

Southborough Hub Inception Meeting

Minutes of meeting held on 13th December 2013 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 Graham Munn (GM) - STC
 Brenda Wickens (BW) - STC
 David Candlin (DC) - TWBC
 Bartholomew Wren (BW) - TWBC
 Chad Nwanosike (CN) -KCC
 Jonathan White (JW) - KCC
 Veronica Dorset (VD) - KCC
 Anthony Benson (AB) - AMUP
 Chris Bearman (CB) – AMUP

Apologies for absence

Cllr Stephanie Williams - STC

1. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising	Action By
<p>PO opened the meeting thanking partners for their attendance. The minutes of the meeting on 04.11.2013 were agreed, and all actions concluded.</p>	
2. Feedback from stakeholder workshop	
<p>AB delivered a presentation which was circulated in advance of the meeting. AB provided a review of the project brief, opportunity, policy context, stakeholder engagement, issues and opportunities as outlined in the presentation.</p> <p>AB summarised the three options that were presented at the stakeholder workshop. He concluded that the consultation and urban design work undertaken so far, supports the assumption that the RVH is broadly in the correct location. The key issue is to maximise the value of the remaining site to support overall viability.</p> <p>AB summarised the stakeholder event feedback as presented in the slides. The 4 most prominent response themes being:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The designs should consider any traffic / air quality impact carefully - Car parking provision should be kept as it is / improved - Open / green / recreational land should not be built on in principle - The Royal Victoria Hall should be retained / restored <p>A discussion followed regarding the significance of the top 4 themes given the total of 140 completed responses received. PO concluded that the themes should be considered within the context of the overall number of</p>	

<p>responses.</p> <p>PO asked for clarification regarding the area of field to be developed as part of the draft allocation. AB agreed to confirm following the meeting.</p> <p>JP expressed concern about parking capacity and the need for sufficient on-site provision. AB confirmed that the masterplan can be revised to accommodate an increased quantum of parking. 66 spaces being the replacement of Yew Tree Road.</p>	<p>AB to investigate.</p>
<p>3. Summary of viability advice</p>	
<p>AB summarised the approach to viability analysis as outlined on the slides. He reiterated that the three options presented, differ in terms of their approach to the retention and / or refurbishment of the RVH, as do their floorspace requirements for office, community, assembly and leisure uses. Option A and optimised option C are the most viable, but further work is required to define capital and revenue costs.</p> <p>A discussion followed regarding the viability of the options and the corresponding scale of the community facilities which are required. AB encouraged partners to consider the brief for the Hub as a next step.</p> <p>PO confirmed that KCC had a financial interest in the site and he was in discussions regarding this.</p> <p>AB confirmed that the work to date is land ownership blind in so far as values. The built form within the options does take account of landownership boundaries. JP expressed that the position of all landowners will need to be confirmed. AB confirmed that Tesco and Lloyds have not yet responded to communications. The masterplan is still too early stage, and perceives these commercial landowners will engage in due course.</p> <p>In summarising the advice provided by Knight Frank, AB concluded that the site may not be able to support the full requirement of planning obligation requirements, as defined in policy. Reconfirming that the viability work at this stage was not intended to identify future running costs, nor does it provide a break down of individual partner inputs. It is a high level assessment which provides evidence of the potential for a viable scheme.</p> <p>DC concluded that all options are potentially more viable, if the quantum's of community, assembly and leisure are appropriately defined. DC confirmed that he and BW would discuss with the Development Management team the likely parameters for required planning obligations.</p> <p>NB asked how soon feedback can be received from TWBC planning teams. BW confirmed that he has scheduled a meeting with colleagues' week commencing 16 December.</p> <p>BW confirmed that St Andrews Medical Practice have expressed an interest in occupying new premises on the Hub site, as their existing premises and site are insufficient to meet future needs.</p>	<p>BW to follow up with Planning team.</p>

4. AMUP recommendations	
<p>AB summarised masterplan related recommendations which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Need to maximise quantum of residential development - Increase the amount of public parking onsite - Do not introduce parking capacity improvements for neighbouring properties. - Commit to traffic management measures as part of future proposal <p>JP remained concerned about site access and parking. AB suggested that this will be explored further as the masterplan evolves; he confirmed that parking can be increased on-site.</p> <p>JJ and JP discussed the opportunity to provide additional off-street parking for the residents of Crendon Park. Constraints were expressed including potential parking layout and protected trees. DC suggested that an alternative would be to introduce parking controls in Crendon Park.</p> <p>CN confirmed that the junctions at Yew Tree Road and Speldhurst Road are critical, and are referenced in the TWBC Transport Strategy. PO asks if the junctions are a high priority for KCC. CN confirmed that the prioritisation of related modelling and design work is subject to senior level approval (John Burr).</p> <p>DC concluded that the project provides an opportunity to align the priorities of KCC property and highway teams. The potential for the library site to contribute towards the required highway interventions was discussed.</p>	
5. Final report	
<p>It was agreed that all partners would provide comments to BW on or before 6 January, for consolidation and response to AMUP.</p> <p>PO requested that the commercially sensitive material (Knight Frank) in the draft report should not be released into the public domain.</p> <p>JJ requested that a press release is issued. DC suggested that a press release can be agreed following receipt of the final draft, early in the new year.</p>	<p>BW to coordinate comments and respond to AMUP and Knight Frank.</p> <p>BW to coordinate press release.</p>
6. Next steps	
<p>AB summarised the strategic next steps, these include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Retain high profile of the project and feedback to the public - Review Draft Site Allocations Policy and explore the timing of SPD preparation - Commission transport modelling and junction design work - Define the brief for the hub facility - Commission a feasibility study to explore in depth options for the RVH - Open legal negotiations to agree land equalisation agreement 	<p>Given the complexity of next steps, these are to be agreed following the meeting.</p>

<p>PO thanked AMUP for the presentation, and concluded that it is now for the three Councils to agree the way forwards. He suggested that funding for further technical work should be pooled together, £25k each. PO explained that STC have a full Council meeting on 30 January, and wishes that consensus is gained to progress the project. DC confirmed that TWBC could be able to contribute financially with equal commitment from partners. VD to consider a funding commitment from KCC to enable further technical work.</p> <p>A discussion regarding committee cycles followed, it was agreed that decision making processes need to be considered to ensure that the project can move forwards.</p> <p>PO expressed that he wants to progress further cost consultancy work on the RVH, to confirm whole life costs for refurbishment / redevelopment options. JW conferred that STC need to be clear what their aims and objectives are for the RVH, further commercial advice will be required in terms of capital and revenue. KCC have wider experience in Kent – Eden Centre. It was agreed that partners need to discuss and clarify the brief for the assembly, community and leisure elements.</p> <p>DC confirmed that TWBC Planning Policy team will require an updated position from STC, to inform related emerging Site Allocations policies for Southborough.</p> <p>AB concluded that next steps need to be confirmed in the final report as this project draws to a close.</p>	<p>Partners to confirm funding support.</p>
<p>7. AOB</p>	
<p>None</p>	