

OAKHAM TOWN TASK AND FINISH GROUP

Thursday 16 August 2018, Council Chamber, Catmose

PRESENT: MEMBERS

Mr D Bottomley	Oakham Town Council
Mr B Callaghan	Ward Member – Oakham South East
Mrs J Clough	Oakham Residents Group
Mr A Dewis	Oakham Town Partnership
Mr J Dale	Ward Member – Oakham North East
Mr P Dowse	Oakham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Grp
Mrs J Fox	Ward Member – Exton
Mr A Mann	Ward Member – Oakham North West
Mr C Wade	Independent Chairman

OFFICERS PRESENT:	Mrs H Bremner	;Strategic Communications Advisor
	Mr S Ingram	;Strategic Director for Places
	Mrs J Morley	Governance Officer

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
1.	APOLOGIES	
	Apologies were received from Mr R Gale and Mr T Norton	
2.	APPROVAL OF MINUTES	
	The minutes of the meeting held on 26 June 2018 were approved by the group.	
3.	ACTIONS FROM LAST MEETING	
	During discussion of outstanding items the following comments were made:	
	<u>Signage in the town to be photographed for circulation to group and discussion at a future meeting</u>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">As Mr Gale was absent from the meeting this item was carried forward.The signage could be clearly seen on Google maps and images could be taken from this.An effective way of assessing the effectiveness and prominence of the town's signage would be to invite people from another town to record it.	RG

Youth Survey Work

- This item was on hold until the beginning of next term as it was going out under the aegis of Catmose College. **JC**
- The questions had been devised with the help of the focus group and results would later be fed in using survey monkey.

Revise map to include Tesco and Wilko

- Tesco and Wilko had been included in the business classification but clarification was sought as to whether they had physically been drawn on the map. **NT**

4. RESEARCH UPDATE INCLUDING PRESENTATION OF EVIDENCE

Town centre visitor and user surveys

Mrs Clough provided a brief overview of the work done on the town centre visitor and user surveys. During discussion the following points were noted:

- The surveys had all been completed and data uploaded. Mrs Clough was in the process of analysing the results and writing the reports which would be completed by 24 August. **JC**
- There would be 2 reports, one showing the town users and the other combining the visitor surveys
- On first view, the data looked very interesting and would bust a few myths about the town.
- Data showed that visitors that came for the day to Rutland water did not usually visit the town centre.
- It was suggested that because of the tight deadlines that another meeting be added to the schedule, preferably two weeks after the 19 September meeting so that all evidence gathered could be analysed together. **NT**

Performance Indicators including business audit, car parking and footfall.

Mrs Clough had collated the information on performance indicators and produced extra reports (appended to the minutes) which had been circulated to the group. During discussion the following points were made:

Footfall

- The data showed that when compared to other small towns, footfall on the high street was greater than average but that in other locations it was lower.
- It was suggested that those who walked into town cut through to the High street using Gaol Street and other routes, and did not pass other retail streets.
- Mill Street was considered a destination location rather than a thoroughfare. Many visitors to the town were unaware of the Mill Street offer.
- One of the challenges would be to get people moving around the different streets and it may be that an ambition of the group would be to increase the footfall to other areas by a third.

- The Chairman commended Mrs Clough and her team on the depth of the data collated and the quality of its presentation.

Parking

- There was a national recommendation that car parks should aim to be 75-85% full to achieve an optimum level as this maximized revenue whilst still allowing visitors to get a space.
- Data revealed that there was fluctuating levels of occupancy during the day and between car parks but that the hours of 10.30 and 3.30pm were peak occupancy levels for all of the car parks.
- Across all 7 car parks during this time there would only be 30 spaces which meant that, at certain times, visitors would be unable to park.
- In time this will merit further investigation and discussion, e.g. there will be a domino effect of moving one group on such as dispersing workers from residential, on-street parking areas.
- Parking options needed to meet the needs of all of the different types of users.
- Mrs Fox asked Mr Ingram whether he could obtain any analysis or data from SKDC that showed how effective or not, the offer of free parking over the Xmas period in Grantham had been. **SI**
- There were always pros and cons to introducing parking schemes. Free parking meant that spaces didn't turn over.

Online Survey to find Town Non-users

- The four questions at the beginning of the draft on-line survey mirrored the previous survey.
- At 19 questions it was felt that the survey was too long and needed editing. People who had no commitment to the town wouldn't take the time to answer that many questions. **PD/HB**
- 10 questions was considered to be the optimum amount for a survey
- Mentioning issues such as the roadworks would usually elicit a negative response. It would be preferable to use open questions and ask what the 'barriers' to coming into the town were.
- The survey audience would be targeted using facebook and through the member organisations. **HB/DB**
- A prize could be offered to get sufficient engagement and offer an incentive to complete the survey. However an incentive may encourage those outside of the target market to complete it and therefore skew the results.
- Town *users* could be analysed to assess their age profile and where they were from and then any gaps could be identified. These 'gaps' could then be targeted by the online survey. **JC**
- In addition this could be checked against the demographics of Oakham to find out what groups were not represented.
- People could be targeted through 'Your Rutland' which had 5000 email addresses. The survey would miss the next edition of Your Rutland but a special edition could be sent out.*

**NB. Please note that Mrs Bremner has subsequently advised that due to GDPR the survey could not be sent out using the 'Your Rutland' email but a general press release could be sent instead.*

