

**Minutes of the Business, Infrastructure and Growth Committee
13 March 2025**

Present:

Councillor H.R.D. Williams (Chair)
Councillor J.R. Boughtflower (Vice-Chair)

Councillors:

C. Bateson	T. Burrell	A. Mathur
S.N. Beatty	D.C. Clarke	S.C. Mooney
M. Beecher	M. Gibson	

Substitutions: Councillors J.P. Caplin (In place of S. Gyawali)

Apologies: Councillors N. Islam

12/25 Apologies and Substitutes

Apologies were received from Councillor Gyawali, and Councillor Islam. Councillor Caplin attended as Councillor Gyawali's substitute.

13/25 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2025 were agreed as a correct record.

14/25 Disclosures of interest

Councillors Beatty, Bateson, Gibson, Beecher, Burrell, and Clarke are also members of the Planning Committee.

15/25 Questions from members of the Public

There were none.

16/25 Forward Plan

The Committee received the forward plan for future Committee business.

The Committee **resolved** to note the forward plan for future Committee business.

17/25 Appointment of a Director to the Board of Visit Staines (the Business Improvement District in Staines upon Thames)

The Committee considered a report from the Group Head – Place, Protection and Prosperity for the Council to appoint a director to the Staines Business Improvement District (BID) Board.

A new director needed to be appointed to the Staines BID following the Council's Section 151 officer stepping down from the role. It was standard practice for local authorities to have involvement in local BID boards as it brought a number of benefits, such as strategic alignment between the BID's initiatives and broader public policies, and fostering collaboration between the public and private sectors. The Council's appointment would be subject to approval by the BID Board.

The Committee expressed interest in how the success of the BID Board was measured, and were advised that the BID produced an annual report as well as a five year plan and success could be measured against these. The Committee noted the Council's Economic Development Manager attended the BID meetings regularly as an interested party, and by approving the recommendation, it would formalise their attendance at the meetings.

The Committee **resolved** to appoint the Economic Development Manager as a director to the board of Visit Staines Ltd, the Business Improvement District in Staines-upon-Thames subject to a resolution to appoint by the Visit Staines Board.

18/25 Ashford Business Improvement District (BID) Verbal Update

The Committee received an update from the Senior Economic Development Officer and the Economic Development Manager on the status of implementing a Business Improvement District in Ashford.

A consultant had been engaged to undertake a feasibility study on a proposed Business Improvement District in Ashford. Engagement was underway with local businesses and stakeholder groups, and a survey was open to gauge local appetite to establish a BID. If there was an appetite from local businesses, a local steering group would be set up to develop a business plan and identify key priorities. Businesses would then vote to decide if they wanted to formally establish a bid. A further report on the progress of the study would be provided to the Committee at their next meeting.

The Committee expressed their support for the project, and noted the support of local stakeholders as well.

The Committee **resolved** to note the update.

19/25 HSR/SLR Working Group Updates

The Committee received an update on the work of the HSR/SLR Working Group from Councillor Bateson.

Members of the working group had visited Heathrow Terminal 5 to view the infrastructure in place. All members would be invited to presentations on two different types of rail from external stakeholders in the coming weeks.

The Committee **resolved** to note the update on the work of the HSR/SLR Working Group.

20/25 Updates on Short-Term Priority Development Delivery Sites

The Chair advised that due to staff illness, a written update would be provided to the Committee after the meeting, however he could provide the following updates:

A decision on Ashford Victory Place was before the Committee on the agenda that evening.

A decision on Thameside House was before the Committee on the agenda that evening.

Regarding the Waterfront site, an agreement for lease has been signed.

Regarding the Summit Centre, a decision for sale of the site would be before the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee on 17 March 2025.

Meeting adjourned 19:58

Meeting reconvened 20:05

21/25 Council Land and Property Disposals

The Committee considered a report regarding the re-marketing of Thameside House offering the unencumbered freehold. The Council had received a number of offers for the site based on permitted conversions, however a freehold unencumbered disposal could increase the best offers and deliverability. The Council would seek to minimise capital loss in disposal of the site.

The Committee noted the disposal was for the whole of the site, and that all bidders would have access to building and condition surveys of the building currently on the site. The Committee expressed concern about the bidders

providing community value or social benefit, and requested that this be communicated to the bidders as part of the Council's consideration.

A recorded vote was requested by Councillor Gibson, and the voting was as follows:

For (8):	Bateson, Beatty, Beecher, Boughtflower, Clarke, Caplin, Mathur, Williams
Against (0):	
Abstain (3):	Burrell, Gibson, Mooney

The Committee **resolved** to proceed with the re-marketing of Thameside House offering the unencumbered freehold.

22/25 Exclusion of Public and Press (Exempt Business)

It was proposed by Councillor Boughtflower, and seconded by Councillor Clarke to exclude the public and press for the following agenda items, in accordance with paragraph 3 of part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) because it was likely to disclose information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) and in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information because disclosure to the public would prejudice the financial position of the authority in being able to undertake even-handed negotiations and finalising acceptable contract terms.

The motion to exclude the public and press for the whole of the remaining agenda **fell**.

23/25 Disposal of Ashford Victory Place

The Committee considered a report on the disposal of Ashford Victory Place. Following a request by the Committee for interested parties to re-consider their offers to include a greater housing provision of affordable housing, two revised bids had been received. The Asset Manager highlighted the differences in the two bids, and advised the Committee that between publication of the report and the meeting taking place, Bidder B had revised their position with a lower offer, and confirmation of funding could not be provided until later in the year.

Members of the Committee expressed concern about the affordable housing numbers being adhered to, and were advised this would be a contractual obligation. Some members of the Committee also felt the offers were not clear that all social housing provided would be provided to Spelthorne residents. Other members of the Committee expressed concern over the value for money the offers provided and felt the decision should be deferred. The Committee acknowledged the revised position on the offer put forward by

Bidder B and felt Bidder A provided more certainty for the Council. Some members voiced that it was in the best interest of residents to accept Bidder A's offer so work could begin on the site sooner.

It was proposed by Councillor Clarke, seconded by Councillor Boughtflower and **resolved** to enter closed session so that any remaining questions regarding the confidential appendices could be answered.

The Committee re-entered public session.

It was proposed by Councillor Boughtflower, seconded by Councillor Bateson and **resolved** to suspend Standing Order 38.3 to continue the meeting beyond three hours.

The Committee **resolved** to select a preferred bidder from the offers put forward.

The Committee **resolved** to:

1. Select Bidder A as the preferred bidder.

The Committee **resolved** to recommend to Council to:

1. Approve the disposal of Ashford Victory Place to Bidder A.
2. Delegate authority to the Group Head of Assets in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Business, Infrastructure and Growth Committee to agree detailed Heads of Terms in respect of the disposal of Ashford Victory Place with Bidder A.
3. Delegate authority to the Group Head Corporate Governance to enter into any necessary legal documentation to complete the disposal of Ashford Victory Place to Bidder A.

Meeting ended 22:00

This page is intentionally left blank