

ECONOMY REGENERATION & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 9 March 2022

Present:

Councillor T Jones (Chair)

Councillors	P Martin	A Hodson
	T Smith	C Povall
	G Wood	D Mitchell
	D Burgess-Joyce	E Gleaves
	A Gardner	KJ Williams

78 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

The Chair opened the meeting and reminded everyone that the meeting was being webcast and a copy was retained on the Council's website for two years.

The Chair led attendees in a minute silence to reflect on the events occurring in Ukraine.

79 APOLOGIES

It was noted that Councillor Karl Greaney had been replaced on the Committee by Councillor Jerry Williams.

80 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests and any other relevant interest and to state the nature of the interest. There were no declarations of interests.

81 MINUTES

**Resolved (by assent) –
That the minutes of the meeting of Economy, Regeneration and Development Committee held on 26 January 2022 be approved and adopted as a correct record.**

82 PUBLIC AND MEMBER QUESTIONS

No questions, statements or petitions from the public or Councillors had been received.

83 **DRAFT BIRKENHEAD 2040 REGENERATION FRAMEWORK**

The Head of Regeneration Strategy introduced the report of the Director of Regeneration and Place and an accompanying video. The report sought approval for the endorsement of the Draft Birkenhead 2040 Framework as the interim regeneration strategy for Birkenhead and those parts of the Claughton, Bidston and St James, Seacombe and Liscard Wards which lay within its boundary.

Members were supportive of the Framework and in response to their questions were informed that:

- there had been around 250 responses to the consultation with around another 40 responses on the Planning Portal;
- around £144 million of external funding had been secured for the development schemes, most of which required spending within four years;
- other areas of Wirral had developments schemes, including New Brighton and New Ferry, and more should benefit from increased transport connectivity; and
- the proposals for infrastructure development would make more land viable for housebuilding.

Resolved:

That the Draft Birkenhead 2040 Regeneration Framework be endorsed as the Council's Interim Regeneration Strategy for Birkenhead and those parts of Seacombe and Liscard that are within its scope.

84 **DOMINICK HOUSE, LISCARD**

The Chair advised that following consultation with the Committee Spokespersons and with the consent of the meeting, which was duly given, the report was withdrawn. He clarified that a workshop was to be arranged for Members to see the process for the valuation of Council assets. A further report in relation to this property was to be brought to a future meeting of this Committee.

85 **QUARTER 3 MONITOR REPORT**

The Senior Finance Business Partner presented the report of the Director of Regeneration and Place which provided a summary of the projected year-end revenue and capital position for Economy, Regeneration & Development Committee as at the end of Quarter 3 (December 2021) of the 2021/22 financial year. The report provided Members with an overview of budget performance.

Resolved: That:

- (1) the projected year-end revenue forecast variance of £0.058m adverse position as reported at quarter 3 (Oct – Dec) of 2021-22 be noted;**
- (2) progress on the achievement of approved savings and the projected year-end forecast position at quarter 3 (Oct – Dec) of 2021-22 be noted;**
- (3) the reserves allocated to the Committee for future one-off commitments be noted;**
- (4) the projected year-end capital forecast expenditure position of £18.487m as reported at quarter 3 (Oct – Dec) of 2021-22 be noted.**

86 **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee considered the work programme for the municipal year.

The Director of Regeneration and Place provided the Committee with a verbal update on the work achieved already and planned for the following year.

Highlights included:

- £144 million in grants received for projects;
- the start of work on the Wirral Waters development in March 2021 with the diversion of a culvert, with 500 housing units to follow, delivering on part of the Birkenhead 2040 Framework;
- the Hythe office development was due to open shortly, funders included the Merseyside Pension Fund;
- the Urban Splash development with new modular homes on site
- the Birkenhead Town Centre re-development was underway with 150,000 sq ft of office development which was award winning in respect of digital connectivity and supported local contractors in the supply chain;
- Eureka Mersey was to open in the summer of 2022,
- Freeport designation for the City Region including the Wirral Waters area;
- the appointment of a preferred developer for New Ferry Regeneration;
- the development of the Birkenhead 2040 Public Realm and Property Design Guide;
- the draft site development plan for Pasture Road Moreton was pending approval;
- there was on going investment in employment and skills especially in the maritime sector.

The Chair, in addition to seeking endorsement of the work programme, proposed an amendment to the working group arrangements approved at the

last meeting, following advice from officers. He indicated that his intention was to make the proposed working group more effective and efficient in respect of Scrutiny of the wider regeneration programme and with a view to maintaining constructive relationships with the Council's development partners. The meetings would allow for feedback to be provided in relation to progress and for any concerns to be raised. The amendment was seconded by Councillor Andrew Hodson.

Resolved: That:

- (1) the content of the Economy, Regeneration and Development Committee work programme proposed in the report for the remainder of the 2021/22 municipal year be agreed;**
- (2) a Working Group be established to look at the performance of the Regeneration Programme. Along with the Chief Executive, Director of Regeneration and key officers, members from Economy, Regeneration and Development Committee will meet with the Council's development and funding partners regularly to discuss the performance of the regeneration programme for the Borough. This group will look at the performance of specific projects or schemes within that programme that have been reported by exception as experiencing delays or issues against the expected timeframes.**
- (3) the second part to the Working Group will be to meet with lead Officers from the key service areas (i.e. the Regeneration Project Manager or lead officers from finance, legal, procurement to consider any matters raised by the Council's Development or Funding Partners). This will provide the opportunity for Members to hear from Officers (and any external support that may be procured) to support the reasons for project being reported by exception and the mitigating actions being implemented. Issues raised by Development and Funding Partners can also be raised and explored;**
- (4) the Working Group will report their findings and any recommendations to the Economy, Regeneration and Development Committee. Additionally, any significant financial risks will be referred to Audit and Risk Management Committee for its consideration and action.**