

MINUTES OF GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

MEETING DATE **Wednesday, 30 August 2017**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillor Gordon France (Chair), Councillors
Aaron Beaver, Eric Bell, Charlie Bromilow,
Jean Cronshaw, Alan Cullens, John Dalton,
Margaret France, Tom Gray, Marion Lowe,
Matthew Lynch, Alistair Morwood and Ralph Snape

OFFICERS: Chris Sinnott (Director of Policy and Governance),
Chris Moister (Head of Legal, Democratic & HR Services)
and Carol Russell (Democratic Services Manager).

APOLOGIES: Councillor Anthony Gee, Paul Leadbetter,
June Molyneaux and Greg Morgan

OTHER MEMBERS: Councillor Joyce Snape

16.GP.14 Minutes of meeting Thursday, 15 June 2017 of General Purposes Committee

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the last meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on 15 June 2017, be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chair.

16.GP.15 Declarations of Any Interests

There were no declarations of interest received.

16.GP.16 Exclusion of the Public and Press

RESOLVED – that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the disclosure of exempt information as defined by Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act.

16.GP.17 Urgent Commissioning Works: Market Walk

Members considered a report of the Director of Business, Development and Growth seeking authority to urgent commissioning works for the Market Walk site in order to meet the programme for the delivery of the scheme and handover to prospective tenants.

The report was presented by Chris Moister, Head of Legal, Democratic and HR Services who outlined the decisions made at Council in July to go ahead with the

Market Walk extension and progress towards achieving final agreement with the key retailer in the development.

In order to meet their contractual requirements for completion of the scheme, there was a need to commission urgent works to service the site with new water and gas supplies; to order the materials for site hoardings; and associated consultancy fees. Whilst the cost of these at a total of £100,000 had been included in the overall development scheme, they were outside the Pre Contract Services Agreement. The work needed to be brought forward before final agreements were in place with tenants and Members were therefore being advised of the risks involved, as these costs would be incurred, even if the development didn't go ahead. There was an added value to the site being serviced, but not necessarily an increase in the monetary value of the site.

In debating the report, Members raised questions around the timescales in signing up key tenants, interest from other retailers, the wish to avoid more discount retailers in the town and whether this would lead to more vacant shops. However the town was keen to attract the right retail offer; there had been a long term wish to attract this particular retailer and a recent meeting of the Town Centre team had heard that the town was bucking national trends. There was a great deal of confidence in the future of the town and its growing population. The Council should therefore demonstrate its commitment to the scheme and progress with the development.

RESOLVED - that the Council authorises the immediate commissioning of the provision of new water and gas supplies to the development site; and to the ordering of site hoardings, on the basis set out in the report.

Chair

Date