- It would be preferable to set up the survey using Survey Monkey so that the collation and analysis of the results would be easier.
- Confirmation was sought on whether the Council had a paid account with Survey Monkey as the free account could only deal with up to 100 responses. If the Council did not have a paid account, other companies that could offer a survey monkey service for a single survey as opposed to paying an annual subscription fee, should be identified.
- The group were up against severe time restrictions to amend the survey, send it out and get the data back and collated before the next meeting on the 19 September. The following deadlines were therefore put forward;

Survey to be edited, set up on Survey Monkey & approved -	ASAP	
Survey to be sent out	- 24 August	
Survey end date	- 07 Sept	
Input and collation of data complete	- 17 Sept	

**JM /
Comms**

**PD/HB/DB
HB/DB**

JC

Business Survey

- Mr Dewis had delivered the survey to 200 properties north of the town including the Lands End commercial area.
- 58 returns had been received which gave a 29% response rate. If the commercial area had been omitted the response rate would have been much higher at 53%.
- Businesses seemed reluctant to give financial information with many leaving the question on turnover blank and none reporting that turnover had gone down.
- Mrs Clough informed the group that Mr Norton had offered the use of his staff to help input the survey data.
- The business survey data needed to be presented in the same level of detail as the KPI's and needed to be circulated before the meeting on September 19th.
- There had been a patchy response to the postcode survey with businesses only recording 1 or 2 days or none at all. The Chairman suggested that the group used the data from the 6 Businesses which had gathered the most information, in order that it could be processed and included in the report.
- Every Monday it would be a good idea to have a weekly catch-up on everyone's progress targets. Governance to co-ordinate by email.
- Mrs Fox asked whether the imminent election in Cottesmore would cause any delays to the timetable. Confirmation that this would not be the case would be sought from the Council's legal officer, Phil Horsfield.

JC

NT

JM

5. COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

- Mr Bottomley and Zoe would be managing the Facebook page.
- The page was up and live but had not yet been promoted.
- Once the online survey was ready it could be promoted on the Facebook page and the two could be launched in tandem.

- User protocols for the site had been set up and would be circulated to the group. Comments on the detail of these protocols were welcome by email so that any tweaks could be made at the next meeting. The protocols would be operable however from the launch of the Facebook page.
- To be accepted into the group, the user would have to sign up to a terms of conduct and abide by house rules.
- The Council's Communications Department would be available to offer support and back up with the administration of the site

6. BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT/TIMETABLE

During discussion the following points were noted:

- The Chairman suggested that an informal breakfast meeting would be the best way to engage businesses. Findings to date could then be shared with them.
- Mr Dewis would take the lead on this action as the Oakham Town Partnership had held similar successful breakfast meetings. Mr Dewis would look to arrange a meeting in October and potentially use Oakham School as a venue. Mrs Bremner and Mr Bottomley would be kept informed of progress. **AD**
- The Chair also suggested that each member of the Task and Finish group should consult and get buy-in from their own organisations. This should happen by early October in order to fit with the Council schedule and the scrutiny timetable. **ALL**
- The group now had only six weeks in which to complete a 12 week timetable.
- The report needed to include not only what the issues were and ideas on how they were going to be resolved but also what the organisation that would deliver them would look like, in effect, what would be the successor organisation to the Task and Finish group. **ALL**
- The group needed to drill down on what the report would look like. Whatever stage the group got to, it needed to be clear so that everyone was brought along with it and there was buy-in to the project.
- The report would be a working document that would be reviewed annually.
- Ideally the group needed to get to the stage where the issues were outlined and groups for each section had been organised, together with a proposed group that would oversee the delivery of the project.
- The Chair tabled a proposed recommendation that the Task and Finish Group aims to produce an initial Forward Framework for the town. This would be based on the methodology in the recently published Local Government Association Handbook on Revitalising Town Centres (see note in appendix). It comprises:
 - i. Factual evidence base of key performance indicators and user/non-user/business perceptions of issues and priorities.
 - ii. Analysis and agreement on priority issues and monitoring indicators to guide project planning by partners and wider stakeholders

- iii. An ongoing communications and engagement plan for broadening understanding, support and involvement of stakeholders
- iv. An outline partnership structure including coordinating group, theme-based delivery sub-groups, partners and responsibilities
- v. An initial statement of future resourcing needs for partnership development and project delivery
- The Group accepted these proposals as a good basis for further discussion at the next meeting and the Chair agreed to provide a background paper on the LGA Handbook and methodology for preparing a 'Forward Framework' document (see appendix).

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

8. SUMMARY OF AGREED ACTIONS AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING

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|---|-----------------|
| 1. Signage in the town to be photographed for circulation to group and discussion at a future meeting | RG |
| 2. Youth Survey to be issued and results collated | JC |
| 3. Check physical map has Tesco and Wilko included | NT |
| 4. Town centre and visitor user surveys reports to be completed by 24 August | JC |
| 5. Additional meeting to be organised after September 19th | NT |
| 6. Contact SKDC for data on Xmas free parking trail | SI |
| 7. Edit online survey and format using Survey Monkey ready to issue by August 24th | HB/PD |
| 8. Use Facebook and links to villages and key stakeholder groups such as school parents to promote survey and target audience | HB/DB/JC |
| 9. Confirm Council or other Survey Monkey account for use | JM |
| 10. Presentation of business survey data circulated ahead of meeting on September 19th | JC |
| 11. Arrange Monday updates | NT |
| 12. Confirm that Cottesmore election would not impact on the timetable | JM |
| 13. Arrange breakfast meeting for businesses in late September/early October | AD |
| 14. Consult and get buy in for proposed 'Forward Framework' from own organisations during October | ALL |
| 15. Consider what the final report should like based on recommendations and background paper from Chair | CW/ALL |

Date of next meeting: 19 September 2018

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The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.00pm

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