

NOTES OF A MEETING OF THE SOUTHERN WILTSHIRE COMMUNITY AREA

COB GROUP 7TH JULY 2015-07-12

The main purpose of the meeting was to try to gain an understanding about the extent and timing of the availability of future funding for campus or community hub projects other than those already underway.

With that in mind, Cllr John Thomson, the Cabinet member with responsibility for the campus programme and Laurie Bell, Associate Director, whose portfolio of responsibilities also includes campus projects, were in attendance.

1 Cllr Thomson reported that he was nearing the completion of a review of the seven campus projects already approved with a budget of £66m (£80m if external funding was included). He explained the shortcomings he was finding in specifications, financial controls and project management.

Financial and staffing resources had to be concentrated on completing these projects in a satisfactory manner before phases 2 and 3 projects could progress in any significant way. However, he stressed that some planning and preparatory work on these later phase projects was already underway.

2 Subject to the constraints of the above resource considerations Cllr Thomson confirmed that he would consider other projects.

He stressed that ideally such projects should demonstrate:

- the availability of external funding contributions
- the availability of WC assets which could be disposed of
- partnership involvement (especially the NHS and/or police)
- and, especially, robust financial sustainability once the hub became operational

3 Each of the three hub projects – Alderbury, Downton and Winterslow – reported on their current situations. (I reported on Alderbury.) Dudley Baker-Beale explained the situation at Redlynch regarding the possible community use of the now defunct village school.

Laurie Bell undertook to research whether there were WC assets in each area which could be injected into the project funding. Both Laurie and John expressed a willingness to visit each site whenever it became appropriate. They felt that there was merit in pushing ahead with these projects since when later phases of the campus programme were activated projects which were most advanced would be considered first.

4 Both John and Laurie understood and accepted the justification for our 'mini-campus' approach and, without giving any undertakings about future funding, agreed that project submissions which had been developed with each community would be considered.

5 Laurie agreed to provide copies of Business Cases which had already been submitted. She also said she could assist with advice regarding feasibility studies.

6 The Downton representatives argued that their project – centred upon the Memorial Hall – was very well advanced. Specifications, drawings, costings, revenue projections were already available. In light of this the COB members present voted unanimously that a recommendation should go to the next Area Board that the Downton proposals should be submitted to WC immediately.

Richard Britton

12th July 2015