

**WEYMOUTH & PORTLAND BOROUGH COUNCIL MANAGEMENT
COMMITTEE**

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 5 MARCH 2019

Present: Cllrs J Cant (Chair), R Kosior (Vice-Chair), M Byatt, C Huckle, R Nickinson, R Nowak, J Orrell, A Reed, G Taylor and K Wheller

Apologies: None

Also present: Cllr I Bruce

Officers present (for all or part of the meeting):

David Brown (Head of Assets & Infrastructure), Stuart Caundle (Head of Paid Service), Stuart C Dawson (Head of Revenues and Benefits) and Lindsey Watson (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

99. Minutes

The minutes of the last meeting held on 5 February 2019 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

100. Code of Conduct

K Wheller declared a non-pecuniary interest in respect of agenda items 6 and 7, 'Application for Discretionary Rate Relief' and 'Council Tax Discretionary Discount' as her husband was a trustee of Weymouth town charities. She indicated that she would not take part in discussion or voting on these items.

R Kosior declared a non-pecuniary interest in respect of agenda items 6 and 7, 'Application for Discretionary Rate Relief' and 'Council Tax Discretionary Discount' as his partner was a trustee of Weymouth town charities. He indicated that he would not take part in discussion or voting on these items.

J Cant declared an interest with regard to agenda item 7, 'Council Tax Discretionary Discount' (XX Everest Road, Weymouth) as he had previously been in a position where he was not eligible for a Council Tax discretionary discount on a similar property during 2016/17.

J Cant declared an interest with regard to agenda item 7, 'Council Tax Discretionary Discount (XX James Street, Weymouth and XX Edwardsville, Rodwell Avenue, Weymouth) as he had been subject to a similar situation where he had to pay Council Tax on applicable buildings.

101. Public Participation

Rex Johnson addressed the committee with regard to North Quay and expressed the view that the building should not be demolished for sustainability, environmental and heritage reasons. He noted that the national planning policy framework encouraged the reuse of buildings and that he felt that demolition of the building was wasteful on all levels. He suggested that

the building could be used as a high quality hotel or if not, for social housing. He felt that more time was needed and that this should be looked at by the successor councils in order to achieve the best outcome for the town.

Mrs Pru Bollam addressed the committee on behalf of Weymouth Civic Society to support the general redevelopment of the North Quay site and to express the importance of the harbourside and the character of the area. Weymouth Civic Society welcomed the council's choice of Magna Housing Association, which would provide accommodation for local people in the long term as well as some commercial use along North Quay. In addition she made comments in respect of highways issues, the need to provide parking and the height of the buildings which were felt to be excessive. The civic society looked forward to the next stage of the development of the town.

In response, the Chair noted that he had been impressed by the contribution of the civic society and offered thanks for their broad support of the scheme. He encouraged the civic society to continue to engage and noted that there would be further consultation on the detailed design.

Mr Ewans of Jurassic Coast holdings addressed the committee with regard to North Quay and indicated that he felt that this was the wrong location for the mix of development and that funding should be used for development elsewhere in the town. He also noted that other offers were available. He asked that the issue was halted until other commercial alternatives were looked at, which he felt would better address the needs of the town.

Graham Perry addressed the committee with regard to car parking provision for the North Quay site for various uses in the area, which he stated was vitally important to any regeneration and to ensure public use of the area. He also referred to the use of the site for the museum.

In response, the Chair noted that the site had to be viable, which was why some compromise may be required. He encouraged Mr Perry to continue to contribute to consultation on the site.

Mr Whatley addressed the committee with regard to various matters including the North Quay consultation, the advertising of jobs for Weymouth Town Council, the role of particular services and what would be happening with the laser columns.

In response, the Chair confirmed that relevant staff would transfer to Weymouth Town Council under TUPE. A Reed noted that the staff structure was being developed and was in the public domain. Staff being transferred to the town council would continue in their current role and external recruitment would be undertaken where required. With regard to the question on the laser columns, a response would be provided to Mr Whatley following the meeting.

Andy Hutchings thanked the Chair and committee for the courtesy shown to him as a member of the public. In addition he asked for confirmation of funding provided to good causes from car parking income.

In response C Huckle confirmed that it had been agreed that £1,500 would be provided to the veterans hut and £2,000 would be provided to the shelter bus.

Mr Farn expressed thanks to the borough council following the installation of a bin on Westham bridge and also noted that bins were being emptied on a more regular basis. In addition he asked for clarification as to future dates and arrangements for committee meetings.

In response, the Chair confirmed that Weymouth and Portland Borough Council would cease to exist after 31 March 2019 and there would be no further borough council meetings after this date. The Head of Paid Service confirmed that meetings of the Dorset Council would be held in Dorchester and that members of the public would be able to attend. Meetings of the Weymouth Town Council would be held in Commercial Road, Weymouth and there would be public speaking arrangements.

102. **Questions by Councillors**

I Bruce offered his thanks to the committee as the previous Chair of the committee and recognised the work put in by briefholders. In addition he raised points with regard to member allowances for the period between the end of the borough council and the beginning of the new councils, which he felt should be looked into and also noted the arrangements for how confidential papers were dealt with and made available historically.

K Wheller raised a question with regard to members' IT devices, what happened to the devices when they were no longer required by members and whether these could be purchased by members? The Chair asked the Head of Paid Service to look at this issue.

