

## SOUTHWOLD TOWN COUNCIL

### **Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council of Southwold, held via Zoom at 6.30pm on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> April 2021.**

PRESENT:	Councillor	I Bradbury – Town Mayor
	“	D Beavan
	“	A Betts
	“	S Flunder
	“	Mrs P Goldsmith
	“	Mrs J Jeans
	“	M Ladd
	“	M Rowan-Robinson
	“	J A Windell

Also present; 11 members of the public, the Town Clerk.

1. **Apologies:** *To receive apologies for absence.*  
Apologies were received from Cllr Jordan.
2. **Declarations of interest:**
  - a) *To receive any declarations of Personal Interest regarding the agenda.*  
Nil.
  - b) *To receive any declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests regarding the agenda.*  
Nil.
  - c) *To note the decision of the Town Clerk regarding requests for dispensations relating to this agenda.*  
Nil.
  - d) *Councillors to be reminded of the requirement for them to individually update their Register of Interests as appropriate.*  
Noted.
3. **Public Participation**

To receive comments from Southwold electors on matters on the agenda (*each elector will be allowed a maximum of 3 minutes*).

(*10 minutes will be allocated overall for this section- subject to Town Mayor discretion*).

A resident suggested that there appears to be concerns financially as to whether the Plan is viable and that the demolition should be put on hold. The resident asked how the planning application had been amended and why the project should progress when it is against the wishes of electorate. Resident advised that they would put their queries in writing. A response will then be sent.

A resident asked about the evidence within the DLA plan to show that there could be office uptake at 85% as a major office on Westgate is now going as residential. Some offices are not let.

The Town Mayor advised that the employment hub would build up to 85% capacity. The DLA Business Plan is not necessarily going to be the actual way forward – the Resolution was to create an Enterprise Hub.

A resident suggested that the grant was based on the DLA report. The Town Mayor advised that the provision of the grant was based on the MossKing business case. The Hub will not necessarily be run direct by STC.

4. **Station Yard Regeneration Project** - Update from Project Board meeting.

Cllr Bradbury update from Project Board meeting and meetings with potential operators.

Cllr Flunder advised that there had been 2 good meetings with operators to start an exchange of views. The 2 operators would be prepared to join a panel to review design and to establish the parameters of the design. A 3<sup>rd</sup> operator will also be asked to help with the design review.

Cllr Jeans advised that Southgen are having enquiries about office spaces which Southgen cannot satisfy as people want their own offices. There is no office space available in town. The Hub should be referred to as providing “Employment space”.

Cllr Beavan asked whether any operator be interested in operating the hub - as Council will need one. Cllr Bradbury advised that it was acknowledged that an operator is a must.

Cllr Rowan-Robinson asked whether, in discussions with operators, were any views expressed about how the management methods/models as both contract and lease had been mentioned in the DLA report. Cllr Flunder advised that the operators have been asked to assist in the design process and that the Project Board will be putting scope/specification together to put out to procurement for this. It was suggested that whatever management method is chosen the preferred route would need to be to minimise risk to STC – the financial returns are low, but Council should ensure it is not exposed to losses.

Cllr Ladd advised that both providers have worked for ESC in the past and that it is therefore good that ESC are involved. Cllr Flunder suggested that as both operators were used by DLA it would be important to ask a 3<sup>rd</sup> operator too – as per the project board intention.

It was noted that it is interesting that Southgen is seeing demand. The Town will have 30 employment spaces at Southgen and 70 at Station Rd

Cllr Jeans advised that Southgen has very small co-worker space and cannot supply an office or studio or small room. People are looking for employment space as per Station Yard accommodation not Southgen accommodation.

Cllr Flunder advised that that is why a panel has been set up by Project Board to consider the design required and that there have been invitations to quote for this work. The Town Clerk explained the number of interested bodies who have responded and that these will be looked at as per the delegated powers. The Project Manager had confirmed that these are all coming within budget as per cost plans. Project Managers are aware that total sum cannot be extended from £2.63m.

Cllr Jeans requested to be involved in consideration of tenders for architect/planning.

Cllr Rowan-Robinson advised that it was good to hear that the design was being modified but will new plans be required? The meeting was advised that at this stage the Project Mangers/Board/STC do not know what the advice of operators might be.

Would need to be amendments usually.

Cllr Windell advised that the Project Managers have also set out the procurement to tender for the demolition works and that some companies have already expressed an interest. STC needs to sort the contamination at the site which will need a full survey to see what the contamination is as would not want to leave contamination there. The demolition, and decontamination remediation will therefore be going ahead.

Discussion took place about the contamination and demolition.

Cllr Beavan advised that the only company who advise that there is no way to investigate contamination without demolishing is Chicks.

The Town Mayor reaffirmed that the alternative proposal was considered at length and turned down and hence no alternative scheme was given to Project Board to take forward. The Project Board is in place to take the agreed project forward. Cllr Ladd advised that costs for the demolition are awaited.

*Cllr Beavan left the meeting at 18.39.*

The Town Mayor advised that UXO/party wall surveyor are instructed.

The Town Mayor advised that 3 proposals have been received for media/PR/marketing and the Comms Group will take the lead on this.

Cllr Ladd advised that he has had a couple of businesses interested in space within the project. The meeting was advised that Expressions of Interest should go to Town Clerk or the Project Manager from anyone who would like space or to be an anchor tenant.

The Town Mayor invited the public to have any further questions.

A member of the public advised that regular Comms are vital for the project, and that Nextdoor is having much debate, and views on there are hostile. Need to reach out to all to explain the situation as there is high emotion on this.

A member of the public advised that people are asking about garage/cycle shop. New bike shop would be liked. Offices are not wanted.

The Town Mayor advised that Council has listened to views and would not be this far out of the original project timeline if had not been listening. Environment that was the garage was not fit for human occupation and the bike shop proprietor had left.

Garage proprietor was never going to be provided with another lease of the existing premises due to the state of the property.

Cllr Ladd advised that regarding a bike shop – Millennium Trustees have been approached to have a cycle shop/facility on the Millennium car park.

Next meeting 25<sup>th</sup> May 2021.