

NOTES OF THE **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT GROUP** HELD ON **WEDNESDAY 20th MARCH 2019** AT 7.00 P.M. AT THE TOWN HALL, GREAT WESTERN HOUSE, 9 DEVON SQUARE, NEWTON ABBOT

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs L Sheffield (Chairman)

Councillors

Mrs C Bunday
C Coyle-Moore
M Hocking
D Howe

Mrs A Jones
C N Parker
T Ward

Councillor In Attendance: M E Ryan

By Invitation: Bob Dennison, Managing Director Stagecoach Bus
Paul Clark, Operations Director
Richard Scant, Operations Manager
Graham Bailey, Commercial Manager

Officers In attendance: Felicity Cole – Museum Curator
Alexandra Robinson – Committee Administrator

CE24. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Richard Jenks (Dep Mayor), Mike Joyce, Ken Purchase (Mayor), and Ms Liz Roberts.

CE25. INTERESTS

Councillor Mike Ryan gave notice of his intention to declare an interest in Minute CE27 below.

CE26. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Community Engagement Group meeting held on 23rd January 2019 were received and signed as a correct record.

CE27. PRESENTATION UPDATE FROM STAGECOACH BUS

The Chairman welcomed Mr Bob Dennison, Managing Director; Paul Clark, Operations Director, Richard Scant, Operations Manager and Graham Baily, Commercial Manager of Stagecoach Bus Company and invited them to update Members on matters raised by the Town Council in connection with the local bus service.

Mr Dennison thanked Councillors for the opportunity to provide an update on local bus service provision in the town. He explained how Stagecoach operated a commercial assessment of bus routes and their capacity to deliver based upon receipt of customer fares. He added that without financial assistance and in the event of diminishing patronage that some services had been cut or suspended.

Mr Dennison further explained that following successful application to Devon County Council that Stagecoach were now in receipt of funding for specific routes and services and were able to ensure that some buses could be reinstated, and service

had resumed in the past few weeks. All the changes would be effective by 14th April 2019 and would be in place for the next five years.

Mr Dennison reported that Stagecoach had recently been granted funding through Section 106 Agreement in relation to Hele Park and therefore they had been able to implement additional resources which would enable the Hele Park to Town route and the Buckland routes to be supported by the Section 106 funding. These changes would be effective from 14th April 2019.

In regard to the quality of service delivery, such as late arrival of buses or amended routes; Mr Dennison stated that roadworks at several sites in the town had had a significant impact and where cars drivers were able to seek an alternative route that the buses could not. The long-term implications for buses on some of the routes had been reported to Devon County Council and the Traffic Commissioner and data was collated from customer feedback and driver experience. He noted that they had experienced some vehicle reliability issues which had impacted some services repeatedly.

Mr Bailey, Commercial Manager emphasised their commitment to providing a more reliable service and gave details of the new and reinstated routes within the town.

In finishing Mr Dennison invited Members to a public consultation event in Victoria Parade, Torquay which will be launched in the next couple of weeks to discuss the Route Consultation Plan.

The Chairman thanked Mr Dennison and his colleagues for their frank and open explanation as to the issues in relation to bus service provision for the town centre and their proposals for improvement. Councillor Mrs Sheffield invited questions from Members, who raised the following key points:

- Clarity on the decision to changes on some routes example Sherborne Road and Highweek,
- Lack of customer involvement in changes to routes and services;
- Confusion surrounding changes to bus numbers (advised that sometimes subject to DCC control),
- Sustainable funding from Developers, ensuring provision in new areas,
- Managing customer expectation and commercial viability,
- Communicating changes to bus routes,
- Service reliability, lengthy delays and poor service,
- Impact of roadworks both temporary and long-term road improvement works,
- Clarity on the bus timetables in particular Broadlands to be changed,
- Resources from diminishing routes cannot be used to substitute other routes, and
- To clarify with Devon County Council on the release of further section 106 funding.

The Chairman thanked all four representatives of Stagecoach Bus Company for attending the meeting; for their open discussion and willingness to clarify and answer concerns as raised by Members. Following which Mr Dennison and his colleagues from Stagecoach Bus were invited to leave.

CE28. MUSEUM

A. MUSEUM REPORT

The Chairman reminded Members that they receive regular updates on the Newton's Place project at each committee meeting and had seen the 3D video of proposed Museum Design at the Meeting of the Council. Councillor Sheffield invited the Museum Curator, Mrs Cole to update Members on the recent activities in the Museum in preparation for the move and re-opening in the new premises.

Mrs Cole referred to the Museum Report, previously circulated, and raised the following key points:

- The curator had commissioned Keith Newstead to create an automaton donations box, the funding for which would be sourced from commercial sponsorship;
- Museum Volunteers continued to be involved in all aspects of the preparation for the Collection to be recorded and packed ready for the move to the new premises;

The Chairman thanked Mrs Cole and the team of Museum volunteers for their considerable efforts in the preparation of the move to Newton's Place. There being no additional questions from Members, accordingly it was;

AGREED that the Curator's Museum Report be hereby, noted and accepted.

B. POLICIES

The Chairman advised Councillors that the Emergency Plan, previously circulated was the last remaining Policy due for review and would ensure compliance with the Arts Council Accreditation. The Museum will be granted provisional accreditation during its period of closure but would be due for assessment soon after its re-opening in Newton's Place. Councillors considered the content of the Emergency Plan and suggested that consideration be given to the installation of a Defibrillator in Newton's Place.

Policy Reviewed:

- Emergency Plan

Following consideration, it was:

AGREED that the **Emergency Plan**, the Museum Policy due for review be hereby, accepted and adopted and signed by the Chairman of the Community Engagement Group and further, it was:

RECOMMENDED that the new Council consider the installation of a Defibrillator in Newton's Place.

CE29. ACCOUNTS/INCOME & EXPENDITURE

A. MUSEUM

The Community and Engagement Group received and noted the Income and Expenditure statements from 1st April 2018- 28th February 2019, previously circulated. It was noted that the remaining budget had been ear-marked for the Newton's Place Project and that any underspend would be carried forward to the 2019/20 budget.

Following consideration, it was;

RECOMMENDED that

- a) The Income and Expenditure Statements for the Museum be hereby noted and accepted; and
- b) Any remaining budget as ear-marked for the Newton's Place Project be carried forward to the 2019/20 budget.

B. NEWTON IN BLOOM

The Community and Engagement Group received and noted the Income and Expenditure statements from 1st April 2018- 28th February 2019 previously circulated.

Following consideration, it was;

RECOMMENDED that

The Income and Expenditure Statements for Newton In Bloom be hereby, noted and accepted.

CE30. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Community and Engagement Group would be 9th October 2019 at 7.00 pm in the Town Hall.

CHAIRMAN