Almonry Development Working Group  
Notes from meeting on 21 October 2019

Present:  
Cllrs B Brown, G Favell and M Kiloh

Funding sources  
Update from Cllr Brown regarding research on further options for possible sources of funding:  
The Heritage Architectural Fund was confirmed to be unsuitable as the building is in the ownership of the local authority and not at risk. The fund offers loans at 6% (above PWLB rates). Cllr Kiloh noted that the project may be considered if it was part of a wider initiative, such as the work towards gaining UNESCO World Heritage status for Battle. Cllr Brown will contact the Battle Conservation Group to explore the possibility. There were no further options for consideration at this meeting.

Information to inform Strategic Plan  
Update on gathering information regarding the accommodation required in order to provide a conducive working environment for Councillors, tenants, Town Council and Rother District Council staff:  
Cllr Kiloh is making appointments to interview BTC and RDC staff regarding the work environment. She aims to collate information by 1st November.

Update on information regarding the accommodation required in order to provide a one-stop-shop and associated services for residents of Battle and surrounding villages visitors to Battle and 1066 Country:  
Cllr Favell will seek an appointment with the Customer Services Manager at RDC

Update on information about the needs of organisations that may wish to use the facilities (for workshops, exhibitions, meetings, training, archiving etc) to inform the requirement specification for the project:  
Cllr Brown has devised a questionnaire that has been sent to various organisations, requesting a reply by 23rd October. There is also a questionnaire on the BTC website.

Update on research into background information to inform the introduction to the business plan for the Almonry  
In addition to searching through documents at the Almonry, Cllr Favell has been given a range of documentation by Lesley Samms, who wrote the Heritage Lottery Grant application.

Process for reassessment of the financial implications  
Council has agreed that the project costs will be reassessed at three stages: receipt of cost forecast at the end of October, receipt of pricing document at the beginning of January and receipt of the tender report at the beginning of March.

Three flow charts to aid the reassessment (below) were agreed for recommendation to F&GP.

Consideration will be given to accessibility, flexibility and future-proofing in addition to the needs of BTC and RDC. Needs of other potential users (leisure, business, educational, social) also need to be considered within the process.
Progressing the project

As Cllr Kiloh will be unable to attend meetings in person between 1st and 20th November, it was agreed to discuss matters by email and teleconferencing.

Timelines are very tight, so some decisions regarding plans, reassessments etc. may need to be taken by F&GP through email to enable speedy responses. This will need to be formally agreed.

Cllr Brown noted that the project should refer to repair, refurbish and *rebuild* because, in architectural terms, reinstate implies restoration to its original state, which does not apply exactly to the south wing.

To inform the Strategic Plan, there needs to be an agreed pricing structure for the proposed Almonry facilities for a range of organisations, taking into account commercial, local organisations, groups with which the Council is working to improve Battle etc.

All possible options for accessibility have been explored, including access from the High Street to the front door and gardens using ramps and slopes. The only viable option seems to be access from the lower gate in Western Avenue by removing the existing door. An alternative plan is being prepared accordingly. Additionally, the possibility of a lift to the first floor was explored, but was of little value.

A list of questions will be sent to the architects prior to meetings. For example, Cllr Brown would like detailed information about stonemasons.
Receive cost forecast

Cost forecast within £600k +5%
Proceed with tender process

Cost forecast higher than £600k +5%
Is higher cost only due to additions to brief?

Yes
Evaluate whether the additions are required and should be funded (possibly through grants for specialist facilities)

Yes
Proceed with tender process

No
Look for cost savings

Cost savings found

No
Proceed with tender process

Cost forecast within £600k +5%
Proceed with tender process

Revise ambitions

Cost forecast higher than £600k +5%
Consider suitability of building for Council use in C21

Proceed to consultation

Decision

Almonry project

Cost forecast stage
Receive pricing document

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Proceed to tender

Cost forecast higher than £600k +5%
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Yes
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Proceed to tender

No
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Cost savings found

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Proceed to tender

Cost forecast higher than £600k +5%
Revise ambitions

Consider suitability of building for Council use in C21
Proceed to consultation

Decision
Receive tender report

Cost forecast within £600k +5%
- Proceed to consultation

Cost forecast higher than £600k +5%
- Is higher cost only due to additions to brief?
  - Yes
    - Evaluate whether the additions are required and should be funded (possibly through grants for specialist facilities)
    - Cost savings found
      - Yes
        - Proceed to consultation
      - No
        - Look for cost savings
    - Cost savings found
      - No
        - Proceed to consultation
  - No
    - Revise ambitions
      - Cost forecast within £600k +5%
        - Proceed to consultation
      - Cost forecast higher than £600k +5%
        - Consider suitability of building for Council use in C21
          - Proceed to consultation

Decision

Almonry project following receipt of tender