

Stratford-upon-Avon Gateway SPD – Strategic Partnership Consultation Workshop

Summary notes of SWOC Analysis Workshop

Event date: 22nd June 2023 (14.00pm - 16.00pm)

Location: Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council, Sheep Street, Stratford-upon-Avon, CV37 6EF

List of attendees:

SDC

Tony Perks – Stratford-on-Avon District Council
Louisa Slator – Stratford-on-Avon District Council
Matthew Neal – Stratford-on-Avon District Council
Joanne Bozdoganli – Stratford-on-Avon District Council
John Careford – Stratford-on-Avon District Council

Consultant team

Jon Tarbatt – Corstorphine & Wright
Spencer John – Corstorphine & Wright
Riaan Louw – Corstorphine & Wright
Rosie Madden – MacGregor Smith

Strategic Partnership

Elizabeth Dixon – Accessible Stratford
Tim Aucott - Shakespeare Birthplace Trust
Rachael North - Shakespeare Birthplace Trust
John Scampion (Vice Chair) – Stratford Society
Howard Blessington (representing Colin Stewart) – Town Transport Group
Cllr Richard Vos - Stratford Town Council
Caroline Nash - Stratford Town Council (Town Clerk)
Cllr Lindsay MacDonald (observer) - Stratford Town Council
Cllr Tim Sinclair - Warwickshire County Council
Cllr Kate Rolfe - Warwickshire County Council
Aoife O’Gorman - Warwickshire County Council (observer)
Rachel Sharpe - RSC, Head of Creative Placemaking and Public Programmes
Emma Gibbons - RSC, Placemaking Projects Manager

Note: the following is a summary of the SWOC Analysis (Strengths Weaknesses, Opportunities Challenges), and does not constitute minutes of the meeting.

The Strategic Partnership’s Chair welcomed the group and introduced the purpose of the Workshop. Following adoption of the previous meeting minutes, Tony Perks (SDC) outlined the background to the Gateway project. Rachel North of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust (SBT) and Tim Aucott (SBT) presented the SBT’s vision and objectives for the proposed World Shakespeare Centre. Jon Tarbatt (C&W) then presented the draft SPD work in progress. This was followed by Questions and Answers.

Aim and objective of the Workshop:

- To inform the partnership group of Stratford-upon-Avon District Council’s progress towards developing a masterplan framework and SPD document for the Gateway site;
- To explore high level issues and opportunities pertaining to the project;
- To inform further work on the masterplan framework and SPD;
- To outline next steps.

SWOC Analysis:

The team divided into two sub-groups facilitated by a member of the consultant design team. Their objective was to compile a SWOC Analysis, which focused on identifying the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges related to the Gateway site. Each group presented back their findings to the wider group and the consultant team.

Strengths

- The potential to create world class opportunities for the local community and tourists.
- The site has the ability to offer complementary attractions.
- The site's proximity to the Shakespeare Birthplace is advantageous.
- The opportunity to regenerate and improve a neglected part of the town.

Weaknesses

- The vision needs to focus on the community and a broader range of offerings.
- Concerns regarding financial resources and time constraints.
- Existing transport and traffic flow through the site.
- The low quality of the built environment.
- Challenges in controlling the joint venture procurement process.

Opportunities

- Establishing a new museum capable of attracting diverse and new audiences.
- Promoting the concept of a "campus" featuring various sites with different offerings throughout the town.
- Improve cultural opportunities and showcasing of collections.
- The potential for collaboration between the RSC and SBT.
- Generating income for all involved.
- Establishing connections with schools.
- Developing the site as a catalyst for improving other parts of the town centre.

Challenges

- Create a coherent compelling and distinctive vision with a broad appeal.
- Promote non-traditional design aspirations.
- Respect the existing historical context and navigating around it.
- Determining what can be provided specifically for local residents.
- Addressing concerns related to land acquisition and funding.
- Managing transportation and accommodating bus coaches.
- Addressing the implications of climate change.
- Sustaining partnerships and generating interest among residents.

Jon Tarbatt (C&W) made some concluding remarks and thanked the Partnership Group for their input and enthusiasm.

Tony Perks (SDC) thanked the Group and outlined two key takeaways for the SPD arising from the Group's feedback.

1. Ensuring the SPD document represents the proposals in a balanced way (proposed WSC *and* wider town benefits arising from the regeneration proposals taken as a whole); and
2. Presenting wider town / community benefits in a more explicit manner.

The Partnership's chair closed the meeting.

End.