

# MINUTES

**Meeting:** Salisbury Area Board

**Place:** Online

**Date:** 12 July 2021

**Start Time:** 4.00 pm

**Finish Time:** 5.18 pm

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Please direct any enquiries on these minutes to:

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## **In Attendance:**

### **Wiltshire Councillors**

Cllr Caroline Corbin, Cllr Brian Dalton (Chairman), Cllr Sven Hocking (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Dr Mark McClelland, Cllr Charles McGrath, Cllr Ricky Rogers, Cllr Paul Sample JP and Cllr Mary Webb

### **Wiltshire Council Officers**

Lisa Alexander, Senior Democratic Services Officer  
Marc Read, Community Engagement Manager

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<b><u>Minute No..</u></b>	<b><u>Summary of Issues Discussed and Decision</u></b>
19	<p><u>Welcome</u></p> <p>The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Salisbury Area Board and invited the members of the Board to introduce themselves.</p>
20	<p><u>Apologies for Absence</u></p> <p>There were none.</p>
21	<p><u>Declarations of Interest</u></p> <p>There were none.</p>
22	<p><u>Community Asset Transfer (CAT) Request - Grosvenor and Riverside House, Salisbury</u></p> <p>The Chairman noted the report and supporting documents attached to the agenda and set out the running order of the meeting.</p>
23	<p><u>Applicant Summary</u></p> <p>Applicant, Peter Rushforth, Director - Rise Resound Rebuild (RRR) CIC, noted the summary of amendments detailed in the revised Business Plan uploaded to the agenda online as supplement 1.</p> <p>The proposal was to re-open the Youth Centre and make it self-sufficient. A lack of youth provision had been identified and the need for a cultural hub that benefitted existing youth outreach in the city was present.</p> <p>If the property was sold to a developer at £1m, that was half the market value. The site would be used to build 25 flats.</p> <p>Alternatively, the buildings could be leased to RRR for 125 years, that would unlock the funding needed to renovate the property and carry out the repairs needed.</p> <p>If the project failed, the building would revert back to the ownership of the council at a profit.</p>
24	<p><u>Members Questions</u></p> <p>Board Members then had the opportunity to ask questions, these included:</p>

- Could you clarify the funding source for the proposals and whether any of the applications to funding bodies mentioned had yet been submitted?

Answer: Yes we have spoken to 5 of the 10 big funding providers which were set up to support groups like ours, they have confirmed that our project is something that they would like to fund, they gave £3.3m to a similar project in Lambeth last week. We had one funder that was committed to supporting us. If the council let us lease the property that would unlock the funding.

- Grosvenor House was vacated in 2017 as it was considered unsafe structurally, due to its poor state. Have you seen a condition survey or structural survey? Nothing in the papers suggest that it is viable to be brought back to life.

Answer: We had inspected the garden from the building and had sent a drone in to the building. It seemed the roof was in fine condition and generally not in as bad a condition as was previously thought.

- So, there was no actual report or survey from a structural engineer?

Answer: No we had completed a pre-app, but there were issues in gaining access due to covid, so that was one of the first things we would be doing if supported by you.

- It would be essential to get a professional survey if the CAT went ahead.

- You have 6 Executives and 7 Managing Directors, given that this is about youth services, I don't see that represented under the headings.

Answer: The structure was designed around a PHD design. 34 hr week of working in those business areas with 6hrs aside for mentoring in the youth centre. They will be within the property, in the basement we were looking to have a music studio, and the youth area. We were trying to provide the safe space and the people to mentor them. Details could be found towards the end of part 2 of the Business Plan.

- In a personal capacity, your vision and the documents provided were admirable. We had to weigh up the CAT bid alongside the option of a private purchase.

- Could you set out what experience you have in securing funding and what attracted you to this specific property and were alternatives considered?

Answer: I personally have £1.2m in investment and research in my day Job. The two major projects I have managed over the last 2 years had cost £2m between them. My colleague Mark had been managing the largest air heat source pump in Europe with a £0.5m turnover for his employer a year. We have people with the experience to see this through. If you don't support us we won't be able to find out.

