

This Report will be made public on 18 September 2023

Report Number: **OS/23/02**

To: Overview & Scrutiny
Date: 26 September 2023
Status: Non-Key Decision
Responsible Officer: Andy Blaszkowicz, Director - Housing & Operations
Cabinet Member: Cllr Jim Martin, Leader of the Council

SUBJECT: PRINCES PARADE – REFERRED PETITIONS

SUMMARY:

This report responds to the 2 petitions referred by Council to Overview & Scrutiny Committee (OSC) to remove the hoarding at Princes Parade, and to abandon the development and rewild the site.

Following election of the new administration in May, the work Council Officers are undertaking in response to approval of Cabinet report (C/23/16) in July 2023 to stop the current project and remove the hoarding, addresses the requests of both petitions. This work is outlined in the report.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

The 2 petitions have been referred to this committee following the Council meetings on 22nd February (Petition A) and 29th March 2023 (Petition B). Council has asked the following of OSC in respect of the 2 petitions:

- Petition A - That the Petition be referred to OSC for their observations before deciding whether to examine the issues raised by the petition.
- Petition B - To examine the issues raised by the petition as part of a future scrutiny programme.

Works being undertaken currently by Officers to remove the hoarding responds to both petitions.

Further updates on progress, and future options for the site are due to be taken back to the Leader/Cabinet in due course.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. To receive and note report OS/23/02.
2. No further examination of the issues raised by either Petition A or B by OSC is required, as the current work authorised by Cabinet being undertaken by Officers continues to respond to the requests in both.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 On 22nd February and 29th March 2023 Council received 2 valid petitions from a resident of the District. In accordance with the petitions scheme, set out in part four of the constitution, petitions which receive more than 250 signatures can be presented to a meeting of Full Council.

1.2 The petition of 22nd February (Petition A) asked for the hoarding along the entire Princes Parade site to be removed. It had a total of 325 signatures. The recommendations from this meeting were:

- To receive and note report A/22/32.
- To consider the options set out in paragraph 2.1 of the report.

Resolved as the preferred option from paragraph 2.1 was, 'the Petition be referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their observations before deciding whether to examine the issues raised by the petition'.

1.3 The petition of 29th March (Petition B) asked for the development at Princes Parade to be abandoned and the site re-wilded. It had a total of 361 signatures.

- The recommendations from this meeting were: That report A/22/35 be received and noted.
- To examine the issues raised by the petition as part of a future scrutiny programme.

1.4 In December 2022 cabinet agreed to pause the Princes Parade project and just to do the necessary works to implement the planning permission (C/22/73).

1.5 Following the election of the new administration in May 2023, the new Leader instructed Officers to stop all works on the Princes Parade site and consider the removal of the hoarding and termination of any remaining contracts in place associated with the development project.

1.6 Cabinet report (C/23/16) was submitted and approved by Members at the July 2023 meeting. The recommendations that were agreed were:

1. To receive and note report C/23/16.
2. To agree that the environmental and cost estimate reports are funded from the existing Princes Parade implementation budget for 2023/24, in order that the implications of removing the hoarding are fully understood.
3. To authorise the Director of Housing & Operations to terminate any unnecessary contracts outlined in section 4 of the report and negotiate exit fees.
4. To agree that as the analysis concludes, the Leader with consultation with the portfolio holders for finance and for communities, will consider a report which will outline the implications, required actions, costs and budget available to remove the hoarding and consultation next steps.

5. **To note that a further report will be prepared for Cabinet in due course following the public engagement on the options for the future use of the site.**

2. ONGOING WORK

- 2.1 Following the Cabinet decision taken in July 2023, Officers have been working to remove the hoarding at Princes Parade. Idom Merebrook Limited have been commissioned to carry out a Contaminated Land Assessment which includes reviewing the recent site investigation data in the context of 3 proposals for the site:
 - i) Unrestricted public access to the whole site
 - ii) A fenced, rewilded site with limited public access along existing paths,
 - iii) A mix of rewilded areas and dedicated areas for recreation such as a new play area and informal sports areas.
- 2.2 When the report has been received and analysed by Officers, options for the safe removal of the hoarding and estimated costs of this, which will include necessary works to minimise risks to the public of exposure to the existing contamination, will be reported to the Leader and the relevant portfolio holders as approved in recommendation 4 of the July Cabinet report.
- 2.3 Quotations are being sought for the removal and disposal of the hoarding and new suitable low level fencing which will provide a barrier until future uses of the site are decided upon following consultation.
- 2.4 Further quotations are being sought for improvements to the car park and play area at Seabrook which will be reported back to the Leader and portfolio holders within the above report for consideration.
- 2.5 Officers have terminated outstanding contracts for service connections and the sewer diversion with utility companies.
- 2.6 Officers are also in communication with representatives of the Seapoint Canoe Centre to regularise the lease position of their containers and equipment.

3. RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

- 3.1 The work outlined in section 2 of this report achieves both the requests of petition A and B, for the hoarding along the entire Princes Parade site to be removed and for, the development at Princes Parade to be abandoned and the site re-wilded.
- 3.2 As such, it is not considered necessary for OSC to further examine issues raised by either petition A or B, as long as the work being undertaken by officers continues to fulfil the requests of the petitions.

4. LEGAL/FINANCIAL AND OTHER CONTROLS/POLICY MATTERS

4.1 Legal Officer's Comments (EC)

There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

4.2 Finance Officer's Comments (DL)

Finance has been consulted and has no further comments.

4.3 Diversities and Equalities Implications (AB)

There are no diversity or equality issues arising directly from this report.

4.4 Climate Change Implications (OF)

There are no climate implications arising from this report.

5. CONTACT OFFICERS AND BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Councillors with any questions arising out of this report should contact the following officer prior to the meeting:

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Appendices:

There are no appendices to this report.