

Minutes of a meeting of the EAP Service Delivery, Performance and Customers

At 9.30 am on Wednesday 3rd August, 2022 in the Council Chamber, Bowling Green Road, Kettering, NN15 7QX

Present:-

Members

Councillor Lloyd Bunday (Chair)
Councillor Jean Addison
Councillor Bert Jackson

Councillor Richard Levell

Officers

Lisa Hyde (Director of Transformation),
Simon Richardson (Interim Planning Policy Lead Manager)
Eden Palmer (Democratic Services)

Also in attendance – Dylan Smith (Heritage England)

73 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Ian Jelley and King Lawal.

74 Members' Declarations of Interest

Councillor Bunday declared an interest in the Kettering High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ) – Phase 3 agenda item due to his role as Leader of Kettering Town Council.

75 Minutes of the Meeting Held on 29th June 2022

RESOLVED that: The Service Delivery, Performance and Customers Executive Advisory Panel agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 29th June 2022 as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

76 Kettering High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ) - Phase 3

The Panel heard a report which sought to inform Members of the work in delivering improvements to Kettering town centre with the support of funding from Historic England's High Street Heritage Action Zone fund. It also served to act as an update to Phase 3. Members were asked to consider the content of the report, which would also be forwarded onto the Council's Executive for endorsement.

Members heard an overview and history of the project and securing of funds, including work from the former Kettering Borough Council which had now switched over to the North Northamptonshire Council. Members also heard that there were projects that fell outside the conservation area that may not be funded in full but would still receive support.

The report stated that year one of the scheme had been restricted by COVID-19, however year two was deemed to be a successful year in terms of work undertaken. Members heard that additional funds had been received of £150,000 in Summer 2021 and £503,631 in Winter 2021/22, however these funds were required to be spent prior to the end of the financial year.

Members heard an update regarding Phase 3 which would cover the frontage area of the Newlands Shopping Centre. It was shown that there was a clear justification for investing in this area as a number of shopfront works and repairs had been undertaken on that area of Gold Street. The meeting noted that the estimated cost of Phase 3 work was put at £460,000, and Historic England had endorsed the approach of the reallocation of funds and were keen to retain the current delivery arrangement if possible.

Members raised questions surrounding the ownership of properties within the area of the scheme, and what potential works would be undertaken on these properties. Further questions were asked surrounding the letting status of the retail properties within the area. Members noted their support that the works undertaken would potentially encourage residents to return to in-person shopping and any un-let properties to be let out. Officers were asked whether the extension and increase in area would mean that the quality of work may be of a lower standard as funds would need to be extended across a larger area. The Panel heard that this would not be the case and that the quality of work would remain at the same standard throughout the project.

Members raised questions surrounding the necessity for Phase 3 and what the overall aims and objectives for the project was. Officers advised the Panel that Historic England had approached KBC regarding the then proposed project. It was noted that claims had been made against the former sovereign council regarding the poor quality of the previous flooring and surface within the Town Centre, and that the amounts paid out in any claims could be detrimental in contrast to the potential improvements proposed in the project. It was also noted that the project would enhance the reputation of the Local Authority and the town by showing that it could create a strategic plan and implement that plan, which may improve the chances of the Local Authority when bidding for any other potential projects in the future. It was also noted that Historic England had set strict parameters as to where the funding could be spent.

Members sought further clarification on the grants provided to shopfronts and the contributions that were required by shop owners to benefit from this grant. It was confirmed that shop owners would be required to contribute to the potential works. Members raised concerns that some shop owners would not be in a position to be able to put forward the required amount of funds to contribute. Further concerns were raised that with the enlargement of retail units in the town centre, may lead to the necessity to increase car parks but there did not appear to be any plans to increase the size of these car parks. Officers advised that there were multiple ways of attempting to address the potential car parking issues, including encouraging potential

shoppers to use alternative methods of traveling to the town centre. Members also raised suggestions that there be an increase in the number of electric car charging points within car parks. Whilst the Panel agreed this should be something that could be investigated, it would be for a different meeting to discuss the finer points of the suggestion.

77 Executive Forward Plan and Panel Work Programme

Members received the Executive Forward Plan and the work programme for the panel and noted upcoming items for both, including items relating to parking enforcement strategy, online ceremonies and the abandoned vehicle strategy.

Chair

Date

The meeting closed at 10.25am