

# **CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL**

## **Cabinet Member for Performance and Capacity**

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**Date of Meeting:** 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2009  
**Report of:** John Knight, Head of Planning and Policy  
**Subject/Title:** Alsager Town Centre Strategy Supplementary Planning Document

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### **1.0 Report Summary**

- 11.2 In accordance with the Council's Local Development Scheme, a draft Supplementary Planning Document for Alsager Town Centre has been prepared. The Supplementary Planning Document sets out a vision for the town centre and a series of objectives. It explains how these objectives may be met, the approach towards new retail provision and urban design in the town centre, as well as broad proposals for improving the public realm, managing and improving transport and town centre management. It is recommended that the draft document should be subject to public consultation prior to final adoption.

### **2.0 Recommendations**

That

- (1) the draft Alsager Town Centre Strategy Supplementary Planning Document be approved for the purposes of public consultation; and
- (2) the results of the public consultation and consequent recommended modifications to the draft Supplementary Planning Document be reported back to Cabinet for resolution to adopt as a Supplementary Planning Document.

### **3.0 Reasons for Recommendations**

- 3.1 To allow for public consultation on the Alsager Town Centre Strategy Supplementary Planning Document to be undertaken, and in the future for this document to be formally adopted as an Supplementary Planning Document providing additional guidance for the development of Alsager Town Centre.

### **4.0 Wards Affected**

- 4.1 Alsager

### **5.0 Local Ward Members**

- 5.1 Councillors R Fletcher, D Hough and Mrs S Jones

## **6.0 Policy Implications including - Climate change - Health**

- 6.1 The Alsager Town Centre Strategy SPD addresses a number of issues which should have a positive impact on climate change and health including:
- the image and character of Alsager town centre;
  - the unfulfilled shopping potential and loss of trade to other Towns;
  - deficiencies in recreation, leisure and culture;
  - the appearance and quality of the Civic Centre and other public buildings;
  - infrastructure – quality of roads and paving, pedestrian facilities, signage in and around town;
  - The ageing population;
  - fear of crime and anti-social behaviour; and
  - the lack of youth facilities.

## **7.0 Financial Implications for Transition Costs (Authorised by the Borough Treasurer)**

- 7.1 None

## **8.0 Financial Implications 2009/10 and beyond (Authorised by the Borough Treasurer)**

- 8.1 The costs of public consultation and the ultimate adoption of the SPD, including notification letters, will be met within the existing 2009/10 budget for Spatial Planning

## **9.0 Legal Implications (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)**

- 9.1 The Alsager Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) will, when adopted, form part of the Cheshire East Local Development Framework. The Local Development Framework (LDF) is required to be produced by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. It is produced to ensure that through its function as a Local Planning Authority, the Council:
- is in accordance with national and regional planning policy and advice and ;
  - wherever possible meets the priorities of the community it serves, as set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Corporate Plan.
- 9.2 The LDF will eventually replace the adopted Local Plans for Congleton, Crewe and Nantwich, Macclesfield and the Cheshire Minerals and Waste Local Plans, and will provide the planning framework for determining development proposals in Cheshire East.

## **10.0 Risk Management**

- 10.1 Provided that the statutory requirements of the SPD preparation and consultation process are met, there is unlikely to be any risk associated with public consultation of this document.

## **11.0 Background and Options**

- 11.1 In January 2009 the Local Development Scheme (LDS) for Cheshire East was given formal approval by the Government Office for the North West (GONW). This document sets out the spatial planning policy priorities for the Council, for the next three years. Included within the LDS programme of works is the production of a SPD for Alsager Town Centre.
- 11.3 The purpose of the Alsager Town Centre Strategy SPD is to complement policies adopted within the Congleton Local Plan and saved as part of the Cheshire East LDF, particularly policies S1, S4, S5 and S6, to provide additional practical guidance and support for those involved in the planning of new development within Alsager Town Centre.
- 11.4 An informal draft of the Alsager Town Centre Strategy SPD was made available from 27<sup>th</sup> August 2008 to a number of key stakeholders, for comments. This consultation stage was essentially concerned with seeking technical observations from individuals within organisations that would either use or potentially endorse the document once it becomes an adopted SPD, including Alsager Town Council and the Alsager Partnership.
- 11.5 The draft SPD was considered and approved at the meeting of the Local Development Framework Task Group on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2009.
- 11.6 The document, a copy of which is attached as Appendix 1 to this report, sets out a vision for the town centre and a series of objectives. It explains how these objectives may be met, the approach towards new retail provision and urban design in the town centre, as well as broad proposals for improving the public realm, managing and improving transport and town centre management.
- 11.7 As required by the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive a Screening Exercise was undertaken to determine if a SEA is required to assess the environmental effects of the SPD. Between 8<sup>th</sup> December 2008 and 5<sup>th</sup> January 2009 the statutory environmental consultees were consulted upon this Screening Statement. They determined that a SEA was not required in relation to this SPD. However, national guidance still requires that a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is undertaken for SPDs where the policies they are supplementing have not already been assessed. The purpose of the SA is to independently assess the contribution that the Alsager Town Centre Strategy SPD will make to achieve the social, economic and environmental objectives of sustainable development. The methodology for the SA is agreed with the statutory environmental consultees through a SA Scoping Report, which was consulted upon

between 7<sup>th</sup> January and 12<sup>th</sup> February 2009. The sustainability of the SPD is considered within the SA Report, which is currently being produced and will be consulted upon at the same time as the Draft Alsager Town Centre Strategy SPD.

11.8 As required by the Habitats Directive a Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening Report for the SPD has also been undertaken. This report determines if this document is likely to have a significant effect on any European sites, such as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Offshore Marine Sites (OMS). Again this report will be consulted upon alongside the Draft Alsager Town Centre Strategy SPD.

11.9 Once the formal public consultation exercise has been conducted, the responses will be recorded and taken into account. It is intended that a further report will be written to the Cabinet, seeking formal adoption of the Alsager Town Centre Strategy SPD.

## **12.0 Overview of Year One and Term One Issues**

12.1 The Alsager Town Centre Strategy will be made available for public consultation. This document is likely to be adopted during Year 1, as part of the Cheshire East LDF that will provide additional guidance for the development of Alsager Town Centre.

## **13.0 Access to Information**

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

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