

Cheltenham Development Task Force Board Meeting

03/14 (i)

Friday 11th October 2013 - 2.00pm – 4:15 pm
Pittville Room, Municipal offices, Cheltenham

Open Minutes of meeting

Present: Graham Garbutt (Independent Chair)
Stephen Clarke
Simon Excell (sub for Nigel Riglar)
Cllr Will Windsor-Clive
Cllr Rob Garnham
Bernice Thomson
Robert Duncan
David Oldham
Michael Ratcliffe
Cllr Andrew McKinlay
Ross Simmonds – sub for Andrew Vines
Jeff Brinley

Other: Wilf Tomaney
Craig Hemphill – sub for Tracey Crews
Jeremy Williamson
Richard Cornell
Andrew Heiron
Richard Cornell
Amanda Lawson-Smith

No.	Item	Action
59/13	<p>Apologies: Andrew North, Nigel Riglar, Diane Savory, Chris Riley, Howard Barber, Cllr Vernon Smith, Cllr Steve Jordan, Dorian Wragg, Andrew Vines, Andrew Willetts, Sarah Pullen, Tracey Crews, David Roberts and Mark Sheldon.</p> <p>Simon Excell would attend future meetings up until May 2014 as substitute for Nigel Riglar to avoid any perceived conflict of interest in relation to the Cheltenham Transport Plan and Nigel's TRO Committee role.</p>	
60/13	<p>Declarations of Interest – GG chaired Parish Council meetings relating to the JCS item 65/13. Cllr W-C and SE noted that they sit on the Local Transport Board.</p>	
61/13	<p>Minutes of previous meeting. Confidential minutes (page 3 - beginning of 2nd para) "<i>MS raised the issue ...</i>" should read MR rather than MS. Also (page 3 - beginning of 3rd para) – "<i>SC raised a final point ...</i>" should read Cllr SJ rather than SC. Both sets of minutes were otherwise approved as accurate.</p>	

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62/13	<p>Action Matrix and Matters Arising Items were either actioned, on the agenda or updated as follows:</p> <p>43/13 Junction Efficiency Trial JW explained that AH would cover the issue of some traffic lights not being on SCOOT as part of the County's mitigation plan under item 70/13.</p> <p>50/13 St Mary's update MR would raise the car park issue at the next meeting of the Minster Board when hopefully more present.</p> <p>51/13 Scheme developments JW been some application discussion – fairly pedestrian approach – sticking plaster / minimum approach – whether do trick? WT – bearly needs planning permission.</p> <p>53/13 Pubilc Realm group Relates to update on wall.</p> <p>In terms of matters arising:</p> <p>57/13 Cheltenham Hospitality Association letter JW circulated for info the response to Adam Lillywhite sent at the end of July; to date no further correspondence.</p> <p>43/13 LEP JW explained that neither he nor RD had been invited to represent the Task Force as involvement in the working groups was very restricted. MR felt the Task Force should be represented on the LEP Board, but JW confirmed that as a full member of the Board Cllr SJ already represented both Cheltenham and the district. Action: GG to write to the Chair of the Board to express disappointment at not having representation from the Task Force direct.</p>	GG
63/13	Confirmation of confidentiality of items – agreed.	
	Matters for Information	

