
Housing, Planning and Regeneration Portfolio Holder

Date of Meeting: 01 February 2019

Report Title: Crewe Station Hub Area Action Plan – Development Strategy

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Ainsley Arnold

Senior Officer: Sean Hannaby, Director of Planning & Environment

1. Report Summary

1.1. This report seeks approval to consult on the next stage of the Crewe Station Hub Area Action Plan (CSHAAP). The Plan is designed to guide and manage development in the environs of the new HS2 Hub Station at Crewe.

1.2. The CSHAAP has been the subject of a four week issues consultation during November and December with a series of local engagement events. Alongside further evidence this feedback has helped shape a Development Strategy as the next stage of the Area Action Plan.

2. Recommendations

2.1. To consider the consultation responses set out at Appendix 1 and the recommendations from Strategic Planning Board

2.2. Subject to any recommendations, that the Housing, Planning and Regeneration Portfolio Holder be recommended to approve the Development Strategy attached at Appendix 2 for consultation.

3. Reasons for Recommendations

3.1. The proposed consultation forms part of the engagement and consultation phase of plan making that will inform the Council's final

'publication' version of the Plan which in due course will be submitted to Examination.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1. The preparation of an Area Action Plan is discretionary; the Council could simply to opt to manage development as best it can with existing policies. However this is unlikely to provide the clarity and strategy appropriate for managing an area of rapid change and opportunity.

5. Background

- 5.1. The Local Plan Strategy recognises the importance of Crewe Station as a Transport hub – but it does not plan directly for the implications of HS2 and acknowledges that a more detailed Area Action Plan might be necessary in the future. The Local Plan Strategy is a pre-HS2 document and if the Council is to manage the change associated with the new station, and the increased connectivity at Crewe through high speed rail, it needs to have a robust and up to date development plan in place which addresses the additional development directly associated with the station.
- 5.2. Via the Local Development Scheme, the Council, through its Strategic Planning Board and Portfolio Holder, agreed in August 2018 to prepare an Area Action Plan for the Crewe Hub Station and its environs. The Area Action Plan will have a very narrow geographic focus, being confined to the area close to Crewe Railway Station to plan for economic growth emerging from the increased connectivity.
- 5.3. The Council continues to campaign for a full HS2 station (enabling north and south connections) to be provided in the town, in order to maximise the opportunities for inter-regional connectivity and economic growth. The Plan is conceived as a means of managing and coordinating the significant change likely to arise from the Government's investment in HS2 at Crewe.
- 5.4. During the Autumn the Council has gathered additional evidence and sought the views of stakeholders on a range of issues associated with the delivery of a HS2 Hub Station at Crewe. This has enabled key development principles to be drawn up for the area Action Plan. As a stepping stone towards the finalised 'Publication' Plan, this 'Development Strategy' is now proposed for consultation during February and March. The strategy is supported by Sustainability Appraisal and a number of evidential documents; these are accessible [here](#).

The Form of the Strategy

- 5.5. The Strategy first of all identifies the options for the proposed plan boundary. Unlike all other development plans which match the boundary of Cheshire East as a Planning Authority (the Peak District National Park having its own planning powers) a fundamental choice for the Area Action Plan is how far it should extend. In simple terms the wider the area covered, the more comprehensive it will be – but equally the more issues that will be provoked and the longer it will take to prepare. Conversely a more confined plan may prove more agile but also may fail to address all of the development implications of the enhanced station. Accordingly a balance needs to be struck in choosing the appropriate boundary and a series of potential options are included within the Strategy itself. Mostly these employ roads and railways to define their limits.
- 5.6. Secondly the Strategy sets out a series of key policy principles for the Area Action Plan which all new development would be expected to adhere to. These include:
- Improving accessibility to the Crewe Hub Station
 - Facilitating transport interchange
 - Improving Linkages between the Town Centre and Station
 - Maximising the opportunities derived from 5-7 trains per hour
 - Integrating development around the station with the rest of Crewe
 - Safeguarding Crewe's Railway & Built Heritage
- 5.7. Thirdly the Strategy sub-divides the Plan into six potential development parcels for which spatial policies and principles are drawn up. Foremost amongst these are:
- Crewe Commercial Hub / Station Central – The Weston Road gateway – creation of a new main entrance to the station, alongside supporting facilities and transport interchange. Opposite this will be the new Crewe Commercial District – a fresh business location which capitalises on the enhanced connectivity afforded by the upgraded station. This area will be characterised by landmark buildings and higher density development
- North West Link – a revamped commercial and residential area focussing on a direct link between Nantwich road and the Town centre

