

LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the proceedings of a Special Meeting of the Development Committee of Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council held in the Island Civic Centre, Lisburn, BT27 4RL on Wednesday 17 January 2018 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT:

Alderman A Ewart MBE (Chairman)

The Right Worshipful The Mayor
Councillor T Morrow

Deputy Mayor
Councillor H Legge

Alderman W J Dillon and S Martin

Councillors J Baird, S Carson, A Ewing, A Givan,
A Grehan, U Mackin and T Mitchell

OTHER MEMBERS:

Alderman J Tinsley, Councillors N Anderson, J Palmer
and C Quinn

IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Executive
Director of Service Transformation
Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing
Head of Economic Development
Head of Service (Parks & Amenities)
Tourism Development Manager
Community Planning Manager
Assistant IT Manager
Member Services Officer

Purpose of Meeting

The Special Meeting of the Development Committee had been convened in order to receive a number of updates relating to the Hillsborough village strategic project.

Commencement of Meeting

The Chairman, Alderman A G Ewart MBE, welcomed Members to the Special Meeting of the Development Committee to which all Members of Council had been invited to attend. and proceeded to outline the evacuation procedures in the case of an emergency.

The Chairman asked that any Member entering or leaving the Meeting alert him accordingly so that the Member Services Officer might accurately reflect arrival and departure times in the minutes.

1. Apologies

Apologies for non-attendance were accepted and recorded on behalf of Aldermen D Drysdale and W A Leathem, Councillors J Gallen and S Skillen.

2. Declarations of Interest

The Chairman invited Members to declare any Conflicts of Interest they might have in relation to the business of the Meeting and reminded them of the requirement that they complete Declaration of Interest forms in this regard, which had been provided at the Meeting.

There were no declarations of interest made.

3. Report of Director of Service Transformation

It was agreed that the report and recommendations of the Director of Service Transformation be adopted, subject to any decisions recorded below and other items noted:-

At the outset the Chief Executive addressed the meeting and acknowledged the importance of the Hillsborough Village projects and the interdependencies. The Chief Executive congratulated the Chairman of the Committee, Alderman A G Ewart, for having the vision and foresight to convene a Special Meeting on this important project for the Council.

With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation the Director of Service Transformation presented an overview of the Hillsborough Village strategic projects which included:

- the Council's Community Plan
- the Council's Local Development Plan
- Hillsborough Tourism Master Plan
- Physical Regeneration of Hillsborough Forest, including the proposed operating model and DAERA's expression of interest and a social enterprise café
- Hillsborough Public Realm and an in-depth outline of the interdependencies and
- Historic Royal Palaces and the Hillsborough Steering Group

3.1 Community Plan

The Director of Service Transformation outlined to the Committee on the Community Plan which was a high level strategic document which should influence the Council's, as well as the other partners', service delivery.

The Director having referred to the five themes of the Council's Community Plan outlined those projects which might be evident in Hillsborough and which had been detailed in the report circulated.

3.2 Local Development Plan

The Director of Service Transformation outlined the salient points in relation to the Local Development Plan for Hillsborough including: population, housing, development proposals, conservation and tourism strategies.

It was noted that any development proposals within Hillsborough Conservation Area would be assessed in accordance with prevailing regional planning policy as currently set out in the Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS) and Planning Policy Statement 6: Planning, Archaeology and the Built Heritage (PPS 6) and any additional design guidance such as within the Hillsborough Conservation Area booklet and Local Development Plan.

The Director reported that the Preferred Options Paper (POP), the first stage in the Local Development Plan, had been published in March 2017 and proposed designating a town centre boundary in alignment with the Conservation Area. It was anticipated that by designating a town centre boundary, it would assist in promoting the re-use of heritage buildings, help attract a range of retailing/commercial uses within a distinctive high quality built environment, and prevent those uses from spreading beyond the town centre.

3.3 Hillsborough Tourism Master Plan

A copy of an update on the work to date on the Hillsborough Tourism Master Plan had been furnished to Members.

The Director of Service Transformation reported that the Council had commissioned a Hillsborough Tourism Master Plan that had been completed in November 2015 which included an Action Plan of priority projects. This commission had been contextualised by Historic Royal Palaces' plans to refurbish Hillsborough Castle and Grounds with an investment of £16 million leading up to the formal opening in 2018 when they planned to welcome 200,000 tourists.

