

MINUTES OF THE SPALDING TOWN BOARD MEETING

Held on Monday 7 October 19:00 - 20:30

at Spalding Gentlemen's Society, Broad Street, Spalding

Present:

Robin Hancox (Chair) - Lincolnshire Field Products, Lydia Rusling - S&ELCP, Charlotte Goy - Destination Lincolnshire, Lizzi van Egmond - Business Representative, Councillor Nick Worth - SHDC, Pranali Parikh - S&ELCP, Michelle Gant - The Engaging People Company, John Bland - Spalding Civic Society, Petronella Keeling - Spalding Gentlemen's Society, Simon Wright - LCC, Dustin Wood - Spalding Gentlemen's Society, Stewart Elderkin - Pedals, David Jones - Pedals, , Michael Morris - Tonic Health, Councillor Gary Taylor - LCC, Matthew Hogan - SELCP, John Mullen - SHDC, Marc Jones - Lincolnshire Police & Crime Commissioner, Inspector Matt Dickinson - Lincolnshire Police, David Ball - Bridge Farm, Claire Foster - Boston College, Alistair Main - Lighthouse Church; Craig Delaney - Spalding Business Board, Alice Ullathorne - Heritage Lincolnshire; Tracy Stringfellow - Heritage Lincolnshire and Cllr Ingrid Shepard - SHDC (sub for Cllr Robert Gibson)

Apologies for Absence:

Luisa Stanney - S&ELCP, Jon Burgess - S&ELCP, Sir John Hayes - MP, Emma Tatlow - Active Lincolnshire, Cllr Robert Gibson - SHDC and Catherine Duce - Spalding Business Board

1 Welcome

RH thanked the Spalding Gentlemen's Society for welcoming and hosting the Spalding Town Board meeting.

RH stated that it has been 3 months since last meeting. Political change has brought a degree of limbo for the LTPFT until decisions are made by the Government on future roll-out.

RH Welcomed Pranali Parikh, the new Director for Economic Development for the South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership. Pranali described her role as one that oversees Planning, Economic Development and Cultural Regeneration including town centre regeneration, culture, tourism and heritage activity and developments as a means of supporting investment and growth in the local economy. PP has seen much evidence of the good work that has both been done to date on the Long-Term Plan for Towns in Spalding and said she had been very encouraged by the strength of the Town Board's commitment to the programme and is confident that there will be many areas in which she and Council teams can help identify opportunities to then work even more closely together.

2 Declarations of Interest

None declared.

3 To agree the Minutes of the last meeting - 8 July 2024

The minutes were agreed as a true record - proposed by MJ, seconded by GT.

4 Business Improvement District (BID) Update - Matthew Hogan

MH updated the meeting with current position of the Spalding BID these were as follows:-

- BID was voted for on 1 July from a ballot of businesses.
- Preparation is in hand for BID mobilisation. The BID company is being set up, with all the financial procedures in place, to enable billing from January 2025.
- Advance payment of District Council funding of £45k will support recruitment with a formal launch in November/December. The events will be announced commencing with a BID newsletter.
- All businesses of a certain rateable value will have a mandatory requirement to pay into the BID to support future BID activity.
- Enforcement will reflect process similar to non-payment of business rates.

RH asked if it is mandatory for levy to be paid for all BID area businesses - MH replied that it was mandatory.

In reply to further question from IS on enforcement, MH confirmed that it is a levy treated in the same manner as Council tax and Business rates.

5 Capacity Funding - Paper previously circulated

RH asked for comments from the meeting on the current financial position of capacity funding that amounted to £210k remaining to support this element of the programme in Spalding. RH enquired if Programme funds are in a higher interest account to ensure any additional value that could be gained from this current period? NW stated that he will enquire further on behalf of the Board with Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 officer). LR stated the LTPFT finance had been earning interest so she would check with Section 151 Finance Officer on the capacity finance.

NW introduced the subject of capacity funding supporting anti-social behaviour actions in partnership with Lincolnshire Police and said that there was potential after having spoken with MJ as Police Commissioner that Spalding could pursue recruitment of an extra police officer for the town. The post could therefore be a ringfenced position to support the community and businesses tackle ASB and related aspects of town centre criminal behaviour that affects business and community safety.