64/13	<p>Local Enterprise Partnership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gloucestershire Infrastructure Investment Fund – GIIF In Cllr SJ's absence, JW explained that the funding criteria had been relaxed enabling a bid for the Gloucester Road site to be submitted. This had been positively received and JW was hopeful that works would begin on site within the next few weeks. Funding alloated for some schemes had not been drawn down so it was being re-allocated. SE confirmed further schemes being considered were Northern Quarter (Cinderford) and Kings Square (Gloucester). • Retail Pathfinder In DS's absence JW explained that Gloucestershire was still leading the way for LEP studies. A retail related meeting was taking place the following week. 	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth Plan 2015 – 2022 including Local infrastructure AL-S explained that from 2015 funding for infrastructure and maintenance related projects will pass from the County to the LEP to allocate direct. The County will have to produce a Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) for the LEP to forward the Government by 19th December 2013. A final draft version will need to be available by the end of March 2014. GCC will work with the LEP on major funded schemes that need including for funding post 2015. <p>It was highlighted that the Boots Corner scheme was LSTF funded, and could be for a further year through the LEP as it relates to economic growth to the County.</p> <p>JW stressed that this was a significant change to existing funding mechanisms, and for example funding previously provided through the Skills Funding Agency will also be routed via the LEP post 2015 as part of their skills agenda.</p> <p>The Chair questioned whether there would be an impact on the way funding is currently categorised? AL-S believed the existing policy would be retained but that if the LEP includes transport schemes the funding for those could not be spent on non-highway related elements.</p> <p>AL-S suggested that the Task Force set up a small working group to work on a bid proposal prior to the next meeting, stressing her concern that GCC funding would not be available post 2015. GCC would include Cheltenham in their own communications with the LEP and would use LTP3 as their evidence base. SE nominated AL-S, MR, WT, JW and himself to take part in a Task Force working group to take a bid proposal forward.</p>	SE,AL-S, WT,MR,JW
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Junction 10 SE explained that work on the A417, A419 and M5 Junctions 9 and 10 had been commissioned by the LEP and that draft report results were being checked for accuracy before issuing to the working group. The rationale for the work was to look at the economic benefit to the County for potentially funding the junction works. An additional £12k had been commissioned by the LEP into studies of business in that area. <p>Noted that GCC continued to liaise with the Highways Agency regarding the bridge repair works. No further action would be taken until after The Festival at Cheltenham Races in March 2014. The length of the works had been reduced from 52 weeks to between 30 and 35 weeks and would involve narrowing motorway lanes and reconstruction works to the A419. SE would keep the Task Force informed.</p>	

66/13	<p>St Mary's consultation</p> <p>BT announced that the fun day event on 24th August had been a hugely success event and estimated 500 people having attended, many of whom actually went into the Minster that had been opened for the day. The event raised more money than it cost to put on so no funding was required from the Task Force.</p> <p>An estimated 150 people looked at plans outside the Minster. 45 had left written comments and many provided feedback on specific elements of the proposals being consulted on, which was circulated to Board members for information. A number of people had signed up to take part in the action group including a local business and Dunnalley School.</p> <p>Next event would be bulb planting which the school children would be helping with. Media coverage had been excellent.</p> <p>Fund raising had begun and the Art Panel had allocated £20k for the green wall art installation. Discussions with Gloucestershire Environmental Trust had also taken place. JW believed such a project could secure flagship status with GETCo given its community involvement and wider benefits. RD stressed that the collapsed wall would be funded by the shop owners, with a contribution from the Borough but not the Minster.</p> <p>In response to a query about making the area an alcohol and drug free zone, BT explained that although already restricted alcohol was still an issue as the area is used by street and underage drinkers. To use the space in a more positive way would hopefully make misuse less likely, which was the whole point of the project. JW was meeting with Ben Lillie (the Minster Missioner) the following Monday and would encourage him to work with the project in helping to address the problem.</p> <p>A Quantity Surveyor was currently costing the wider scheme.</p> <p>BT explained that if the listed wall along Church Street could come down it would expose the cottages behind which were stone, not brick. Other options might be to lower or replace the wall with railings depending on what would be allowed. BT also hoped to thin the trees out if possible. RS could see the merits of what was being suggested but stressed the need to go through a proper process. Action: RS to speak with Inspector at English Heritage and to provide contact details to follow up.</p> <p>In terms of an update on car parking BT believed there could be a potential alternative to the previously discussed arrangements, by taking some space from the burial ground at the entrance, although this proposal was still in its infancy. Meanwhile, the cottage owner was allowing parishioners to park in his car parking area, but the issue would continue to be sticking point. The Chair stressed the Task Force's line remained firm and congratulated BT on the excellent work being carried out to date.</p>	RS
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67/13	<p>Joint Task Force, Civic Society, Architects Panel, Planning Team meeting</p> <p>The Chair reminded the Board that this issue had arisen from discussions at the last meeting about the perception that the quality of buildings on schemes being promoted by the Task Force could be better or different, and how best to challenge that. GG explained that although a good discussion took place it was not entirely conclusive. It was thought there might be a way of challenging developers about future developments through the pre-application process, and that a workshop might help test a range of processes to optimise such challenge. There could also be a debate about development that already exists in the town, and are people content with it, ie: is development in Albion Street too Regency but perhaps too modern in North Place? RS agreed that design was a difficult thing to challenge. Education was key he felt, stressing that pastiche would never be listed, but that good contemporary design that reflects character would work well in Cheltenham if it could be achieved by local architects. He would happily take part in a debate on the issue as suggested.</p> <p>In terms of raising standards for future development, SC spoke about the successful development of the Arts Centre in Parabola Road being a contemporary design and not pastiche. Cllr RG pointed out however that it had been designed for the existing occupier rather than for commercial use which put a different perspective on creating such a design. SC believed the Architect (Tim Foster) understood the principles of design and would be happy to come along and talk at a workshop. WT explained that English Heritage had carried out a case study which concluded that to achieve good design the key was to have a successful and strong collaborative process built around the architect, conservation officers and planners. Cllr RG had started a campaign to look at what training was required for members involved in planning to assist their understanding. The Chair stressed the importance of ensuring such training took place and it was agreed to move the matter forward as discussed.</p>	GG/JW
	Matters for consideration	

