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| Report to: | Cabinet | Date: 09 March 2022 |
| Subject: | Bury Town Centre Masterplan | |
| Report of | Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Growth | |

Summary

This report details the results of the draft Bury Town Centre Masterplan consultation and seeks approval for the final Bury Town Centre Masterplan to become a material planning consideration and a document that will guide and support the development and future regeneration of Bury Town Centre.

Recommendation(s)

- Note the key themes raised in response to the consultation on the draft Bury Town Centre Masterplan;
- Approve the post-consultation amendments; and
- Approve the revised Bury Town Centre Masterplan as the final version and Council's policy document for the future of the town – to become a material planning consideration and guide future regeneration and investment opportunities.

Reasons for recommendation(s)

The Bury Town Centre Masterplan will provide a commercial, market facing and deliverable vision to guide the development and regeneration of Bury Town Centre over the next 15-20 years.

Alternative options considered and rejected

No other options were considered/were applicable.

Report Author and Contact Details:

Name: Crispian Logue

Position: Assistant Director (Strategy, Planning and Regulation)

Department: Business, Growth and Infrastructure

E-mail: c.logue@bury.gov.uk

Background

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Bury is the principal town centre in the Borough and is the focal point for retail, leisure, administration, services, tourism and culture. The town centre has fared comparatively well in recent years. It has seen significant investment and regeneration and is one of the highest-ranking retail destinations in Greater Manchester.
- 1.2 It is important that the centre can respond to both challenges and opportunities to sustain this status.
- 1.3 To support this, the Council appointed CBRE and Aecom to prepare a Town Centre Masterplan (hereafter known as the 'Masterplan'). The aim was to set out a comprehensive plan to direct the future growth and development of the town centre in a coherent and joined up manner.
- 1.4 The Masterplan is an informal, non-statutory document that will help to shape and direct future investment into the town centre and will form part of the evidence for the Borough's emerging Local Plan. It will also be a material consideration to which regard may be had in development control decisions relevant to the future regeneration of the town centre.
- 1.5 Early and extensive engagement with key stakeholders and Members underpinned the preparation of the draft Masterplan and on 15th December 2021, Cabinet approved a draft of the document for consultation purposes. This was followed by a six-week period of public consultation between 4th January and 15th February 2022 to seek the views and inputs from the wider public, key stakeholders and partners.
- 1.6 This report sets out:
 - The methods used in consulting on the draft Masterplan;
 - Details of the consultation responses received; and
 - Recommended changes to the draft plan in response to consultation feedback.
- 1.7 The report then considers the next steps for the Masterplan and the resources and governance arrangements required to deliver it.

2. CONSULTATION ON THE DRAFT MASTERPLAN

- 2.1 The Masterplan has been subject to a six-week period of consultation.
- 2.2 Several approaches were introduced to raise the profile of the consultation process and to maximise engagement with local residents and stakeholders.
- 2.3 The consultation process included:
 - A specific Bury Town Centre Masterplan consultation page on the Council's website which included full and summary versions of the draft Masterplan, frequently asked questions and a link to the survey which was hosted on the One Community website;

- Direct emails to stakeholders;
- Pull up banners in key locations (Bury Town Hall, Bury Library, Bury College and Castle Leisure Centre);
- Hard copies of the Masterplan were placed in Bury Town Hall and Bury Library;
- Postcards distributed to businesses and placed in key locations (Bury Town Hall, Bury Fusiliers Museum, Bury Art Gallery, The Millgate, Newtons on the Rock, Bury College);
- Press Releases and press features;
- Social Media;
- Distribution of social media assets and Masterplan postcard to community and business contacts/stakeholders;
- Stakeholder meetings including the Bury Town Centre Management Board, Bury College and Ward Members;
- Face to face drop-in sessions at the Millgate and Bury Market.

2.4 Feedback was encouraged via the online survey, by post or email and a dedicated phone line and email address were established as bespoke points of contact.

3. CONSULTATION RESPONSES – KEY THEMES

3.1 The Statement of Community Consultation is included in Appendix 1.

3.2 The consultation programme generated a good level of response in comparison to similar consultation exercises:

- The online consultation pages had 660 visits and 146 surveys were completed;
- 17 responses were received via email;
- Eight key stakeholder submissions were received e.g. TfGM, Bury College, Environment Agency.

3.3 As set out in Appendix 1, respondents identified their key priorities for the town centre as:

- Retaining shops and addressing vacancies (65.1%) and
- Improving the quality of streets and public spaces (65.1%)

3.4 Over three quarters of respondents agreed with the Masterplan's vision for Bury Town Centre (30.1% 'definitely agree', 47.3% 'agree')

3.5 There was a high level of support expressed for the ambitions set out within the Masterplan's Development Principles. This is especially true for DP1 (economic future and land use) where all ambitions received at least 75%

positive responses. A particularly high proportion of respondents agree with 'supporting growth sectors and innovation' (88.4%), 'upskilling (and reskilling) the local community' (87.7%), and 'improving health and wellbeing' (85.6%).

