

5. SOLUM REGENERATION – HAYWARDS HEATH RAILWAY STATION

REPORT OF: Tim Barkley, Better Mid Sussex Planning Leader
Email: Timb@midsussex.gov.uk Tel: 01444 477336
Wards Affected: All
Key Decision No

Purpose of Report

1. To provide an update to Members on the work being undertaken by Solum Generation at Haywards Heath Railway Station. Members will receive information from John Robinson, Senior Development Manager at Solum Regeneration on their work to date at Haywards Heath Station. This continues the dialogue between the Council and Solum Regeneration which started at the meeting of this Group held on 2nd September 2010 and the update they gave at the meeting held on 3rd February 2011.

Summary

2. Solum Regeneration have advised your Officers that they are making progress with a proposal at Haywards Heath Railway Station and this is an opportunity for Members to hear directly from them about the emerging scheme and test the principles they are applying. The site they are considering is in private/Network Rail ownership and therefore a scheme here will become a matter for the Council as the Local Planning Authority. The report suggests it is probably now appropriate that the Landowner Brief previously approved by the Council and issued to our former development partner is withdrawn.

Recommendations

3. **The Advisory Group is recommended to:-**
 - 3.1 **To comment on the information given by Solum Regeneration;**
 - 3.2 **To request that Solum Regeneration develop their thinking for a scheme at Haywards Heath Railway Station working in partnership with the Haywards Heath Town Council; and**
 - 3.3 **To recommend to Cabinet that the Haywards Heath Station Quarter Landowner Brief approved in 2007 is withdrawn.**
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Background

4. When Solum Regeneration were first introduced to the Council in September 2010, the company advised the Council it would look at development opportunities at each of our town railway stations whilst recognising their prime role as important transport hubs. Their emerging focus is the development opportunities which exist at Haywards Heath Railway Station. As Members will know, this is a very large site occupying a strategic location and is a key infrastructure asset which supports the economy and wellbeing of the town.
5. There have been several attempts to bring forward a scheme at the site over a long period of time but none have come to fruition. The interest from Solum Regeneration probably represents the best opportunity to have emerged over the last few years to obtain substantial inward investment and improvement in this part of the town.

6. The adopted town centre master plan gives an indication of how the site could be developed and some of the key issues for the Council in the past have been:-
 - To achieve improvements to the station as a public transport inter-change;
 - To improve accessibility;
 - To substantially improve the cycle and motor cycle parking provision;
 - To improve the amount of commuter car parking available at the site;
 - To improve the flow of traffic on the network in the vicinity of the station;
 - To improve the set down/pick up facilities;
 - To improve the Taxi provision;
 - To safeguard land to allow the Bluebell Railway to access Haywards Heath;
 - Public Realm improvements.
7. To deliver important improvements at the site, there is a need to find a commercially viable scheme that can support the required infrastructure improvements which is in accordance with the objectives set out in the adopted master plan. This is the challenge to Solum Regeneration and to help them develop their thinking your officers and Haywards Heath Town Council have recently met with them.
8. When the Council was involved at the site with its former development partner, a larger site was under consideration, which included land owned by the Council and as such, the Council issued a Landowner Brief. The brief, which was issued in early 2007, set out a number of requirements from a scheme and it still remains an approved Council document. It is your officer's view that the brief is now somewhat dated and not directly relevant to the work now being undertaken by Solum Regeneration. It is therefore suggested that it is now appropriate to withdraw the Landowner Brief. Any scheme which Solum Regeneration may submit to the Council will be determined, having regard to planning policy, including the town centre master plan.

Policy Context

9. The Haywards Heath Railway Station is a major and key transport hub for the town and the wider Mid Sussex community. The site is covered by existing Local Plan policies which is supportive of its development and improvement. The adopted master plan for the Haywards Heath Town Centre provides additional guidance for prospective developers/landowners of the site.
10. As with the other Better Mid Sussex work streams, the Council has chosen not to appoint a development partner to take forward the objectives in the master plan, preferring to encourage existing major interests to come forward with schemes. Here at Haywards Heath Station, the joint venture between Keir and Network Rail is an example of the private sector becoming engaged with the Council's ambition to see improvements in and around the station area.