MJ said although he could not speak on behalf of the Chief Constable, he had comparative example of an additional Police officer resource being provided via a Memorandum Of Understanding in place with University of Lincoln. The action taken in Lincoln was based on robust ASB research and local knowledge. He could investigate an approach that would be Spalding based and therefore come back to the group with the key figures on the current crime rates in the town. He stated that current rate for an extra police officer would be on a pay scale of around £30k with on-costs taken into consideration as well.

- IS stated that proposal would require assessment of need and consideration of resource requirement. Police Officers cannot be on short term contract. Impact of 2-year focus of policing. No planned PCSO recruitment. Public consultation demonstrated concern but need to see bigger picture as well.

- CG - BID will add more support especially around safe and secure town centre initiatives like shop watch. So, consideration of their role important too in partnership with Police.
- JB - New Government commitment to funding for police officers? Physical police presence is required. Remit to cover ASB, traffic regulation and reflecting needs of the town centre.
- MJ 13,000 UK Government pledge not always equivalent to extra new officers. Will come from efficiencies and include specific recruitment of 5,000 voluntary, 3,000 PCSO's, 3,000 from existing workforce and therefore left with around 3,000 new officers nationally. This would provide the county of Lincolnshire with 10 new officers.
- AM enquired whether there would be a guarantee that it would be an extra body in the town centre? MJ stated that the MOU example with UOL was a basis that could be investigated for Spalding to focus on town centre and ensure this remit.
- CF if there were any other suggestions for the funding to cover a needed 2-year period that appears to be more practical for the type of initiative required for Spalding.
- PK ensure we could achieve the funding if further work required.
- NW ideal would be to have two officers, but possibly need to trial first on recruiting one full time post.
- LR updated on funding, no further official update from MHCLG. The proposal is in line with the guidelines and this project could be a pilot initiative.
- GT supports presence on streets.
- MJ hot spot policing funding; would recommend a flexible approach rather than prescriptive to meet home office requirements, including technology investment.
- RH positive reaction and agreement to work up the detail and present to future board.
- DB public has supported and funding available. Commit to officer into the town.
- Ensure it supplements existing requirements.
- MJ support report to come to board with experience of similar scheme, costs, implications. Taking into account engagement with businesses and communities and BID. Reflecting high footfall in town centre to demonstrate visibility to address perception of crime. Young people positive relationship with Police.
- DJ - geographic area to be covered can be covered by bicycles.

Action: MJ to bring paper to Spalding Town Board once key data and options are gathered together on this potential scheme, hopefully therefore the paper would be available before the next Board meet and have provision to be more fully discussed at this time.

6 Spalding Christmas Lights proposal - MH

MH referred to his report that had been circulated previously and summarised the key points that had been made for the Board to decide on whether Capacity Funding could be provided to purchase new Christmas lights for the town that have a 10-year lifespan. In summary:-

- Christmas Lights are provided and funded on an ongoing revenue basis by SHDC. So, every year revenue needed to fund costs to erect, dismantle and pay electricity for the lights.
- Capital investment has been reliant on external funding previously, but not that readily available for this type of one off annual event activity on a consistent basis over time.
- Major overhaul needed with new design and extension. Costs outlined in the paper to support the acquisition of the lights that would extend areas into Sheep Market and Crescent areas.
- Tangible investment into the town centre. Aligns with feedback from public consultation. Investment anticipated to last 10 years. Aligns with Christmas events. No other funds available to support.
- Contract and press release ready to be signed and issued as soon as Board has decided.

- Capital cost of £64k - SHDC will continue to pay revenue costs.
- GT supports the proposal because poor coverage currently. Need to make Spalding a destination to visit.
- IS supports and stated she could see how this complements proposals for late night shopping on the Crescent, and event at Ayscoughfee Hall and Gardens.
- MJ could see that it represents an activity that can promote and develop something popular with the wider community and local businesses.
- CG fully support and important to utilise lighting as way of supporting a welcome message to visitors also stretching brief to support wayfinding as an initiative that is developing for the town.
- CF supports and as a board decision is in keeping with remit of supporting the town centre.
- LR stated scheme is complementary to existing investment of Arts Council England's National Portfolio funds and subsequent development of activities and events at Ayscoughfee Hall such as the Light Festival last year.
- Pedestrian crossing to Ayscoughfee; brief update from GT confirming LCC supports and looking at progressing middle of next year. RH Can we fast track?
- JB positive idea: the river area neglected and suggested use of old lights could be considered?
- CF Could use positive publicity from investment e.g. - Town Board saves Christmas! Overall need positive PR to reflect commitment and support of the Spalding Town Board for the town centre moving forward.

