

MINUTES OF LONGRIDGE ASSETS WORKING GROUP – 3 FEB 2021 at 2.00pm

PRESENT

Cllr R Thompson (Chair)	Marshal Scott, Chief Executive
Cllr S Carefoot (2.18pm)	John Heap, Director of Community Services
Cllr J Clark	Nicola Hopkins, Director of Econ Dev and Planning
Cllr S Hore	Mair Hill, Head of Legal and Democratic Services
Cllr A Knox	Colin Hirst, Head of Regeneration and Housing
Cllr J Rogerson	

APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

CHAIR'S INTRODUCTION

The Chair, Cllr Robert Thompson reminded the members that the working group had been formed as part of the resolution at Policy & Finance committee where a report had been considered on a review of assets in Longridge.

He wanted the group to be 'task and finish' with a target of presenting a report to P&F at it's meeting in September 2021.

ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR

Councillor Judith Clark was elected as Vice Chair.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations for this meeting at this point but members would declare interests as they arose in the subsequent discussions.

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR WORKING GROUP

These were approved as follows –

The working group has been constituted by Policy and Finance Committee at its meeting held on the 19 January 2021 (Draft Min 928 refers) to support the review of assets in Longridge.

The purpose of the group is to consider in further detail, options emerging from the Asset Review work and to provide advice to Policy and Finance Committee on suggested actions.

Nominated Members of the group are:

Councillor Thompson (Chair)

Councillors, Carefoot, Clarke, Rogerson, Hore, and Councillor Alan Knox.

The group will meet as necessary.

3 nominated Councillors of the working group must be present to be quorate.

The working group does not have any delegated decision-making powers.

The working group will consult with the relevant Chairs of other service committees as appropriate.

The group will consider identified issues and explore realistic options for the future use of Council assets, taking account of existing users and the principles of best value for the Council, to meet the needs and aspirations of the local community.

The working group will take the form of a Task and Finish group with the aim of completing its considerations by 30 July 2021 to enable reporting to September Policy and Finance Committee.

ISSUES

Colin referred to the report presented to P&F in January 2021 which was the culmination of these issues being looked at over a period of time. In the last 12 months lots of discussions had taken place regarding several scenarios including the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. There was a large range of assets in Longridge where no action would be chosen to be taken. However, there were 3 key assets where consideration was required, namely Towneley Buildings, King Street toilets and the Civic Hall.

Councillor Carefoot joined the meeting.

KEY ASSETS

King Street toilets

It was suggested that Community committee be consulted upon those assets in Longridge that come under its remit. These toilets had been mothballed for a number of years. There had been interest shown in purchasing the site during this time but to date there had been no intention declared by the Council to dispose of the site. A valuation had not been sought for the land.

Cllr Carefoot declared an interest in this particular site.

There was also a question mark over the toilets on Berry Lane that had been taken on by the Town Council.

Towneley Buildings

LCC had use of one part of these buildings for youth facilities whilst the other part was used by the Over 60's club. There is also a flat above and a solicitor's office next door. RVBC was responsible for the maintenance of the structure and exterior.

The use of the buildings needed to be looked at realistically, not necessarily to sell them off but to get good value for money.

Civic Hall

This asset was currently run by ELSEC who were facing operational challenges with the building needing significant investment to make it fit for purpose and sufficient to generate the necessary income for it to be sustainable. At a recent meeting between LTC, ELSEC and Love Longridge it had been agreed to look at a way forward.

The members felt it important that any way forward was viable and ultimately self-funding particularly for revenue costs and that the visions and aspirations of those interested groups for the asset be sought, to inform this working group's deliberations.

NEXT STEPS - ACTIONS:

- 1. Nicola Hopkins to contact key stakeholders within Longridge to seek their thoughts on the future of the assets;**
- 2. Nicola Hopkins/Colin Hirst to contact the existing leaseholders to arrange a meeting to discuss their future intentions;**
- 3. John Heap to prepare a report to Community Services committee in March regarding the Longridge assets under their remit; and**
- 4. Mair Hill to prepare a legal pack on each asset outlining details of lease etc**

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING(S)

The next two meetings were arranged for Monday 15 March 2021 and Monday 12 April 2021 – both at 2.00pm.