

Torquay Town Deal and Paignton Future High Street Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Board

Report to Cabinet on 18 May 2021

Background

1. The Overview and Scrutiny Board met on 14 April to receive an update on the Torquay Town Deal and Paignton Future High Street Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Board.
2. The Panel heard from the Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Tourism and Housing, Councillor Long, who outlined the submitted report on the Torquay Town Deal and Paignton Future High Street programmes - [\(Public Pack\)Items 6 and 7 Torquay Town Deal and Future High Street Briefing Paper Agenda Supplement for Overview and Scrutiny Board, 14/04/2021 17:30 \(torbay.gov.uk\)](#). The programmes had been led and developed with the community through engagement with Neighbourhood Forums and other community groups, based on a number of strategies and plans which would lead to investment and economic development in Torquay and Paignton. Councillor Long and Alan Denby, Director of Economic Strategy responded to questions in relation to:
 - The timescale for work to start on site at Crossways – Members had previously been provided with a timeline for implementation of the redevelopment of Crossways, this was being done as a dual process – a legal process via Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) and negotiations with the land owner. The Chief Executive informed that a date had been set for the enquiry for the CPO of mid July 2021 and therefore this should be the latest time for a decision on the implementation of the proposals.
 - If the funding for the Princess Gardens and Upton Park was included within the £180m – these projects were part of additional funding of £750,000 for accelerated projects.
 - What was being done to ensure use of local labour and skills – they were looking at options to ensure the use of local labour which linked to the community wealth building proposals to ensure that money is kept in Torbay. Risk had been identified around having sufficient local labour and skills due to the level of development happening in the Region. They were looking at how we could help local people retrain and get into the construction sector, engineering, design as well as the traditional manual elements, working with the local business community to enable them to bid for work and working with colleagues in the NHS, South Devon College and suppliers to identify what we need to create and keep as much wealth as possible in the local area.

- What sort of events would the banjo on Princess Gardens be able to host – they were still engaging in conversations on the infrastructure that was required to ensure they meet the needs of the events but hoped to have events such as the Radio 1 Roadshow.
 - Torbay Road allocation had been reduced to £600,000, what sort of projects would be delivered for this – the reduction in funding for the project related to being permitted to have 5% of a project on beatification and most of the proposals for this project came under that category, it was hoped that capital receipts from other projects would be used to help fund this project to make improvements which were supported by residents and traders.
 - If the funding covered consultant's fees – the funding received covered all costs including contingency, the levels of which would be agreed once each project was developed and was held by the Government and then claimed for if needed.
 - Risks around capacity of TDA to deliver the programmes – the Team would be increased by one member of staff in May and external suppliers would be used as and when required to help address capacity within the team. There was not yet a detailed programme of work and there was a need to put in place a project co-ordinator. Some of the Town Deal revenue fund would be used for elements of training and they need to work with South Devon College and other providers to see how it can be delivered and how we can ensure people who would really benefit are able to access training and other support. Further work was being carried out on how we could draw in more funding to pay for skills services.
 - Concern around Torquay and the lack of growth and the high levels of deprivation and inequality – work around affordable housing, new developments requiring employments and skills plans will help improve economic growth in all areas. The Town Deal was one part of the puzzle and more work needed to be done alongside understanding how we can do more to help businesses relocate and grow in Torbay. Work with ThinkingPlace and exploring options to find a way to support our communities to become more employment ready and skilled, help them become higher skilled, retain good business and good employment space.
 - Lack of significant house building in Torquay – the Cabinet Member was working with local housing associations and advised that a couple were due to be building new homes soon, as well as the Council's own housing company TORVISTA, this would help drive affordable housing and support other private sector initiatives combined with the other proposed projects such as the Melville area working with communities to support the various issues they have. The Council was not able to force housebuilders to develop land where they have planning permission and would welcome the Government supporting this area.
2. The Board reflected and debated the information provided to them, both in writing and orally. The Board formed the following recommendation to the Cabinet. On being put to the vote, the motion was declared carried unanimously.

3. That the Cabinet be recommended:
- (i) to require developers and contractors to make a commitment to use local labour and/or apprenticeships, wherever possible, and to develop opportunities to retrain local people to enable them to have the relevant skills to help them to obtain local jobs, especially in the construction industry and to present regular updates on progress of the Torquay Town Deal and Paignton Future High Street programmes to the Overview and Scrutiny Board; and
 - (ii) to explore opportunities for economic growth in Torquay within the business plans for the Torquay Town Deal to ensure, where possible, funding is spent to tackle the deep and underlying issues surrounding deprivation.