



Myplace Hastings Stakeholder meeting 14th May 2009

Thank you for attending the meeting, or for showing an interest in the project and its processes. I feel that the turn out to the meeting was not as good as I had hoped however it did incorporate several agencies and stakeholders from across the whole community. This is great and shows the passion that there is within the town to create a more cohesive and inclusive community.

I would like to thank you all for your participation as some good points were raised as well as some questions that definitely needed addressing. I feel that some of the questions were answered adequately on the day, however I have produced a list of the main points that were addressed on the day and subsequently a list of responses to them: This has been done separately for ease of reading.

I have also added some of the key points that Lord Mawson discussed at the end of the meeting, in a bid to further support us the stakeholders, as well as the project itself.

Finally I have included an introduction from Jodie Taylor, the new youth and community engagement officer, whom we have recruited to support the youth client team and to act as a source of information for the wider community, throughout this project.

If you feel that there are any points that have been missed from this then please do send them to Jodie and she will arrange for a response to be sent to you and everyone on the mailing list.

Once again many thanks for your input and I look forward to seeing you all soon.

Questions and points raised at the Stakeholder meeting on 14th May 2009

1. There are several unused churches and buildings across the town why does it have to be here at St Mary in the Castle (SMIC), especially when it will create so much anger and distrust?

As many of you are already aware, we were looking at several alternatives, such as the library in Claremont, the Observer building in Cambridge Rd, and the White Rock Theatre. At the 11th hour the White Rock Theatre went elsewhere and HBC gave us SMIC. Whilst we are aware that there is some animosity with regards to SMIC becoming a youth hub, we feel that is also a chance for young people to shine and break free from the stereotyped image that they are ALL associated with.

2. Hastings Borough Council do not have a specific, dedicated, conservation department and that is a concern, especially as no one will have the knowledge history of SMIC. When SMIC was an arts gallery it was used by the youth and I think it is great to see what can be done and if it can be open to the public as well then that will be fantastic.

We have been working with Graham King from the design and conservation unit at HBC who is very knowledgeable about SMIC.



3. What youths will be using SMIC?

There is no specification of youth that will be using the hub, it is open to all. There is however a core age range of 13-19 year olds.

4. Taking the view of a customer my concern is that SMIC is a grade II listed building; will the youth be able to make it their own space? They must feel it is theirs and they must have ownership of it.

The youths that we have already been in discussion with have had plenty of suggestions and ideas on how to make SMIC their own, whilst preserving its natural beauty.

5. I'm fully supportive of the youth hub but I'm not sure SMIC is the right place, but if it is to be here then we want to know upfront what architectural differences will be made and once this is decided will there be a public event to display the proposed alterations?

As mentioned at the first stakeholder meeting we wish to involve the public at all times and keep them as up to date as possible with regards to the progress of the project and yes public events will be used. We have employed Jodie Taylor as the youth and community engagement officer to support the dissemination of information to the wider community (see attached).

6. If we waste £4 ½ Million on SMIC then that is an outrage, there is not a single 11 year old living in this area. This is not a place for young people; it is not a youth centre. Young people deserve more and we should ask the lottery/my place about changing the location; it shouldn't be here in the town. This is not Mel's fault, however her work will be lost if this goes ahead. SMIC is not sustainable, Hollington Youth Centre would be better; you could knock it down and start again. SMIC is a dead space, quite literally. The young people will be furious they don't want to hang out here, they need to feel it is theirs. Rules were made to be broken.

There are some young people living within the town centre area, but also we aim to look at the transportation options open to young people. SMIC would be a great 'working' place and chill out zone for young people. If we were to consider options outside of the town such as Hollington Youth Centre, then we will have accessibility issues; ones that stem not just from transportation but also from issues such as neighbourhood divides. Ultimately this would go against the inclusive element of this project; if we cannot create an inclusive youth community within the town how could we bridge other segregational divides such as intergenerational and ethnicity ones. The idea behind the design day is to promote youth participation in a bid to let them decide what would happen with the money; how they want the money spent. This will flag up any feelings of hostility towards the use of SMIC.

7. Thank you to Mel for putting in the bid, a lot of the views discussed today were discussed at the first stakeholder meeting, for instance using the White Rock Theatre, which I believe the young people wanted more than SMIC, or the white rock baths? The young people expressed their want of somewhere scruffy to make their own; to put their mark on it and that can change as and when wanted. I do disagree with the town being the wrong place, I feel everyone has access to the town and they all come here already. Is there a failsafe; a plan B? Will the views of the young people really be taken into account at the design day? What if they don't like SMIC? What if they want somewhere else?

Again i need to refer back to the 11th hour change of heart from HBC with regards to using SMIC, as opposed to the white Rock Theatre. This whole project from the very start has been led by the youth community; they approached Hastings Trust and asked us to put forward their bid, following years of



research into the youth facilities with the town. The research suggested that there is already ample sports provision within the town and it highlighted the need for somewhere with an arts culture, is SMIC not then ideal for this? As i said young people have been involved in this project from the start and they will remain involved throughout, even to the point of promoting and supporting the sustainability of SMIC after the funding has gone. With regards to a plan B, this is something that is being worked on within the contingency plan and will be linked greatly to the report that is produced following the design day in May.

