

NOTES of the **STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT KEY AREA GROUP MEETING** held in the Council Chamber on **TUESDAY 2 JULY 2019 at 19.00 hours.**

Present: Roger Cartwright Chairman
Graham Allen
Joseph Foster
Kathleen Willis
Robert Duggan
Andrew Barrett-Miles*

Also Present: Robert Eggleston
Janice Henwood
Peter Chapman

** denotes non attendance*

(18.00 hours)

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Andrew Barrett-Miles

2. **APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY CHAIRMAN**

The Chairman felt that in view of Cllr Barrett-Miles involvement and knowledge of the planning of the town, he should be the Deputy. As he was not present, it was agreed to hold the appointment over till the next meeting

3. **SUBSTITUTES**

None

4. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Robert Eggleston stated that he had an interest in an Arts Programme..

5. **BACKGROUND PAPER**

The paper presented a history of the Strategic Planning which had previously been undertaken and which had led to the Town Wide Strategy, the Neighbourhood Plan and the District Plan.

Four recommendations were presented:

- a. The Town Council was not represented at all on the various management boards which sit to determine the town's future and its development. Cllr Barrett-Miles represented the town but as a County

Councillor. It is important that the Town Council is represented better at a governance level where decisions of consequence are made. The decisions made have a serious impact on the town and it is therefore important that the Town Council through its Councillors is involved in order to represent the interest of its residents. The Town Council is involved on a consultative panel but this is somewhat low key. The Deputy Leader of MSDC is responsible for the overall growth strategy of Burgess Hill and the matter will be taken up with her. The Chairman undertook to take the lead on this.

RESOLVED:

That representation be made to WSCC and MSDC to include at least one Town Councillor on any of the members boards responsible for decisions concerning the regeneration of the town including the A2300, Science Park, Northern Arc and any other development which materially affects Burgess Hill

- b. Promises made in the past included the Town receiving £40million from development contributions while the private developers at the time had promised a further £40million. Neither had materialised though the MSDC had used section 106 funds as match funding to receive funds from the LEP. Some 2000 houses have been or are in the process of being built since the original deal. It is unclear as to what has been raised and MSDC do not consult with the Town Council over where it will be spent. The Town Council has no way of knowing what is being collected or whether a good deal has been struck. It is clear that 6000 people signing a petition is a clear indication that the town wants a contribution towards its cultural development through the Beehive centre.

The monies collected should be appropriately allocated within the development as well as areas which will be affected and service the inner town public realm. While there is a strong argument for development contributions to be spent on Burgess Hill, the fact of the matter is that the Northern Arc falls outside of Burgess Hill. While much of the development contributions had been used for match funding, there should still be monies available for smaller projects such as the Beehive. There is a resistance from both New River Reit and MSDC to support this project. The politics of this is very deep as it involves central government, the county and district. Political capital is being made out of the regeneration and the cultural development of Burgess Hill should be nurtured and pursued. Robert Eggleston agreed to take the action forward.

RESOLVED:

That the Council aim to get a realistic share of the development money to fund the infrastructure needs of the town given its rapid current and planned expansion.

- c. Combined with Item 8
- d. The review of the neighbourhood plan could be a costly and large exercise. It could be tweaked and members were asked to look at the Plan and come back to a later meeting with suggestions. The CEO undertook to contact the relevant Planning Officer for advice. Janice Henwood agreed to lead on this.

RESOLVED:

That Council look to a way of updating the Neighbourhood Plan which is incremental only and does not involve a major exercise and expenditure.

6. STRATEGY AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the KAG is to represent the town to ensure we are getting what we are supposed to be getting as set out in the Town Wide Strategy, Neighbourhood Plan and District Plan and provide a degree of scrutiny. Included are other plans and documents such as the Transport Plan and a Sustainability Plan. The development is made up of various modules and the KAG should ensure that all the pieces fit together properly and work. Who is responsible? Will it work? Are there any gaps such as parking and infrastructure which have been omitted?

Reference was made to the Space and Development Programme which should be prioritised. The Customer Services KAG had looked at this. The planting of trees in the centre of town could be achieved and would be of great benefit. This to be discussed at the next meeting. The CEO mentioned the status of the Space and Development programme and warned that the Town Council should work alongside and not separately on this project.

