

Overview & Scrutiny Report



REPORT TO :	OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE:	14th July 2020
SUBJECT:	Regeneration Plans for Bury & Radcliffe
REPORT FROM:	Councillor O'Brien (Leader & Portfolio Holder for Regeneration)
CONTACT OFFICER	Paul Lakin (Director of Economic Regeneration and Capital Growth)

TYPE OF DECISION:	For Information
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FREEDOM OF INFORMATION/STATUS:	The paper is within the public domain.
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SUMMARY:	Town centres are vital hubs for local communities and the shops, services and other facilities that meet their needs. They have been facing unprecedented challenges in recent years and these are likely to be accelerated by the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.
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The Council has a long-standing recognition that town centre masterplanning can play a vital role in shaping the role and function of a town centre and in promoting and stimulating the growth, investment and development required to underpin them.

It is now a critical time to refresh previous masterplans and work is on-going on a new Strategic Regeneration Framework for Radcliffe with plans to shortly commission updated work on Bury town centre.

OPTIONS & RECOMMENDED OPTION	Option 1 (recommended option) That Overview and Scrutiny note the contents of this report.
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Corporate Aims/Policy Framework:	Do the proposals accord with the Policy Framework? Yes
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Statement by the S151 Officer:	The funding for work on masterplans for Radcliffe and Bury town centre are within agreed budgets. Proposals arising from the consultation will need to be reflected as part of the Council's Capital programme in future years. This will be subject to the approval of Full Council. At this stage there are no additional finance costs.
Financial Implications and Risk Considerations:	
Equality/Diversity implications:	No
Considered by Monitoring Officer:	The proposals set out in the report are in line with policy and there are no identified legal implications at this stage.
Wards Affected:	All

1 Background

- 1.1 Town centres are vital hubs for local communities and the shops, services and other facilities that meet their needs. However, they are increasingly facing unprecedented challenges including the continued growth of internet shopping, competition from out-of-centre retail and leisure destinations and wider economic conditions. As a result, town centres are having to adapt and reinvent themselves in a way that is less reliant on the retail sector.
- 1.2 The Council has a long-standing recognition that town centre masterplanning can play a vital role in shaping the role and function of town centres and in promoting and stimulating the growth, investment and development required to underpin them.
- 1.3 Previous masterplanning has helped in the delivery of key regeneration projects in Bury, Radcliffe and Prestwich with town centre vision and development strategies such as Bury but Better, Radcliffe Town Centre Masterplan and Love Prestwich Village. These have helped to deliver schemes such as The Rock in Bury and the new bus station and supermarket in Radcliffe.
- 1.4 Whilst these have proven to be successful it is important that we do not rest on our laurels. The on-going threat to the high street makes it even more important to plan for their future. This is now particularly important in light of the on-going impact that the coronavirus pandemic is having on the economies of our town centres.
- 1.5 As a result, work is on-going on the new Radcliffe Strategic Regeneration Framework that will aim to guide and shape the town centre and surrounding areas over the next 10 to 15 years. Similarly, work is also planned on an updated masterplan for Bury town centre that will help it reinforce itself as one of the key destinations in Greater Manchester.
- 1.6 As national Government has already indicated, it is looking to invest in northern towns and it is vital that we have comprehensive strategies in place that sets out a clear vision with investable projects that we can use to secure funding - particularly those which are geared to support town centre

transformation. This is particularly important as we emerge and attempt to recover from the economic impacts arising from the current pandemic situation.

2 Bury

- 2.1 Bury town centre is one of the key economic drivers within the Borough. Despite the challenges, Bury has bucked the national trend in recent years and seen significant investment and regeneration.
- 2.2 The 'Bury but Better' Town Centre Vision and Development Strategy was originally prepared in 2003 and subsequently updated in 2009. These set out a clear direction for the town centre and it is now established as one of the key centres within Greater Manchester.
- 2.3 It is now critical that Bury town centre is fully prepared for the economic consequences that will arise from coronavirus and to establish a clear and deliverable plan to support economic recovery in the short-term as well as to identify the foundations that can allow it to strengthen and secure its longer-term future.
- 2.4 A new town centre Masterplan will play a key role in this recovery process as well as being an important tool in demonstrating that the Council has a cohesive strategy in place in support of external funding bids.
- 2.5 As a result, it is proposed to update the masterplan for Bury town centre in order to provide a clear direction to the delivery of positive change, improve business confidence and encourage quality investment from private and public sectors.
- 2.6 It will help inform future decision making and co-ordinate town centre activities to achieve complementary improvements. It will also assist with town centre promotion and marketing and encourage the development of partnerships which will be essential if the strategy is to be successfully delivered.
- 2.7 The masterplan will need to set out a robust and deliverable framework for the town centre, including the approach to:
 - Its role as a retail and leisure destination, including the future of the market;
 - Town centre living, including health and wellbeing;
 - Commercial development;
 - Development opportunities for key strategic sites in the town centre such as the former police and fire stations, Bury Interchange, Bury Market, Townside etc.
 - Parking;
 - Urban design, movement, public realm and open space; and
 - The tourism/cultural sectors;
 - The future role of the 'historic quarter';
 - Strengthening the evening and night time offer;
 - One Public Estate initiatives, including the potential to create a new civic hub;
 - The future of the education estate;
 - Town centre infrastructure requirements (physical/ social/ transport/ green/digital); and

