

Agenda item 6

For decision – Joint Committee for Boyle Cross

Author: Peter Wheelhouse, Economic Development & Regeneration Manager & Deputy Town Clerk

Summary

Now that the work on Boyle Cross is completed the priorities are to get more activity going on the site to make use of the new event space and ensure that the area is well maintained. Whilst the area remains in the freehold ownership of Mendip District Council (MDC) the proposal is that the area is jointly managed by a partnership of MDC and FTC with a Joint Committee being established. The work of the Joint Committee will be relatively light touch; day-to-day management including promoting the site for markets and other events would be the responsibility of staff.

It is recommended that the appended legal agreement is approved as a basis for the operation of this Committee.

Background

FTC and MDC jointly invested in the refurbishment of the Boyle Cross area and the proposal is that this partnership continues in terms of the ongoing management of the area. The benefit of this arrangement is that the resources and expertise of the two authorities can be brought into play to ensure that the maximum benefit is achieved for the town. The Boyle Cross Project Group comprising councillors and staff from the two authorities has met periodically to consider how best to take this joint management arrangement forward. Mark Dorrington and Sheila Gore currently represent FTC on this group with the Deputy Town Clerk providing advice.

Given that the site remains in the freehold ownership of MDC, the proposal is that a Joint Committee is established to take this arrangement forward. The enabling legislation is the Local Government Act (1972 and 2000). A draft agreement governing the work of the Joint Committee is attached as [Appendix 6.1](#), but the salient points of the agreement are summarised in this report.

What the Joint Committee will do

The Committee will operate on a light touch basis only. It is anticipated that it would meet a minimum of twice a year and its functions will be to:

- Agree and monitor the implementation of a Business Plan for the use, management and maintenance of the land – this will include agreeing a plan for promoting events on the site to benefit the local community
- Agree fees for events held on the land

- Agree a maintenance schedule
- Agree a budget

The Committee will comprise two councillors from each Council. Staff would be invited to each meeting in an advisory capacity. Periodic reports will be presented to each Council to keep them abreast of progress.

The responsibilities of the two Councils

The FTC Ranger Team currently takes responsibility for the regular maintenance of the fountain with FTC also commissioning hardware checks by the supplier, Ocmis under the current warranty arrangement and legionella and other bacteria checks currently performed by Kingfisher Environmental Services (they also run regular checks on the water supply in the Town Hall). These arrangements are expected to continue on the basis that the Ranger Team is fully trained up for work underground and are conveniently placed to deal with any management issues.

The plan is for the Town Council to be the first point of contact for enquiries regarding the use of Boyle's Cross and to be proactive in promoting the area for markets and other events. MDC officers will be engaged as part of this process and will provide specialist guidance around licensing etc. But FTC and MDC staff are currently working together to put together a process which is as user friendly as possible and minimises bureaucracy. It is recommended that the process that is adopted (Schedule 3 of the agreement) should be delegated to staff to determine.

Financial implications

The financial implications of this arrangement will be confirmed when the Business Plan is completed. Currently, FTC is incurring expenditure relating to the maintenance of the fountain and planters. It is understood that MDC will meet 50% of the cost in Year 1. The funding formula for future years would be the subject of early discussion by the Joint Committee. Income from the hire of the area for events would be pooled in any case.

Recommendation

1. Approve the draft Joint Committee agreement
2. Delegate authority to the Deputy Town Clerk to work with MDC staff to agree a process for the use of the Boyle Cross area and to actively promote the area for events