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**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE SCRUTINY PANEL**

A meeting of the Economic Development, Environment and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel was held on 4 March 2020.

**PRESENT:** Councillors Saunders, (Chair), Arundale, Branson, Coupe, Furness, Hubbard, M Storey and S Walker

**PRESENT AS OBSERVERS:** A Metcalfe, BBC Local Democracy Reporter

**PRESENT BY INVITATION:** Councillor Thompson, Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Board

**OFFICERS:** M Canavan, P Clarke, R Horniman, S Gilmore, H Nelson, S Lightwing

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** were submitted on behalf of Councillor Garvey.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

There were no Declarations of Interest at this point in the meeting.

19/39 **WELCOME AND EVACUATION PROCEDURE**

The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting and read out the Fire Evacuation Procedure.

**NOTED**

19/40 **MINUTES - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE SCRUTINY PANEL - 5 FEBRUARY 2020**

The minutes of the meeting of the Economic Development, Environment and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel held on 5 February 2020 were taken as read and approved as a correct record.

19/41 **BOHO DIGITAL EXPANSION SITE - UPDATE**

The Head of Economic Growth and the Project Manager provided a brief overview of developments at the Boho Digital Expansion Site. The Boho One building was now ten years old and Boho Five was four years old. The Boho buildings were built to incubate new digital businesses in a supported environment, clustered together to share new projects and innovation. Both buildings were now at capacity, and there was a danger that businesses would start to look elsewhere for accommodation. Some digital businesses expanded very quickly and it was essential to have provision in Middlesbrough and the Tees Valley. The Tees Valley Combined Authority's Strategic Economic Plan and the local Industrial Strategy looked at how the digital creative sector could be supported and there was some funding aligned to those strategies. The public sector was better placed than the private sector to offer short-term leases to fledgling businesses, who often had limited credit worthiness.

In the short term, any outward migration of businesses had been stemmed through the use of private property in Albert Road. Even so, Sun Alliance House in Albert Road was now also full to capacity. The Albert Road area was a designated digital and creative Enterprise Zone for new tenants and this was also applicable for Boho 8 until March 2022.

Boho 8, which consisted of small modular units up to 3000 square feet would pick up some of the short term pressures. The build for Boho 8 would commence shortly at the back of Boho 1. Using modular buildings allowed for further expansion since additional units could be placed on top.

Boho X was a longer-term solution which would provide approximately 12,000 square feet of office accommodation. The planned date for completion of Boho X was the end of 2022. A planning application was submitted on 24 February 2020 and a 13 week consultation process

had commenced. It was anticipated that the application would be considered by the Planning Committee by June 2020 at the latest. There was a twin-track procurement process for Contractors, which whilst it did not commit the Council to any Contractor, would help the Council to meet project deadlines.

The outline planning application for the two residential blocks to accompany the tower would be coming forward within the next few weeks. Boho X would be located behind the Boho 1 car park on Gosford Street with the residential blocks opposite Lower Gosford Street at the back of the Police Station car park. Members were shown a plan detailing the locations.

It was confirmed that planning applications had to consider the heritage setting within the area and therefore the impact on the old Town Hall, Transporter Bridge and Gibson House (Grade II listed) had all been included. It was considered that there would be no major detrimental impact on any of those buildings. In fact, through the development of Boho X there was potential for the old Town Hall to be brought back into use. In addition, the area next to the consecrated ground to the north east of the St Hilda's site near the old Captain Cook public house, was currently identified for low level residential use. Again, new development could potentially provide an opportunity for the public house to be brought back into use if integrated within a campus setting.

Adjacent to Boho X, housing company Thirteen were on site developing 40 apartments, which were envisaged for housing people working within the Boho cluster.

In response to a query regarding the Boho X Tower, it was explained that previous plans for the area were revisited by the Mayor, who wanted to make a gesture to the digital cluster and along with some additional funds from the Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) saw this as an opportunity to make a statement piece. On top of the £20 million that the project was based on, £6.2 million would be coming from the Indigenous Growth Fund and the Council would contribute £3.8 million. The building was already 10% pre-let in terms of companies paying deposits to rent space as well as expressions of interest. The building was designed to host smaller companies and allow for them to grow either horizontally or vertically within the floor plate of the building. It was clarified that Boho X was not exclusively reserved for digital companies and that other businesses would be considered.

