

14 October 2015		Agenda Item 4
<i>Update on Sittingbourne Town Centre regeneration</i>		
Lead Member:	Cllr Mike Cosgrove – Cabinet Member for Regeneration	
Report author:	Pete Raine – Director of Regeneration	
Recommendation		
That the Committee considers and notes the latest position on Sittingbourne Town Centre regeneration.		

1 Purpose of report and executive summary

1.1 The Committee has requested an update on Sittingbourne Town Centre regeneration and this report provides the latest state of play.

2 Background

2.1 There is a development project between Spirit of Sittingbourne LLC and Swale Borough Council to regenerate Sittingbourne Town Centre.

2.2 A development agreement between SBC and Spirit of Sittingbourne was signed in September 2012 and the Council has now satisfied all of the Council’s conditions and Spirit has commenced satisfying their conditions.

2.3 This has resulted in them satisfying the initial conditions leading to a full planning application for phase 1 and an outline application for phase 2. The planning application was made at the end of 2013 and Planning Committee resolved to consent in March 2014. Many of the outstanding issues have been resolved.

2.4 Tesco have announced that they are withdrawing from development in Sittingbourne, have cancelled their planning application, and we understand that the Forum and former Industrial Park sites are being marketed.

3 Consideration

3.1 The latest state of play is as follows:

- Spirit and SBC continue to hold regular progress and high level meetings;
- Spirit detailed planning application for phase 1 has been approved at committee and determination delegated to officers subject to resolution of outstanding matters and conclusion of section 106 agreement;

- Spirit continues to work on design revisions and may need to make a further planning application due to renewed interest from a hotel operator;
- Spirit continues to work on the interchange design to the front of Sittingbourne Station in order to provide designs that are acceptable to Kent Highways, Network Rail and South East trains. They estimate that once the highways designs are agreed and it will then take about 4 months to secure Network Rail and South East Trains approval;
- 34 High Street is currently being refurbished internally for ideas test to take up occupation and external proposals for place making have been submitted to the planning department for approval;
- Spirit continues to negotiate with Cinema operators and has secured heads of terms with a national cinema chain. Negotiations have now started on the agreement to lease and lawyers for both parties have been instructed;
- Spirit has started to market the restaurants and retail units in phase 1 and has interest from a number of operators and is confident that these elements will be taken up very quickly once the Cinema agreement has been signed;
- The Council has drawn proposals for a new footpath linking the multi storey car park on St Michael's Road to the High Street. An architects drawing has been commissioned and work is underway with Legal to prepare a footpath creation order;
- SBC Legal are working with Spirit to achieve vacant possession of sites for phase 1 in the Fountain Street area;
- A meeting has been held with Tesco on Sept 15th clarifying their plans for disposal of the site north of the railway line to a housebuilder. Major planning issues include provision of recreational infrastructure and the extent of the site affected by flood risk;
- LGF funding to support the highways and infrastructure works for Sittingbourne town centre has been successful but there is an outstanding issue for Spirit to resolve over timing for the drawdown of funds. They held detailed discussions with KCC on 16th September about how best to achieve the required drawdown due to the delayed programme; and
- The Council has agreed to appoint Huber Car Park systems as their preferred contractor for the Multi storey Car Park and will enter into a formal construction contract once the Spirit development goes unconditional. Huber has agreed to extend its tender by 6 months and will carry the risk of material cost increases and the Council has agreed to carry the risk of euro/£ fluctuations for elements that the contractor will have to pay for in Euros. In addition the Council has agreed to issue an order for £15k to allow detailed design and material specifications to be completed once an agreement to lease has been signed by a Cinema operator as part of the Spirit development.

3.2 A schedule of costs association with the regeneration of Sittingbourne town centre is at Appendix I and a map showing the phasing of the Masterplan is at Appendix II.

3.3 A synopsis of progress in implementing wider regeneration initiatives in Sittingbourne town centre is at Appendix III.

4 Appendices and background papers

4.1 The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix I: Expenditure on Sittingbourne town centre regeneration
- Appendix II: Spirit of Sittingbourne Phasing Plan
- Appendix III: Sittingbourne – Update for members on regeneration issues

5 Officer contact details

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