

TEAM ABERGAVENNY

BETTER, TOGETHER

Report from Team Abergavenny to the North Monmouthshire Area Committee to be held on 20 November 2019.

1. Following on from our last report the following points were noted in the minutes of your last meeting:

1.1. Welsh Government has not yet agreed a solution to the bus stop required in Park Road by Tesco. Though this is a Welsh Government matter, Monmouthshire County Council's Highways Group Engineer was meeting with Welsh Government representatives. The Cabinet Member responsible for Infrastructure and Neighbourhood Services would liaise with Highways officers and the Welsh Government with a view to addressing this matter. **Have you had further information about this important matter?**

1.2. Concern was expressed regarding the no left turn sign at the Baker Street end of Princes Street, as it prevents access to Frogmore Street for vehicles and, in practice, the sign is being ignored. It was noted that local views vary regarding the need for the sign. **Is there any progress on this please?**

A Member of the Area Committee stated that she had asked to meet the Highways Safety Manager to discuss this matter further. We hope that any proposal to change the existing arrangements will be consulted upon publicly to ensure that all views are considered.

1.3. The Licensing Department needs to ensure that it is managing the use of street space in Frogmore Street. **It would be useful to have an update on this from the Licensing Officer.**

1.4. The re-development of the town hall is behind schedule due to a delay to the mezzanine piling. The library will have more books available and have a larger floor space. Automated bibliotheca machines will be available on both floors of the building to cater for the return of library books. Friends of Abergavenny Library has met with the developers and provided input into the development. You have agreed to receive a report on this development at your meeting today. Officers have been consulting with some local bodies and the following points have been made to them after a recent meeting of the Civic Society. The points are set out here in the hope that they may be answered at your meeting, thereby clarifying some concerns:

-What is the total linear provision, in metres length, of shelving units in the library?

-What are your intentions for the colour and lighting scheme (s) for the listed building? Do you plan any external lighting to celebrate the iconic Town Hall structure.

- Excluding meeting rooms for the Town Council and the community, what are the comparative floor areas for the library/ hub service when compared with the other large towns.? A table would help us to understand the reply.

-What specific plans does MCC have for the TIC in relation to this project ? (We believe it is to be located with the Theatre Box Office on the ground floor.)

-Likewise, what future use is planned for the The Carnegie Library building?

-Can we assume that free-standing units will be 4 shelves high, and wall units 5 shelves, as per Chepstow ?

-How many interview booths are planned for the ground floor hub ? How has this been quantified?

-Why are seats in the hub facing the entrance door, rather than the booths?

-Do you agree that the shelving units in the new mezzanine should be arranged to allow views between the units, towards the windows and the light, and not as shown?

- *What is the minimum dimension planned between shelving units, allowing for wheelchair access?*
- *Given the small size / limited capacity of the Community Meeting Room, showing about 16 (?) seats versus the existing 34 (?) in the current Council Chamber, there will be pressure to deliver an enhanced / alternative offer in the main library area. How will this be delivered? Is there a plan to indicate seating for larger events?*
- *What are the minimum and maximum staffing numbers for simultaneous delivery of service on each of both levels.?*
- *What are the proposed furniture systems you plan for the seating and shelving?*
- *For three years we have asked about the signage strategy for the building. There was no information at the Civic Society meeting. We think you should avoid any mention of the token library service, planned for the ground floor hub, in the key signs for the building. Given the complexity of potential messages about contents of the building, as witnessed from outside, what specific wording are you planning for the key signs you intend for the entrances to the building? It would be useful to imagine you are a young mother with a pushchair seeking to use the library for the first time in working out the directions.*

Some answers have been received since the meeting as follows:

“The total floor area of the new library on the first floor will be 361.86m² and the Ground floor Area 141m². Therefore the total ‘hub’ space provided will be 502.86m². This compares to 222.4m² in the current library.

As explained at the meeting, the new space will also benefit from enhanced accessibility, an essential aspect that the present facility completely lacks. The current library access and egress are restrictive and in parts completely non accessible, and therefore do not easily lend to being comfortable space for people with additional mobility needs or people with prams and pushchairs. We are also enhancing our provision in providing an additional day for the library service by opening on Mondays, providing more shelving space than we have at present and we are looking to provide a flexibly furnished environment that can be adjusted easily and opened up for events, conferences and large meetings etc. A lift through all floors will enable inclusive access for all, the lift being installed will accommodate up to 8 people, the existing lift is also being refurbished and this is also an 8 person lift.

- *With regards to budget. A report was taken to Council on 20th September last year which sought agreement to proceed with the proposals. The resource implications of the report confirm the approved indicative budget for the scheme as being £2.1m.*
- *A question arose regarding what would happen to the old library building. As we explained we have not to date been engaged in any conversations regarding this, however I would direct you to Debra Hill-Howells who will be able to advise the best person to speak to on this matter.*

A few people on the night questioned exterior décor, particularly colour. The Contract Manager has met the CADW officer with regards to this, and we have been told that whilst we have to adhere to heritage requirements the original colour used for the exterior front door was in fact Oxblood Red. Whilst further paint tests must be carried out before we can confirm that we would be proceeding with this, it looks promising that we can move away from the dreary brown that the door has been for a number of years, which will probably please many local people.”

The answers go some way to dealing with the questions, but there are still some outstanding issues awaiting a reply. **Possibly these might be resolved at your meeting on 20 November?**

2. A meeting is being held with Cath Saunders concerning the redevelopment of King Henry VIII School. The intention is to pass on to her initial broad expectations about the planning and design of the project, including the management of traffic in the surrounding area, and community engagement in the planning process and subsequent involvement at the school.

3. Following a recent meeting concerning the LDP and economic development, it was clear that MCC and Welsh Government do not have facilities in place to attract incoming employment creation opportunities, which are essential to balance up any further residential development. There is a focus on the M4 corridor but this area is not seen as a priority. Team Abergavenny has focused its attention on creating prosperity in the Abergavenny area and we are exploring an option to engage a sales and marketing team to attract new employment to the area. We see this as an important element of reducing travel for local people as well as improving the prosperity of the area.

11/11/19