

MINUTES OF THE ONLINE **MEETING** OF THE **STRATEGIC PLANNING FORUM** HELD ON **WEDNESDAY 9TH SEPTEMBER 2020** AT 7.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors C N Parker (Chairman)
M Hocking (Vice Chairman)

P Bullivant R Jenks (Mayor)
Mrs C Bunday M Joyce (Dep Mayor)
D Corney-Walker M E Ryan
D Howe

Councillors in attendance: R Hall
R Hayes
Mrs L Sheffield

In attendance: Philip Rowe – Town Clerk
Sally Henley – Town Development Manager
Nigel Canham – Council Communications Advisor
Alex Robinson – Principal Administrator

SP32. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Mrs K Crout and Mrs A Jones and Ms S Scott, Deputy Town Clerk.

SP33. INTERESTS

None declared.

SP34. MINUTES

The minutes of the Strategic Planning Forum held on 27th November 2019 were received and signed as a correct record.

SP35. VISION, PRIORITIES AND OBJECTIVES

The Chairman referred to the document, previously circulated and noted that it reflected the Council's Vision, Priorities and Objectives as approved by Council last year, and he invited Members to review those priorities for the Council and to make suggestions for new objectives for the forthcoming year and beyond.

Following a lengthy discussion among members it was suggested that the Council's core priorities remained as set out but that they would be re-ordered on the document to reflect their relevance. In summary Members conveyed a message that given the unprecedented effects of the COVID-19 pandemic that they wanted to do all they could to uplift the town's economic vibrancy; by providing a safe and pleasant environment for the residents and visitors to Newton Abbot. In acknowledging the service cuts within the District and County Authorities, Councillors felt it was important that the Town Council met some of those service needs to ensure the protection of the town's assets and facilities; improve the quality of the public realm and overall to enhance the wellbeing of those who reside and visit Newton Abbot.

Given the recent change in leadership at Teignbridge District Council, Members considered any potential merit in discussing their priorities with the District Authority to ensure a collaborative approach for the town. Following discussion, it was felt that the Town Council had a duty to the residents and visitors of Newton Abbot and would define the Council's Vision and Objectives by its own measures and retain ownership of the priorities as set out in the redrafted document.

The Chairman noted that the financial implications of the Vision, Priorities and Objectives would be considered in more detail at the next meeting of the Strategic Planning Forum on 11th November 2020. Accordingly, it was;

AGREED that the revised Vision, Priorities and Objectives document, be hereby approved subject to amendment and be submitted to the Council for adoption.

SP36. BUDGET AND STRATEGY 2020/21

The Chairman introduced the **Final Budget for 2019/20** and advised Members that it represented the budget performance and outturn for the last year. It would form the basis for further detailed consideration at a future meeting of the Strategic Planning Forum and would take into account the priorities as outlined in the discussion under Minute SP35 above.

The Chairman advised that Members could consider realigning the budgets to accommodate the shift in priorities rather than adding to the budget for 2021/22. Accordingly, it was;

AGREED that the **Final Budget for 2019/20** be hereby, noted.

SP37. GREATER EXETER STRATEGIC PLAN (GESP) – UPDATE

The Chairman invited Councillor Mike Hocking to update Members on the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan (GESP). Councillor Hocking reminded Members of the background in relation to GESP, its intentions and outline plans for regional development in areas surrounding Exeter which included Newton Abbot.

Councillor Hocking further advised that the consortium of local authorities had met to consider the proposals and implications for their respective districts. Following which, two authorities had withdrawn from the programme; East Devon District Council and more recently Mid-Devon District Council. Whilst Exeter and Teignbridge had yet to confirm their intentions, the withdrawal of two parties meant that GESP no longer had a legal standing and therefore would likely have to disband.

Whilst the outline proposals contained within GESP were considered to have huge implications for Newton Abbot the plans would now be superseded by the Government's White Paper – Planning For The Future.

Councillor Hocking closed his summary by suggesting that those Members who has expressed an interest in reviewing GESP be able to refocus on the implications of the Planning White Paper as referred to under Minute SP38 below.

The Chairman endorsed Councillor's Hocking's summary of the situation on GESP and thanked him for his efforts in monitoring the situation to date.

SP38. PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

The Chairman referred to the two documents, previously circulated, which summarised the Government's White Paper – Planning for the Future and NALC report on the same. Councillor Parker noted two key points for consideration; firstly, that the paper recommended development of sites adjoining existing urban areas and secondly, the apparent lack of consultation by Government in forming their proposals. The Chairman invited the Town Clerk to update Members on action he had taken in regard to the Planning White Paper.

The Town Clerk advised Members that on behalf of the Council, he had sought the advice of a Planning Consultant, Mrs Emily Farrell to prepare a summary paper outlining the implications for Newton Abbot. It would be her intention to present her findings and recommendations to an online meeting of the Planning Committee on 13th October, to allow the Council to respond within the consultation period. All responses to the Government would be required to be submitted by 15th October 2020.

The Chairman thanked the Town Clerk for his prompt actions on behalf of the Council and invited comments from Members, who raised the following key points:

- Consultation and questions raised by residents;
- Lack of detail about infrastructure in the proposals;
- Relevance and importance of Neighbourhood Development Plans;
- Newton Abbot's Neighbourhood Development Plan a key asset;
- Uniform collection/setting of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) income;
- Requirement of developers to provide infrastructure in advance of housing;
- Interpretation of 'building beautiful' schemes; and
- District Council ability to borrow against future CIL income to enable provision of infrastructure prior to housing.

The Chairman thanked Members for their comments in relation to the Government White Paper – Planning for the Future and accordingly it was;

AGREED that Mrs Emily Farrell, Planning Consultant make a summary presentation and provide guidance for the Council at the Meeting of the Planning Committee on 13th October 2020, with a view to the Council making a response to meet the Government's deadline of 15th October 2020.

SP39. NEWTON'S PLACE PROJECT

The Chairman invited the Town Clerk to provide a verbal update on the progress of the Newton's Place Project towards completion.

The Town Clerk was pleased to report that there were only a few remaining items on the snagging list and these would be dealt with. That day the Councillors had received an invitation to attend a private viewing of the Museum at pre-arranged sessions in line with Government social distancing requirements on Friday 25th September 2020 and he encouraged all Councillors to attend. The Museum would open to pre-booked appointments on 3rd October and Councillors noted that since opening the booking service staff had received in excess of 180 booking requests.

Mr Canham, the Council's Communications Advisor reported that the Project's Working Group were meeting weekly to ensure that all the necessary arrangements were in place to welcome visitors to the Museum in a COVID-19 safe environment from 3rd October and he was pleased with the enthusiasm and great response from the wider community.

The Chairman thanked all those involved on the project for their efforts in bringing the project to this stage. Members endorsed their appreciation and accordingly it was:

AGREED that the verbal update on the Newton's Place Project be hereby, noted.

SP40. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held on 11th November 2020.

Chairman