

TOWN CENTRE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP MEETING

Friday, 4 December 2020

10.30am

Held remotely on Zoom

NOTES

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Present:

Accessible Stratford represented by Elizabeth Dixon;
BID represented by Joe Baconnet;
Royal Shakespeare Company represented by Geraldine Collinge;
Shakespeare's England represented by Helen Peters;
Stratford on Avon District Council represented by Cllr Pemberton and Cllr J Fradgley;
Stratford Society represented by John Scampion;
Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council represented by Cllr Richard Vos and the Town Clerk, Sarah Summers
Stratford Town Trust represented by Sara Aspley;
Town Transport Group represented by Colin Stewart;
Warwickshire County Council represented by Cllr Kate Rolfe, Rachel Baconnet and David Ayton-Hill.

Observers: The Mayor, Cllr Tony Jackson, Stephen Rumble, Transport Planning Team Leader, WCC

Clerk: Mrs J Mayes

Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Tim Aucott, Shakespeare Birthplace Trust and Julie Lewis from SDC.

The Chair welcomed Stephen Rumble to the meeting as an observer. She acknowledged the continuing challenges that the Town face because of the COVID pandemic. She noted that the Strategic Partnership had been set up to identify a strategy for

delivering the NDP and that there is real pressure to deliver on the plan. The Partnership needs to think about the challenges it has, the other groups where discussions may be happening that relate to the work of the Partnership and how to balance the tension between developing a strategy and delivering on it.

1. Minutes from previous meeting held on 2 October 2020.

Noted.

2. Co-option of John Stacey, Director at Blue Coast Capital(Bell Court)

It was proposed seconded and

AGREED

That John Stacey, Director at Blue Coast Capital (Bell Court), should be co-opted as a member of the Strategic Partnership.

3. Town Centre Strategy including Plan for Bridge Street Presentation (Town Centre Project 5) - Cllr Lee, Town Council

Before the presentation there was a further discussion on distilling the thoughts raised in the previous meeting into a vision statement. Cllr Pemberton asked the group to consider what it was set up for and how it interplays with other groups within the town. He expressed concern that there may be duplication of work with individuals presenting to more than one group on the same piece of work and without some rationalisation of these groups the Strategic Partnership may not be effective in achieving its objectives.

Cllr J Fradgley and Cllr Vos both noted that there is a need for groups to work together and the key priority is delivering on the NDP, which has been voted on by the public and should form the foundation of the vision for the town.

Cllr Lee gave a presentation on the Town Centre strategy. The presentation outlined the mandate from the NDP consultation to

develop a 10-year plan, focusing on the town centre projects outlined in the NDP. He began with TC Project 5 on Bridge Street and the geographical context of the other projects proposed in the NDP.

The Chair thanked Cllr Lee for his presentation.

John Scampion asked if the pedestrianisation of High Street would be included in the project as he believed that it should be looked at together with Bridge Street. Cllr Lee confirmed that the full scope of the proposed work had been widened to include High Street and the roundabout at the top of Bridge Street.

Joe Baconnet noted that there is an imperative to engage with people and communicate information about the projects of the NDP. This needs to happen at the start of the process to avoid encountering resistance later on and being detrimental to the implementation of an agreed NDP project.

4. Breakout Rooms for discussion;

The group split into the following groups for discussion for 20 minutes.

Group One: Perception/Image/Experience of the Town taking into account enhancement of the public realm and accessibility.

- Cllr Darren Pemberton, Cllr Kate Rolfe, Sarah Summers, Elizabeth Dixon.

Group Two: Liaising with established retailers/supporting independent businesses/ Market strategy.

- Joe Baconnet, John Scampion, Cllr Richard Vos, Sara Aspley and Cllr T Lee.

Group Three: Improving pedestrian and cyclist experience/ Consideration of parking and traffic policies.

- David Ayton Hill, Colin Stewart, Cllr Jenny Fradgley, Stephen Rumble.

Group Four: Building on the contribution of the town's creative industries to its prosperity.

- Geraldine Collinge, Rachel Baconnet, Helen Peters and Cllr Tony Jackson.

5. Plenary

Summary of plan of action and discussion on frequency of future meetings and proposed calendar of meeting dates.

The Chair invited each group to report back on their main points.

Group One

Sarah Summers reported that the group were concerned that at present the town was not working well and that there were too many different factions working against each other. She noted that the retail offer in the town has changed fundamentally and the group felt that the town should move towards an experience offer. She acknowledged that people want to live in the town and understand what tourism brings to the town but want other experiences to be offered.

Group Two

Joe Baconnet reported that the group had a wide ranging discussion and a curated approach to the town centre is needed, encouraging landlords to consider what is good to fit it. There is also a need to identify agents of change, key landlords and buildings, and create an environment that will encourage investment. He also noted that businesses need to know the message about the future direction of the town.

Group Three

Cllr Fradgley reported that the group had discussed where the town is at presently and the various projects, such as Warwick Road, Birmingham Road that are being undertaken. The group agreed that a vision to promote the town to agents of change is needed otherwise we will not be in a position to attract funds to invest in projects to make them happen.

Group Four

The Chair reported that the group had considered the role of creative industries in Stratford and the importance of engaging with creative people in the process. There is a need to consider what Stratford, as a beautiful historic town, looks like in the future as well as looking at the barriers to achieving this and where income would come from. She concluded that it is important to learn from others.

It was noted that there were common themes from the groups. Cllr Vos noted the example of Altrincham, which had reinvented itself as a town. The Partnership should agree how to move forward to sell the story of the vision and convince investors that Stratford does have a bright future and opportunities. It was noted that there is a perception that the various elements within the town are out of synch and that it is unlikely that everyone will support proposals but that eventually a decision must be taken on the future direction for the town, building on the vision within the NDP.

The Chair proposed that the Partnership should split into smaller working groups to look at specific areas and report back to the next meeting.

Proposed Bridge Street Town Centre Project 5

The Town Council Task and Finish group, chaired by Cllr Vos will work on this.

The Vision set out in the NDP Group.

This group will look at the vision in the NDP and how it relates to the current situation, taking into account the impact of the COVID pandemic.

- Geraldine Collinge, Colin Stewart, Helen Peters, Cllr Jenny Fradgley and John Scampion.

Future Strategy Group

This group will follow on from the work of the vision group but will start thinking about what needs to be in the strategy.

- Geraldine Collinge and Colin Stewart.

The Chair suggested that in the future a group working on the communication strategy for the Partnership will be needed. It was suggested that it might be beneficial to engage with an external

communications advisor to provide advice on this. The Chair noted that this could be considered at the next meeting.

Joe Baconnet noted that work was needed on identifying the constraints and interdependencies in some projects. The Partnership will need to have awareness of the plans of confidential projects and other issues such as changes to the core strategy. Cllr Pemberton confirmed that the Core Strategy is a new plan and therefore there will be a requirement to review the NDP. He also highlighted the need to be aware of the economic and industrial strategy for Warwick and South Warwickshire to ensure any future plans dovetail with that. Joe Baconnet will begin work on a list of constraints/interdependencies which can then be added to by other members of the Partnership.

Cllr Rolfe highlighted the need for the Partnership to provide Stephen Rumble with input on its proposed vision before he begins work on his transport strategy. The Chair asked Stephen to advise the group on the best way for it to report to him.

Date of Next Meeting

Working Groups will arrange separate meetings before the next meeting so that they can report back at the meeting.

The next meeting of the Strategic Partnership will be on Thursday 28 January 2001.

The meeting closed at 12.00pm

