

Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 08 October 2019

Report Title: Macclesfield Town Centre Regeneration – Strategic Framework and Future Programme

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Nick Mannion – Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regeneration

Senior Officer: Frank Jordan – Executive Director Place

1. Report Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the development of a Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF) for Macclesfield town centre, outlines the process undertaken in its development, and informs Cabinet of the outcome of a public consultation exercise with local residents, businesses and stakeholders on the draft document. It also seeks Cabinet's approval of the final draft of the document.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet:
- 2.1.1 Note the content of the consultation report as outlined in Appendix A.
- 2.1.2 Approve the Macclesfield Town Centre Strategic Regeneration Framework as outlined in Appendix B.

3. Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1. The Council has clearly articulated its ambitions to support the regeneration and improvement of Macclesfield Town Centre. The attached draft Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF) has been developed to provide clear direction for the delivery of those ambitions and has been refined to take account of views raised through a public consultation.

- 3.2. Approving this document is important to provide a clear sense of direction for all stakeholders including other parties also interested in driving forward improvements and regeneration, and to demonstrate to potential funders that the Council has a clear considered strategy and intentions to pursue it.
- 3.3. If the Council wishes to pursue initiatives to support the regeneration and improvement of the town centre, it will be necessary to commit further resources to developing key projects. Whilst resources within existing budgets can be used to start to develop plans, officers will also need to seek further funding through the normal budget setting process.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 There is no statutory requirement for Local Authorities to produce Strategic Regeneration Frameworks. However, the need for an SRF is outlined in Section 5 of this report.
- 4.2 Proceeding with no specific regeneration strategy for the town centre has been considered but this is likely to result in:
 - 4.2.1 Attempts to secure external funding being undermined;
 - 4.2.2 Promotion of uncoordinated proposals which fail to create potential synergy and at worse are contradictory and counterproductive;
 - 4.2.3 Residents, businesses, developers and potential investors lacking confidence in the Council's commitment to support the regeneration of Macclesfield town centre;
 - 4.2.4 Potential opportunities for growth, including any opportunities associated with HS2, remaining unrealised.

5. Background

- 5.1 Macclesfield is one of two recognised 'Principal Towns' in the borough as set out in the adopted Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy of 2017 (CELPS). Macclesfield is the principal centre serving the north, whilst its counterpart Crewe is the principal centre serving the south. Crewe and Macclesfield, as the boroughs two Principal Towns, are key to the Council's aspirations for growth and prosperity.
- 5.2 A number of strategic Council documents including the Sustainable Community Strategy, the Local Plan, and the draft Economic Strategy, recognise the opportunities Macclesfield presents for supporting Council strategic priorities. Central Macclesfield is identified in the Local Plan

(LPS 12) as a location where the Council will look to maximise opportunities for improvement and regeneration through a range of mechanisms including:

- 5.2.1 Supporting or delivering new dwellings, in-centre retail and leisure development, offices, restaurants, cafes, and an enhanced cultural offer;
- 5.2.2 Improving highways and pedestrian and cycle links;
- 5.2.3 Ensuring appropriate car parking;
- 5.2.4 Improving the public realm and green infrastructure;
- 5.2.5 Promoting local markets;
- 5.2.6 Maximising opportunities to bring disused and underused buildings back into use.

5.3 Furthermore, the Local Plan states that:

- 5.3.1 The retail and leisure sectors must be strengthened with a focus on quality and variety;
- 5.3.2 There are numerous opportunities to rationalise and consolidate existing car parks to unlock regeneration opportunities;
- 5.3.3 The area around the station in particular offers significant opportunity to create a hub of activity with commercial, residential and leisure development;
- 5.3.4 Land to the north of the retail core (around Jordangate) would benefit from enlivening via small scale development and reintegration with the town centre;
- 5.3.5 Sensitive infill residential development is appropriate around the historic centre and there must be a focus on offering a mix of residential accommodation;
- 5.3.6 There are opportunities to deliver high quality public open space throughout the town centre.

5.4 Taking into account the above, the importance of prioritising the regeneration of Macclesfield town centre to fulfill its potential is clear.

5.5 To identify the best strategy for Macclesfield town centre the Council has sought external expert advice from a multi-disciplinary team.

