

Hebden Bridge Partnership

Minutes of management board meeting, held on Mon 6 June 2016 in HB Town Hall

Present: Bob Deacon, Andrew Bibby, Cllr Dave Young, Cllr Jonathan Timbers, Susan Quick, Stephen Curry, Thomas Bull, David Fletcher, Anthony Rae. Also present: Janet Battye, Hilary Chadwick, Helen Dziemidko, Myra James, Annie Conboy.

Apologies: Lesley Mackay, Paul Forrest; Fiona Pattison

1. Membership of the management board. The secretary reported that Cllr Fay Blackburn (Erringden PC) had contacted him, and had advised him that she was unable to take on the role of representative of the parishes on the Partnership. This position was therefore vacant.

2. Minutes of May 9 approved as a correct record.

3. Matters arising

a. 'Historic development'. Our focus now is on seeing this empty unit used. Dave Young reported that he had had an initial conversation with Mark Thompson (Calderdale director, Economy and Environment)

b. 20 mph roll-out. Myra James and Anthony Rae reported. It was agreed that the challenge was to make a cultural change in drivers' habits. Jonathan Timbers reported that Calderdale had originally planned to introduce severe parking restrictions in Church Ln/Mytholm Steeps but that this was now being reconsidered and a 'Keighley Rd' style solution being sought.

c. Market relocation. Dave Young reported. Plans had now been submitted for planning permission, but not yet validated. A meeting on July 28 might be the final meeting, although an ongoing market support group was also under discussion.

d. Tourism leaflet. Andrew Bibby asked if the canal towpath racks could be replenished. Bob Deacon undertook to contact Mike Troke.

4. Flood issues

Bob Deacon from the Chair introduced this item. He said there were three issues to consider. (i) In terms of the Flood Commission report, the Partnership's critical response had been submitted. (ii) In relation to EA stakeholder engagement, Bob detected a more positive response from the EA. The EA's Helen Batt had offered to be a guest speaker at the Partnership's July public meeting. (iii) The Flood Recovery Steering Group was reportedly considering a proposal at its June meeting which would open its meetings to the public.

Anthony Rae said that there was a danger of the loss of momentum and of opportunities for change, and that June was a critical month.

Stephen Curry echoed Bob's comments about an apparent new engagement from EA. David Fletcher was concerned at high river walls. Annie Conboy, as a local business owner, expressed her frustration at lack of consultation, and said she was getting information only through the Partnership.

It was agreed to accept Helen Batt's offer to address the July meeting. It was agreed to remind the Flood Commission of our submission.

5. Access issues

Andrew Bibby introduced this item, referring back to Susan Quick's desire (March meeting) to see Hebden Bridge as an exemplar in relation to access. He also referred to Jonathan Timbers' valuable experience in this respect.

The Partnership had discussed the fact that flood resilience work was in some cases making shops and public facilities *less* accessible. The Partnership had also been approached by Renny O'Shea, who had shared her experiences of living as a person with disabilities in the town. The Community Foundation had responded positively to the Partnership's approach, and had suggested that it could fund the local social enterprise Visits Unlimited to undertake an access audit, and thereafter consider grant funding for projects based on their suggestions.

Jonathan Timbers pointed out the need to tie in the Partnership's initiative with other local initiatives (particularly that relating to the Neighbourhood Plan). He asked that the cinema be covered in any funded audit, and also that opportunities for countryside walking be considered. Hilary Chadwick stressed that the focus needed to be not just on mobility difficulties but on other forms of disability as well.

Stephen Curry drew attention to some unsympathetic landlords. He argued that the Business Forum should be fully engaged, and this was agreed.

Jonathan Timbers suggested that existing good practice (for example, Aux Délices in Mytholmroyd) should be flagged up.

There was strong consensus that the Partnership should accept the Community Foundation's offer as the next step forward. It was agreed to seek to ensure that any audit focused on as many impairment groups as possible. It was agreed to seek an audit which not only looked at physical issues but also looked at possible solutions for example by inviting comments from shopkeepers on how they could better meet the needs of potential customers with disabilities. It was agreed that the emphasis would be a positive one, aimed at strengthening the attractiveness of

individual businesses and the town's public realm as a whole to visitors with disabilities, rather than adopting a heavy-handed prescriptive approach. It was agreed to extend the initiative to Royd Regeneration's area if this could be arranged. It was agreed that this would be progressed by Andrew and Jonathan, with input from Susan Quick.

6. Valley Rd.

Declarations of interest: Stephen Curry and David Fletcher declared an interest in this item, since they both were potentially interested in progressing discussions with the developer independently of the Partnership. (They remained in the room for the discussion which followed.)

Bob Deacon introduced this item from the chair. A representative of the developer Eshton Gregory had met three representatives of the Partnership (Bob, Dave Young and Andrew Bibby) after the May meeting, and the Partnership's proposal for the former fire station site, together with the market square, had been put forward. Cllr Barry Collins (portfolio holder for economy and environment) had also been at the meeting. Eshton Gregory had advised that they had their own proposal for the site, for housing, which was at final stage of being drawn up. They did however offer to ask a QS to price up the Partnership's proposal. Bob Deacon reported that he had heard that day that, following this work, Eshton Gregory did not consider the Partnership's proposal commercially viable.

While this outcome was to some extent predictable, and was predicated among other things on Eshton Gregory's own valuation of their land, there was a sense that the developers were moving inexorably towards submitting their own proposal. The housing proposal was seen as considerably better than the Sainsbury's planning application, but the meeting expressed its disappointment that the opportunity to see a landmark development on such an important site had apparently not been realisable. It was agreed that the Partnership had done all it could in this respect, over a number of years, and that the underlying problem had been the original sale of the fire station site to a private developer. One further meeting will take place on Wednesday 8th with CMBC and Eshton Gregory. The view was expressed by Hilary Chadwick that the Partnership should make a public call to seek a more sympathetic developer and to engage the town in the process. The Chair expressed the view that, regrettably this was unlikely to be useful at this late stage.

Anthony Rae, who was separately inviting community ideas for the whole site as part of the Neighbourhood Plan consultations, asked for it to be minuted that he had not taken part in the discussion on the proposed housing plans. A Neighbourhood Planning statement concerning the kind of development that would be seen as

favourable on the site(s) arising from their consultations may be published later in June.

7. Governance issues

Andrew Bibby introduced his report, previously circulated. He advised the meeting that the AGM would be held on 24 October in the Waterfront Hall. It was agreed that the AGM would follow the usual format.

In relation to the Partnership's current complex management board structure and voting procedures, it was agreed to consider this further in September.

It was agreed that a chair's letter would be sent to members of the Partnership, inviting them to consider putting forward nominations for the Partnership board.

8. Officers' report

a. The Treasurer's report (pre-circulated) was noted. The chair expressed his concern at the lack of financial resources in the period ahead, and it was agreed to discuss possible solutions in September.

b. There was no business reported by the Secretary

9. July General Meeting (July 4)

It was agreed to have two guest speakers, Helen Batt from the EA, and Pete Myers, Client and Stakeholder Manager for Northern Rail, who had offered to attend, to discuss the implications of the new railway franchise for the Calder Valley line services.

10. Future meetings

It was agreed to meet as a Management Board on Sep 12, Oct 10, Nov 7 and Dec 5.

There was no further business.