

Southborough Hub Meeting

Minutes of meeting held on 04 April 2014 at Southborough Town Council Offices

Present:

Cllr Peter Oakford (PO) – STC (Chairman)
Cllr Nick Blackwell (NB) - STC
Cllr Jacqui Jedrejewski (JJ) - STC
Cllr Jackie Prance (JP) - STC
Cllr Glenn Lester (GL) – STC
Cllr Stephanie Williams - STC
Brenda Wickens (BJW) - STC
David Candlin (DC) - TWBC
Bartholomew Wren (BW) - TWBC
Jonathan White (JW) - KCC
Veronica Dorset (VD) - KCC
Jay Neil (JN) - KCC

Apologies for absence

None

| 1. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising | Action By |
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| <p>PO opened the meeting thanking partners for their attendance. The minutes of the meeting on 13.12.2013 were reviewed; all actions are either concluded or are being addressed.</p> <p>JJ identified that she is seeking minor amendment to the minutes. It was agreed that any comments on the minutes should be submitted to BW by 9 April.</p> | |
| 2. Project Overview | |
| <p>PO informed that he has issued a position statement that has now been uploaded to the STC website.</p> <p>PO informed of the meeting with Tesco at TWBC offices earlier that day. He confirmed the current position of STC with Tesco, that no supermarket development would be supported on the Hub site regardless of operator. Tesco staff informed that they will now refer the matter to their Board for a decision regarding the retention or sale of the site. Tesco were offered the opportunity to engage in the master planning process to support the evolution of the AMUP hub options, and the redevelopment of the site for a mix of uses. It was acknowledged that Tesco are likely to seek the best possible return on their investment.</p> <p>DC updated on the position of the TWBC Local Plan, confirming that the draft Southborough Site Allocations policies will be reviewed before the publication of the final document. He also informed that Peter Brett Associates have been instructed by the Borough Council to prepare a new Retail and Leisure Study as part of the Local Plan evidence base. Initial findings are that only an additional requirement for comparison retail is required in Southborough. The study is in the final stages of preparation</p> | |

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| <p>and will be made available on the TWBC website. http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/residents/planning/planning-policy/evidence-base</p> | |
| <p>3. Management Proposals</p> | |
| <p>PO expressed that project management going forwards is important, this issue links with the agreement of partner funding and resources for further technical work (see item 4). JJ agreed that a clear project management structure is important to deliver the project.</p> <p>KCC have offered the provision of project manager Jay Neil (or colleague) for the Hub project. JN provided a draft project gantt chart, which sets out the broad stages toward the delivery and occupation of a hub development. The chart covers the period from March 2014 – March 2017 (appendix A).</p> <p>JN confirmed that KCC will in due course appoint an independent planning / transport consultant (possibly DHA Planning). KCC has the ability to source professional skills quickly through its established procurement frameworks.</p> | |
| <p>4. Project Development Funding</p> | |
| <p>PO informed that TWBC Local Area Board will visit the Hub site next week as part of a tour, during which Members will be shown the extent of the site. Officers will be present; Leonie Harrington will be attending from KCC.</p> <p>Partners discussed the pooling of £25k each to cover further professional fees. STC have confirmed their commitment to provide the funding, KCC have offered to provide a dedicated project manager in lieu of a funding contribution for project stage 2. JN advised that £50k plus project management resource should be sufficient to progress the project to detailed design / planning application submission. DC informed that a decision will be taken by the TWBC Development Advisory Panel regarding TWBC's contribution towards project funding; he acknowledged that the project management capability offered by KCC is a valuable resource.</p> <p>PO confirmed that he met with Gary Cook from KCC property recently. It has been agreed that KCC will release claw back funds achieved from the future sale of land currently in STC ownership, for the benefit of the project.</p> | |
| <p>5. High level Hub Deliverables</p> | |
| <p>Transport - JJ expressed that sustainable transport needs to be considered at an early stage; JN recommended the commission of a Transport Impact Assessment. DC informed about the Growth Deal document that is now live on the South East LEP website. This document provides the basis for direct bid funding by the LEP to central government. The document was informed by the work of the West Kent Partnership and the draft Borough Transport Strategy. It includes the junction of Yew</p> | <p>JN - Commission transport consultants.</p> |

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| <p>Tree Road / Speldhurst Road as a strategic requirement for Tunbridge Wells.</p> <p>RVH Feasibility Study – JN identified this as a critical component of work that needs to be commissioned before a decision can be taken regarding the future of the RVH. BW informed that AMUP recommended the appointment of a specialist cost consultant. Partners agreed that the brief for the Hub needs to be agreed by the next project meeting (within 4 weeks).</p> <p>DC advises that the consideration of ongoing revenue costs / business model are important considerations in evaluating future options for the building. JN requested copies of any building or asbestos surveys relating to the RVH.</p> <p>SW enquired about securing a motion from STC Full Council regarding the future of the RVH. It was agreed that this decision needs to be evidence based, and will be taken in due course.</p> <p>Public consultation – JW encouraged that further public consultation would be invaluable for the project, to ensure that the community 'buy-in' to the masterplan / concept, this will support easier progress through the planning process.</p> | <p>Partners to agree Hub brief and commission Feasibility Study.</p> <p>BW to provide a copy of surveys to JN.</p> |
| <p>6. Next steps / programme</p> | |
| <p>JJ was supportive of the requirement for STC to support the draft project management timescales, this may require the scheduling of extra ordinary Full Council meetings to provide timely decision making. BW and BJW agreed to provide JN with relevant Full Council / other committee dates, so that these can be incorporated into the project plan as it is developed.</p> | <p>BW and BJW to provide Full Council and other relevant dates to JN.</p> |
| <p>7. Key Milestones</p> | |
| <p>Detailed milestones to be confirmed in project plan.</p> <p>PO explained that STC needs to secure a legally binding agreement to ensure that the project will continue to be supported beyond the 2015 elections. DC expressed that a legal process could be undertaken, the complexities of potential agreements were briefly discussed by partners.</p> | <p>JW to seek further advice on legal agreements.</p> |
| <p>8. Approval Procedure(s)</p> | |
| <p>DC requested that all Council's approval processes are known and that delegated authority is achieved where possible. TWBC is to confirm political representation at the Hub project meetings, in addition to the attendance of officers.</p> | <p>TWBC political representation to be confirmed.</p> |
| <p>9. Scheduling of Future Meetings</p> | |
| <p>It was agreed that project meetings are now held every month commencing 6 May @ 5.00pm, STC offices. JW confirmed that he has remote access to BT MeetMe (telephone conferencing); a conference phone would need to be available.</p> | |

10. AOB

NB expressed his aspirations for good architectural quality within the Hub scheme. JN suggested that viability and finance will influence the architectural design / quality. JN identified that in due course, the appointed architects will work up detailed design proposals.

DC confirmed that s106 and other planning considerations including design will have to be negotiated with the TWBC Development Management team.

JP mentioned her concern regarding adequate parking provision. She recommends that there needs to be more provision (minimum 100 spaces). DC confirmed that the Tunbridge Wells Urban Area Parking Strategy is available online, this document provides a reference to inform the quantum of parking to be provided on-site.

<http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/residents/planning/planning-policy/evidence-base>