

CABINET

7 NOVEMBER 2016

55 HOYLAKE GOLF RESORT



Councillor Phil Davies, Leader of the Council - Strategic Economic Development, Finance and Devolution, said:

'Hoylake Golf Resort promises to be an iconic international project bringing new jobs, prosperity and tourists to Wirral, boosting our economy and visitor numbers. Tourism is an important part of our growth plan, and supports our pledges around a vibrant economy and jobs.'

'This report will take our plans nearer reality by consulting a range of commercial, technical and legal experts who can help us draw up a blueprint and a process for moving forward.'

'I would like to reassure residents and all other interested parties that we will be continuing to consult and talk to people who live in Wirral, to make sure that we are all move forward as partners in delivering these plans.'

Councillor George Davies introduced a report, in Councillor Phil Davies' absence that informed that following the selection of the Nicklaus Joint Venture Group (NJVG) as the Council's Preferred Development Partner, detailed discussions had taken place to conclude a Development Agreement to take the Hoylake Golf Resort project forward to the Funding and Viability stage.

The report provided an update for Members on progress, outlined an indicative timetable for moving forward and sought approval to sign the Framework Development Agreement and formally close the Competitive Dialogue Procurement process. It also requested approval of an additional fee and works budget of £595,969 to allow essential expertise to be retained to advise the Council on a range of commercial, technical and legal aspects of the proposed development. The previous fee budget of £237,000 had been expended. Members noted that it was also necessary to undertake geotechnical investigations of the Council's owned former landfill site at Greenbank Road to ensure that it could be safely used as a golf course. The total cost of these investigations, including specialist supervision and the ground work itself, was £252,469 and was included in the total reported above (£565,969). Members were asked to endorse the Council entering into the Framework Development Agreement (FDA). The signing of the Agreement would allow the NJVG to work up a comprehensive Funding Strategy for future Council approval that it was envisaged would trigger the preparation of a full planning application.

The Hoylake Golf Resort project supported the business category of the 2020 pledges and, in particular, the priority to create a vibrant tourism economy. It also linked to the Council's priorities to increase inward investment and create greater job opportunities in Wirral. The report was of greatest relevance to the Hoylake and Meols Ward but it was noted that the wider economic impacts would have implications for all wards.

Further detail of the Framework Development Agreement provisions was appended to the report together with an assessment of the implications of signing the FDA and the protection measures in place to protect the Council. This appendix was exempt from publication under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 due to the commercial sensitivities of that information. (Minute No. 61 refers.)

Councillor Ann McLachlan informed that the Cabinet was under no illusions about the financial situation the Council was in. This money was being spent as a long term future investment and it was in accordance with the Council's pledges around homes, jobs and health and wellbeing. Wirral would be the only Council in the Country to have a Nicklaus Golf Course. The scheme had been well thought out and costed and the NJVG would have to show significant cost commitment. This was a most appropriate and right way forward with the scheme and it was an ambitious approach for the site.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the signing of the Framework Development Agreement under the terms reported and the formal closing of the Competitive Dialogue procurement process be authorised;**
- (2) the decision on the appropriation of the land required for the purposes of the golf resort for planning purposes under Section 237 Town and Country Planning Act 1990 be deferred to a future meeting;**
- (3) a new fee and site investigation works budget of £595,969 to take the project forward as set out in the report be agreed;**
- (4) a geo-technical Site Investigation of the former landfill site as Greenbank Road owned by the Council be undertaken as well as the necessary works required to ensure that the land is suitable for use as a golf resort; and**
- (5) once the Funding Strategy has been submitted by the NJVG and assessed by the Council, a further report be presented to the Cabinet for consideration.**

61 HOYLAKE GOLF RESORT - EXEMPT APPENDICES

RESOLVED:

That the content of the exempt appendices (reference report Agenda Item No. 4 – Hoylake Golf Resort - Minute No. 55) be noted.