

HAVANT BOROUGH COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 6 December 2023

Present

Councillor Kennett (Chairman)

Councillors Munday (Vice-Chairman), Blades, Brent, Crellin, Gray, Milne, Sceal, Tindall, Turner and Weeks

Other Councillors Present:

Councillor(s): Bowerman

19 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Patrick and Keast.

20 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interests relating to matters on the agenda.

21 Langstone Sea Wall

The Board was given an update on the work being undertaken to address the public concern over the potential loss of Langstone Mill Pond.

The officers presented the report and answered any questions raised.

The Cabinet Lead for Coastal and Councillor Bowerman, in her capacity as Chairman of the multi-agency meetings referred to in the report, were also invited to join the meeting and answer any questions in relation to the report.

The question and answer session together with the subsequent discussion highlighted the leading role taken by the Council in bring the relevant agencies together to seek long term solution for Langstone Sea Wall and the Council's innovative proposal to identify the preferred management options for the harbour coastline.

The Chairman, on behalf of the Committee, thanked the officers for work on this issue.

RESOLVED that the information, evidence and data presented in the report be noted.

22 Meridian Task and Finish Group Report

The Committee considered the recommendations of the report of the Meridian Task and Finish Group.

The Committee also received supplementary information, which:

- a. included the latest performance statistics for the Meridian Centre; and
- b. updated the Committee on how performance of the Meridian Centre had been adversely affected by the closure of the Wilco store and Compass House.

Councillor Munday, the scrutiny lead of the Meridian Task and Finish Group, presented the report and answered any questions raised. Councillor Fairhurst, the relevant Cabinet Lead, and the Head of Property and Asset Management were also invited to join the meeting and answer any questions in relation to the report.

The Committee noted that Hampshire County Council was looking into the possibility of pedestrianizing the area outside St Faith's Church in such a way that funeral and weddings vehicles could still be able to park outside the church, when required.

The Committee was satisfied that, at the time of the meeting, the centre was operating successfully. However, in view of the concerns raised by the Head of Property and Asset Management that the current operation arrangements would not be sustainable in the long term, the Committee considered that it would be prudent to monitor the operation of the centre in the next municipal year.

RESOLVED that Cabinet be recommended to:

1. request Hampshire County Council, the Highway Authority to:
 - a. Improve the connection with Solent Road Retail Park to attract more shoppers to visit the town centre by waymarking the route more effectively and possible changing the position of the pedestrian crossing on Park Road South.
 - b. Make the area outside St Faiths Church into a pedestrian zone with demountable bollards, enabling the development of an outdoor café culture during summer months. This might also possibly attract someone to open a restaurant in this area.
2. focus on improvements to Market Parade, encouraging more shops to cluster around the Meridian Centre, reducing the footprint of the town centre shops to create a busier atmosphere, reducing the vacant shop sites; and
3. to form a group to take responsibility for the further development of the Meridian Centre and Havant Town Centre.

RESOLVED that the Overview and Scrutiny Workplan for 2024/25 include a session to update the Committee on the performance of the Meridian Centre.

The meeting commenced at 5.00 pm and concluded at 6.46 pm

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Chairman