



Bridgwater Town Council

Portfolio:	Economy and Staffing
Portfolio Holder Name:	Cllr Mick Lerry
Full Council Meeting Date:	14 th March 2024
Agenda Item:	TC2024/22

Report:

Town Team At the last meeting of the Town Team there was a discussion on the Town Deal Animating Application, which has now been withdrawn. BTC staff are researching training programmes that could be useful to businesses, such as first aid and social media. There was a discussion relating to ASB in empty properties and the police have now responded to the request for information.

The Chair reported on the future change to BTC staff supporting the Town Team, which were taking place due to restructuring.

Town Deal

Peter Paddon interim Head of Regeneration Somerset Council and Owen Martin from Taylor Woodrow were introduced to the Board. Peter will be the temporary lead office and Owen spoke about the Eastover Celebration Mile Project comms strategy.

Project Progress and Updates:

Bridgwater Docks.

The Docks Consultation event was held in December. The public feedback has been collated and is now available.

Town Hall Theatre.

The planning application is progressing, and Cllr Mick Lerry reported that there is a change to the timeframe for the Town Hall Theatre due to delays with the Planning application and the Theatre is needed for Carnival Concerts. Other aspects of the project will be implemented in the meantime. Delivery of the Town Hall project will be 2025.

Arts Centre

The planning application has been reallocated and moving forward.

Tidal Barrier Project

There is £2million for the project and Nick Tait is the lead officer for Somerset Council. At the moment the officer will be looking at the agreement with the solicitor and the Environment agency to reach an agreement between all parties. The funding has been allocated for £1m within 2023/2024 and £1m within 2024/2025.



Bridgwater Town Council

Celebration Mile Public Engagement

Taylor Woodrow will begin to work on the Comms Strategy, outlining the key stakeholders, and will work out the best way to communicate the messaging. Work to commence at the end of March.

Animating the Town Centre Update

Beccy Amory presented the Board with photos of previous Animating Bridgwater events. BA reported that there will be 15 events this year which include: Bridgwater Food and Drink Festival; Pop Up Shop; Theatre Company performance; Fire and Light Festival in September.

The contract for Destination Bridgwater brand & Website Development is about to be awarded which has been supported with Bridgwater Town Council match funding and is set to be delivered in July 2024. The Town Council have made plans for future staffing and are looking to take on the cultural marketing officer in the new tax year. Quotes are in for delivery of the agreed commission events.

Bridgwater Town Council has agreed to be the funding vehicle for the applications, there are plans in place for delivery whether funding is received or not.

Animating Bridgwater in 2023 held 8 events attracting 12,000 visitors spending an average of £3.32 per head. There will be 15 events this year 2024/2025 which should reach 19,000 visitors, which will generate £600,000 in day visitor spend.

Footfall is worked through with delivery partners and footfall monitors, it was discovered there are only 3 monitors with none on Cornhill or Northgate, the Town Council has been asked to invest in more footfall monitors.

Step Up Options Paper

The key points are that a new location needs to be identified for Bridgwater Step Up. Alternative revenue funding (or in-kind match funding) needs to be identified. It was agreed that most of the options would not be viable, and Cllr Mick Lerry proposed the Town Hall as a suitable venue for the project and this proposal was agreed by the Board. It was agreed to look for other funding streams to make up the loss of 200K revenue from Somerset Council.

Bridgwater Carnival Project Update

The Design stage is moving forward. The project team are reviewing the drainage of the site and seeking to have discussions with the Local Lead Flood Authority.

The project team are looking at undertaking a value engineering exercise as the current QS report is showing the scheme is running over budget by 25%: but, the team are confident that the project will be delivered by May 2026, having identified savings.

Bridgwater Council Staffing

The Job Evaluation scheme has been adopted by Council and the recruitment process is taking place, after slotting in present staff to the new structure. A great deal of work has gone into this process in preparation for the new assets and services. A team has visited Chippenham Town Council to assess how they managed a similar process in Wiltshire, when unitary council was set up.



Bridgwater Town Council

Recommendations: (if you are expecting Council to make a decision from your report)

None