



Dereham Town Plan Working Group

a joint working group of
Dereham Town Council and the aboutDereham Partnership



Notes of meeting held 22 September 2021

Present: Cllr. Stuart Green, Chair, Cllr. Philip Morton, Peter Wade Martins, Carolyn Coleman, Cllr Phillip Duigan

1	Apologies Mike Webb	
	Updates (i) Ellenor Fenn Garden - the opening event was held on 11th September and was very successful. The project has been very well received. It has opened up and improved what was an eyesore in the heart of the town and created a usable and pleasant space. Everyone commended the contribution made by Sue Walker to the garden design and information panels. (ii) Community Toilets Scheme - Carolyn had incorporated the recommendations written by Mike into the report and has sent the report to Stuart so as to ensure it goes forward to the Social and Welfare Committee meeting on 26 October. Peter said that budget will be needed this year so as to make a start in the current year. Carolyn asked Stuart to deal with this in the meeting since a breakdown of costs has been supplied. Mike and Carolyn will offer to attend this meeting.	Stuart Carolyn Mike
2	Wayfinding - possible launch event Carolyn had not received advance notice of the installation of the wayfinding signs which was carried out by sub-contractors to Norse on Saturday 18th September, earlier than expected. Three signs and one finger-post are yet to be installed by DTC. Consulting with Stephanie Lewis in Breckland's Comms team, we have agreed who should be invited and agreed a tentative date of 22 October for a launch event. Everyone agreed it is right and appropriate to hold a celebration of the signs and their presence in Dereham. Stephanie is to check with the various members and officers to find out their availability. Currently timings are expect to be from 10.30am to approx 12.30. Carolyn was asked to let Trevor know the date and agreed she will email Trevor, Mike and Charlie Robinson with this news.	Carolyn

Dereham's Town Delivery Plan

DTC held a meeting of all councillors and Emma Crampton on 21 September. This meeting will be minuted.

Overall, the town councillors are happy with the report and approve of the majority of the projects that have been proposed. They have said they look forward to seeing some of the projects start. They also noted some of the inaccuracies which undermine credibility in the report.

Councillors had some questions about the retail environment and what the High Street of the future should aim to be. It was said that a lot of the shops need improvements not only to the frontage but also to the interiors which are not representative of a good, modern retail experience for shoppers. Some of the buildings may be listed which might impose constraints on how buildings can be modified, if at all.

Councillors agreed with the plan's main thrust to attract higher value businesses which in turn employ higher skilled people on higher wages, but asked how this can be achieved. It was agreed that a start should be made towards this goal, however small.

Breckland Council are producing a skills report. This can be helpful when prioritising actions from the delivery plan. There seems to have been, as far as we are aware, a lack of involvement of the schools in the development of the delivery plan. There seems to be a lack of joined-up thinking around future skills needs.

We were told the report indicates around £11m to refurbish the Breckland Business Centre - but before spending the money they need to ensure there will be sufficient demand.

DTC agree with aD's point that there needs to be a group to oversee progress on the plan which will evolve as time goes on and said that it needs to be a joint approach by all three councils, with the ability to bring in other stakeholders. We spoke about the lack of a Chamber of Commerce and thought that perhaps a suitable representative could come from the business banking sector, or the accountants in Dereham since they know the views of business.

Carolyn spoke about the 'quick win' idea of a year-round events programme. She said the voluntary & community sector does not have the capacity to organise this and there needs to be a professional events organiser with a budget for a varied programme of events.

Peter asked if the minutes of the DTC meeting can be shared and Stuart said he will check this.

Both Philip and Phillip pointed out this is a long term process and the plan will change - but we all need to support it now if we hope to attract funding for some of the schemes.

Stuart

	<p>It was also said that Dereham does not have a USP and does not fit any of county's priorities (i.e. not a windfarm etc).</p> <p>Peter asked if he can submit comments for us to include in the aD draft response. Carolyn asked him to copy both her and Mike but that there is not guarantee any of his points can be incorporated into our draft. Carolyn will respond when his comments are received.</p>	<p>Peter</p> <p>Carolyn</p>
4	<p>Minutes of meetings held on 25 August 2021</p> <p>The minutes were approved and can be published on the aD website.</p>	<p>C</p> <p>Carolyn</p>
9	<p>D&TNM</p> <p>The next meeting will be 27 October 2021</p> <p>A possible agenda topic might be to debate the town's USP. Everyone to have a think about this and bring ideas.</p>	<p>All</p> <p>All</p>