

Notes of a Meeting of the Surrey Heath Villages Working Group - 2 December 2020

Members Present:

Cllr Rebecca Jennings-Evans
(Chairman)
Cllr Graham Alleway
Cllr Sharon Galliford
Cllr Ben Leach
Cllr Sashi Mylvaganam

Cllr David Mansfield
Cllr Morgan Rise
Cllr Victoria Wheeler
Cllr Valerie White

In Attendance: Cllr Emma-Jane McGrath and Cllr Helen Whitcroft

Officers: Daniel Harrison, Teresa Hogsbjerg, Kate Noviss and Darren Williams

8 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received for Councillors Paul Deach and Tim FitzGerald.

9 Notes of the Previous Meeting

The notes of the meeting held on 23 September 2020 were agreed by the Working Group.

10 Declarations of Interest

As per the Members' Code of Conduct Councillor Valerie White declared a non-pecuniary interest in that she was the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Bagshot Village Community Library which leased part of 63A The High Street, Bagshot.

11 63A High Street Bagshot

The Group received an update as to progress on the 63A The High Street, Bagshot proposal since the Group's last meeting.

Since September, the draft consultation survey had been circulated and further surveys and development appraisals of the site had been conducted. However, it had been found that the size of the proposed Community space was in fact smaller than previous first thought. It was put into context for the Group that the size of the space was 17 Square foot plus a small kitchen at the back of the space and that the overall space was comparable to a large office; only realistically lending itself to use as a training and meeting room or space for small mother and baby groups.

It was noted that the space was a similar size to the existing barbers and community library; and that some sort of kitchen facilities had to be included in the plans to fulfil the lease agreement that the barbers and library still had in place. In

addition, the Group acknowledged that as part of the scheme the existing basement would be levelled out.

The Group considered the planned residential units, which were proposed to site above the Community Hub and the existing businesses and would fund the creation of the Community Hub. The Group noted there was a balance to be struck between the need to provide affordable housing and income generation which would support the business case.

The Group considered the potential for the Community Hub to be twinned or connected to the Wellbeing Centre at the back of the Windle Valley Day Care Centre which was currently under-utilised during evenings and weekends. It was suggested that as the Wellbeing centre comfortably held 30 seated together with kitchen and toilet facilities, pairing the venues could allow an event space at Windle Valley to be complimented with a Coffee and Digital Hub space at 63A, the High Street.

Having discussed the size and thereby potential uses of the Community Hub in the Ground Floor of 63A the High Street Bagshot; and its potential to flow over the 2 venues; Members felt they needed to evaluate the proposal with different potential floorplans and development appraisals which would aim to maximise the size and flexibility of any Community Hub.

Furthermore it was concluded from discussions that options for residents in the consultation questionnaire should not be limited to opportunities which would fit to the 63A High Street Ground Floor space; given the potential opportunities to use the feedback for consideration of other future projects. It also was agreed that the consultation should take place in January rather than December to avoid Christmas.

RESOLVED that

- i. a consultation on the 63A The High Street, Bagshot Community Hub proposal be conducted starting in January 2021; and**
- ii. the Working Group receive alternative development proposals for the site at its next meeting; which aim to maximise the potential floor space of the Community Hub.**

12 Community Transport Pilot

The Working Group received an update on the potential Community Transport Pilot in the Villages and were informed that the project now had greater potential given the approved Community Services Partnership with Runnymede Borough Council.

It was explained to Members that the pilot was first discussed in 2018 with the Borough's Parish Councils. Whilst goals of the pilot being self-sustaining, blending cost-sustainability and social merit were established; it was recognised from discussions with the Parish Councils that a circular service through the villages wouldn't work. Since previous consideration; Surrey County Council had made a green transport funding scheme available which could provide capital funding for ultra-low emission vehicles and associated facilities for the project.

