

Todmorden Town Centre Development Board

1st July 2015

Attendees:-

Councillor J Booth	Claire Butler (<i>Project Manager, Corporate Projects</i>)
Councillor S Booth	Mark Thompson (<i>Acting Director, Economy & Environment</i>)
Councillor B Collins	Andrew Pitts (<i>Head of Service, Neighbourhoods</i>)
Councillor A Hollis	
Councillor C Potter	
Councillor S Press	
Councillor S Sweeney (Chair)	

Welcome & apologies:-

Apologies were received from Councillor Battye, Joanne Gott and Robin Tuddenham.

Confirmation of Board membership, Town Hall Working Group and Terms of Reference

Board membership was confirmed as follows:

Calderdale Council representatives

Councillor J Booth, Councillor S Press, Councillor S Sweeney (Todmorden Ward Councillors)
Councillor J Battye (Calder Ward Councillor)
Councillor B Collins (Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Economic Development)
Councillor S Sweeney (Portfolio Holder for Communities)

Todmorden Town Council representatives

Councillor S Booth (Mayor)
Councillor A Hollis
Councillor C Potter

Cllr J Booth advised that she was stepping down as Chair of the Development Board and proposed Cllr Sweeney. Seconded by Cllr Press. A vote was held and the proposal was approved, with 5 votes in favour and 1 abstention (Cllr S Booth).

Cllr J Booth further advised that she was stepping down from the Town Hall Working Group and proposed Cllr Sweeney as her replacement. Seconded by Cllr Hollis. A vote was held and the proposed was unanimously approved.

[Post – meeting note: the Town Hall Working Group comprises 3 Development Board representatives, however a replacement for Cllr Rez was not discussed at the meeting. This is to be confirmed at the next Development Board meeting (18th August)]

It was noted that a Vice Chair also needed to be appointed for the Development Board. Cllr Press nominated Cllr Hollis. Seconded by Cllr Collins. A vote was held and the proposed was unanimously approved.

Action: Officers to send updated Terms of Reference to the Chair for signature

Further to an item which had been raised at a recent Calderdale Council Scrutiny Committee meeting, Cllr Collins asked Board members to consider and comment on a proposal to co-opt business and community representatives onto the Development Board.

Cllr Press supported the proposal as an opportunity to promote working together in Todmorden, but noted that any co-opted representatives would need to remain accountable to the organisation that

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they represented. Cllr S Booth confirmed that there is a working business association in Todmorden.

Cllr S Booth advised that it was important for representatives to reflect the demographics of the town, which has a large elderly population. Cllr J Booth agreed but noted that those board members with other community roles / involvement have the opportunity to provide input on their behalf without separate representation and it is important to keep Board numbers to a manageable level.

MT queried whether business and community representatives would have voting powers. Cllr Collins noted that the Board has a responsibility to manage public funds and on this basis it would be prudent for decision-making to remain with elected members, however the Development Board could, if it wished, set up a business-focussed Working Group (along the lines of the Town Hall Working Group).

After consideration the suggestion was agreed in principle and it was agreed that this should be submitted to Cabinet for approval. Board members were asked to consider business and community organisations for further discussion at the next meeting.

Action: Cabinet report to be submitted recommending co-opting of business and community representatives on to the Board

Action: Board members to consider business and community organisations for discussion at the next Board meeting

Agreement of minutes – 12th May 2015

Agreed.

Matters arising

Officers from the Tourism and Business & Economy teams are meeting later this month to review visitor accommodation options for Todmorden. An update will be provided at the next Board meeting. Cllr Press noted the “virtual hotel” concept may be helpful to consider as part of this discussion.

Action: Update to be provided at the next Board meeting

Officers reported that quotes are being sought to upgrade various sections of pedestrian railing within the town centre. It was understood that there was circa £5k funding available from Calderdale Council, and that Todmorden Pride had also offered to contribute. Cllr Potter asked if the project included the railings around the Town Hall and, if not, asked for these to be included.

