

Work Programme – Item Deferral

Letter to Cllr Brenda Clelland from Peter Udall, Strategic Director Economy, Innovation and Growth

I am writing to you as Chair of Housing, Environment and Healthy Communities OSC and further to our discussion yesterday regarding the minutes of HEHC OSC and the note that Economic Development/Physical Development and Regeneration is on the agenda for OSC on 4th Dec 2023. This is a broad topic, incorporating some of the Council's most high profile, outward facing and outcome generating projects and workstreams, aligned with the Council's Economic Development Strategy. The EIG Group co-ordinates this programme of activity, managing progress and performance. I agree that a holistic presentation across the broader area linked to our Economic Development Strategy outcomes and Council priorities would be beneficial.

The whole programme, however, is currently going through a period of review, due to the challenging economic environment (inflation, interest rates) which has affected the delivery ambitions of both the Council and our private sector partners. At the same time, the Council is working through the opportunities that will arise from devolution and access to new funding streams. Both these factors are contributing to a series of re-profiles and new Business Cases for projects that will require key decisions for Cabinet Members over the next six months – including the Quays, Baltic Quarter, High Street South, Chandless, the Housing Joint Venture, Old Town Hall. Therefore, I believe that discussion at OSC in December would be premature in light of upcoming cabinet decisions, and the officer time involved in their preparation.

I remain committed to member engagement, both in the development of proposals and in the decision making process, and also in those decisions being reviewed by OSC Committee, and therefore propose a slight reshuffle to the OSC forward plan to facilitate presentation and discussion of Economic Development/Regeneration matters. The "The Flood and Water Management Act 2010: Annual Progress Report" currently scheduled for 11th March would (I suggest) sit comfortably with the Climate Change Strategy item scheduled for 13th May. That March slot could then be used for our Economic Development/Regeneration discussion, on the same agenda as the "Housing Development Programme Update", so that Members will be able to see the synergies and gain an overview of development activity across the borough.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (i) That the Housing, Environment and Healthy Communities Committee agree to defer this item to a later date to be established in due course.

Contact: Melvyn Mallam-Churchill, Ext: 2149.