

# TOWN CENTRE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP MEETING

Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> March at 2pm

Held via Zoom

## MINUTES Pages 1-5

### Present:

**Accessible Stratford** represented by Elizabeth Dixon

**Bell Court** represented by Holly Woodhead

**Royal Shakespeare Company** represented by Emma Gibbons

**Shakespeare Birthplace Trust** represented by Tim Aucott

**Shakespeare's England** represented by Helen Peters

**Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council** represented by the Town Clerk

**Stratford District Council** represented by John Careford, Cllr Anne Parry, Joanne Bozdoganli; also attended by Cllr Jenny Fradgley

**Stratford society** represented by John Scampion (Vice Chair)

**Stratford Town Trust** represented by Sara Aspley (Chair)

**Warwickshire County Council** represented by Stephen Rumble, Aaron Corsi, Catherine Marks, also attended by Cllrs Kate Rolfe and Tim Sinclair. Aoife O'Gorman attended as an observer.

**Advent Communications** represented by Sam Jackson.

**Clerk to the Strategic Partnership:** Margo Galvin

**Apologies for absence:** Dave-Ayton-Hill (Warwickshire County Council), Cllr Richard Vos (Stratford Town Council), Colin Stewart (Town Transport Group), Rachel Sharpe (RSC) and Adam Dent (Advent Communications)

### 1. Actions and Minutes from the meeting held on 23 February 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 February 2023 were approved.

### 2. Matters Arising

The Chair thanked everyone who contributed feedback to the SWLP consultation submission. The Partnership's response has been submitted. Thanks to Emma Gibbons for her support in this.

The Chair advised that The Guild Estate Charity had received £90k from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) through Stratford-on-Avon District Council for a project to convert an empty historic building at the back of Henley Street to a co-working space. It is hoped that the first phase of work, which is to make the building weatherproof, will start as soon as possible. The Chair proposed that the

project be brought to the Strategic Partnership for discussion since it will align with the proposed Bridge Street/High Street project if this comes forward.

Tim Aucott advised that the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust had also received £35k of SPF funding for feasibility studies into two projects: to complete the re-paving of Henley Street and to convert the former EWM building at 22 Henley Street into a community wellbeing hub and learning venue. Both projects are relevant to the Strategic Partnership. SA/TA will discuss further offline.

Elizabeth Dixon noted the importance of maintaining accessibility to Henley Street, given that there are currently six Blue Badge parking bays situated there.

See press release below for details of SPF funding awards:

<https://www.stratford.gov.uk/news/press.cfm/current/1/item/137947>

It was noted that the next round of SPF funding opens soon.

### **3. South Warwickshire Local Plan (SWLP) – consultation and response**

The Options stage of the consultation will run from July-October 2023. It was agreed that the Strategic Partnership should provide an informed response to this, given its importance to Stratford. John Scampion is therefore forming a small sub-group to work on this, with support from John Careford. The intention is to hold three meetings and report back to the Partnership at the July meeting, and possibly again in September. Anyone interested in joining the group should contact John Scampion direct (and cc Sara). Emma Gibbons and Colin Stewart have already confirmed their interest.

### **4. South Warwickshire Economic Strategy consultation (deadline for submission of responses: 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023)**

Cllr Parry declared an interest in this matter in her capacity as SDC Portfolio holder for ICT, Transformation, Tourism and Economic Development. She and John Careford offered to answer any questions Partnership members may have about the consultation.

Emma Gibbons summarised the consultation content and process, noting this was an opportunity for the Partnership to discuss the proposed vision, mission and objectives before formulating a group response.

John Careford noted the correlation between the economic strategy consultation and the SWLP, to which the Partnership has already responded; the intention is for the economic strategy to feed into the Local Plan. The strategy has three themes: people, prosperity and place, which constitute the local economy. It is not just about business but about creating the right environment to nurture growth and attract investment, including affordable housing and infrastructure.

This will be the only opportunity to consult on South Warwickshire's economic strategy. Feedback will be assessed and passed to the SDC Cabinet for any

changes to be approved. It may then need to go to full Council. The process is expected to take place over the summer. Action plans will then be developed for each district.

Cllr Fradgley advised that the Economic Strategy consultation had been discussed at a recent Stratford Town Council Planning meeting ahead of the Council submitting its own response. At this meeting Councillors expressed concern that tourism did not feature as one of the core principles of economic development, given its importance to the town. There was a strong feeling that tourism should be included in the consultation as one of the economic sectors.

