

RUGBY BOROUGH COUNCIL
QUESTION PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 10
COUNCIL – 13 MARCH 2024
QUESTION C

Councillor Slinger to ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Poole:

“What progress has been made of the Town Centre Regeneration Working Group regarding its work streams, particularly as regards delivery of specific tangible projects so that residents can know when to expect the town centre to be revitalised?”

Councillor Poole, Leader of the Council, to respond as follows:

“As Councillor Slinger will be aware as a member of the cross party working group, the working group was created to shape and oversee the regeneration of the town centre. Chaired by the Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, the group has agreed a set of 19 workstreams to deliver the regeneration of the town centre. Councillor Slinger will also be aware that the working group agreed an action plan for the current year 23/24. An update report is provided twice a year to Cabinet and Council on progress. The first report is scheduled for June which is the first available Council following the end of the financial year. Members and the public can find out more about the town centre and the workstreams on the new dedicated webpages [Rugby town centre regeneration strategy - Rugby Borough Council](#). These webpages are constantly updated and are the best place to keep abreast of the works underway.

Ahead of the report in June, I will set out a few of the schemes that are already underway:

Public Realm

A consultant team called Planit have been employed to design public realm masterplan to deliver a high quality public realm including

- Creating an accessible environment
- Opportunities to mitigate the impact of climate change and support a low carbon town centre
- Providing reasons to pause, dwell and enjoy the town centre
- Encouraging people to explore and discover the town centre
- Considering how public space can be activated and used to encourage social connections and grow and encourage new experiences in the town centre
- Promote links between high quality environments such as our beautiful parks and green spaces with consideration of people’s health and wellbeing; and
- Promote and enhance Rugby’s heritage

The working group has already received an initial presentation from the consultants and public consultation is planned for June. More details can be found here [Public realm - Rugby Borough Council](#) which also includes details of public realm schemes already underway like St Andrews Gardens.

Meanwhile Uses

CJ Events have been employed to take over the running of the market in Rugby. CJ Events bring significant experience at running markets across Warwickshire and the West Midlands for both Councils and private organisations such as Warwick Castle. Members of the working group have recently been discussing with CJ Events how we can further improve and expand the market in Rugby.

A vacant shop audit is underway which will identify the reasons for vacancy rates within the Town Centre and provide an action plan to decrease the vacancy rates in Rugby and also opportunities for shop front dressing.

A Shop Front Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) was approved for consultation at Cabinet on the 11th March which will provide guidance for shop front design, especially within the Town Centre Conservation Area. A report to Council on the 13th March also recommends that a grant scheme be established using UK Shared Prosperity Funds to allow business to bid for funds to upgrade the appearance of their shopfronts in line with this guidance.

Asset Strategy and Catalyst Sites

The Council has employed CBRE to conduct options appraisals of all council assets within the town centre to explore their optimal use and to ensure that the Council's sites can facilitate physical change which will transform the town centre.

Discussions are also ongoing with the landowners of Rugby Central a catalyst site which occupies a 5 acre plot in the town centre about their plans for redevelopment.

Creative and Marketing

The Council has employed Hemmingway Design to create a coherent strategy to create pride in place and which

- Promotes Rugby town centre as a place to visit, live, do business and invest.
- Positively markets Rugby as an investment opportunity.
- Positively influences people's perception of and association with Rugby and its town centre.
- Provide confidence to the public and potential investors that Rugby Borough Council can deliver on its aspirations and is a successful partner to collaborate with.
- Supports Rugby town centre retailers in promoting their businesses.

Business Hub

On the Council Agenda on the 13th March is report for allocating UK Shared Prosperity Funds which includes initial funding for a business hub. To trial the concept this hub is designed to create a physical hub for business and community support with private and public sector partners and provide a space for start-ups and early-stage businesses with support and resource and also provides a collaborative ecosystem that fosters innovation, drives economic growth and creates a sustainable and prosperous business environment for all stakeholders involved.

Sustainable Travel

Discussions have been taking place with Warwickshire County Council across their highways and transportation team and the working group to focus on improving travel to and from and within the town centre.

More details on the workstreams and the progress can be found here [Workstreams - Rugby Borough Council](#) .“