

# TOWN CENTRE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP MEETING

Thursday 16 June 2022 at 2pm

Held remotely on Zoom

## MINUTES Pages 1-6

### Present:

**Accessible Stratford** represented by Elizabeth Dixon

**Royal Shakespeare Company** represented by Geraldine Collinge (Chair)

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

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

**Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council** represented by Cllr Richard Vos, also attended by the Town Clerk, Sarah Summers

**Stratforward BID** – represented by Diane Mansell

**Stratford Town Trust** represented by Sara Aspley

**The Stratford Society** represented by John Scampion (Vice Chair)

**Town Transport Group** represented by Colin Stewart

**Warwickshire County Council** represented by Aaron Corsi, Catherine Marks and Cllr Tim Sinclair, 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)

**Apologies for absence:** Dave Ayton-Hill, The Mayor, Cllr G Cleeve; Tim Aucott (Shakespeare Birthplace Trust), John Stacey (Bell Court)

Not present: Cllr Tony Jackson

## 1. Welcomes

The Chair welcomed Emma Gibbons, Placemaking Projects Manager at the RSC, as an observer.

## 2. Actions and Minutes from the meeting held on 26 May 2022

### *Actions:*

- The Clerk confirmed that the PJA slides from the LUF2 stakeholder workshop had been circulated to Strategic Partnership members.
- The Chair and Clerk had discussed the July agenda which will focus mainly on the future of the Strategic Partnership.

The minutes were approved.

### 3. **Matters arising**

Public Consultation update: Stephen Rumble advised that 939 people had completed the survey online, 10 completed the paper version and c60 letters/emails were also received.

### 4. **Levelling up Fund**

Stephen Rumble advised that survey feedback had remained consistent and seemed mostly positive.

The main concerns were Blue Badge parking, impact of displaced traffic on surrounding roads and turning from Union Street into Guild Street. The data provided by the survey will be used to help strengthen the bid submission.

The submission date for the LUF bid is 6<sup>th</sup> July, although it was noted that the pro-forma had not yet been released.

Stephen advised that he has emailed Strategic Partnership members requesting letters of support from their respective organisations for inclusion in the bid submission. The Chair will draft a letter of support from the Strategic Partnership.

**ACTION 1: 16.06.22:** Stephen Rumble to share draft text for Partnership organisations to use in their letters of support.

**ACTION 2: 16.06.22:** ALL - Letters of support from Strategic Partnership organisations to be sent to Stephen Rumble by 30<sup>th</sup> June.

In response to questions raised by Partnership members, Stephen Rumble advised that:

- The Leader of WCC has requested Nadim's Zahawi's support for the bid submission. A standard pro-forma must be used for this.
- A high-level report summarising the consultation feedback will form part of the submission.
- It is assumed the bid result will be announced in the Autumn statement.
- It appears that many bids are being prepared for round 2, possibly more than in round 1.

The Chair asked if Stratforward BID members had offered their support for the submission. Diane Mansell advised that the LUF bid had been promoted through the BID's usual channels and via the Town Hall consultation event.

## 5. Communications

Sam Jackson confirmed that the People and Places benchmarking audit article had been published in the Herald. The Herald has recently launched its own Town Centre survey and Sam advised keeping track of this to see if it aligns with the benchmarking results. It will be interesting to see what feedback comes from this, although it was noted that the Herald's survey is unlikely to be as rigorous as the People and Places survey. The Chair asked Strategic Partnership members to take the Herald's survey.

**ACTION 3:** 16.06.22 – ALL – respond to the Herald's Town Centre survey. See [Take our survey - have your say about Stratford town centre \(stratford-herald.com\)](https://www.stratford-herald.com)

Cllr Fradgley noted that she had not seen the Herald's survey promoted via social media.

Sam advised that Geraldine Collinge, Margo Galvin and Advent will meet before the July Strategic Partnership meeting to discuss content for the new Partnership website and agree next steps.

It was agreed that Advent will draft a quote on behalf of the Partnership to be included in any media articles concerning the bid submission. Stephen Rumble will continue to keep Advent advised of planned WCC media activity concerning the submission.

## 6. Vision session update

Cllr Sinclair shared a presentation: *A Strategy for Stratford* (attached to these minutes) summarising the activities and outcomes of the recent Strategic Partnership Vision session, held at the RSC.

The objective of this session was to define the strategy's Vision, Mission and Key themes. To facilitate this work, various exercises were undertaken and the outputs captured on flipcharts. These outputs were then visualised by artist Jim Rogers (see slide 9 of presentation).

### Next steps:

- Agree / amend the Vision, Mission and Key Themes
- Create a visual summary of these from the full set of visuals created on the day
- Use these to develop the rest of the strategic plan – i.e. measures and targets, objectives, actions, responsibilities, timings, resources, dependencies and risks
- Having now defined what is in scope and what is not, run further idea generation activity to define more/all of the major activities required to deliver this

The Chair thanked Cllr Sinclair for his work.

Cllr Vos suggested that Jim Rogers' visualisation should be displayed publicly as it communicates a strong message that there is modern thinking taking place about the town's future. Cllr Sinclair thanked everyone for their positive feedback. He agreed there would be value in summarising Jim's visual and making a feature of it.

