

Local Economy & Place Policy Development Advisory Group
4 MARCH 2024

Present: Councillors: Ruth Fletcher (Chair), Mark Baynham, Jon Campbell, Paul Clarke, Nigel Emery, Alex Jeffery, Joanne Knowles, Richard Landeryou, Colin Minto and John Trollope

Absent: Councillors: Tony Hogben

Also Present: Councillors: Tony Bevis, Mike Croker, Dennis Livingstone, Roger Noel, Jonathan Taylor and Tricia Youtan

26 **NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The notes of the meeting on 4 March were received.

27 **DRILL HALL**

The Director of Communities provided the Group with an update in relation to the proposed sale of the Drill Hall. The Drill Hall would require significant investment in the future, particularly in relation to energy efficiency. The option to lease the Drill Hall had also been explored, and discounted. It was noted that the site had a covenant to protect the building for community use, and Lifespring Church had demonstrated interest in purchasing the Drill Hall for such use. A consultation took place in September in relation to the future of the Drill Hall.

The Group requested that multiple valuations would be sought, prior to agreeing the sale. A discussion took place in relation to events that were scheduled to take place at the Drill Hall in the coming year. It was confirmed that if Lifespring Church were to purchase the Drill Hall, it was expected that bookings could continue until the end of 2024.

The Assets of Community Value process was discussed, and it was confirmed that if an application was submitted, further consultation would be required.

28 **ECONOMIC STRATEGY**

The Head of Economic Development provided a summary of the Economic Strategy workshop that had taken place. The strengths and challenges within the district were outlined, as well as the key steps for future growth. Partnership working was important, and the priority projects were summarised. The Director of Place highlighted the need to talk to business and umbrella groups to gain wider feedback. The Strategy would evolve and be outward looking. A consultant had been appointed for 6 months, and would be supporting the development of the Economic Strategy.

29 **QUEEN STREET/QUEENSWAY PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS**

The Head of Property and Facilities gave an update on the public realm improvements in Queen Street and Queensway. Work had commenced in Queen Street and the first phase was complete. The second phase had also incorporated works to the kerbing, on behalf of West Sussex County Council.

It was confirmed that there would not be road closures as a consequence of the works being undertaken.

30 **CARFAX COBBLES REPAIR WORKS AND ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS**

The Corporate Project Manager updated the Group on the repair works to the cobbles in the Carfax. There was a phased approach closures, to ensure that access would be maintained for deliveries. It was acknowledged that the work that had been completed was of a high quality. It was also confirmed that the material being used should reduce the risk of cracks in the future.

The Cabinet Member thanked officers for their work on the project, particularly in relation to reducing disruption to the town, and the consultation that had taken place.

The Group noted that good progress had been made on the works and stated that the works had not seemed to impact trading and footfall in the town centre.

31 **FORWARD PLAN EXTRACT FOR THE LOCAL ECONOMY & PLACE PORTFOLIO**

The Forward Plan extract was noted.

The meeting closed at 6.22 pm having commenced at 5.30 pm

CHAIRMAN