8. This is the only country that seems to have a huge divide between young and old, but we do care about the young and they have so much talent in this town, more than others. I agree the young should decide but how realistic is a plan B? What will happen if Hastings Borough Council (HBC) say that this is the only place and the youth decide they don't want to spend the money here? Will you go back to myplace? But if it is here then we want to know how many public performances there will be? How much can the wider population visit SMIC? How capable are the young people of running SMIC?

I agree there is a big divide between the young and old people within the town but that is reducing through the work of other agencies across the town. As previously stated plan B will be incorporated into the contingency plan and if the young people decide that SMIC is not the right place for the hub, then yes we will support them with the choices they make, but we are not willing to lose this money for them. With regards to public performances we would hope that those that already occur will continue to do so and we will actively encourage further use of SMIC, this is paramount to the sustainability of the hub. There will be a tight staffing structure in place, with young people managing SMIC with a full staff team. Young people will be integrated throughout the whole process, including interviews. This project will create educational opportunities, voluntary possibilities and training. All of this will be in the Business Plan.

9. It's good to hear fighting talk from a young person but it is also sad to hear them talk about 'saving SMIC'. Is there no possibility of dividing the money?

I would be concerned that by dividing the money we increase the risk of 'spreading it too thinly' and this would then be of no benefit to the young people within this town. I feel that it is in fact enlightening that the young people talk about saving SMIC; they care about the history and the culture surrounding SMIC. This then makes the project more special to them; they will be actively using and sustaining a grade II listed building.

10. What is the £4.25 million for?

The £4.25 million is purely capital; it is for the 2 year preparatory work that needs to take place. That is why sustainability of SMIC is needed.

11. Where will the other services be housed? The offices next door are not adequate enough? Where will places like Gizmo go? The sustainability of SMIC is what scares me, why can't we use the YMCA or Hollington Youth Centre.

We hope to use the house next door for the other services as well as SMIC itself, however until plans have been made agreed with the young people then I simply cannot offer any further insight into the proposed layout of SMIC and the facilities within it. With regards to the sustainability as mentioned previously we hope to hire out the auditorium etc for public performances, which will generate an income; there are plans to expand the cafe area, the services that wish to be housed within SMIC will

of course pay rent, so these will add to the income. Again I wish to refer back to point 6 with regards to the use of other buildings such as YMCA.

12. If you build a youth centre in Hollington that will not promote inclusiveness it will become exclusive.

Again I agree with this comment and refer back to point 6.

13. This is a wide space and most of what you need is here, I think it is a brilliant idea.

Thank you, again I agree SMIC has a lot to offer an arts culture youth hub.

14. This building is a part of the town and if we can use this building to integrate the youth and the wider community then that is great. Use local creative people to support this project.

We would love local people to be involved in the project, so please do contact Jodie if you wish to be more involved and updated.

15. Would you still get the support of HBC and East Sussex County Council (ESCC) if you do not take SMIC?

I would like to say that yes ESCC and HBC will continue to offer their support if SMIC is not seen as a viable option.

16. I personally would like to be alive in 5 years time and see this project a success, see the youth given the opportunities to shine. SMIC has the potential to do so much and yes it is central but buses all come through here from across the town. We must support intergeneration with the young people.

We think it is great to have such support for an increase in the intergenerational cohesion of the town.

Key points from Lord Mawson (OBE of One Church: 100 Uses: a newly established agency of the United Reformed Church which brings new life to church buildings no longer needed for worship)

1. I think there is a lot more common ground between you all then you imagine.
2. You must be practical and pragmatic; you will never get 100% in agreement, if you get 75% then you're doing well.
3. You can talk structures and committees etc but that is not what drives a project, it is teamwork. You must embrace business logic.
4. The project will teach young people skills and if you allow them the opportunity to learn business management skills this will then give them opportunities.
5. Geography is irrelevant; it becomes a somewhere due to the people and its culture.

Introduction to Jodie

Hi, I would like to introduce myself to both you and your agency. My name is Jodie Taylor and I have been appointed as the Youth and Community Engagement Officer for the Hastings Trust.

Primarily my role is associated with the exciting My Place funded project at the lovely St Mary in the Castle. The aim is to create a new state-of-the-art youth facility that is a centre of excellence in arts culture. It will act



as a 'hub' with co-located specialist support services, open access 'chill out' space and activities/opportunities for young people and the wider community.

My main role is to work with the youth community throughout Hastings and St Leonards to ensure the success of the hub, as well as empowering and encouraging their participation throughout the process; from design, through the construction, and on to the operational management of the facility itself. Secondly I aim to act as a source of information and a point of contact for agencies from across the town. I intend to keep everyone up to date with the progression of the project and encourage wider community involvement in a bid to create a more cohesive, participatory town that embraces the young people within it.

Should you have any questions then please feel free to contact me, what's more should you have any meetings you feel would be beneficial for me to attend, or any groups that you feel I should also be in contact with then please do let me know.

I look forward to working in collaboration with you all on this very exciting project.

My contact details are as follows: Direct Telephone: 01424 452527; E-mail: jodie@hastingstrust.co.uk

