

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2

TUESDAY, 9 MARCH 2021

Present:

Councillors Bullivant (Chair), Swain (Vice-Chair), D Cox, Evans, Hayes, G Hook, Morgan, Nuttall, Parker-Khan and L Petherick

Members Attendance:

Councillors Jeffries, Keeling, MacGregor, Taylor and Wrigley

Apologies:

Councillors Austen, Daws and Tume

Officers in Attendance:

Neil Blaney, Head of Place & Commercial Services
Rosalyn Eastman, Business Manager, Strategic Place
Michelle Luscombe, Principal Policy Planner
Fergus Pate, Principal Delivery Officer
Trish Corns, Democratic Services Officer
Beth Tipton, Administrative Assistant

49. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2021 were confirmed as a correct record and authorised to be signed at the earliest convenience.

50. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

None.

51. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The following questions were submitted by a member of the public to the Chair of the Committee. The answers are 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.

52. COUNCILLOR QUESTIONS

None.

53. EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN

The Executive Forward Plan detailing issues to be considered by the Executive over the next 12 months was noted. It was requested that each item be identified as to which Overview and Scrutiny Committee remit it fell to.

54. WORK PROGRAMME

The Work Programme as circulated with the agenda was noted.

55. EXECUTIVE MEMBER BIENNIAL PRESENTATION - PLANNING

The Executive Member for Planning, Councillor Taylor gave his biennial update which included: the draft local plan was on track for public consultation in June 2021 and would include site options for development, housing numbers and a low carbon strategy; since September 2020 approval has been granted for more than 600 new homes, and a major application has been refused for not providing adequate affordable housing provision; consultation on the vision for the area under the Newton Abbot Garden community project; the Matford District Heating project would provide heat to more than 2000 homes and reduce emissions by 70%; and other priorities going forward were completing the SW Countryside Park, and the Dawlish and Houghton Barton link roads.

Councillor Taylor responded to questions and also advised that a written response would be provided to the question on the impact of CIL on reduced new housing numbers.

The full presentation can be found [here](#).

56. EXECUTIVE MEMBER BIENNIAL PRESENTATION - SPORT, RECREATION AND CULTURE

The Executive Member for sport, recreation and culture, Councillor MacGregor gave a biennial update which included: the dates for opening outdoor and indoor leisure centres with social distancing rules was welcomed; fitness and wellbeing activities were successfully continuing to be delivered online through live streaming and on demand; Leisure Centre refurbishments was on hold but decarbonisation works would proceed assisted by national funding to reduce carbon emissions by some 280 tonnes; refurbishment of Decoy and Bakers parks play areas were progressing; and work was continuing on leisure facilities and all activities being up and running safely as covid restrictions are lifted in stages.

Councillor MacGregor answered questions from Members advising that activities were being publicised to increase participation; and the Matford SNAGs site was due to open to the public in the summer.

The full presentation can be viewed [here](#).

57. EMPLOYMENT SITES TASK AND FINISH GROUP REPORT

Consideration was given to the report of the Employment Delivery Task and Finish Group which concluded there was merit in the Executive looking at production of an employment strategic plan.

The recent free port status being awarded to Plymouth was referred and the potential for resulting business benefits for Teignbridge and Devon.

It was unanimously

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RECOMMENDED - The Executive produce an employment plan for Teignbridge that addresses the matters identified in the report and establishes the next steps necessary to develop and implement a successful employment strategic plan, including:-

- a) Greater emphasis on creating Employment.
- b) Establish specific policies that support the delivery of jobs.
- c) Amend policies to enable additional funds to be generated.
- d) Invest directly in resources to support new businesses.
- e) Increase support for rural economies.
- f) Expanded current resources to bring forward employment.
- g) Invest in new facilities to support business development.
- h) Provide awareness training to Councillors.
- i) Make appropriate investments to create employment.
- j) Lobby government and others for employment delivery support.

CLLR P BULLIVANT
Chairman