

CONFIDENTIAL

Margate Seafront Development Steering Group

Monday 3 November at 3.00 pm – Cabinet Room, Sessions House

Minutes of meeting

Attendees:

Kent County Council	-	Mike Hill (MH), Barbara Cooper (BC), Rebecca Spore (RS), Donald Farquharson (DF), Paul Mawson (PM), Tony Witton (TW), Sarah Wren (SW), Jo Weatherley (JW) (notes)
Thanet District Council	-	Cllr Iris Johnston (IJ), Cllr David Green (DG), Madeline Homer (MHo)
Turner Contemporary	-	Victoria Pomery (VP)

1. Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

2. Minutes of meeting held on 28 July 2014

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 July 2014 were agreed.

3. Rendezvous Site

Rebecca Spore (RS) will be on maternity leave until March. Donald Farquharson (DF) and Paul Mawson (PM) will be dealing with matters relating to Margate on her behalf.

Outline planning permission for the Rendezvous Site has been granted with the normal conditions attached. There are a few issues (parking and disabled access) but generally there has been positive feedback.

PM shared the presentation with the group. It is hoped that by Christmas 2017 the hotel will open. An investors evening will be organised in the New Year and the Events Team at TDC will be involved with the arrangements. It was suggested that two events are organised, one at Turner Contemporary and one in London. Barbara Cooper (BC) asked that Visit Kent were involved. Members of the group will be informed of the dates.

4. Visioning

At the last meeting the Vision was presented. PM presented a summary of what the vision might look like.

Cllr Johnston (IJ) found the document heavy going and thought the first paragraph should capture the vision. There is sensitivity around this being a vision for Margate rather than all of Thanet although a vision for Broadstairs and Ramsgate would follow on from this document. Victoria Pomery (VP) felt there was a missed opportunity that Turner Contemporary was not catalyst to the vision. There is a need to press on with a vision for the seafront and for the profile to be raised. The vision should focus on deprivation being largely eradicated from Margate. It was suggested that a meeting with Thanet District Council and PM be arranged to discuss the document. PM will circulate the document to members of the group.

5. Margate Lido

Thanet District Council has seen a presentation from the owners and a meeting has been held with the Head of Economic Development. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] IJ and VP will visit the Lido site and MHO will keep the group informed of developments.

6. Winter Gardens

At the last meeting a draft briefing was shared. This has now been amended with Steve Davies from the Winter Gardens. It would be useful to have an update on the commissioned condition survey and more specifics are needed to this. A tender process will begin shortly. PM stated it was important to look at what the Winter Gardens currently provides and a sustainable business plan is needed. Two pieces of work are being looked at, one at the Rendezvous site and a separate piece on the Winter Gardens. BC asked if a link to Dreamland was also being looked at. Thanet District Council is paying for the conditions survey.

[REDACTED] VP asked that people with a cultural background are involved. It will take two months for the study to be completed; possibly looking at three months after the condition survey is completed. The current provider knows about this work. This should be a joint KCC/TDC document. The document will be emailed to everyone and comments requested.

7. Dreamland Development

The Dreamland Development is progressing and discussions have started with partners. Discussions are also required with the potential operator. Shortlisting has begun and serious discussions have been held with one contractor. Advice is being sought from Legal. £1.8m has been granted from the coastal communities fund for the Sunshine café within the Dreamland complex (this will be a training restaurant). There have been expressions of interests for other areas (including the cinemas). Coombs have been contracted to construct the site. The Scenic Railway has already awarded a contract and work has started (with Top Board contractors). Work on the façade has commenced and the new branding is being agreed. TDC is managing both of the contracts. A grand opening of the Dreamland site is planned.

Discussions are still taking place with Freshwater regarding the Tesco site.

8. Margate Harbour

Options are being explored by an engineer (Mike Humber). The offer of consultants from KCC has not been taken up by TDC yet (the option of dredging is to be explored and this would be supported by KCC). The longer term solutions to the problem are very expensive and it is very difficult to find the funding. Mike Humber will be asked to contact DF to discuss this issue.

9. Any Other Business

Theatre Royal - TDC are currently looking at the building next door to the Theatre Royal and trying to establish who would be the legitimate partner. There are issues around the viability proposals. The possibility of a development partner is being looked into. Plans are being made for soft market testing. Funding was raised, the Arts Council is no longer a partner in the project and funding expires next year. A clear vision is needed. MHO will look at the time line. VP suggested including the Theatre Royal with the Margate Winter Gardens. A separate meeting is needed regarding the Theatre Royal. This item will be discussed at the next meeting.

10. Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be arranged for February. JW to arrange.

Jo Weatherley
14 November 2014