It was noted that the emerging Council tourism strategy recognised Hillsborough as the Council's unique offering both within the Council area the wider NI tourism product. This provided an opportunity to encourage at least 10% (20,000) to extend their visit and enjoy the village, its heritage, attractions, festivals, services and amenities; and to inspire tourists to enjoy short breaks in the village and surrounding area. In doing so the aim of the Hillsborough Tourism Master Plan was to make Hillsborough the focal point for tourism in the wider area and a significant destination.

The purpose of the Hillsborough Tourism Master Plan was also to make recommendations for the development and marketing of Hillsborough village that complemented the investment by Historic Royal Palaces, thus enabling Hillsborough as a whole to offer the highest standards of experience and service available on the island of Ireland.

3.4 Physical Regeneration

3.4.1 Hillsborough Forest

The Director of Service Transformation reminded the Committee that at the July 2017 Special Development Committee the Economic Appraisal/Outline Business Case had been noted and the Committee had agreed that Officers progress the design appointment subject to meeting favourable terms with the lease and Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Forest Service.

The Director reported that in order to progress works on site the Council must agree the Forest Service's Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and subsequent documentation relating to a Trails Licence, Works License and Lease. It was noted that the Council's solicitors had raised a number of issues regarding the MOU with the Forest Service concerning the clarity of the obligations that the document would place on the Council. The Director elaborated on the issue of the negotiations with the insurance broker and the underwriters which were ongoing.

The Director reported that the Council had written recently to Chief Executives of the other Councils, copies of which had been circulated to the Committee, it being noted that this correspondence sought to attain a collaborative approach ensuring NI Forestry Service made available their assets in an appropriate manner to benefit the wider community. A briefing paper had been drafted for SOLACE, a copy of which had been circulated also, seeking a similar objective.

3.4.1 A Operating Model

The Director of Leisure and Community Wellbeing outlined the differing elements under consideration for inclusion in the Hillsborough Forest project and reported that the project required to be broken down to the infinite element/task; for example:

- Visitors Centre
- Car parking
- Provision and servicing of toilets
- Social Enterprise café
- High Ropes Course
- Digital Sculptures trail
- Woodland themed play park
- Bird Viewing Sanctuary
- Orienteering Course
- Glamping Pods/Self Catering Accommodation
- Boating
- Grounds Maintenance of the paths
- Co-ordination and ongoing liaison with other stakeholders eg. HRP, Forest Service, AFBI, Rivers Agency, Tourism NI etc.
- Management of tenants and facilities management

3.4.1 A Operating Model (Cont'd)

The Director advised that the 'end-state' operating model could span a number of options from being fully outsourced to being individually managed in-house and a range of combinations in between. The Director discussed a number of steps that would be required to be considered to assist in determining the 'end-state' operating model, the detail of which was documented in the report circulated. The Director also referred to the procurement process that the Council would be required to adhere to when appointing operators for projects within the Hillsborough Forest project.

3.4.1 B DAERA Expression of Interest

The Director of Service Transformation reminded the Committee that at the September 2017 Development Committee an item on the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) Rural Tourism Scheme (Rural Development Programme 2014-2020) had been discussed, and the Council had agreed to progress discussions with DAERA for two funding bids, namely; Discover Waterways Lisburn and Hillsborough Forest.

The Director advised that Council Officers had met with Officers from DAERA, it being noted that the Discover Waterways Lisburn project had been omitted due to not meeting eligible criteria. The Hillsborough Forest project continued to be eligible for funding, with a deadline for Expressions of Interest before the end of January 2018. Tourism Officers had met with Tourism NI, and DAERA, and proposed that an innovative and unique digital sculpture trail be developed through the woodland of Hillsborough Forest as part of this funding bid.

The Director also reminded the Committee that as part of the Hillsborough Forest Concept Plan multiple sculptures had been suggested to be part of the overall project. The idea for Hillsborough Forest digital sculpture trail was to tap into new technologies, including virtual reality, phone apps and games that make the whole piece a little more immersive and cutting edge for new markets. This would then form a 'different, unique, and innovative' concept that would put Hillsborough Forest firmly on the map for the new concept.

