

**A MEETING OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD  
WAS HELD ON 31 JANUARY 2018**

The Mayor (Councillor Mrs Batty) (ex-officio), Councillors Hook (ex-officio), Ms Ballard (P), Bateman (P), Beavis (P), Mrs Cully (P), Ms Diffey (P), Edgar (P), Farr (P), Mrs Forder (P), Mrs Furlong (P), Mrs Huggins (P), Miss Kelly (P), Philpott (P), Mrs Prickett, Raffaelli (P).

**28. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for inability to attend were received from the Mayor and Councillor Mrs Prickett.

**29. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

**30. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD HELD ON 15 NOVEMBER 2017**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the Economic Development Board meeting held on 15 November 2017 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record.

**31. DEPUTATIONS**

There were no deputations.

**32. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

There were no public questions.

**PART II**

**33. SOLENT RECREATION MITIGATION STRATEGY**

Consideration was given to the report of the Deputy Head of Planning Services, (Policy) requesting that consideration be given to approving the Solent Recreation Mitigation Strategy, prepared for by the Solent Recreation Mitigation Partnership (SRMP) and endorsed by the PUSH Joint Committee of 5<sup>th</sup> December 2017.

The Board was advised that the measures were proposed as part of a wider project to protect internationally important nature conservation areas. The requirement to protect such sites is set out in the Government's Habitats Regulations and included in Policy LP42 of the Council's Adopted Local Plan. The issue of recreational disturbance is specifically identified in this policy and the ongoing work of the SRMP is also referenced. Other examples of strategies in use included the Thames Basin.

Members acknowledged that extensive work was ongoing in schools to promote conservation work and welcomed that attitudes towards wildlife protection were changing.

Members welcomed the proposal to protect wildlife and habitats and accepted that many developers welcomed the strategy, as without it they would be required to produce their

own.

In answer to a Member's question, the Board was advised that PUSH comprised of 15 members and that the Deputy Head of Planning (Policy) attended the Steering Group on behalf of the Council.

Members recognised the importance of the provision and option to review the charges within five years if it was deemed necessary and welcomed the use of positive education for the management of dogs, but questioned that there was no byelaws proposed to allow for enforcement action if necessary.

The Deputy Head of Planning (Policy) advised that the partnership had considered the possibility for an early review important and had been very keen on positive education to manage the strategy but that the introduction of enforcement options could be considered at a later date if required.

Members acknowledged that it was important not to prevent people from enjoying walking along the coast but recognised the importance of protecting wildlife.

In answer to a Member's question, the Board was advised that hot spot areas had been identified for the rangers to patrol, with areas being rated as high, medium or low risk of the greatest disturbance and the greatest impact. The partnership had accepted that the area was large and the Board was advised that branding for the strategy and education was important.

The Board was advised that the senior ranger was liaising with countryside officers and would be happy to arrange a presentation or visit for Members.

Members were advised that Bird Award Solent were a good source of useful information.

**RESOLVED:** That the Board

- Approves the Solent Recreation Mitigation Strategy (SRMS)
- Amend its Bird Disturbance Mitigation Protocol to reflect the SRMS
- Collects the revised developer contributions for new residential development permitted from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018.

### **34 ANY OTHER ITEMS**

The Board was advised that there were two urgent items for consideration. In answer to a Member's question, the Board was advised that there had been 380 responses to the Town Centre Redevelopment Supplementary Planning Document and that it was anticipated that the findings would be reported to the March Board. The Deputy Head of Planning (Policy) was working through the responses but had recently had to manage a response to Fareham Borough Council's Local Plan as a matter of urgency.

### **35. ROYAL CLARENCE YARD RETAINED LAND**

By reason of special circumstances, the Chairman determined that the following item be

considered at this meeting notwithstanding the fact that the item had not been available for public inspection in accordance with the provisions of Section 100B(4)(a) of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985.

The special circumstances were created as there was an urgency for it to be considered so as to meet the timing requirements of the DIO and enable Gosport Borough Council to respond with authority to the request to purchase and the report could not be produced at an earlier time.

Consideration was given to a report of the Property Investment Manager updating the Board on the status of discussions on the potential acquisition of part of Royal Clarence Yard.

