

Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Date: 8th March 2016
Briefing Note: A vision & strategy for Leamington town centre
From: Philip Clarke (Senior Projects Co-ordinator)

Members will recall that at its meeting on 12th January, the Committee received a verbal update on discussions that had taken place with stakeholders regarding developing a vision and strategy for Leamington town centre.

During the summer and autumn of 2015, officers met with a number of internal and external stakeholder groups with an active interest and involvement in Leamington town centre. These groups ranged from Leamington Town Council, BID Leamington and Leamington Chamber of Trade through to the University of Warwick Students Union and the Leamington Society. There were also meetings with all Service Areas within WDC and with officers from the County Council.

It was clear from these meetings that:-

- Despite the different perspectives of the different stakeholder groups, there is a significant consensus around what any “vision” for Leamington town centre may comprise in general terms.
- There is an appetite from stakeholders to work with the Council to develop a vision and strategy for Leamington town centre and to see whether there may be opportunities for us to work in partnership to deliver this.

Executive has now had the opportunity to consider a model for how such work could be taken forward. It has informally agreed the principle that the Council establishes a “**Leamington Town Centre Forum**”. The precise terms of reference for such a group are still being finalised, but it is likely that they will be broadly as follows:-

1. It will be a Task & Finish Group with a specific remit to develop a strategy for Leamington town centre, consider delivery and implementation issues arising from the strategy, consider who may take these forward and how this may be done.
2. It will include representatives of local businesses, societies, local authorities, and other key stakeholders. The involvement of this Council will be led by Deputy Chief Executive Bill Hunt.
3. Importantly, the Forum will have no decision making powers. Each organisation represented will have the responsibility to take any recommendations from the Forum back to their own organisation for consideration and (if necessary) approval. Members will commit to working in a spirit of openness and partnership to do this.
4. The Forum will aim to complete its work within 12 months of its first meeting.

In order to ensure that councillors are kept fully informed of the discussions at the Forum, and are able to consider when and how more formal reports from the Forum should be reported back to the Council, it is proposed that a **Member Reference Group** is set up.

Before any of this is done, Executive has agreed that **formal briefings** should be held with all district and county councillors representing wards in Leamington, and with Leamington Town Council. These groups may make suggestions which cause Executive to revise these proposals before the Leamington Town Centre Forum is launched.

It is hoped that these briefings can be arranged within the next month, and the Town Centre Forum established shortly after this.

Bill Hunt, Philip Clarke and Duncan Elliott will be available at the meeting to take any questions about the town centre vision and strategy.

Philip Clarke
26th February 2016