5.6 The team was commissioned to develop a draft SRF which:

- 5.6.1 Ensured 'strategic fit' with existing key strategies and policy documents such as LPS12 of the Local Plan (CELPS);
- 5.6.2 Was evidence based;
- 5.6.3 Took account of local stakeholders views;
- 5.6.4 Sought to enable opportunities which might arise from HS2 to be realised;

- 5.6.5 Drew on the professional expertise, knowledge and experience of the team to ensure realism and deliverability; and,
 - 5.6.6 Was sufficiently flexible to allow responsiveness to ever-changing market conditions and emerging opportunities.
- 5.7 On 31st January 2019, the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Planning and Regeneration approved the draft document for public consultation. A public consultation subsequently followed, launched with significant local publicity, including press notice, media release, posters erected around the town centre, information banners installed in the Macclesfield Grosvenor Centre, sharing of the documentation and media material with local organisations, email to 1,100 members of the Cheshire East Digital Influence Panel in surrounding wards, officer visits to Macclesfield College, Kings School and Cheshire Eye Society, an entry in the 'In Focus' section of the Council's homepage, and the running of a Saturday drop in event in the town centre. The public consultation ran from 13th February to 13th March 2019. Fuller details of the process undertaken to engage stakeholders and in running the public consultation are set out in a [Statement of Consultation and Engagement](#).
- 5.8 The public consultation resulted in the submission of 264 responses. This was a 66% increase in the number of representations received in response to a previous consultation on a draft 5 year regeneration vision for the town centre from 2017, indicating the influence of the publicity undertaken. Respondents were asked a series of closed questions to understand views around a draft vision, draft objectives, draft aspirations for identified character areas, to understand which of those areas stakeholders regard as priority for regeneration, and to gain feedback on provisional actions and a draft illustrative framework. The consultation also allowed opportunity for more open feedback, for example suggestions for additional ideas and issues for consideration by the consultant team.
- 5.9 Following the close of the public consultation, all issues raised were reviewed. A report at Appendix A summarises the key issues raised by the consultation and the changes they have made to the draft document in response. All responses received are available to view [here](#).
- 5.10 Respondents were asked how strongly they agreed or disagreed with a draft vision for the town centre. A large proportion (79%) 'strongly agreed' or 'tended to agree' that the draft vision was a good vision for the town centre, with just 12% in disagreement. After consideration of the suggestions received the draft vision has now been amended with the additional text in green:

Macclesfield - a town that celebrates its quirkiness*.

Green, creative, connected and social. A home to innovators, entrepreneurs and independents.

Thriving, diverse, distinctive and inclusive. Rich in heritage and culture, with outstanding employment opportunities and nestled in stunning countryside.

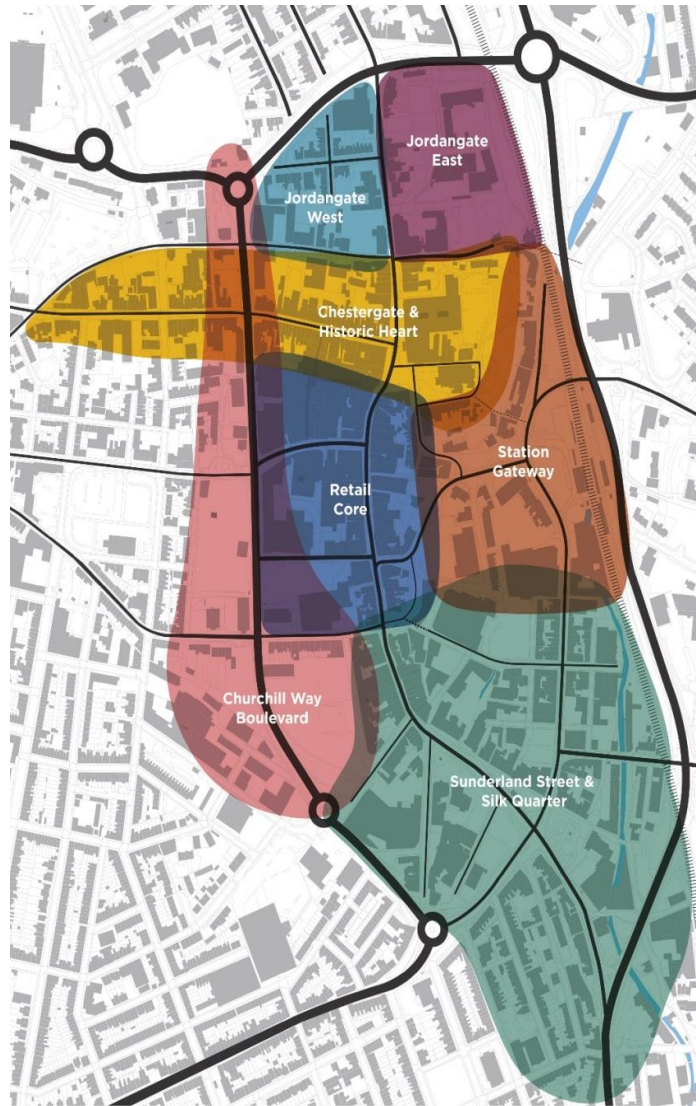
Cherishing its past, striving for a sustainable future

**Quirky "unusual in an attractive and interesting way."*

5.11 Eight draft objectives for the town centre were set out and respondents asked to rank these in order of priority. The following list orders those objectives as ranked by respondents from most to least important and shows key changes to text resulting from suggestions received via the public consultation in green including the addition of a further objective.

