

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD – 12 SEPTEMBER 2018

EXTRACT MINUTE

**5. DEVELOPMENT OF SCARBOROUGH TOWN CENTRE STRATEGY**

The Board considered a report by the Director (RB) (reference 18/206) in respect of a new outline Scarborough Town Centre Strategy. Introducing the report, the Director, Mr Bradley noted the national challenges facing traditional retail and town centres with the rise of online and out of town shopping, the cost burden of business rates, other economic pressures, and the change in consumer behaviours.

However, these challenges also created opportunities to recast Scarborough Town Centre as a mixed use environment with a more diverse offer encompassing homes, workspace, civic and leisure uses such as festivals and events. Other elements of the outline strategy were improvements to the public realm, making the town centre more attractive to the town's students, establishing free public wifi, building an identity and brand, and creating a Town Centre Commission with a champion. The outline before Members demonstrated the Council's strategic intent and was just the start of a big conversation which would be used to develop a more focused Action Plan which would come back to the Board for comment before referral to the Cabinet for approval. Mr Bradley undertook to circulate to Members the Grimsey Review 2 which had examined in detail the future of the high street. Members then discussed the draft strategy making the following comments::

- Welcomed the vision and this exciting agenda for Scarborough
- Would like to see North Street developed through this strategy
- The development of the night time and evening economy was integral to the success of the town centre
- Scarborough Chamber of Trade and Commerce used to contribute financially to the position of Town Centre Manager – an option which could be reconsidered
- The DBID presented investment opportunities for the town centre and should be taken into account in the development of the strategy
- The Newborough area needed attention
- Large stores becoming vacant afforded opportunities for smaller start-up units to encourage local independent businesses
- Recent hot weather, rail disruption and industrial action, and poor rail connectivity all affected footfall in the town centre
- Good connectivity between the foreshore and St Nicholas Cliff, and between the Market Hall and Westborough were critically important
- The Council needed to work in partnership with landlords (absentee landlords with no interest in the town were a challenge), tenants, Civic Society and Friends Groups to realise this vision, including the public realm improvements vital for a tourist destination
- Empty premises above shops provided important residential opportunities
- The Council should take care not to let the student 'feel' dominate the town centre

- The Overview and Scrutiny Board would like to assist officers with a consultative evidence gathering session to help inform the development of the strategy

Mr Bradley thanked the Members for their comments and suggestions. He noted Members' concerns, and agreed with the importance of improved connectivity and flow across parts of the town, and of supporting the night time/evening economy. He confirmed that he was holding discussions with the Regional Development Manager of TransPennine Express about rail connectivity and services to the town. He did not feel that local student numbers were so high as to have a demographic impact on the town, but there were opportunities to create a more mixed use offer attractive to students and others. He added that officers were already exploring retail start-up units in Scarborough Market Hall, and undertook to arrange an 'evidence day' with the involvement of the Overview and Scrutiny Board to consult with stakeholders and help progress the strategy.

**RESOLVED** that the Board endorse the outline Scarborough Town Centre Strategy.