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## Economy and Property Committee

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**MINUTES** of the Meeting held in the Council Chamber, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, ME10 3HT on Tuesday, 23 July 2024 from 7.00 pm - 7.42 pm.

**PRESENT:** Councillors Hayden Brawn, Derek Carnell (Substitute for Councillor Monique Bonney), Ann Cavanagh, Lloyd Chapman, Shelley Cheesman, Roger Clark, Simon Clark, Charles Gibson, Elliott Jayes, Sarah Stephen (Vice-Chair), Terry Thompson, Mark Tucker and Ashley Wise.

**OFFICERS PRESENT:** Billy Attaway, David Johnson and Kieren Mansfield.

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE (VIRTUALLY):** Councillor Dolley Wooster.

**APOLOGY:** Councillor Monique Bonney.

117 **Vice-Chair in-the-Chair**

Councillor Sarah Stephen (Vice-Chair) took the chair for this meeting and would be referred to as Chair for the remainder of these minutes.

118 **Emergency Evacuation Procedure**

The Chair outlined the emergency evacuation procedure.

119 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 12 March 2024 (Minute Nos. 753 – 760) and Minutes of the Meeting held on 15 May 2024 (Minute Nos. 21 – 22) were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chair as correct records.

120 **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Elliott Jayes declared a non-pecuniary interest as he was a member of the Sheppey Matters Board.

121 **Extended Membership of the Levelling Up Fund Member Working Group**

The Strategic Programmes and Assets Manager introduced the report to extend the working group Membership to include further Isle of Sheppey Members and that to ensure the working group stayed politically balanced, one member from the Swale Independent Alliance, and one from the Labour would be needed.

The Chair invited Members to make comments, which included:

- Believed that the group should include only members from the Isle of Sheppey, even if it did mean that the group would not be politically balanced;
- had no strong views as to what group or councillor sat on the working group and, if the group needed to be politically balanced then one nomination needed to be given to the Conservative group;
- needed to be mindful that working groups did not become too large and non-functional; and

- further discussions needed to take place for an option where the working group was comprised solely from Isle of Sheppey councillors.

Councillor Derek Carnell proposed the recommendation, and this was seconded by Councillor Ashley Wise.

**Resolved:**

- (1) That the Economy and Property Committee agrees the extension of Membership to the Levelling Up Fund Member Working Group, as set out in section 3.1 of the report, and that officers revise the group's Terms of Reference to reflect this.***

**122 Consultation - Disposals and Community Asset Transfer Policies**

The Strategic Programmes and Assets Manager introduced the report and the consultation document shown at Appendix I for the Disposal and Community Asset Transfer (CAT) Policies.

The Chair invited Members to make comments, which included:

- Was good to see that the consultation document would be seeking Parish and Town Councils views;
- important to involve Parish and Town Councils with the decision making around community assets as sometimes they were willing to take on the responsibility of them;
- when the community asset was transferred to an outside body, could the council take the asset back?; and
- important for the assets to be as close to the residents as possible and should make that clear in the consultation.

The Strategic Programmes and Assets Manager responded to points raised and said that Community Asset transfers were traditionally given to outside bodies under a long lease so the Council could take back the asset should the transfer not be successful.

Councillor Hayden Brawn proposed the recommendations, and this was seconded by Councillor Mark Tucker.

**Resolved:**

- (1) That the Consultation Document at Appendix I be approved and published to be circulated to local organisations for responses over an 8-week period.***

**123 UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) - Capital Allocations for Town Centres**

The Strategic Programmes and Assets Manager introduced the report which sought support to allocate the available funding to the projects identified at Appendix I of the report.

The Chair invited Members to make comments, which included:

- There were sensible proposals for Faversham;
- Periwinkle Mill had been a restoration project for almost 20 years, how much work could be done with the funding that was available?;
- Periwinkle Mill had been neglected for many years and it was exciting to see something happen to the site;
- all the proposed projects were suitable for investment;
- Trinity gardens, Sheerness, needed serious tidying up;
- the Old Water Tower, Sheerness, was another project that officers could focus on; and
- was a shame to hear that the ANPR cameras, supporting the pedestrianisation of Faversham were not able to come forward in time but wanted reassurance that officers had explored all the options that were available to them.

The Strategic Programmes and Asset Manager responded to points raised and said that Periwinkle Mill had the potential to be a good linking heritage destination between Milton Regis High Street and Sittingbourne High Street and that the project was ready to go. He said that the Conservation Officer was providing details about the works that could be undertaken with the budget available and that he would circulate the documents to the committee.

Councillor Terry Thompson proposed the recommendation, and this was seconded by Councillor Ann Cavanagh.

**Resolved:**

- (1) That the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) town centre allocations are used to support the delivery of the projects identified at Appendix I of the report.**
- (2) That delegated authority be given to the Head of Place to make changes if required, in consultation with the Prosperity Fund Member Working Group, in line with delegation 2.8.19.3. To implement key regeneration projects across the Borough.**

124 **Forward Decisions Plan**

**Resolved:**

- (1) That the forward decisions plan be noted.**

125 **Disposal of Land at Fountain Street, Sittingbourne**

The Interim Property Manager introduced the report for the freehold disposal of Land at Fountain Street, Sittingbourne.

The Chair invited Members to make comments, which included:

- Shame that Swale Rainbow Homes could not take the site on;
- would the land be more valuable if outline planning permission was obtained?;
- could a covenant be placed upon the land to require the new investor to build social housing?;
- it was surplus land that the council could do nothing with so was happy to see the

land be sold; and

- could the profits from the sale be given to Swale Rainbow Homes to help them fund future projects?

The Interim Property Manager responded to the points raised and said that the valuation obtained was based on similar sites that did not have planning permission granted. He said that due to the size of the site, any planning application would most likely need to be seeking detailed planning permission rather than outline, and any prospective purchaser would want to control this. It was felt seeking planning would not increase the overall value of the site.

The Interim Property Manager said that it was not a decision for the Economy and Property Committee to decide where the profits of the sale of land would go to, it would require a decision from the Policy & Resources Committee or Full Council.

Councillor Mark Tucker proposed the recommendations, and these were seconded by Councillor Elliott Jayes.

**Resolved:**

- (1) That the Land at Fountain Street, Sittingbourne be not transferred to Swale Rainbow Homes Limited, but be declared as surplus and placed on the open market to affect a freehold disposal.***
- (2) That delegated authority be given to the Head of Place, in consultation with the Head of Mid Kent Legal Services and the Chair of Economy and Property Committee, to negotiate a freehold sale of the property and to complete the necessary legal formalities.***

**126 Exclusion of the Press and Public**

The confidential appendix was not discussed so there was no need to go into closed session.

**127 Exempt Appendix II - Sale of Freehold Fountain Street**

The confidential appendix was not discussed so there was no need to go into closed session.

Chair

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All minutes are draft until agreed at the next meeting of the Committee/Panel