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NEWMARKET VISION E-NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2015

A Year of Vision with 20:20 clarity

A year has flown by since the first meetings of the Delivery Groups for Newmarket Vision. A year in which groups have been formed on the basis of a document prepared by the Princes Foundation for Building Communities with the aim of creating a 'sustainable and holistic vision for Newmarket in collaboration with residents and other key stakeholders'. The link to that final document can be found.....

http://westsuffolk.gov.uk/Council/Policies_Strategies_and_Plans/upload/Newmarket-Vision-EbD-Report-Final_VLR_17-06-13-LOW-RES.pdf

Having the three tiers of local government, businesses, community groups and volunteers working together so collaboratively is a feat in itself and the good news is that a year on it's going well! It is hoped that by producing a monthly e-Newsletter you will see the progress that has and is being made with clear 20:20 vision for the next 20 years.

Originally four Groups were identified

- [1] Community Planning Delivery Group
- [2] Town Centre, Retail, Local Economy and Tourism Delivery Group
- [3] Education Delivery Group
- [4] Traffic and Highways Delivery Group

Membership of these can be found on the Forest Heath District Council (FHDC) website by searching Newmarket Vision or clicking on this link:

http://westsuffolk.gov.uk/Council/Policies_Strategies_and_Plans/upload/Newmarket-Vision-structure-updated-January-2015.pdf

Very quickly it was realised that two further Groups should be established, the Equine Hub [5] and a group to specifically look at the Railway and Railway Station issues [6].

All these groups are 'overseen' by the **Steering Group**, Cllr Lisa Chambers (SCC), Cllr Warwick Hirst (FHDC) and Cllr Rachel Hood (NTC), whose role it is to coordinate work and find possible sources of funding or other resource to deliver actions from the agreed priorities.

Everyone involved in the delivery groups has worked extremely hard over the past year devoting a lot of time, energy and thought to how we can improve Newmarket for the benefit of all those who live and work in the town as well as those who visit.

The list of agreed priorities (which is regularly updated) can be found here:

http://westsuffolk.gov.uk/Council/Policies_Strategies_and_Plans/upload/NewmarketVisionAgreedPriorities140917A1.pdf

Don't forget that the minutes of each group are available on the Forest Heath website (just type 'Newmarket vision' into the search box on the home page: www.westsuffolk.gov.uk) but the idea of the monthly newsletter is to give you a flavour of the work of each group. This month is a bumper issue, which scoops up all of the key points from 2014! All groups originally met to assess the Vision Statements and to decide who was best suited to take those statements forward. Those which overlapped were identified showing the need for communication and cooperation between the main groups and between sub groups. It must be emphasised that all groups have worked extremely hard and well independently and collaboratively and we are grateful for everyone's commitment and hard work.

[1] Community Planning Delivery Group

A Neighbourhood Plan (NP). Following a presentation from the Parish Clerk of Cringleford who had recently seen that council's plan through the process, it was realised that a huge amount of work and organisation would be needed. To be sure that all involved knew exactly the extent of the area of Newmarket (leaving out the surrounding villages for the moment) a tour was taken to identify the development sites that are under consideration within the Local Plan of FHDC. Some funding has been agreed to commence the Neighbourhood Plan, which must by law be led by the Town Council, who approved the Terms of Reference in January 2015. It is safe to say we have successfully cleared the first hurdle - which has taken a lot longer than was first anticipated. Further detail about neighbourhood plans can be found here: <http://www.pas.gov.uk/neighbourhood-planning>

The Group has also been concerned about the Housing need of the district together with the specific issue of affordable housing need and have had invaluable assistance by way of presentations from Officers over the course of the year.

Planning Enforcement has been an ongoing issue particularly in terms of advertisement control in the High Street and following a presentation by Officers and detail of how they intended to enforce policy, the High Street in particular, is slightly less cluttered and hopefully will remain so and the correct procedure of applying for consent will be adhered to.

