



Old River Lane Delivery Board Meeting

Thursday, 25 April | 12:00 – 13:30

Minutes of the meeting

Present: Steven Linnett (SL), Richard Cassidy (RC), Ben Wood (BW), Helen Standen (HS), Miriam Swainston (MS), Sarah Hopewell (SH), Mione Goldspink (MG), Carl Brittain (CB), James Ellis (JE), David Falco (DF), Ben Crystall (BC – Chair), Jack Pritchard (JP, Howells), George Briscoe (GB, Howells), Mark Darne (MD, MM Management), Andrew Farrell (AF, MM Management)

Apologies: Sarah Copley

Declarations of interest: MG & MS noted their roles on the Town Council.

Item 1: Minutes of last meeting. Proposed by MG, seconded by CB.

Item 2: Public Space

JP took the board through an updated concept design for the public space on the ORL site following feedback from the previous meeting (which focused on ensuring proposals can fit within the £1.5m available, there is obvious connectivity to the town and having a functional space). Updated designs show a main public area (likely to be permeable self-binding gravel), surrounded by paving which connects neatly to commercial and residential units to the north of the square, with contained edges to the south and west (with mixture of seating, active uses and planting) and an 'urban forest' approach on the eastern edge (retaining existing trees) to align with Castle Gardens. There would also be a temporary/ semi-permanent structure, creating a community focal point.

MG said she was positive about the proposals but wanted to know more about the materials for the main square area, in particular the different types of self-binding gravel that can be used. MS and CB noted they are familiar with similar finishes at other venues and some site visits by Board members would be helpful to get a feel for how it



could look. RC agreed that the types of materials used across all of the space would be crucial in terms of the construction costs but also on-going maintenance.

MG also suggested that although the urban forest is good way for the area to visually align to Castle Gardens there should still be some gaps in order for motorists to be able to see through to parts of the square from the main road.

MS also said she was positive about the proposals and asked about the semi-permanent structure. JP responded to say this could be something like a wooden open pavilion offering shelter and seating, but also flexible enough to be used for markets or other activities. DF further noted that the intention is to build this on the foundations of the southern part of Charrington's House to minimise costs and recycle as much material as possible.

CB suggested the square will need a name at some point and this is something that can be tested with the public.

Board members agreed there was enough content in the proposals from Howells to think about moving into a public consultation about the design and also potential uses of the space. MG suggested we need to be clear with the public about the financial limitations of what can be built. MS also suggested that face to face conversations with stakeholders will also be required as part of this. The Board asked officers to come back to the next meeting with proposals and thanked Howells for their work to date.

Item 3: Project update

DF continues to work on finalising the Development Agreement. The outstanding action from the previous meeting to invite Weightmans and Montague Evans to a future meeting to brief the board on the content of the DA will still take place as soon as the final draft is ready. The Board will need to sign off on the overall scheme before Cityheart can submit a planning application.

MG asked for clarity on what exactly the Board will be signing off. DF explained signing off the overall scheme is not the same as signing off the planning application. The Board are being asked to sign off Cityheart's overall proposals in terms of overall design and costs. Cityheart will be asked to attend a future board meeting to share these (which of course still need to be aligned to the previous SPD principles). DF made it clear the Board will not be responsible for signing off the planning application – this more detailed work will be undertaken by Cityheart and ultimately considered by East Herts Development Management Committee. There is an expectation that Cityheart will submit a masterplan as part of their planning application evidence which will need to be prepared collaboratively. This would ensure consistency with planning policy requirements and it is likely that previous steering group attendees would be one set of stakeholders involved in the collaborative process.



RC suggested that a colleague from East Herts planning is invited to a future meeting to explain the overall process leading up to a planning application submission.

AOB: MG had a ward walk last weekend and received lots of questions about Water Lane Hall. It has been agreed that DF will act as the point of contact for these queries and any correspondence should be sent through to him.