

Todmorden Town Centre Development Board

22nd July 2014

Attendees:-

Councillor B Collins (Chair)	Claire Butler (<i>Project Manager, Corporate Projects</i>)
Councillor A Miles	Joanne Gott (<i>Programme Manager, Corporate Projects</i>)
Councillor S Press	Ian Gray (<i>Director – Economy & Environment</i>)
Councillor J Rez	Andrew Pitts (<i>Head of Neighbourhoods</i>)
Councillor S Sweeney	Robin Tuddenham (<i>Director for Communities</i>)
	Stephanie Furness (<i>Housing Project Manager</i>)

Apologies:-

Councillor J Booth, Councillor M Hatfield, Councillor D O'Neill

Welcome and Introductions

It was noted that there had been some changes to Board membership following the Cabinet meeting held on 14th July. Councillor Alison Miles was welcomed to the Board (replacing Councillor Janet Battye). CB confirmed that the Terms of Reference had been updated and issued to the webteam for uploading to the Todmorden Development Board webpage.

Agreement of minutes – 3rd June 2014

Agreed.

Matters Arising

Todmorden Development Board webpage

CB confirmed that the webpage had been updated.

Hope Street

IG reported that he has been liaising with Todmorden Pride regarding the site. Cllr Rez asked if the site was now back up for sale. Cllr Collins advised that Calderdale Council could not commit at this point to rebid for the site if this was the case, however he believed that some additional budget had been allocated to Todmorden (in addition to the LABGI funding) which could be used to support projects endorsed by the Board. IG agreed to check and confirm the position.

Action: IG to provide an update at the next meeting.

Todmorden Market Futures

CB reported that she had met with John Walker (Council Markets Manager) to discuss. The market trader group are keen to engage, but have not yet decided on a formal structure.

Action: JW to provide an update for the next meeting.

Cinderhill Mill planning application

CB reported that the application is still pending. Planning officers are awaiting further information from the application and some consultation responses.

Water Street pedestrianisation

CB reported that a Cabinet report has been drafted and issued to the Highways team for input. It is expected that the report will be submitted to the Cabinet meeting on 11th August.

Action: CB to submit report for Cabinet meeting on 11th August

Town Hall

AP confirmed that the HLF bid had been approved by the Board and submitted w/c 14th July. AP

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reported that the Town Hall had been well used during the Tour de France, with a number of activities taking place within the building. Councillor Rez agreed that there had been a lot of visitors in the Town Hall during the TdF events.

Town Centre Development Options

CB presented a number of slides to the Board outlining standalone project options for the following key town centre sites:

- Town Hall
- Indoor and Outdoor Markets
- Town square (incorporating Rose Street / Bramsche Square)
- Todmorden Community College
- Library
- Water Street
- Hope Street

Town Hall

The Board confirmed that they would be happy with the majority of the proposed options, i.e.:

- Locality hub (e.g. some Council services **excluding** library services)
- Venue for events, weddings and functions
- Tourist information / Visitor centre / Historic centre
- Exhibition & Art Gallery

It was noted that there are a number of constraints, including Grade I listed status and backlog maintenance requirements of circa £650,000. Councillor Sweeney highlighted that existing access issues would also need to be addressed to ensure there was equal access to all levels. CB advised that a second lift would likely be required to support increased use of the upper floors, which would enable the existing lift to be used as a service lift.

The Board were agreed that it is important to consider uses which will allow the building to be used during the day and also in the evenings, for example tea dances, salsa/other classes, theatre/cinema. The Board was also supportive of an element of commercial offer being incorporated to maximise use of the available space, including the cellar.

The Board asked how these project options tied in with the work of the Town Hall Working Group. AP confirmed that there was a significant consistency with the 4 priority areas for the Working Group which are as follows:

1. Building (e.g. lift refurbishment, WREN funding to repair statues and windows)
2. Maximising use (e.g. HLF bid)
3. Promoting the building (marketing)
4. Management of the building (currently via CMBC Library and Public Halls service).

The Board acknowledged the work done so far by the Town Hall Working Group and agreed that the Working Group be asked to develop some more specific plans / vision for the use of the building.

Action: AP/CB to liaise with Town Hall Working Group to develop a specific plan & vision for the use of the building

Indoor and Outdoor Markets

The Board agreed that Todmorden Markets are important assets which remain popular and profitable. It was acknowledged that there are considerable backlog maintenance costs for the Market Hall. Cllr Rez said that Heywood market had had similar problems but managed to turn

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things round. Cllr Sweeney explained that this was done with the support of considerable regeneration funding. It has not been possible for Calderdale Council to access similar funding.