3.4.1 C Social Enterprise – Café

The Director of Service Transformation reported that as part of the Hillsborough Tourism Master Plan and development of Hillsborough Forest an unused building in Hillsborough Forest was being considered for a social enterprise café. The Community Planning Partners including Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council (LCCC), the Health and Social Care Trust (HSCNI) and the Public Health Agency (PHA) were working together to seek to develop this project which had the potential to not only support a viable commercially focused social enterprise, but also provide training and employment opportunities for young care leavers currently with the Trust.

3.4.1 C Social Enterprise Café (Cont'd)

The Committee noted that to date a number of meetings and consultations had been held with representatives from the PHA, HSCNI and LCCC staff. A consultation meeting had been held also with Hillsborough Steering Group on 2 November 2017. Work was ongoing on the Scoping Study that included a completed comprehensive strategic context analysis. A vision and mission statement as well as a value statement had been developed and agreed with LCCC, HSC and PHA, the broad objectives having been agreed.

The Director reported that a market segmentation analysis had been conducted and measureable outcomes were currently being developed in consultation with the key stakeholders. It was envisaged that the Scoping Study would be completed over the next 6-8 weeks. The key issues around this was that the project could not be taken forward until the insurance implications had been agreed in conjunction with the MOU.

Members had been furnished with a copy of the correspondence to the Chief Executive of Southern Eastern Health Trust requesting that he escalates within the Assembly the issues associated with the tenure transfer from NI Forest Service.

3.4.2 Public Realm

In line with the Stakeholder Engagement Plan agreed at the meeting of the Development Committee in October 2017 the Director updated the Committee on the consultation process for the Hillsborough Public Realm Scheme.

Following previous consultation events and consultation with statutory bodies and a presentation at Committee earlier in 2017, the design team had edited designs across the scheme with a view to agreeing a final plan and submitting a planning application.

The formal PAN (Pre Application Notice) process had now commenced with Public Consultation agreed, details of which were outlined in the Hillsborough Steering Group Newsletter, a copy of which had been circulated to the Committee.

Through the PAD (Pre Application Discussion) process, meetings had been requested to take place with statutory bodies including DfI and NIEA. Ongoing meetings had taken place with HRP involving the Chairman of Development Committee and various Council Officers, in particular in relation to the access requested through the Dark Walk to the proposed new Fort Car Park.

The Director also reported that at the most recent meeting with HRP it had been agreed to submit the PAD (Pre Application Discussion) to support the planning application, which would request feedback on the proposed car park site access from the Dark Walk and proposed parking configuration at the courthouse from the statutory bodies. It was noted that HRP were in support of the proposals submitted by the Council.

3.4.2 Public Realm (Cont'd)

Upon completion of the outlined consultation period it was anticipated that the designs would be finalised with any proposed changes and a final plan presented to the Development Committee for approval prior to a full planning application being submitted in early spring 2018. Alongside this process a full economic appraisal was being produced and would be presented to Council in the coming months.

3.4.3 Interdependencies

The Committee had been furnished with a copy of a report that had been presented to the Development Committee in September 2017, and which outlined the interdependencies that may impact planned capital project schemes and other projects being developed for delivery in Hillsborough Village.

The Director advised that a key outcome of the Special Meeting was that Members acquired an in-depth understanding of these interdependencies and the need for choreographing of events. In particular, the provision of car parking within the Forest Park required to compliment the formalising of car parking provision around the Court House required to enhance the proposed public realm scheme.

3.4.4 Historic Royal Palaces

The Committee noted that Hillsborough Castle and Grounds were closed to the public (from 1 October 2017 until 1 July 2018) with much capital works planned over this time. The Committee noted that a full update on the programme of works was outlined as part of the Hillsborough Steering Newsletter, as circulated.

The Director reported that Historic Royal Palaces (HRP) were also submitting an application for new tourist brown signs for the A1 dual carriageway, these signs being required by legislation. An opportunity for Council to consider was the wider use/promotion of Hillsborough village as a tourism destination. Having these tourism brown signs located on other access roads could be something the Council would consider worthwhile to encourage a greater footfall to the village.

3.4.5 Hillsborough Steering Group

The Director reported that the Hillsborough Communications & Steering Group had been set up in 2015 to ensure strategic projects, and other community initiatives were discussed in one agreed forum leading to the launch of their latest 'Steering Group Newsletter' with copies distributed to the local area.

It was noted that topics contained within the newsletter included Hillsborough Public Realm Scheme, Hillsborough Castle Development Plans, Hillsborough Forest Park Concept Plan and Work by Utility Companies such as Phoenix Gas, with an update on their planned works in the area and an invitation to public information events to discuss road closures and diversions in more detail.

