

Cabinet
Wednesday 29 November 2017

Comments from the Overview and Scrutiny Commission
at its meeting on Monday 27 November 2017
OSC/263

1. Cabinet Agenda Item 7 – Treasury Management Mid-Year Review 2017-2018

Comments and Recommendations

The Commission considered report FIN/426 of the Head of Finance, Revenues and Benefits.

During the discussion, the following points were expressed:

- The 0.25% rise in Bank of England base rate to 0.5% may be small, but it marked the first rise in borrowing costs for a decade.
- Clarification sought and obtained as to whether the investment acquisition reserve could be used to benefit other areas within the town centre.
- Acknowledgement that project work with surrounding authorities was being investigated with regards to temporary housing however this needed to be viable.
- Confirmation was provided on the investment portfolio and indicators contained within the report.
- Members took the opportunity to pass on their continued thanks to the Chief Accountant.

Recommendations:

That the report and recommendations to the Cabinet be noted.

2. Cabinet Agenda Item 8 – Town Centre Signage & Wayfinding

Comments and Recommendations

The Commission considered report PES/252 of the Head of Economic and Environmental Services.

Members made the following comments:

- Support for digital signage within Queens Square, which would assist with wayfinding, advertising and events.
- Acknowledgement that the replacement of the vinyls would be uncomplicated to update.
- Concern was raised over highlighting specific stores and the possibility of exploring funding opportunities. However alternative views were expressed that these stores facilitated wayfinding by their necessary location.
- Upon considering the signage designs, Members felt that public consultation should take place to ensure consistency with the recognition and interpretation of the symbols.
- It was felt that it would be beneficial to include a 'meeting point' position within the proposed signage at a prominent location.
- Following a detailed discussion Members welcomed the proposals for the Town Centre and looked forward to the project progressing in the future.
- Whilst supportive of the report and as a result on the comprehensive discussion, the Commission felt that the following two recommendations were appropriate to refer to Cabinet:

1. That there should be public consultation on the signage designs, particularly the symbols to ensure consistency with recognition and interpretation.
2. That a 'meeting point' position should be included in the proposed signage at a prominent location.

Recommendations:

That the Commission supported the recommendations to the Cabinet with the proposals identified above.

3. Cabinet Agenda Item 9 – Town Centre Regeneration Programme

Comments and Recommendations

The Commission considered report PES/261 of the Head of Economic and Environmental Services.

During the discussion, the following points were expressed:

- Recognition that the Professional Services Business Forum and the Historic High Street Forum were newly established, assisting to improve the town centre's economy and footfall.
- Confirmation was provided regarding the consultation process and those stakeholders involved. Although it was noted that the consultation would take place over the Christmas period and it was queried whether this could be extended.
- Concern was expressed regarding a lack of recognition and interpretation over the symbols contained within the Town Centre Regeneration Programme, together with a need to improve some of the readability of the printed material.
- Acknowledgement that it was important to enhance the night time economy with a recognition that the current Local Plan protects the retail core.
- Having considered the matter in detail, the Commission welcomed the proposals for the regeneration to the Town Centre and looked forward to the programme progressing in the future.

Recommendations:

That the Commission supported the recommendations to the Cabinet.

4. Cabinet Agenda Item 17 – Acquisition of College Car Park Scheme - An Affordable Housing Opportunity

Exempt Paragraph 3

Information relating to financial and business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information)

Comments and Recommendations

The Commission considered reports CH/178 of the Head of Crawley Homes.

During the discussion, the following points were expressed:

- Clarity sought and obtained over the viability and costings of the proposal.
- Recognition that there was increasing pressure to commit Right-to-Buy funds within the anticipated timescales.
- Overall support for the scheme and the opportunity to explore future tenure opportunities, whilst maximising affordable housing development.

Recommendations:

That the Commission agreed to support the report to the Cabinet.

Councillor Brenda Smith
Chair, Overview and Scrutiny Commission
27 November 2017