

Minutes of a meeting of Better Mid Sussex Advisory Group held on 15th December 2011 from 10.00 a.m. to 10:50 p.m.

Present: Jack Callaghan (Chairman)*
Tim Farmer (Vice-Chairman)

Andrew Barrett-Miles*
Katy Bourne
David Dorking
Margaret Hersey

Catrin Ingham
Anne Jones
Denis Jones

Natalie March
Edward Matthews
Mandy Thomas-Atkin*

* Absent

Also Present: Councillor C. Hersey and Moore.

Also in Attendance: Steve Trice, Clerk to Haywards Heath Town Council

52. CHAIRMAN FOR THE MEETING

In the absence of the Chairman, Councillor Farmer, the Vice Chairman, took the Chair for the duration of the meeting.

53. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

That Councillor Matthews be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the duration of the meeting.

54. SUBSTITUTES AT MEETINGS OF COMMITTEE – COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 4

None.

55. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Barrett-Miles, Callaghan and Thomas-Atkin.

56. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

57. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 17th November 2011 were agreed as a true record.

58. VICTORIA PARK, HAYWARDS HEATH

Jan Lear, Strategic Projects Manager introduced the report and updated Members on the procurement process. She noted that the conclusion of the project team was that there was no viable scheme at the present time that would take forward the reprovision of public toilets. She outlined the five alternative procurement processes and suggested that the project team review the brief, with the scheme to be reviewed by the Advisory Group next summer.

It was felt by a number of Members that it was important to consider the longer-term picture rather than opting for a short-term solution.

It was felt by a Member that the gradients of the park enhanced the site and that the existing site for the toilets was the most appropriate location. It was felt by a Member that Options 1 and 3 appeared sensible.

It was felt by a number of Members that refurbishment should happen in the short-term. It was felt that the toilets needed to be of a good standard to encourage visitors, particularly now that the water facility had been redeveloped.

It was felt by a number of Members that spending £35k now on refurbishing the toilets would not be a long-term solution and that as the toilets were currently serviceable it would be better to wait and spend the funding on a more permanent solution.

In response to a query from a Member concerning whether the funding could be invested in increasing toilets at the existing pavilion, the Strategic Projects Manager explained that if the same number of toilets at the park were retained but relocated to the pavilion, the cost would be closer to £200k – £250k. She noted that a reduced number of toilets might be able to be offered if there was a good take up of the community toilet scheme.

A number of Members spoke in support of development of the existing pavilion into a larger café with public toilets and demolish the existing public toilet block and introducing a community toilet scheme. It was felt by a Member that some residents might not be comfortable accessing toilets through the community toilet scheme.

The Cabinet Member for Leisure and Sustainability explained that the existing toilets beside the A272 would be difficult to upgrade and £35k would not be adequate to sufficiently do that. She noted that an inadequate upgrade would not address the anti-social behaviour problems at those toilets and it would be difficult to monitor the toilets following refurbishment. She suggested that it would be better at this point to explore further the opportunities available.

It was felt by Members that it was important to make the brief more attractive to developers, particularly in the current economic climate. It was felt the current brief could be too restrictive and it might be better to take the provision of public toilets out of the brief.

In response to a query from a Member concerning the Section 106 funding available for the project, Tim Barkley, the Better Mid Sussex Planning Leader explained that approximately £10k – £20k was currently available however this might increase over time as more contributions come in.

It was felt by a Member that any refurbishment or community provision of toilets needed to be suitable for disabled and elderly users. The Cabinet Member for Leisure and Sustainability explained that disabled and elderly users would be served through either provision.

It was felt by a Member that it would be wiser for the project brief to be reviewed and considered by the Advisory Group in Summer 2012.

The Chairman moved to support a review of the project and brief next summer but not to support the short term refurbishment of the existing public toilet block. This was seconded by Councillor M. Hersey.

This was agreed by Members.

RESOLVED

That a review of the project and brief next summer be supported.

59. WORK PROGRAMME

The Better Mid Sussex Planning Leader noted that representatives from New River would attend the 12th January 2012 meeting to provide an update on Burgess Hill Town Centre. He noted that the February 2012 meeting had been cancelled as there were no issues to bring forward.

RESOLVED

That the Work Programme be noted.

Chairman.