



Cllr George Allen
Deputy Leader of the Council

Thursday, 25 March 2021

Direct Line: 07791 176489

Dear Kate,

Thanks for writing to me, it is important that residents have answers to their concerns and elected members remain accessible to the public especially when there is so much misinformation being circulated throughout the community, causing distress to residents and businesses. For this reason, there is a new Facebook page set up for the Towns Fund, through which residents can raise any questions when information is shared at the time: <https://www.facebook.com/BurtonTownInvestmentPlan>

I was delighted to learn the Government had allocated the Town Deal Board £22.8 million for regeneration projects in Burton upon Trent. This is a truly game changing amount of money. The project proposals submitted to Government in the Town Investment Plan (TIP) are subject to a HM Treasury Green Book business case process. The project sponsors, such as Staffordshire County Council for the library relocation project, will be required to carry out extensive consultation on their proposals before a decision is taken on whether to proceed. I would expect public concern for any project to be taken into account in addition to any concerns raised during the consultation in October 2020. Staffordshire County Council shared their plans for engagement last week: [People can have their say on town's library proposals during summer engagement programme - Staffordshire County Council Newsroom](#)

On the library relocation project in particular, I want to address a concern about the library site to aid the discussion on these proposals.

As the lead member for regeneration at East Staffordshire Borough Council, I share the desire of many of my council colleagues and Burton residents to slowly but surely turn the town around to face the river. The River Trent and Washlands are underutilised and I am committed to bringing forward exciting plans for the waterfront and Washlands. Later this year, ESBC will begin works to environmentally enhance the Washlands area between Bargates and the Market Place, creating new boardwalk areas and further investing in the play area. The TIP also includes a new cycling and walking connection between Stapenhill Hollows and Burton town centre which will support sustainable travel and increase walking and cycle trail options over the Washlands. This is the future for Burton – a town centre which increases its leisure offer and encourages social activity to offset the likely decline of its retail offer.

Turning to your specific points, I have earlier this week spoken with Cllr Bev Ashcroft, Cabinet member for Leisure, Amenities & Tourism, and we have agreed a plan to directly engage with Market Hall businesses through a series of virtual meetings to ensure each business in the Market Hall has the opportunity to talk openly about their concerns so we can understand clearly their challenges, we also hope to ensure they are clear on what these plans mean for their business and how ESBC will be able to assist if the move is to go ahead. Of course we would have much preferred to meet with traders face to face and as soon as this is permitted we will do so.



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With regards to the Library site, I can confirm at this point there are NO current or agreed plans for the redevelopment of the Library site. If the library relocation project does go ahead, my intention is for ESBC to seek the views of Burton residents on what they would like to see on this large waterfront site. Additionally, later this year, ESBC will commission a feasibility study into the viability of a Washlands Visitor Centre which could feature as part of a larger complex on the waterfront including cafés, bars and restaurants – similar to what many call a “marina style development”, depending upon interest from the private sector for those uses.

You mentioned specifically the rumour that 188 residential units will be built on the Library site. I can confirm this is again entirely false information. The Town Investment Plan does refer to a figure of 188 residential dwellings however this is in reference to development elsewhere on the High Street, it does not refer to the library site. There is an existing allocation of housing in the local plan for the area occupied by Molson Coors, which was allocated for housing in 2015 under the previous administration led by Cllr Grosvenor. This has been in the public domain for over six years.

There will be more consultation over the summer as part of the Town Deal process which will feed into the business case for each project and of course we will want to engage with residents again once it is clear that the library will be moving. Whatever the outcome of that consultation, my view is that a development on the waterfront must be of real benefit to Burton residents and it must complement its natural surroundings and location in the National Forest

I look forward to working with you, Burton residents and stakeholders to advance these plans in the coming months.

Yours sincerely,

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