

TOWN CENTRE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP MEETING

Thursday 28 July 2022 at 2pm

Held remotely on Zoom

MINUTES Pages 1-5

Present:

Accessible Stratford represented by Elizabeth Dixon

Royal Shakespeare Company represented by Geraldine Collinge (Chair)

Shakespeare Birthplace trust represented by Tim Aucott

Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council represented by Cllr Richard Vos, also attended by the Town Clerk, Sarah Summers and the incoming Town Clerk, Caroline Nash

Stratforward BID – represented by Diane Mansell

The Stratford Society represented by John Scampion (Vice Chair)

Town Transport Group represented by Colin Stewart

Warwickshire County Council represented by Dave Ayton-Hill and Catherine Marks, and also attended by Stephen Rumble and Cllr Kate Rolfe.

Advent Communications represented by Sam Jackson

Clerk to the Strategic Partnership: Margo Galvin

Also present: Emma Gibbons (RSC), Rachel O'Connor-Boyd (Shakespeare Birthplace Trust)

Apologies for absence: Aaron Corsi and Cllr Tim Sinclair (WCC); John Careford and Cllr Matt Jennings (Stratford-on-Avon District Council); The Mayor, Cllr G Cleeve; John Stacey (Bell Court); Sara Aspley (Stratford Town Trust); Helen Peters (Shakespeare's England) and Cllr J Fradgley.

Not present: Cllr Tony Jackson.

1. Welcomes

The Chair welcomed Emma Gibbons, Placemaking Projects Manager at the RSC and Rachel O'Connor-Boyd (Shakespeare Birthplace Trust) as observers.

2. Actions and Minutes from the meeting held on 16 June 2022

Stratford Herald Survey: The Chair asked if the Herald's recent Town Centre survey had generated much response. Sam Jackson advised that the paper had not yet published any results and he did not think there had been much feedback.

The Chair advised that she had followed up Colin Stewart and Stephen Rumble to agree next steps regarding Transport.

Stephen Rumble provided a brief update on a non-agenda item: parking strategy. He advised that, after today's meeting, he will share the Options Assessment report which Jacobs have been working on. This sets out the short, medium and long-term options that form the recommended basis of the parking strategy. Those options have built on the baseline report that has been shared, and the feedback and engagement undertaken with various groups, including the Strategic Partnership. The options have been assessed against the strategy's vision, aims and objectives and the longlist of options that was presented at the end of last year and has been reviewed. The next step is to draft the implementation plan which Stephen hopes to share shortly.

<p>Action 1: 28.07.22 - Stephen Rumble to circulate the Transport Options Assessment report to Strategic Partnership members.</p>

Colin Stewart advised that the Transport Group has sent the proposal to the local planning team for consideration in the local plan also to the LTP4. Hopefully this will have some input to those processes.

The minutes were approved.

3. Levelling Up Fund update

Stephen Rumble advised that the bid document was currently being finalised. The extended deadline for submission is now noon on Tuesday 02 August. The submission will be similar to the round one bid and will also include some high-level feedback from the public consultation. A summary of the feedback is currently being prepared and this will form the basis of a document that will be shared shortly. Stephen will share the submission document with the Partnership in due course.

Cllr Vos asked if the bid submission had included a letter of support from Nadim Zahawi. Stephen Rumble confirmed that Nadim had provided a letter of support which included the draft text WCC had sent.

Cllr Vos asked when the LUF results might be communicated, given the changes in Government. Stephen Rumble responded that it was expected with the Autumn statement, although it might now be delayed.

The Chair noted that it is very likely more bids will be submitted in this round than in the first round and that the competition for funding will be fierce. She thanked Stephen for all his hard work on the bid submission.

4. Communications

Sam Jackson advised that a press release about the Levelling Up Fund submission has been approved and is ready to issue.

It seems unlikely that the Herald will publish a report on the Town Centre survey they recently conducted; it seems this was not well supported.

The Strategic Partnership website is still pending.

5. Vision session update

Following the vision presentation at the last Strategic Partnership meeting: *A Strategy for Stratford*, the Chair had met with Cllr Sinclair and it is proposed to run some brainstorming sessions involving people from the Partnership and the wider Stratford to gain a range of views. Cllr Sinclair will facilitate these workshops in August and September. The Chair will follow up with him when he returns from holiday.

