

SCRUTINY REPORT



MEETING: Overview and Scrutiny Committee

DATE: 6 September 2022

SUBJECT: Bury Town Centre Regeneration

REPORT FROM: Cllr. Eamon O'Brien- Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member for Strategic Growth and Skills

CONTACT OFFICER: Sarah Porru – Assistant Director Regeneration (Business & Growth)

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 and has seen significant investment and regeneration. It remains one of the most successful retail centres in Greater Manchester.
- 1.2. However, like all town centres, Bury is increasingly facing unprecedented challenges including the continued growth of internet shopping, competition from other leisure destinations, wider economic conditions and the impact of the Covid Pandemic. As a result, town centres are having to adapt and reinvent themselves in a way that is less reliant on the retail sector.
- 1.3. The on-going threat to the high street makes it even more important to plan for the future and ensure that Bury town centre can respond to challenges and opportunities to sustain its success. The Council has therefore developed a comprehensive Town Centre Masterplan (hereafter known as the 'Masterplan') to direct the future growth and development of the town centre in a coherent and joined up manner.
- 1.4. The Masterplan provides a commercial, market facing and deliverable vision to guide the development and regeneration of Bury Town Centre. Given the scale and ambition of the proposals identified, alongside the level of investment that is required, delivery will be phased over a 20-year period.
- 1.5. The town centre assets will be strengthened through a committed £96.7 million investment programme delivering a modernised Transport Interchange which will facilitate an increase in sustainable travel choices in Bury and contribute to regeneration and economic growth in Bury Town Centre, a new flexible event space and revitalised market, new hotel and delivery of 90,000 sqft high-quality employment space to the north of the town centre.
- 1.6. This paper provides an update on the delivery of the priority projects within the Masterplan, focusing on the proposals that are expected to come forward in the short to

medium term. These will be key sites that are already cleared and/or within the Council's ownership or sites/proposals that have already secured funding.

2. Bury Town Centre Regeneration

2.1. Bury Town Centre Masterplan sets out the following vision for the town:

By 2040, Bury will be an attractive, thriving, healthy and forward-looking town where people aspire to live, work, study and experience.

With a diverse mix of uses and services, this exemplar for future towns will be a vibrant place to be, both during the day and into the evening. Building on its distinctive and popular cultural heritage, visitors will experience a wealth of museums and galleries, the celebrated East Lancashire Railway and renowned, bustling market.

Creativity, innovation and community will be at the heart of Bury's transformation, providing exciting opportunities to grow new ideas, skills and businesses. Connecting it all together, will be Bury's network of high-quality streets and public spaces which encourage people to walk, cycle, explore and stay.

2.2. To realise the vision, the Masterplan identifies opportunities within 10 Broad Character areas. These are supported by 8 Strategic objectives across the town centre. A Bury Town Centre Prospectus (Appendix 1) has been produced summarising these opportunities and promoting the town centre to investors. In May 2022, the prospectus was distributed at UKREiif (Real Estate, Investment and Infrastructure Forum) a major, regeneration event) and the document will be updated regularly and form the basis on ongoing promotional activity to support the regeneration of the town centre.

3. Priority Projects

3.1. Bury Market Flexi Hall

£20 million Levelling up Funds has been secured to undertake improvement works to Bury Market and create a new Flexi-Hall. The 'Flexi-Hall' anchor will be a key destination comprising a large, state-of-the-art, carbon neutral, multifunctional events space, providing 'pop-up' trading, live performance, conference space, and community events. The development will also include a new café bar along with replacement office space for the Bury markets team and bookable meeting space.

Vinci Constuction are leading the design development work and this is now underway with the design work is currently at RIBA Stage 3. A full planning application for the scheme is due to be submitted in October 2022. The current programme anticipates the Flexi-Hall and market improvements will be delivered by Q4 2024

3.2. Mill Gate

Bury Council entered into a Joint Venture vehicle with Bruntwood and subsequently acquired the Mill Gate shopping centre and associated estate. The development vehicle has been set up to facilitate transformational change across the Mill Gate estate. Development opportunities include consolidation and diversification of the retail offer along with the potential for addition of new residential accommodation, leisure uses, office accommodation, family leisure along with food and beverage.

The joint venture is currently undertaking a number of workstreams to further analyse feasibility for the estate including a wide scale masterplanning exercise which has been instructed.

3.3. Former Fire Station Site (Eastern Gateway)

The former fire station site is earmarked for development as a hotel. Negotiations between our respective solicitors regarding the legal documents is ongoing.

