

Folkestone Town Centre Working Group

Held at:	Boulogne Room - Civic Centre Folkestone
Date	Tuesday, 10 December 2019
Present	Councillors Danny Brook (Chairman), Douglas Wade and David Wimble
Apologies for Absence	Councillor Laura Davison and Councillor David Monk
Officers Present:	Mrs Jess Harman (Community Projects Manager), John Bunnett (Corporate Director - Place and Commercial Services), Sue Lewis (Committee Services Officer) and Lorraine Smith (Economic Development Officer)
Others Present:	Holly Lewis and Emily Temperton, We Made That, Urban Research and Architecture

7. **Declarations of interest**

Councillor Danny Brook declared a voluntary announcement in that he has a business in the town and is Ward Member for Folkestone Central. He remained in the meeting during the discussions.

Councillor Douglas Wade declared a voluntary announcement in that he is known to the owners of Big Boys Burgers in The Old High Street. He remained in the meeting during the discussions.

8. **Minutes and actions (15 Minutes)**

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 October 2019 were submitted and approved by the Committee.

At the last meeting further information was sought in respect of point 3 of the working group's terms of reference – Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Monitoring Officer provided members with a response which has been noted. In addition an Action Log was circulated.

9. **F and H High Street Funds (20 Minutes)**

Lorraine Smith updated members on the following applications which have been reviewed and approved by the decision panel:

1. Market Square – Rendezvous Street (building fit out to deliver a proof of concept Food Hall for circa. 15 stalls)
 - a) Grant request £33,000 (capital expenditure)
 - b) Timeline = November '19 to February '20

The owners already work with local schools at Lubens, Folkestone and will be continuing to provide this opportunity in the new space, including lessons on baking and food tech. This is 50% self-funded.

2. Conchitas – Bouverie Rd West (extension and refit to support disabled access and facilities)
 - a) Grant request = £42,250
 - b) Timeline = January '20 to February '20

This is 50% self-funded.

3. Big Boys Fine Burger Co – Old High St (refurbishment of existing establishment)
 - a) Grant request = £7,500
 - b) Timeline = December '19 to January '20

This is 50% self-funded.

4. Folkestone Town Council (Lighting infrastructure for Christmas lights and support for FTC Christmas event)
 - a) Grant request = £17,500 (capital and revenue expenditure)
 - b) Timeline = 22nd November '19 to 5th January '20

The panel agreed to fund 50% of capital expenditure to support installation of LED lights to the value of £5000 but did not support revenue expenditure, such as on costs.

5. Folkestone Town Council (CCTV expansion throughout Folkestone)
 - a) Grant request = £50,000 (capital expenditure)
 - b) Timeline = November '19 to January '20

The panel requested further information before a decision could be made on this request.

The total value approved so far is £87,750 with the next review taking place in January.

Members received a progress report on Council led projects and noted the following:

Transport Study - Phase 1 is now complete and officers are now waiting on the findings. Phase 2 will take place next year.

Masterplanning Development - Guildhall Street will be the initial focus.

Market Research – surveys are now complete with data analysis output expected soon.

Town Centre Animator – a retail consultant has been appointed on a 1year contract to start mid-December. They will help to curate interventions in the

town centre, working on scoping, planning and identifying areas of growth. An update will be provided at a later date.

Folkestone Music Town – members noted the launch of Busking Code will be early January 2020. Members of the Music Board are in the process of being identified and the first meeting will be held in the New Year.

Jess Harman updated members from a community safety aspect on the following:

CCTV – there are now good links with Folkestone Town Council with access availability of CCTV and work is taking place for the link to be made available into the CSU office for live time viewing by officers.

PSPO - signage is being finalised and will be installed in the New Year with work on-going for Communications around the understanding of PSPO and enforcement.

Multi-agency Operations - Folkestone Town Centre centric every other month which remains positive with good communications between the council, police and other agencies.

Violence Reduction bid for £14,500 has gone in for a 3 phased community safety partnership led project covering night time economy, education in schools, led by Excelsior, and 40 emergency trauma packs.

10. **We Made That - Urban Research and Architecture (40 Minutes)**

Holly Lewis and Emily Temperton, We Made That, Urban Research and Architecture were in attendance to present examples for how town centres can be changed.

Members were shown some examples of the work undertaken for Croydon, South London, Burnt Oak, North East London and Kingston, South East London. Each presenting different needs and requirements but all wanting the same result, bringing the High Streets and surrounding areas back to life.

Further discussion was then had on how this can be achieved and important considerations as you move through this process.

Representatives commented that whilst walking around Folkestone, particularly Guildhall Street area, it was clear that work needs to be done. It should be noted that if heading down the residential route you should do so cautiously as once residential it will stay residential and could have an impact on the surrounding town centre.

A piece of work has been commissioned for We Made That to conduct some research and analysis specific to Guildhall Street. Once the exercise is complete, the output will be brought back to the Working group and presented to Council once works are complete.

11. **Public Engagement (20 Minutes)**

Lorraine Smith provided members with an update on public engagement paying particular attention to the following:

- Surveys – the target of 500 responses to the survey was exceeded with 947 completed of which 577 were face to face and 370 via the online link. 412 visitors (outside of the district) and 104 businesses also took part. The results are still being analysed and will be reported back to members at the next meeting.
- Officers advised members from a proactive group of independent traders have shared their input and confirmed nothing additional has been highlighted.

12. **Folkestone Town Centre Strategic site update (15 Minutes)**

John Bunnnett updated members on the following:

- Ship Street – discussions are ongoing with no additional information at this time.
- Harbour Line – discussions continue with the Harbour Line Group. A report will be taken to Cabinet in due course.
- Debenhams site – a closure date of 24 January 2020 has now been confirmed. Officers continue to work with liaison with the owners.