

COUNCIL MEETING - 22 JULY 2003

RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL **COUNCILLOR N CAVILL - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, PROPERTY** **AND TOURISM**

1. Asset Management Plan 2003

The Executive have considered this Council's submission to the Government Office of the required data for 2002/03 for the Asset Management Plan.

We have also looked at progress made with the 2002 10-Point Action Plan and the 10-Point Action Plan for 2003.

The Review Board at its meeting on 12 June 2003 have also considered the full range of properties covered by the Asset Management Plan.

Consideration was given to the progress made with the 2002 Action Plan. Although it was not a Government requirement, a 10-Point Action Plan for 2003 had been set. Issues arising from last year's programme have been rolled forward for further action.

The full Plan, together with a covering report from the Director of Development is circulated to all members with these papers.

It is therefore RECOMMENDED that the 2003 Action Plan be agreed.

2. Redevelopment of Crescent Car Parking Site, Town Centre Regeneration/Opportunities for Retail Growth in the Old Market Centre/Crescent Car Park Area

Following their investigations, Sovereign Land Limited have now concluded that because of its restricted size the Crescent Car Park site would not be viable to carry out the proposed Crescent Car Park Scheme.

The Council has a nil budget for 2002/03 with the understanding that the developer (Sovereign/Heritage) will reimburse the Council for any fees paid to C B Hillier Parker. To date a total of £38,000 has been spent and a reimbursement of £15,000 has been received from Sovereign Land Ltd leaving an outstanding balance of £23,000. It is also estimated that an additional cost of approximately £5-7,000 will be incurred regarding the employment of C B Hillier Parker to advise on commercial/viability matters for the last quarter of 2002/03. A Supplementary Estimate of £30,000 is required for fees paid to C B Hillier Parker.

The Vision for Taunton is that the Old Market Centre/Crescent Car Park area should function effectively as a major retail destination in the region. A study of the Old Market Centre and the Crescent Car Park wider area will

demonstrate the potential of this area to contribute significantly to the future vitality and viability of Taunton. However it is felt that, at this stage, not only would any scheme for redevelopment be fairly difficult to implement with significant parking disruption during construction, but a careful assessment of viability and the Borough Council's financial return from such a development is crucial.

Detailed consideration has been given by the Members' Steering Group to possible partnership arrangements/consulting arrangements for a feasibility study of the wider area. Terence O'Rourke were commencing production of an Urban Design Framework for the town centre and the master planning of key sites. It is considered that agreement should be sought with the Regional Development Agency, Terence O'Rourke and partners for the master planning of potential development areas on either side of the High Street. If this work was to progress in tandem with the existing programme/consultation arrangements, there is a tight timescale to reach agreement and it would be prudent to have a Supplementary Estimate available for potential master planning and for future consultancy fees to assess scheme viability/potential development partnerships.

The Executive feel that it will be helpful to have a Member Steering Group to oversee progress. The membership of the present Crescent Car Park Steering Group is well placed to fulfil this responsibility.

The revenue implications of the proposals are -

Outstanding C B Hillier Parking consulting fees	£30,000
Contribution to Terence O'Rourke for extending the master planning Urban Design Framework Brief	£25,000
Additional provision for future consultancy fees in respect of any scheme viability assessment/initial negotiations	£15,000
TOTAL	£70,000

A Supplementary Estimate in the sum of £70,000 will therefore be required.

It is therefore RECOMMENDED that -

- (1) it be noted that the current car park scheme was not viable and should not be pursued at the present time;
- (2) opportunities for retail growth in the Old Market Centre/Crescent Car Park area be investigated and discussions commenced with significant landowners in the area;
- (3) agreement be sought with the Regional Development Agency, Terence O'Rourke and partners to extend the existing contract to secure master planning of the potential retail growth/redevelopment of the Old Market Centre/Crescent Car Park area;

- (4) a Supplementary Estimate of £70,000 be made to enable outstanding fees to be met and to enable matters to progress to assist town centre regeneration;
- (5) the existing Crescent Car Park Steering Group form a Steering Group to oversee progress in regenerating the Old Market Centre/Crescent Car Park area.

Councillor N Cavill

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REPORT OF COUNCILLOR CAVILL- ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, PROPERTY AND TOURISM

Crescent Car Park

As you will all be aware by now, the Crescent Car park scheme has not been able to be worked up into a viable option. The area being considered now includes an area to the east of High Street. This area, along with Firepool and Tangier, is currently being assessed by Terence O'Rourke as part of their urban design framework study. The consultation is attracting a great deal of interest and comment from our key partners and developers.

Asset Management Plan

The previous AMP was rated as good. We are trying to build on this plan and improve to excellent. A great deal of money is required to maintain the Council's assets. The present budget enables us to do the essential work, but not other work to bring them up to the appropriate/desired standard. When the Somerset Influence Panel was consulted, they rated as their #1 priority the maintenance of the TDBC properties. Although we have a 10-point action plan, I believe that the most challenging targets to achieve will be: the compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act,

employment sites to serve areas of need in Taunton North and East, Chelston, and rural areas.

and of course, (as mentioned), the level of budget provisions for future maintenance.

Best value review of economic and community regeneration

I commend to you the recently produced paper presented to the Community Leadership Panel. If we adopt option 1, over the next 3 – 5 years, in partnership with others, we have the opportunity to create and safeguard 200 jobs. At the same time Taunton's profile as a regional centre will be greatly enhanced.

Tone Mill Partnership

The Prince's Foundation is heading up this partnership, not just to safeguard the building and equipment of the wet finishing works, but also to make a viable scheme of most of that site. Fox Bros wish to bring the wet finishing processes back in house. Furthermore, they hope to develop the production process, for educational and tourism purposes. This will act as a catalyst for other activities on that site. The partnership will be a registered charity, and it is hoped that its charter will enable it to utilise its trading profits for its benefit.

NORMAN P CAVILL