Financial Implications

11. This report contains no financial implications.

Risk Management Implications

12. Cabinet has identified this project as one of the five Strategic Risks for the Council in 2011/12. The Better Mid Sussex Project risk is described in the following terms:-

“Risk1 Town Centre Revitalisation Project does not deliver anticipated improvements”

The aim of the Better Mid Sussex Project is to secure significant improvements in our town centres. The risk in 2011/12 is that the private sector is unable to progress the revitalisation of our town centres in accordance with our requirements, adopted policies and strategies. In Haywards Heath, the result could be the loss of investment in a key transport hub which would have an impact on the local economy and well-being of the town. The private sector is now expressing interest in a scheme at the station and with input from this Group and Haywards Heath Town Council further progress should be made during the remainder of the year on the scheme.

Other Material Implications

13. Proposals at Haywards Heath Railway Station will only progress if the scheme is viable, private sector funding is available at the time required and there is sufficient commercial interest to occupy any new commercial floor space included in the scheme.

Background Papers

None

6. BURGESS HILL TOWN CENTRE

REPORT OF: Tim Barkley, Better Mid Sussex Planning Leader
Email: Timb@midsussex.gov.uk Tel: 01444 477336
Wards Affected: All Wards in Burgess Hill
Key Decision No

Purpose of Report

1. To provide Members with an update on the work of New River Capital Limited (referred to as New River) to develop a proposal to improve Burgess Hill Town Centre.

Summary

2. New River introduced themselves to this Group at its meeting held on 7th April 2011. Since then they have held discussions with your Officers and with Burgess Hill Town Council concerning the town centre. Officers have shared some basic information with them concerning the town centre car parks, the Martlets Hall and Library to help them develop their ideas for improving the town centre. They have agreed to attend this meeting of the Group to provide Members with an update and explain the next steps of the project. The Council is a major landowner in the town centre and the town centre generates important income for the Council.

Recommendations

3. **The Advisory Group is recommended to:-**
 - 3.1 **To comment on the information provided by New River;**
 - 3.2 **To request that New River develop their thinking for the town centre scheme in partnership with the Burgess Hill Town Council; and**
 - 3.3 **Invite New River to submit a proposal to Mid Sussex District Council, the latter as Freeholder, to review.**
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Background

4. New River completed the acquisition of the Martlets Shopping Centre in late 2010 and have indicated that they wish to improve the retail offer in Burgess Hill Town Centre. This meeting provides a good opportunity for New River to explain to Members the progress they have made since they attended the meeting of this Group on 7th April 2011.
5. Following the meeting of this Group on 7th April 2011 your Officers and the Town Council have met representatives from New River. The Town Council have taken the opportunity to explain to New River their concerns about the quality of the buildings and vacancy rates in Church Walk and the visual and accessibility problems in Crescent Way. New River did agree to look at these issues as part of their work. Your Officers have shared some draft work on the replacement of Martlets Hall, being based on the approved Leisure Strategy, and also shared some basic information received from West Sussex County Council in 2009 concerning the replacement of the Library. Your Officers have also shared town centre car parking capacity information with New River.

6. The Martlets Shopping Centre comprises approximately 123,000 sq ft of commercial floor space and is directly supported by the multi-storey car park which has 165 spaces of which nine spaces are for disabled car parking. Located within the shopping centre is the Martlets Hall, public library and public conveniences. New River are looking to substantially increase the commercial floor space, introduce strong anchor tenants and to increase the parking provision. Your Officers understand their emerging proposals do not include any residential accommodation.
7. The current head lease has 128 years left to run and the Council leases back the adjoining multi-storey car park. The Council leases the library to West Sussex County Council which expires in November 2072 at a current rent payable of £14,700 pa. This reduces to £250 pa in 2022 and rises to £500 pa in 2047. The higher rent received at the moment is, as a result of the repayment of a loan provided to WSCC by MDSC at the time of the refurbishment of the Library.
8. The New River scheme is seeking a comprehensive approach to the Town Centre and this may result in proposals aimed at improving the retail circuit with the adjoining Market Place Shopping Centre. As Members will be aware, the adjoining Centre is enclosed with a large adjoining surface level car park adjoining both of which are owned by the Council. The Market Place Shopping Centre is held on a lease which has 130 years to run. The adjoining surface level car park has 340 spaces and is subject to a current license agreement, which expires in 2012.

