

TOWN CENTRE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP PUBLIC MEETING

Thursday 28 April 2022 at 2pm

Held remotely on Zoom

MINUTES Pages 1-5

Present:

Royal Shakespeare Company represented by Geraldine Collinge (Chair)

Stratford-on-Avon District Council represented by John Careford, also attended by Cllr J Fradgley

Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council represented by Cllr Richard Vos (who joined the meeting at 2.30pm), also attended by the Mayor, Cllr K Taylor and the Town Clerk, Sarah Summers

Stratford Town Trust represented by Sara Aspley

The Stratford Society represented by John Scampion (Vice Chair)

Warwickshire County Council represented by Catherine Marks and Cllr Tim Sinclair, also attended by Stephen Rumble (who left the meeting at 2.45) and Cllr Kate Rolfe

Advent Communications represented by Adam Dent

Clerk to the Strategic Partnership: Margo Galvin

Apologies for absence:

Elizabeth Dixon (Accessible Stratford); Helen Peters (Shakespeare's England); Dave Ayton-Hill and Aaron Corsi (WCC), Cllr Matt Jennings (Stratford District Council); John Stacey (Bell Court); Tim Aucott (Stratford Birthplace Trust); Colin Stewart (Town Transport Group) and Sam Jackson (Advert Communications).

Not present: Diane Mansell (Stratforward BID).

1. Minutes and actions from previous meeting held on 24 March 2022

The minutes were noted and approved.

It was noted that **Action 3: 24.03.2022** – *Committee Clerk to include funding of Project Co-ordinator role on the April agenda* was outstanding. The Chair advised that this would be discussed during the meeting.

The Partnership asked the Committee Clerk to organise flowers for Elizabeth Dixon who is currently recovering from surgery.

2. Matters arising

Public Consultation update: Stephen Rumble advised that the public consultation is going very well; 520 responses have been received to date (the half-way point). The three public events were well attended and the online session attracted around 30 people. WCC will continue to promote the consultation to encourage participation.

Feedback so far has been positive. Two areas of concern have been identified: parking and access for Blue Badge users and people with disabilities. WCC has written to 4300 Blue Badge users and will set up focus groups to ensure this concern is discussed further with this group.

Very few young people have responded to the survey and WCC will try to address this, for example through focus groups. It was also noted that few retail businesses had responded and that 70% of respondents had opted not to provide information about their age.

The survey will close on 5th June, after which the results will be analysed and a consultation report produced. This will be factual and will not make any recommendations for action. The Strategic Partnership and Town Council will need to discuss the findings and then report back to Cabinet so that final decisions can be made. The survey data will feed into the Levelling Up Fund bid and the long-term development of the Bridge St/High St scheme.

Adam Dent asked if it would be helpful to issue a press release urging young people to take the survey, but this was not felt to be necessary. Cllr Rolfe advised that she would be attending the Stratford Youth Council later in the day and she would ensure this was raised. It was hoped that the Youth Council would be able to promote the survey at their respective schools. Sara Aspley advised that the Town Trust has strong links with the schools, including Heads of sixth forms. She agreed to discuss further with Stephen Rumble. Cllr Sinclair noted that Escape Arts have a youth group and suggested it might be helpful to run a focus group with them. Also, the Grammar School in Shottery has an active discussion group on social media, which could be another means of promoting the survey to young people.

Stephen Rumble advised that, initially, only the high-level findings will be published, although he accepted that the public might want to see more detail. John Scampion felt it would be helpful to include some of the survey findings in the second LUF bid, noting that it may not be easy to identify if the overall response was positive or negative, given that those who support new schemes tend not to respond to surveys. Stephen Rumble felt it should be possible to draw conclusions that could be included in the bid. The fact that a consultation had taken place should reassure the bid assessors. Feedback so far indicates a very strong steer from the public that they want this scheme. Stephen felt the bid should be re-submitted as it is, but it should outline any changes that may need to be made to the scheme once the outcome of the consultation is known.

Cllr Fradgley asked if any single group of respondents would be able to stop the scheme from happening, noting a conversation that had taken place with local taxi drivers about potential loss of access to Bridge Street/High Street. Stephen Rumble noted that the consultation process is very robust and it should not leave the Partnership open to challenge. He acknowledged that access for those with mobility issues was a concern and that people would need sufficient space to get in and out of vehicles and, where necessary, transfer to mobility aids. One way of addressing concerns might be to allow some daytime access to Bridge Street /High Street for Blue Badge holders. Resolving the access issue should go a long way towards getting the scheme accepted.

(Stephen Rumble then left the meeting.)