Cllr Parry responded that both WCC and SDC continuously support and invest in tourism and work closely with Shakespeare's England in this respect; the area's strong tourism economy continues to develop. It is acknowledged that the hospitality industry in general struggles to attract people. However, what is needed now in South Warwickshire is to think outside the box more to generate new business interests that will drive economic growth, generate high calibre jobs and attract greater diversity into the area.

John Careford added that the five economic sectors mentioned in the consultation relate to the core opportunity areas that have been identified. If the Partnership felt that the strategy is not focused on the right things, the consultation provides the opportunity to say so.

Cllr Sinclair commented that the district's investment in its current strengths, as well as new areas, could be made more explicit within the consultation document, and suggested placing more emphasis on the arts. He noted that if the proposed economic strategy does not specifically mention this, then it will not be included.

**Action 1: 23.03.23** – ALL to send feedback on the Economic Strategy consultation to Emma Gibbons and Sara Aspley by 31<sup>st</sup> March.

It was noted that there is a consultation out for the University of Warwick Campus near Wellesbourne, which also closes on 31<sup>st</sup> March. This is worth reviewing since it aligns with the South Warwickshire economic strategy in relation to the creation of high caliber jobs. There have been consultations with local stakeholders and the campus is taking on the name of Stratford-upon-Avon, thereby further developing the area's international profile. Cllr Parry will circulate a link.

## 5. Transport update

Town Transport Group: In Colin Stewart's absence Elizabeth Dixon advised that members of the West Midlands Rail Executive had recently made a presentation to the Town Transport Group about their investment strategy.

**Action 2: 23.03.23** – Committee Clerk to circulate the WM Rail Executive strategy presentation and details of the May timetable.

## Mini-Holland scheme

Stephen Rumble shared a presentation on the Mini Holland programme. This is part of the Mayor of London's Healthy Streets approach which has seen c£100m being invested to help three outer London boroughs (Enfield, Kingston and Waltham Forest) transform into cycling hubs through high specification Dutch-style infrastructure. Changes include redesigned junctions that are safer for cyclists and pedestrians, segregated cycle lanes on busy roads and reductions in the amount of traffic using residential streets. (For reference, see the *5 years of Waltham Forest mini-Holland* short video here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KvVI3Xjpsn4> .)

In 2021, as part of the third round of the Active Travel Fund, the Department for Transport allocated funding to support the preparation of feasibility studies to see how Mini Hollands could be introduced outside of London. In March 2022, WCC received £79k of this funding to develop a feasibility study for Leamington; this will be submitted shortly and a report published around May 2023.

It was noted that there is no Active Travel Fund funding currently available to implement new Mini Holland schemes.

A Councillor asked what local people thought about the Mini Holland approach. Stephen Rumble advised that there had been good support for the idea following the temporary pedestrianisation of the Parade in Leamington during Covid. WCC have been engaging with residents to obtain their views.

It was noted that there are strong similarities between the suggested Mini Holland scheme in Leamington and the proposed Bridge Street/High Street project in Stratford.

See the following link for more information on plans to transform Leamington:

<https://transformingleamington.co.uk/>

## **6. Communications update – new Strategic Partnership website**

Advent Communications will provide a quote for the new website.

## **7. Stratford Upon Avon BID**

The BID board is currently seeking an interim Manager following Diane Mansell's departure. More information will be shared when available.

## **8. Any Other Business**

### **8.1 You.Smart.Thing Travel Assistant**

Emma Gibbons gave a short presentation about this project which the RSC is working on together with several Strategic Partnership member organisations, and others. The service is a plugin for websites and apps that guides people to local venues and events. An alternative to Google maps, it gives venues control

of visitor routing options to and from events and can be configured to manage parking and transport operator partnerships. The Travel Assistant also helps manage accessibility requirements more effectively. The service should be live on the RSC website in the next couple of months and it is hoped that it will solve some of the travel problems theatre visitors currently face.

## 8.2 Dates of future Strategic Partnership meetings

It was agreed to cancel the April meeting and that there would be no meeting in August. Monthly meetings were preferred. Either the June or July meeting to be held in person at the Town Hall.

<b>Action 3: 23.03.2023</b> – Committee Clerk to check availability of Town Hall for a June or July in-person meeting.
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It was noted that, following the May local elections, new members may need to be appointed to the Strategic Partnership.

*The next Strategic Partnership meeting will be on Thursday 25 May 2023  
2pm – 3.30pm, via Zoom.*