

CULTURAL QUARTER STEERING GROUP

Notes of the Meeting held on

4 November 2021

1. Attendance:

Joe Foster (Chairman), Peter Chapman, Jacky Hilary, Chris Elkins, Richard Light, Janice Henwood, Anne Eves , Robert Eggleston, Andrew Barrett-Miles
Steve Cridland

2. Apologies: Mike Stewart Sarah Voce, Hannah Wilson,.

3. The meeting considered the update received from Greenwoods, the project manager for the Beehive:

Planning

- The S73 Variation of condition application for re-wording of the planning conditions to allow demolition work to take place in advance of discharging the main planning conditions, was submitted to Mid Sussex and validated 23rd August 2021 (application reference DM/21/3067). This application has a determination deadline of 22nd November 2021. There appears to be only one consultee response to the application this far, received from BHTC – no objections.
- Dorton Group have prepared a draft Construction Demolition Management Plan for submission to Mid Sussex once the above application has been determined to discharge planning condition 6 of the original planning consent. The team have made comments on the CDMP and Dorton Group are to make some minor modifications to their plan prior to submission. The demolition work will require a level of construction traffic and compound area to utilise some space within the rear car park area and the details of this will need to be agreed.

Design Progression

- The consultants (structural engineer, architect, mechanical and electrical engineer, quantity surveyor and principal designer have all been appointed by BHTC to prepare the re-work for the amended phase 1 and 2 designs.
- The design team are meeting on 9th November to discuss these amendments and as a briefing for them to progress their re design work.
- At this meeting a programme for the progression and target dates for re-submissions will be agreed, it is likely a target submission for the revised planning application will be toward the end of February 2022.
- Once design work is complete Greenwoods will undertake a revised cost review.

- A further presentation meeting will be arranged between the team and BHTC to undertake a review of the revised design and costs in advance of submission to Mid Sussex planners.

Demolition

- Assuming the S73 is determined in line with Mid Sussex's deadline of 22nd November, the CDMP can be submitted immediately to discharge planning condition 6. Based on this date we would expect to have planning condition 6 discharged by March 2022. Whilst Mid Sussex are considering the CDMP the team will put together the demolition tender documents and submit these to selected contractors for pricing (assuming there are no procurement restrictions / rules which need to be followed). We would anticipate being in a position to issue tender documents by the end of January 2022 with prices being returned at the end of March 2022, with demolition work commencing April 2022 and the site cleared by July 2022.
- Demolition work will require involvement from a party wall surveyor. Fees for this involvement are yet to be identified and this will be discussed at the design team meeting next week.
- BHTC are arranging for the removal of the gas and electric services and metering from the British Royal Legion building in preparation for the demolition work, including an alteration to the water supply in readiness for demolition.
- A final check on required surveys prior to demolition needs to be undertaken (ecology etc).
- We have an asbestos survey and all remaining asbestos will be removed as part of the demolition work.

The demolition plan is on track. Some permissions will be needed. The current planning application will address the issue of allowing us to continue with demolition ahead of the whole project. There are other processes which are frustrating but will need to be done. There is a slight redesign as well which will need to be submitted but no problems are foreseen. Timelines : demolition will be considered on 22 November and the aim is to be on site by March. Tender documents will be issued in January. The site should be clear by July. Fighting chance to open late 2023.

Jacky was concerned that people may lose heart by the time taken and suggested that something be displayed in the windows of the RBL building. This would show that the project is still going. Some graphics on the building was also suggested.

The planning for the demolition and approvals are separate. Feedback from MSDC on using the carpark is not negative but slow. Until the permission is given this remains a risk.

Part of the QS process is that we will take another look at the project. A number of things have happened since 2018 eg pandemic, Brexit and supply chain. The bubble we are in may be deflated in the future and prices come down. If this is a problem we will rise to the challenge. Streams of additional funding are being investigated eg grants, corporate support, public support, MSDC and section 106.

Operational policies. These will be needed once the Beehive is up. We do not want to wait to get the policies in place. We have the capacity to increase the trustees and should look at whom to bring in with the necessary skill sets. Need to be legally compliant. Other theatres will be approached rather than reinventing the wheel. NCVO have generic policies available.

Rope Tackle, Chequer Mead and Seven Oaks were suggested. Need to come up with a generic list of policies and then go out and find them. Jacky may be able to assist with employment policies. There are at least 7 required by law.

Caution needs to be thought about policies and customising them.

Virtual Beehive. The challenge is that when we open the Beehive we will have no experience or data. Will need to go from nothing to something fairly quickly. Holding events in the meantime will mean we are getting to know artists and collecting data about people who attend. This will assist with marketing. We will need to look at people who can do this for us. It will give us some things which can be transferred. Robert mentioned an artist who is keen on running a monthly comedy night for us. Artists are keen to perform anywhere because their world has been shattered. It will take us longer to get going if we wait for the Beehive to open.

We will be looking for volunteers and this will start an ethos of volunteering. It will also show what is popular.

A more detailed plan is needed to show what this looks like including resources. More flesh is needed to make a good concept work. The meeting supported the concept. A lot of detail needs to be worked through. Need to find a venue/s to do this. Park centre is a possibility as is the old Lidl unit. The Croft at the Girls school is another possibility but is used by the school. Kings Church has moved away from private hire.

Resources will need to be considered. The meeting was supportive of this idea.

It was agreed that meetings would be held as and when needed rather than regular meetings. The Trustees will need to meet when policies can be considered. It would be good to know whether the deadlines are being met. This can be done by email rather than a meeting.

We should compile a news release on our good news eg demolition. We need to connect with our supporters. Once we get demolition go ahead we can make a statement. We will be launching our fund raising as well in the New Year. Hopefully have contractors on site by summer 2022. We need a comms plan.

Fundraising. We are putting together a leaflet and will be approaching businesses and organisations Paddy identified. These have been on hold. We now have a loan, a lease and the CIO Hopefully some organisations will be available again which they were not the past year.

The website needs to be updated. Small things should go on and the Middie should be fed to get the word out there. An update will be drawn up for after 22 November.

Chris queried whether the timelines mentioned were realistic. Nigel needs to agree the dates. The biggest work is the architect getting the final detail plans. Nigel will be asked for a milestone plan updated every 3 months

ACTION:

Draw up a business plan for virtual events.

Seek operational policies from existing theatres and customise them

Draw up a communications plan.

Draw up a fundraising plan

Ask Nigel for a 3 monthly update.

Meeting ended at 20:10