

Bishop Auckland Heritage Action Zone Advisory Group



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Historic England

MS Teams Meeting

Date: 15th July 2020

PRESENT:

Dr Bob McManners (Chair)	BA Civic Society
Nigel Bryson	BA Town Team
Jules Brown	Historic England
Alison Tweddle	The Auckland Project
Annalisa Ward	Durham County Council
Chris Myers	Durham County Council
CLlr Joy Allen	Durham County Council
Kathryn Watson	Durham County Council

APOLOGIES:

Jamie Blackburn	BA Town Council
Liz Fisher	The Auckland Project
Bryan Harris	Durham County Council
Andrew Walker	TAP

1.0 WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Alison Tweddle, Head of Learning & Community Outreach at The Auckland Project, to her first meeting, deputising for LF.
- 1.2 Apologies were received from LF, BH, AW and JaBl.

2.0 MINUTES & ACTIONS

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 8th January 2020 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

2.2 Actions:

- 2.3 AnnW would be updating the Town Centre Vacancy Map for the next meeting.
- 2.4 AnnW reported that her new office within Bishop Auckland Town Council's building would be ready at the end of September. CM said that DCC's Corporate Health & Safety Team would be assessing the office prior to occupation.

3.0 UPDATE FROM BRIGHTER BISHOP AUCKLAND PARTNERSHIP

- 3.1 BMc gave an update from the meeting held on 18th May 2020.

3.0 UPDATE FROM BRIGHTER BISHOP AUCKLAND PARTNERSHIP (cont'd)

- 3.2 JA reported that she had had discussions with Visit County Durham regarding the current lack of visitor/holiday accommodation in the area. She suggested that if private investors could be encouraged to consider residential properties as holiday let opportunities this could help to address the issue of under supply.
- 3.3 CM agreed that there was an issue and said that a recent Visitor Accommodation Study commissioned by DCC identified a shortfall of both serviced and un-serviced accommodation.
- 3.4 NB suggested arranging a workshop/event for potential property investors in order to raise awareness of visitor accommodation opportunities. AW said that Visit County Durham had held a similar event in the past and KW would contact them to discuss the possibility of an awareness raising event focusing on the Bishop Auckland area.
- 3.5 JBr suggested inviting successful local accommodation providers along to the event to share their experience with potential investors.
- 3.6 **ACTIONS:**
- i) JA and KW to contact Visit County Durham representatives to discuss plans for a virtual event with private investors and accommodation providers to promote visitor accommodation investment opportunities.
 - ii) This issue to be included as an agenda item at the next meeting.

4.0 PROJECT MANAGER'S REPORT

- 4.1 AnnW talked through the key points of her report which had been circulated previously.
- All end of Year 2 and start of Year 3 tasks had been completed; signing off funding spend, production of Delivery Plans and reports and monitoring.
 - AnnW had completed various online training sessions.
 - Applications submitted for Section 106 money draw down of the remainder from a £50K allocation to HAZ and to date used for Castle Chare works. The applications were for funds to support project development for the former Mechanics Institute, the King James Boatshed and St Anne's Church.
 - Conservation Area Grants Scheme progressing well. Publicity for first completed project at No. 10 Newgate, to be issued soon when further grant offers can be announced. Currently 4 enquiries.
 - Shop Front Design Guide almost complete.
 - Castle Chare project almost completed, with some additional signage and minor wall repairs to be carried out. Press release to be issued.
 - Heritage & History Festival date moved from September 2020; will now run from 23rd October to 2nd November.
 - Repair works due to start on the Auckland Castle Clock Tower. The Auckland Project were also submitting plans for development of the Castle curtilage areas including the gardens surrounding the castle.
- 4.2 AnnW had joint team meeting with Historic England and DCC to discuss the former Mechanics Institute. An Options Appraisal would be drawn up to look at addressing legal and ownership issues relating to the building. The former Masonic Hall was now on the market and AnnW aware there were a few interested parties.

4.0 PROJECT MANAGER'S REPORT (cont'd)

JA left the meeting at 11.00am

- 4.3 BMc asked whether the HAZ would be extended due to Coronavirus crisis. JBr said that there would not be an extension, however Historic England would be considering legacy planning for projects not delivered as expected. CM confirmed that any projects not completed by the HAZ end date would be delivered by DCC.
- 4.4 Delivery Plan - AnnW said that the Plan was currently being reviewed by Historic England and it was anticipated that some minor amendments may be needed. Members agreed to sign off the Plan following completion of amendments. Any comments on Delivery Plan documents to be emailed to AnnW prior to sign off.
- 4.5 R.A.I.D Log – AnnW gave an overview and explained that the document would be reviewed and amended as necessary on a regular basis with an updated report being produced for the next meeting when any highlighted risks could be discussed.
- 4.6 AnnW reported that Project P2 on the Issues Register had been completed and would be removed from the register.
- 4.7 History & Heritage Festival 2020 – AnnW reported that Covid-19 restrictions were affecting progress of the programme with many organisations not responding as staff were currently furloughed. AnnW was working with the DCC Marketing Team to prepare a Marketing Plan. The festival will be run in conjunction with Stockton & Darlington HAZ. A joint programme will be prepared and issued across County Durham, Stockton and Darlington.

5.0 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

5.1 Community WiFi Scheme

KW reported that following the launch of the scheme, valuable footfall monitor data had been collected. Connectivity was increasing, with 2,400 users reported on Friday last week. Further comms was planned to publicise the scheme.

5.2 Targeted Business Improvement Grant Scheme

KW reported that one application had been approved and paid so far, this financial year. Two further applications were progressing.

5.3 Fore Bondgate Signage

KW reported that installation of the signage was to be completed soon.

- 5.4 BMc asked AT if dates had been announced for the re-opening of TAP visitor attractions. AT replied that TAP had no immediate plans for re-opening.

6.0 REVIEW OF ACTIONS

- 6.1 AnnW to update Town Centre Vacancy Map for the next meeting in November
- 6.2 JA and KW to meet with Visit County Durham representatives to discuss virtual workshop for property investors to raise awareness of visitor accommodation opportunities

- 6.3 Include visitor accommodation as an agenda item for the next meeting
- 6.4 Any comments on Delivery Plan documents to be emailed to AnnW prior to sign off
- 6.5 AnnW to give an update on RAID Log risks at the next meeting, highlighting specific projects which require discussion

7.0 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

- 7.1 Wednesday 11th November 2020, 10.00am-12.00noon.