

Chichester District Council

THE CABINET

6 December 2022

To establish a Task Force for Chichester City

1. Contacts

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2. Recommendation

2.1 Cabinet considers the outcome of investigating the setting up a specific multiagency Chichester City Centre Task Force (MCCCTF) and approves a Task Force to be in place until Easter 2023, as a sub-group of the Chichester Vision Delivery Steering Group.

2.2 Cabinet approves the draft terms of reference as set out in appendix one.

3. Background

3.1. At its meeting in September 2022, Full Council approved - minute 161; 'The Council investigates the setting up of a specific multiagency (CDC, CCC, WSCC, BID) Chichester City Centre Task Force to ensure the city centre defined as the Chichester Conservation area has an attractive and well-maintained Public Realm through enforcing Planning Conditions on premises; Regulation 7 removal of unsightly "to let" boards; graffiti; litter; unnecessary and redundant signs; and "A" boards. Enforce no cycling, pedlars and busking rules in the precinct and parks. Ensure premises are in a good state of repair and decoration and to research and understand the factors that have resulted in a decline in footfall. To ensure we consider what can be done to enhance Chichester's offer for a younger demographic, the Multi-Agency Task Force should include representatives from the University, the College, young people and families. City Centres can no longer rely on shopping for footfall, and Chichester needs to have an offer which competes with other places with a range of choice in shops, fun activities and a welcoming and vibrant atmosphere'.

3.2. Chichester Vision was developed in 2017, and a Vision Delivery Steering Group was established to oversee the delivery of projects and to receive regular reports from project groups. The Vision Delivery Steering Group meets quarterly and consists of representation from a wide range of organisations, including the following:

- Chichester District Council

- Chichester City Council
- West Sussex County Council
- Chichester Business Improvement District
- Chichester Festival Theatre
- Chichester College
- University of Chichester
- Chichester Cathedral
- Chichester Chamber of Commerce & Industry
- The Great Sussex Way

3.4 The Vision Delivery Steering Group, in 2018, agreed to the creation of a sub-group (the 'Look and Feel' group), which was chaired by the then Chair of Chichester Business Improvement District. This group included officers from Chichester City Council, Chichester District Council, West Sussex County Council, Chichester BID and The Great Sussex Way. This group was in existence for around two years and, following a walkabout in the city centre to undertake an audit of the issues, resulted in a number of achievements, including the following:

- City centre fingerposts refurbished and replaced.
- Northgate underpass cleaned, painted, new signage introduced both inside and outside.
- New wayfinding map boards created and introduced.
- Shop Fronts Guide developed.
- Bollards and lampposts painted.
- New bike racks introduced.
- Benches cleaned.
- Removal of redundant planters in Crane Street and re-planting of planters in key locations.
- Bins replaced.
- Walls Walk frames and lecterns repainted.
- Improvements to signage for Novium Museum and Tourist Information Centre.
- Shop Fronts Grant launched enabling city centre businesses to improve shop fronts.
- Lighting schemes introduced and enhanced in city.
- A-frame scheme investigated.
- Flag scheme introduced to city centre.

3.5 Since this time, the work of Chichester Vision has continued, and several other projects not linked to the public realm (and not summarised in this report) have been delivered or are underway. Additional public realm projects have also been undertaken, including consideration of options for the pavements in the city centre; review of trees in the city; cleaning; removal of redundant signs; dressing the city and projects to improve empty shops.

4. Outcomes to be Achieved

4.1 The project will provide an opportunity for bringing together a number of partners to deliver short-term improvements relating to the city centre before Easter 2023.

5. Proposal

5.1 Cabinet is asked to approve the creation of a sub-group in the form of a City Centre Task Force – which will report to Chichester Vision Delivery Steering Group. It is proposed that this group will consist of representatives from the following:

- Chichester City Council
- Chichester District Council
- West Sussex County Council
- Chichester Business Improvement District
- Sussex Police (for enforcement activities)
- Chichester College
- Chichester University
- Chichester Chamber of Commerce and Industry

All partners involved with Chichester Vision have been contacted to seek views on whether they would like to be involved in the sub-group. Confirmation has been received from West Sussex County Council, Chichester City Council and Chichester Chamber of Commerce and Industry that they are happy to be involved in the sub-group. The University of Chichester have advised that whilst they are limited in the level of influence or involvement that they have relating to the public realm in the city centre, they are interested in being involved in some of the meetings of the Task Force to assist with ensuring that consideration is given to what can be done to enhance Chichester's offer for a younger demographic. Chichester BID have advised that they have concerns relating to duplication of effort, and that they already have a number of plans in place to deliver projects relating to improvements to the public realm. However, if this is supported by others, they may be able to become part of the working group.

5.2 Chichester City Council have confirmed that they are able to assist with resourcing the project and will take the lead in organising and undertaking a walkabout in the city centre to set out the issues which are considered to be required for action. It is intended that this is undertaken before Christmas.

6. Alternatives Considered

6.1 Not to set up the Task Force for the city centre. There is already a partnership group in the form of Chichester Vision Steering Group who are progressing a number of actions in the city centre. However, this task and finish group would give a short-term focus and any outstanding actions not completed by the subgroup could be considered as ongoing work for the Vision Delivery Steering Group.

Resource and Legal Implications

7.1 The approval of minute 161, covers a number of issues where responsibilities lie with other Councils and agencies and also across a number of Chichester District Council services areas. Resources from several teams from within the council will therefore be required for this project. The following Divisional Managers will be involved in the work of the project:

- Divisional Manager for Place
- Divisional Manager for Environment and Health Protection
- Divisional Manager Development Management
- Divisional Manager Licensing, Events and Communications
- Divisional Manager Chichester Contract Services

7.2 There is no specific budget allocated to this project, however, funding requirements will be considered as the action plan is developed following the walkabout. Some of the works required may form part of existing work priorities.

7. Consultation

8.1 Consultation has been undertaken with Chichester Vision Delivery Steering Group stakeholders to understand the commitment for the creation of the group.

8. Community Impact and Corporate Risks

9.1 Risk that expectations will not be met if improvements are not made and that the actions are not delivered in the timescales. Risk that partners are not able to facilitate a further sub-group and/or have budget available. Reputation may be harmed if the city is not maintained in a suitable manner.

9. Other Implications

	Yes	No
Crime and Disorder		X
Climate Change and Biodiversity		X
Human Rights and Equality Impact		X
Safeguarding and Early Help		X
General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)		X
Health and Wellbeing		X
Other (please specify)		X

10. Appendix

11.1 Draft terms of reference

11. Background Papers

12.1 None