

Minutes of NDP2 Advisory Panel (P2) Economy

Second Meeting - Monday 7th October 2pm at 1 Beaudesert Park

Present: Simon MacDonald (Lead), Sandy McCaskie (JPC Lead), Geoff Norman, Jonathan Dovey

Apologies: Simon Woods

Conflicts of Interest: Jonathan Dovey (Heritage Centre)

Proceedings:

Feedback was given on the communication we have received in the last few weeks. Meeting with Johnsons – main feedback being about carparking, small commercial units, tourism. Met with Andy Robinson (Forward Group) about their plan that had gone into Stratford D C. It was noticed that a plan [March 2023] from their group was in the public domain as part of the SDC Plan. This was referred back to Richard Clark as it referenced consultation with the JPC.

It was noted that plans just outside Henley (namely Arden Cross) would bring major business and housing some 15 miles from Henley. This could influence our plans and the economy of Henley. It was felt that Henley without a plan could slide towards being either a dormitory town or a retirement town. It was generally agreed that Henley needed to be a mixed use, market town.

Key factors expressed so far from individual and business feedback was that limited or expensive car parking both for residents, visitors and employers & public transport being sketchy were an obstruction to growth. The High School demographics showed that a large majority of staff and pupils came into Henley rather than living in Henley. The Heritage Centre visitor numbers highlighted where people come from but significant growth in this sector could be hampered by being so close to the major tourism centres of Stratford & Warwick.

[More work finding out about parking in other towns needed]

An important objective was to get a fully up to date register of businesses in Henley. Information from various sources had been gathered but many were out of date with businesses included from outside our parish and ones that were no longer trading. It was felt that this register was crucial in order to know about the economy of Henley today.

[GN will continue to do the work on compiling this list]

It was noted that a high number of people working in Henley were actually commuting into Henley, more than perhaps the last census recorded which was 52%. It was also felt that there was a hidden diversity of businesses in Henley that we need to explore and approach with the all important question being why did you set up here?

[All the group should enter their questionnaire results into the feedback spreadsheet and chase any outstanding replies]

Main Questions were: How do we keep existing businesses in Henley? How can we help existing businesses to expand? How can we help specific sectors to expand? How can we attract new sectors into Henley?

It was felt Henley was probably more suited to the requirement of feeder businesses and for housing for people commuting to businesses further afield. Smaller starter businesses / incubator businesses could be a focus.

[SM to draft out a first version of vision & objectives to circulate before next meeting]

Next meeting: Monday 28th October 2pm