The Board was advised that the report was intended to bring the Council up to speed on the future of the Royal Clarence Yard retained land and the desire to bring it back in to economic use, with employment and deep water access. It was also advised that it was important that any potential purchaser of the site was aware of the difficulties and subsequent financial implications the site would present.

Members welcomed that the Council was still attempting to negotiate a deal with the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) and that the importance of the site was being recognised, and expressed frustration at the DIO's approach to negotiations.

Members felt that any deal to transfer must also include a dowry to acknowledge the risk undertaken in taking on the site, and prevent any future large bill for the Council for work that may need undertaking.

Members were advised that the Council were attempting to seek funds from all areas to fund the due diligence process and that there were plans to re-approach the LEP. The Board was also advised that the £50,000 funds in place were to enable discussions to commence and to draw on knowledge to establish what further due diligence was required.

Members were advised that 1 Public Estates was a project between the Cabinet Office and the Local Government Association to help Local and Central Government to come together to rationalise the issues regarding property ownership and allowed for money to be allocated over a number of years to the LEP and the Local Authority.

Members expressed concern regarding the unassessed risks and welcomed the proposals to seek additional funding.

Members thanked officers for their work and acknowledged that the negative value was a concern, and also welcomed that the report would ensure that any potential purchaser was aware of the risks of the site. It was recognised that the site had huge potential, but that it would require a large investment. Members did not want to see the site fall into disrepair and welcomed that the report made it clear that the Council would enforce any necessary action on potential new owners to ensure that the site and buildings did not fall into a further state of disrepair.

The Board was advised that a potential solution was for the DIO to include Fort Blockhouse, scheduled for release by the Ministry of Defence before 2020, to be given to the Council as part of a deal for the Council to take on the Royal Clarence Yard site to

offset the negative value and on costs of Royal Clarence Yard.

Members felt that the DIO needed to be more realistic with their expectations and approach to the disposal of the site.

A Member advised that previously companies had folded as a result of the expense of undertaking a large project because the costs associated with it had not been properly considered.

The Chairman advised that the discussions had been ongoing for a number of years and that various Government ministers had visited the site. The Council would like to obtain the site, but the negative value made the deal unviable and that the inclusion of Blockhouse would help to address this. Members recognised the potential of the site for employment and the important deep water access but did not want to commit to taking on a liability.

Members welcomed that the Council would continue to lobby and push the DIO for an acceptable outcome.

It was proposed and seconded that the recommendation be slightly amended for clarification at point two and three as detailed.

**RESOLVED:** That the Board;

1. note the contents of the report.
2. The Council continue to lobby relevant Government Ministers to ensure the site is presented, to either the Council or the wider market, in a viable manner to enable future development in line with Council ambitions for the site
3. The Council continue to push to ensure that the Defence Infrastructure Organisation do not offer the site to the market until these discussions have had sufficient time to take place and effect change to make the site workable.

### **36 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED:** That in relation to the following item the public be excluded from the meeting, as it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during this item there would be disclosure to them of exempt information within Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, and further that in all circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemptions outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, for the reasons set out in the report.

### **37. POTENTIAL ACQUISITION OF LAND AT DAEDALUS WATERFRONT**

Consideration was given to an exempt report of the Property and Investment Manager advising the Board of the background to the site, the valuation and due diligence works undertaken in connection with the potential acquisition of land at Daedalus Waterfront. To seek approval to commission and undertake further due diligence works, to negotiate terms and acquire the land from the Homes England.

RESOLVED: That the Board:

1. Notes the work undertaken to date
2. Endorses officers to enter into the Solent LEP funding agreement and notes the match funding requirements which are subject to approval of full council
3. Endorses officers to commission and complete further due diligence, prepare a business case for the development of the land, and negotiate terms for the proposed transaction with Homes England
4. Subject to the approval of the business case and principle terms of the transaction with the Homes England by the Economic Development Board, authority be given to the Chief Executive and S151 Officer in consultation with the Leader of the Council to complete all necessary documentation and to acquire the land at Daedalus Waterfront.

The meeting concluded at 7.12pm

CHAIRMAN