

# Cheshire East Council

## Cabinet

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<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	12 <sup>th</sup> September 2017
<b>Report of:</b>	Frank Jordan, Executive Director - Place
<b>Subject/Title:</b>	Macclesfield Regeneration - Vision and Strategy
<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	Cllr Ainsley Arnold, Housing & Planning

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### 1. Report Summary

- 1.1. This report outlines the intent to adopt a vision and strategy document to guide Macclesfield focused regeneration activity, replacing the Macclesfield Town Centre Vision document of January 2014.
- 1.2. It proposes that the appended draft vision and strategy document be subjected to public consultation, and, post consultation, having regard to all relevant representations, that the document be finalised and adopted to provide a clear, unambiguous structure for prioritising and managing regeneration activity in Macclesfield Town Centre over the next 5 years.
- 1.3. The report outlines the reasoning behind the production of a refreshed vision and strategy document, and sets out how this will assist in revitalising Macclesfield Town Centre, to strengthen the resilience of the local economy, enhance the quality of place, and provide for the needs of the local community in line with the Council's 'Residents First' outcomes.

### 2. Recommendation

It is recommended that:

- 2.1. Cabinet approves the attached Consultation Draft of the Vision, Strategy, and Action Plan for the revitalisation of Macclesfield, for public consultation purposes.
- 2.2. Cabinet delegates authority to the Executive Director - Place, to authorise any necessary actions to finalise the document, and in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning, to approve the final version of this document having regard to representations submitted through the public consultation process.

- 2.3. Cabinet delegates authority to the Executive Director - Place, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning, to take all actions necessary to progress and implement the delivery of the strategy, including making modifications to the Action Plans contained within the document, subject to any further business cases being made in the normal way for allocation of associated finances.
- 2.4. Cabinet authorises the spend of up to a further £400K from the existing approved Regeneration and Development Capital Budget to supplement the £1M already approved to enhance the public realm in the core of the Town Centre.
- 2.5. That Cabinet notes that a business case will be developed for capital investment in public realm enhancements in future years, so that it can be considered as part of the medium term financial strategy.

### **3. Reasons for Recommendation**

- i. Approving the attached Consultation Draft of the 5 year Vision, Strategy, and Action Plan for the revitalisation of Macclesfield, for public consultation purposes.*
- 3.1. To improve the vitality and viability of Macclesfield Town Centre has been a long-standing ambition of the Council. Alongside Crewe Town Centre, Macclesfield Town Centre is a key area of focus for the Council's Regeneration Team for several reasons which are highlighted in the appended strategy document.
- 3.2. Officers across many teams within the Council are already working on a number of projects aimed at revitalising the town centre including: pursuing the delivery of an enhanced leisure offer in the form of a cinema led leisure development on Churchill Way car park, developing plans for a public realm enhancement scheme in the Primary Shopping Area, administering a shop front grant scheme, pursuing funding streams for the delivery of highway enhancement schemes as part of the Macclesfield Movement Strategy, and making Local Development Orders to facilitate in-town residential developments.
- 3.3. It is critical to ensure there remains a clear focus on the delivery of such ongoing projects, because as people see changes happening on the ground, confidence that Macclesfield is a place on the ascent will grow. However, in light of the continuing rise in internet retailing and downward economic growth revisions, it is also considered important that we look beyond these existing projects, to make longer term plans to support the continued revitalisation of the town centre and demonstrate our commitment to doing this through a publicly visible document.

- 3.4. Realistically, the Council cannot deliver the kind of uplift in the town centre that residents, members and officers want to see, working alone. Working collaboratively with other organisations, however, it is possible to effect significant positive change. Research suggests that organisations wishing to revitalise town centres are more likely to be effective, if they work with others to a shared vision, a clear agreed strategy, and an action plan with defined responsibilities for delivery.
- 3.5. It is therefore considered important that the draft document be subject to consultation, in particular allowing the Council to engage with other key delivery organisations, with a view to seeking: their support to endorse, support and share the Vision and Strategy it sets out; their input into the emerging action plans contained within it; and agreement on a mechanism for allowing key delivery organisations to effectively communicate and work collaboratively.
- ii. *Delegation of authority to the Executive Director - Place, to authorise any necessary actions to finalise the document, and in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning, to approve the final version of this document having regard to representations submitted through the public consultation process.*
- 3.6 This recommendation is included to avoid delays in adoption of a final document whilst ensuring a transparent, formal route to adoption.
- iii. *Delegation of authority to the Executive Director - Place, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning, to take all actions necessary to progress the delivery and implementation of the strategy, including making modifications to the Action Plans contained within the document, subject to any further business cases being made in the normal way for allocation of associated finances.*
- 3.7 The Council have initial views on what additional activities should be explored as potential options for supplementing the existing range of regeneration activities focused on Macclesfield Town Centre and these are set out in the 'Potential Activities' sections of the appended draft strategy document.
- 3.8 It is important to recognise however, that town centres are complex places, operating in fluid economic, social and environmental contexts, with fragmented ownership, and multiple, often competing uses and users. Revitalising a town centre is consequently also complex and there is no tested recognised transferable approach. Whilst suggested potential additional activities have been set out, it is therefore key, that the Council are able to remain agile to respond as circumstances change and new evidence emerges, and have the scope to change the specific activities to be progressed accordingly.

3.9 The 'Potential Activities' set out in the strategy document, are not therefore, intended to be a rigidly prescribed action plan for the next 5 years, but rather an indication of the type and scope of projects to be explored and Cabinet is asked to support the principle of officers exploring the potential activities itemised, with a view to developing business cases for these activities for consideration as part of the normal budget setting process, whilst not excluding the potential for additional or alternative initiatives to be added and brought forward for consideration.

iv. *Authorising the spend of up to a further £400K from the existing approved Regeneration and Development Capital Budget to supplement the £1M already approved for works to the public realm in the core of the Town Centre.*

v. *Noting that a business case will be developed so that it can be considered as part of the medium term financial strategy for capital investment in public realm enhancements in future years.*

3.10 On 3rd May 2016 Cabinet approved the use of £1M capital to fund transformational public realm enhancements in the Primary Shopping Area of Macclesfield Town Centre, focused on Castle St, Exchange St and Mill Street. Since that time concept designs have been developed for the target area which indicate the limitations of a £1M budget when looking to bring forward transformational infrastructure projects. In order to bring the quality and scope of uplift to the public realm shown in the aspirational concept designs, across the target area identified, the high level costings suggest the total budget required would be in the order of £6M.

3.11 Any further allocation of such significant capital resources would clearly need to be progressed as part of the budget planning process with appropriate supporting business cases developed. However, the high-level costings suggest a figure of between £1.2M and £1.6 M would be sufficient to comprehensively upgrade one of the three target streets, and circa 400K exists within the existing wider Regeneration and Development budget for Macclesfield which could be used for this purpose.

3.12 Cabinet approval is therefore sought for the transfer of already approved capital within the same overarching budget line for this purpose.

#### **4. Other Options Considered**

4.1 Officers have considered proceeding without replacing the now outdated Macclesfield Town Centre Vision document of 2014, either leaving the existing document in circulation, or revoking it without providing a replacement.

4.2 The existing document gives outdated information regarding the Council's approach to revitalising Macclesfield Town Centre. Leaving it in place

without revoking it is likely to cause confusion and potential criticism of the Council. This is therefore an inappropriate course of action.

4.3 Having a documented Vision and structured Strategy for revitalising the town centre is important for many reasons, including:

- To give a clear message to the public that the Council is listening to concerns about the town centre and being proactive in its efforts to address these;
- To demonstrate to potential investors that the Council is acting to support town centre regeneration, encouraging greater optimism about the likely future of the town and performance of any investments they may be considering;
- To enable officers to prioritise resources effectively;
- To provide a framework to facilitate the various stakeholders involved in the town centre to ensure their work aligns, thus, creating synergy between differing organisations, and avoiding duplication or counterproductive projects.

