

HEREFORD CITY COUNCIL
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE 5th March 2019

MINUTES OF MEETING

Present Councillors Edwards, Hey, Kenyon, Rone, Wilcox

In attendance Steve Kerry Town Clerk, Tracy Morriss Deputy Town Clerk

In the absence of the chair, the Vice Chair Councillor Hey chaired the meeting and reminded all present of the fire evacuation procedures.

CD2018/19.117 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were noted from Councillors Bushkes (Chair), Lloyd-Hayes, Stevens and Tillett. In addition, Councillor Michael, who had been appointed as substitute for Councillor Stevens, had sent apologies.

CD2018/19.118 APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTES

Councillor Lloyd-Hayes had appointed Councillor Wilcox as substitute.

CD2018/19.119 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were made at the start of the meeting.

CD2018/19.120 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Councillor Hey drew to members' attention an email from Councillor Tillett querying the minutes of the meeting of 18th February in respect of his comments on minute number CD2018/19.98. Members present at that meeting confirmed that the minutes were consistent with their recollection of the meeting and the Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that there was no recording of that meeting.

It was then proposed by Councillor Edwards, seconded by Councillor Hey and

RESOLVED That the minutes of the meetings of 18th February 2019 and 22nd January 2019 are agreed as an accurate record and that they be signed accordingly by the Vice Chair of the Committee.

CD2018/19.121 HALO LEISURE LTD – COSED CIRCUIT CYCLE TRACK APPLICATION

The Vice Chair welcomes Mr Alex Haines from HALO to present the application.

Mr Haines reminded members of the background to the project which started merely six years ago with copious support from many local clubs. British Cycling and Sport England had both changed their structure and revised their grant criteria and budgets lately which had held up the project in Hereford. Now a large application had been made to British Cycling's £15m fund. HALO were among the first people to make an application and a decision was expected in twelve weeks. If this

application, for £400,000, was successful the project would be able to proceed with the other funds pledged were available. It was therefore timely for the Council to be asked if it could make a further grant to support the construction, having previously grant funded the design and planning application processes.

The proposal is for a track which will support local children learning to ride safely in an off road setting, schools to use for cycling safety training and general exercise and fitness and for clubs to use for both training and competition. Clubs in the area were at present using a track in Stourport and there was evidence that a good track in Hereford would not only meet local needs but also draw competition cyclists from Shropshire, Monmouthshire and Powys.

The possibility of obtaining funds from British Cycling for around 50% of the cost of the project has breathed new life into it. Despite a long delay, interest has remained high and the same enthusiasm that was evident when this idea was first suggested is evident now.

Councillor Kenyon added that there was a great deal of support from local businesses for this project and identified the following:

Weston Cider, Next Step Veterans, TPG Disability Aid Ltd, Level Peaks, Hereford Brewery, Ellis Properties, Tudors Building Supplies, Wye Valley Brewery, Miro's, Coffee Cart, ELY, Express Bathrooms and kitchens, HR4K, Providence, Burghill Golf Course, Hereford Cycle Hub, Hereford Cycle Club, Climb On Bikes, ABC Print, with several others pending.

Councillor Hey asked if Councillor Kenyon should declare an interest given his close involvement with the project. The Clerk confirmed that it is up to each member to decide individually if they should declare an interest. If a member had a financial interest in a matter that must be declared, and it was a criminal offence not to. This did not apply in this case as Councillor Kenyon had no financial interest in HALO. If a member was so closely involved with an organisation applying for a grant that the general public might reasonably believe they had pre-determined the matter and were not capable of reviewing it objectively, then they should declare a non-pecuniary interest. Councillor Kenyon confirmed that he felt he was well able to be objective about this matter, and did not wish to make a declaration.

In answer to questions for members the following points were noted.

The level of ongoing support during the delay waiting for clarity from British Cycling has been encouraging. A recent You Tube posting appeared to show only 13 people present whereas there had been over 40 at the launch meeting. Mr Haines pointed out that the meeting was arranged at very short notice, and that one person present represented an organisation with some 200 local members. There are over 800 Facebook followers supporting the project. Consultation and Roadshow information gathering events had confirmed an ongoing level of support for cycling generally and the track in particular.

There will be proper arrangements for managing the use of the track and it was confirmed that there would be specific sessions for family use, basic training for children, more advanced training for sports cyclists, use by cyclists with disabilities and competitions. There was also a one way system to avoid any conflicts in use. This would all be managed by HALO.

There was added value for the community in the proposal through access to schools, although some issues around transport and supervision might limit this, encouraging older people back into cycling and supporting local clubs.

The covenant referred to relates to a piece of land which is covered by a restrictive covenant which is preventing its disposal by Herefordshire Council. Cllr Bramer, the cabinet member for resources, has confirmed that Herefordshire Council are confident that they can get the covenant lifted and when the land is disposed of the proceeds will provide the £100,000 referred to. The S106 contribution is from the market value element of the Bath Street site redevelopment, two thirds of which is social or affordable housing, and has been orally agreed by the officer responsible. If possible, written confirmation of both these matters will be available when Council considered any recommendation from the committee.

Councillor Kenyon acknowledged that at the very start of this project he had stated in public that he did not envisage that this would require any public funding. He felt he had been naïve in making that statement and confirmed that it had not been correct.

It was noted that the application refers to a 1.5km track, with the option of scaling back to 1 km if funds are not available for the full project. Mr Haines stated that 1.5km (a near mile) was required for full competitive use and was the intention. However, a 1km track would have some competitive use and would still meet the other objectives around community use, children's safety training, health and recreation etc. It was also possible to value engineer the outline bids received, for example both on fencing and lighting bidders had put forward expensive solutions and cheaper ones might be possible. The figures were not firm estimates, but were sufficiently robust to be the basis for grant applications.

It was noted that many towns and cities in Europe prioritise facilities of this kind because of the proven health benefits from cycling.

There was considerable discussion about the extent to which this application is currently relying on pledges of funds, offers contingent on settlement of other matters such as a S106 agreement or the release of a covenant and most importantly on the response of British Cycling who were being asked to fund around 50% of the project cost. All present also acknowledged that the project was important, would bring considerable benefits to the community and they would wish to encourage and support it, provided the Council acted prudently given the uncertainties noted above.

Councillor Wilcox proposed that the matter be deferred and considered again when the outcome of British Cycling's deliberations was known, and to enable a properly financed business case to be prepared for consideration. There was no seconder and this was not put to a vote.

Councillor Rone proposed, Councillor Hey seconded and by three votes to nil with two abstentions it was

RESOLVED

That the Committee recommends to Council that a sum of £50,000 be taken from the general reserve and held in an earmarked reserve for up to two years and that the funding be released to enable the project to proceed when sufficient funding from other sources is confirmed and available to deliver the whole project.

CD2018/19.122 STREET SCENE INFORMATION ITEM

The Deputy Clerk explained that this was a report to advise members of the progress made by Vennture, with a good level of support from Balfour Beatty in raising the standard of the street scene towards the level achieved on Hereford in Bloom judging day. It was noted that the support from the Hereford BID has not been so encouraging.

CD2018/19.123 ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

It was noted that item regarding a Ward Asset register, together with any decision of Council on the motion regarding milestones would be incorporated into ward reports to avoid an onerous workload. A proposal would be presented on 2nd April.

Confirmed that progress reports on Community Led Plan priorities would also be on the 2nd April agenda.

CD2018/19.124 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Tuesday 2nd April 2019 General Business

Monday 8th April 2019 Grants Meeting

There being no further business, the Vice Chair declared the meeting closed at 7:10 pm

Signed

Dated