

Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Special)

Minutes

23 January 2024

Present:

Chair: Councillor Amir Moshenson

Councillors: June Baxter
Philip Benjamin
Govind Bharadia
Graham Henson
Maxine Henson
Jerry Miles
Samir Sumaria

Apologies received: Councillor Dan Anderson
Councillor Eden Kulig
Councillor Vipin Mithani

70. Attendance by Reserve Members

RESOLVED: To note the attendance at this meeting of the following duly appointed Reserve Members:-

Ordinary Member

Councillor Vipin Mithani
Councillor Dan Anderson

Reserve Member

Councillor Philip Benjamin
Councillor Jerry Miles

71. Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED: To note that the following interests were declared:

- Councillor Philip Benjamin declared a non-pecuniary interest in that he is the Portfolio Holder Assistant for Planning and Regeneration,

however, that has had no involvement in this business plan. He remained in the room whilst the item was considered.

- Councillor Graham Henson declared a non-pecuniary interest in that as the former leader of the Council, had been heavily involved with the previous Harrow Strategic Development Partnership. He remained in the room whilst the item was considered.

Resolved Items

72. Harrow Strategic Development Partnership (HSDP) Report - Business Plans

The Chair welcomed the Leader of the Council Councillor Paul Osborn and the Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration Councillor Marilyn Ashton.

The Chair invited Councillor Osborn to present the item. He confirmed that he was pleased with the initial proposals which had been submitted on the HSDP.

The Corporate Director of Place highlighted that in July 2021 the Council entered into a Joint Venture agreement in partnership with Wates Residential as the development partner following an extensive procurement process. As part of the Harrow Strategic Development Partnership, it was planned to deliver over 1000 new homes across three Council sites: Poets Corner, Byron Quarter (ph1) and Peel Road. It was confirmed that Peel Road development had been paused partly due to costs and viability of the site.

The planning submission for Byron Quarter PBP (Ph1) was expected to be May 2024, which aimed to Deliver 30% affordable (approx. 44 new homes). It was also noted that Poets Corner PBP (Ph1) was expected to deliver 15% affordable (approx. 159 new homes), with 6% in first phase (approx. 30 new homes).

It was reported that due to the new safety regulations and viability of the scheme, it was decided to lower the storey of the buildings in order to avoid the two-staircase regulation, ultimately improving the viability of the scheme. Poets Corner was currently planned for a build to rent scheme and would be 'forward funded'. It had been planned to build a Primary school as part of the site. However, in March 2022, the decision had been taken that the school was no longer needed.

Milton Road was also a 100% affordable scheme, and was redesigned to reduce from seven stories to six stories. This was already under construction and due to complete later this year.

It is anticipated that the planning permission for Byron Quarter would be submitted by Summer 2024 and for Poets Corner in late Autumn 2024. Members raised questions on the quality of the new accommodation. It was confirmed that once approved Business Plans were in place, work could begin to develop more detailed proposals and designs, including responses to any

new standards. Parking for residents was discussed and it was noted that there would be parking available, however, the area was well connected and in accordance with the London Plan residents would be encouraged to make use of public transport, particularly at Poets Corner.

Concerns were raised over the costing elements and the unpredictable interest rates, however, members were assured that independent financial advice has been sought to reduce financial risk and safe assumptions had been made. The Leader and Deputy Leader pointed out that risks had been properly assessed and mitigated against as much as possible to reduce the level of risk to the Council. It was also pointed out that as Poets Corner would be forward funded, this would mitigate some of that risk exposure to the Council. It was estimated that if the sites progressed well, the first properties could be completed in 2028 based on the current programme.

It was reported that the scheme was sustainable as reductions have been made to the height and the entity of the development making the plan viable, achievable, sustainable and affordable.

Questions were raised regarding the number and sizes of flats, energy costs, the rent structure. It was confirmed that such factors would be discussed in greater detail in the next detailed phase of work on detailed plans for the development where further engagement would be made with planning, the market and various other bodies such as the Greater London Authority.

It was agreed that Cabinet be requested to include the voluntary sector in the list of consultees as part of the development and that officers review project milestones and the milestones to be proposed before the HSDP and present to Scrutiny Leads or the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee. The Committee also requested further information from officers on financial information in relation to the development.

RESOLVED: That the comments of the Committee be referred to Cabinet for consideration.

73. Exclusion of the Press Public

RESOLVED: That in accordance with Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) for the reasons set out below:

<u>Item</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Reason</u>
5.	Harrow Strategic Development Partnership - Business Plans	Information under paragraph 3 (contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)).

Information under paragraph 1
(contains information relating to
any individual).

Information under paragraph 5
(contains information relating in
respect of which acclim to legal
professional privilege could be
maintained in legal proceedings).

74. Harrow Strategic Development Partnership - Business Plans

Members received confidential appendices to the report.

RESOLVED: That the confidential appendices be noted.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 6.30 pm, closed at 8.26 pm).

(Signed) Councillor Amir Moshenson
Chair