68/13	<p>Risk Group “Due Regard” statement concerning Cheltenham Transport Plan</p> <p>RC explained that “Due Regard” looked at equality and the need to consider the views of minority groups and how they would react to the proposed changes being carried out in Cheltenham as part of the Transport Plan proposals. A draft Equality Impact Assessment had been produced and circulated to demonstrate the County was meeting its legal obligations and how the document was still evolving. The Chair felt pregnant women would benefit from seating around Boots Corner and should therefore be moved to reflect that as a ‘positive’ impact. He also felt it was important to further promote cycling. WT also highlighted that a disability group had been established to consider Boots Corner proposals. Action: RC to revise draft document accordingly.</p>	RC
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69/13	<p>Emerging Public Realm strategy delivery proposals</p> <p>WT felt there was need to look at the areas that would be addressed through the Transport Plan via Civic Pride, and had started to undertake a rapid analysis of sites and responsibilities within the High Street locality. He would also get input from his economic development colleagues to help assess the physical character of the High Street area that had been split into 5 or 6 zones covering public realm and social and community related issues. The map was beginning to grow but the parameters were yet to be fully determined. He welcomed feedback from members of the Task Force as to what other information could usefully be included relevant contacts.</p> <p>JW saw it as an aide memoire providing a steer as to what's still required to further lift the public realm. The core focus on the High Street was from Beechwood Arcade to Brewery Phase 2, with these two anchors acting as bookends. Then from the West going into Lower High Street and East into The Strand.</p> <p>In terms of an alternative coach site layover for North Place, the southern end of Sherborne Street Car Park had been identified as a possible location. There would be linkages to the 'pedestrian way finding' providing a useful guide as to what's in the town.</p> <p>It was also noted that a 'walk about' organised by Richard Gibson for Thursday, 17th October to help assess the poor quality of housing above shops was worth linking into.</p> <p>SC queried how reactive and/or proactive the Council was being in setting policies to encourage owners to maintain such premises to a reasonable standard. WT was working with the Planning Policy Team to address the issue as part of the plan, but wanted to avoid promoting rent increases by raising standards too high.</p> <p>The Chair felt a very good start had been made but was not sure what other interventions were appropriate. WT stressed that if available funding is targeted for one area then the benefits multiply. JW believed an initial version would be completed in another month and suggested it then be circulated for comments by January. It would provide a good basis on which to move forward.</p> <p>MR suggested giving it to the Civic Society and Architects' Panel as a project, which the Chair felt was a good idea. Action: WT to bring back an updated version to the next mtg (24.1.14) in order to flesh out possible further engagements and interventions.</p>	WT
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The public part of the meeting concluded at this point