The KAG is in place to look at strategic oversight and scrutiny of delivery of programmes by other bodies and to influence delivery. Smaller projects such as the Beehive and environmental projects are strategic. Where the KAG is unable to actually do something, it should look at enabling or influencing other bodies or authorities.

Town Council officials should be looking at projects which may involve spending regardless of whether there is currently funding. It is up to the Strategic Development and Finance KAGs to budget for such projects. The Council will talk to the town about priorities and costs. One example is a Changing Places Toilet that is available during the evening. It does not mean that the Council should necessarily run it but should look at how it might be accommodated and run. It is necessary to paint a picture of what we would like the town to look like and provide and build a vision to provide over the years to come. This picture should represent the aims and aspirations of the people in the town. It is important that some immediate actions be taken to enhance the centre of town. Joseph Foster agreed to lead on this. Build a list of what we want to do and how we deliver it.

RESOLVED:

That members consider the Town Wide strategy, Neighbourhood Plan and District plan with a view to developing objectives.

7. UPDATES TO THE BURGESS HILL REGENERATION PLAN

a. NEW RIVER REIT

There are many empty shops in the town and Lidl will move shortly. It is important for a Bridge the Gap strategy to be put in place to assist traders over the next 2 to 3 years. Various factors have reduced the footfall in the town. How do we keep the centre of town going while the development takes place?

This should be taken very seriously as a separate initiative led by the Town Council through the Strategic Development KAG. Roger Cartwright undertook to develop the Terms of Reference for a group to be made up of traders, councillors and other interested parties. Hopefully NRR, La Salle and MSDC will join the group. Traders are experiencing difficult times and need to be assisted however possible. Traders should be canvassed to discover their ideas and thoughts. A previous meeting with traders had been well attended.

The initial meeting would start to build up a programme to carry out. MSDC had not been positive but might change its approach. The Town Council should invite the relevant cabinet member and officer from MSDC to join this group. Footfall in the Market place has fallen 12.5% and with Lidl moving it will decline further. It was noted that the independent traders were getting a group together and they could have representation rather than involvement of each trader.

There is not a lot of time to get this together and time is of the essence. A six month window is the most time we might have. The Steering Group must have an action plan. The Town Council must create the impetus and look at simple and difficult projects. Party politics must be avoided.

It was suggested that a letter be sent to NRR or their agent to discover what their intention is for the empty shops. If some of the shops are available these could be used for community ideas and initiatives.

RESOLVED:

1. That a Bridge the Gap Steering Committee be set up with representatives from Independent Traders, La Salle, NRR, MSDC and the Town Council to address the difficult trading circumstances expected over the next 3 years.
2. That a letter be sent to all in 1 above asking for suggestions and ideas and to invite them to join the steering committee..
3. That Council agree the number of representatives on the group

4. That NRR be approached to find out what shops may be available for community initiatives.

8. **THE CULTURAL QUARTER STEERING GROUP**

It was felt that this group should report to the Strategic Development KAG. Robert Eggleston provided a short history of the group. It was made up of councillors and community representatives. The Council still made the overall decisions. Two additional members are being sought to replace some members who had stood down. It is now at a stage where it would make sense for it to report to the KAG.

The plans and architectural drawings are complete bar one or two small snags. It is ready to be submitted for planning permission hopefully by the end of July. There is a legal issue which needs to be addressed which could delay this. A meeting with the RBL solicitors has been arranged.

The budget will cover payments of a £3million loan leaving our fundraiser to find the balance of £2,5million. This will take some time. MSDC will be approached for a grant as will other grant funding bodies.

The venue has a name ie The Beehive. Three work streams have been set up. The first is to look at staffing and volunteers, the second is to manage the venue probably through a CIO and this will be set up. The last stream is to look at the financial business plan and what will take place in the venue to ensure it is viable.

It is making good progress and the scrutiny of the group will now be with the KAG. The Council is committed to the project.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted and that the Cultural Quarter Steering Group report to the Strategic Development KAG in future.

It was agreed that Items 9 and 10 on the agenda had been covered elsewhere in the agenda.

The meeting ended at 20.15 hours.