6. WMCA update

The Chair advised that a second workshop had taken place with the Combined Authority. This was a more detailed session than the first one. One of the people attending knew Stratford-upon-Avon very well and had a lot to say about transport, traffic and parking. They concurred with what the Strategic Partnership has been saying on these topics. GC will share his name with Colin Stewart. She advised that the Combined Authority will be happy to run future workshops. When the Partnership has progressed its vision statement, the Authority will be a good place to test it with.

<p>Action 2: 28.07.22 - Committee Clerk to ask John Careford to circulate the notes from the last WMCA workshop.</p>

7. Future of the Strategic Partnership

The Chair referred to a paper she had sent out prior to the meeting, *Stratford Strategic Partnership: Next Steps July 2022* which summarised the Partnership's history and achievements and proposed next steps as follows:

To move fully to a delivery phase for the Partnership and to give confidence to third parties, the Chair recommends the creation of a Transformation Board. This revised governance structure, if approved by the Partnership, would need to be approved by the cabinet of each of the three councils. It would have an independent chair who has credibility and experience of public / private partnerships with a smaller membership. This would be informed by the Partnership, which would be configured as an advisory group. A new body would also be created to deliver work from the Board. It is also proposed to recruit a paid Project Manager.

The proposed structure and is designed to attract investment; this sort of structure is often created after major investment. The proposal would require 12 months investment in the structure to work up a business plan and prove the

economic value of such a structure. This would need c. £70k pump prime investment.

Questions on the proposed structure were then invited.

Cllr Vos asked how the £70k might be sourced. The Chair advised that she would see funding coming from split contributions from the Strategic Partnership organisations.

Cllr Rolfe expressed concern about the proposed number of project groups (four) included in the structure which she felt would have a huge cross-over while various projects are being worked on. How would this work as each group feeds into the chain above? Two groups might work better. The Chair responded that it is not necessary to have four groups. It is just important to use resources wisely and in a co-ordinated way.

Catherine Marks commented that the project groups would not necessarily need to be theme-based and could be created to work on specific projects as required. She noted the importance of finalising the vision work so that it can be shared with the board.

Elizabeth Dixon expressed support for the structure and noted the importance of smaller organisations continuing to have their voices heard once it is in place.

The Chair commented that it will be essential to keep the Strategic Partnership as an advisory group.

Diane Mansell added her support for the proposal and commented that the proposed structure would help to streamline activities in the town.

Cllr Rolfe commented that it will be especially important not to slip back into silos when no one knew what anyone else was doing in the town. Communication between the town's key organisations must stay open and transparent. The structure must be tight, concise and precise.

Sarah Summers commented that the Strategic Partnership was set up because of the Neighbourhood Development Plan and the Town Council was fully behind it. It is an essential group with the right organisations involved, and it must continue. Funding is critical and the Town Council would wish to contribute money into something that will achieve results. CIL money is available and the Town Council has said it will save some of this for projects such as Bridge Street/High Street.

The Chair advised that she had spoken to Cllr Matt Jennings and John Careford outside of this meeting. They support the proposed new structure. She will follow up with Dave Ayton-Hill to discuss how to move things forward from a WCC perspective.

To summarise the above discussion:

- There was overall support for the proposal
- The next step is to consult with each of the three Councils to agree the details
- Ideally, the new structure will be implemented in January 2023
- Partnership organisations were asked to think about funding the new structure

Sam Jackson noted that once the new structure has been agreed at Council level, it will need to be communicated in good time to the public.

Any other business

The Chair thanked everyone for their kind messages on her new appointment at Compton Verney and confirmed that she will step down from the Strategic Partnership when she leaves the RSC on 26 August. John Scampion has kindly agreed to continue as Deputy Chair and Sara Aspley has agreed to Chair as we move to the new structure, effective 01 September 2022.

John Scampion expressed the Partnership's sincere appreciation for Geraldine's hard work and leadership.

*The next meeting of the Strategic Partnership will be on
Thursday September 29 at 2pm on Zoom.*