

Minutes of NDP2 Advisory Panel (P2) Economy

Monday 28th October 2pm at 1 Beaudesert Park

Present: Simon MacDonald (Lead), Sandy McCaskie (JPC Lead), Geoff Norman, Simon Woods, Jonathan Dovey (Gary Kirk Yourlocale Ltd via zoom)

Apologies: None

Conflicts of Interest: None

Proceedings:

Discussions started with an update on where we were currently including the results of the larger business questionnaire. The small business online forms will be going live by the end of the week which will allow businesses to reply quicker and easier. Discussions were held on the thought of supporting things that Henley currently have and promoting other opportunities like events, arts, tourism with possible festivals. The business register of current businesses in Henley was progressing well with details taken from public sources. This will probably end up showing that Henley has about 200 businesses with about half in commercial properties. This register is very important as it will give a snapshot of where Henley is today and will give insights for future plans. The meeting with school children at the High school (15th Nov) will give greater insights into young people's views both on community and economics. Discussions were held about the Arden Cross development and whether this will actually be a driving force for the economy in Henley or will it just affect Henley negatively e.g. traffic.

Gary Kirk joined at 2.45pm via zoom to touch base with the group. He had sent some documents to the group for discussion on about areas perhaps lacking in the previous plan including Village Centre commercial uses & shop frontage design. The panel reported back our thinking so far along with various questions. The option being considered is to go with a bold economic initiative but with concerns expressed about proportionality, look to develop Henley into a centre for feeder companies or to build on what Henley already has tackling the issues and concerns and promoting areas like events, tourism etc. Gary informed us with how the process is proceeding and that the work we are doing will be ready for when firm information from the government and district are made available. That we need to harden up the existing vision statement and policy being both bold and realistic.

Gary thought it most likely, depending on numbers of housing required, that there would be a significant change in the policies so that a referendum would be necessary. He also advised that the object was to shape planning rather than blocking it and that the policies would need to be precise and clear. On parking issues he suggested that the options were to be supportive of development that added extra parking and prohibit loss of existing parking but that this would need the extra backing of evidence that stressed the need.

It was suggested that an initial draft version of our thoughts should be put to Gary so that he could find examples of other local plan visions and policies that were similar to ours. He said that the whole process gave us the opportunity to talk with prospective land owners about what Henley wanted rather than in a 'planning application' dialogue. It was hoped that a first draft of our thoughts should be ready by the end of November.

Next meeting: Friday 15th November 11am at 1 Beaudesert Park