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MEETING	HUNGATE AD HOC SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE	12 JANUARY 2009
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS ASPDEN (CHAIR), BROOKS, GUNNELL, HOLVEY AND PIERCE
APOLOGIES	COUNCILLOR TAYLOR

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## **8. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

At this point in the meeting members were invited to declare any personal or prejudicial interests they might have in the business on the agenda.

Councillor Aspden and Councillor Pierce both declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in Item 4 (Hungate Review – Interim Report) as they are both personal members of English Heritage.

## **9. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

## **10. MINUTES**

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2008 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

## **11. HUNGATE REVIEW - INTERIM REPORT**

Members considered an interim report, which provided background information on the previously proposed Hungate site for the Council's office accommodation and provided a summary of the information gathered to date, including a record and analysis of the Information gathered at the informal meeting held on 26 November 2008.

The following points were clarified for Members by the Chair and the Scrutiny Officer:

- With regard to Paragraph 9 of the Interim Report and Annex B, a summary of all the consultations had previously been made available to Members in Section 22 of the information pack circulated to Members when the scrutiny committee had been formed.
- Annex C, which was provided by Officers at the meeting, included an extensive series of information documents, which had been

difficult to copy or digitise. This information included evidence of response to change over time and would be made available to Members and interested parties via the Democracy Officer/ Scrutiny Officer.

- A simple revised budget information sheet, Annex D, was circulated to Members at the meeting and had been added to the agenda and republished online.

In response to a query from Members about the progress of the request for information from English Heritage under the Freedom of Information Act, the Scrutiny Officer reported that this had not yet been received, but that it was being chased as the deadline for receipt of this information, 20 working days after the request was made in writing, was 14 January 2009. The Chair asked the Scrutiny Officer to let Members know whether a response would be received in time for the next meeting, or whether the date of the meeting needed to be moved.

Members then considered Annex A to the Interim Report, and the following comments were raised:

- Paragraph 8, last sentence. Clarification was needed with regard to which meeting/s in December 2007 this had referred. There had in fact been two meetings with English Heritage in December 2007 - 5 December and 20 December 2007. It was agreed that the inclusion of the two dates be made.
- It was noted that there were two Paragraphs 9.
- Paragraph 11. It was confirmed that this was the Council's response. It was also agreed that a change to the wording be made in Paragraph 11: "on the basis of the evidence available..." and that earlier "negative comments from English Heritage had not been restated at the meeting on 20 December 2007". It was agreed that the exact wording would be left to the Chair and the Scrutiny Officer.
- Paragraph 12. A query was raised with regard to the use of "both instances". And that with regard to the 10%, the wording should be changed to: "Members noted that this figure was ..."

Members also raised concerns about the role of the Project Board and whether senior officers had been substituted by lower level officers at some meetings. For example, whether at the meeting on 25 April 2008 the Project team had received clear direction. The Chair noted that the Chief Executive had confirmed that the Project team had done all that could have been expected and he referred to Chief Executive's mention of "textbook governance", but that a number of points had been raised about "softer skill consultation". The Head of Property Services responded that on occasion some senior officers had been unable to attend the meetings due to busy schedules and substitutes had attended in their place. However, regular progress reports had been given at meetings of the Corporate Management Team to ensure all the directors were kept fully informed.

With regard to the consultation process, the Head of Property Services confirmed that Atkins had followed their procedures and had consulted with English Heritage.

Finally, Members revisited the original objectives of the Hungate Ad-hoc Scrutiny Committee, as outlined in the Scoping Report of 10 November 2008.

It was confirmed that evidence was awaited from English Heritage in response to objective iii on the consultation process, and with regard to objective vi, "best practice" had been followed throughout the process. The Chair confirmed that a written response on this had previously been circulated to Members.

**RESOLVED:**

- (i) That the report be noted and the amendments and additional information agreed be included in a further report.
- (ii) That the following further information be requested and provided in advance of the next meeting on 27 January 2009:
  - The requested information from English Heritage.
  - Further breakdown of the project budget to be provided with expanded columns broken down into abortive costs and costs that could be re-used and which would include leases and energy costs etc.

**REASON:** To progress this review in line with the timeframe agreed for the review and to ensure compliance with scrutiny procedures, protocols and work plans.

Councillor Aspden, Chair

[The meeting started at 6.10 pm and finished at 7.18 pm].