- 3.6 All of the proposed Character Zones were largely supported, with each receiving around two thirds of responses or more recorded as 'agree' or 'definitely agree'.
- 3.7 The Zones with the highest level of support were:
- Zone A – Retail Heart (81.5%);
 - Zone B – Vibrant Bury (80.8%); and
 - Zone C – Cultural Quarter (77.4%),
- 3.8 For those Character Zones with less support, this was still at over 66% (Zone H – Southern Gateway and Zone J – Chamberhall).
- 3.9 Key issues raised during the consultation by stakeholders and members of the community included:
- Retaining car parking and vehicular access to the town centre;
 - Ensuring access for people with disabilities and the elderly;
 - The need to provide high quality active travel infrastructure;
 - Improving access to the town centre by public transport;
 - Concerns around crime and public safety;
 - Better maintenance of existing public spaces, particularly green spaces;
 - Provision of housing on brownfield sites, particularly social/affordable housing;
 - Ensuring a diversity of town centre uses for all residents, workers and visitors;
 - Refurbishment rather replacement of Bury Market;
 - Ensuring sensitivity around the town centre's heritage assets;
 - Retention and development of local businesses
- 3.10 Appendix 1 sets out how these issues have been considered in the final Masterplan. Following thorough consideration of the issues raised, it was concluded that there were no fundamental changes required to the final Masterplan.

4. POST CONSULTATION AMENDMENTS TO THE MASTERPLAN

- 4.1 However, it has been considered necessary to make a number of amendments to reflect updated information which was not available at the time of consultation. A summary of these proposed amendments is presented below and a full table of amendments is provided in Appendix 2.
- An update to the Strategic Regeneration Context to reflect the Levelling Up White Paper, the submission of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and sub-regional transport policy context to reflect Quality Bus Transit and Restoring your Railways;
 - Additional text to reflect the opportunity to align new developments with upskilling and reskilling of the community, linking with Bury College;
 - New proposed visualisation for the Town Centre South Character Zone
- 4.2 The final Masterplan also identifies potential housing numbers on the sites earmarked for residential development or that have a residential component. Whilst there will be further work needed on the details of these sites, the proposed Masterplan does identify residential opportunities in Bury Town Centre beyond what had previously been envisaged. This is largely a reflection of the new opportunity for residential development that has arisen from the potential redevelopment of part of the Mill Gate estate.
- 4.3 The new potential housing land in Bury Town Centre and elsewhere will be reflected in the annual update of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). It is currently estimated that over 1,000 new units could be added to the supply from these potential new sources. However, a more detailed review of capacity for housing within the town centre will be undertaken in conjunction with the update to the SHLAA.
- 4.4 The updated SHLAA will be used as part of the evidence base for the formal Public Examination into the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and any identified additional capacity for housing within the town centre, may help to minimise the amount Green Belt land released in the Borough.
- 4.5 The final Masterplan can be viewed at Appendix 3.

5. DELIVERY OF MASTERPLAN

Funding

- 5.1 The Council is seeking to secure significant funding for the redevelopment of the Bury Interchange through the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement. The redevelopment of the interchange would act as the catalyst for wider investment and development around the town, providing a modern day interchange that integrates with its surroundings.
- 5.2 The Council has also recently secured substantial Levelling Up funds for the proposed new Flexi Hall, which will provide a new venue for events, pop up and seasonal markets as well as several wellbeing programmes.

- 5.3 The Council is also seeking to enter into a Joint Venture with Bruntwood to develop some of the Millgate Shopping Centre components of the Masterplan. It is envisaged that other funding opportunities should present themselves through these proposals.
- 5.4 In addition, the new Masterplan will assist with town centre promotion and marketing, encouraging investment and the development of partnerships which will be essential if the strategy is to be successfully delivered.
- 5.5 The Masterplan will establish a clear and planned approach towards the future of the town centre that will be used to underpin further funding bids from other sources such as Active Travel monies; Evergreen; the Brownfield Land Fund; Homes England; and the Shared Prosperity Fund
- 5.6 Bury town centre businesses are also seeking to establish a Business Improvement District where they contribute towards and decide what improvements they want to make in the town centre. If this status is established, this will be a further source of funding that could be invested into the town centre's business community and enhancements to the town centre trading environment.

Delivery Timeframes

- 5.7 Given the scale and ambition of the proposals identified in the Masterplan, alongside the level of investment that is required, the delivery of the proposals will be phased over a 20-year period.
- 5.8 The sites will not all come forward within the first five years of the Masterplan but, instead, the initial focus will be on key sites that are already cleared and/or within the Council's ownership or sites that have already secured funding (as detailed in Section 5).
- 5.9 The overarching ambition will be to ensure that development opportunities are brought forward in a way that creates an appropriate mix of mutually supportive uses across the town centre.
- 5.10 The short-term proposals (up to 2025) include the development of the Flexi-Hall and improvements to Bury Market. Detailed planning will be required to commence to ensure these projects are delivered by 2024.
- 5.11 In addition to the Flexi Hall and Market improvements there are several other proposals which are anticipated to come forward in the short to medium term (up to 2030). These include:
- The acquisition of the Mill Gate Estate by a Joint Venture to be formed between Bruntwood and the Council to secure a phased redevelopment of the Mill Gate Shopping Centre;
 - The redevelopment of Bury Interchange;
 - The sale of the former fire station site for development as a hotel; and

- The development of Phase Two of Chamberhall to create additional, high quality business space.

5.12 A commercial investment prospectus will follow the approval of the Masterplan, to provide quality promotional material that will be used to lever in additional interest and investment into the town centre.

6. GOVERNANCE

6.1 A number of proposals identified within the Masterplan will quickly move to the preliminary stages of delivery.

6.2 A report to Cabinet on 12th January 2022 set out a governance framework to implement the proposals within the Masterplan and ensure that they play a key role in delivering the Let's Do It strategy. The approved governance arrangements will be put in place to ensure successful implementation of the Masterplan and feed into the Council's Regeneration Board.

7. CONCLUSION

7.1 The recommendations are contained at the front of this report.

Links with the Corporate Priorities:

The Masterplan will guide and inform the future direction of activity within Bury Town Centre with the aim of creating a vibrant place that will benefit all of Bury's communities.

The outcomes that can be achieved will play a key role in delivering the Let's Do It strategy as developments planned for Bury Town Centre will have a significant impact on the economic, environmental and social development of the Borough as a whole.

Equality Impact and Considerations:

8. There are no negative impacts on equality and a positive impact recorded. EIA is available upon request.

Environmental Impact and Considerations:

9. The Bury Town Centre Masterplan sets out an ambitious vision for the future of Bury over the next 20 years and seeks to deliver a town centre where people want to live, work, study and visit. As a result, this will reduce the need for residents to travel to other locations for work, retail, leisure and other town centre facilities.

Assessment and Mitigation of Risk:

| Risk / opportunity | Mitigation |
|---|---|
| The post consultation amendments are not accepted. | The amendments are a result of public consultation and having considered the responses received. |
| The final Masterplan is not approved. | A previous Cabinet report approved the draft plan which is fundamental to the final Masterplan. The final Masterplan has been amended in response to comments received and additional information which has become available. |
| Adequate funding is not available and/or secured to deliver the Masterplan. | Early funding opportunities have been identified and secured. The Council is committed to sourcing and securing additional sources of funding. |

Legal Implications:

The masterplan is an informal, non-statutory document. If approved, it will not form part of the statutory development plan, and the force of s38(6) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 will not apply to it: it will be a material consideration to which regard may be had but it will not be a document with which development control decisions must accord unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

It will carry less weight than a supplementary planning document. In addition, the governance arrangements and approved recommendations from the January Cabinet meeting together with the legal implications set out in that report must also be taken into account in progressing this matter further.

Financial Implications:

The funding for the respective individual developments within the masterplan will be the subject of individual Cabinet reports. Cabinet has already received a report on the Bury Flexi Hall as part of the Levelling up Fund and will continue to receive further reports throughout the project. The proposed acquisition of the Millgate Estate, will also be subject to a further Cabinet report later this month following the completion of all the due diligence work and development of the joint venture documentation.

It is clear from this report that the masterplan covers a significant period of time and a number of projects which are inter related, some like the interchange which will be a catalyst for others and some of which may also stand alone.

Wherever, possible external funding will be sought to fully or partially fund each of the projects which form part of the Bury redevelopment and regeneration proposals. Funding sources may include levelling up funds, City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement, New Prosperity fund, capital receipts and the Councils capital programme. There is circa £54m of funding included within the capital programme for Bury regeneration for the period 2022/23 through to 2024/25.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Statement of Community Consultation

Appendix 2 – Schedule of Bury Masterplan Changes

Appendix 3 – Final (post consultation) Bury Town Centre Masterplan

Please include a glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report.

| Term | Meaning |
|--|---|
| City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement | A funding source that will help to transform local and strategic connectivity, making it easier to travel sustainably, affordably and quickly, improving access to employment and enhancing quality of life |
| Evergreen Funding | A funding source that will support development projects that contribute towards the local economy |