

NOTES of the **STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT KEY AREA GROUP MEETING** held in the Council Chamber on **Monday 27 July 2020 at 19.00 hours.**

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

Also Present: Robert Eggleston
Janice Henwood
Ann Eves
Peter Chapman
Sylvia Neumann
Lee Gibbs
Simon Hicks
Tofojjul Hussain
Lee Gibbs

**denotes non attendance*

(19:00 hours)

61. **OPEN FORUM**
Nil
62. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
Graham Allen
63. **SUBSTITUTES**
Robert Eggleston for Graham Allen
64. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
Andrew Barrett-Miles stated that with regard to the urgent matter later he was a County Councillor.
65. **NOTES OF THE STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT KAG MEETING**
The Notes of the meeting of the Strategic Development Key Area Group held on 29 April 2020, having been previously circulated, were **AGREED** and will be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

66. **ASSETS OF COMMUNITY VALUE**

The notes of a meeting between the working party appointed to consider assets of community value and the Theatre Club held on 30 June 2020 were considered and noted. It was agreed that the withdrawal of the ACV application for the Theatre club was appropriate.

MSDC has notified the CEO that the applications submitted were unsuccessful. The Council has 8 weeks to appeal the decision. It was annoying that the outcome had been conveyed to District Councillors before the Town Council had been notified. A meeting of the working group will be convened to consider options.

Noted

67. **FOOD PANTRY**

A result of Covid 19 is that many people will have lost their income once the furlough scheme comes to an end. The country is heading into a severe recession. 10% of all school children are eligible for free school meals and some 300 hampers had been distributed. This highlights the numbers of people who experience food insecurity on a long-term basis. This policy not only reinforces current support for the community but sets out an ambition of there being “No cupboard empty” in Burgess Hill.

The Leader of the Council has investigated the “Your Local Pantry” charity which is in partnership with FareShare. It is a community food club that supports those on low incomes by providing shopping at a discounted price. It is also a community hub where people are able to obtain information and receive training and develop new skills. They will learn how to manage on a low income through attending workshops. FareShare has confirmed that we could participate.

People meeting the qualifying criteria (which could be a variety of things such as universal credit, jobseekers, and people identified by appropriate agencies etc) pay a weekly subscription to join and, in return, choose a minimum of 10 items each week worth around £15 at retail value. The scheme limits membership to 150 people and assumes that it only operates 1 day per week. To make this a scalable proposition and meet demand membership clubs can be opened on more than 1 day per week each limited to 150 people. The recommended weekly subscription for Burgess Hill is £4.00.

The cost of purchasing a ‘Your Local Pantry’ Franchise is **£2000.00** and then **£500.00** annually thereafter. FareShare redistributes surplus stock from supermarkets and food manufacturers to other charities and community groups. First year costs for the franchise fee and core food supply from FareShare (assuming large tonnage) would be **£4,250.00**

As part of the Trading Places programme the William Hill Interiors unit (Unit 25 – 29 The Martlets) was identified as a locale for a community social enterprise. Approximately 1000 sq. ft of space could be made available to deliver the Community Cupboard. This unit is being offered on favourable

terms meaning there will be low premises costs in the early stages of the project. At a future date it may be necessary to move the Community Cupboard to separate premises. Some fitting out will be required.

The Community Cupboard would be managed by paid staff and volunteers. The Burgess Hill Community Cupboard is intended to be a social 'not-for-profit' enterprise with any surpluses re-invested for the benefit of its members.

The medium-term intention is for the Burgess Hill Community Cupboard to be operated by the community with limited oversight from Burgess Hill Town Council and to run as an independent organisation by the community. A CIO is recommended and is intended to be self-financing with membership subscriptions covering operational costs.

Robert Duggan commended the scheme. Robert Eggleston said that Portsmouth, Brighton and Lewes were all investigating this scheme. There are currently 18 schemes operating, most of which are in the north of England. He felt that the target of 90 families would be possible and that the pantry could open on different days if the interest increased.

The CIO would be responsible for ensuring all requirements for health and safety and food hygiene are met as well as safeguarding and stock control. There is a 6 month development plan. The project will need a full time paid manager.

Andrew Barrett-Miles was against the proposal and had many concerns. He felt the council had not been given enough time to consider the implications of the scheme and has not received sufficient scrutiny. He was concerned that a councillor rather than an official had written the report. It was pointed out that the RFO had provided a financial review. He disagreed that there would be sufficient demand and that people in schools receive good benefits. Receiving free school meals does not imply food poverty. Is this the most appropriate way of delivering the scheme? There is a stigma to a pantry and people would not want to admit they were using this charity. There are already informal networks in town that provide help in a private and discreet manner. The intended location among other normal shops was wrong and would be detrimental to the other traders. He asked whether New River would accept a CIO given the financial consequences. He did not see the urgency and asked for more work to be done.

Cllr Henwood questioned whether the £4 fee would cover £10 or £20 of shopping. She questioned the demographics and asked whether there were enough people who would make use of the scheme. She was concerned about the amount of time a person would have to shop given the requirements of social distancing and the 90 people a day target. This would give each shopper only 3 minutes. She was also concerned about how long the food would last given that it was reaching its sell by date by the time we would get it. She felt that the Bridge the Gap initiative was to encourage new entrepreneurs and that this was not that sort of initiative. She questioned whether the foodbank supported this initiative.

