

12th September 2025

To: **MEMBERS OF THE STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT KEY AREA GROUP,
BURGESS HILL TOWN COUNCIL**

A **MEETING** of the **STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT KEY AREA GROUP** will be held in the Council Chamber on **18th September 2025** at **19.00 hours**, when your attendance is required.



Julie Holden
Chief Executive Officer

A G E N D A

1. **[OPEN FORUM](#)**
2. **[APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE](#)**
3. **[SUBSTITUTES](#)**
4. **[DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST](#)**
5. **[CHAIRMANS ANNOUNCEMENTS](#)**
Any items which the Chair wishes to update which are not on the agenda, for noting
6. **[NOTES OF THE STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT KEY AREA GROUP MEETING](#)**
To approve and sign the notes of the meeting held on 28th July 2025 (previously circulated)
Links to the current plan for the Beehive, which were discussed at the meeting are here. The Greenwoods cost plan is attached as Appendix B

https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/949qztaty4euvfjjmdida/250828_BHTC_Stage02_DesignDevelopment_Submission-Concise-Report-1.pdf?rlkey=20wusqsc923jjtr6uq5zkpran&st=oi4dlu3n&dl=0
7. **[COMMUNITY LAND AND BUILDINGS DEVELOPMENT GROUP](#)**
The notes from the working group with recommendations in bold are included as appendix A.

8. BROOKLEIGH COMMUNITY CENTRE

Purpose of report; To consider whether the new Brookleigh community Building should be taken over as management by the Town Council

1. There are two community buildings to be delivered on the Brookleigh estate, one on the eastern side of the development which will be Hill Homes and is shortly to go through planning and one on the western side which will come along much later. The eastern community building is to be 1000 sqm, Mid Sussex District Council have approached the Town Council to ask whether we would be interested in managing this larger building.
2. The Chief Executive explored initially if there was any opportunity for the larger building to be used as the home of a theatre, to replace the Martlets Hall and be an alternative siting for the Beehive project. After several conversations this has now been ruled out by Mid Sussex DC. There is existing outline planning permission for this building indicating two halls and community use, there is no area that could be used for green rooms or wings without compromising a lot of space, and the halls would be too small. The community use must be adhered to under the terms of the S106 agreement. Additionally, there is to be no significant car parking provision for the building making the theatre idea unworkable.
3. The Council already manage Sidney West for the CIO; we undertake the maintenance and management of the building along with bookings. This impacts the time of the Maintenance Team and the Corporate Services Teams. To absorb another building would have additional resource implications for these two teams. While both teams have had additional resources allocated this year, this has been to undertake already identified works or undercapacity, to take on another building will have implications for additional resources. The Sidney West CIO pays the Town Council for the works undertaken, the District Council will be asking that we take on the lease to maintain and manage the building with the income from lets coming to the Town Council to offset the costs of the building. This means we will need to market the building, especially in the early stages of a new building to ensure that it is able to generate sufficient income. Officers have raised concerns as to the buildings viability as it is allocated only 5 disabled car parking spaces, with the expectation that the development will be the majority of users therefore walking or cycling to the hall. There is other parking available on the spine road between the developments and on the residential streets, however this could become very congested if users are drawn from all over Burgess Hill and further afield.
4. If the Council do not take on the management MSDC will be looking for another community organisation to do so, this could include Scouts and Guides (who may well be new users of the facilities).

5. If the Council do take this on, it will be additional work for the corporate services and maintenance teams. There will be implications, initially that will take away the maintenance team extra capacity that was built in to do more proactive work in the public domain and will result in the corporate team being busier with new contracts to put in place and then ongoing management of the hirers and bookings, cleaning and maintenance. This will need monitoring and may result in a request to increase staffing.
6. The District Council have provided the terms for the building; they are indicating that the tenancy would be for 15 – 30 years with a rent payable subject to a valuation. The initial indication is an annual rent of around £111,000 with rent reviews 3-5 yearly. I am advised however that negotiation would be available as the building is to be used largely for community use (although the expected anchor tenant would be a nursery, which are private businesses). The Council would be responsible for all insurances, rates, utilities. There is a commutable sum of £262,465 for the maintenance of the building which would be paid to Mid Sussex District Council and be available on application. This is part of the S106 agreement and there will be a term during which these sums should be used (usually 10 years).
7. The officers would not recommend that we take on a building with these outgoings, however if the negotiations would allow the Council to acquire the building on a peppercorn rent, or full transfer of asset, the costs to the Council would be staffing costs, utilities, business rates and maintenance. These costs could be offset with rental incomes from the anchor tenant and other hirers. At the meeting the Chief Executive will have comparable information from the Sidney West building for illustration as to income and expenditure, to assist the Council in forming a view.

Recommendation: To determine whether the Council are interested in taking over the management and maintenance of the Brookleigh community building to be built by Hill Homes in the coming year. If so, any terms that the Council would want to be included during the negotiation.

