

Approval for the Installation of a Generation Bench on Castle Street, Edgeley**Report of the Director of Place Management****1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report is to seek approval for the installation of a metal 'Generation Bench' on the pedestrian area of Castle Street designed by Artist and Furniture Maker, Helen Middleton, and funded by Sky through the AgeUK Hub in Edgeley (see Figure 1).

2. BACKGROUND

Benches were removed from the Armoury end of Castle Street along the pedestrian area back in 2018 but focused policing along with targeted Operations in the Town Centre and Edgeley have seen positive changes.

Age UK in partnership with SKY opened a new Digital Hub at 2 Castle Street Edgeley in June 2023 and currently there is nowhere to sit and dwell. Edgeley Ward Cllrs have asked Officers that benches be installed and are supportive of the installation and SKY are funding the bench design and manufacture to the value of £1,000. Richard Daniels District Centre Manager is in support of this and has spoken to Traders locally who were generally supportive. Concerns were raised about historical ASB and it was agreed that the bench would be removed if the historical issues of ASB returned.

The bench will be blue in colour and powder coated to make sure it can be easily maintained and will be positioned between 8-10 Castle Street and 7 Castle Street (SW Appliances and H&M Beauty) in the middle of the pedestrian area looking down the length of Castle Street away from the Armoury Roundabout.

Helen Middleton has designed 'The Generation Bench' representing the different ages creating the artwork which will be laser cut into the bench with patterns created by local school children and residents in the local care homes bringing generations together within one bench-children will find their designs whilst it will be a great conversation starter for people resting their legs. Helen Middleton is working with Richard Daniels on projects in Edgeley and Marple and has recently been involved in the Brinnington Maps Art Trail-a Town of Culture-funded collaboration with partners Life Leisure.

The bench is on the walking route of a separate piece of work in relation to 'On The Way Play'. The aim is to encourage active travel and working with communities, especially young people, to design playful installations along cycling and walking routes and is part of the District Centre Action Plan to create more outdoor seating Areas. Helen Middleton is connected with the Project Lead to facilitate collaboration.

3.FUNDING

The Workshops to create the artwork and the fabrication of the bench are included in the proposal by Helen Middleton and will be funded by SKY through Age UK Stockport. Highway Installation costs will be covered from existing District Centre Funds.

4.RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet Member for Parks, Highways & Transport Services, Councillor Baynham, has been consulted and is supportive of the installation. The Area Committee is recommended to approve the installation of 'The Generation Bench' on the pedestrian area of Castle Street.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are none.

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Figure 1. Bench proposed