There was a discussion around an option to replace the fixed outdoor market structure with more flexible “pop up” market stalls. The Board had mixed views on this. It was acknowledged that a more flexible outdoor market stall arrangement would open up the town square on non-market days (for example, for use as an events space). Cllr Collins advised that Calderdale’s general approach is moving towards having more flexible markets, and that the flexible market solution at Brighouse has proved very successful. The Board agreed that it would be good to see the outdoor market open for longer or at different times.

The Board agreed that any future plans for the Todmorden Markets would need to be aligned with the overall vision for the markets, and developed in conjunction with the market traders. Cllr Collins noted that it was critical to engage with the market traders and asked for a meeting to be set up as soon as possible. CB advised that John Walker is due to meet the group again in August and confirmed that she would liaise with him regarding this meeting.

Action: CB to liaise with JW regarding the meeting with Todmorden market traders.

Town square (incorporating Rose Street / Bramsche Square)

A number of development options for the town centre were tabled, i.e.:

- Residential
- Retail
- Restaurant
- Offices
- Formal community and town square space

The Board advised they would prefer to see some mixed use within any town centre development.

Cllr Collins asked if there were any updates regarding the supported living feasibility report which SF had previously presented to the Board. SF advised that there is now a greater demand for accommodation for adults with learning difficulties than for supported living. It was thought that a maximum of 8 apartments would be required to meet this demand.

CB reminded the Board of Resilienti’s retail proposal which had been considered previously. This was noted.

CB reported that there does not appear to be a clear market demand for extra office space within Todmorden, although this was included as an option as it had been raised at previous Board meetings.

CB also tabled some shorter term options to improve the appearance of the town square, and in particular the Environment Agency compound. The Board agreed that it would be preferable to remove the fencing and open up the space. IG advised that the EA have a lease over this area until September 2014 so any plans would need to be agreed with them.

Action: Officers (CB/Rachel Jones) to liaise with the Environment Agency

Todmorden Community College

CB explained that the building currently accommodates a Children’s Centre, Customer First point, Council Touch Down Space and a small number of Calderdale / Town Council staff, but circa 2/3 of

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the College building is empty. The building is expensive to heat, energy inefficient and with backlog maintenance requirements of over £500,000.

The Board agreed that the building is under-occupied and that the Council services currently provided from the College building would be more accessible if these could be co-located within the Town Hall and/or Library.

Action: CB to liaise with the CAFM team

Todmorden Library

It was agreed that the Library is an important asset, and that the building ideally should be retained and made fit for purpose and look to expand its offer to both the public and Council staff.

Action: As above

Water Street

It was noted that the Board had previously agreed to pedestrianise Water Street, which officers are progressing. CB tabled the option of “pop up” shops as a temporary use for any empty shops in the town centre, although after discussion this did not appear to be an immediate requirement for Todmorden as the town has very few empty shops.

Hope Street

Options for improving the appearance of derelict sites such as Hope Street were tabled, e.g. by installing site hoardings printed with images, opening up sites for temporary car parking or serving enforcement notices. As noted earlier in the meeting, it was agreed that IG would provide an update on Hope Street to the next meeting.

Action: IG to provide an update at the next meeting.

Wider Projects

Options considered included using branding/signage around the town centre more effectively, improving tourism and transport links, and providing more family-focussed activities. Cllr Press felt that some of the footpaths/ROW around Todmorden are not in the condition or as well signed as they should be, which is a concern when the natural environment/countryside offer is one of Todmorden's USPs.

Action: AP to follow up with Countryside Service

Cllr Rez reported that the Town Council is still waiting for a lease for the land for the skate park in Centre Vale Park. Cllr Sweeney also advised that there had been some misinformation reported to the last Todmorden Pride meeting with regard to the HLF bid for the Park and it would be helpful for AP to attend the next meeting to clarify the position.

Action: AP to follow up skate park lease with Legal Services

Action: AP to attend the next Todmorden Pride meeting (21st August) to clarify the position regarding the HLF bid for Centre Vale Park

Action: AP to provide an update on Centre Vale Park to the next Board meeting

AOB

Councillor Collins advised that Calderdale Council are currently developing a Neighbourhood Plan for Calderdale, and thought that it would be helpful to liaise with Todmorden Town Council who it was believed were already well on with developing their own Neighbourhood Plan. Councillor Rez confirmed that Todmorden are developing a full blown Neighbourhood Plan based on the existing Town Plan but fully co-ordinated across a wider range of organisations. Cllr Press advised that Hebden Royd Council may also have expertise that would be helpful.

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Action: Cllr Collins to liaise with Cllrs Rez and Press

Cllr Rez asked if there was any update following the recent incident at the Eastwood waste recycling station.

Action: IG to provide an update at the next meeting.

Date of next meeting:-

Thursday 4th September 2014, 5 - 6.45pm Committee Room A, Todmorden Town Hall.

Apologies were received in advance from Cllr Collins, Cllr Sweeney and AP.