Risks:

Environmental implications: Other than officers and contractors needing to travel to the site to maintain the building and open up / close up from bookings or provide keys, there are none.

Financial implications: The Council are expected to be asked to take on a full maintaining lease and in time S106 will be allocated to the upkeep of the building, however initially if there is slow uptake with the use of the building from within the Brookleigh estate it is a risk that the income may not meet the expenditure. Council buildings are rarely run at a profit, however the Council choosing to run the building

and undertaking to keep it open ensures that a community facility is provided for the residents. Where a community organisation runs the building, in contrast, this can increase the risk of closure if the building is not sustainable.

Public Safety implications: There are none.

9. LAND AT THE WEST SIDE OF JUNCTION ROAD

1. A resident has approached the Council asking whether the council would consider the sale of a parcel of land to him. He has clarified that his intention is not to develop or alter the character of the land, but rather to conserve and enhance its natural state. The land is at the southern tip of the allotments that the Council acquired in 2012. The piece of land that he refers to does not have any allotments on it being mostly trees and shrubs, but it is part of the parcel of land transferred from London and Continental Railways limited and any disposal of the land would need consent from that firm under the terms of the sale as well as the Secretary of State as allotment land is protected from sale. While the part that the resident is interested in, is not actually used for allotments it is part of the whole site. Current thoughts around allotments are that they should have areas left wild so that wildlife and bio-diversity can thrive. Officers are currently looking at whether there is guidance as to whether these areas should be left to nature or have a light touch management.
2. At this time the land is part of the allotments site and protected under neighbourhood plan policy G5, "All allotment sites within Burgess Hill will be retained and their loss resisted"
3. For the Council to separate this part of the land from the allotments we would need to provide fencing which would have cost, but more importantly it would lose the linked wildlife area from the existing allotment site. Although the resident states he intends to retain the wilding of the area and encourage wildlife, it would no longer be directly linked as one parcel of land.
4. While the resident has indicated that he does not wish to develop the land, once out of the Town Councils control there would be no guarantee of longevity as conditions or covenants which are included at sale can later be overturned.
5. The Council could consider a lease to the part of the land for the resident to manage the wild area In line with the indication that the resident has made, however if this area were to be made available for public access, additional fencing and gates would be necessary which would then result in separating the land from the rest of the allotments and incur costs.
6. The resident has been advised that the Council Policy would not support sale under our current policies, however as the approach has been made it falls as a strategic decision and is for Members to determine.
7. The public have expressed their feelings as to the loss of allotment land, although there are no actual allotments on the land, loss of part of the land forever, is likely to be unpopular

Recommendation: To note the request and ask the Chief Executive to thank the resident for his interest but as the land is part of the allotments and therefore is

currently part of the Councils operational requirements and under policy G5 of the Neighbourhood Plan the Council would not consider a sale.

Risks

Environmental Implications: The area is a wild area, it forms part of the allotment gardens, separating it away from the allotments would reduce the interaction with wildlife to the allotments.

Financial Implications: sale of the land would generate a capital receipt while fencing to separate the land will incur revenue costs.

Public Safety Implications: Opening up the area to the public will require security to prevent access to the allotments to be put in place.

Appendix A

Notes from the Community Land and Building Development Group

10 am 4th September 2025

In attendance: David Eggleton (c), Robert Eggleston, Anne Eves, Bob Foster, Janice Henwood, Peter Williams

Additional Councillors and staff: Diane Black & Brenda Williams, Julie Holden & Ramize Easter

Guests: Richard Cherry, Dave Stenning, Jo Horman, Richard Light, Jacky Hilary, Matt Roberts

Cllr Eggleton welcome all and handed over the Cllr Eggleston for an update on Tuesdays consultation and to introduce the presentation today.

1 - Cllr Eggleston advised that some feedback had already come back from the attendees which is positive. There were nearly 50 persons in attendance as users of the hall across the two sessions, along with the council reps to the CHA. He confirmed that the main hall at the Cyprus hall is not to change in size under the new plans and only one room (the upstairs meeting room) is to go under the new plans. Mostly the plan is for the new building and then a joining extension and wrap around to the front. Concerns over accessibility had been addressed at the meeting also. More feedback will hopefully be received as nearly 40 feedback sheets had been issued.

Jessie Froman from Unknown Works then went through the plans.

Questions followed:

The new kitchen in Cyprus Hall, will this remove storage space?

No, it is further up from the storage and will be a new build on the side of the building, moving the fire escape closer to Cyprus Road to accommodate.

When retractable seating is retracted does this mean the other fixed seating will not be usable?

Yes, this could happen but is not the intention

The alley between the Constitutional Club and the Beehive, will this still be wide enough to serve as a fire exit?

Yes

Would the lift and entrance at the rear be enough to accommodate props and scenery to the stage?