3.4. Chamberhall Business Park Phase 2

Building on the success of Phase I, Bury Council is now seeking to deliver a second (and final) phase of the Business Park. A developer brief was prepared which sets out the following requirements:

Provision of at least 50,000 sq ft light industrial (Use Class B2) floorspace; Seeking to provide smaller units that will accommodate SME aspirations.

Hargreaves Land have been selected as the preferred developer. Detailed site surveys are currently being undertaken for delivering commencing in 2023. The developer will be responsible for securing planning for the site.

3.5. Health Innovation Centre Bury College

Over £60m investment is committed by Bury College, including a new Health Innovation STEM Centre. Construction is underway and continued engagement with Bury College will ensure training, education & skills ambitions for local residents and businesses are considered as part of the Masterplan delivery.

3.6. Bury Interchange

The Interchange will be redeveloped to create a new transport interchange. Opportunities to refurbish the Metrolink platform, introduce a new southern step free access and new mixed uses into the site, will help to create an active frontage with the Flexi Hall and onto Kay Gardens. TFGM are a key partner in the delivery of the masterplan and discussions regarding final design, funding and the timetable for construction are underway.

3.7. Parking Strategy

WSP have been commissioned to develop a parking strategy to fully understand parking demand in Bury TC and determine usage of both off-street and on-street parking across Bury town centre during a neutral weekday (Tues/Weds/Thurs only) and a Saturday. The on site surveys have now been completed and WSP are currently analysing the data. A summary report on the survey findings is due at the end of August.

3.8. Housing & Services

The introduction of new homes and services is critical to achieving increased footfall in the heart of the town and to boosting the night time economy. The Western Gateway and Southern Gateway are highlighted as fully residential zones which will deliver high-quality new housing within the town centre. However, wherever possible, all of the priority projects listed above will consider opportunities for residential development and/or the development of shared space and services to maximise footfall and increase vibrancy. To achieve this, it is recognised that the Masterplan must be considered in parallel with the ambitions of Bury's Housing Strategy and health & social care provision.

4. Funding

- 4.1. A £96.7 million investment programme has already been identified for town centre projects. The Masterplan establishes 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 UK Shared Prosperity Fund. Work to attract further private investment will also continue with further marketing & promotional activity planned.

4.2. **Bury Business Improvement District (BID)**

Bury Council has been working with Bury Town Centre Management Board (BTCMB) who have led on the development of a town centre BID. A BID Ballot (March 2022) supported the formal establishment of a BID. The BID is funded through a small, annual levy which will be used to deliver agreed projects to the benefit of businesses within the BID area. Projects will include the appointment of a BID Manager, Marketing and promotion and events which will bring an additional and complementary investment into the town centre.

5. **Governance**

- 5.1 Delivery of the Masterplan will be monitored by a Town Centre Advisory Board comprised of Council members, project partners and stakeholders. Membership of the Town Centre Advisory Board is attached at Appendix 2 The first meeting of the Town Centre Advisory Board was held on 25 July 2022 and membership and Terms of Reference are agreed.
- 5.2 The Board will give joint consideration to, and ensure the integration of, physical improvements to the town centre as contained within the town centre masterplan, with the economic, educational, social and cultural activities being developed as part of the emerging Bury People & Communities Plan. This will ensure that the economic success of the town centre benefits local people within the surrounding neighbourhoods, including East Bury which has deep and enduring levels of deprivation.
- 5.3 The Advisory Board will ensure joint working & engagement to achieve broader outputs and outcomes. It will also consider opportunities for new investment, into culture and heritage and the people and community workstreams. To ensure cross service engagement, a number of workstream subgroups have been agreed. Updates from each subgroup will be reported to the Advisory Board to ensure shared understanding and enable benefits to be maximised. These are:
- Flexi Hall & Market development
 - Millgate redevelopment
 - Interchange/Metrolink development
 - Culture & Heritage
 - People & Communities (Plan development)
 - Education
 - Housing
 - Transport

List of Background Papers:-

Bury Town Centre Masterplan - [Bury Town Centre Masterplan - Bury Council](#)

Contact Details:-

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Executive Director sign off Date: _____

JET Meeting Date: _____

Appendix 1 – Bury Investment Prospectus – attached

Appendix 2 - Membership of Bury Town Centre Advisory Board

To enable the Panel to deliver the above responsibilities the following membership is proposed :

- (a) Political representation from the Council: Leader of the Council, a representative from the largest Opposition Group and one Ward Councillor from East Bury.
- (b) MP for Bury North.
- (c) Chair of Bury Town Centre Management Board.
- (d) Representatives of the public and private sector partners that have decided to invest in Bury Town centre: the Rock, Bruntwood, TfGM, GMCA and Bury College.
- (e) A representative to be nominated by the key culture and heritage organisations based in Bury town centre.