

## **BARNSELY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**This matter is a not Key Decision within the council's definition and has not been included in the relevant Forward Plan**

**Report of the Executive  
Director Place**

### **BARNSELY TOWN CENTRE PLAN AND SITE DEVELOPMENT APPRAISALS**

#### **1. Purpose of report**

- 1.1. To present the Barnsley Town Centre Plan, which sets out a series of priorities for the town centre and how the Council and partners will seek to deliver these priorities over the next three years, in order to compliment and maximise the impact of the Better Barnsley scheme.
- 1.2. To update Cabinet on development appraisals conducted by Arup on key gateway sites in the town centre, as part of the Town Plan work, and to seek approval to proceed to the next stage on the Courthouse site.

#### **2. Recommendations**

**It is recommended that:**

- 2.1. **Members recognise and confirm the priorities set out within the Town Centre plan and agree the mechanisms for project development and delivery.**
- 2.2. **Members note the Town Centre Projects set out in Arup's Barnsley Town Regeneration Plan and endorse their further development**
- 2.3. **Members agree to the principle of development on the Courthouse car park site and agree to a detailed programme of option appraisals to determine the form, scale and timing of that development**
- 2.4. **Further reports be submitted which provides a business case including options appraisals for the development of the Courthouse site.**

#### **3. Introduction**

- 3.1. In November 2014, Cabinet approved a revised Jobs and Business Plan budget which included a new commitment to deliver a Town Centre Plan to run concurrently with the development timescales for the Better Barnsley scheme.
- 3.2. The purpose of the Town Centre Plan was to provide a delivery framework for a range of complimentary activity, in order to ensure it adequately coordinated and drove forward a range of initiatives and interventions to contribute towards the Council's objective of an improved town centre offer by 2019.
- 3.3. The objectives of the Town Plan, as agreed with Cabinet are:

- A comprehensively refreshed town centre plan that is fit for purpose for the duration of the Local Plan and Transport Strategy, along with delivering the town centre programme of the Jobs and Business Plan.
  - Sets out the overall place making approach to the town centre which defines the role each element plays and can be enhanced.
  - A plan that is recognised and supported by the majority of the key stakeholders within the town centre and can be used to articulate the future development of the town centre to potential investors.
  - A plan that has real meaning in guiding actions and activities going forward that are underpinned by evidence that allow subsequent detail projects to be developed to deliver the vision and objectives i.e. it is delivery rather than strategically focussed.
- 3.4. The output would be a delivery focussed plan which is underpinned by a clear evidence base, and is concise and accessible in its format including any prioritisation and critical path that needs to be undertaken/ followed.
- 3.5. Given the Better Barnsley scheme is now sufficiently advanced, now is the right time to put the plan into place. This report outlines the process that has been followed to produce the plan, emerging priorities and the key areas of work which are already underway and those that are planned in the next 3 years.
- 3.6. The Town Centre Plan is built upon a shared vision for the Town Centre, owned by key stakeholders and backed up by an adequately resourced and achievable Action Plan.

The overall objective for the Town Centre Plan is to create a Vibrant Town Centre. In order to achieve this we aim to create:

- A Town Centre that is attractive, safe and welcoming to all visitors
  - A Town Centre that is a visitor destination
  - A Town Centre that is accessible, well connected and promotes health & wellbeing
  - A Town Centre that Supports a thriving and diverse business community
  - A Town Centre with a vibrant evening and night time economy
- 3.7. The Town Centre Plan is about co-ordinating activity to generate increased footfall and maximise the economic viability of the town centre. The plan also appraises key development sites within the town, recommending development on a number of gateway sites to complement the Better Barnsley scheme and enhance footfall into the town centre.

This report presents the initial findings on the appraisal of key development sites within the town centre and proposes a series of next steps to progress the largest of these sites, the Courthouse campus site.

