

Economy & Place Scrutiny Committee - 12/12/22

Councillor Simon White, Deputy Mayor and Heritage Champion, introduced the report on the programme of commemorations for the 850 years of the Borough of Newcastle under Lyme. The council had set up a Working Group which had met regularly to plan the programme.

The Leader provided more detail on the plans which were set out in the report and included Civic, community and legacy celebrations and events. A dedicated area on the website displayed the programme and information. There were various sponsorship packages available and £35k in sponsorship had been committed to date. Local schools would be able to get involved. The logo had been designed by the council's in-house team.

Members raised queries as follows:

- Would the King's Coronation be included within the plans? The committee was advised that the programme would complement the Coronation.
- Were there opportunities for other events to be added as the programme progressed? The committee was informed that the council welcomed all involvement from across the borough and events could be 'badged' as 850 commemorations if wished. Town and Parish Councils were encouraged to participate and had been contacted.
- The proposals were welcomed particularly the civic pride elements and it was hoped could lead to the relaunch of the Civic Society.
- Was there any involvement by Newcastle College? The college was working with Daniel Jones, the council's Culture and Dance Leader, regarding a performance.
- Could the programme run without sponsorship? All elements could be funded except the legacy of a statue for Queen Elizabeth II which would require external funding/sponsorship.

RESOLVED: that the report be received and noted.

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6. BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN UPDATE

The committee received an update on the current position with the Borough Local Plan. The Leader, Councillor Simon Tagg, updated that the council was currently calling for brownfield sites to be identified. There would be a consultation in spring 2023 on preferred sites with the final Plan to be submitted to Council by the end of the year.

Members queried the confidence in the timescales and were advised there was a detailed Project Plan in place and regular monitoring to ensure the Plan kept on track.

Members requested an update on the current position with the Borough Local Plan be included on every agenda.

RESOLVED: that the Borough Local Plan be included as an agenda item for each meeting for the foreseeable future.

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7. **FUTURE HIGH STREET FUNDS AND TOWN DEALS FOR KIDSGROVE AND NEWCASTLE UNDER LYME**

The committee considered the Future High Street Funds and Town Deals for Kidsgrove and Newcastle under Lyme:

FHSF: Ryecroft site:

- Morgan Sindall had been appointed to support delivery of the car park and were preparing a planning application.
- A feasibility study was underway for the provision of a mid-range hotel.
- Planning applications for Aspire HQ and residential development were due in 2023.
- Funding streams were outlined.

FHSF York Place:

- Wilmott Dixon appointed to support delivery of the proposed development of ground floor retail/leisure/restaurant with office space above. Funding was as shown.

Kidsgrove Town Deal:

- There were 5 projects with the current position as stated – Kidsgrove Sports Centre was now open; Chatterley Valley works and the Railway Station enhancements – for both projects the design works had begun and funding was being finalised; Shared Service hub – business case was being approved and design works and scope had been agreed.

Newcastle Town Deal:

- There were 9 projects with the current position as stated – Knutton Masterplan designs were being developed following consultation; Cross Street, Chesterton – feasibility study for the next phase was being developed; Walking and Cycling routes were being progressed by Staffordshire County Council; the design for the former Zanzibar site had been agreed and the Midway proposals were awaiting the operation of the car park at Ryecroft; Centre for Performing Arts – the preferred location had been identified and the Business Case was being finalised; Digital Society – the premise had been secured and grant agreement was being finalised; GB Broad Band and EV Charging Points were both being initialised.
- The funding for each project was outlined along with the inflationary pressures and other considerations.

Members referred to York Place and asked how confident was the council that the units would be filled and income received when there were already a number of empty units in the town centre. In response, the committee was informed that the design made it a modern, flexible and efficient space with lower operating costs due to the zero carbon design. There was no such similar offer in the town.

A query was raised around the hotel proposal and whether there was a contingency plan should no provider come forward? In this case, the council would look into developing the site and a consultant was investigating whether this was feasible.

Members asked who the council's partners were in the delivery of all the schemes and were business plans available? It was agreed that in future the presentation would be circulated in advance of the meeting and that all available information would be shared.

Members also asked about the current position with the Sky Building and were advised that works would continue in the next few weeks.

RESOLVED: that

- (a) The update be noted.

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- (b) The presentation be circulated in advance of the meeting for all future meetings to enable Councillors to identify in advance any areas for which further information is needed.

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8. WORK PROGRAMME

The committee considered the Work Programme. As discussed at the meeting, the item from the BID would be deferred to the March meeting along with the A53/Bus Gate Full Business Case if it was ready and the regular items relating to the Future High Streets Funds/Town Deals and the Borough Local Plan. Members asked whether scrutiny could consider social housing providers as this had been an issue raised with some Members particularly relating to ongoing maintenance works at properties. It was agreed that this would be added to the Work Programme for March. In addition, it was agreed to set up a sub-committee to review social housing provision across the Borough and the work plans for Aspire Housing.

RESOLVED: that the Work Programme be updated as discussed at the meeting.

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9. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no members of the public present.

10. URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

**Councillor Gary White
Chair**

Meeting concluded at 8.15 pm