

Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel

14 March 2017

Commenced: 6.00pm

Terminated: 7.25pm

Present: Councillors K Welsh (Chair), Piddington (Deputy Chair), Affleck, Beeley, Bowden, Bowerman, Fowler, Glover, Homer, Patrick, Pearce, Sharif, Sidebottom, F Travis, Whitehead

Apologies for absence: Councillors Feeley, A Holland

32. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel held on 10 January 2017 were approved as a correct record.

33. VISION TAMESIDE

The Panel welcomed Damien Bourke, Assistant Executive Director, Development and Investment, to receive a progress update on Vision Tameside and development plans for the borough.

Members received a presentation which provided background to the development proposals for Ashton town centre. This journey started in 2012 with a town centre development prospectus and continued work has led to the creation of a design framework and cost plan. The vision endorses a sound strategic, economic and commercial business case to support four objectives:

- Supporting growth and regeneration across Tameside
- Securing the future of Tameside College and skills provision
- Improving efficiency and effectiveness in the use of the council's assets and service provision
- Alignment to strategic policies

Detailed mapping and visual plans for the town centre area of Ashton provided a staged approach to the vision becoming a reality. This concentrated on the outcomes achieved to date with Clarendon College and regeneration of the market square, then looked at forward projections to how the new buildings and public realm will improve access and connectivity. The Transport for Greater Manchester development plans for the current bus station was also shown as part of the wider improvement plans.

Panel members were provided with aerial footage of the site, with demolition completed in September 2016 and the construction phase now well underway with assembly of the steel structure. It was made clear that the wider redevelopment programme will be carried out in stages through to 2020.

The new buildings will house a shared Public Service Centre, with the presence of the Council's Customer Services, Job Centre Plus, Credit Union and Citizens' Advice. There will also be retail space within a section of the development. Spaces throughout the development will be well designed, provide better access to services and deliver considerable cost savings. In order to ensure Council employees are in the right places to effectively deliver business objectives, work is now underway to inform the Council's Office Accommodation Strategy and recant plans for 2018 onwards.

The Panel asked about the approach to ensuring that benefits from this significant investment and redevelopment programme are realised.

Mr Bourke informed the Panel that this will be closely monitored and will include oversight of:

- Reduction in the total annual costs of the new shared public service centre
- Improved educational attainment
- Significant improvement in the built environment
- Employment opportunities arising from the construction project

Panel members asked about the employment opportunities that have arisen during the construction of the new buildings, with particular interest on the creation of apprenticeship opportunities. Reference was made to a previous meeting in June 2016, which reported low numbers when compared with targets for the programme.

Mr Bourke advised members that the number of apprenticeships created has now increased, and while still below the initial targets for the programme, this will start to rise as the construction phase advances. It is important for members to be aware that the demolition and construction of the steel frame are complex elements, with a required level of expertise and and to take account of associated risks. The build will now progress at a pace and start to involve a range of trades for the creation of apprenticeships.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That Mr Bourke be thanked for attending the meeting.
- (2) That any further questions arising from the meeting be sent to Scrutiny and Member Services Manager.

34. UPDATE ON CURRENT REVIEW

The Chair updated the Panel on the progress of the current review on the 'Approach to Community Safety Partnership Working in Tameside', advising members that plans are afoot for the working group to meet with Superintendent Dean Howard on Monday 20 March 2017 to receive an information relation to Police operations, impact of resource pressures and wider partnership involvement.

RESOLVED: That detail of future working group meetings is circulated to members by email and as electronic calendar invitation.

35. URGENT ITEMS

The Chair reported that there were no urgent items for consideration at this meeting.

CHAIR