#### **4. Development of the Town Centre Plan**

- 4.1. The Council have led on the development of the town centre plan, recognising its role as guardians of the town Centre; encouraging economic development, creating jobs, attracting investment and increasing visitor numbers. Its success will now rely on all stakeholders taking ownership of the plan and working together to implement delivery of the various strands within the plan.
- 4.2. The plan has been developed based upon a detailed baseline assessment of the existing town centre. FSP, nationally recognized retail consultants, have gathered intelligence on the demographic of the catchment, consumer behavior and visitor opinions through on street surveys, online worker and student surveys and utilised much of the ongoing public consultation on the town centre, as part of the Better Barnsley Scheme and The Local Plan.
- 4.3. Key stakeholders have been engaged including, Barnsley College, Town Centre property agents, The Civic Trust, The Victorian Arcade Group, The Civic and Many of the Towns Equality Groups to get an understanding of the issues that affect them in the town centre and where improvements need to be made.
- 4.4. A full retail audit has been conducted to identify where trading gaps exist, what businesses the Barnsley catchment can attract and identified our main competitors and source of leaked expenditure. This market intelligence has helped to identify the strengths of the current town centre offer and also helped to prioritise where there are opportunities to increase visitor numbers, spend and investment in the town centre. This information has been invaluable in identifying the trading gap of the town Centre, where there are currently investment opportunities that are not being filled, which has been critical in attracting the right mix of retail and leisure.
- 4.5. A summary of this research can be found in Appendix B (FSP Retail Report Summary). A full version of this report is also available. This information has been critical in identifying the priorities for the Town Centre Plan and the development of a Town Centre Communication and Marketing Strategy, which is being developed by Counter Context.
- 4.6. The key priorities of the town plan will be communicated with town Centre stakeholders via a visual and simple representation of the plan, rather than a long and comprehensive report which may become outdated. This can be shared with stakeholders, town centre visitors and investors with an interest in the town. See attached draft at Appendix C

## **5. Delivering the Town Plan**

- 5.1. A Town Plan Project Board has been established to monitor and drive forward delivery of a range of town centre activities, which will report into the Town Centre Programme Board. Operating under this project board are 5 working groups that are responsible for delivering the actions and initiatives required to deliver the Town Centre plan. There is also a direct link into the Town Centre Communications and Marketing group, which will be critical for the delivery of the Town Plan and many of the initiatives and priorities identified which rely on communication and marketing activity.

5.2. A town Centre Dashboard has been developed which will be overseen by the Town Centre Project Board and the Town Centre Programme Board. The dashboard will include each of the group's priorities and progress on actions and initiatives to deliver the priorities. The project board will meet on a quarterly basis to review progress and to extend the scope of working groups if further priorities arise.

5.3. The working groups have evaluated the research findings from the baseline study undertaken by FSP and identified a number of key priorities to focus upon over the next 3 years. The overall driver for these priorities is about increasing the economic prosperity of the town centre, increasing footfall and spend within the town centre. The thematic groups are as follows:

- Town Centre Safety & Security Group
- Markets Development Group
- Business Support Group
- Evening and Night time Economy Group
- Access and Site development Group

There is also a Town Centre Marketing & Communications Group which reports directly to Programme Board.

5.4. The Town Centre Safety and Security Group has been established to deal with town centre anti-social behavior and to ensure a coordinated and planned approach to town centre public safety and enforcement. Anti-social behavior is seen as barrier to people visiting the town, in particular for town centre staff, shoppers and representatives of the equality forums. The impact of ASB on shoppers can not be underestimated. The multi-disciplinary group that has been set up to look at town centre safety and security is focusing on the following priorities:

- Prevention and Early Help
- Enforcement
- Public Reassurance & engagement
- Rehabilitation and intensive support

5.5. The Markets Development Group has been established to ensure that the market provides a high quality offer, with good quality and excellent customer service at its core. The market is at the heart of the new development and the markets group will ensure there is a plan for the market transitioning from its current offer into the newly refurbished market halls. The group is focusing on the following priorities, through a range of projects, training initiatives and interventions:

