COUNCIL MEETING – 22 JANUARY 2019

REPORT OF THE TOWN CENTRE SUB-COMMITTEE

11 December 2018

Present: Councillors Carr (Chairman) and Councillors Anslow, Ekins, Graves and Skittrall.

Also present: Mr A Piper (Assistant Director/Committee Manager), Mrs V Phillipson (Principal Property and Projects Manager), Ms A Arden-Barnatt (Project Manager) and Mrs C A Mundy (Committee Administrator).

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Bell and Maguire.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

RESOLVED to note that in accordance with the Localism Act 2011, the council’s code of conduct and the council’s constitution, the following declaration was made:

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<tr>
<th>Councillor</th>
<th>Minute no.</th>
<th>Reason</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skittrall</td>
<td>Min. 4 - Mosaics</td>
<td>Registerable – appointed by the council as a director on BID</td>
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<td>Min 5 – Wellingborough Market</td>
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3. MOSAIC REPAIR OPTIONS AT MARKET STREET

The annexed circulated report of the assistant director was received in relation to the repair and protection of the ‘five wells’ and ‘twin towns’ mosaics.

A request to address the meeting had been received from Mr J Cable, from Wellingborough BID, who spoke for three minutes in relation to the area around the Five Wells mosaic and the need for this to be retained for significant events during the year.

The report made reference to the two mosaics, both located in Market Street, known as the ‘five wells’ mosaic situated opposite the Hind Hotel and the ‘twin towns’ mosaic outside the Swansgate Centre. These had been installed in the late 1990s/early 2000s and reflect the historic significance of the town. Both mosaics need repair work; discussion and inspection by mosaic restoration companies has confirmed that the damage has been caused by vehicles driving over them and potentially items being dropped or unloaded. Due to the cost of the requisite repairs alternative options were detailed within the report for members to consider:
• Removal where beyond economic repair;
• Installation of barriers to reduce repair costs and to prevent further damage to the mosaic;
• Removal of the existing mosaic and replication, which will not require any future maintenance costs.

The report detailed the options for each of the mosaics along with the guide price of each option.

Members discussed these options and made reference to the grassed area between the Tithe Barn at Burystead Place which they considered would benefit from considerable improvement to the public realm. It was suggested that this area could be paved with a water feature and seating and that this would be a good location to replicate the mosaics or reflect their subject matter in the design.

Members also asked if a ‘coating’ could be placed on top of the mosaics to limit damage if a decision was made to repair them. The project manager clarified that she had asked this question of the restoration company who had said this would not be advisable as it would be a health and safety issue as the area would become a slip hazard.

Members expressed the desire for the ‘twin towns’ mosaic fully or in part to be replicated or reproduced fully or in part in some form if it was removed, but not necessarily as a mosaic. With regard to the ‘five wells’ mosaic it was considered this mosaic should be repaired and that removable bollards be installed, which could be taken down for events. It was also noted from the report that the ‘five wells’ mosaic would not last forever and due consideration would need to be given to its removal in future years.

**RESOLVED** that:

(i) approval be given to the removal of the ‘twin towns’ mosaic and the reinstatement of the paving;
(ii) approval be given to the repair of the ‘five wells’ mosaic and installation of removable bollards to enable the space to be used for appropriate events;
(iii) approval be given for officers to consider options for the reproduction or replication either fully or in part elsewhere in the town centre of both mosaics;
(iv) it be noted that whilst working on improvements to the public realm at Burystead Place officers give consideration to replicating or reproducing fully or in part both mosaics in this area or to reflect their subject matter in the design.
4. UPDATE ON FUTURE DELIVERY OPTIONS – WELLINGBOROUGH MARKET

The annexed circulated report of the assistant director was received in relation to the potential interest of specialist outdoor market operators to run the market.

The market in Wellingborough had been facing difficulties due to changes in shopping habits. A working party had been set up to develop proposals to enhance, protect and promote the market and its offering. A health check had been carried out by the National Association of British Market Authorities (NABMA), which had resulted in a number of recommendations; those that had been implemented had not resulted in significant improvements to the market offer, number of traders and in turn financial performance to date.

The report detailed how the market was managed and gave information of the income received from the rental of the stalls.

The market, in its current form, was no longer sustainable and other options were being pursued. The traders had requested that the market would benefit from being moved to Orient Plaza, behind the Pagoda. A scheme was drawn up and an urgent action decision was taken for implementation from Saturday 1 December for a trial period during December 2018 and January 2019. The Bric-a-Brac market would remain in Market Place.

If this relocation proved to be successful traders had suggested that the Market Place be considered for use for car parking, which would assist with footfall in the town centre and to a relocated market.

The town centre review had highlighted that the market place would benefit from additional green space linked to the church, and more flexibility built into the space, such as portable shops and suggested some remodelling of the space.

The report detailed four options for the future of the market as follows:

Option A: Continue with the current arrangements, undertaking the NABMA recommendations and last attempt at a call for residents to use the market;
Option B: Pay a fee for a minimum of two years for an operator to run the market to revive it, and offer a profit share arrangement to claw back money in future years;
Option C: Investigate the costs of closing the market immediately and establish what savings would be made;
Option D: Investigate and develop a range of alternative proposals such as location of the market, themed markets, additional uses or reducing the market days etc.
Discussions between officers and traders indicated that there was preference for Option D to be progressed.

Appended to the report was the request for urgent action.

Members discussed the options before them and the previous work that had been undertaken with the traders over a number of years to try to improve the use of the market. It was hoped that the trial relocation would prove to be beneficial and therefore members concluded that option D would be the best way forward, to investigate and develop a range of alternative proposals, such as the location of the market, themed markets, additional uses or reducing the number of market days. They also noted the urgent action that had been taken to relocate the market for a trial period and thanked officers for organising this so quickly.

RESOLVED that:

(i) approval be given to Option D being progressed - to investigate and develop a range of alternative proposals, such as the location of the market, themed markets, additional uses or reducing the number of market days.
(ii) the urgent action taken be noted.

Chairman

The meeting concluded at 4.55pm.