Policy Context

9. The Martlets and Market Place Shopping Centres form an important part of the overall Town Centre. Local Plan policies and the Economic Development Strategy are supportive of development and improvement of the Town Centre. The adopted Master Plan for the Town Centre provides additional guidance for prospective developers/landowners and adds details concerning the importance of an improved public realm, an enhanced retail circuit, accessibility and the need to provide some modern-sized retail units.
10. As Members will be aware, the Council is a major landowner in the Town Centre and has been prepared to allow its own assets to be included in schemes in order to support enhancement of the Town Centre.
11. As with the other Better Mid Sussex work streams, the Council has chosen not to appoint a development partner to take forward the objectives in the Master Plan, preferring to encourage existing major interests to come forward with schemes. Here in Burgess Hill, the new head lease holder of the Martlets Shopping Centre has expressed a desire to work in partnership with the Council to secure significant improvements to the Town Centre.

Financial Implications

12. This report contains no financial implications. However, it is important to note that the Martlets Shopping Centre and the adjoining multi-storey public car park generate a significant revenue stream for the Council, which will need to be retained and, where possible, enhanced. In addition, if improvements to the Centre can be achieved, the capital value of the Council's freehold interest would be enhanced. In addition, the Market Place Shopping Centre and adjoining surface car park, generate a significant income to the Council, which also needs to be safeguarded and, where possible, enhanced.

Risk Management Implications

13. Cabinet has identified this project as one of the five Strategic Risks for the Council in 2011/12. The Better Mid Sussex Project risk is described in the following terms:-

“Risk1 Town Centre Revitalisation Project does not deliver anticipated improvements”

The aim of the Better Mid Sussex Project is to secure significant improvements in our town centres. The risk in 2011/12 is that the private sector is unable to progress the revitalisation of our town centres in accordance with our requirements, adopted policies and strategies. The result could be the loss of trade to competing centres which would have an adverse impact on the local economy and well-being of our towns. The work of this Group, the input and support from the Town Council and the response from the private sector in Burgess Hill is encouraging and indicates that the project should make good progress this year which will ultimately lead to significant improvements in the town centre.

Other Material Implications

14. Proposals in Burgess Hill Town Centre will only come forward if schemes are viable, private sector funding is available at the time required and there is sufficient retail interest in occupying the new floor space.
15. The Council will need to have regard to how any scheme at the Martlets Shopping Centre is procured. The current advice is that procurement and the works contract rules only apply if the Council is seeking the delivery of public facilities. As a consequence, these issues may arise in connection with the Martlets Hall, public conveniences and Library if they form part of the proposals from New River. The Council will need to be alert to these matters and may require specialist advice. In addition, the Council will have to show best value and this may require outside property advice at the appropriate time.

Background Papers.

None.

7. WORK PROGRAMME - BETTER MID SUSSEX ADVISORY GROUP: JUNE 2011- MAY 2012

Date of Meeting	Item	Purpose
2 nd June 2011	<p>Role of the Group and Review of projects and the current strategy</p> <p>To consider work programme</p> <p>Victoria Park, Haywards Heath</p>	<p>To provide an update for members on the work streams within the project and explain the strategy</p> <p>To agree the proposed work programme</p> <p>To consider the Stage 1 evaluation documentation and an addition to the design brief.</p>
30 th June 2011	<p>Victoria Park, Haywards Heath</p> <p>Haywards Heath Town Centre</p>	<p>The evaluation and criteria documentation for the 2nd stage detailed submissions</p> <p>To consider how to promote inward investment</p>
28 th July 2011	<p>Solum Regeneration – Haywards Heath Railway Station</p> <p>Queens Walk, East Grinstead</p> <p>Burgess Hill Town Centre</p>	<p>To provide Members with an update following the presentation given to Members by Solum Regeneration on 3rd February 2011</p> <p>To review the project and make recommendations to Cabinet (to be confirmed)</p> <p>To review the project and make recommendations to Cabinet.</p>

Meeting Date	Item	Purpose
22 nd September 2011	Environmental Enhancements, Haywards Heath Town Centre	To update members on the progress of the project
	Victoria Park, Haywards Heath	To receive the tender shortlist for consideration
	Queen Elizabeth Avenue, Burgess Hill	To report back to members on the progress of the project
	East Grinstead Toilets	To receive an update on the progress of this project.
20 th October 2011	Sadlers Yard, East Grinstead	To receive an update concerning the site.
17 th November 2011	Victoria Park, Haywards Heath	To receive presentations from the shortlisted bidders
15 th December 2011		
12 th January 2012	Better Mid Sussex Annual Report	To present to Members the Annual report for consideration.
	Victoria Park, Haywards Heath	To consider tender evaluation and make recommendations to Cabinet
9 th February 2012		
8 th March 2012		
5 th April 2012		
3 rd May 2012		