- Improving quality & range of Market Offer
- Increasing visitors/ spend in the markets
- Promoting Market Trading as a business opportunity

5.6. The Business Support group will work to support and build a thriving town centre business community. Thriving and sustainable business is a key priority

for the health and prosperity of the town centre. Ensuring businesses are equipped with market intelligence and have the necessary business skills to respond to business opportunities. The group has identified the following priorities:

- Town Centre Business Networking
- Supporting New Town Centre Businesses
- Promoting Town Centre Independents & Local Spend
- Improving information for Town Centre investors & agents
- Undertaking a feasibility study for a future Business Improvement District
- Developing a digital Town Centre offer

Early work has included support to the Victorian Arcade to assist them with establishing a business co-operative to work together to fund improvements, facilitate improvements with their landlord and to put on events to drive footfall.

- 5.7. The Evening and Night Time Economy group brings together key stakeholders from the evening and night time economy. The priority for the group is as follows:

- Creating a vibrant and safe evening & night time economy.

The Evening and Night Time Economy group is working through the 'Purple Flag' framework with key stakeholders. The Purple Flag award focusses on the early evening and night time economy and is extremely comprehensive, including the type of offer, quality of provision, safety, safe travel options and partnership working. The group is currently completing a self-assessment on the town Centre and recently undertook a night time assessment from early evening through to the early hours of the morning to witness first-hand the experience of the evening and night time offer and the work required to improve the overall quality of the offer. The group will work through the stages of self-assessment, through to a formal assessment of the town centre, with a view to making changes to improve the current offer. Working with key stakeholders will be critical.

- 5:8. The Access and Site Development group is focusing on the physical environment and its connectivity with new development, including assets within the town Centre. The group will consider access into and around the town. This group is overseeing a number of town centre commissions and will progress any physical town centre infrastructure projects that arise from the Arups work, with a view to identifying suitable funding for delivery. The group is working on the following priorities:

- Car Parking to meet the needs of the Town Centre
- Ensuring Connectivity between the new development and existing centre
- Exploring opportunities for town centre residential & development
- Improving Town Centre Access
- Exploring opportunities for an active town centre

- 5.9. Car Parking Strategy The Access and Site Development Group is currently overseeing the development of the car parking strategy. Work is currently being undertaken by consultants Aecom to review the existing provision, including a full user survey and town centre staff survey. The review will consider the impact of the new parking provided by the Better Barnsley re-development and the demolition of the multi storey car park. The strategy will include an interim proposal on car parking arrangements during the town's re-development and a longer term strategy post development, ensuring the towns parking needs are met.
- 5.10. Barnsley Town Centre Regeneration Plan (Arups) The Regeneration plan developed by Arups, has been overseen by the Access and Site Development Group. The work undertaken by Arups has included baseline mapping and analysis to develop a regeneration plan that includes Town Centre Projects, Town Centre Wide Initiatives and opportunities for development on key town Centre sites.

Town Centre Projects The Regeneration Plan has identified 3 potential town Centre projects/ priority areas for future funding that will support and enhance the wider development of the town Centre along with complementing the committed investment in Better Barnsley. These are:

- Mandela Gardens and The Lanes (Victorian Arcade/ Georges Yard)
- Peel Square
- The Interchange

It has also identified town centre wide initiatives for consideration which will further enhance the viability and attractiveness of the town centre. These include:

- Lighting
- Public Art
- Digital Technology

Development Opportunity Sites The Arups Report has also considered the development potential of 3 key Town Centre Sites. The detail of this work is included at Section 6.

- 5.11. The Marketing and communication Group is a critical group for both the Town Centre Plan and the wider Town Centre. The group will ensure that the communication and marketing of the town Centre is fully coordinated to maximize impact and strengthen key messages with all key town centre stakeholders. Counter Context are working with BMBC, the development manager Turner & Townsend, Henry Boot and other key town Centre stakeholders to develop a marketing strategy for the town Centre. The overarching objectives for this strategy are:

- Generating interest, excitement and a sense of ownership of the transformation of the town Centre

- Celebrating the successes of the emerging Barnsley Town Centre Plan
- To maintain current visitor numbers during the construction of the Better Barnsley scheme and grow them on scheme completion

The Key pillars of the marketing strategy have been agreed as follows:

- Enjoyment – A joined Programme of events that give people further reason to keep coming to the town centre
- Excitement – Keeping high levels of awareness of the transformation that is underway
- Celebrate - Pop up activities that draw destinations from the Borough into the Town Centre
- Resonate – The development of an engaging and inclusive brand for the transformed Town Centre
- Together – Ensuring close partnership working to encourage and instill civic pride

The group will also be responsible for reviewing the online marketing of the Town Centre and look to streamline the many different websites that currently market the town Centre and the borough as a whole.

- 5.12. Strategic Heat Network In addition to the areas of activity being taken forward by the 5 thematic groups, a detailed feasibility exercise is underway to ascertain the potential for a strategic district heat network that would serve a range of domestic and non-domestic public and private sector customers. This scheme could have the potential to dovetail with and complement the redevelopment of the town Centre, increasing its attractiveness, to be reported through the Town Centre Board meetings. Detailed feasibility work is currently being undertaken to identify a potential town Centre Site for the Energy Centre and will be subject to full business planning and Cabinet approval.

## **6. Gateway Development Sites**

- 6.1. Arups Regeneration Plan considers the development opportunities for three large development sites within the town centre that are considered under utilised and offer an opportunity to support the growth and economic development of the town.

These sites are:

- Southern Fringe ( land off Westway across from the Alhambra shopping centre)
- Eastern Gateway ( site off Swabisch Gmund Way)
- Courthouse Carpark

A map of the sites is set out in appendix E

- 6.2 As part of the option appraisal process Arup undertook some initial market testing with developers, investors and related services such as Architects.

Arup also consulted internally and with support from BMBC officers also gained views from a range of internal stakeholders to look at viable options for development. These included:

- Enterprising Barnsley- Office commercial developments
- Barnsley Premier Leisure- new leisure offers
- Barnsley College- expansion requirements and potential student accommodation
- School Access team- future needs for school places

- 6.3. Development options for the sites were developed via these discussions. A summary of the findings and recommendations for the three sites is set out in the report attached in appendix D.
- 6.4. The emphasis of the study was to look at options for the Courthouse Carpark site. Unlike the other two sites, the land is in the full ownership of the Council and is the closest to Better Barnsley with the potential to be one of the first to benefit from the catalyst of the investment in this scheme.
- 6.5. All the soft market testing indicated strong support for some form of residential development on the site, across a range of different tenures and typologies. With a density ranging from between 50-75 houses per hectare.
- 6.6. It is estimated that the site could provide somewhere between 125 to 150 dwellings on the primary residential areas. Reflecting a general trend towards increased town and city centre living, there was support for town houses on the lower parts of the sites. In a move away from apartment living, Sheffield, Bradford and Doncaster have seen recent examples of denser town houses aimed at families' as well single people.
- 6.7. The upper part of the site could provide higher density accommodation. The soft market testing indicated an opportunity for private rented accommodation that could be similar in quality to that currently offered at Gateway Plaza. Discussions with Barnsley College also indicated a potential opportunity to provide specialist accommodation for students. This offer could support the expansion of the College into the overseas student market.
- 6.8. Internal discussions have also indicated potential education and associated uses for young people. Work is underway to understand the future requirements for secondary school places in the town centre and alongside these potential options for the provision of a specialist facility for young people to use in the town centre.
- 6.9. Future development opportunities for the Courthouse site have to be set in the context of the current usage. Over two levels 859 car parking spaces are currently provided, delivering an important town centre car parking offer and revenue to the Authority. An initial car park study that has looked at usage across all town centre car parking, including; private, public car parks and on street car parking concluded that there was overall some capacity within



current provision, however this did vary across car parks on different days of the week. A further more detailed study that looks to understand the primary role for key car parks (i.e used for shopping, work, students, and leisure) and preferences for parking is being undertaken. Importantly this study will also consider the impacts of the car parking changes brought about by the Better Barnsley Scheme, including the demolition of the multi-storey car park and the new parking proposed as part of the scheme.

