

THE SEVERN LOOP LOCAL FORUM

NOTE OF DECISIONS AND ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 4TH FEBRUARY 2015 AT THE GUILDHALL, FRANKWELL, SHREWSBURY

Responsible Officer: Tom Brettell, tom.brettell@shropshire.gov.uk Tel 01743 252482

Committee Members Present:

Shropshire Council:

Andrew Bannerman

Mansel Williams

Shrewsbury Town Council:

Alan Townsend

In attendance:

Sgt Richard Coles, West Mercia Police

Helen Ball, Town Clerk, Shrewsbury Town Council

Tom Brettell, Senior Community Enablement Officer, Shropshire Council

Felicity Roberts, University Centre Shrewsbury

Dr Tim Jenkins, University Centre Shrewsbury

George Candler, Director of Commissioning, Shropshire Council

Steph Jackson, Head of Customer Support & Assets, Shropshire Council

There were approximately 18 members of the public present at the meeting.

ACTION:

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Anne Chebsey

3. DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

Members were reminded that they must not participate in the discussion or voting on any matter in which they had a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest and should leave the room prior to the commencement of the debate.

No interests were declared.

4. NOTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING & MATTERS ARISING

Agreed - Notes of the meeting held on 20th October 2014 be approved and signed as a correct record by the Chairman.

All matters arising were covered on the agenda.

5. UNIVERSITY CENTRE SHREWSBURY

Cllr Bannerman welcomed three members of the team working on the University to the meeting:

Prof Tim Jenkins, Programme Manager for the University gave an update on work currently underway:

- Planning permission has been granted and work is soon to begin to convert Mardol house into student accommodation consisting of a mix of studio flats and cluster living totalling 85 beds. This was a positive use of a redundant building. A tutor will also live in the building giving 24 hour security. Currently developing policy documents that will include a clear contract with students including details such as no parties or vehicles.
- A planning application is currently in progress to change the use of Rowley's House into office accommodation for the University. This will retain one of Shrewsbury's most iconic buildings in community use.
- A planning application has been made to convert the Guildhall into the main teaching hub. Currently working through the most efficient use of this space.
- There are tight timescales for these buildings given that the first undergraduates will enrol in September with the initial accommodation need provided for by Mardol house.
- Reassurance was given over the numbers of students- around 150 in year 1 eventually reaching 2,500 over 5-10 years.
- There is a significant advantage in being able to start from scratch rather than with many towns/ cities that saw a former Polytechnic grow quickly.
- Currently working on an accommodation strategy that will go to Shropshire Council cabinet in the Spring. Within this lots of consideration has been given to the town's conservation areas, the management of cars etc.

Felicity Roberts, Communications Manager for the University gave a brief overview of current work:

- Main part of role is sharing information about the University to ensure the public are aware of its work and activities
- Very keen to hear from people over any opportunities to work together or for communication
- Forming a community liaison committee with an initial meeting taking place tomorrow evening
- Rowley's House is now open 10-4 on most days except Wednesdays- people encouraged to drop in.

The audience were then invited to ask questions:

Q: Will there be a Students Union and refectory facilities?

A: A refectory will be provided at the Guildhall initially which has an estimated capacity of 350-400. We are currently investigating the most efficient way to do provide student's union facilities and we are potentially looking to work with an existing facility.

Q: Is the University looking to develop an out of town campus in future?

A: Have looked at lots of options and are now revisiting these with the main aim to develop a cluster of facilities. A report will go to Shropshire Council in late spring.

Q: Will the University take up 100% of the Guildhall?

A: Some residual use by current services including Customer Services and Registrars until the end of 2015. In the medium term the building will be 100% occupied by the University

Q: There are significant fears amongst residents and groups about the impact of houses of multiple occupation (HMO's)

A: The University and partners recognise the importance of this and already Shropshire Council has policies in place to prevent issues encountered elsewhere. The strategy to help deal with this will be included in the Cabinet report in the Spring. Again we are greatly helped by being able to start from scratch unlike other places that have struggled to cope with growth. Working with landlords is also key.

Q: The room partitioning for Mardol House seems to go across where the windows are?

A: We are working with the architects to look at solutions and can reassure that it will meet all regulations, acoustic testing to ensure most suitable accommodation possible. Already done testing to see what noise will occur during construction/ adaptation.

Q: Concern over the impact on traffic in town centre and on air quality which is already a problem

A: Students will not be allowed to have cars.

Q: Even without cars there may be an impact on transport/ road infrastructure?

A: We doubt whether it will be increased from current use and in some respects a reduction may occur as accommodation will be in the town centre. There are wider traffic issues within the town and the development of the University may help to tease these out and bring them to the fore and may have access to academics to help with this.

Q: How will the strict behaviour rules for students be implemented?

A: The University implements a 3 strikes and you're out rule. Will be lots of regulations and monitoring.

The guests from the University were thanked for their time and were invited to future meetings to provide further updates.

