

NOTES of the STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT KEY AREA GROUP MEETING held on Zoom on 11 January 2023 at 19.30 hours.

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

Also Present: Robert Eggleston
Tofojjul Hussain
Peter Chapman
Matthew Cornish

**denotes non attendance*

99. **OPEN FORUM**

3 members of the public attended. A member from the Burgess Hill Cricket Club spoke about the development of St Johns Pavilion into a modern and vibrant multi use community facility. The current pavilion is no longer fit for purpose. Many discussions had been had with MSDC and things are now beginning to progress to bring the plans for the centre to fruition. The Cricket Club accepted that they were a minority user as they only used the facility during summer. That said, they were developing the girls and women's games significantly and intend to enter the premier leagues with both teams. This would be an equivalent structure to that of the men's premier league. Separate facilities are needed to ensure a safe environment. At present the umpires rooms and disabled toilets are used as changerooms. He noted that women's cricket is the country's fastest growing sport.

The business plan submitted has been structured to home the club for many years to come. The club is committed to raising £200,000 towards the cost of the improvements and they have access to various grant giving bodies. However, before these bodies can be approached the club needs the commitment of the major funders (BHTC and MSDC). They have put a great deal of work into developing both the business plan and the design plan for the building. While £200k is a large amount of money for the club to raise, they are committed.

100. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Kathleen Willis

101. **SUBSTITUTES**

Robert Eggleston for Kathleen Willis

102. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Robert Eggleston noted that he was a Trustee of the Beehive CIO.
Peter Chapman noted that he was a volunteer at the Escape Youth Club.

103. **NOTES OF THE STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT KAG MEETING**

The Notes of the meeting of the Strategic Development Key Area Group held on 17 June 2022, having been previously circulated, were **AGREED** and will be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

104. **PARK CENTRE UPDATE**

Council previously resolved to investigate the opportunity provided by the Park Centre. A survey had been carried out which was followed up through an investigation by a structural engineer. It appears that the condition of the building is not as bad as first thought though there are some maintenance issues which will need to be carried out. WSCC is currently working with the charity commission to transfer the charity and some legal work needs to be attended to. This will prepare the way for the formation of a CIO in due course.

Cllr Eggleston moved an amendment to the recommendation as follows:

- 6 That the potential capital requirement referred to in 5 above be referred to the Finance KAG to assist in its development of the Council's forward capital programme.

Cllr Duggan seconded the motion and all were in favour.

Cllr Eggleston explained that the remit of the KAG is to identify projects and aspirations. The capital expenditure items will assist with the development of a forward plan for capital expenditure. An estimated £1,2 million will be needed to carry out remedial repairs and an extension. The Finance KAG will look at the finances and develop the forward capital plan. It is expected that the town council would contribute 50% of the costs.

There would be limited expenditure in year 1 in order to make the building fit for purpose and get it up and running. It is hoped that this commitment to the building will incentivise WSCC to move the matter forward. The council will need to ratify the recommendations made.

Cllr Duggan asked for more information on the proposed extension. What purpose would it serve? In response Cllr Eggleston said that there were some design challenges eg the lift shaft opens directly into the hall. There are also insufficient emergency exits from the hall which would limit the number of people that could be accommodated. The building is neither H&S compliant

nor DVA compliant. A new lift is needed. The extension would provide for additional services. These are all matters which the charity would need to consider. There is a possibility for additional services to be offered. A dance studio could, for example, be included as well as a changing places facility. There are groups in town which need premises from which to carry out their activities.

Cllr Duggan asked whether any work done will be in accordance with environmental standards and Breeam. He asked that any planning done take this into consideration. The building needs to be made fit for the future and compliant with modern standards. The charity would need to consider this when deciding about the future of the building. They would then bring proposals to the town council to consider. This report allows some financial planning to be done.

Cllr Duggan proposed that recommendation 3 be amended to include refurbishments and to ensure that any work done is done to an acceptable environmental standard ie that the building be made energy efficient. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Foster. All in agreement.

RECOMMENDED

1. That the Council note the reports of the structural engineer and surveyor and estimated costs of repairs of around £500,000.
2. That the Council and Sussex Clubs for young people enter into discussions with WSCC to take over the St Johns Institute and establish a new CIO.
3. That a further report be considered regarding funding of repairs, refurbishments and a possible extension once a business plan has been drawn up to reflect an estimate of costs for the extension, refurbishments and bringing the building up to modern environmental standards and agreement has been reached as to how the costs will be divided between SCYP and the Council.
4. That a further report be considered regarding the governance of the CIO eg number of trustees and the representation of the Town Council on the new CIO.
5. That the Council consider its financial position with regard to applying for a PWLB loan of up to a £600,000 in light of the other projects which the Council wishes to be involved in and also subject to consultation with residents
6. That the potential capital requirement referred to in 5 above be referred to the Finance KAG to assist in its development of the Council's forward capital programme.

105. **St JOHNS PAVILION**

Cllr Eggleston thanked the representatives from the Cricket Club for drawing up a comprehensive business plan.

He went on to propose the following amendment to the recommendations:

4 That the potential capital requirement referred to in 3 above be referred to the Finance KAG to assist in its development of the Council's forward capital programme. This was seconded by Cllr Cartwright and accepted by all.