Members suggested various potential concepts for the pilot which included the following ideas:

- A service from the villages to Camberley Theatre which could be booked in combination with a ticket to the pantomime or other Camberley Theatre events.
- A timetabled weekend leisure and recreation service between the Villages and Camberley Town Centre and the new Camberley Leisure Centre.
- A demand responsive service to local GP surgeries and potential Frimley Park Hospital.
- A timetabled loop which included all 6 villages, GP surgeries, Camberley Town Centre and Frimley Park Hospital.
- A 6 Villages loop, which would aim to improve the inter-connectivity of the Villages; and promote accessing shops and services from different villages.
- A service between Lightwater, West End and Bisley; and Brookwood Station at the weekends to add to the existing service to Brookwood Station on weekday mornings and evenings.

Following discussions, it was noted at the moment the Council's Community Transport Service was mixed and consisted of Surrey County Council School Transport services which subsidised services which aimed to tackle social isolationism within Surrey Heath. The latter already included on-demand services to hospital and doctors appointments; and possible 'referral and book transport' schemes to Frimley Park Hospital had already been discussed in the past.

There was also a recognised need to make use of existing services, such as the already existing service between Brookwood Station and the Three Villages, and to better utilise the existing Surrey Heath and Runnymede fleet of vehicles before the considering of the expansion of the Council's fleet.

It was felt in order to evaluate the merits of any pilot, the Group would have to reanalyse the data which was collated when Windlesham Parish Council first considered the pilot in 2018. In addition it was reaffirmed by Officers that any Parish Council were able to partake in the orchestration of the pilot if they were willing to engage and pledge a part of their budget towards the project. Therefore it was agreed to receive the 2018 survey results and statistics at the Group's next meeting and reconsider the pilot with potential partners in the form of the Surrey Heath Parish Councils.

RESOLVED that at its next meeting

- i. the Working Group receives the survey results and statistics from when the community transport pilot was first considered in 2018; and**
- ii. the Group reconsiders the community transport pilot in the form of a large timetabled loop service of the villages; and**
- iii. partnership for the pilot with the relevant Parish Councils be explored.**

13 Other village specific issues

The Group considered coverage of the Surrey Heath Villages in the Council's Heathscene magazine and the Council's economic development work.

Heathscene

The Group were reminded that Heathscene was primarily a magazine to promote and update residents on the Council's service provision and was not a Community magazine. However there was an acknowledged potential for the magazine to promote the larger community-led events taking place in the rural areas of the Borough.

The Group felt that the magazine sometimes felt Camberley-centric and that Heathscene could be more inclusive by promoting events taking place around the villages; and by encouraging residents to travel round the Borough to access different shops and services within the villages.

It was suggested that whilst there were very few events currently planned in the villages because of the social distancing restrictions, liaising with local residents' associations was a good route to identify planned events to feature in Heathscene. In addition it was suggested that Heathscene could advertise and promote existing Surrey Heath and Surrey County Council services in the Villages such as the bus route between the 3 Villages and Brookwood station.

Economic Development

It was reported to the Working Group that the Council's Economic Development Team struggled to engage with the businesses from the rural parts of the Borough and it was felt Members had the potential to help encourage local businesses to engage and tap into the resources and offering of the Economic Development Team. It was highlighted that currently the Surrey Heath Business Newsletter had few features highlighting the businesses within the Surrey Heath villages; and that engagement with the villages' business associations via Ward Members could be a route to a stronger relationship between the Council and its local businesses. It was agreed that the Economic Development Team would produce a brief for Members to go out and engage with their local business associations with the goal of getting businesses in their Wards making use of the Council's business support provision.

Moreover, the Group suggested that the Council's Business Advice services and contact details for the Economic Development Team needed to be more easily accessed and headlined on the Council's website. It was also suggested access via Google to the business support services also needed to be improve.

RESOLVED that the Working Group be supplied with a brief to take to their wards' Business Associations to encourage their businesses' to engage with and make use of the Council's Business Support Services.

14 Date of next meeting and any other business

The Group were advised that the next scheduled meeting of the Group would be on 10 February 2020.