A Transport Assessment had been carried out as part of the development and identified a requirement of 227 spaces for Boho X. Boho 1's car park had been reconfigured to provide additional space and to the rear of that car park there would be a temporary car park and an overspill car park. Cycle spaces were also included. The Assessment was based on current car usage but it was anticipated that upgrades to the Rail Station and the implementation of a bus Superstop adjacent to the site would help reduce people travelling in by car.

Once all the buildings were complete there could be two to three thousand people working on campus. Conversations were ongoing with transport operators and highways officers with the aim of keeping traffic on the outer area of Middlehaven and increasing pedestrian and cycle routes within the area.

It was noted that there was also a proposal for a Helipad on Boho X, and an urban farm in the north west corner of St Hilda's in conjunction with the Camphill Trust.

The procurement process would begin with a Project Initiation Form to give contractors notification that the development was coming. In terms of the environment, the Council would be asking contractors about their plans for a zero carbon site, as well as the use of recyclable material and local suppliers and labour to reduce travel. Modern construction by default had a high level of accreditation for environmental credentials for a building. On a square foot by square foot basis Boho X would be one of the most efficient buildings in the town. A two-year build period was envisaged.

**AGREED** that the information provided was received and noted.

Middlesbrough Council's Local List was produced in April 2011 and 91 buildings and sites were included on it. Any structure with historical importance could be included on the List. The Local List was available on the Council's website. Middlesbrough was a relatively young town in the national context and did not always meet the criteria for listed buildings.

When planning applications were received for development to and around Local List buildings, their local significance was used to guide decision making about the alterations that were permitted. It was important to note that whilst the Local List did not give properties or sites any further protection, it did allow the Council additional influence so that buildings did not disappear overnight. In fact, the Local List came about when the Cleveland Scientific Institute and the Odeon buildings were demolished.

Reference was made to The Crown building which had previously been scheduled for demolition. The Council had issued an emergency Article 4 on the building which prevented Developers from demolishing it without planning permission. The Council was current exploring whether Article 4 could be issued on all properties and sites in the Local List, perhaps not individually but in groups.

An Article 4 Direction could not stop a developer from extending a building within permitted development limits, however it could give the Council some control over design. Buildings often needed alteration to make them more functional. The Council's Conservation Officer stressed the importance of the Council's role in helping owners to use and retain such buildings.

Over the next twelve months the Local List would be reviewed to check whether any additional properties needed adding or any needed taking off the list. There was an established criteria for deciding what would be included. Members were invited to submit any suggestions at any time.

It was also suggested that outside organisations including the Twentieth Century Social, Victorian Society and Historic England could have an input. As time passed, buildings were getting older, and those that were not considered ten years ago might now be worthy of inclusion on the List.

A Panel Member asked whether there were any plans to refurbish the remainder of the Town Hall as the Mayor had previously announced plans to move office staff to another building. If plans were put forward to re-purpose or refurbish the building, the Head of Development confirmed he would be involved from a planning and conservation point of view.

**AGREED** as follows:

1. That the information provided was received and noted.
2. The EDEI Scrutiny Panel would be informed of any plans to re-purpose the Town Hall.

19/43

#### **DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR SHORT TOPIC REVIEW OF TEESSIDE CREMATORIUM**

Draft Terms of Reference for the Panel's Short Topic Review of Teesside Crematorium had been circulated with the Agenda for the Panel's consideration.

Panel Members were informed that a site visit had been arranged to Teesside Crematorium on Tuesday 31 March 2020 at 4.00 pm.

**AGREED** that the following Terms of Reference were approved:

- A) To explore the service offered by Middlesbrough Council and recent improvements at Teesside Crematorium.
- B) To examine the service offered by Stockton Council at Stockton Crematorium.
- C) To investigate the potential financial impact of recently opened Crematoria at Kirkleatham and Stockton on Teesside Crematorium and any mitigation required.

19/44

#### **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD - UPDATE**

A verbal update was provided on the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 13 February 2020.

NOTED

19/45 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING - WEDNESDAY 1 APRIL 2020**

The Chair confirmed that the next meeting of the Economic Development, Environment and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel would be held at 10.30 am on Wednesday 1 April 2020.

NOTED

19/46 **ANY OTHER URGENT ITEMS WHICH IN THE OPINION OF THE CHAIR, MAY BE CONSIDERED**

Transport Times North of England Transport Summit

Councillor Branson gave a short presentation to the Panel on the Transport Times North of England Transport Summit that he attended in Manchester on 12th February 2020. A briefing note had been circulated to the Panel prior the meeting.

The Chair thanked Councillor Branson for the information provided.