- 1. Enhance the town centre environment** - making it greener, more distinctive and a celebration of local creativity **through our high quality and sustainable blue and green infrastructure, green spaces and public realm.**
- 2. Cherish historic buildings and repurpose underutilised assets** - to diversify our offer, **celebrate our distinctiveness** and attract a wide range of occupiers to the town.
- 3. Grow and diversify the leisure, cultural and evening economy** - to balance the existing retail dominated central offer and attract a wider audience and support new resident desires. Encourage people to spend more time and money in the town **through new leisure uses including food and drink.** Building upon our existing impressive events calendar **and proximity and views to the Peak District.**
- 4. Support businesses to create jobs and develop skills** - Maximise Macclesfield's strategic location and create the right business environment for small and medium sized businesses to co-locate and collaborate with each other and the world class organisations in our hinterland.
- 5. Raise aspirations and change perceptions** - get better at promoting all that the town has to offer and encourage new entrants to invest
- 6. Harness distinctiveness** - make better use of our assets - such as town and country, rivers and canals, Georgian architecture. Provide reasons, services and experiences that can only be found in Macclesfield.
- 7. Grow the town centre population** - building the right **mix of quality** residential accommodation **of appropriate design** to attract and sustain a diverse community
- 8. Make more of connectivity** - to attract residents, workers and visitors who want a base from which to access our local world class businesses as well as those who want access to the Peak District, London and Manchester. Capitalise on strategic opportunities such as HS2 to unlock and accelerate growth.
- 9. Enhance the retail offer** – **striving for an uplift in quality, independents and diversity, supporting existing retailers and encouraging new**

5.12 The draft SRF identified a number of character areas within the town centre and set out suggested aspirations for these areas. The public was asked to rank these areas in order of importance for regeneration and to consider whether they agreed with the suggested aspirations. The defined areas and an overview of responses is shown below.



Area	Priority	Agreement with aspirations
Chestergate & Historic Heart	1st	87%
Retail Core	Joint 2nd	74%.
Station Gateway	Joint 2nd	76%
Sunderland St & Silk Quarter	4th	81%
Churchill Way Boulevard	5th	74%
Jordangate East & West	6th	74%

5.13 Cabinet is asked to note that the next steps proposed by officers to take forward the regeneration of Macclesfield Town centre are as follows:

5.13.1 To utilise existing resources within the Macclesfield Regeneration Programme budget to develop detailed designs for the public realm, prioritising in the first instance Chestergate and the Historic Heart of the town to align with the priorities identified in the Strategic Regeneration Framework.

5.13.2 To seek to identify any available existing funds which might be utilised to progress the development of: a Town Centre Movement Strategy; a Regeneration focused Town Centre Car Parking Strategy; an Options appraisal for Macclesfield's markets, public realm enhancements and a review and options report on the use of Macclesfield Old Town Hall.

5.13.3 To start to consider options for the transformative redevelopment of the Station Gateway, liaising with interested parties to identify potential routes forward.

5.13.4 As and when the timing is appropriate, to pursue further actions recommended in the SRF and Delivery Plan following all normal Council procedures as appropriate to the particular recommendation.

6. Implications of the Recommendations

6.1. Legal Implications

6.1.1. There is no statutory requirement to produce a Strategic Regeneration Framework and there should not be any direct legal implications arising from its approval.

6.2. Finance Implications

6.2.1. Cabinet are not being asked to commit to the delivery of specific major capital projects stemming from the SRF, rather they are being asked to agree to officers pursuing the recommendations in the SRF and Delivery Plan. Funding will need to be applied for following normal Council budget setting procedures.

6.3. Policy Implications

6.3.1. The development of the Strategic Regeneration Framework supports the delivery of Objectives 1, 2, 4 and 5 of the Corporate Plan. More specifically it supports the delivery of the regeneration ambitions for Central Macclesfield set out in LPS 12 in the CELPS.