- Linkages between the town centre and other surrounding assets and neighbourhoods e.g. East Bury, Chamberhall business park, Burrs Country Park etc.

3 Radcliffe

- 3.1 The continued regeneration of Radcliffe remains a priority for the Council and this commitment is evident in the draft Strategic Regeneration Framework that is currently out for consultation (22 June to 3 August). This is a comprehensive plan that pulls together the various key regeneration components that will direct the future growth and development of the town in a coherent and joined-up manner.
- 3.2 Following consultation and once it is fully approved, the SRF will play a pivotal role in underpinning the way the Council deploys its own resources and discharges its regulatory functions, including the determination of planning applications. It will also provide the necessary evidential base to guide the investment decisions of third parties.
- 3.3 The key interventions recommended in the draft SRF include:
 - **Creation of a central public hub within the town centre** – this could accommodate a range of functions, including office accommodation, flexible civic space, café and some retail;
 - **Creation of new leisure facilities** – this would complement the Council's drive to create wellness centres to help improve the health of the town's residents;
 - **Refurbishment of Market Chambers building** – the aim would be to re-purpose this building to provide flexible working space for local activities and community groups, along with flexible office accommodation for start-up businesses;
 - **Opening up of the river** – the proposals include improvements to the river walkway and a new riverside public space, exploiting opportunities to create river frontages where possible;
 - **Focussed retail strategy** – this would be likely to involve consolidating retail floorspace over time and ensuring that the daytime function of the town extends into the night time economy;
 - **Cultural initiatives** – this could include a permanent base for cultural initiatives, perhaps as part of the Market and Hub buildings. This could host a diverse cultural programme to celebrate Radcliffe's heritage;
 - **Revised car parking strategy** – this would include creating opportunities for sustainable travel options, with bus, tram, walking and cycling being promoted in and around the town. There are opportunities to develop or re-purpose some of the town's surface car parks;
 - **Public realm improvements** – it is proposed that a series of distinctive public open spaces should be central to the vision, to help with movement through the town and improve the visitor experience / create investor confidence. This would include key focal points, such as the Piazza and civic spaces, and key routes, such as Blackburn Street;

- **Marketing strategy** – building on the recent Branding of Radcliffe, this needs to form an integral part of the wider regeneration strategies to create a real local distinctiveness for the town and to attract investment;
- **Secondary school** – the proposals for a new secondary school in Radcliffe will be key to helping to improve educational attainment in the town and providing a sense of pride in the town. The provision of a new secondary school in Radcliffe will also reduce the need for existing and potential future Radcliffe residents from having to travel to schools outside of the town;
- **Brownfield development** – as part of the housing delivery it is proposed that there are a number of key brownfield sites that should be utilised to deliver a range of different housing types in and around the town, including affordable homes for young families;
- **Infrastructure improvements** – the draft SRF proposes a range of infrastructure interventions, including transport and movement opportunities, digital infrastructure to ensure that the technology is there to sustain economic growth and proposals to make use of renewable energy and low carbon solutions; and
- **Employment growth** – it is proposed that employment opportunities are created in the town centre, from smaller start-up businesses to larger employment users in the hub. This could involve the consolidation and improvements to the towns existing industrial space to make it attractive to modern day employment.

Council Investment Fund

- 3.4 Given the projects emerging through the SRF and the Council's continued commitment to the ongoing regeneration of Radcliffe, it is anticipated that significant funding will be required to ensure that key regeneration projects are progressed and delivered.
- 3.5 As reported to Cabinet in March and June, the Chief Executive will bring forward an outline business case for the creation of a Council Investment Fund that would be used to leverage third party funding to support appropriate interventions in key investment areas including Radcliffe Town Centre.