Additional priorities were transferred to Community Planning which is very much dependent on work being undertaken by Officers to identify the full extent across the District of informal and formal play areas by way of an Open Space/Sports Report for the next 20 to 25 years, which would be considering issues such as a Skate Park, the use of Scaltback School premises for rugby and athletics, and the future options for football in Newmarket. This work is ongoing. Two further priorities were the need to conduct an audit and character assessment of existing landscape assets within and surrounding the town with a view to creating a landscape strategy, and to explore and enhance the ecological corridors within the Town centre linked to the wider landscape. Invaluable help and productive work has been achieved on the open areas that connect Studlands with the town centre, supported by John Smithson (FHDC Parks Operation Manager) and he has liaised with the community group 'Go wild' to initiate and produce a Management Plan which will aid the Community in being able to use and enjoy this delightful aspect of Newmarket. Another positive outcome is that throughout Newmarket various areas of grass were cut at different times by different agencies employed by different authorities this is now better coordinated.

The use of buildings to accommodate a number of public and voluntary organisations in Newmarket is being considered with a view to trying to bring them under one roof, saving time and money.

[2] Town Centre, Retail, Local Economy and Tourism Delivery Group (TRET)

This group quickly divided into four sub-groups, which allowed a much focused approach in the four areas, whilst working under the umbrella of the main delivery group.

Overall it was felt that the Town Centre's public realm should and could be improved. Different ideas were initially thought through and presented quite quickly with various groups having toured the Town looking at enforcement, shop fronts, litter, signage, parking, increasing foot fall in a more organised manner, revitalising the market, redevelopment of the Guineas, and encouraging Tourism. An ambitious list!

[A] The Town Centre Group (incorporating Town Centre Working Group) aim is to make the High Street attractive, functional and pedestrian friendly. A delightful place to spend time, decluttered, smartened, with an enhanced public realm. Ensure enforcement of advertising, parking and licensing policy. Address the Taxi Rank issue, improve disabled parking. Improvement in connectivity from the north and south sides of the High Street at Crown Walk Market Street Sun lane/Wellington Street.

[B] Retail Group aim initially was to improve signage, consider the long-term/short-term car park allocations, consider the removal of parking bays on one side of the High Street, control of the number of Taxis waiting in the High Street, closer monitoring of parking restrictions, create the same impression as the Avenue being tree lined. Additionally, the Retailers Association developed the 'Newmarket Equine Design' Project an innovative idea using public art high street furniture and other similar opportunities to create the feeling of a 'horseracing high street', hoping to set Newmarket apart from all the other market towns. More detail can be found here: http://westsuffolk.gov.uk/Council/Policies_Strategies_and_Plans/upload/NVConferencePublicArtOnTheHighStreetPresentation.pdf

[C] Local Economy aim to encourage businesses to develop and grow in a manner which complements Newmarket's existing infra-structure and horse racing industry. Newmarket Chamber of Commerce have been instrumental in holding breakfast meetings in conjunction with Vision groups and very much involved with the project at many levels. Work has focused on developing a diverse local economy and market, promoting Newmarket to key business sectors and industries, promoting the support available, and conducting a review of existing business accommodation.

[D] Tourism Group aim is to find ways of enriching what Newmarket has to offer, to add depth and breadth to the home of horse racing offer, to recognise and protect historical assets and market them to use our unique assets to form a unified and collaborative offer to ensure Newmarket becomes a regional tourist hub, using modern technology.

[3] Education Delivery Group

It was recognised in 2013 that Suffolk's education was not performing as well as it could and Newmarket was no exception. The need to harness the expertise, ideas

and aspirations of local people was paramount and the Raising the Bar county-wide initiative formed the basis of the group's workplan.

The Vision for Education was agreed to be 'everything we do must contribute to building an environment where Young People can meet their full potential and be Fit, healthy and display positive behaviours. Independent, self-motivated. Confident, adaptable, resilient. Inclusive, culturally accepting. Aspirational opportunistic. Caring, Proud and Valued.

