

<b>MEETING:</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
<b>DATE:</b>	Tuesday, 27 November 2018
<b>TIME:</b>	2.00 pm
<b>VENUE:</b>	Council Chamber, Barnsley Town Hall

## MINUTES

### Present

Councillors Ennis OBE (Chair), Bowler, G. Carr, Charlesworth, Clements, Franklin, Frost, Gollick, Daniel Griffin, Hand-Davis, Hayward, W. Johnson, Makinson, Mitchell, Phillips, Pickering, Pourali, Sheard, Tattersall, Williams and Wright together with co-opted member Ms K. Morrill

### 35 Apologies for Absence - Parent Governor Representatives

No apologies for absence were received in accordance with Regulation 7(6) of the Parent Governor Representatives (England) Regulations 2001.

### 36 Declarations of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interest

There were no declarations of pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest.

### 37 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> October were approved as a true and accurate record.

### 38 The Glassworks and Wider Town Centre Re-Development

The following witnesses were welcomed to the meeting:

Matt Gladstone, Executive Director - Place  
 David Shepherd, Service Director - Economic Regeneration  
 Neil Copley, Service Director - Finance  
 Councillor Roy Miller, Cabinet Member – Place  
 Andrew Darlington, Senior Quantity Surveyor, NPS Barnsley  
 Steve Loach, Acting Head of Financial Services (Corporate) and Deputy S151 Officer

This item was introduced by the Executive Director (Place) who provided an update on the progress of the Glassworks and wider town centre re-development, with a particular focus on the governance arrangements in place to ensure that the overall programme is delivered on time and to budget. The Town Centre Programme Board reports into Cabinet and the Glassworks Board manages the delivery of the Glassworks Programme and provides updates to both the Council's Senior Management Team and to Cabinet.

The report highlighted the current position in terms of decisions taken, cost and income projections and future risks/challenges the scheme may encounter and how

these will be managed moving forward. It was reported that the town centre project has been ongoing for a number of years now, with a significant amount of investment and engagement with both internal and external stakeholders both internal and external.

In the ensuing discussion, and in response to detailed questioning, the following matters were highlighted:

The Glassworks is central to the scheme for the Borough and is aligned to the local plan. The overarching plan is for a thriving town centre and Borough. The Council's Town Spirit vision will help to get the whole community behind the project. The new Market is at the very heart of the Glass Works scheme as this makes good business sense. The new Market and Café has now opened, with footfall up by 11%. Existing businesses are also part and parcel of the scheme as part of a thriving Town Centre. There is an expectation that the retail market will contract further over the next two or three years, which presents a number of challenges.

The High Street, both locally and nationally, is in a state of flux at the moment and there is a need to future-proof the scheme and manage the risks involved. There is also a wider economic uncertainty around Brexit. The project represents a big investment and the Council has worked hard to ensure people have signed up for the long term, in some instances to a 20 year lease.

There is currently a Premier Inn in the town centre and it is likely that the overnight 'offer' will be further developed in the years to come, when investors start to see the business benefits. As the town centre is relatively small and compact, it is essential that opportunities to promote it as a unique place are seized – such as the new town centre bridge and redevelopment of the former Npower site. The Jumble Lane crossing has been problematic in the past, particularly on match days, but investment in the new bridge and Interchange (including longer platform for intercity trains) will alleviate this.

It was reported that the town centre restaurant and leisure market is volatile and risky for investors but nonetheless some investment has been secured over the last 12 months. Larger centres such as Leeds and Meadowhall are also struggling and have had to put expansion plans on hold. The report indicated that 59% of Barnsley residents don't use the town centre as a retail destination. It was felt that this is due to the lack of an adequate 'offer' at the moment, as Barnsley does not currently have a multiplex cinema, no key retail names or branded restaurants. This is set to change. Significant private sector, Leeds City Region (LCR) and Sheffield City Region (SCR) investment is now being directed to Barnsley with a number of high profile names already announced (Next, Cineworld) and more in the pipeline.