6. SWIMMING IN SHREWSBURY- UPDATE

George Candler, Director of Commissioning at Shropshire Council gave a brief verbal update on the work looking at swimming provision in Shrewsbury (a full presentation was given at the previous meeting):

- A brief recap over the context and background was given- the Quarry is an ageing facility with 2 pools built in the 1860s and 2 further pools added in the 1960s- a very well used facility with lots of club use- a fitness suite was added in 2010/11 in line with most centres as they help offset the high running costs of pools.
- The key objective of improved facilities is to get more people, more active more often. Inactivity is the key issue that we are looking to tackle and swimming is a proven way of achieving this.
- Whatever we do has to be financially affordable now and for the next 25 years which is the industry standard lifetime of a new pool.
- We've undertaken a conditions survey of the existing facility.
- To ensure objectivity and independence we have employed a leisure industry expert to develop options based on an agreed vision of 2 pools (a learner pool 17m x 10m with moveable floor giving lots of flexibility and a 25m x 8 lane competition standard pool), a minimum of a 50 station gym and water confidence facilities. The options are:
 - the existing site- a basic refurbishment, a substantial upgrade and a new build.
 - new build on other land within Shropshire Council ownershipAll options are based on current and future demand working with the Amateur Swimming Association (ASA) and Sport England. A business case for each option against key criteria including economic impact, build cost and running costs will be produced.
- We continue to have a good working relationship with the Quarry Forum and helped them to complete a user survey over Christmas that had a fantastic response, the results of which have been forwarded to industry experts. We have also facilitated meetings with the Forum and the ASA and SE.
- The report will be complete by end of March but the emphasis is on getting things right, first time and we will not sign off the report until it is fit for purpose
- We will undertake a 3 month consultation once this report is complete. This will predominantly be online to make analysis far easier but we will have measures in place to help people who can't do this. We will email all current users, undertake public consultation sessions such as with this Forum and will promote widely around Shrewsbury. It is critical to get the views of those who don't use the existing facility. We will test the consultation proposal with the Forum before going live.
- The results will be analysed and will form the basis of a cabinet report for the June Cabinet meeting with recommendations on which business case to develop further.
- Capital funding for a new pool is currently not in the Shropshire Council capital programme as no recommendation has been made as yet- the cabinet report will trigger this. We are confident of

attracting some external funds through Sport England.

George was thanked for the update and a number of questions were raised:

Q: Would the rebuild on the current site option mean no swimming provision in Shrewsbury during the build period?

A: This is likely -it is a build period of 18 months to 2 years. We could look to phase the works but this would be likely to increase the costs

Q: Why not go for 50m pool?

A: These tend to be in main conurbations and are much more expensive to both build and run. We have asked the Leisure consultants to look at the 50m option.

7. TEAM SHREWSBURY UPDATE

A brief verbal update was given on the work of Team Shrewsbury.

Q: There have been issues for some time in Old St Chad's Churchyard- what is Team Shrewsbury working on for this area?

A: it is a priority location, there were litter issues that are now largely resolved through the Tuesday morning Operational meetings. Have encountered some cannabis use but not class A drugs. The majority of the young people meeting there are very friendly but do have the effect of making the area look untidy. All STC staff have logs and of late no drug paraphernalia found.

Q: Cllr Alan Townsend confirmed that he was really pleased about this collaborative working but did have some concern over the benefit to the wider area and that this programme should be rolled out especially since the PCSO presence appears to have diminished.

A: We have initially concentrated on the town centre where the majority of issues occur. All the good practise we have developed can now be rolled out, for example in the recent work to counter a rise in graffiti tagging.

Q: Really important to have resident involvement in team Shrewsbury- how is this being developed?

A: The focus areas of work come from the police survey work with residents and from calls to agencies and to 101 and the ASB line. We will be undertaking some detailed survey work with residents in the spring.

Q: A major issue is noise late at night with a specific issue in the Bellstone area at present

A: a key facet of Team Shrewsbury's work is to ensure its priorities are responsive and this issue is being pursued at present. Police not currently receiving complaints directly and residents were encouraged to report issues via 101. Residents can take a premises to the licensing review or this can be done through the Councillor through public protection officers.

7. HAVE YOUR SAY

Cllr Bannerman opened up the meeting to the audience to ask any questions or to raise issues:

Q: Well over 29 major towns and cities use residents parking permits and this would greatly help Shrewsbury. The nature of the town with its many listed properties and narrow streets makes parking for residents challenging. This is a particular issue in areas such as Belmont, Fish street and the Quarry. This issue can impact on property values. A permit scheme would generate income for the Council, reduce and help an ageing population.

A: a scheme was introduced where Shropshire Council offered residents parking in 3 council owned car parks. Lots of complaints were raised and this scheme was clearly not fit for purpose. Cllr Bannerman is pressing for a review. This issue has been raised many times over history with the last

serious attempt undertaking 2 consultations that were inconclusive but cost lots of money. If going to issue permits you have got to have enough capacity to allow them to park and we cannot guarantee parking outside of the resident's house. The administrative costs involved are high and enforcement is a key issue- enforcement is very thin due to cuts. This scheme would need to be rigorously enforced. It was suggested that a review of the strategy including confirmation of how many people have taken up the off street offer be undertaken and an officer be invited to discuss this as a key item at the next meeting.

Q: is there any work underway to reduce traffic flow in the town?

A: some money made available towards an integrated strategy for Shrewsbury, particularly looking at key junctions around the town centre. A group of officers is now working on a scheme that will go out to consultation. This work is long overdue but need to look at it positively not negatively. It was agreed that this should be a future item for a meeting. Princes street is a disgrace at present. Cllr Bannerman publicly commended the police action in this area where 500 drivers in 1 week were spoken to.

Q: What is the current position with the Flax mill and what's happening with charging for the museum?

A: It was agreed to request an update on the Flaxmill. Not heard anything about a review of charging at the museum. Have got year 1 figures that have met financial projections. Will try to get figures on people who don't go beyond the entrance area and agreed to look at this at a future meeting.

It was agreed that an update on the Dana would be requested for a future meeting at that the Osborne Group would be invited to attend a meeting.

Cllr Bannerman thanked everyone for their attendance, particularly George Candler and Sgt Coles.

The meeting closed at 9:15pm.

Councillor Andrew Bannerman.

Signed:

Chairman

Date: