

SCRUTINY REPORT



MEETING: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

DATE: 25 March 2021

SUBJECT: Regeneration Budget Plans

REPORT FROM: Cllr. Eamonn O'Brien, Leader of the Council

CONTACT OFFICER: Paul Lakin

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Town centres across the country have, for a number of years, been facing significant challenges that have eroded high street retailing and its role in underpinning the vitality and economic strength of town centres. The economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has led to a significant intensification and acceleration of these challenges, and this is likely to have far-reaching consequences for the economies of all town centres.

2.0 ISSUES

- 2.1 Plans are in progress to develop regeneration and redevelopment opportunities in the Borough's key town centres to help address the key challenges they face. This will include explore ways in which these centres can appropriately adapt in a way that helps them continue to be key economic drivers for the Borough.
- 2.2 The following summarises the key areas of activity that are being pursued for Bury, Radcliffe, Ramsbottom and Prestwich town centres.

Bury Town Centre

- 2.3 For Bury Town Centre, work on a new, commercially-facing town centre masterplan has recently commenced . This will play a key role in delivering a response that will help to support economic recovery in the short-term as well as provide the foundations for Bury town centre to maintain its vibrancy and its status as one of the strongest centres in Greater Manchester for years to come.
- 2.4 Importantly, the masterplan will firm up end uses for some of the key sites in and around the town centre to enable their delivery in the short to medium term, including:
- The former fire station;
 - The former police station;
 - The Interchange;

- Bury markets area;
- Townside (Q Park); and
- Townside (former Pyramid Park).

2.5 The masterplan will also have an important role to play in promoting the town centre in general and in attracting development and inward investment by highlighting the major opportunities that exist. At the same time, it will be an important tool in demonstrating that the Council has a cohesive and up-to-date strategy in place to support bids for external funding.

Radcliffe Town Centre

2.6 The continued regeneration of Radcliffe remains a priority for the Council. In September 2020, Cabinet approved the Radcliffe Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF) to guide the future regeneration of the town. Since its approval, significant progress has been made on exploring opportunities to deliver the key priority projects identified in the SRF.

2.7 One of the SRF's key proposals for the regeneration of Radcliffe is the creation of a new Civic Hub in the heart of the town centre and this is a major regeneration priority for the Council given the potential for the site to have a fundamental role in driving further economic growth in the town centre.

2.8 The challenge and the aspiration for the Civic Hub development is to deliver a mixed use scheme that is distinctive and one that delivers the right products of the right quality within the current market conditions, with the potential to incorporate council services, leisure facilities, high quality retail, food and beverage outlets, community events space and private office space.

2.9 Doing nothing and leaving the town to market forces will not change the existing patterns of demand and won't provide the attractions to the centre that is needed to drive footfall and the growth. As set out in the SRF, intervention in the market is required and a development of the scale and nature proposed has the potential to be truly transformational for the town and will act as a catalyst for further development and investment in the town centre and wider Borough.

2.10 The SRF is clear in specifying that the preferred location for a new Civic Hub should be in the very heart of Radcliffe town centre and, specifically, identifies the site of the existing 1960's precinct owned by London and Associates Property. This location is strategically linked to the public transportation network, complements the Radcliffe Market proposals and will significantly improve the image and environment of the town centre core. Negotiations over the acquisition of the site from London and Associates are on-going.

Ramsbottom Town Centre

2.11 Work is due to start imminently on a Place Management and Movement Plan that will build on Ramsbottom's existing strengths and play a key role supporting the post-Covid economic recovery of town centre businesses and

the town centre in general. It will build increased confidence in the town centre, promoting it as a visitor destination and as a location for inward investment and will explore innovative approaches to current issues around navigation difficulties, pedestrian and vehicular conflict when visitor numbers are particularly high, poor linkages between some attractions and the longstanding problem with the quantity and location of parking for visitors.

- 2.12 The Council is also keen to provide further engagement to the businesses and town centre communities to understand what further interventions can be implemented to help and provide additional resilience with reopening.

Prestwich Town Centre

- 2.13 Significant progress has been made to unlock the development obstacles in Prestwich. Proposals are being developed which will involve the council acquiring the remaining Longfield shopping centre and plans to consult on redevelopment plans which create new homes, civic and commercial spaces along with usable public realm and a new public square. This will seek to create a new, distinct, centre for Prestwich which is fit for purpose for the modern demands for the town.

Prioritising the redevelopment of brownfield sites

- 2.14 The Council is committed to bringing forward new development on brownfield land to help deliver regeneration within the Borough and to reduce the amount of greenfield land that is required to meet longer term development needs.
- 2.15 The on-going work within each of the Borough's key town centres will play a key role in delivering the regeneration of brownfield land.
- 2.16 The Council was also recently awarded more than £1m from the Brownfield Housing Fund to help deliver new homes on brownfield sites at School Street and on the former Millwood School site at Fletcher Fold in Radcliffe with other bids already submitted to secure further monies from this Fund.

Funding

- 2.17 The Council's Strategic Investment Fund will be used to leverage investment from private sector partners and central government and this will also be supported through working alongside other partners, such as Transport for Greater Manchester and Homes England, to deliver key regeneration projects.
- 2.18 The regeneration plans set out above will also be an important tool in demonstrating that the Council has cohesive and up-to-date strategies in place to support other bids for external funding, including the Levelling Up Fund, the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, the Home Building Fund and the Intracity Transport Fund.

3.0 CONCLUSION

- 3.1 If our town centres are to maintain their role as key economic drivers within the Borough, it is now a critical time to develop an informed approach to how

these centres should position themselves and adapt to the challenges they are facing. This includes the need to accelerate regeneration activity which can not only help the centres to adapt but to also act as the catalyst for further investment and regeneration across the centre.

List of Background Papers:-

Contact Details:

[Report Author]

Executive Director sign off Date: _____

JET Meeting Date: _____