The plans for alterations to the building have already been drawn up and costed to be circa £1million. It is currently a charitable asset. Emily Temple left both the Park Centre and St Johns Park to the people of Burgess Hill. This was her original vision for the town. The pavilion needs to fulfil its charitable purpose and should be the best that it could be. There is an opportunity here to make a difference by upgrading the pavilion to a modern community venue in the park.

Concern was expressed regarding the governance of the charity. It would be necessary to have some control. It is proposed that the town council become a trustee and this could be a deal breaker if refused. The trustees have to work in the interests of the charity and not the interests of the council/s involved.

A question was asked as to whether the MSDC had agreed the figure of £1million. It was also suggested that MSDC should contribute more to this project in line with other projects it had and was carrying out in the district. It had taken since 2014 to get to this point. Cllr Belsey had been very helpful in promoting the project and many barriers have been broken. £1,2 million has been allocated by MSDC to upgrade the park. There is no recognition that the pavilion is central to the park and needs upgrading. The CC needs the commitment of the councils before they can start to fund raise. The club has been active on social media and most people support the concept. They have a high profile and the plans received 14000 views when they were released. There is still some work to do and the commitment by the town council should hopefully incentivise MSDC.

Cllr Eggleton said it is a great opportunity for the town and thanked the CC for their hard work.

RECOMMENDED

1. That the business plan submitted by the Cricket Club be approved
2. That further discussions be held with MSDC and the Cricket Club to consider the following
 - 2.1 proposed improvements to the Cricket Club;
 - 2.2 becoming a trustee of the charity and representation thereon
 - 2.3 funding of the extension
3. That, subject to the satisfactory conclusion of discussions with and clear commitments from MSDC and the Cricket Club, the Council agrees 'in principle' to provide 40% of the cost of redevelopment up to a maximum of £400,000 providing this is matched by MSDC and there are shared

governance arrangements of the charity between MSDC and the Town Council. and also subject to consultation with residents.

4. That the potential capital requirement referred to in 3 above be referred to the Finance KAG to assist in its development of the Council's forward capital programme.

106. NEW BURIAL GROUND

The members were in agreement with the report and the recommendations.

Cllr Eggleston proposed the following amendment:

- 5 That the potential capital requirement referred to in 1 above be referred to the Finance KAG to assist in its development of the Council's forward capital programme.

This was agreed by all present.

Cllr Duggan asked that a natural burial ground should be considered for any future burial ground. While this type of burial ground took up more land, less methane was released. There would be no memorials and manual digging would replace plant. Ultimately the ground could be reused.

RECOMMENDED

1. The Council agree the commencement of the planning and construction of the new burial site and provide funding of approximately £250,000 for this project. It should be noted, it took 2 years to plan, develop and construct the current burial ground.
2. That a loan from the Public Works Loan Board be applied for once the Finance KAG has considered all the bids to the Community Facilities Fund and agreed an amount to apply for and also subject to consultation with residents.
3. That an additional site be identified and acquired whenever possible and the possibility of making this a natural burial site be investigated.
4. That officers meet with members of the Muslim community to understand their requirements and identify arrangements the Council need to take into account when developing the new burial ground.
5. That the potential capital requirement referred to in 1 above be referred to the Finance KAG to assist in its development of the Council's forward capital programme.

107 BEEHIVE PROJECT

Cllr Duggan asked that the architect to be appointed be made aware of our

requirements to be environmentally responsible and to be Breeam compliant.

Cllr Eggleston proposed that the recommendation be amended to include “and refers to Finance KAG the potential capital requirement referred to assist Finance KAG in its development of the Council’s forward capital programme”

This was agreed by all present.

The RFO raised concerns in regard to the prudence of committing substantial public funds towards additional design work on the Beehive where the prospect of the project coming to fruition in the near to medium term was, if at all, highly unlikely due to financial viability and affordability issues, born from high inflation, build costs and interest rates.

Cllr Eggleston responded by saying that the visioning day held by the council identified the Park Centre, Beehive and Inclusive Town as the council’s priorities. He felt that a working plan need to be developed to deliver the project when the time is right. Things may well change over the next 4 years and if we do not prepare the project may slip.

The RFO continued to question that with the very real prospect of the project being deferred a number of years down the line, why there was a need to commit public monies now towards design work with the likelihood that any associated costings would be considerably out-of-date should the town council be in a position, sometime in the future, to progress the build-side of the project.

The consensus was, ultimately, the Finance KAG will need to prioritise the council’s aspirations and funds and make recommendations to Council.

RECOMMENDED

1. That council notes the expected cost of the professionals for stage 1 of the reduced project. and refers to Finance KAG the potential capital requirement referred to assist Finance KAG in its development of the Council’s forward capital programme.

108 **STANDING ORDERS**

The CEO explained that the NALC model standing orders had been compared with the standing orders of the council. Elements in the model standing orders that were statutory or desirable had been added to the Council’s Standing Orders but no standing order had been removed.

RECOMMENDED:

1. That Council consider its Standing Orders and that sections from the Model Standing Orders as set out in Appendix 11 be included in Burgess Hill Standing Orders.

2. That the reviewed Standing Orders be adopted

The meeting ended at 21.00