

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2

9 March 2021

Public Questions

The following questions have been submitted by a member of the public to the Chair of the Committee, who has responded to the questions as set out below.

Q1. What provision of meaningful activities for the youth and disadvantaged groups does the current project plans actually offer?

Answer

It is too early in the process to be able to comment on specific activities, and it is necessary to consider the proposals as a whole.

The Future High Street Fund award will enable the Council to develop more detailed plans for the Markets Quarter, which includes the Alexandra Cinema and Market Hall building, along with the Market Square. How the space is managed and used will form part of the considerations for the plans as they are being developed in more detail. As part of the bid to the Future High Street Fund the Market Quarter proposals included:

- *Combining and transforming the Market and Food Hall, Alexandra Cinema and Market Square to include a new eating quarter, a state of the art cinema, a remodelled entertainment and events venue and a high quality market space*
- *Attracting investment in these important heritage buildings to make the Markets Quarter a more attractive destination*
- *Changes to attract greater footfall and increase the time visitors spend in the area, extending into the evening, and so supporting the wider town centre economy*
- *Opening up access and making improvements to the Market Square to allow events to take place, including greening the area and providing seating.*

Q2. Have any entertainment professionals (touring groups, musical acts, comedians, entertainment agents) been approached to canvass their thoughts and opinions on whether they would be willing to use the proposed space?

Answer

The submitted business case for the Future High Street Fund was produced with input and support from consultants and architects with experience of delivering similar projects across the country. When we develop the projects in more detail we will engage with a range of future users of the space to design a high quality offer as its role changes from being a separate cinema and market hall to becoming a more flexible entertainment and events venue and high quality market space.

An Overview and Scrutiny group has also been looking at the provision of cultural facilities in Newton Abbot. Their remit looks at the current provision excluding the Alexander Theatre but has included and received seeking input from diverse groups interested in the arts including current users of the Alexander Theatre. The group work is ongoing and will report on how Newton Abbot can develop the basic requirements for an improved cultural quarter within the town.