

**Councillor David Buckle**

**Executive Member for Communities and Economic Development**

**September 2020**

**Market Towns revitalisation**

- We are still waiting to hear whether our submitted action plan for the Reopening the High Streets Safely Fund ERDF grant is acceptable. We expect to be allocated a grants officer in September and should be able to move rapidly to signing the contract. Meanwhile we continue to deliver the work – business packs have been distributed, signage is in place (and some additions commissioned).
- The initial communications campaign “Let’s get Selby District Back to Business” has generated strong interaction on social media. The Minster FM engagement figures were as follows.
  - Facebook – average post reach from Minster FM updates: 10,500
  - Instagram – average post reach from Minster FM updates: 9,700
  - Twitter – average post reach from Minster FM updates: 7,400
- The Selby Times partnership delivered a free double-page spread feature. This is worth around £2,000 of advertising spend. The Local IQ partnership required the biggest investment but has delivered by far the biggest online impact. Combining digital display advertising and sponsored social media posts, the material recorded 990,000 views in total. On the Council’s own social media channels, the material was consistently the best performing of the year so far, in terms of engagement rates. Facebook total audience reach of the material – 33,300. This makes this the best-performing channel for the material.  
Best performing Facebook posts
  - 15 July – Sweet Finkle: 9,332
  - 10 July – Stag and Boy: 5,974
  - 17 July – Jac D Clothing: 5,172Twitter total audience reach of the material (as measured through page impressions) – 14,556.
- The first campaign was centred on welcoming people back to safe shops and services, but businesses are telling us that older people have not returned, so the next campaign will look at targeting older shoppers with messaging to ensure they feel safe and their anxieties are reduced.
- We have participated in the High Street Task Force’s pilot of the Maybe\* platform, which has enabled us to track social media chatter to see how people are talking about their towns. This gives good insight into the effectiveness of campaign such as Eat Out to Help Out and will also enable us to steer conversations towards particular campaigns we’re delivering. Comparison with other towns is also possible, to understand whether our high street businesses are using social media effectively, for example, recently York’s chatter was

consistently around York as a great place to visit and a safe place to return to, whilst Selby's was about vaping.

- Regular stakeholder meetings are being held with all three, town business and community representatives so we can hear the concerns and issues of businesses and other stakeholders. There's currently some focus on planning for autumn/winter – e.g. managing queuing in bad weather.
- Initial baselining of footfall has been completed and a programme of counts drawn up for the next 6 months. This will allow us to track recovery.
- A local campaign raising the profile of ShopAppy has begun. This included an online campaign which went live on bank holiday Monday (31<sup>st</sup> August)
- The Sherburn draft town centre action plan will be discussed with local stakeholders next week.
- The first Tadcaster town centre Action Plan meeting was on the 2<sup>nd</sup> September with positive engagement from town and district councils and local business representatives. Engagement around town centre Covid-19 recovery has already given a good start to this work.

### **Community Safety Hub**

- Streets Ahead Project: an initiative from the Early Help Team, will commence shortly, with workers deployed to Selby's more disadvantaged wards (Flaxley Road and Abbots Road), to work with young people. This will link with the IHL / Leeds Utd project (likely to commence in October) and align with a Selby Big Local activity programme.  
The programme is linked to the Hidden Harm agenda and has been developed by the Early Help team as a response to many young people not been seen by professionals (teachers) due to Covid-19. It is hoped that the model will replicate some of the youth activity that was lost when the re-structure of youth services happened around 2 years ago.

### **Economic Development and Regeneration**

- The Executive agreed on 6 August 2020 to sign the Partnership Agreement with North Yorkshire County Council to deliver the Transforming Cities Fund (TCF) project, in line with the £17.5m funding allocated from the Department for Transport to the West Yorkshire Combined Authority for the Selby station proposals. The Executive also agreed to progress the Selby TCF proposals to full business case, including undertaking appropriate investigations, negotiations, design work and further public consultation before the Council agrees the final detailed designs and costs for the works early in 2021.
- On 3 September 2020, the Executive agreed to purchase the land at James William House, Cowie Drive, Selby, to contribute to the delivery of the Selby TCF proposals and regenerate the area east of Selby station. Contracts have been exchanged and a deposit paid, with completion expected immanently.
- Cushman and Wakefield are advising the Council over land acquisition relating to delivery of the Selby TCF package and discussions with relevant landowners will be taking place over forthcoming weeks.

