

NOTES of the STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT KEY AREA GROUP MEETING held in the Council Chamber on **4th November 2024 at 19.00hours.**

Present: Robert Eggleston Chairman
David Eggleton Vice Chairman
Cedric de Souza*
John Orchard
Janice Henwood
Bob Foster
Andy Stowe

Also Present: Tofojjul Hussain
Brenda Williams
Peter Williams
Dianne Black

Julie Holden (Chief Executive)
6 members of the public

**denotes non attendance*

38. The Chair opened the meeting, welcoming all and advised that it had been brought to the Councils attention that an open forum is not allowed for in the standing orders of the Council regarding Key Area Groups. However as has been the custom of the Town Council it was recommended to continue with public participation by the suspension of standing order 3.8 for this meeting.

RESOLVED: To suspend standing order 3.8c

39. Open Forum

There were no questions

40. Apologies for Absence

RESOLVED: To accept the following apology

Cllr de Souza	Personal Commitment
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41. Substitutes

There were none

42. Declarations of Interest

There were no new declarations of interest made

43. Chairmans Announcements

The Chairman had none

44. Notes of the Strategic Development Meeting

RESOLVED:

The notes of the meeting of 13th August were accepted as a true record and the chairman authorised to sign them as such.

45. Market Working Group

The Chairman introduced the item making reference to the national picture of decline in markets generally. He made reference to the ages of market traders and noted that new entrants were in decline therefore making this a declining situation when traders reached retirement.

It was clarified that the community crafters are those who normally operate from the Kiln and continue with their quarterly markets. It was further stated that the Town Council would continue to promote those markets as support for them, there is no financial or personnel support currently provided. There is also a Town Council festive market planned for 7th December.

It was commented that the extra budgetary resource could be allocated to other groups or markets to hold events. It was further commented that an earmarked economic development reserve could be utilised to help other events.

It was asked if the markets came back, how the resource would be funded if the job had not been filled. It was explained that the hours were to be reallocated to another service which needed more capacity and if markets comeback how it would be resourced, would be reviewed at that time.

RESOLVED:

- 1. To put the weekly Burgess Hill Market on hold for at least 2 years, to see what happens with the joint venture between Mid Sussex District Council and New River Retail.**
- 2. The Town Council to grow the town centre events, subject to staff resources, using additional funds from the Bridge the Gap budget, and to ask the Community Team to research what they could deliver**

on top of the existing plans for the 'It's Christmas Lights Switch On event with an additional £5k budget.

3. The Town Council to continue to support the Burgess Hill Community Crafters and their quarterly markets.

46. Visioning Day

The Chair introduced the report, he indicated that he would be proposing an amended proposal to what appeared in the report under proposal 2.

It was queried as to whether the Beehive working party should be reinstated. It was commented that Annual Council had resolved to create a new Community Building Development Group which would pick this up. This should go to the next Council meeting for setting up and determining the TOR and membership which in time could include the public.

It was asked if the Cyprus Hall Association had been advised as to the revised plans. The Chief Executive advised that she'd had an initial meeting with the Chair of the Trust, the revised plans have not as yet been shared.

The Chair explained that the progress was baby steps as there was still a long way to go. Cyprus Hall will play an important part in the project. A plan as to how any works will manage disruption and minimising disruption to deliver an asset for the whole community will come forward. Any decision tonight was not going to result in making large financial commitments or decisions on borrowing nor to upheaval for others.

The Chair outlined that stage 1 has been agreed by the Council already for expenditure up to £65k. This commission is not expected to be a significant sum, to date £6.5k of the £65 has been spent. The costs are met from the existing community buildings ear-marked reserve.

It was suggested that as the plans effectively created a new project the working group should be reconsidering the whole project including other uses of the land.

The Chair advised that it was still the plan for the Beehive, albeit revised. Once the costs of the build are received further considerations can be made, which is why he was proposing that the Chief Executive be given the authority to not just seek the estimate but if it is below £3k plus VAT, that the commission be approved.

The Chief Executive commented that she was mindful that the whole project had not been presented to the new administration (since 2023), The recommendation as it is shown in the report would allow a full report to the Council prior to any further expenditure. However, it was for the KAG to agree the steps it wishes to take.

It was asked why the exploration as to paying for a PCSO / PC / Community Warden was on the long term not short-term list of projects when policing was a matter that greatly concerned the public.

The Chair advised these were only guidelines as to what would come forward within 12 months and what would come forward after this time and that it did not mean it would be several years before the reports were considered. Some items may also be progressed more quickly. It would be about resources, permissions and processes. This could be picked up when we have the local inspector at the next Council meeting.

RESOLVED:

- 1. To note that a Business Plan for the Council will be forthcoming to lay out projects and aspirations to the end of this administration.**
- 2. To agree to approach Jackson Coles for an estimate to provide the build costings for the revised plan of the Beehive and if below £3,000 plus VAT for the Chief Executive to commission the costings, to be paid for from the Community Building ear-marked reserve.**
- 3. To agree that the short-term priorities as identified at the visioning day (shown in the report at paragraph 4), will be worked in to business cases for review at the appropriate KAG**
- 4. To alert the Finance KAG that appropriate budgetary allocation should be considered for 2025/26 projects.**
- 5. To agree the inclusion of “For A Better Burgess Hill” in to the Council logo and other profiles.**

47. Public Realm Enhancements

Councillors supported the recommendations and spoke particularly regarding recommendation 2 that it would be good to have the town looking better. It was not known at this time how much of the work would be able to be transferred back, whether just vegetation or all highways works. Whatever may be possible it was welcomed that could potentially be an income generator for support to the neighbouring parishes.

RESOLVED:

- 1. To approve the principle of additional feature planters and hanging baskets in the town centre and more planting in the stone garden, and to *recommend to Finance KAG* to allocate £10,000 in the 2025/26 budget towards this.**
- 2. To authorise Officers to explore with WSCC the possibility of taking on some of the lapsed Highways tasks and bring back a business case for consideration of inclusion in the 2025/26 budget.**

There being no other business the meeting ended at 19.58