

ROYAL BOROUGH OF GREENWICH

REGENERATION TRANSPORT AND CULTURE SCRUTINY PANEL

MONDAY, 12TH JULY 2021 AT 7:00 PM

MINUTES

PRESENT:

Members:

Councillor Gary Parker (Chair), Councillors Ann-Marie Cousins, John Fahy, Clare Burke-McDonald, Charlie Davis, David Gardner, and Aidan Smith.

Officers

Director of Regeneration Enterprise and Skills, Assistant Director of Capital Projects and Property Maintenance, Assistant Director of Business, Employment and Skills, Head of Communications and Culture, Scrutiny Officer.

Others in attendance

Councillor Mariam Lolavar (Cabinet Member for Business and Economic Growth), Tracy Stringfellow (Chief Executive Officer Royal of Greenwich Heritage Trust), Janet Denne (Head of Public Programming Royal Greenwich Heritage Trust).

The Chair made introductions and advised that the meeting was being held under emergency regulations and that some of the Council's procedures have been amended accordingly.

Item

No.

1 Apologies for Absence.

No apologies received.

2 Urgent Business.

There was no urgent business.

3 Declaration of Interest.

Resolved –

That the list of Councillors' memberships as Council appointed representatives on outside bodies, joint committees and school governing bodies be noted.

4 Minutes

Resolved –

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 24th June 2021 be agreed and signed as a true and accurate record.

5 Woolwich Works Follow Up Update.

The Assist Director of Capital Projects and Property Maintenance introduced the report and highlighted some areas of interest. He stated that over the past three years the council has acquired five heritage buildings on the Royal Arsenal and has undertaken extensive works to the buildings to create a set of modern, refurbished, extended and re-purposed buildings to form a cultural destination.

The Assist Director of Capital Projects and Property Maintenance stated that in March 2020 work came to a halt due to the covid-19 pandemic. He added that as a result of social distancing regulations they weren't as productive because they couldn't have many workers on site at once. He concluded by saying that the technical challenges coupled with the effect of the covid-19 pandemic delayed the completion of works on the site which ultimately meant that the tenants also had to delay the opening of their shows.

In response to questions from the Panel, the Assist Director of Capital Projects and Property Maintenance stated that it was too early to provide financial information relating to Woolwich Working since cost analysis was still ongoing. He advised the Panel that reliable figures relating to the financial information will be made available by the end of September 2021. He suggested that it would be useful for the members of the Panel to visit the site to show them what has been done to date.

Responding to questions from the Panel, the Assist Director of Capital Projects and Property Maintenance announced that the Woolwich Works site will be taken off the heritage at risk register. He added that discussions were being had around the future of Greenwich Heritage Trust and that an agreed strategy was not yet in place.

The Panel requested that a follow up report covering financial information relating to Woolwich Works, figures relating to jobs being created (including apprenticeships and an update on Greenwich Heritage Trust in Woolwich Works be presented at the 30th September 2021 meeting of the Panel.

Action: DRES

The Panel

Resolved -

That the Woolwich Works Follow Up update be noted.

6 Royal Greenwich Heritage Trust and Museum & Archive Collections Verbal Update.

The Head of Public Programming took the Panel through a presentation centred on community engagement during the covid-19 pandemic. She revealed that Greenwich Heritage Trust received two emergency funding grants. A sum of £35,000 from the Arts Council England of which £29,000 went into staffing and £49,791 from Historic England of which £28,500 also went towards staffing.

In terms of outreach and engagement, the Head of Public Programming stated that the aims included strengthening and widening relationships with individual households, organisations, schools and community groups within walking distance of Charlton House, developing an affinity with collections amongst residents (especially the BAME groups which make up 40.7%), encouraging people to engage in the future and visit and lastly to create a digital archive from the project.

The Head of Public Programming added that the exhibitions included items from the Trust's Collection and archive, were related to Charlton House and represented different wards and communities in the borough. She stated that stories of residents were also captured and presented online. She emphasised that inclusivity was considered although exhibitions were digitally based.

The Head of Public Programming gave a tour of the website and highlighted some of the features and objects on display. She stated some of the outcomes of the engagement which included developing learning resources and re-engaging with schools, an online exhibition promoting the Trust to the community and an upgraded cataloguing system to manage collections and archive data.

In response to questions from the Panel, the Chief Executive Officer of Royal Greenwich Heritage Trust stated that they always consider engagement with young people but believed more could be done and added that they were happy to have conversations with other partners.

Cllr John Fahy expressed his appreciation and thanks for the contributions that the Trust has made to the borough during the pandemic.

The Panel

Resolved -

That the Royal Greenwich Heritage Trust and Museum & Archive Collections Verbal Update be noted.

7 Economic Development Strategy Verbal Update.

The Assistant Director of Business, Employment and Skills stated that the Economic Development Strategy fell under four key themes linked to the corporate priorities around delivering economic prosperity for all namely, prosperous people, prosperous businesses, prosperous places and prosperous communities.

The Assistant Director of Business, Employment and Skills added that the strategy was also underpinned by two cross-cutting themes specifically sustainability and digital. She stated that the immediate priorities included

supporting business survival due to the impact of the covid-19 pandemic. This support included getting grants out to businesses and protecting jobs.

The Assistant Director of Business, Employment and Skills revealed that since November 2020 the Council has paid out almost 12,000 grants totalling £35.4 million. She added that in May 2020 the Council established a new Integrated Employment Advice Support Service to support residents who had lost their jobs and those who were at risk of losing their jobs.

In response to questions from the panel, the Assistant Director of Business, Employment and Skills stated that there was a lot of work going on in the Council contributing to community wealth building and added that there is a need for a strategy and approach to help bring it together.

The Assistant Director of Business, Employment and Skills explained that jobs in all sectors were being captured under the strategy and not only “Green Jobs”. She further revealed that work had been commissioned to help the retail sector in what they need to do. The Assistant Director of Business, Employment and Skills also revealed that work was being done to rebrand the Greenwich One Card.

The Cabinet Member for Business and Economic Growth acknowledged the delay of the Economic Development Strategy report and stated that there is an opportunity to tailor it for the current climate created by the pandemic.

The Panel

Resolved –

That the Economic Development Strategy Verbal update be noted.

8 Commissioning of Future Reports.

The Chair informed the Panel of the items coming to the 30th September 2021 meeting.

The Panel

Resolved -

That the items coming to the 30th September 2021 meeting be noted.

The meeting closed at 9:04 pm.