- A workshop took place on 3 September to help identify relevant issues and opportunities in the centres of Selby, Sherburn and Tadcaster, as well as potential interventions – from simple tweaks to wholesale changes. This is part of the work is underway on the Places and Movements study for three towns, funded by the YNY LEP, NYCC and SDC. The study will identify how to improve key road junctions, safety, walking and cycling routes and public spaces in the town centres and prepare outline cases for funding bids for the priority projects. The workshop was a required step to comply with the Department for Transport approach to developing transport funding bids and was attended by a number of Members.
- Three new members of staff have now started work with the Economy and Regeneration Team: Duncan Ferguson is the new Regeneration Manager; Marcin Dane is the new Senior Economic Development Officer; and Stephanie Dick is the new Project Delivery Lead. One post remains unfilled at this stage.
- Work is underway to provide a detailed assessment of flood risk on land owned by the Council at Burn Airfield. This will allow potential future uses to be assessed through the emerging local plan.
- Selby officers have provided updated proposals for investment in towns in North Yorkshire, to form part of a bid to government to allocate funding to the area in advance of a possible devolution deal.
- The Council is to work with Selby College to promote their range of opportunities for local adults to enhance their skills. These packages can assist both those in work and people seeking a new role or career.

## **Market Towns revitalisation**

### **Covid Recovery**

A Reopening High Streets Safely Plan has been developed to support the reopening of businesses and public spaces to encourage people back to our town centres. Selby District Council has been awarded just over £80,000 from the Government's Reopening High Streets Safely Fund (RHSSF). This is a European-funded initiative which focuses on marketing, information provision and temporary changes to the public realm to support the safe reopening of High Streets. Over 200 Back to Business packs have been created and delivered to high street businesses including a second tranche of packs for leisure and hospitality businesses which reopened in July. We're liaising closely with colleagues at NYCC with regards to highways management designed to enable the widening of pavements and the safe movement of pedestrians, as well as appropriate signage and safe use of pavements. A marketing plan is in place and marketing campaigns have been commissioned, which are designed to ensure businesses feel empowered to reopen and operate safely and local people feel comfortable to return to the High Streets. Virtual stakeholder groups have been developed for each town, to enable this work to be iterative and respond closely to business & community need.

### **Towns Action Planning**

The longer-term work to develop partnership-based town centre action plans continues and the immediate response work for covid dovetails well with this. So much so that we have been recognised as a good practice case study by the Local Government Association (LGA), using a long term framework approach to ensuring the range of infrastructure, access, culture and business development supports town growth in a holistic way. An advisory board will be established in September to oversee the work at a district level. Selby – the action plan is finalised and the key stakeholder groups are being brought together to support the plan. These include businesses focused on marketing and digital development and will also include a community and heritage engagement group for the High St HAZ. Sherburn – the action plan is in final draft and has been taken to the stakeholder group. Work focuses on high street environment, access and digital development. Tadcaster – engagement has commenced. There has been initial engagement with businesses and stakeholders as a result of the Covid-recovery work which provides an excellent start. Information on each town will be publicly available on the council's website.

### **Community Support during Covid**

We are all aware of the significant impact the last 6 months has had on local residents and communities. We have seen a fantastic response across the district. Alongside NYCC we have helped establish 3 Community Support Organisations in the 3 towns as the main contacts for supporting local residents unable to get support for themselves with things like shopping, prescription collection and financial and food assistance. Underneath the Support Organisations have been a wealth of local community support groups and networks that have ensured that the vast majority of our residents in need have had a direct and immediate local response. At the beginning of the crisis the council quickly designated £25,000 of CEF funding to support local community networks who were focused on supporting local people in crisis. This fund continues to be held by the community support organisations for local groups to access who are continuing to support recovering from Covid. As local community spaces start to open back up and encourage people out to shop and socialise, this continues to be the offer.

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