

## DAVENTRY TOWN COUNCIL

### Minutes of the Special Meeting of Daventry Town Council held by Video Conference on Monday, 15<sup>th</sup> March 2021 at 6.30pm

**PRESENT:** Cllr Lynne Taylor (Town Mayor) – Chairman

**Councillors:**  
Mike Arnold  
Dawn Branigan  
Matthew Churchley  
Lynn Jones  
Maureen Luke  
Peter Luke  
Malcolm Ogle  
Wendy Randall  
Katie Thurston  
John Tippet  
Karen Tweedale  
Mark Wesley

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Deborah Jewell – Chief Officer  
Sarah Fox – Responsible Finance Officer

3 Members of the Public  
0 Member of the Press

#### OPEN FORUM.

Cllr Stephen Dabbs advised that he was very interested to hear the views of the Town Council on the current Town Centre Vision and raised concerns that the vision was nowhere near complete and a work in progress which needed to be taken forward with the new West Northamptonshire Council to create an action plan. Cllr Dabbs added that the vision had some interesting ideas, such as new leisure facility but he felt the proposal did nothing to revive a struggling high street and questioned if more could have been done to consult and engage with residents.

A resident of Daventry advised that he had not seen the meeting publicised on Facebook, as per other Council meetings. The Chief Officer advised that publication of meetings on Facebook were generated automatically and the Town Council website had just been upgraded which would suggest this was a technical issue that she would investigate and resolve for future meetings.

#### TC2103.1 APOLOGIES

Apologies from Cllrs Fox, Knape and Nichol.

#### TC2103.2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS.

Councillor	Declaration of Interest
Wendy Randall	Daventry District Councillor and West Northamptonshire Shadow Authority Councillor – non-pecuniary
Mark Wesley	Daventry District Councillor and Chair of Daventry District Council Scrutiny and Improvement Committee – non-pecuniary
Dawn Branigan	Owner of Retail Outlet on Daventry High Street – non-pecuniary

#### TC2103.3 TOWN CENTRE VISION 2035.

The Chair asked the Chief Officer to update everyone on the process and purpose of the Town Centre Vision.

The CO advised that work on the vision started in March 2020, as Daventry District Council (DDC) recognised that the Town Centre Vision 2021 had reached the end of its intended period. The DDC recognised the importance of a vision for the Town, and the importance of adopting a Town Centre Vision before Vesting day of the new West Northamptonshire Council.

The CO advised that it was important to note that the Town Centre Vision is not a planning document, but it does provide a framework for the development of the Town.

It was important and key to the final document that the DDC worked in partnership with the Town Council and consulted as widely as possible, workshops were held with Officers, Members and the business community.

The CO advised that having attended all meetings she could confirm that the consultants reviewed all comments and created an initial vision based on their comments and feasibility. However, whilst consulting on the draft vision it was noted many Daventry residents wanted a 'feature' an aspiration that had been held by many residents in the past and continued to be held by many in the present.

Based on this aspiration the draft consultation was amended to include a new leisure centre, which then triggered other key changes in the Town to change it from being purely a vision for change to the public realm to a vision that would require investment of time and money by both the Town Council and West Northamptonshire Council to make it happen.

The Chief Officer referred to Cllr Dabbs comments in the Open Forum and advised he was correct in the Town Vision not being finished but it was a risk to not adopt it, at this stage if the Town Council wanted to have a document to take forward with the new West Northamptonshire Council, hence the end of the document has a delivery plan that needs to be completed by working in partnership with West Northamptonshire Council.

Cllr Wesley stated the vision was aspirational and proposed the Town Council takes this vision forward and pushes the new unitary authority to meet many of its aims.

Cllr Randall emphasised her disappointment at their being no public meetings, when despite restrictions on public meetings, due to Covid-19 government regulations, public meetings still could have been held via zoom and in her view there was insufficient consultation with the residents. Cllr Randall also pointed out that it was well known that West Northants Unitary didn't have any money to invest in Daventry Town, therefore none of the projects or initiatives would reach fruition.

Cllr Maureen Luke spoke against the adoption of the vision, stating it was too soon for the Town Council to approve, as the vision was not complete and many of the identified developments were impractical and not necessarily supported by the residents. Further consultation was needed, and the Town Council should invest monies to appoint their own consultants to create a vision that was supported by all Town residents.

Cllr Arnold advised he had reservations as the vision was a 'wish list' not a vision and it was important that residents were made aware that the vision was aspirational and dependant on feasibility studies and availability of funding.

Cllr Branigan stated, 'It's a vision', its something to build on, something to aim for. Previous visions were unattainable, but this vision was achievable.

Cllr Churchley advised there were good arguments for both views, but it is a vision and although understanding of the argument to delay adoption in favour of further consultation, he questioned how many times the decision would need to be delayed to reach the number of responses that would justify sufficient engagement had taken place. Cllr Churchley also



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referred to and understood the rationale not to demolish the existing leisure centre to rebuild in another location, however change had to happen otherwise infrastructure, ideas and development would become dated and in consideration of the Town's growing population the Town Council needed to support and encourage new development and investment in modern facilities. Cllr Churchley stated that many people had a fear of change and that's why Towns die and the reason he became a Town Councillor, was that he saw that the Town Council wasn't afraid to make changes and that is why he would support the adoption of this vision.

Cllr Tweedale stated her disappointment at Eastern Way being excluded from the Vision, due to it being earmarked for the possible construction of a secondary school but understood the need for the Town Council to adopt the vision and work with West Northamptonshire Council to take the vision forward. Cllr Tweedale highlighted that comments on social media were positive and it was important the Town Council had a clear plan to win investment over other towns in the new unitary and not disappoint.

Cllr Thurston spoke of her mixed feelings. She agreed that consultation could have been done better and the vision could be 'over promising', so if the vision was adopted the message needs to be clear in the feasibility of delivering each element. Cllr Thurston further questioned whether this decision should be made by the new Council, following the May election.

Cllr Peter Luke highlighted that very few of the aspirations in the previous 2004-2021 vision transpired and felt this vision was poor, relying on altering roads that relied on studies and investment from private landowners and other principle authorities to provide funding to achieve the majority of aims within the vision and for that reason he would not be able to vote for something that, in his view, was undeliverable.

Cllr Tippet emphasised the Daventry Town Vision 2035 was an aspirational and positive document that was needed to ensure the Town develops and it was essential the Town Council adopted the vision to ensure the Town develops and grows.



Cllr Wesley reminded members of his proposal that the Town Council takes this vision forward and pushes the new unitary authority to meet many of its aims, seconded by Cllr Brannigan it was,

<b>RESOLVED:</b>	(i) Daventry Town Council adopts the Daventry Town Centre Vision 2035, dated March 2021 (Appendix1)
	(ii) Daventry Town Council continues to work in partnership with West Northamptonshire Council to progress projects and initiatives identified in the Vision.

**TC2103.4 DATE OF NEXT MEETING.**

Date of next meeting Monday, 29<sup>th</sup> March 2021.

The meeting closed at

SIGNED..........DATED..........