6.4. Equality Implications

- 6.4.1. An Equality Impact Assessment screening has been undertaken. A link to that screening assessment is provided in Section 9. Any individual proposals stemming from the strategy will be subjected to Equality Impact Assessments where appropriate.

6.5. Human Resources Implications

- 6.5.1. There are no identified implications as a result of this report.

6.6. Risk Management Implications

- 6.6.1. The approval of a strategy will raise expectations that the Council will commit resources to the regeneration of Macclesfield Town Centre in the form of future capital projects and work which may generate revenue funding. Whilst each project and initiative would be considered in more detail as part of normal funding allocation processes, it must be understood that stakeholders will anticipate financial support for projects going forward. Dependant on other financial commitments, it may not be possible to finance projects from Council resources and the Council cannot ensure funding from other sources. There are therefore risks around reputation if stakeholders' expectations are raised.
- 6.6.2. To mitigate risks associated with this it is important to be clear of the level of commitment at every stage and to seek to ensure expectations are managed and not raised unrealistically.

6.7. Rural Communities Implications

- 6.7.1. Macclesfield town centre, being one of largest in the borough, serves not only the residents of Macclesfield but many of the villages and rural populations that live in the surrounding rural areas. Securing the regeneration of the town centre therefore indirectly supports the rural communities in the north east of the borough.

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

- 6.8.1. There are no direct implications for children and young people although there are indirect implications as it is recognised that people without access to private transport (particularly young people) use town centres more than out-of-centre locations that are less well-served in terms of transport, seating etc.

6.9. Public Health Implications

- 6.9.1. There are no direct implications for public health although in pursuing projects which will increase walking in the town centre and reduce vehicle dominance, positive health implications could result.

6.10. Climate Change Implications

- 6.10.1. The Council has committed to becoming Carbon Neutral by 2025 and to encourage all businesses, residents and organisations in Cheshire East to reduce their carbon footprint. Supporting strong and healthy town centres is key to minimising the need to travel by private motor vehicle. Town Centres are generally, relatively well served by public transport compared to alternative destinations such as out of town retail parks. Additionally town centres act as a hub for a wide range of facilities and services in one location, facilitating people to combine activities without unnecessary travel. The Town Centre Movement Strategy recommended as a next step flowing from the SRF would be focused on discouraging driving through the town centre and encouraging and facilitating walking and cycling.

7. Ward Members Affected

- 7.1 The geographical focus of the Macclesfield Town Centre SRF falls within Macclesfield Central Ward. Ward councillors are Cllr Liz Braithwaite and Cllr Ashley Farrall.
- 7.2 Macclesfield town centre is however used by residents and visitors from a far wider area and the prosperity of the town centre has implications for the wider economy. This report thus has implications for many of the wards across the north of the borough.
- 7.3 Local Members were invited to a briefing during the development of the pre-consultation SRF in December 2018 and their views taken into account at that time.
- 7.4 A further all Members briefing was held in July 2019 on Macclesfield regeneration particularly focused on briefing new members. Additionally a further meeting with Central Macclesfield ward members specifically focused on the SRF was held in late July 2019. Further minor changes were made to the draft SRF following that meeting.

8. Consultation & Engagement

- 8.1 The draft Strategic Regeneration Framework was developed having regard to views of local stakeholders gathered via a variety of means. The draft document has been subjected to a full public consultation exercise whilst still at a formative stage. The process of engagement and consultation in

developing this document is set out in some detail in the Statement of Consultation and Engagement available by following the link at 9 below.

- 8.2 The consultants have carefully considered each response received and produced a report outlining how representations have informed the final form of the document. The consultants report on the consultation is set out at **Appendix A**.
- 8.3 Any proposals stemming from the SRF would be subject to separate public consultation if required following normal procedure.
- 8.4 The Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee considered the draft strategic framework at its meeting on 16th September 2019.

9. Access to Information

Appended Documents:

Appendix A: Report on Consultation

Appendix B: Macclesfield Town Centre Strategic Regeneration Framework
Final recommended version

Links:

[2011 Place Shaping Consultation Headline Results](#)

[CELPS 2017](#)

[SADPD \(Consultation Draft\) 2018](#)

[Cabinet Report 12th September 2017](#)

[PH Decision 16th August 2018](#)

[PH Decision 31st January 2019](#)

[Equality Impact Assessment](#)

[Macclesfield TC SRF Statement of Consultation and Engagement](#)

Available on Request:

Recommended Delivery Plan

Macclesfield Town Centre SRF final version showing tracked changes from consultation draft

10. Contact Information

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

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