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ECONOMY REGENERATION & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Monday, 26 July 2021

Present: Councillor T Jones (Chair)

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

12 **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION**

The Chair welcomed attendees and viewers to the meeting and reminded everyone that the meeting was webcast and retained on the Council's website.

13 **APOLOGIES**

There were no apologies for absence.

14 **MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Tony Jones declared a prejudicial interest in items 6,7 and 10 (items connected with Wirral Growth Company) as a board member of the Wirral Growth Company and would leave the meeting for those items.

15 **MINUTES**

Resolved –
That the minutes of the meeting of the Economic, Regeneration and Development Committee held on 8 June 2021 be agreed as a true record.

16 **PUBLIC AND MEMBER QUESTIONS**

There were no questions, statements or petitions from the public or Members.

17 **WIRRAL GROWTH COMPANY: BIRKENHEAD PHASE 1 FINAL SITE DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

Councillor Tony Jones, having declared a pecuniary interest in this item, left the meeting.

Councillor Andrew Hodson, as Vice-Chair, took the position of Chair.

Chief Regeneration Officer Sally Shah introduced this item which sought Member endorsement to the formal Site Development Plan (SDP) for Phase 1 of Birkenhead Town Centre. The plan had been developed by the Wirral Growth Company (WGC) as part of the Partnership Agreement that the Council and MUSE Developments entered into on 19th March 2019. The draft indicative SDP was contained in the Partnership Business Plan and approved by Cabinet on 24th February 2020. WGC obtained planning permission for Phase 1 of the scheme, a funder had been identified and the proposed SDP was approved by the Wirral Growth Company Board at its meeting on 1st July 2021.

The Phase 1 development consisted of two office buildings in Birkenhead and an associated electricity substation. The larger building would be occupied by Wirral Council and the second would be let on the open market. Both buildings would be built to high environmental standards.

Members discussed the risks, including whether there was demand for lettings, and were reassured that the lettings market was monitored regularly and there was a strong likelihood of pre-lets for the second building. The lack of existing transport infrastructure was also questioned, but it was explained that this development would kick start investment in other projects including infrastructure in the phased development and that funding had been secured through Future High Streets Fund for transport improvements.

Resolved – that Policy and Resources Committee approves the Formal Site Development Plan for Birkenhead Commercial District Phase 1.

18 **WIRRAL GROWTH COMPANY - GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS**

Councillor Tony Jones, having declared a pecuniary interest in this item, remained outside of the meeting.

Councillor Andrew Hodson, as Vice-Chair, took the position of Chair.

Phil McCourt, the Director of Law and Governance, introduced this report which recommended the arrangements by which the Council was represented on the Policy Board of the Wirral Growth Company Limited Liability Partnership. There were four appointments to be made to the Policy Board, two of which had been occupied by officers, those being the Director of Children's Services and the Director of Resources.

Member debated the implications of having four officer appointments so that all Members could be involved in discussion rather than having to declare an interest and leaving a meeting during any such discussion. This would allow Members to fully scrutinise decisions made. Members felt that it was a

decision which should be passed to the Policy and Resources Committee to make whilst discussions took place within groups and with Political Group Leaders.

Resolved –

That Policy and Resources Committee are requested to:

- (1) approve that the officers holding the post for the time being of Assistant Director Finance and Investment and the Director of Children Families and Education continue to be the Council's officer appointments to the Board of the Wirral Growth Company Limited Liability Partnership and that those persons (and their successors) remain so appointed until they resign, are removed by subsequent decision or until they cease to hold such post as officer of the Council; and**
- (2) consider whether Members should be appointed to the Board and discussions take place in the meantime within the political groups and with group leaders.**

19 WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

Councillor Tony Jones returned to the position of Chair.

The Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee was responsible for proposing and delivering an annual committee work programme. This work programme was to align with the corporate priorities of the Council, in particular the delivery of the key decisions which are within the remit of the Committee.

Resolved –

That the content of the Economy, Regeneration and Development Committee work programme which is proposed in this report for the remainder of the 2021/22 municipal year be approved.

20 EXEMPT INFORMATION - EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

That, under section 100 (A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by paragraphs 3 and 5 of Part I of Schedule 12A (as amended) to that Act. The Public Interest test has been applied and favours exclusion.

21 **WIRRAL GROWTH COMPANY: BIRKENHEAD PHASE 1 FINAL SITE DEVELOPMENT PLAN EXEMPT APPENDICES**

Councillor Tony Jones, having declared a pecuniary interest in this item, left the meeting.

Councillor Andrew Hodson, as Vice-Chair, took the position of Chair.

The Appendices to this report contained exempt information as defined in Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. It was in the public interest to exclude the press and public during consideration of these items under Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as they contained commercially sensitive information.

Resolved –

That the exempt appendices, to the Wirral Growth Company: Birkenhead Phase 1 Site Development Plan, be noted.

22 **HOYLAKE GOLF RESORT, DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT**

Councillor Tony Jones returned to the position of Chair.

This report contains exempt information as defined in Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. It was in the public interest to exclude the press and public under:

Paragraph 1 'Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding the information); and

Paragraph 5 'Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.'

Members were given details regarding a legal issue and a potential solution. Members asked questions regarding the position, the background issues for the issues involved and the possibilities for resolution.

Resolved –

That the Hoylake Golf Resort Development Agreement item be referred as urgent business to Policy and Resources Committee meeting on Wednesday 28 July for consideration.