

**STRATFORD- UPON- AVON TOWN COUNCIL**

**TOWN CENTRE/TOWN TRANSPORT TASK & FINISH GROUP**

**17 August, 2020**

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Present:

Councillors:

Coles	Jackson (Mayor)
Dowling	Rolfe
J Fradgley	Taylor
Lee	Vos (Chairman)
How (Observer)	

Clerk: Town Clerk

Apologies: Cllrs Curtis and Fotjik.

1. Terms of Reference for the Strategic Partnership

As it was a condition of the Neighbourhood Development Plan to instigate a Town Centre Strategic Partnership, the Town Clerk took the opportunity to discuss the Terms with the former Chairman of the NDP Steering Group and Management team, Mark Haselden, in the hope that he would act as Chairman again for this group. Unfortunately, Mark declined but commented as follows on the proposed Terms of Reference:

*I wonder whether these proposed terms of reference fully address what was intended by TC Project 1? They read as reactive rather than creating a visionary strategic body. TC Project 1 talks about preparing, implementing and monitoring a Town Centre Strategy. This is more than “strategic challenges”. For example, the medium term “Strategy” might be to concentrate on being an outstanding tourist destination (better than Bath or York) and leverage the town’s international brand as high street retailers increasingly consolidate into larger primary shopping areas such as Leamington. There would then be various options as to how to achieve this (eg: enhance pedestrian environment, encourage more visitors to stay the night/weekend and spend more etc., promote the town more as a tourist destination etc. etc.). This all then leads to the implementation which is where the draft Terms of Reference is largely focussed. The partnership must include people sufficiently senior (section 5.1) to be strategic thinkers – and actually understand what a strategy is!*

*There is a great opportunity here to make Stratford an even better place, vibrant and appreciated by both visitors and residents, rather than to be on the back foot and reactive as the retail environment changes.*

*I hope this makes sense!*

Generally, the meeting agreed with Mark's comments but as things are now moving and changing so rapidly, not least new planning legislation which may well result in town centre residential implications, it was felt that rather than purely concentrating on TC Project 1, the group should also consider:

- A broader view resulting in a strategic master plan
- A realistic implementation plan

However, in the first instance, the partnership needs to concentrate on delivering TC Project 1 which in turn will be linked to the other projects within that section which will add to the vibrancy and success of the town centre.

## 2. Setting the agenda for the first Strategic Partnership Meeting

The Town Clerk explained that the representative from the Stratford Society, John Scampion, was the key representative for the Town Centre on the NDP management team. It was his idea to implement a Town Centre Strategic Partnership as he considered partnership working was vital for an agreed and cohesive way forward. He used this model when he was CEO of Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council for the implementation of the Touchwood Development.

Members considered that John would potentially be an excellent Chairman for the partnership; knowledgeable but sufficiently independent so that the group was not overly authority led.

It was agreed that the Town Clerk would liaise with John to see if he would be willing to take the chair, and for John to have real input into the proposed Terms of Reference and the agenda for the first meeting.

## 3. Action Plan and Priority List for the First Strategic Partnership Meeting

It was agreed that the partnership should concentrate on implementing things that can be done relatively quickly, such as those in Bridge Street and High Street.

The first meeting should be a place making meeting with a short agenda. Everyone would need to understand the dynamics of the group in order to plan effectively and agree on what could be realistically achieved. It was felt very important that all bring tangible skills or services to the table such as PR expertise as it will be important to 'sell' the way forward as positively as possible. Resources from each organisation need to be shared and the people present must be sufficiently senior to be effective – point 5.1 of the proposed Terms of Reference.

The agenda for the first meeting is likely to be:

- Election of Chairman
- Agree Terms of Reference
- Agree next steps
- Key agenda items for next meeting
- Date of next meeting – to be arranged without delay

Although it was understood that the makeup of the partnership is one from each organisation (plus a senior officer if it is an authority) it was suggested that either councillors or other people from the organisations included in the partnership could attend as observers. The Terms of Reference 5.2 to 5.4 does enable substitutes, co-option or additional guests where they will add value to the discussion.

#### 4. Date of Next Meeting

A further meeting will be arranged once the Town Clerk has had the opportunity to discuss matters with John Scampion.

*The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 3:00pm*