3.4.5 Hillsborough Steering Group (Cont'd)

Representatives from different interest groups had been nominated at a public meeting to make up the membership of the group. The areas of the community represented included residents, churches, local community groups and businesses. The Group included those community representatives along with a representative from Historic Royal Palaces and Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council.

A copy of the Winter Edition of the Hillsborough Steering Group Newsletter with a series of updates had been circulated to the Committee.

The Chairman, Alderman A G Ewart, encouraged as many Members as possible to attend the public consultation events that had been arranged in the coming weeks.

At the conclusion of the presentation the Chief Executive, Directors and the Head of Economic Development responded to questions from the Committee in relation to a number of issues, including:

- projected visitor numbers to Hillsborough Castle
- the on-going negotiations between the Council and Forest Service in relation to the above-mentioned liability issue
- car park access from the Dark Walk
- proposals for the social enterprise café project
- cycling as a tourism attraction which would complement a social enterprise café on site
- a motorhome and caravan park as a tourism attraction
- car parking spaces at the new car park at Hillsborough Castle and in Hillsborough Village
- quality of the lake water in Hillsborough Forest

Councillor C Quinn left the meeting at 7.55 pm.

3.5 Decisions

It was proposed by Councillor A Grehan, seconded by Councillor A Givan, and agreed to recommend that:

- a) the Director's update report on the Community Plan for the Hillsborough Project be noted (item 3.1)
- b) the Director's update report on the Local Development Plan for the Hillsborough Project be noted (item 3.2)
- c) the Hillsborough Tourism Master Plan emerging strategy, in the context of the wider tourism strategy, be considered further when brought forward to the Development Committee in due course (item 3.3)

- d) the Director's update report on Hillsborough Forest be noted (item 3.4), including the potential path necessary to determine the most appropriate operating models and that Officers proceed to develop a draft plan in this regard (item 3.4.1 A)
- e) an expression of interest for a digital sculpture trail within Hillsborough Forest as part of the rural tourism scheme (DAERA) be submitted (item 3.4.1.B)
- f) the update report on the social enterprise café project be noted (item 3.4.1.C)
- g) the update report on Hillsborough Public Realm be noted (item 3.4.2)
- h) the Director's report on the interdependencies and the effort of the detailed planning invested in the proposals be noted (item 3.4.3)
- i) the update report on HRP be noted and that Officers explore the possibility of additional tourist brown signs to promote Hillsborough Village (item 3.4.4)
- j) the report on the Hillsborough Steering Group be noted, including the Public Consultation events on the proposals for the Hillsborough Public Realm scheme (item 3.4.5)

4. Confidential Business

The Chairman advised that the item contained within the Confidential Report of the Director of Service Transformation was confidential for reason of:

- a) information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings), and
- b) information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular organisation (including the Council holding that information)

It was proposed by Alderman S Martin, seconded by Councillor J Baird, and agreed that the Confidential Report be considered "in Committee", in the absence of members of the press and public being present.

The following Director and Officers left the meeting (8.00 pm):

Director of Leisure and Community Wellbeing
Head of Service (Parks & Amenities)
Tourism Development Manager
Community Planning Manager
Assistant IT Manager

4.1 Lisburn Square Market Fees - Update Report

Further to the request of the Committee at its meeting on 10 January 2018 an update report by the Director of Service Transformation on the Lisburn Square Market fees issue had been circulated to Members.

Alderman J Tinsley and Councillor N Anderson left the meeting at 8.01 pm.

At the outset the Director reported that the ongoing review of the City Centre Masterplan would consider the future of the market in terms of location, scope and scale, and that future reports would be provided to the Committee in this regard with a view to making future recommendations thereon.

The Director and the Head of Economic Development provided clarification and responded to a number of questions from the Committee in respect of the Lisburn Square Market fees issue.

It was proposed by Councillor J Baird, seconded by Councillor A P Ewing, and agreed to recommend that the update report by the Director of Service Transformation in relation to Lisburn Square Market fees be noted and that the recommendations as outlined in the Director's report be agreed.

It was proposed by Councillor A P Ewing, seconded by Councillor A Givan, and agreed to come out of Committee and normal business was resumed.

Resumption of Normal Business

There being no further business, the Special Meeting concluded at 8.35 pm.

Chairman