The focus was to concentrate efforts on connecting education with business, young people, families and professionals. An example of work already completed is the off-curriculum week for years 8 and 9, supported by various contributors of the horse racing industry (HRI) and volunteers from other groups within the town.

[4] Traffic and Highways Delivery Group

Suffolk County Council have allocated £450,000 of funding towards highway improvement schemes within Newmarket through its Local Transport Plan. Some schemes have already been completed and are evident within the town, including a zebra crossing on Exning Road together with one on Rowley Drive. Some are not so evident such as a survey of HGV traffic. Ongoing is the new horse walk on Snailwell Road, as well as improvements with its junction of Fordham Road and some are still to come to fruition such as improvements to the horse crossing at Mill Hill.

The issues the Group have specific to Newmarket and involving other groups are those particularly of concern to the Town Centre, Retail, Economy and Tourism (TRET) including parking, traffic regulation orders and signage, all of which are themselves very much integrated. Parking Strategy was seen as a high priority which has links with the situation of the taxis on the High street and consequently air quality. A presentation by Tom Wright of FHDC was helpful in relation to the Parking review and Taxis. Resident Parking consultation has been on going.

The importance of the rail network is so significant for Newmarket that a Railway Group has been formed, again a priority of other groups.

Importantly a new priority was proposed to look at improvements related to buses (services and infrastructure).

The 20mph schemes were thought a low priority at this stage when compared to other schemes which need to be considered.

It is to be emphasised that the work of this group and others is very much interlinked and it will be important to ensure coordination across the groups, to avoid duplication or confusion.

[5] Equine Hub

The Newmarket Vision document included an action to investigate the establishing of an 'equestrian, sports science centre of excellence' (equine hub). The Newmarket Vision Steering Group has brought together people from local, national and international horseracing industries to explore whether an opportunity exists to build on Newmarket's natural advantages.

The draft action plan can be viewed here:

http://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/Council/Policies_Strategies_and_Plans/upload/NewmarketVisionEquineHubActionPlan141119.pdf

Significant progress has already been made once it was realised that actually Newmarket itself is the unique selling point (USP).

Discover Newmarket was developed from the already existing Newmarket Experience and was launched in November 2014 with the aim to increase visitor numbers in Newmarket and West Suffolk significantly, by promoting the history, culture and unique attractions of the town.

<http://www.discovernewmarket.co.uk/pages/index.php>

The question of seeking World Heritage Status has been put on hold for the moment but work has progressed very well with an application for Royal Status, again a joint effort by more than one Vision group.

With a view to providing appropriately supported accommodation for workers in the horse racing industry (HRI), some research is ongoing regarding demand and potential options for delivery.

The potential for an uphill gallops on the racecourse side of town has also been progressed, with both Local Enterprise Partnerships now including this project in their 'medium priority' lists for future funding.

[6] Railway Group

This group's main priorities are to lobby for the improvement of the service by way of timings and speed, quality of rolling stock, later night service, improvement of the Railway Station and the hope for it to be recognised as a Tourist line.

There is currently an opportunity to comment on the East Anglia Rail Franchise operation, through the public consultation which can be found here:

www.gov.uk/government/consultations/east-anglia-rail-passenger-franchise

This consultation closes on 16 March 2015.

September Conference

The September conference saw about 150 people attend – many more than originally anticipated, demonstrating the passion and commitment people feel for their town – and details of the presentations and workshops can be found here:

http://westsuffolk.gov.uk/Council/Policies_Strategies_and_Plans/newmarketvisionconferenceprogramme.cfm

It is hoped that other similar events will be held during 2015, using some helpful feedback we received from those who attended in September.

Contributing to this e-newsletter....

If your group would particularly like an issue raised or promoted amongst the other delivery groups, please send details to christine.rush@westsuffolk.gov.uk

The newsletter will be monthly as a trial period from February – July 2015. **If you like it let us know – if not, tell us how we can improve it to make it more useful for you!**