RH asked for Board approval to support the recommendation for use of capacity funding for investment in new Spalding Christmas Lights - Board approval granted.

7 Spalding Heritage Strategy Presentation - Alice Ullathorne Heritage Lincolnshire

AU provided the Board with summary papers of presentation and will **circulate further copies after the meeting.**

AU stated that the Heritage Strategy was a key priority and activity within the National Lottery Heritage Funded Spalding Reconnected: Historic Town and Riverside project bid for through SHDC.

Key points:

- Consultations taken place and informed both the importance of heritage to the town and priorities for heritage renewal/improvement projects and event activities to attract more external funding moving forward and boost town centre economy.
- Why have a strategy? The value of heritage, linked to spend and attracting visitors.
- Build on assets, priorities for area and this is what we have.
- Tangible difference to removing properties from 'at risk' and having an economic impact.
- Consult with local people, open to everyone, online and focus on stakeholders and new audiences that haven't come into contact with heritage previously. Asking what people value and how that can bring pride to a place.
- Start of a conversation about heritage in a place.
- Community spirit and special places valued in Spalding.
- Want a vibrant town centre, celebrate what is special, independent shops.
- Framework is the strategy, includes themes that create actions, action plan. Individual projects and how to make these happen.
- NLHF major funder of heritage in the country; key to heritage-led regeneration. Spalding has good opportunities to consider heritage-led regeneration, including town centre regeneration (living above the shops, improvements to shop fronts, can provide confidence and gets growth going).

- Action plan timeline to support projects come forward.

Comments:

- RH stated that he could see that this strategy and the consultation LTPFT engagement and consultation with community and businesses can dovetail to present a robust case for funding and actions in support of the town.
- LR Heritage Strategy intended to bring together a place-based approach and is complementary with much of the recent work undertaken with initiatives such as National Portfolio Organisation Arts Council funded scheme for Ayscoughfee as a cultural hub, developing the broader Cultural Strategy and Tourism Strategy for the area as well as LTPFT focus for 10-year investments.
- CG Heritage led tourism £20bn to UK economy; visitor spend. Reads across the developing Tourism Strategy and Visit Lincolnshire work to support these important themes and focus investments.
- Future presentation on Tourism Strategy from Destination Lincolnshire with CG.
- DB asked whether it would therefore be important, given the focus and the need for investment, to put LTPFT funding into capacity for bidding into larger scale funding areas and work to be undertaken on the detail of what we want to achieve for the town?
- LR said this was a good point that DB has made.
- DJ asked about the need for a Tourist Information Centre as none existed in the town.
- IS said although TIC not in town there are TIC information points where paper-based information is available - however, there is also opportunity for shop windows to host information and events promotions.
- NW agreed that there are lots of opportunities for hosting visitor information across the town including Ayscoughfee Hall/Gardens, Rail Station, Bus Station and South Holland Centre included.
- IS stated that there is opportunity to do more whether on-line or paper-based information.
- LR quoted figure of 2% visitors actually using Tourism Information Centres - focus on-line information through web sites, blogs and other media platforms are certainly key in the approach.
- DJ said that Libraries are not under policy to support display information but could enquire with LCC Libraries what would be possible if not?

SW to pursue issue with LCC Libraries team.

8 Any Other Business

PK wanted to raise issue of High Bridge damage possibly by vehicle impact from Church Street side of town and if LCC aware of this?

SW/GT to raise and investigate with Highway colleagues.

LR raised attendance at recent "Future of The High Street" event where it was re-stated as nationally important for business and local communities regardless of whether they fall within or outside large-scale funding streams such as LTPFT to work with Town Boards on developing robust plans to improve the viability of their towns.

RH said that he had written to Angela Raynor through emails to both parliamentary and constituency addresses but not received reply yet so will retry these avenues for more LTPFT future funding.

RH said he had also spoken to Sir John Hayes and that he had spoken with minister at Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government concerning the lack of new information.

Sir John Hayes had also asked if a Thursday or a Friday could be considered as alternative meeting days with the STB as his constituency days were aligned to end of the week and not Mon-Wed.

RH said he would prefer, if required, for the day to be Thursday if all happy with considering this as a possibility. Also, to consider on-line for those with longer travel obligations for next meetings.

RH re-stated earlier views by other attendees that UKGOV November Budget Statement looks like it could be a key point for a future LTPFT statement and therefore next meeting will need to be considered over the period around and beyond this point, but could change if more actions required in the interim by the Board.