

At an Extraordinary meeting of the CABINET held in the CIVIC CENTRE (COMMITTEE ROOM NO. 1) on Thursday 4 December 2014 at 12.30 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor H. Trueman in the Chair

Councillors Gofton, Kelly, Miller, Mordey, P. Smith and Speding

Part I

Receipt of Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillor P. Watson.

A19 Ultra Low Carbon Vehicle Enterprise Zone - Appropriation of land at Hillthorn Farm / Enterprise Zone Site 3 and project update

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) to seek approval to proceed with the necessary actions required to enable the redevelopment, delivery and disposal of the Council-owned key economic development site at Hillthorn Farm as identified edged red on the Plan attached at Appendix C to the report ("the Site") and to appropriate the Site for planning purposes in order to facilitate the redevelopment of the Site.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Speding reminded Cabinet Members that the Council owned land at Hillthorn Farm, Washington that formed part of the A19 Enterprise Zone adjacent to Nissan. He reported that this was a large strategic development site which had been identified as a key site for the further expansion of the low carbon automotive and advanced manufacturing sectors within the City and to meet the clear demand for large economic development sites in the city. He explained that this would also lead to significant job creation and substantial physical and economic development within the city.

Cabinet Members were advised that a significant potential first occupant and investor for the site had already been identified and there was now an urgent requirement to progress the delivery of the site in order to meet the potential occupant's timescales. In order to make the site viable for substantial private sector investment, there was a need for the Council to deliver the initial enabling site infrastructure to facilitate the substantial development of the site.

Councillor Speding outlined that the enabling infrastructure included:

- The construction of an internal spine road in order to open up and service the development plots;
- The diversion of utilities and the provision of new services/supplies to the site;
- The extinguishment of the public footpath that currently ran across the site and the alignment of the proposed new spine road and the development plots.

In order to facilitate the above, Councillor Speding requested that Cabinet:

- Reaffirm its commitment to the procurement and delivery of the requisite enabling infrastructure for the site;
- To agree to appropriate the site for planning purposes in order to facilitate its redevelopment for economic development purposes;
- To authorise the Deputy Chief Executive to dispose of the site in such phases and on such terms as agreed with the Leader and the Cabinet Secretary.

Councillor Speding explained that budget provision existed within the approved capital programme for the necessary site infrastructure works as part of the Enterprise Zone Infrastructure project.

Councillor Speding then drew attention to a funding proposal in the report in respect of the newly created North East Automotive Alliance. He reported that the automotive sector played an important role in the city's economy and the development of this site, and the future plans for the International Advanced Manufacturing Park (IAMP), were vital to the ongoing growth of the automotive sector in the city. He explained that the Alliance would provide the North East with one voice to raise the profile of the industry, to promote lobby, and support its continued growth within the region. He advised that it was proposed that the Council provide a financial contribution of £100,000 in this financial year and a further £100,000 in financial year 2015 / 2016 to support the important work of the Alliance. He also advised that the Council had been invited to be represented on the Board of the Alliance.

Consideration having been given to the report, it was:-

1. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the progress made to date in respect of the development proposals for the Site be noted,
- (ii) it be reaffirmed that the Deputy Chief Executive is authorised to take all necessary action to bring forward the delivery of this key economic development Site through the procurement of all necessary infrastructure and enabling works for the Site,
- (iii) it be agreed that the Site is no longer required for the purpose for which it is currently held by the Council, namely as investment land,
- (iv) approval be given for the appropriation of the Site for planning purposes pursuant to s.122(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 (within the meaning of Section 246 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 ("the Act")),
- (v) the Deputy Chief Executive be authorised to dispose of the Site on a best consideration basis and upon terms and in such phases to be determined by the Deputy Chief Executive in agreement with the Leader and Cabinet Secretary,
- (vi) the Deputy Chief Executive and the Head of Law and Governance be authorised to take all necessary action in order to implement the above, and
- (vii) support be provided to the newly formed North East Automotive Alliance (NEAA) by way of revenue support contributions of £100,000 in this financial year and a further £100,000 in 2015/2016 and to recommend to Council that the Chief Executive be appointed as the Council's representative on the Board of the NEAA.

(Signed) H. TRUEMAN,
CHAIRMAN.