- 6.10. The initial car park study did indicate the current importance of the Courthouse spaces; however, the study also indicates variable usage across the differing levels of the Courthouse site. For example, on the market day survey there was only one vacant space across 404 spaces between 10am to 12pm on the upper part of the car park whilst on the lower part of the car park there were 246 empty spaces out of the 455 available.
- 6.11. The development options put forward by Arup suggest a phased approach with two options considering initial development at either end of the site. This phasing is crucial and needs to consider the outputs of the ongoing car parking study, particularly in relation to the current users of the car parking in courthouse and also the re-provision of car parking as part of the Better Barnsley scheme. The output from this report is anticipated in December 2016.
- 6.12. Options for developing the site have also been considered. These vary from an outright sale of the site, to a developer generating a capital receipt but relinquishing control, to a more long term partnership approach with a developer, that may forgo upfront capital receipt however, will allow the council to exert more control; on the quality and timing of development. The full details of the option analysis are set out in the Arups Barnsley Town centre Regeneration Plan attached as Appendix D.

## **7. Consideration of alternative approaches**

### **Town Plan not adopted**

- 7.1. As Cabinet already agreed to the creation of the Town Plan, as a way of demonstrating the Council's delivery strategy for improving the town centre, it is strongly recommended not to proceed with this approach.

## **8. Proposal and justification**

- 8.1. The proposal is to endorse the Town Centre Plan, associated governance structure and the outlined priorities.
- 8.2. It is also proposed to proceed to the next phase in assessing the development viability of the Courthouse Carpark site on the back of the initial option appraisal works by Arup and in particular the initial market demand for residential investment.
- 8.3. It is proposed that a more extensive / formalised market testing exercise is undertaken using the Arup study to understand the development mix/ housing typologies and the location and size of an initial phase of development.

- 8.4. Although the initial market testing has indicated interest in residential, further work also needs to be undertaken on non housing uses for the site. In particular the work on the provision of a specialist youth facility, potentially set in the context of high quality public realm, needs to be explored in more detail to see how this could complement a phased residential development.
- 8.5. As part of this market testing work it is also proposed to carryout further work on the most appropriate development route examining options that would be commercially attractive to the private sector but also framed in away that the Council can retain a level of control over the phasing and quality of what is a strategically important site within the town centre
- 8.6. It also proposed to undertake further work on the constraints of the site including access, relevant ground conditions and the provision of the statutory services
- 8.7. Crucially a key element of this option appraisal work is to complete the next phase of the car parking study which will further inform the current and future demand for car parking on Courthouse. Central to this will be to understand the type of car park users e.g. what proportion are shoppers, workers or students and what the ultimate destination of these users is. This information may allow for users to be accommodated in other existing, or in the case of shopper's, new car parks and help understand what car parking needs to be retained /provided elsewhere and will form the basis for decisions on the timing and phasing of any development.

## **9. Implications for local people / service users**

- 9.1. The work of the town centre plan will bring about positive change in the town centre that will result in a more vibrant and safer town centre for people that work, live or visit the town centre. Town Centre business will benefit from increased business support and networking opportunities, ensuring they maximise business opportunities created through improved market intelligence and communication on town centre events. Service users will benefit from increased co-ordination of town centre services.

## **10. Financial implications**

- 10.1. Consultation on the financial implications has taken place with colleagues in Financial Services on behalf of the Director of Finance, Assets and IT.
- 10.2. Resources totalling £0.150M have previously been set aside as part of the Jobs and Business Growth Plan to fund the completion of the town plan as attached.
- 10.3. The plan identifies a number of potential development sites within the Town Centre. One such site is that of the current Courthouse car park. It is proposed that a full options appraisal for the development of the site be completed. If a viable proposition is identified, a full business case will be drawn up including

any capital investment requirement, to be brought back to members for consideration.

