

Minutes of a meeting of Better Mid Sussex Advisory Group held on 12th January 2012 from 10.00 a.m. to 11:48 a.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 Marsh

Also in Attendance: David Carden, Clerk to Burgess Hill Town Council
Alan Lockhart, New River
Charles Miller, Acting for New River
Paul Turner, Acting for New River

60. CHAIRMAN FOR THE MEETING

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

61. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

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

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

The Advisory Group noted that, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4 - Substitutes at Meetings of Committees etc. – Councillor Simpson had replaced Councillor Barrett-Miles for the duration of the meeting.

63. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Barrett-Miles, Callaghan, Dorking and M. Hersey.

64. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

65. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15th December 2011 were agreed as a true record.

66. BURGESS HILL TOWN CENTRE

Representatives from New River gave an update on the proposals for the development of Burgess Hill Town Centre and invited Members to comment.

It was felt by a number of Members that it was important for stakeholder engagement to be carried out.

Alan Lockhart from New River explained that public consultation would be critical and New River would agree a strategy with the District and Town Council.

In response to a query from a Member concerning what would happen to the existing multi-storey car park, Paul Turner, acting for New River explained that it would be completely removed and replaced with a new car park.

In response to a query from a Member concerning how the issue of anti-social behaviour would be addressed, Paul Turner, acting for New River explained that design elements which could combat anti-social behaviour such as positioning of benches and design materials would be analysed in depth at the appropriate stage of the development. Alan Lockhart from New River added that the management of the centre would be invested in, as much in the interests of New River as it was for the public that anti-social behaviour did not become an issue otherwise consumers would shop elsewhere.

In response to a query from a Member concerning whether there would be residential provision as part of the development, Alan Lockhart from New River noted that there would not be any residential development. Charles Miller, acting for New River added that there was not now the market for residential development above shops in town centres that there was 8 years ago.

A Member spoke in support of there being no further development above shops due to the late night noise.

In response to a query from a Member concerning what aspects an anchor store considered before investing in a town centre, Charles Miller, acting for New River explained that retailers would consider demographics, competition from other retailers, surrounding retail provision, location and potential growth. He noted that the area was not well catered for in terms of fashion retail provision.

A number of Members spoke in support of the development and noted that it was important that momentum was maintained in taking it forward.

In response to a query from a Member concerning whether 2014 was still scheduled as the completion date, Charles Miller, acting for New River explained that this was still the target date, however there were elements of the project that New River had no control over which could see the target extended to 2015.

It was felt by a Member that it was important for there to be retail provision for older people given the older demographic of the area. It was felt by a Member that it was important for Shop Mobility to be incorporated.

Alan Lockhart from New River noted that Shop Mobility would be incorporated in the scheme.

It was felt by a Member that it was important to attract people into the town centre of an evening through the civic centre and proposed cinema to combat anti-social behaviour.

In response to a query from a Member concerning whether the existing cinema in Burgess Hill would have the opportunity to bid for the proposed cinema space in the development, Alan Lockhart from New River explained that he had recently met with the manager of Orion Cinema along with other cinema providers. He noted that New River would need to consider who could best provide cinema provision in the town centre.

It was felt by a Member that it was important to consult with the community groups currently using the existing community facilities.

A Member requested that additional information be provided relating to projects developed by Macgregor Smith, similar to the one proposed.

In response to a query from a Member concerning independent retailers, Alan Lockhart from New River explained that independent and local retailers were important in terms of providing variety and local business groups would be consulted. He noted that New River were keen to have a joined up approach to marketing of the town centre and events.

In response to a query from a Member concerning whether there would be a connection to link the bottom end of Church Walk with the rest of the scheme, Alan Lockhart, from New River explained that New River was currently exploring whether it could acquire part of Church Walk which would improve connection to the proposed library redevelopment.

RESOLVED

That Members comments be noted.

67. BETTER MID SUSSEX PROJECT ANNUAL REPORT

Tim Barkley, the Better Mid Sussex Planning Leader introduced the report and highlighted areas Members might wish to consider.

Concern was expressed by a Member that redevelopment of East Grinstead Town Centre was not progressing at a suitable pace, particularly in comparison to Burgess Hill. A Member requested an update on the East Grinstead Town Centre redevelopment and noted that if an agreement was not soon reached, wider private sector investment should be investigated. It was felt by a Member that it was important for this redevelopment to take place given that more people would be using the railway station once the Bluebell Railway connected there.

The Better Mid Sussex Planning Leader explained that he had met with Frontier Estates twice since the update Members received at the Advisory Group in October 2011, and would meet again with them in the following week. He explained that depending on the outcome of that meeting, he would propose Frontier Estates update the Advisory Group at the 8th March 2012 meeting. He noted that in comparison the Burgess Hill Town Centre, the area proposed to be redeveloped in East Grinstead Town Centre was a much smaller and less valuable site in terms of floor space. He explained that the Council was in a strong position and had a

number of options looking ahead. He noted that development was going ahead at East Grinstead Railway Station.

It was felt by a Member that it was important to link the two ends of East Grinstead in a way that enhanced what was an unattractive part of the town.

In response to a query from a Member concerning who the major parties were, in terms of Burgess Hill Railway Station being developed, the Better Mid Sussex Planning Leader explained that the major parties were the District Council, Burgess Hill Town Council, West Sussex County Council, Network Rail, British Rail Property Board, Southern Rail and the taxi and bus providers.

It was felt by a number of Members that it was important for the environmental enhancements in the town centres to be taken forward in the coming year.

It was felt by a number of Members that the development of Burgess Hill Railway Station should be investigated by Advisory Group in the coming year.

RESOLVED

That Members comments be noted.

68. WORK PROGRAMME

The Better Mid Sussex Planning Leader explained that Members had agreed a calendar of meetings for the Advisory Group where the group met 4 or 5 times in the coming year. He noted that this schedule was not inflexible if any issues arose.

RESOLVED

That the Work Programme be noted.

Chairman.