via Mill Street Bridge. There are also important heritage assets in this vicinity which require preservation and integration.

Gresty Road Gateway. This area will safeguard a potential future pedestrian entrance directly into the station. There is scope for additional development to complement the retained Crewe Alexandra stadium and improved public realm

Infrastructure & accessibility

- 5.8. The enhanced rail service requires significant improvements in accessibility in and around the station. The benefits of HS2 will not be realised if major cities can be reached in minutes by train but grid lock prevails beyond the station entrance resulting in the benefits of high speed rail travel and enhanced connectivity being undermined by poor accessibility. Accordingly, the Area Action Plan must anticipate new and improved transport infrastructure as within the station all passengers are effectively pedestrians and thought must be given initially to the movement of people by non-vehicular modes. Allied to this there will be complementary strategies for public transport interchange, public car parking – and the management of existing and enhanced traffic within the town of Crewe.
- 5.9. To address this, the Development Strategy proposes a corridor of exploration for a new high capacity road bridge located to the south of Crewe Station. This will carry through traffic away from the congested station area and enable Nantwich Road to be significantly amended to improve the environment for pedestrians accessing the station – potentially reassigning road space from vehicles to people.

Next steps

- 5.10. This current Development Strategy brings together the Council's initial proposals for the planning and management of development around the Hub Station. It reflects many of the matters raised during the period of engagement during the autumn. If approved, consultation is planned to take place over a six week period between 11th February and 25th March.
- 5.11. Following this it is proposed to move towards a publication draft plan later in 2019, subject to any additional consultation or engagement considered appropriate in light of responses received. The Publication Plan will be the subject of formal consultation and will then be submitted to the Secretary of State for Examination.

6. Implications of the Recommendations

6.1. Legal Implications.

6.1.1. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) requires local planning authorities to prepare Local Plans. The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) sets out the procedures to be followed in the preparation of such plans.

6.2. Finance Implications

6.2.1. The full cost of preparing the Crewe Station Hub Area Action Plan will be funded from the HS2 budget within Infrastructure and Highways.

6.3. Policy Implications

6.3.1. The Area Action Plan sets out the Council's policies for the development of land in and around the Crewe Hub Station.

6.4. Equality Implications

6.4.1. The sustainability Appraisal that accompanies the preparation of the Area Action Plan considers the implications for equalities.

6.5. Human Resources Implications

6.5.1. There are no direct implications for human resources

6.6. Risk Management Implications

6.6.1. There are no direct implications for risk management

6.7. Rural Communities Implications

6.7.1. The Area Action Plan concerns land within the urban area of Crewe

6.8. Implications for Children & Young People / Cared for Children

6.8.1. There are no direct implications for children and young people.

6.9. Public Health Implications

6.9.1. Appropriate Development Plan policies can help foster healthier living and working environments.

7. Ward Members Affected

7.1. All Crewe Wards

8. Consultation & Engagement

- 8.1. The Area Action Plan was subject to a period of engagement during the late Autumn of 2019. A series of events were held for local businesses and residents and an online consultation on the Issues Paper. A summary of the comments received is attached as Appendix 1.

9. Access to Information

- 9.1. Aside from the supporting information referenced in paragraph 5.4 the relevant section of the Council's [website](#) includes the previous Area Action Plan Issues Paper and related supporting information

10. Contact Information

- 10.1. Any questions relating to this report should be directed to the following officers:

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Crewe Station Hub Area Action Plan: Issues Paper – Summary of Responses

Appendix 2 Crewe Station Hub Area Action Plan: Development Strategy