Alongside retail, the cultural and leisure offer is an important feature to attract visitors, with venues such as Experience Barnsley and the Cooper Gallery helping to increase footfall. Additional investment has been made in promoting large scale town centre events such as Christmas lights, the Tour de Yorkshire and comedy festivals. It is important to explore imaginative ways to increase and sustain footfall, with effective marketing and strong branding. It is not just about retail. Good working relationships have been formed with other agencies such as 'Visit Yorkshire' and the 'National Trust' and there are plans to bring more housing into the Town Centre. There will not be a profit on investment, but rather the return will be in terms of the

wider social and economic benefit. The 'Dancing town event' was very well received, well managed and positive. Work is ongoing to explore how more businesses can be attracted to the Civic.

Good transport links are crucial to the success of the project. Work is ongoing with both Sheffield City Regions (SCR) and the Barnsley Bus Partnership (BBP) to ensure better and affordable access to transport through a number of investment schemes. It was acknowledged that some communities do not have transport into the town centre. Unfortunately, since deregulation, bus companies will not run a service if it will not make a profit. Coach tours continue to be successful, with people coming from as far afield as Lowestoft for a day trip to Barnsley. It was felt that coach parking should be incentivised to further encourage this, perhaps with provision of a tour guide and facilities for coach drivers to use.

Members can help by promoting the town centre and utilising some of the town centre ideas and innovation in their own areas to secure a vibrant future for the entire Borough. It was felt that the visible student presence in the town centre was positive, with over 9500 students enrolled at Barnsley College.

Members expressed concern that the image of the town centre may be tarnished due to such issues as homelessness, drug use, begging, safety concerns and anti-social behaviour. It was explained that extra funding has been provided to the Police to manage the town centre and there has already been significant improvement with regard to street drinking, particularly around Peel Square, and student/anti-social behaviour has reduced compared to two years ago. There is a collective responsibility to tackle these issues and the Council has invested significantly in proactive enforcement. Barnsley is working towards 'Purple Flag' accreditation, which recognises excellence in the management of town and city centres at night. Options for a new CCTV system are being explored, including state of the art digital facial recognition in combination with a traffic management plan.

It was felt that gateways into the town should be enhanced. Plans are being developed to alleviate traffic concerns on Dodworth Road, Sheffield Road and the motorway slip road. Some of the properties on the edge of the town are currently Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs). Members felt that the opportunity for these to be converted into family homes to improve the overall ambience of this area should be fully explored. Walking and cycling into town is also being encouraged in conjunction with Public Health as part of 'active travel' plans. New and improved signage will be included in the plans as part of the public realm but there are limitations as to what the Department of Transport and the Highways Agency will allow.

It was felt that parking should be free but the cost of building car parking makes this difficult and there is evidence to suggest that some people are happy to pay charges for secure parking (for example, at the Alhambra).

The importance of accessibility for disabled and those with health issues (given Barnsley's heavy industry legacy) was highlighted. Members were reassured that various service user groups had consulted and involved in designing all aspects of the town centre, including the Glassworks.

The 'Library at the Lightbox' project is being led by the Communities Directorate, but will be integrated into the overall town centre redevelopment and will open in around 6 months' time. A number of activities are planned at the Library, including computer coding, adult skills and dance. An events space will be available for use by community groups and a sensory room and café will also be on site along with extended opening hours.

Members agreed that the redevelopment was the largest project undertaken for many years by the Council and Officers should be commended for their hard work in securing a bright future for Barnsley over an extended timeframe. Councillor Clements proposed that a dedicated Member briefing be arranged to look at the town centre redevelopment plans in more detail.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The update be noted;
- (ii) Witnesses be thanked for their attendance and contribution
- (iii) A members' briefing be arranged to look at the redevelopment plans in more detail.