#### **11. Employee implications**

- 11.1 There are no employee implications arising from this report.

#### **12. Communications implications**

- 12.1. There is a comprehensive Better Barnsley communication plan which continues to be delivered and updated. Included in this are weekly-eshot newsletters and specific consultation events are provided at the Better Barnsley shop on Cheapside.

There is also a new Town Centre Marketing and Communication group who are developing the marketing and communication strategy for the Town Centre and the new development, including branding and marketing to attract investors. The town plan will be published in a user friendly publication that will be shared with town centre stakeholders and potential investors. Appendix C

#### **13. Consultations**

- 13.1 Consultation has been undertaken with the town centre Ward Alliance, Disability Equality Forum, Gender Equality Forum, Barnsley College, The Civic Trust, St Marys Church, The Police, The Civic, Town Centre BMBC staff, Barnsley College students & staff and a full town centre shopping survey undertaken by FSP. Better Barnsley consultation data has also been utilised to develop the emerging priorities and actions.

#### **14. Community Strategy and the Council's Performance Management Framework**

- 14.1 The proposals in this report are consistent with Council's Corporate Plan 2012-15 as it directly contributes towards the aspiration of delivering a thriving and vibrant economy. A specific outcome of this objective is a vibrant town centre with clear linkages to the further outcomes of creating more and better jobs and increasing skills to get more people working.
- 14.2 The corporate performance framework monitors the vibrancy and health of the town centre by measuring footfall and the occupancy levels of retail units in the town centre.

#### **15. Tackling Health Inequalities**

- 15.1 The creation of new jobs reduces overall worklessness which provides a significant contribution to addressing inequalities in health and developing a healthy productive workforce. Initiatives, like lower the Strength and preventative work around licencing will help to address problems with street drinking and the Safety & Security Group are currently undertaking a review of those with chaotic lifestyles who are presenting anti-social behaviour problems

in the town centre to help identify the success of current interventions and proposed alternatives.

**16. Climate Change & Sustainable Energy Act 2006**

- 16.1 Action to improve the energy efficiency of buildings constructed as part of the Better Barnsley project will help to reduce carbon emissions.

**17. Risk Management Issues**

- 17.1 None relating to the development of the Town Plan.

**18. Health & Safety Issues**

- 18.1 None arising directly from this report although there is the need to ensure all relevant staff are trained up on health and safety issues.

**19. Compatibility with the European Convention on Human Rights**

- 19.1 There are no matters of relevance arising from this report.

**20. Promoting Equality & Diversity and Social Inclusion**

- 20.1 Creating a vibrant mixed use town centre that is accessible to all is integral to the town plan. Consultation has been undertaken with the disability equality forum which has highlighted key issues in the town centre, including negative perceptions of safety which the town plan will look to address. A Town Centre Equalities Forum is currently being established to oversee the Equality Impact Assessment and agree a series of actions required ensuring equality; diversity and social inclusion are factored into all town centre priorities.

**21. Reduction of Crime & Disorder**

- 21.1 The Town Centre Safety & security Group will work proactively to reduce crime and disorder in the town centre. The group will focus on preventative work, enforcement and public reassurance.

**22. Conservation of Biodiversity**

- 22.1 There are no matters of direct relevance arising from this report.

**23. Glossary**

**24. List of Appendices**

Appendix B – FSP Summary

Appendix C – Town Centre Plan Visual

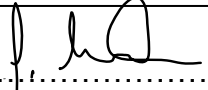
Appendix D – Arup – Barnsley Town Centre Regeneration Plan

Appendix E – Plan of potential development plans

**25. Background Papers**

AECOM – Barnsley Town Centre Car Park Capacity Study  
FSP Report

Office Contact: Andrew Osborn Telephone No: 2774	Date: 9th Nov 2016
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Financial Implications / Consultation (To be signed by senior Financial Services officer where no financial implications)	 .....08/12/2016...
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