John Scampion questioned whether the wording of themes 1 and 3 on the Key Themes slide contradicted each other i.e. 'Evolution not revolution' (slide 1) and 'Reinvent the town centre' (slide 3). He also asked which part of the town's youth community the Partnership should be aiming at in terms of making Stratford a more 'youthful town'.

In response to John's first comment, Cllr Sinclair advised that in terms of 'reinventing' the town centre, the aim is to try to capture the spirit of the new but not make things too new. 'Evolving' suggests that things will change but only partially. He noted that the word 'reinvented' could be softened. In response to the second comment, Cllr Sinclair advised that Stratford's demographics are disproportionately older and that younger people leave the town to have fun or leave permanently. There is a danger that Stratford could become a retirement village.

The Chair confirmed that statistics show that, compared to other towns/cities (e.g. Coventry), Stratford has an older demographic.

Helen Peters commented that Stratford is widely considered to be a place that older people visit and move to; there isn't much to attract younger people. This group needs to feel there is something for them after 6pm.

Cllr Vos noted that Stratford doesn't quite have the right vibe to attract younger people.

Sara Aspley commented that 'multi-generational' might be a helpful term to use when defining the groups the town wants to attract.

Cllr Rolfe commented that a lot hinges on town planning. While more and more care homes and retirement apartments continue to be built, there aren't enough affordable homes being built for the young.

Cllr Fradgley noted that she had been speaking to both younger and older people in the town. Transport is a major issue for older people. People of all ages find it very difficult to afford even rental property in the town since many properties are now holiday lets.

Diane Mansell noted that many of the town's businesses are struggling to find staff because people can't afford to live here. Public transport is poor in the evenings.

Cllr Sinclair thanked everyone for their input and asked Partnership members to contact him with any further comments on the presentation, which the Committee Clerk will circulate.

**ACTION 4: 16.06.22** – ALL to review and respond to the Vision slides (Committee Clerk will circulate these). Please respond to Cllr Sinclair with any further feedback by Friday 01 July. **COMPLETE**

## 7. Transport update

Colin Stewart shared a presentation '*Towards an Integrated Transport Solution for Stratford-upon-Avon*'. Building on work done by the Town Transport Group earlier in the year, this summarises the current traffic situation in Stratford and considers the way forward. The presentation notes that:

- The problems highlighted in the Atkins report of 2016 are plain to see and nothing new.
- In Stratford there is a disproportionate reliance on developer-led proposals and funding, the cumulative effect of which means conditions deteriorate and the town's economy is threatened. Currently there is no evidence this trend will improve.
- There are several current transport projects and initiatives but is there a case for doing more?
- Arundel in West Sussex is known as a traffic bottleneck and Highways England has awarded a contract worth around £320m for work on the A27 Arundel bypass. While statistics indicate that Stratford carries more vehicles than Arundel, the southwestern relief road is not supported by the Highways Authority.

The Town Transport Group proposes a new approach as suggested in the conceptual 'What if' 'map' of how transport in the town could work on slide 15. The outcomes from a sustainable integrated transport plan would be:

- A vibrant, welcoming town that is easy to get to, use, and get through
- Connectivity - joined up journeys
- A benefit to the town economy
- A detailed transport plan (document/map) to use to
- Guide the development of the town
- Secure funding
- Defend against unhelpful development (safeguarding)
- Demonstrate fulfilment of the Climate Pledge (Transport)

### **Comments were then invited from the group.**

The Chair thanked Colin for his work. The overall view was that this was very helpful, especially the map on slide 15. Cllr Sinclair commented that the map dovetails well with his strategy work.

Cllr Vos noted that the town used to have a southern P&R. The time has come to talk politics because, without political support, Stratford will not get a southern P&R.

John Scampion commented that integrated transport planning is complex and takes a lot of time. He felt some elements of the plan for Stratford should be pursued without delay e.g. the town centre pedestrianisation and the relief road. To deal with traffic flow in the town, it is necessary to embrace the issue of a bypass. The lack of a unitary authority demonstrates the need for the Strategic Partnership to take transport and investment as key areas of its future activity.

Cllr Fradgley commented that Stratford has a long history of not working together. As a result, a degree of progress is made and then things stall. The Strategic Partnership is the key to achieving things in the town and has huge potential. She felt that the points made in Colin's document should be included in the LTP4, which is currently going through WCC.

Stephen Rumble noted that the key challenge is that transport needs ongoing investment. However, traditional sources of funding are decreasing. Bus services are needed but Government funding for bus service improvements is not forthcoming. The LTP will be an opportunity to pick up the challenges and themes.

Elizabeth Dixon, as a long-term member of the TTG, noted the ongoing challenges faced by the group in terms of improving transport in and around the town.

Colin Stewart summarised by stating that an integrated plan is about inter-dependencies. Doing one project at a time will not result in a strong business case. Imaginative solutions are needed.

<p><b>ACTION 5 16.06.22</b> - <u>The Chair</u> to follow up with Colin Stewart and Stephen Rumble to agree next steps. ALL - email either Geraldine or Colin with comments.</p>
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## 8. Any Other Business

The Chair advised that the July meeting will focus mainly on how the Strategic Partnership will work in the future. She will circulate a paper in advance with the next agenda.

*The next meeting of the Strategic Partnership will be on  
Thursday July 28 at 2pm on Zoom.*