

POLICY AND PROJECT ADVISORY BOARD

Virtual 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 Chair provided an update on the recommended Local Government Association (LGA) Peer Review Challenge that was 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 will be carried out
- Once the scope was agreed, the Peer Review would be undertaken - aim to be completed by December 2020/January 2021
- The Board's recommendations 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 deliver 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 were 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, it was noted that work in this area had been stepped up, in conjunction with the Police, to help tackle the problem.
2. Gathering data and monitoring footfall – key aim 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 – New communications officer in post from November, 2020, to work specifically on the promotion of the town centre. Continued engagement with key stakeholders/businesses through fortnightly newsletters.
4. Encouraging town centre use – work had been carried out on the adaptation of events, 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 were 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 were cancelled. It was noted that an updated was expected from the central Government in November, 2020. In respect of digital performances. Options were being explored, however, 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 for the first occupier, Rocket Desk, to move in. The first floor of the building, had faced some issues but procurement options were being considered to lease 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, 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 were 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,

education and skills and health. 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 ran 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, these included COPD, 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 and it was advised that figures were currently very low but the situation would continue to be monitored closely as the situation evolved with the ending of the furlough scheme and a potential rise in cases.

A discussion was held regarding foodbanks, it was noted that a number of different models were being looked at, 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)
