

CULTURAL QUARTER STEERING GROUP

Notes of the Meeting held on

16 November 2020

COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE

1. Attendance:

Joe Foster, (Chairman), Peter Chapman, Jacky Hilary, Chris Elkins, Richard Light, Janice Henwood, Andrew Barrett-Miles, Sarah Greg, Mike Stewart, Anne Eves, Robert Eggleston, Hannah Wilson, Andrew Barrett-Miles, Lee Gibbs, Sylvia Neumann, Robert Duggan, Matthew Cornish, Roger Cartwright, Toffojul Hussein, Graham Allen, Simon Hicks

Julian Middleton, Lara Kerrison, Steve Cridland

2. Apologies: Nil

3. The minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2020 were confirmed.

4. The chairman summarised the report. A revised proposal had been put together by architects Julian and Lara showing the project set out over three phases. They took the meeting through the existing project explaining the features on the different levels. They then went through the proposed scheme setting out the long term vision which was to join the Beehive with Cyprus Hall in the future.

The new scheme would see a new façade for Cyprus Hall (CH) to fit in with the façade of the Beehive. Regarding the Beehive, the main differences were the toilets on the lower floor which would be reconfigured for a changing places toilet. The kitchen would be lost as well which would mean that the bar area would only be able to sell light meals eg paninis etc . A proper kitchen with a dumb waiter would be fitted in the CH section in due course.

The upper ground floor would be fully accessible from both ends. The floor was otherwise similar to the old scheme though there was an additional dressing room. The entrance from Cyprus Road would access both halls.

The upper level was similar to the existing scheme but lost the meeting room which would now be in the CH.

As far as the phasing of the scheme was concerned, in the first phase the changing places toilet would not be fitted out but would be an office or other facility until phase 3. The lower ground floor would be much the same while the upper floor would see the dance studio and storage space built but not fitted out. Services would be capped off.

The chairman opened the meeting for questions and comments. Cllr Barret-Miles (ABM) was supportive of the scheme. In response to his question regarding steps Lara said that this could be debated further but that it would be a waste to include them if they were to be ripped out when doing phase 3. The closeness of the phases would determine the need for them. The kitchen will not be delivered in the first phase and the bar would provide light snack meals. The office in phase 1 will become the changing places toilet. The accessible changing room was not included in phase 1 and moves to CH in phase 3. The stage door will move. The Large meeting room will be delivered in phase 3 in CH. There could be an option to fit a meeting room during phase 2.

Robert E said that people would have to be more creative with the use of spaces. Flexibility was key.

Janice asked about the inclusion of photovoltaic panels. The architects confirmed they were included. There will be room for more in the larger scheme.

Richard asked about the roofline. This had been moved back to fit in with CH and to save costs. This allows for the meeting room to be moved to CH. The meeting room as it was would have been complex because of the acoustics with the dance studio next door. The removal of the meeting room allows the upper level to work independently.

Mike was concerned about the size of the bar which he felt would not be able to cope with an audience of 300 during a short interval. Phase 3 has a larger bar area. There are various other areas which could complement the bar such as the front desk which could serve bottled drinks. The foyer space could have a mobile bar.

ABM was concerned that without a kitchen it would be difficult to cater for banquets without a prep kitchen. It was felt that the lower floor meeting room could be used until the main kitchen comes online.

Jacky felt that the connectivity between the two halls made sense. How will it be financed?

The chairman responded saying that financial modelling was going on to work out the financing. Tonight was about getting the vision accepted. Covid 19 has made it a difficult year and plans for consultation had to be cancelled. The Arts Council will be looking at directing their funds to existing facilities to rescue them. He said that there would need to be full engagement with the town.

The chairman thanked Julian and Lara and recognised their belief in the scheme. He also thanked ABM for his continued support.

Chris pointed out that one advantage of the phasing would be that CH users could use the Beehive when phase 3 closed the CH.

Anne asked about the timing. This was still to be decided and will depend on the funding plan and the bat survey which could only take place between May and September.

A meeting with CHA would be needed to inform them of the long term plans. Ideally the project would be carried out in partnership. It was agreed that a meeting be convened with them and that they be kept apprised of developments as they happened.

The Chairman asked for a proposer and seconder to endorse the new plans. ABM proposed and was seconded by Chris. A unanimous vote confirmed that the plans presented were accepted and endorsed.

Meeting ended at 20:20