

MARKET TOWNS PROGRAMME – WINTER UPDATE

6. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY.

- 6.2 The Panel discussed the Market Towns Programme – Winter Update Report at its meeting on 6th December 20223.
- 6.3 Following an enquiry from Councillor Corney, the Panel heard that where possible common sense would be applied to project delivery to allow for a joined up approach and avoid duplication of works across projects.
- 6.4 Concerns were expressed by councillors Slade and Gardener surrounding the works to trees planned for the St Neots market square. The Panel were reassured that a robust communications plan was in place and would be ramped up closer to the project start. It was also noted that the County Council would be leading on this project. It was further advised that the trees removed from the square would be reutilised as nature habitats, whilst the new planting would increase the tree canopy and biodiversity in the square. Councillor Jennings raised a concern regarding the impact of the project on the Christmas lights in St Neots, the Panel heard that every attempt would be made to minimise impact on the 2024 Christmas lights within the square.
- 6.5 In response to a question from Councillor Jennings on the figures within Table 1 section 3, the Panel heard that more detail on budgets was anticipated within the next quarterly report due to the project start date, however this would be investigated and further clarified to members.
- 6.6 In answer to a question from Councillor Howell, the Panel heard that whilst it was planned to expand the shopfront scheme across the market towns of the district, further discussions were in progress to extend this into rural key service areas. It was noted that the funding for this scheme was specific to towns at this point however further updates would be advised should they develop. Following a further question from Councillor, Harvey, it was confirmed that BID Huntingdon would continue to process the shopfront grants.
- 6.7 Further to a question from Councillor Pickering surrounding the retention of blue badge car parking spaces, the Panel were advised that whilst this was currently to maintain the availability of these bays, work was being undertaken by Parking Services to assess the ongoing need for these spaces within St Neots, allowing for an appropriate provision of these bays in the future.
- 6.8 Following an observation from Councillor Slade, it was confirmed that section 1.9 should read policy compliant planning application.
- 6.9 Councillor Gleadow congratulated the team on the obvious hard work which had been undertaken, a sentiment which was echoed by the Panel.
- 6.10 Following the discussion, the Panel were informed that their comments would be added to the Cabinet report in order for an informed decision to be made on the report recommendations.