

Minutes of the **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
of the **Test Valley Borough Council**
held in Conference Room 1, Beech Hurst, Andover,
on Tuesday 22 February 2017 at 5.30 pm

Attendance:

Councillor C Lynn (Chairman)	(P)	Councillor I Jeffrey (Vice Chairman)	(A)
Councillor N Adams-King	(P)	Councillor P Hurst	(A)
Councillor D Baverstock	(P)	Councillor J Lovell	(P)
Councillor J Cockaday	(P)	Councillor J Neal	(P)
Councillor C Dowden	(P)	Councillor J Ray	(-)
Councillor D Drew	(P)	Councillor B Page	(P)
Councillor B Few Brown	(P)	Councillor T Preston	(P)
Councillor A Finlay	(A)	Councillor K Tilling	(A)
Vacancy			

Also in attendance:

Councillor S Hawke
Councillor P Giddings
Councillor P North

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Minutes

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 24 January 2017 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

294 **Presentation by Chris Gregory, Andover Town Centre Manager**

The Andover Town Centre Manager, Chris Gregory, gave an update on the achievements and successes of the Town Centre Partnership since it started 2 ½ years ago.

The Town Centre Partnership had a good representative sample from across the town including business community representatives and Councillors. Town Centre management is funded by Andover Town Council, Test Valley Borough Council and Hampshire County Council. The Andover Town Centre Manager explained that his contract was for 3 years but was proud that the foundations had been laid for the work to continue and develop following his departure in May 2017.

There had been a number of key achievements and the Town Centre Manager highlighted the following;

- Introduction of a Town Tidy day to coincide with the Great British Spring Clean Weekend over the weekend of 3rd to the 5th March 2017.
- Created a series of newsletters to help communication with the business community.
- Commissioned a series of photo libraries for the Town and made these available to partners to use freely to promote Andover and produced a promotional video which can be included in websites and on social media. There may be an option to advertise these to a wider audience.
- Organised business training sessions the first of which was being run in the Guildhall by Andover College this evening.
- Joint submission entries in Great Britain High Street competition which had been judged in the national top 5.

The following issues and comments were discussed;

- Business rates not linked to turnover but linked to value of the property. Business rates are payable by the owner of the business not the property.
- Footfall was pretty static which was unprecedented in the current economic climate. The challenge would be to sustain and improve footfall in the future. Footfall was down nationally but in Andover it was pretty static at around 60,000/80,000 per month.
- Beggars – most if not all homeless people have been offered a tenancy and there are safety nets to ensure that they are not left homeless.
- Monitoring of footfall, vacancy rates (October 2016 – Romsey 4%, Andover 10% and nationally 12%) and car parking.

The Town Centre Manager was asked what achievements he felt that he hadn't achieved and he explained that there were 3 main objectives for the Partnership, events and vitality; marketing and promotion; (including tourism) and cleaner, greener and safer. He would have liked to have set up many more events and created a greater energy, effort and resource to promote marketing and promotion. There are however contingency plans in place beyond the end of his contract to continue the work with public sector and community support.

The Committee was informed about a possible Business Improvement District (BID) for Andover town centre. Any request for a BID would have to come to the Council and Secretary of State from businesses themselves. Preparation for a ballot would take between 6-12 months during which consultation period all details of the business plan, on which businesses would vote, would be agreed. Such details would include: levy rate, levy thresholds, definition of the BID area boundary, how the income would be spent, treatment of businesses outside the boundary, possible exemptions etc.

Because BIDs involve the payment of a business rate levy the process for determining them is subject to detailed statutory regulation. The ballot would be decided on the dual basis of the rateable value and number of businesses.

The Economic Development Officer explained that there was one footfall counter in the town centre. The more counters there were the more trends and dynamics of the town centre could be measured. New forms of technology could better measure trends and dynamics within the town centre.

The Committee requested the Economic Development Officer to provide them with information on up to date methods of monitoring including costings, options and value for money.

The Chairman thanked the Andover Town Centre Manager for all his hard work over the last 2 ½ years and congratulated him on what had been achieved and wished him luck for the future.

Resolved:

- 1. That the Andover Town Centre Manager be congratulated on the success of his achievements.**
- 2. That the Economic Development Officer be requested to look at ways in which the vibrancy of the town centre could be measured.**

295 Programme of Work for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Dowden explained that she had met with the Democratic Services Manager and the Senior Democratic Services Officer to discuss her report on Call In and was confident that this report would be ready for the meeting in March.

The Economic Development Manager was requested to circulate a briefing note on ways in which the vibrancy of the town centre could be measured.

Resolved:

That the future work programme, as amended, be approved.

(Meeting terminated at 6.45pm)