

CONFIDENTIAL

Margate Seafront Development Steering Group

Wednesday 22 January 2014 – 2.00 pm

Minutes of meeting

Attendees:

- | | | |
|-------------------------|---|---|
| Kent County Council | - | Mike Hill (MH), Stephanie Holt (SH),
Barbara Cooper (BC), Rebecca Spore (RS),
Donald Farquharson (DF), Jo Weatherley (JW) (notes) |
| Thanet District Council | - | Clive Hart (CH), Sue McGonigal (SMcG),
Madeline Homer (MHo) |
| Turner Contemporary | - | Richard Morsley (RM) |

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Amanda Honey.

2. Minutes of meeting held on 31 July 2013

The minutes of the meeting held on 31 July 2013 were agreed.

3. Rendezvous Site

Rebecca Spore (RS) updated the group on the Rendezvous Site. The attendance and coverage of the launch was good and the plans were also displayed at Thanet Gateway. The responses have not been overwhelming (a breakdown of the responses received is attached). The outline planning application is being put together and this is taking longer than anticipated. Since the event and launch, market sounding has been undertaken by Christie & Co (consultants for the project). Feedback has been that this is an interesting idea but there are concerns over the long-term viability of the project. There has been positive feedback on the retreats but to make the hotel a viable business opportunity it would need 100 bedrooms.

RS explained that Guy Holloway had developed the plans to compliment the Winter Gardens and Turner Contemporary. There would be an impact on construction costs if the building was broadened rather than building an additional storey. Christies have categorically responded that it would be very difficult to find an operator who would be willing to invest in a hotel smaller than 100 rooms. Christies have contacted many different developers for their opinions (including niche operators) and they are all of the opinion that the hotel needs to have 100 bedrooms. Discussions have been held with Warbird who are working with Property, Guy Holloway and local partners as to a hotel development that could work on the site. There is a need to better articulate "the holistic story" of Margate's developments going forward so as to give potential investors greater confidence.

Clive Hart (CH) commented that this was a contradiction to what was first proposed as the advice given was for fewer bedrooms rather than more and the agreement was for three floors, not four. He expressed concern over a proposal for the additional storey and felt it may be difficult obtaining planning permission.

Richard Morsley (RM) felt that the Turner Contemporary Board Members would need to be consulted on any changes proposed. There are concerns over size, scale, quality and the long term financial sustainability.

Barbara Cooper (BC) stated that this was always going to be a difficult site. She understood that operators would like 100 rooms but would like to know the risks involved. BC will liaise further with Visit Kent regarding bespoke models of hotel development that are happening organically in Margate, and how they might impact a Rendezvous site hotel.

There is a general confidence issue and a way forward needs to be found. Guy Holloway is keen to speak to Thanet District Council and engagement is needed with Turner Contemporary. The Leader also needs to be briefed on the issue by Property and shown any proposed designs.

It was agreed that Guy Holloway would look at the design again with regard to the additional bedrooms and discussions would be concurrently held with Warbird.

This item will be discussed at the next meeting.

4. Winter Gardens

Stephanie Holt (SH) updated the Group on the Winter Gardens. FEI produced the first stage report on Dreamland Cinema/Winter Gardens and agreement was made at the last meeting to proceed with the second stage report. A meeting was held in early September between Thanet District Council and Kent County Council to talk through the stage 1 report and to look at ways of moving forward with stage 2 of the Winter Gardens and the Dreamland Cinema. Sally Abbott has been recruited as a consultant by FEI for this project.

Madeline Homer (MHo) expressed concerns previously that the options around the Dreamland Cinema were not fully worked through in Stage 1 report and recommendations. MHo agreed with Amanda Honey subsequent to the last Margate Seafront Development Steering Group that Stage 2 proceed but only with the Winter Gardens. KCC has been looking to draft Stage 2 terms of reference since then, but any Stage 2 must include access to Dreamland Cinema site and programming as the two venues are naturally complimentary/could have competing offers. Efforts to draft/prepare Stage 2 commission were paused for the month of December whilst Property's new advisor (David Booth) revisited the Margate 'picture' vis a vis the Rendezvous Hotel but with a clear remit of considering the widest plans for the town as they naturally impact on the Rendezvous potential.

MHo agreed to arrange access to the Dreamland Cinema site so that FEI can revisit the recommendations of Stage 1, and confirm or adjust those for consideration at the next Margate Seafront Development Steering Group. The stage 2 brief will then be prepared.

Thanet District Council is unsure of the programming intentions for the cinema and anticipate going to tribunal regarding the Cinema site (this could take a number of years). It is imperative that in order not to impact on negotiations any information must be treated confidentially.

5. Dreamland Development

MHo updated the group on the Dreamland heritage amusement park development. Dreamland Trust has appointed Eddie Kemsley as the Project Director. Work has begun on site and it is still intended that the scenic railway element of the park will be open in 2015. The budget is challenging as this is a complex project and additional funding has been requested from the Heritage Lottery Fund. Funding and sponsorship strategies are being looked at. Thanet District Council is keen to get an operating company on board. A discussion is required with Highways to see if it would be possible for 60s style

street furniture to be built at the entrance of Dreamland. MH advised this may be possible, but that the Trust may have to fund this.

6. Margate Harbour

There has been concern regarding the appalling smell in the harbour. It was thought that this was due to an influx of seaweed collecting on the coast but there is also a problem with the make-up of the sand and underground gases. Engineers have looked at the problem and a number of surveys have taken place but no resolution has been found.

This problem has resulted in an impact to visitors at Turner Contemporary. RM mentioned that Thanet District Council has been helpful with moving the seaweed.

It was suggested that Property investigate whether any studies have been made on this problem. RS will speak to the contractors and a meeting will be arranged to discuss the issue ahead of the next Seafront Development Committee (the meeting to involve RS, BC and MHO - RS will coordinate). This issue will be discussed at the next meeting.

7. Any Other Business

Visioning

It is important to increase the market's confidence in Margate and a clear plan is needed. It was felt that the report produced by KCC's Jo Purvis could be used as a starting point.

CH expressed that one of the major issues is that there is an area of deprivation just 100 metres from the Rendezvous/sea front site. Donald Farquharson (DF) said that there are many similar areas in London and proactive media is required to make a difference. There is a need to put out a concerted message. Turner Contemporary has done an excellent job in generating media coverage range and Seven Hills has provided quality press for Margate. It is now important to find ways of building momentum.

An approach to increasing market confidence is required. It was suggested that the report by Jo Purvis be reviewed. This issue will be discussed at the next meeting.

Theatre Royal Margate

MH asked to fully briefed by TDC and KCC on the recent developments around Theatre Royal.

8. Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be arranged in March (JW to arrange).

Jo Weatherley
Executive Assistant to the
Cabinet Member for Community Services

4 February 2014