

REGENERATION SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

17 February 2021

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and was an online remote meeting in compliance with the Council Procedure Rules Relating to the holding of Remote Meetings and the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020.

Present:

Councillor Christopher Akers-Belcher (In the Chair)

Councillors: Tom Cassidy, Jim Lindridge, Brenda Loynes, Ann Marshall and Leisa Smith

Also Present: Councillor Tony Richardson

Officers: Gemma Ptak, Assistant Director (Preventative and Community Based Services)
Sarah Scarr, Heritage & Countryside Manager
Denise Wimpenny, Principal Democratic Services Officer

13. Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor Paddy Brown.

14. Declarations of Interest

None

15. Minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2021

Received

16. Revised Grant Programme: Church Street Conservation Area Townscape Heritage Scheme
(Assistant Director, Preventative and Community Based Services)

Type of decision

Non-key decision

Purpose of report

To provide an update on the current position of Church Street Conservation Area Townscape Heritage Scheme and the revised Activity Plan.

To obtain agreement to review the budget to deliver the programme.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Assistant Director, Preventative and Community Based Services provided background information in relation to the proposals for a scheme of works in relation to the Townscape Heritage Scheme in Church Street Conservation Area. The programme included a number of areas of work, details of which were set out in the report. It was reported that all activities had been paused in March 2020 in light of the ongoing pandemic which had resulted in a number of challenges around delivery as well as recruitment of an officer to oversee the works. The National Lottery Heritage Fund had agreed to extend delivery of the scheme for a further two years to November 2022.

The draft activity plan, attached at Appendix 1, had been reviewed and discussions were ongoing with activity leads to consider how activities would be delivered. It was proposed that the building grant scheme and level of funding offered be simplified and, whilst this would mean an increase in funding for property owners, it would also result in fewer buildings receiving assistance. Members were referred to the governance, risk and financial considerations including the updated budget proposals as set out in Appendix 2 to the report.

The Heritage and Countryside Manager went on to provide a detailed and comprehensive update in relation to the ambitions of the revised activity plan, as detailed in Appendix 1.

In the discussion that followed, officers responded to queries raised arising from the report. Clarification was provided in relation to recruitment arrangements, the potential reasons why building surveys had not been progressed and the lack of applications for building grants by building owners. Clarification was also provided in relation to the funding arrangements and a detailed explanation of the updated budget proposals

was provided. In response to concerns regarding the public perception reported in social media around the Council's funding contributions to projects of this type, the Chair updated Members on the background to the various funding contributions that had been sourced in terms of taking this project forward which included lottery funding and contributions from the Combined Authority.

Members welcomed the proposals and spoke in support of the proposed scheme and commented on the benefits as a result. Members were pleased to note the linkages between the Towns Fund Bid and the ambition to invest in the town and its cultural heritage. It was suggested that a programme of cultural events including those in the action plan be produced.

In concluding the debate, the Chair took the opportunity to place on record his personal thanks to the Heritage and Countryside Manager and all members of the team for their hard work in taking this project forward, the benefits of which were outlined. Thanks were also expressed to Councillor Mike Young, as Heritage Champion, for his contributions to the success of the scheme as well as his continued support to him as Chair of the Regeneration Services Committee.

The Committee agreed the following recommendations with no dissent.

Decision

- (i) The Committee noted the current position of Church Street Conservation Area Townscape Heritage Scheme and the revised Activity Plan, attached at Appendix 1.
- (ii) That the updated budget proposals, set out in Appendix 2, be agreed.

17. Date and Time of next meeting

The Chair advised that the next meeting would take place on 17 March 2021 at 10.00 am depending on the outcome of decisions of Full Council in relation to the functions of Committees as set out in the constitution.

The meeting concluded at 10.50 am.

H MARTIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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