

Minutes of: RADCLIFFE CABINET COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 18 March 2021

Present: Councillor E O'Brien (in the Chair)
Councillors C Cummins, L Smith and M Smith

Public Attendance: No members of the public were present at the meeting.

Apologies for Absence: Councillor R Cathcart and Councillor P Cropper

8 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Rhyse Cathcart and Councillor Paul Cropper.

9 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

10 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

11 MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting held on 22 December 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

12 RADCLIFFE - ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW SECONDARY SCHOOL

The Leader introduced a report regarding the successful application from Star Academies to establish a new secondary school in Radcliffe, and thanked officers for their work in supporting this development. Paul Cooke, Strategic Lead for Schools, Academies & Colleges, detailed the report noting that although the statutory route to establishing schools was not in the gift of the Council, Councillors and officers had been instrumental in developing the business case to establish the new school, and it was this that encouraged and enabled Star to submit its successful application to the Department for Education (DfE). It was noted that the government would provide funding to Star Academies to deliver the build but that the Council was a key partner in the process. This enabled the Council to influence the development and ensure the school fits within the wider regeneration of Radcliffe.

With regards to the process moving forwards, a masterplan regarding the exact boundaries of the school site was to be produced to inform due diligence, site investigation, design and delivery works for the land. This would facilitate an understanding of the entire Spring Lane site, how it would be used for the school and potentially wider community use. This masterplan would be developed over the coming months and would link to the wider Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF).

After the masterplan was in place, Star Academies and the Council would then design the school itself, at which point extensive stakeholder engagement with the wider public. In terms of timescale, the aim was for a September 2024 opening date for the school to admit year 7 students. It was noted that there was a lot of work to complete to meet that date, but that this offered a significant opportunity to align the school site with wider developments in Radcliffe.

In response to Members' questions, it was noted that master planning would happen at pace, taking place in the coming months with boundaries for the site defined by September/October 2021. Although master planning would be a more strategic exercise, public engagement would be crucial when establishing the details for the school including what it would look like, potential functions, admission arrangements and community use. The Leader clarified the importance of community involvement before the planning application was submitted. Officers confirmed there was a commitment from Star Academies and from the Council to facilitate public engagement, and it was noted that the existing governance structures would enable a continued dialogue to ensure synergy with the SRF.

In response to a question regarding completion, it was noted that details were yet to be developed but it was expected that the site would be completed as a whole rather than incrementally, despite the incremental admission of students. With regards to curriculum, officers advised that there were no proposals for the school to have a specialism, and that the DfE were satisfied that Star Academies had demonstrated they were able to deliver a full broad and balanced curriculum and had done through their track record of operating schools in other LA areas.

Decision:

That Radcliffe Cabinet Committee:

1. Endorse that Cabinet formally welcome this important result for Bury, Star Academies and Radcliffe.
2. Note the previous decisions of the Council in respect of the Spring Lane site, and the intention to commission a study to determine the extent of the site to be utilised for the school, whilst preserving access to the adjacent development site.
3. Note that there is a financial commitment by the Council to the delivery of the scheme, and it is anticipated that this be funded from the schools capital budget, and that this will be subject to Cabinet approval when the detail is known.
4. Note the alignment of the delivery of the school to the Radcliffe Strategic Regeneration Framework.
5. Note the continuing close partnership working between the Council, Star Academies and the Department for Education.
6. Note that discussions are underway for the acquisition of additional land to support the delivery of the school and its ancillary uses and that a further report would be brought back to Cabinet seeking approval for any acquisition.

13 RADCLIFFE STRATEGIC REGENERATION FRAMEWORK - ACQUISITION OF ASSETS

The Leader presented the report regarding the specifics of the proposals for the continued development of the Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF) projects.

One of the SRF's key proposals for the regeneration of Radcliffe was the creation of a new Civic Hub in the heart of the town centre, given the potential for the site to have a fundamental role in increasing visitor footfall and driving economic growth. It was noted that existing shops would be prioritised and helped to continue trading while other opportunities were being pursued.

Officers advised that the delivery of the Civic Hub was likely to require external funding and the Government's Levelling Up Fund had been identified as an opportunity to help support the development. In order to access these funds, the Council was required to submit a robust bid that was able to demonstrate that the Council has the ability to deliver the development proposals within specific timeframes; a key aspect of which was to demonstrate it had control over land assets.

Members discussed the report, agreeing that this was a unique opportunity to make a difference for Radcliffe given the magnitude of the proposed scheme. Although this was a long process, the Council now had the right officer knowledge, commercial knowledge, strategy and political will for this to succeed.

Decision:

That:

1. The progress on the creation of a new public service hub building and wider regeneration efforts in Radcliffe Town Centre be noted.
2. The Cabinet Committee recommends to Cabinet the acquisition of land and premises that are critical to the delivery of key SRF projects as set out in Part B of this report be approved, subject to financial and legal due diligence to complete the transaction.
3. The Cabinet Committee recommends to Cabinet that they delegate the final agreed acquisition of the land and premises that are critical to the delivery of key SRF projects as set out in Part B of this report to the Chief Executive after consultation with the Council's Section 151 and Monitoring Officers and the Leader of the Council and subject to the satisfactory completion of the financial and legal due diligence.

14 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Decision:

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting under Section 100 (A)(4), Schedule 12(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, for the reason that the following business involves the disclosure of exempt information as detailed against the item.

15 RADCLIFFE STRATEGIC REGENERATION FRAMEWORK - ACQUISITION OF ASSETS - PART B

The Leader presented the confidential report regarding the specifics of the proposals for the continued development of the Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF) projects. Members discussed the report, noting that the strategic nature of the acquisitions was critical to the success of this project, and that the pace and timing was crucial in driving the project forwards and in securing funding.

The Leader thanked officers and Members for their work in bringing forward this report, the first step of a positive journey.

Decision:

That Cabinet Committee recommend that Cabinet approve the recommendations set out in the report.

COUNCILLOR E O'BRIEN
Chair

(Note: The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 6.40 pm)