

# POLICY AND PROJECT ADVISORY BOARD

Minutes of the Remote Meeting held on Wednesday, 7th October, 2020 at 7.00 pm.

## Voting Members

Cllr J.B. Canty (Chairman)  
Cllr P.I.C. Crerar (Vice-Chairman)  
Cllr C.J. Stewart (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr Sophia Choudhary  
Cllr P.J. Cullum  
Cllr Nadia Martin  
Cllr T.W. Mitchell  
Cllr Sophie Porter  
Cllr M.J. Roberts  
Cllr B.A. Thomas

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Cllr Prabesh KC.

## 17. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Special Meeting held on 25th August, 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

The Chairman provided an update on the Local Government Association (LGA) Peer Review Challenge that had been recommended at the meeting. Following discussions with the Chief Executive, a way forward had been scoped, as follows:

- The use of the equality framework for local government – focussing on elements most relevant to the motion and scope agreed in August, 2020 by the Board
- A draft scope to be shared with the Board before agreement with LGA
- The Council's new Assistant Chief Executive, Rachel Barker, to be the main point of contact with the LGA
- The review to include interviews with community groups and interested parties - work with the LGA to explore engagement options/how this work would be carried out
- Once the scope was agreed, the Peer Review would be undertaken with the aim to be completed by December 2020/January 2021
- The Board's recommendations following the Peer Review to be presented to the Cabinet before the end of the 2020/21 Municipal Year

It was proposed that the Board move forward on this basis to scope out the finer detail of the Review.

## 18. TRANSITION AND RECOVERY PLAN ALDERSHOT

The Board welcomed Tim Mills, Head of Economy, Planning and Strategic Housing, who reported on the Transition and Recovery Plan for Aldershot.

The Board noted that the Council's approach to Aldershot had been split into two elements:

- Support for the town to transition during the re-development works (Transition Plan)
- Longer-term strategy

However, since the Transition Plan had last been presented to the Board, COVID-19 had emerged and the Institute of Place Management, who delivered the High Street Task Force, had developed a Post COVID-19 Framework for Recovery which had four stages; crisis, pre-recovery, recovery and transformation. The Council was currently in the recovery stage.

The framework had four elements; managing social distancing and cleaning, gathering data and managing footfall, telling the story and showing kindness and reacting quickly. The Board noted that under the main framework there had been seven priorities identified by the Council:

1. Managing safety, distancing and cleaning – measures taken included zoning, signage, marshals, hotspot areas and use of planters to create flexible safe spaces/pop up performance spaces. Issues around anti-social behaviour in Aldershot were reported on and it was noted that work had been stepped up, in conjunction with the Police, to help tackle the problem.
2. Gathering data and monitoring footfall – the key aim was to collate good data through tracking businesses and monitoring footfall. A new automatic footfall tracking system was hoped to be in place by March, 2021.
3. Telling the story and communication – A new communications officer would be in post from November, 2020 to work specifically on the promotion of the town centre. Engagement with key stakeholders/businesses would continue through fortnightly newsletters.
4. Encouraging town centre use – work had been carried out on the adaptation of events and on information on using public spaces i.e. parks and accessibility.
5. Supporting businesses – a number of initiatives were in place including support and advice from the environmental health teams, business rate grants until 31st March, 2021, business support provider schemes, in particular a Building Business Resilience package, digital training and advice.
6. Attracting and monitoring external funding – it was noted that £82,000 had been received from the “Re-opening High Streets Safely Fund” and exploration of further funding options, with the Local Enterprise Partnership

(LEP), Hampshire County Council (HCC) and Department for Transport (DfT) was underway.

7. Engaging with the High Street Task Force – virtual guidance and webinars had replaced the original process at the peak of the pandemic. However, it was advised that resumption of the original processes was imminent.

In response to a query, it was noted that the Princes Hall was currently being used by local community groups in a socially distanced environment, but all large scale performances had been cancelled. It was noted that an update was expected from the central Government in November, 2020. In respect of digital performances, options were being explored, although as most shows were provided commercially, ultimately the decision would lie with the provider.

In response to a comment on the digital games hub, it was advised that the building would be ready to occupy imminently. However, some legalities had been delayed by COVID-19 and these were currently being finalised to enable the first occupier, Rocket Desk, to move in. The first floor of the building had faced some issues but procurement options were being considered for leasing the space.

Following discussions on the planters creating space for pop up performances, it was advised that the procurement of the planters had considered the risk of antisocial behavior and would not be easily moved by individuals. Consideration would also be given to locating some in the Westgate area to support the existing businesses with the temporary closure of Cineworld.

A request was made for some pre-COVID-19 comparable data on footfall figures and this would be provided to the Board.

The presentation was **NOTED**.

## 19. **DEPRIVATION AND SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES**

Andrew Colver, Head of Democracy and Community, and Emma Lamb, Community and Partnerships Manager, attended the meeting to give a presentation on the current position on the development of the Deprivation/Supporting Communities Strategy and Action Plan. The presentation covered the background and context, data and evidence, impacts from COVID-19 and the emerging priorities and proposals.

Mr. Colver talked through the data and evidence available to the Council, which would help inform any future work. It was noted that the Council were working with partners, such as the Clinical Commissioning Group, and gathering information from various sources including, Frimley Integrated Care Services and Public Health England to build a robust evidence base.

The Board was advised of an initial project that would be targeted in the Aldershot Park ward. The area had been considered one of the most deprived areas in the Borough and a range of issues were present, including income deprivation, poor

education and skills and health inequalities. A number of proposals had been outlined for the project, these included:

- Developing local health and physical activity opportunities and increased social interaction
- Activities to reduce social isolation and improve mental health
- Utilisation of local sporting facilities and green spaces for local residents
- Promotion of healthy lifestyles – by improving awareness of the benefits of an active lifestyle, and improving access to activities in the area
- Identifying and enabling longer term community projects – such as community gardens

It was advised that other projects would be run in other areas across the Borough where similar issues were present.

In response to a query, it was noted that data from the healthy weights audit had been used and this had been supplemented by data from the CCG for the whole Borough. Other areas had also been identified which could be picked up as Borough wide issues, including mental health, smoking and cardio vascular disease. Information was also requested on comparators between hospital admissions relating to injury from violence and crime data, this would be looked into and reported back separately.

The Board discussed the local response figures to COVID-19 and it was advised that demand was currently very low. The situation would continue to be monitored closely as the situation would evolve with the ending of the furlough scheme and a potential rise in cases.

A discussion was held regarding foodbanks and it was noted that a number of different models were being looked at for food provision, including the Trussell Trust. It was important to find the right model for Rushmoor and a report would be prepared for the Board once the review had been completed.

The Board **ENDORSED** the work and **NOTED** that the Strategy and Action Plan would be drafted by November 2020.

It was advised that the meeting would be followed by a workshop for Members of the Board to discuss in further detail the main themes to be covered in the work, wards or parts of wards where the work could be undertaken and actions to be taken that would make an immediate difference to people's lives.

## 20. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Board **NOTED** the current Work Programme.

The updates on the Rowhill and Southwood Management Plans, Farnborough Civic Centre, the End Violence at Work Charter and the Homelessness strategies were **NOTED**.

The meeting closed at 8.48 pm.

CLLR J.B. CANTY (CHAIRMAN)

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