Robert Eggleston responded and said the foodbank did support the scheme. He said that the scheme would be implemented over 6 months before opening. He felt that it fitted in well with the Trading Spaces concept which was about promoting sustainability and keeping food in the chain rather than in a landfill. The CIO would need someone who understood food hygiene and who could handle the food appropriately to ensure it was fit for purpose. Time will tell if there is a need. The hamper scheme showed that there was a need.

Nobody is forced to buy the food. It is a shopping experience where people can choose their products. If successful it would move to permanent premises.

Lee Gibbs felt that there was no stigma attached. It was not a hand-out and would assist those struggling. There is food deprivation in this area.

Other councillors supported the feeling that there was a need and quoted the Trussell Trust which had seen a sharp increase. Clarion Housing had set up 5 schemes one of which was in Kensington. Nobody is forced to attend. It is up to people to opt in. There was concern that if the shop was situated elsewhere people would acquire pariah status. The biggest risk to the Council is a loss of £10k if it does not work.

Anne Eves felt that there would be many people earning under £18k who would be eligible and asked whether the administration could be coped with.

Robert Eggleston said that the CIO would have to put in place criteria. Up north it is more generalised whereas we seem to be honing in on specific criteria. We should not make this too difficult. The Council has suitably experienced officers who could deal with this. Free school meals is a good starting point. We should work on the basis of trust. Better off people would not want to use the scheme. We should be fair without being onerous.

Andrew Barrett-Miles proposed that the scheme should not go ahead and that more work should be done. There was no seconder for his proposal.

Robert Eggleston proposed the recommendations and was seconded by Joseph Foster. Andrew Barrett-Miles asked that further reports be brought back to the Group.

All attending were asked to vote. Only 1 was against with the remainder in favour.

RESOLVED:

That the Town Council recognises that there are single people and families in the town who are food vulnerable and **resolves to:**

(i) implement a community-based food outlet to tackle the problem of food insecurity located in the old William Hill Interiors unit.

(ii) form a Charitable Incorporated Organisation called the Burgess Hill Community Cupboard CIO;

(iii) appoint 4 councillors as the interim trustees of the CIO with support from 2 officers (with the additional objective of appointing trustees from the community such that there is a majority of community representatives on the CIO board).

(iv) authorise the Council (or the CIO if it is registered) to enter into a Franchise Agreement with Your Local Pantry and a food supply agreement with FareShare.

(v) make a grant of £10,000 to the CIO to fund its start-up costs including payment of the franchise fee; annual fee to FareShare; purchase of capital items;

(vi) enter into a lease with the CIO on a unit within Trading Spaces on terms which reflect the charitable nature of this operation.

(vii) Instruct officers to:-

(a) promote the CIO with community organisations and individuals in the town;

(b) build a volunteer and management base so that the CIO can be transferred to community control as the expertise of its staff and volunteers grows;

(c) prepare the necessary operational and governance structure to support the implementation of this policy.

(viii) that further reports be submitted for consideration by the KAG.

68. NOTES OF THE CULTURAL QUARTER COMMITTEE

The notes of the Cultural Quarter Committee held on 8 July 2020 were considered. The committee will review the public consultation process when deemed appropriate. There are applications for funding which are ready to be submitted when funds come online. The charity application was proceeding.

NOTED

69. URGENT MATTER: ACTIVE TRAVEL GRANTS

The Group was asked to consider the matter as a matter of urgency as there was a deadline to consider. The Group agreed.

The Department of Transport had launched its second Active Travel Fund which is to promote schemes to encourage pedestrians and cyclists recognizing that Covid 19 had resulted in changes to people's behavior towards public transport which was now less popular. The fund is valued at £180k. To qualify there need to be plans which can be swiftly implemented. We need to inform County of our suggestions by 7 August but earlier is better.

Andrew Barrett-Miles said that he, in his role as a County councillor, had submitted a proposal for a pedestrian crossing at the junction of Mill and Leylands road. This was on a main school route and would also assist the elderly to cross. It will assist children cycling and walking as well as assist those trying to access Lidl. Preparatory work had been done on the scheme and it was part of the Place and connectivity scheme.

Robert Duggan proposed 20mph zones to be introduced. It was felt that this would not be appropriate for the scheme as no consultation had taken place and a TRO would need to be approved which could take 2 years. Cllr Duggan

felt that 20mph zones would benefit cyclists and pedestrians alike and should not need too much time to implement. Haywards Heath was asking for a 20mph zone and we should at least consider Church Road.

There was far more to this than just erecting signs. The scheme would need to be developed, advertised for comment and go through a long and expensive process. This project was not suitable for this scheme.

Councillors present were happy to support the traffic lights at Mill and Leylands road. A report on the 20mph scheme should be submitted to another meeting for consideration. More evidence of the need is required.

RECOMMENDED:

1. That the Council support the installation of a pedestrian crossing at the junction of Mill and Leylands road as a project for the Active Travel Grant scheme.
2. That unfunded projects within phases 1 and 2 of the Place and Connectivity programme be put forward for this scheme.

70. TRADING SPACES

Due to the confidential nature of the discussion the public and press were excluded.

The meeting ended at 20.40