Action: Officers to include the Town Hall railings in the project scope

Officers provided an update regarding the Cycle City Ambition Grant. It was noted that the Calderdale proposal seeks to upgrade the canal towpath between Todmorden town centre and Brighouse (with the exception of those sections which have already been treated as part of the development of the “Route 66” Calder Valley Cycleway) to a standard suitable for commuting, utility trips and leisure use. Works will comprise a combination of towpath reconstruction, wash wall reconstruction where required, and gateway treatment to link local communities into the cycleway. Towpath surface treatment standards are yet to be determined. The total value of the bid across West Yorkshire is circa £30million, of which between £3m and £4m will be spent in Calderdale. All government funding is to be spent by Spring 2018 and it was noted that opportunities to do construction works along the canal are limited by weather conditions and the need to keep the navigation open through the boating season, so this is a challenging 3-year programme.

Cllr Sweeney reported that a map had been produced to the Calder Ward Forum showing the proposed works.

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Action: Officers to circulate map to Board members

Cllr Collins noted that there had also been progress with the proposed improvements to the railway station access. Cllr Press reported that the feasibility study was complete and there is a meeting with Council officers in the next couple of weeks to progress options. Cllr Press further advised that the intention is to have a short-term solution in place within the next 6 months.

Cllr Press noted generally that there needs to be a greater focus on communications, and in particular local press releases.

Action: Officers to draw up a local press release to publicise the canal works programme and railway station access plans

Cllr Potter queried why the hoardings around the compound area could not be removed, as these are felt to be unsightly.

Action: Officers to request costs for clearing the compound area of any residual materials, removing the hoarding and making the area safe

CB reported that an additional oil heater had been ordered to address problems with the Town Hall lift. Delivery/installation date to be confirmed. Cllr J Booth considered this to be a design issue which should be taken up with the lift contractor.

Action: Officers to follow up with lift contractor

It was noted that there had been a fire at the bandstand over the weekend, but fortunately this had not caused structural damage. AP advised that officers were continuing to work with the community group to assess how to take forward the bandstand renovation project. Likely costs to rebuild the bandstand were thought to be between £25k and £30k, and it was thought likely there would need to be an asset transfer to enable the community group to access funding. Cllr S Booth asked if this would also be an option for the bowling green.

Action: Officers to approach Todmorden Town Council to review options

AP was pleased to report that the tennis court resurfacing had been completed in time for Wimbledon 2015.

AP reported that Environment Agency (EA) works in Centre Vale Park were believed to be complete, and the EA has provided a set of maps and other "as built" information to Calderdale Council. Future maintenance is still to be agreed between the EA and Council.

All other actions were covered by the main agenda items.

Rose Street

Officers reported that the developer had carried out various surveys of the site, including ecology and flood risk assessments, however a formal response is required from the Environment Agency before any draft site plans or layouts can be produced.

Cllr S Booth noted that there was some confusion as to the next steps, in particular at what point the site would be transferred to the developer and when a planning application for the development would be submitted. Cllr S Booth asked who owns the Rose Street site. Officers confirmed that the site is currently owned by Calderdale Council. It was further noted that the Council's Head of Legal had confirmed that the ultimate disposal of the land will be conditioned on the basis of securing planning permission, meaning that if permission cannot be obtained then the transaction will not complete and the land will not be transferred. MT advised that the Council could also require a reversion clause, whereby the land is transferred back to the Council if the proposed development

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does not go ahead.

Action: Officers to request a clear statement from the Council's Head of Legal on the process / next steps

The Board asked to see a draft site plan before any planning application is submitted, as it is essential to understand proposals for the public realm space. Cllr Collins acknowledged that it is important to respect the need for public space in the town centre and the impact on Todmorden Markets, and this needs to be looked at in a unified way.

Cllr S Booth stated that she understood the site had been bought for the benefit of the people of Todmorden. It was confirmed that this was not the case, and that Yorkshire Forward funding had been used to acquire the land for development. Following the disbanding of Yorkshire Forward, the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) are now overseeing the project, with regular updates from Council officers.