4.4 Therefore, revoking the current document and not replacing it, is equally, considered an inappropriate option.

## 5. Background

5.1 A Vision document outlining the Council's ambitions for Macclesfield Town Centre was produced in January 2014.

[http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/business/major\\_regeneration\\_projects/town\\_centre\\_vision/town\\_centre\\_vision.aspx](http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/business/major_regeneration_projects/town_centre_vision/town_centre_vision.aspx)

5.2 Since that time conditional contracts have been exchanged to sell Churchill Way Car Park to Ask Real Estate and their scheme is being worked up to be progressed through the planning process. Cabinet has also subsequently authorised spending £1M of the Council's Regeneration and Development capital budget to progress public realm enhancements in the Primary Shopping Area, for which concept designs have now been produced.

5.3 Reduced economic growth predictions, a continued rise in online spending at the expense of high street retailers, and the potential of further competition for Macclesfield Town Centre from a variety of out of town schemes, mean that it is now important to make a further commitment to looking beyond the projects the Council is already pursuing to boost town centre vitality and viability, with a considered approach for the next 5 years.

- 5.4 This paper, therefore, proposes the revocation of the 2014 Macclesfield Town Centre Vision document and the adoption of a replacement Vision and Strategy document which takes account of current market conditions and new opportunities.

## **6. Wards Affected and Local Ward Members**

- 6.1. The refreshed Vision and Strategy document focuses specifically on Macclesfield Town Centre which falls within Macclesfield Central Ward. Ward councillors are Cllr Beverley Dooley and Cllr Janet Jackson.
- 6.2. Macclesfield town centre is however used by residents and visitors from a far wider area and the health 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. Implications of Recommendation**

### **7.1. Policy Implications**

- 7.1.1. The revitalisation of Macclesfield Town Centre accords with many Council policies focused on enhancing environmental, economic and social wellbeing, including policies which: encourage inward investment; encourage development to be in highly accessible locations; support upgrading infrastructure, support improving the quality of the visitor shopping, cultural and leisure experience; and support the enhancement of environmental quality and 'Quality of Place'.

### **7.2. Legal Implications**

- 7.2.1 The Council will be consulting on the contents of the document prior to making a final decision. The consultation process embarked upon must be "fair" and certain basic principles must be adhered to:

Consultation must be undertaken at a time when proposals are still at a formative stage;

- a. It must include sufficient reasons for particular proposals to allow those consulted to give intelligent consideration and an intelligent response;
- b. Adequate time must be given for this purpose; and
- c. Feedback from consultation must be conscientiously taken into account when the ultimate decision is taken.

- 7.2.2 Once the Council embarks on the consultation it should be prepared to change course if persuaded by the outcome of consultation. To do otherwise would prevent an informed and integrated response and risk challenge to the final decision made (on the basis that the outcome was pre-determined).
- 7.2.3 Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council is required to identify the impacts of any decisions, policies etc on certain protected groups to ensure equality is promoted and inequality minimised. Completing an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) as part of the process of adopting the strategy will both assist in meeting the Council's equality duties and inform the eventual final decision to adopt the document.
- 7.2.4 It will be necessary to undertake compliant procurement processes for the intended works. In relation to each contract/transaction, consideration will need to be given to the level of authority required under the Constitution and the Council's statutory powers to contract and the requirements of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 as and when decisions fall to be made on individual potential projects brought forward under this strategy.
- 7.2.5 In the event that the adopted vision results in the disposal of land belonging to the Council any such disposals will be subject to the provisions of s123 of The Local Government Act 1972 and will follow the statutory procedures set out in s123. Where any land concerned is public open space the Council will undertake the statutory advertising procedure and consider any objections and/or representations to that process prior to making any final decisions to dispose of public open space.
- 7.2.6 In addition to the above the adopted vision could result in the acquisition of land by the Council. The Council has the power under s120 of The Local Government Act 1972 to acquire land by agreement.
- 7.2.7 The proposed disposal of Council owned land or acquisition of land would need to be fully explored within separate reports as the project progresses.
- 7.2.8 In the event that the adopted vision results in the development of land forming part of the highway or on Council owned land then the appropriate consents under the highways/development control regimes will have to be obtained as part of that process. These are issues that can be dealt with as the relevant project progresses and will be obtained at the appropriate time following the provision of further advice, as necessary.

