

## BARNSELY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

This matter is a Key Decision within the Council's definition and has been included in the relevant Forward Plan.

REPORT OF THE  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PLACE  
TO CABINET ON 14 JULY 2021

### Urbed Town Centre Plan

#### 1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To update Cabinet on progress in developing the Town Centre Plan by Urbed, and to seek approval to undertake consultation on the draft Town Centre Plan.

#### 2. Recommendations

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 2.1 **Notes the progress made in the development of the DRAFT Town Centre Plan, and;**
- 2.2 **Approves the proposal to undertake a public and stakeholder consultation exercise planned to commence during Summer 2021.**

#### 3. Introduction

- 3.1 In December 2019 we commissioned some urban design and sustainability work in Barnsley Town Centre. URBED were the successful bidder and have been working on this project since January 2020. This was originally to be a nine-month piece of work which has several strands including: looking at how we move the Town Centre towards being zero carbon; urban design issues, consideration of whether the town centre should contract; and a movement framework.
- 3.2 Whilst the URBED work has been ongoing, the need for a refreshed Town Centre Plan to update the work that Arup did in 2016 has become apparent. This will provide us with an evidence based response to a changing town centre in a post COVID context, including considering contraction /repurposing with opportunities to integrate sustainability. It will feed into the Sheffield City Region Economic Blueprint work and will need to position Barnsley as an Urban Centre within the context of SCR Economic Priorities. The URBED work to date provides a natural base to achieve this. It was considered preferable to have one comprehensive piece of work rather than two related/ overlapping pieces of work.

### 3.3 The issues to be covered by the work are:

- High level assessment of buildings in respect of energy efficiency.
  - A gap analysis and movement framework.
  - Whether the town centre needs to contract, and if so appropriate uses for any areas that may be affected by this.
  - Sustainability and how we move to the town centre being zero carbon.
  - Opportunities for the Civic and Eldon Street to support the Heritage Action Zone and Historic High Streets fund bid.
  - Urban design guidance to ensure that all developments and changes of use of areas complement works done and underway.
  - Provide a baseline assessment of accommodation type
  - Assess delivery against the original ARUP Town Centre Plan
  - Set the vision for the life of the next Town Centre Plan (10 years)
  - Form an update of the Town Centre Plan
  - Include a strategy for, and be cognisant of, recovery during and post Covid-19.
  - Set out the strategic growth priorities within the Town Centre
- Work to date includes receipt of baseline reports and draft summary report. Public and stakeholder engagement is still to take place.

## 4. **Draft Town Centre Plan and Public Consultation material**

- 4.1 Urbed has provided a draft summary report, together with supplementary information from their sub consultants LEDA and Ade Regeneration. LEDA has dealt with the low carbon element of the commission. Ade Regeneration has dealt with the economic elements of the work, and has included a document summarising the response to Covid of Urban Centres across the UK.
- 4.2 The draft report summarises the baseline information and provides some thoughts on a post covid future for our Town Centre. It considers that *“Barnsley is now in a really interesting position. Like many medium sized towns in the UK Barnsley has been better equipped to weather the storm, partially by dint of not having city centre style assets to lose in the first place. It had no significant office market and no large department store anchoring its high street and it is in many ways a practical town centre, serving the needs of residents as much as visitors or commuters. Because of this Barnsley is in an excellent position to respond to the emerging trends following the pandemic. It may need, as ADE Regen highlighted, to rethink its relationship with retail, reducing its floorspace by up to a third, but it is well placed to plug the gaps left behind.”*
- 4.3 The overarching theme of ‘Low carbon interventions’ sits above six other themes: Retail; Culture; Work; Housing; Greenspace and Connection. These are then followed through into a proposed spatial strategy and a long list of potential projects that could go forward into the final Town Centre Plan.

- 4.4 Consultation material will be taken from the draft report and will comprise of principles, themes, recommendations for a proposed spatial strategy and will include the long list of potential projects. Consultation material and all communications will reinforce that this is a list of projects that may happen in the future, that some may not come forward and suggested timescales will be added to indicate the projects that are considered to be very long term. We will also ask for views on anything that we may have missed.
- 4.5 The consultation will be mostly digital, with materials available to view online and an online presentation. One to one/ small group meetings will be held with the equality forums. In addition to online consultation it is proposed that display material is produced and placed in a prominent location in the Town Centre to enable this to be viewed in person. This material will provide a postal address for people to send in comments if they are unable to respond online.
- 4.6 It is proposed that consultation takes place for a period of 6 weeks.