3. Investment Workshop update (including Levelling Up Fund)

The Chair provided an update on the second workshop, held on 27 April. The key points discussed were:

- Identification of different types of property owners in the town (i.e. private owners, Town Trust and District Council), especially in the Bridge Street/High Street areas. John Stacey will do some further work on this.
- Consideration of alternative investment opportunities for High Street/Bridge Street, also bringing in the Town Trust's artists' hub project in Henley Street, and how these can be packaged up.
- A Town Centre regeneration project with specific phases and deliverables from those phases. Paul Spooner and the Chair will draft some wording around this.

The Group had discussed how the Partnership might have the best chance in the second LUF bid, asking if more significant changes should be made to the original submission to make it as strong as possible. Creating a narrative around the scheme would help with this and the group had discussed the 'cultural journey' that would start with creative spaces (manufacturing) at the Town Trust's Henley St property and move to exhibition space and retail space in the Bridge St./High St areas to widen the regeneration output for the town centre. It was felt that this joined-up approach would be more likely to succeed. Good progress had been made on the thinking around the second LUF; more work is needed so an extra Investment meeting will be held on 11th May.

John Scampion commented that the sponsor of the Bid should be the District; the Chair agreed this needs SDC's support and advised that John Careford will speak to SDC to gauge their support. John felt that if the same bid is resubmitted, it won't succeed and, therefore, a slightly different approach is needed for the second bid.

4. Communications update (Advent Communications)

Adam Dent advised that Colin Stewart's blog has now been published.

He then presented four initial designs for Strategic Partnership logos, designed by the Jade Group. These aimed to reflect the town centre without being overly Shakespeare-focused. Partnership members voted on their preferred designs and it was agreed that Examples 1 and 2 should be refined, with the text to read 'Stratford-upon-Avon Strategic Partnership'. Revised designs to be presented back to the Partnership as soon as possible for a final decision.

5. Vitality and Viability Matrix feedback

John Careford had circulated the results of the matrix exercise, which highlighted some of the more important issues/themes, notably walking, appearance of the town and the Stratford experience (recreation). These results will feed into Cllr Sinclair's work on the vision.

Cllr Sinclair advised that a small group of Partnership members will attend a half-day Vision session on 23 May, the aim of which is to produce the Partnership's vision and mission; the core strategic themes would play into this. The outcomes will be presented visually using the services of a creative agency.

ACTION 1: 28.04.2022 – Committee Clerk to re-circulate the matrix results to the Partnership.
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6. Street furniture (including The Art of Bollards)

Cllr Sinclair advised that two meetings have taken place to discuss this, one in March and the other on 25th April. This included Judith Laycook and Karen Williams who will help to identify the artists who will be used to create the bollard artwork. The bollards will be new and located in Meer Street. The County Council has delegated budget for this. A shortlist of artists will be produced and a consultation process with residents will take place. Escape Arts will help with this at the H&M store. It is critical that the project produces high quality art. Elizabeth Dixon will represent people with visual and mobility impairments to ensure that the overall work on the new bollards, including their artwork, meets the needs of all users. The next meeting will be at the end of May. Cllr Sinclair will provide an update.

Cllr Rolfe noted the artists will be local to Stratford-upon-Avon and will have a history with the town. Judith and Karen will approach artists to start the process.

John Scampion asked how the artwork will be finished/protected. Cllr Sinclair suggested talking to The Colour Factory in Winchester, who originated this scheme, to get some guidelines. It is likely that an annual refresh of the artwork will be necessary.

7. Transport Plan

As Colin Stewart was not in attendance, this will be discussed at the May meeting.

8. Any Other Business

Consideration of employing a Strategic Partnership Co-ordinator on a paid basis (brought forward onto this agenda from the March 2022 Partnership meeting ACTION 3: 24.03.2022 – Committee Clerk to include funding of Project Co-ordinator role on April agenda).

The Chair commented that the time may have come to rethink the Strategic Partnership's Terms of Reference and how the Partnership can gain more authority with the three Councils (County, District and Town) to drive projects through. Employing a Co-ordinator on a paid basis could help facilitate this.

Cllr Sinclair believed that such a role would work well and commented that the line of management should be through the Strategic Partnership Chair.

Cllr Vos urged caution about employing someone into the role immediately as the Partnership should focus first on getting through the next LUF process, the results of which will dictate the Partnership's confidence and approach. If the Partnership gains public approval, its remit will expand and more funding might become available, with possible implications on the Co-ordinator role. He noted that this would be more than an administrative role and could incorporate an element of research.

John Scampion agreed with Cllr Vos, commenting that the Partnership is still defining its true role. It needs to decide if it is an advocacy body or an executive body and it is too early to define the role of Co-Ordinator.

John Careford commented that the Co-Ordinator's role could help bring the Strategic Partnership's proposed prospectus together, which would be used to help generate funding. Therefore, he felt the Partnership should not delay in creating the role.

*The next meeting of the Strategic Partnership will be on
Thursday 26 May at 2pm on Zoom.*