Cllr S Booth advised that she had seen a minute which stated that the sale proceeds from the disposal of Rose Street would not be ringfenced to Todmorden and that "not one penny" of the sale proceeds would be spent in Todmorden. Cllr Collins explained that although the sale proceeds from the disposal cannot be ringfenced to Todmorden due to Council financial policy this is not the same as saying that the funding will not be spent in Todmorden. Cllr Collins advised that there is also LABGI funding available for spend in Todmorden.

Cllr Potter advised that there is a need in Todmorden for more affordable elderly accommodation, and asked if more social housing could be provided. Cllr Collins noted that the Board had previously considered the outcome of feasibility studies into extra care housing and accommodation to support adults with learning disabilities on the site, following a unanimous decision from the Board to support residential development within the town centre. Cllr J Booth confirmed that the housing provider is not in a position to provide extra care accommodation in Todmorden.

Water Street

Officers presented an overview of the initial consultation plan and questionnaire which had been circulated to businesses on Water Street. Businesses had been asked two key questions : did they support in principle the pedestrianisation of Water Street, and did they support in principle additional loading restrictions for the street. It was noted that there was an equal split of responses in favour and against, with key concerns relating to access for deliveries/collection and the impact on the adjoining road infrastructure.

Cllr Potter asked if residents of the adjacent street (e.g. Dale Street etc) had been consulted. Officers explained that this had been a very initial consultation exercise to understand whether businesses saw there being any benefit in the proposals. The next steps would be to develop the plans further in light of feedback obtained from businesses, feedback responses to the businesses consulted, and then consult more widely with businesses and local residents either through a workshop, public meeting or similar.

Action: CB to take forward with Highways

Other sites

Officers provided the following updates:

Burnley Road (Abraham Ormerod / former cinema)

A landscaping scheme has been agreed for the site, and planning officers are currently seeking clarification from ASDA on the proposed timeframe. Separately, ASDA have commenced Japanese Knotweed removal treatment which will continue over a number of months with repeat visits and spraying.

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Halifax Road / Hope Street

Works commenced w/c 1st June 2015 and are ongoing to complete the following:

- Fencing to Halifax Road and Medical Centre boundaries (proposed to install 10ft site hoarding, painted olive green)
- Repair of existing fencing to the rear of the site (canal side) and side elevation/Rope and Anchor

The derelict building (not the substation) has been demolished. Planning officers will monitor the site and, following completion of the fencing works, will consider whether there is a need to enforce other aspects of the Notice. Cllr Press advised that the mounds are still very visible from buses and should therefore be levelled as part of the S215 Notice requirements. Cllr Sweeney noted that fencing to the back of the site was still to be completed, but hopefully when complete would help with the current waste tipping issues.

Cinderhill Mill

Planning officers have written to the site owner requesting that they either demolish or repair the building. If progress is not made within 14 days of the letter (which was sent on 25th June) then it is anticipated that a Section 215 notice will be served (subject to taking legal advice).

Action: Officers to provide an update statement for the public (press release and via the webpage)

Town Hall updates

Minutes of the last Working Group meeting were circulated.

AP reported that the HLF project is progressing well and the Heritage Centre opening is scheduled for 11th September 2015.

It was noted that a report had been submitted to the AM/FM Board recommending funding of circa £23k to be applied towards various key projects to improve the Town Hall. The Board endorsed the report.

Action: AP to liaise with Finance to allocate the funding

AP advised that officers are also now looking towards the next stage, which will look at how the town hall building could be opened up for greater use. This is likely to involve some reconfiguration works, and officers are therefore starting to investigate funding options.

Centre Vale Park

It was reported that the Alice in Wonderland event had gone well, although lessons had been learned in terms of advance consultation.

Finance update

A finance update report was circulated. It was clarified that there is still circa £450k of LABGI (Local Authority Business and Growth Initiative) funding available to the Board, which can be spent on capital or revenue projects. It was clarified that proposed corridor redecoration works within the Town Hall were being funded separately through Calderdale Council's asset management plan (AMP) budget, and not from the LABGI funding.

After consideration, the finance update report was accepted.

Date of next meeting:-

Tuesday 18th August 2015, 5 – 7pm Committee Room A, Todmorden Town Hall