



Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 3rd December,
2020

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MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Joe Baker (Chair), Councillor Jennifer Wheeler (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Salman Akbar, Michael Chalk, Peter Fleming, Andrew Fry, Ann Isherwood and Mark Shurmer

Also Present:

Councillor Matthew Dormer - Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economic Development, Commercialism and Partnerships
Councillor Nyear Nazir - Portfolio Holder for Community Services and Regulatory Services
Councillor Mike Rouse - Portfolio Holder for Leisure

Officers:

Sue Hanley, Mike Dunphy, Ostap Paparega, Rebecca Pritchett and Mary Worsfold

Democratic Services Officers:

Jess Bayley and Jo Gresham

53. CHURCH GREEN DRAFT CONSERVATION AREA AND MANAGEMENT PLAN CONSULTATION - PRE-SCRUTINY

The Principal Conservation Officer presented a report in respect of the Church Green Draft Conservation Area and Management Plan consultation. During the presentation, the following matters were highlighted for Members' consideration:

- The Conservation Area around St Stephen's Church was originally designated in 1971 with later extensions in 1978 and 2006 after further appraisals

Chair

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 3rd December, 2020

Microsoft Teams

- A summary of the Church Green Conservation Area and areas of special interest
- That a high number of buildings within the area were Designated Heritage Assets
- That the positive features of the Conservation Area would act as a focus for the future regeneration of the Redditch Town Centre
- The areas for concern within the Conservation Area included poor state of shop-fronts, parking around St Stephens' Church and vacant units.

Following the presentation of the report Members discussed a number of areas in detail:

- The opportunity for regeneration of the shops within the Conservation Area in order to make positive changes to the Town Centre
- The condition of the long-term vacant premises and the impact this had on business owners desire to take on these premises
- The positive outcomes of refurbishment of the shop fronts in the area
- The issue of parking on Unicorn Hill, and any future changes that could be made would increase the footfall for the shops in this area and encourage visitors to visit
- That raising awareness of heritage buildings within the Church Green area and signposting facilities would increase use within the area
- Improvement of the link between the Kingfisher Shopping Centre and Church Green. Officers reported that this was an area that was being looked at for improvement including removal the of street clutter to encourage greater use of the area
- The importance of the strong history of Redditch and its promotion in the future.

The Chair invited Councillor Dormer, as Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economic Development, Commercialism and Partnerships and Councillor Rouse, as Portfolio Holder for Leisure (including Heritage) to comment on the report and the following was highlighted:

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 3rd December, 2020

Microsoft Teams

- That the inclusion of electric car chargers and other modern infrastructure would be allowed within the Conservation Area. It was reported that as long as the inclusion was sympathetic to the area these types of changes would be permitted.
- The future introduction of increased pedestrian areas within the Conservation Area
- The agreement for the greater need for parking in the area. It was explained that this issue was currently being addressed by the Council but was an ongoing matter.

It was clarified to Members that formal recognition of the area being 'At Risk' by English Heritage did not indicate that the heritage buildings were at risk of falling down but more that it would be considered an area that was at risk of losing its heritage features. It was confirmed that if the area was recognised as 'At Risk' by English Heritage this would boost the possibility of access to funding in the future.

At the end of the debate the Committee

RECOMMEND that

- a) the Executive supports the draft Church Green Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan; and**
- b) the Executive approves a 6-week public consultation period. The result of this consultation will be reported back to the Executive in due course.**

The Meeting commenced at 6.30 pm
and closed at 7.52 pm