### **7.3. Financial Implications**

- 7.3.1 The decision to proceed with a public consultation on this document has no significant financial implications, the cost of that consultation and the production of a final document being covered by the investment sustainability reserve.
- 7.3.2 The projects set out in the 'Ongoing Activity' sections of the strategy document have generally been agreed previously or do not require Members specific approval and raise no financial issues which need consideration.
- 7.3.3 One exception to this is the ongoing development of plans to deliver public realm enhancements within the Primary Shopping Area, which as explained in section 4, requires further funds if the desired quality of finish is to be achieved, even in only one of the target streets. To this end it is proposed that up to £400K from the existing approved Regeneration and Development capital budget be used to supplement the £1M already set aside for public realm enhancements in Macclesfield Town Centre. This does not require a virement as the capital is already allocated within the Regeneration and Development budget line.
- 7.3.4 Although other Potential Activities outlined in the Action Plans would require significant further budgets to be allocated if taken forward, no decision is being requested on this other than support for the general principle of business cases being developed for consideration for such activities in due course, as part of the normal budget setting process.

### **7.4. Equality Implications**

- 7.4.1. The Revitalisation Strategy document is being developed with the needs of all existing and new communities in mind. Any individual proposals stemming from the strategy will be subjected to appropriate Equality Impact Assessments.

### **7.5. Rural Community Implications**

- 7.5.1. Macclesfield town centre, being one of largest in the borough serves not only the residents of Macclesfield but many of the village and rural populations that live in its hinterlands. Promoting the health of the town centre therefore indirectly supports the rural communities in the north east of the borough.



## **7.6. Human Resources Implications**

7.6.1. It is the intention that, if after exploring potential additional activities set out in or stemming from the strategy, these are taken forward as specific initiatives to be progressed, then appropriate business cases, covering all relevant issues including human resource implications, will be developed for further consideration in the normal way.

## **7.7. Health and Wellbeing Implications**

7.7.1. Supporting the health of town centres supports and encourages investment in a highly accessible location, thereby supporting, broadly speaking, ambitions to reduce the need to travel with associated benefits from reduced carbon emissions. Furthermore supporting the enhancement of pedestrian public realm and other enhancements to the quality of place can encourage people to get out of their cars, walk between different destinations within the town, and in so doing can bring health benefits from increased physical activity as well as increased social interaction.

## **7.8. Implications for Children and Young People**

7.8.1. No specific implications have been identified for children and young people. However, again, the town centre being accessible by public transport and offering places for social interaction can be a popular meeting point for younger people. Additionally part of the strategy set out is to encourage more in town living and facilities which specifically appeal to a younger market to encourage young people to locate in Macclesfield.

## **7.9. Overview and Scrutiny Committee Implications**

7.9.1. Should a councillor or member of the public suggest the Macclesfield Regeneration Strategy as a topic for scrutiny it would be assessed against the criteria in the normal way and, if following that assessment it was considered a suitable topic for scrutiny, would be referred to the Environment and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee. No such suggestion has as yet been made.

## **7.10. Other Implications (Please Specify)**

7.10.1 None

## 8. Risk Management

8.1. The key risks identified at this point are as follows:

8.1.1 The launch of a new strategy for revitalising Macclesfield Town Centre will inevitably raise expectations regarding the Council's continued commitment to supporting projects which improve the town centre offer with associated expectations on financial and staffing levels. Whilst it is clearly important to manage expectations the Council has already stated its firm commitment to revitalising both Macclesfield and Crewe town centres in several key documents including: Ambition for All - the Sustainable Community Strategy for Cheshire East 2010-2025; the Corporate Plan 2017-2020; and indeed the Local Plan Strategy which covers the period to 2030. This document, therefore, does not add to existing commitments but rather seeks to set out a mechanism by which the existing commitment to revitalising the town centre can be better managed to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Council's approach.

8.1.2 The launch of a refreshed vision may also lead to criticism regarding the number of strategic documents which are produced diverting from delivery. However, as set out in section 3 there are considered to be clear and convincing reasons for the production of this strategic document.

## 9. Access to Information

9.1 Appendix A: There's no Place Like Macclesfield. Consultation Draft

9.2 [Macclesfield Town Centre Vision, 2014](#)

## 10. Contact Information

Contact details for this report are as follows:

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