Yes, the exact size can be confirmed but this is what it is designed for.

The plans are a big step forward, but how will it be paid for?

Today the working group are looking at the design and the plans so far. The funding and operational plans still need drawing up and the Council will need to agree these. So, there is still a long way to go. It is unlikely that the Council will take a loan for the whole project, but this has yet to be discussed or agreed.

Public Works Loan Board interest rates are too high at the moment and this needs to stay under review. 3rd party funding means grants and fundraising and donations, and this side of the funds will need to be a significant proportion.

The skylight in the auditorium, how will this be closed?

This will come at the next stage to determine but it will be an automated screen

The building line, will this pass planning?

The building line is within the line that had been part of the previously approved planning permission, the entire footprint is smaller than the original designs. Pre planning advice would be part of the next steps to explore this, but as the plans were approved once this is not expected to be a problem.

How confident are we that the fundraising will come to fruition, the money was not found last time? Are grants still available for changing places toilets?

Previously £410,000 was pledged, so yes, it is possible that grants and donations are going to be forthcoming. There remain a number of grant bodies that support the arts and additionally now is the heritage angle that was not previously included. The inclusion of the museum artefacts does mean that there are other options to now pursue.

Greenwoods have a fundraising specialist that we would be able to procure to help if needed.

It was noted that there were also other firms who specialize in fund raising who will take a % of the fund raised so it is a payment by success.

Is there scope to bring display cabinets in for temporary displays from the museum? Yes, but these always cost, the intention is to have some artefacts as fixtures in the building fabric, although there may also be options for additional displays.

Helping the Museum to become part of the building is not just about fund raising it is also about enhancing the prominence of the museum and the towns history.

It was asked whether Cyprus Hall is listed as a non-heritage façade?

This is not known, but as the original plans replaced the building again this was not raised as a concern before. Advice could be sought from the society of protection of ancient buildings, while acknowledging that Cyprus Hall is not an ancient building.

The stakeholder guests were then thanked for attending and their questions but asked to now leave so that the working group could discuss the remaining items.

The Working group then moved to Item 2 due to Cllr Richard Cherry's need to leave by 12.

2 - Cllr Cherry gave an outline of the proposal suggesting that this would be investing in the local school and expected to be a less costly proposal than a whole new build. He gave examples of the Park School in Havant where something similar had been achieved allowing the school to have a first-class facility which was then used for the community in bring local and professional acts in at other times. He advised that the existing governors were keen to explore this further and similar indications had been received from the new governance arrangements as the school moves to the new trust.

He was seeking support from the Council to take this idea further.

There was general support to know more about the scheme, what the Councils involvement would be and what the expectation around funding was. There were a lot of questions which would need to be answered. It was also mentioned that while the Council may support the exploration of further development of this idea, the Council should decide whether it would carry on with the Beehive plans or pause them. There was general support that if the facility could be provided for the town but at a lower cost to the tax payer, this would be favored.

Agreed: to ask that a list of questions be drawn up by 19th September to be submitted to Cllr Cherry for discussion with the Academy. With responses aimed to be provided by 24th October. The group to work up the questions would be Robert Eggleston, Bob Foster and Peter Williams collated by the Chief Executive.

Once the questions and answers are known the KAG will be able to consider further recommendations regarding the proposal.

The Working group then returned to Item 1 to consider the Greenwoods Cost Plan

Concerns were raised that the scheme was a shell scheme with £427,000 being left to BHTC to procure independently the fixtures and fittings for a number of items. This would be a lot of work for the staff in tendering and procurement and also places the liabilities on the Council should warranties need following up. This could be a lot of work that otherwise would be that of the main contractor.

It was proposed that there were next steps for the Beehive plans to progress:

Pre Planning Advice

Urban designer advice

The need for a structural Engineering report

The need for a mechanical and engineering report

The pre planning advice is free to the Town Council, however the other services will be charged for and costs will be sought for the KAG.

There were concerns that a funding plan and operating plan should be developed to ensure that all costs were included in the overall cost of the build and running of the project. It was also noted that while taking the steps to get these next reports and advice, if the plan was then suspended, the expectation of BFIS is that construction costs over the next 5 years would rise 14-15% and this would need to be added in as extra contingency to the funding plan.

It was agreed that the SDKAG would be asked to consider that all 4 of the above steps be taken to move the project along to the next stage, but also to draw up the operating and funding plans. Estimates for the two reports have been gathered by Unknown Works which will be shared and the Chief Executive will seek the costs of the urban designer advice.

Due to staff leave these costs will be given verbally at the meeting and shared beforehand, but not necessarily be included in the agenda papers.

3 - Any other project updates

The Chief Executive advised of two items which had come in too late for the working group, but will be on the agenda for the SDKAG, the concerning the Brookleigh community building that the District Council are asking the Town Council to consider running for them and the second is an approach regarding a piece of allotment land.

The meeting finished at 12.10pm