## **5. Renewable and Low Carbon Energy**

- 5.1 One of the elements of the Town Centre Plan is to look at how the Town Centre can move to be zero carbon by 2045 in line with the Council's aspirations.

## **6. Consideration of alternative approaches**

- 6.1 An alternative is to not do public consultation. However

## **7. Proposal and justification**

- 7.1 It is recommended that Cabinet approve the proposal to undertake a stakeholder and public consultation exercise on the DRAFT Town Centre Plan.
- 7.2 It is essential that public and stakeholders are involved in the shaping of the strategy for Barnsley Town Centre.

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

- 8.1 The Town Centre Plan will create a strategy and suggest spatial projects for Barnsley Town Centre. When implemented these will have an impact on all Town Centre users.

## **9. Financial implications**

- 9.1 Consultations on the financial implications have taken place with representatives of the Service Director-Finance (S151 Officer).

- 9.2 There are no direct financial implications associated with the proposal to undertake consultation other than staff costs and publicity/ display materials which are funded from within existing budgets.

## **10. Employee implications**

- 10.1 There are no issues arising directly from this report.

## **11. Communications implications**

- 11.1 A communications strategy will be produced for the Town Centre Plan. This will ensure that timely and accurate information is provided through appropriate press releases via local press, social media/website updates, local member briefings, and engagement with key stakeholders.

## **12. Consultations**

- 12.1 Council officers from various disciplines have had the opportunity to comment on emerging themes and high - level spatial issues. No wider consultation has taken place to date.

## **13. The Corporate Plan and the Council's Performance Management Framework**

- 13.1 The Town Centre Plan will help us to achieve a number of outcomes of the new priorities set out in 'Our Council Plan 2021-2024'. In particular the following:-

Healthy Barnsley – The Town Centre Plan is looking to increase opportunities for active travel which will contribute towards reducing health inequalities.

Growing Barnsley – The Town Centre Plan will contribute to creating a ***“welcoming, safe and enjoyable town centre and principal towns as destinations for work, shopping, leisure and culture.”***

Sustainable Barnsley – The Town Centre Plan will look to create and improve green spaces within the Town Centre.

## **14. Tackling Health Inequalities**

- 14.1 A representative from Public Health has had the opportunity to comment on the high level work done so far and was pleased to see a 'healthy town' theme visible across the plan.

## **15. Climate Change & Sustainable Energy Act 2006**

- 15.1 One of the key strands of the Town Centre Plan is looking at how we can meet our targets within the SEAP, such as the 80% reduction in carbon by 2030, and move Barnsley towards being zero carbon by 2045 to fit with the borough's climate change aspirations.

15.2 Some of the key findings and recommendations set out in LEDA's baseline report to help meet these targets are:

- To prioritise retrofits from high energy use buildings. This will allow to achieve potential savings during the first 10 - year period, 2020 - 2030.
- Identify any urban and masterplan changes that might allow for energy demand removals
- Monitor carbon savings by the end of each 5 – year period to plan future areas of intervention such as:
  - Increase of PV deployments
  - Potential buildings connected to local heat networks
  - Power purchases
- Consider a Power Purchase Agreement (CPPA) strategy to support investment in renewable power generation.
- Focus on Offsetting residual emissions by the end of each period

## **16. Risk Management Issues**

16.1 The Town Centre Plan is covering a wide range of themes and issues, some of which may be in conflict with each other. One example of this may be that suggesting some areas with opportunities for redevelopment could conflict with the zero carbon agenda in the short term. Targets set by Government for Building Standards to be met by 2030, in addition to our own targets will need to be borne in mind, and projects phased appropriately.

16.2 There is a risk that the draft Town Centre Plan is not well received by stakeholders. However, consultation will be on a draft strategy, together with a list of suggested projects, therefore there is opportunity for stakeholders and the public to influence development of the Town Centre Plan.

## **17. Promoting Equality & Diversity and Social Inclusion**

17.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment was drafted when the work was originally commissioned. It is important that we create an inclusive Town Centre. Work is already underway through developing the consultation strategy to ensure that Equality Forums are engaged during the consultation process.

**18. Conservation of Biodiversity**

- 18.1 The Town Centre Plan will seek to conserve and enhance biodiversity opportunities in any potential projects. For example the plan will be looking at opportunities to create and enhance green space within the Town Centre.

**19. List of Appendices**

Appendix A – Financial Implications

Appendix 1 Draft Town centre plan summary report

Officer Contact: Paula Tweed	Date:9 /06/2021
------------------------------	-----------------