

AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Report Title: Public Consultation on Rugby Town Centre Regeneration

Name of Committee: Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 6 September 2021

Report Director: Executive Director

Portfolio: Growth and Investment

Ward Relevance: All wards

Prior Consultation: Internal

Public Consultation undertaken through an online survey

Member Consultation undertaken in an online workshop

Consultation with a range of public, private and third sector stakeholders

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Public or Private: Public

Report Subject to Call-In: Yes

Report En-Bloc: No

Forward Plan: No

Corporate Priorities: This report relates to the following priority(ies):

(C) Climate Rugby is an environmentally sustainable place, where we work together to reduce and mitigate the effects of climate change. (C)

(E) Economy Rugby has a diverse and resilient economy that benefits and enables opportunities for all residents. (E)

(HC) Health and Communities Residents live healthy, independent lives, with the most vulnerable protected. (HC)

(O) Organisation Rugby Borough Council is a responsible, effective and efficient organisation. (O)

[Corporate Strategy 2021-2024](#)

This report does not specifically relate to any Council priorities but

Summary: This report is to recommend launch of a public consultation for a four-week period commencing in September 2021

Financial Implications: Costs relating to the consultation process will be met from the Town Centre Improvement Fund.

Risk Management Implications: As set out below within the outline of options the proposed recommendation is to ensure that the Council can maintain progress in the overall adoption of the town centre spatial strategy. Any delay will impact on future external funding and overall development.

All physical event consultations follow Government guidelines on venues adhering to COVID safety requirements

Environmental Implications: None arising directly from this report

Legal Implications: The recommendation will ensure that the Council is undertaking effective public consultation in the formulation of the proposed town centre spatial strategy and masterplan.

Equality and Diversity: The Council has duly considered its equality duties in accordance with its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The outline proposal sets out an inclusive approach for both online and physical consultation. As set out within the recommendation authority is delegated to the Executive Director to ensure inclusivity of consultation

Options: Option 1: For the appointed consultants to launch a public consultation on the town centre spatial strategy commencing in mid- September for a four-week period

Option 2: Delay a public consultation

Option 3: Do not launch a public consultation

Option 2 would result in a delay in the completion of a spatial strategy and masterplan for the town centre and delay in adoption of development changes and attraction of external funding to achieve those developments

Option 3 would prevent the completion of a town centre spatial strategy and production of masterplan and severely limit development in the town centre

Recommendation:

- (1) The Council undertakes a four-week public consultation as detailed within this report commencing in September; and
- (2) delegated authority be given to the Executive Director to agree the detailed timing and nature of the public consultation and such authority to include the requirements of inclusivity of engagement in accordance with the Council's Equality and Diversity requirements.

Reasons for Recommendation:

To ensure the timely completion of the town centre spatial strategy and production of a masterplan.

Cabinet - 6 September 2021

Public Consultation on Rugby Town Centre Regeneration

Public Report of the Executive Director

Recommendation

- (1) The Council undertakes a four-week public consultation as detailed within this report commencing in September; and
- (2) delegated authority be given to the Executive Director to agree the detailed timing and nature of the public consultation and such authority to include the requirements of inclusivity of engagement in accordance with the Council's Equality & Diversity requirements.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Spatial Strategy and Regeneration Plan will set an ambitious and holistic vision for the town centre that will identify projects and initiatives to create a vibrant town centre of the future.
- 1.2 Understanding the aspirations and ambitions of our community and town centre stakeholders is pivotal to ensuring a transformative revival of the town centre, that will meet not only the needs of today, but for generations to come.
- 1.3 In March 2021 the Rugby Town Centre Strategy team undertook a public consultation exercise which sought to do exactly this. A very positive level of response was received, with nearly 1300 submissions. This feedback has been key in helping to form the draft vision and objectives and identify potential projects for the strategy and regeneration plan.
- 1.4 Key themes from this feedback include;
 - Better choice of retail and more independent shops.
 - Better choice of dining and drinking.
 - Improved Market experience and identity as a market town.
 - More green spaces to improve experience and an improved environment.
 - Improved parking, free or cheaper parking.
 - Improved walking and cycling infrastructure.
 - Desire for a wider service provision and a 'fully functioning' hospital.
- 1.5 The purpose of this report is to seek approval to commence a further four-week public consultation, during which the findings to date and potential proposals will be explored further.

2 PROJECT PROGRESS

2.1 Progress to date includes;

- Baseline analysis relating to an overall understanding of the issues and opportunities facing the town centre.
- Engagement which has involved a series of meetings with relevant public, private and third-party organisations to test the baseline analysis and further understand the issues and opportunities that exist.
- A virtual consultation with council members.
- A first stage public engagement exercise which produced nearly 1300 responses. This a high level of feedback demonstrates the community's passion for the town centre.
- Developing a draft vision and objectives to support how the town centre could be best developed for the future.
- Development of some potential major project options.

3 CONSULTATION

3.1 The second stage consultation which is proposed to commence in mid-late September, will inform future land use and delivery and also the movement and public realm in the town centre. It will build on the key themes and findings to date and explore potential future options for some key locations.

3.2 Four main approaches to the consultation are proposed:

- Launch of a micro website for the project which will include the key options and topics for consideration and enable the public to submit comments and ideas
- Siting of an exhibition to allow residents to view the key options and topics and provide written feedback and links to the microsite for online feedback later
- The exhibition will also include staff and consultants to allow for questions and overall feedback.
- An online workshop for stakeholders to present the options and topics and allow discussion in breakout rooms to enable questions and feedback.

3.3 The public consultation will be promoted extensively through a wider communication strategy. This will comprise of promotion through the Council's own website and social media channels, a press release, a digital 'flyer' sent to stakeholders and businesses. This strategy will ensure all residents are made aware of their options to contribute and participate whether in person or through online alternatives.

4 NEXT STEPS

4.1 Supporting the economic recovery of the borough is a key priority of the Council and sites within the Council's ownership provide a significant opportunity to catalyse the regeneration of the town centre and attract inward investment. Therefore, alongside the public consultation, the project team will progress options appraisals on key council owned sites, and work with partners to

progress the same for sites in third party ownership. A car parking review will also be undertaken to determine future need.

- 4.2 In parallel to the consultation, the Council will develop a “meanwhile strategy” for the town centre. Key aims of this strategy will be to test new uses for the town centre, explore opportunities to support businesses and start-ups and aid a greater understanding of what attracts people to the town.
- 4.3 Recent summer-time events hosted by the Council in the town centre have been very successful and demonstrated how footfall into the town centre can be increased. Therefore, this short-term strategy will be a useful tool in informing the longer-term strategy for the future of the town centre.
- 4.4 This “meanwhile” strategy along with the findings from the consultation will be presented to Council for consideration and approval.
- 4.5 The resultant spatial strategy and regeneration plan will also be presented to Council for approval.

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Subject Matter: Public Consultation on Rugby Town Centre Regeneration

Originating Department: Growth and Investment

DO ANY BACKGROUND PAPERS APPLY YES NO

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Doc No	Title of Document and Hyperlink

The background papers relating to reports on planning applications and which are open to public inspection under Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972, consist of the planning applications, referred to in the reports, and all written responses to consultations made by the Local Planning Authority, in connection with those applications.

Exempt information is contained in the following documents:

Doc No	Relevant Paragraph of Schedule 12A