K Wheller asked whether there were any plans to hold an event in Commercial Road for staff, including former members of staff in order to thank them for their service to the Council. Councillors Wheller and Taylor would discuss this following the meeting.

103. **Application for Discretionary Rate Relief**

The committee considered an application for Discretionary Rate Relief from The British Red Cross. The application was set out at appendix 2 and the Guidelines for determining applications for Discretionary Rate Relief were set out at appendix 1.

The Chair noted that the committee had considered many cases for discretionary rate relief and although it was recognised that the charities were doing valuable work, the borough council could not set a precedent by allowing a charity to receive discretionary rate relief.

It was proposed by J cant seconded by M Byatt

Decision

That Committee rejects the application for Discretionary Rate Relief listed at Appendix 2 of the report.

104. Council Tax Discretionary Discount

The committee received a report of the Head of Revenues and Benefits to consider two applications for Council Tax discretionary discount.

XX Everest Road, Weymouth

The Chair declared an interest with regard to this item as he had previously been in a position where he was not eligible for a Council Tax discretionary discount on a similar property during 2016/17.

A point was made that the Council Tax charge should be taken into account when property was being developed.

It was proposed by J Cant seconded by R Nickinson

Decision

That Committee rejects the application for Council Tax discretionary discount listed at Appendix 1 of the report.

XX James Street, Weymouth and XX Edwardsville, Rodwell Avenue, Weymouth

The Chair declared an interest with regard to this item as he had been subject to a similar situation where he had to pay Council Tax on applicable buildings. He indicated that the committee could not set a precedent to approve the discretionary discount.

It was noted that these matters would be considered by Dorset Council in the future.

It was proposed by J Cant seconded by M Byatt

Decision

That Committee rejects the application for Council Tax discretionary discount listed at Appendix 1 of the report.

K Wheller abstained from voting on this decision.

105. Former WPBC Offices, North Quay, Weymouth

The committee received and considered a report of the Head of Assets and Infrastructure with regard to the current position with the former Weymouth and Portland Borough Council offices, North Quay, Weymouth.

The Chair provided a short history of the proposals for the site and noted the timescale for getting to the current position. He confirmed that the proposed scheme had been agreed in principle and therefore the discussion at the meeting was in respect of the options put forward by Magna Housing Association. There would be no further debate on any other alternatives.

The Head of Assets and Infrastructure confirmed that at this stage it was for the committee to consider the initial proposals produced by Magna and the responses from the public consultation undertaken. It was noted that Site Approach 1 had received the most support from the public. The report contained 3 parts which included consideration of the design to be supported by members, risk elements with the Homes England grant and the in-principle approach that the borough council and Dorset Council would be taking moving forward. He confirmed that the Management Committee was not being asked to look at the planning merits of any proposal. A number of unsolicited interest and offers had been received and detail of these were set out in the confidential appendix.

The Chair confirmed that the committee would consider recommendations i), ii) and iii) in open business and that recommendation iv) would be considered in exempt business.

Members considered the issues arising from the report and during discussion the following points were raised:

- A general level of support was expressed for Site Approach 1 which was felt to be consistent with the original proposal
- There needed to be a comprehensive approach to traffic management associated with the proposal
- Support was expressed for the inclusion of accommodation for older persons within the proposal
- A point was noted that it was important to achieve a balanced community with the inclusion of shared ownership housing and market sale housing
- A number of members expressed concerns with regard to parking and the importance of ensuring parking provision for that area for residents, visitors and harbour users. A number of suggestions were made for how parking could potentially be provided and a point made that there was a need to look at the detail of the designs
- A specific point was made that there was no wish to make the buildings higher in order to have parking provision underneath
- It was noted that these issues would be for consideration by Dorset Council in the future
- A concern was noted with regard to potential flood risk and that the design needed to take this into account
- A point was raised as to whether the existing building should be reused or whether the proposal should be a new build. It was noted that there should be consideration within Approach 1 as to whether any part of the existing structure could be reused

- Reference was made to whether the museum could be accommodated within the proposal
- A point was noted that there was a need for a strategic overview of the site to include the nature of the development, landscaping and heritage issues.

It was proposed by J Cant seconded by G Taylor

Decision

Members agree to:-

- i) Support the initial scheme design – Site Approach 1 – as set out in Appendix 1 of the report

It was proposed by J Cant seconded by C Huckle

Decision

Members agree to:-

- ii) Grant delegated authority to the Head of Paid Service to enter into a grant agreement with Homes England and to agree the terms of such an agreement
- iii) Grant delegated authority to the Head of Paid Service to continue to negotiate terms for a joint venture agreement with Magna Housing Association.

106. Urgent Business

There were no urgent items.

107. Exempt Business

That under section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as detailed in paragraph 3 of part 1 of schedule 12a to the Act.

108. Former WPBC offices, North Quay, Weymouth - exempt appendix 3

The detail of a number of unsolicited offers and interest received from various parties in respect of the North Quay site, was provided within confidential appendix 3.

It was proposed by J Cant seconded by M Byatt

Decision

Members note the various unsolicited offers and interest that has been received for the site, but agree these be declined and that the council wishes to continue to proceed with Magna Housing Association.

Duration of meeting: 9.30 - 11.00 am

Chairman

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