	<p>Yes other properties were considered, but this was the former youth centre and we had huge support through our petition for this site. It would also tie in well with the Salisbury Future High Street fund projects around the train station and the Fisherton street developments. This could only add value to Salisbury.</p> <p>We also had a desire to extend the river walk which would lead through the garden to the train station. Almost a tourist draw, if we put a public walk through a market garden that would be the only one in the country.</p> <p>There was one youth facility near the Gala Bingo which was not successful, it did not have enough space. If we don't provide for the young people of Salisbury, they will leave.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We did need to do more for young people in Salisbury and tying it in to do more for hospitality, but you referred to the catchment area as including Amesbury, Tidworth &amp; Ludgershall, however, they don't have transport links and were quite far away from Salisbury, how did you see that working? Had you spoken to Salisbury Reds to see if they could serve that area?</li> </ul> <p>Answer: We have picked that area because Salisbury is a geographical hub and the youth use buses, all of the routes end up in Salisbury. It would be in the Reds interest to provide another bus stop on Churchfields. But no, I have not spoken to them. It would not be practically difficult for them to walk from the Market square if Salisbury Reds did not invest in another bus stop or change the route.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Was R3 CIC already in existence?  <u>Answer:</u> It was registered but had not yet set up a bank account.</li> </ul>
25	<p><u>Public Q &amp; A</u></p> <p><u>Local Resident - James Stares</u></p> <p>We suffered quite far ranging anti-social behaviour when Grosvenor House was operating as a youth centre. We are not anti-youth but we have to live in the location. There is talk of methane bio generation and garden events. This is a poor location for any kind of drop off for large number attendance.</p> <p>I applaud the efforts of Pete and his team in trying to provide some provision for young people. If the project were to last 3-4 years and be unsuccessful it would remain an eyesore.</p> <p>Buses don't pass along Churchfields Road. Where would the heavy transport go during the development phase?</p> <p>As neighbouring residents, we want something done to those properties which had secure backing and could be concluded in a reasonable time.</p>

	<p><u>Local resident - Sally Wilmot</u> As a local resident I think it's a shame that Pete and colleagues had not engaged with local residents as I could have provided input. I admire the ambition, but this was the wrong location.</p> <p>The Business plan was vague in terms of youth service provision. The location was on a busy route used by heavy traffic and many school children. Adding a bus route along this road would be dangerous, and there would be a lot of additional car users visiting to drop off.</p> <p><u>Local resident - James Wilmot</u> I am confused about the age group they were aiming for. The papers mention 16 – 24 year olds, but were they youth groups? Which age group are going off to Bristol?</p> <p><u>Answer:</u> Yes, they are youths and young people. Data shows a large dip in the age brackets 16 – 24y and particular 20 – 24y. We have over 1300 in that age group that are classed as NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training). Council data show that 3% of young people are NEET and more specifically, that 14% of 18-24y were NEET.</p>
26	<p><u>Area Board recommendation</u></p> <p>Local Member Cllr Paul Sample thanked the applicant for the level of detail provided within the plan.</p> <p>He noted his concern regarding the level of deterioration of both Grosvenor House and Riverside House since being occupied by Youth and children's Services.</p> <p>The absence of any inspections by builders' surveys was also noted as a concern, as was the lack of confirmed funding which would be required to back a project of this size, noting that the costs of running a professional fundraising organisation costs in itself hundreds of thousands of pounds. There was also no bank account in place, which combined, all suggested that you were not ready to go.</p> <p>Cllr Sample had been to speak to those affected by the proposals and drew attention to the low numbers of letters and Facebook posts received in support for the project. He suggested that it would be easy to raise a petition of 200 people on an online platform and felt that it did not represent a large number of people given the draw available through social media.</p> <p>Those who had spoken to Cllr Sample were all neighbours living close to the proposed site. They were all against the proposals and instead supported the property being sold to developers because they wanted the works to be done by professional who would assess the levels of work by structural engineers.</p>

The Business Plan did not include a provision for any unexpected health and safety costs or needs.

Cllr Sample praised the Applicant for their presentation, noting that it was clear they had a vision, however, the issue was how to put that into effect and how they would get the buildings up and running from day one, which he felt the applicant was not in a position to do currently, as he would expect to see a percentage of costs in a functioning bank account before such a project could be supported to go ahead. He would like to see 50% of intents offered.

Cllr Sample moved the motion not to support the CAT at this time, as the project would require someone that could step in and do the work, putting the building safe and managing the security, all from day one.

Members supported the buildings being sold, as did the residents living in close proximity to the site. In these times when there was so little public money available, by allowing this we would be tying our hands behind our back and would result in the lost opportunity to bring millions back into use.

The motion to not support the CAT was seconded by Cllr Sven Hocking.

Cllr Rogers had been the former Chairman of the Management Committee at Grosvenor House for over a decade noted that when looking in detail at the scale of the development and the money that would be required from various organisations, he queried whether the project would ever happen due to the number of uncertainties. He would like to support however, could not and felt it was not feasible.

Other more suitable buildings and locations were suggested, including the Gala Bingo or Blue Boar Row, which were both sites which were more central and felt to be a better option by some.

The general consensus was that the applicants were not yet ready to start and make the project work.

It was also raised that another reason young people left Salisbury was due to the lack of suitable accommodation and the need for more affordable housing for young people.

Cllr Sample gave summary, noting that if the Board did not approve to support the CAT, then it would not go forward to Cabinet. Time was of the essence, as there was a building that was crumbling by the day. The sooner planning permissions were in place for housing development, to enable it to move to the next stage the better.

The Board then voted on the motion not to support:

	<b><u>Decision:</u></b> <b>Salisbury Area Board agreed not to support the Community Asset Transfer (CAT) Request - Grosvenor and Riverside House, Salisbury.</b>
27	<u>Close</u> The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and noted that the next meeting of the Salisbury Area Board would be held online, on Thursday 30 September 2021.

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