

POLICY AND PROJECT ADVISORY BOARD

Meeting held on Wednesday, 19th September, 2018 at the Council Offices, Farnborough at 7.00 pm.

Voting Members

Cllr Sophia Choudhary (Vice-Chairman) (In the Chair)
Cllr Marina Munro (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr J.B. Canty
Cllr A.H. Crawford
Cllr P.I.C. Crerar
Cllr R.L.G. Dibbs
Cllr Mara Makunura
Cllr M.J. Roberts
Cllr P.F. Rust

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Cllr A.R. Newell and Cllr J.E. Woolley.

11. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings held on 12th July and 30th August, 2018 were approved and signed by the Vice-Chairman. There was a request that the data on the national trends for leisure use, discussed at the 12th July meeting, be circulated to Board members.

Action to be taken	By whom	When
Circulate information on national leisure trends to Board members	Justine Davie	October 2018

12. DEVELOPMENT OF THE ALDERSHOT TOWN CENTRE STRATEGY

The Board considered the Executive Director (Customers, Digital and Rushmoor 2020) Report No. ED1805 which set out a number of options for the Board to consider regarding the development of a town centre strategy. It was proposed that the strategy should aim to maintain the vibrancy of the town centre during the period of regeneration works and ensure the sustained health of the town centre in the longer term.

The production of a retail plan for Aldershot Town Centre had been identified as a Council priority as part of the 2018/19 Council Plan. Informal advice had been sought from external consultants, Cushman & Wakefield and CBRE, and the key themes from the discussions included:

- To consider other uses for the town centre as well as retail;
- To contract the town centre and diversify use; and,
- To agree Aldershot's unique selling point.

There was a clear consensus that any plan developed would need to look beyond a retail plan to a wider town centre strategy. The Board was advised on two documents which provided guidance on reshaping town centres, the Local Government Association handbook entitled 'Revitalising town centres' and 'The Grimsey Review 2'. Suggested potential activities that could be focussed on included parking incentives, access, cleanliness, anti-social behaviour, retail offer, markets and events.

The Board discussed the development of a town centre strategy and put forward some recommendations to be considered. It was the general view that it was important to maintain a vibrant events programme to encourage footfall. There was also strong support to build on the town's heritage and cultural offer. The success of the Aldershot Games Hub was also seen to be important to draw in new talent and new residents to the town. It was proposed that the provision of free WiFi in the town centre should also be considered. Other proposals included proactive community engagement, food stalls, a soft play area and events for visitors to watch/take part. It was suggested that lessons should be learned from other town centres which had been transformed including Preston, Rotherham and Altrincham. The retailers and businesses in the town centre would be contacted to obtain their views on the issue.

It was recognised that some of the large units which were currently empty were not attractive to many retailers. It was suggested that a model similar to the Aldershot Enterprise Centre could be operated in the town centre to provide an opportunity for smaller businesses to occupy part of a larger unit. Discussions could be held with Enterprise First to identify the demand from businesses.

The Board commented on the high rent and high rates which were a deterrent to smaller independent businesses. During the transition period it was suggested that rents should be reduced and rates should be subsidised. The cost of parking and whether there would be sufficient parking with the loss of the High Street Multi-Storey car park was also highlighted. A parking capacity survey was suggested.

There was some concern expressed regarding the roles of the various groups relating to the regeneration work including the Aldershot/Farnborough Regeneration Groups which had not yet met, Local Plan Group, Regeneration Steering Group and Rushmoor Development Partnership. It was requested that the areas of responsibility be made clearer to ensure there was no overlap and duplication or work.

The comments from the Board would be incorporated into the development of the draft Aldershot Town Centre Strategy to be submitted to the Cabinet for approval and budget allocation.

13. FIRE AND RESCUE COMBINED AUTHORITY CONSULTATION

The Board discussed the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority and Isle of Wight Council's consultation on the proposed creation of a new Combined Fire Authority for Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton. The purpose of the proposal was to enable:

- simpler governance arrangements;
- financial efficiency;
- greater operational efficiency, effectiveness and public safety;
- greater pooling of skills and knowledge; and,
- greater contribution towards national scale incidents.

The Board discussed the consultation and was broadly supportive of the proposal as long as there would be no detriment to the local fire service provision. It was recognised that the benefits would mainly be achieved in the changes to the governance and administration arrangements. A response to the consultation would be prepared from the Council, from the Operational Services Portfolio Holder.

Action to be taken	By whom	When
Prepare a response to the consultation on the proposed creation of a new Combined Fire Authority for Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton to include the comments from the Board.	Ian Harrison/ Justine Davie	19 October 2018

14. RUSHMOOR 2020 MODERNISATION AND IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME - APPOINTMENT OF TASK AND FINISH GROUP

The Board received the Executive Director's (Customers, Digital and Rushmoor 2020) Report No. ED1804 which set out the terms of reference for the Rushmoor 2020 Modernisation and Improvement Task and Finish Group and the proposed membership. The role of the Task and Finish Group would be to help shape projects and policies associated with the Rushmoor 2020 Modernisation and Improvement Programme. The proposed key areas for the Task and Finish Group to develop were the vision and priorities, customer experience, digital council and communications. There was an IESE workshop scheduled for the 10th October and the members of the Task and Finish Group would be invited to attend.

The Members nominated to join the Task and Finish Group were Cllrs A.R. Newell, A.H. Crawford, K. Dibble, J.B. Canty and Veronica Graham-Green. There was one further vacancy for a Conservative Group Member. The Board discussed whether the core membership should include the Portfolio Holder or whether they should attend as an observer, by invitation only, this matter would need to be agreed. The same issue was raised regarding the Aldershot Regeneration Group and the Farnborough Regeneration Group, it was questioned whether the Portfolio holder should be included in the membership or whether they should attend as an observer, by invitation only.

RESOLVED: That the following members be appointed to serve on the Rushmoor 2020 Modernisation and Improvement Programme Task and Finish Group for the 2018/19 Municipal Year.

Chairman	Cllr A.R. Newell
Conservative Group	Cllr J.B. Canty Cllr Veronica Graham-Green (one vacancy)
Labour Group	Cllr A.H. Crawford Cllr K. Dibble

15. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Board **NOTED** the Work Programme.

The meeting closed at 8.40 pm.

CLLR SOPHIA CHOUDHARY (VICE-CHAIRMAN)
