

Folkestone Town Centre Working Group

Held at:

Date Wednesday, 12 May 2021

Present Councillors Danny Brook (Chairman), Connor McConville (In place of Laura Davison), David Monk, Tim Prater and Douglas Wade

Apologies for Absence Councillor Laura Davison and Councillor David Wimble

Officers Present: Ewan Green (Director of Place), Henry Kennedy-Skipton (Regeneration Lead), Sue Lewis (Committee Services Officer), Llywelyn Lloyd (Chief Planning Officer), Lorraine Smith (Economic Development Officer) and Karen Weller (Environmental Protection Senior Specialist)

Others Present: Holly Lewis, Emily Temperton and Will Beeston – We Made That
Michael Kill and Silvana – Night Time Industries Association

1. **Declarations of interest**

Councillor T Prater declared a voluntary announcement in respect of the presentation given by Night Time Industries Association (NTIA), as he has commercially worked with them. He remained in the working group during the presentation and discussions on this item.

2. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 February were submitted as a correct record.

3. **Presentations by external speakers**

Lorraine Smith, Economic Development Senior Specialist, informed members that there had already been a successful public event on the place plan with a final event due to take place on Thursday 10 June 2021.

Presentation – We Made That

Holly Lewis, We Made That, presented members with an overview and update as to work done so far on the Place Plan to help shape the future of Folkestone Town Centre.

She covered a number of issues as follows which can be seen in more detail in the presentation slides which will be circulated to members following the meeting:

- Programme overview;
- Community Engagement process involvement so far;
- Place Plan and Missions which includes project overview study area, approach to the Place Plan and the 6 missions within the plan;
- Actions Against the missions which included the overall area, paying particular attention to Station arrival, Ship Street, Sandgate Road West, the town centre, Creative Quarter, Coastal area and Heritage Quarter and Harbour and Sunny Sands area.

Public Engagement outcomes provided project team consultants with a number of key themes, listed below. Further detail can be found in the presentation slides.

- reflecting the needs of the community;
- more green spaces, with safe play areas;
- evening and night time uses;
- St Eanswythes as a key asset;
- Training needs;
- Vacant properties;
- Reasonable rent levels
- Toilets;
- Lighting;
- Cleanliness.

Members paid particular attention to the following:

- Road networks – make these work not just for the town centre but the surrounding areas too, connectivity is key.
- Parking – enhance parking facilities where needed but also look at “Park and Ride” schemes.
- Vacant premises – knowing landlords and working with them to get these back open, communicating better with them and continuing to encourage the High Street Funding scheme which has been beneficial to so many already and KCC’s “No Use Empty Scheme”.
- Large vacant properties – look at how these can be split into smaller business opportunities which are the preferred options of many retailers.
- Planning process – consideration should be given as to how planning advice could be delivered via drop in sessions so that discussions can be had and planning officers can give advice before any plans are made.

- Evening economy –feedback has identified many residents travel outside of the area for this and consideration should be given to recommendations to address this that would meet the need for all.

The need for the Place Plan action areas to be prioritised was discussed and We Made That confirmed this would form part of their project delivery.

The next steps will be to continue developing the place plan, further officer and member workshops are planned to continue work on the 6 missions, it is anticipated this work will continue until July 2021.

Presentation – Night Time Industries Association (NTIA) – Licensing Policy Review

Michael Kill from the NTIA presented members with the Licensing Policy Statement Overview.

A copy of the presentation slides will be sent out to members following the meeting.

The policy provides the rules local authorities must adhere to, paying particular attention to the four key licensing objectives:-

- The prevention of crime and disorder
- Public safety
- Prevention of public nuisance, and
- The protection of children from harm

He explained that authorities must have regard to their Statement of Licensing Policy (SLP) when carrying out their licensing functions and the policy acts as a starting point for a decision.

The SLP should set out how licensees can contribute to creating the daytime, evening and night time economy that the council envisages, examples of this are seen in the slides to be circulated following the meeting.

The statement covers a number of other issues listed below, all of which additional information can be found in the presentation slides:

- Population overview;
- Equality and Diversity;
- Key areas for consideration;
- Current Landscape of Planning and Licensing;
- Mechanisms for management of licenses;
- Overview and licensing matrix.

Members paid particular attention to:

- Licensing matrix;
- Management of night time economy, in particular who is responsible for late night revellers once they have left the venues;
- Planning and Licensing working together.

4. **Strategic project update**

Members will be updated on this item following the meeting.