

## Report to Heywood Township Committee



Date of Meeting	15 <sup>th</sup> February 2021
Portfolio	Cabinet Member for A Thriving Economy
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Public/Private Document	Public

## Adoption of Heywood Town Centre Masterplan

### Executive Summary

- 1.1 A town centre masterplan is an essential tool to guide development and build a case for investment in our town centres. As such, the Council has committed to supporting the development of masterplans for each of the boroughs town centres.
- 1.2 The Cabinet Member for a Thriving Economy has committed to working with members in each township on the preparation of masterplans, to help develop a vision and strategy that reflects the member's aspirations for the area.

### Recommendation

2. Heywood Township is asked to approve the Heywood Town Centre Masterplan for adoption by the Council.

### Reason for Recommendation

3. The adoption of the masterplan will assist with guiding future developments in line with the vision and objectives outlined in the masterplan document and to support future funding bids to support regeneration priorities in the township.

### Key Points for Consideration

## **Background**

- 4.1 A town centre masterplan is an essential tool to guide development and build a case for investment in our town centres. As such, the Council has committed to supporting the development of masterplans for each of the boroughs town centres.
- 4.2 The Cabinet Member for a Thriving Economy has committed to working with members in each township on the preparation of masterplans, to develop a vision and strategy that reflects the member's aspirations and regeneration priorities for their township.
- 4.3 To support the development of this masterplan, the Council commissioned Broadway Malyan (BM), to facilitate the preparation of the Heywood Town Centre Masterplan. BM and officers ran a number of engagement sessions with members, including a walk around of Heywood Town Centre. This supported the development of a vision and identified key themes, including development and improvements to the public realm, proposals to improve car parking and identify development opportunities. These key themes are reflected in the Heywood Town Centre Masterplan document though the objectives, design principles, framework masterplan and interim opportunities.

## **Masterplan Document**

- 4.4 A baseline study of the masterplan area has been carried out and fed into a SWOT analysis to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. This analysis provided a basis for discussions with members to identify the key themes and develop the visions, objective and principles contained in the masterplan.
- 4.5 The amount of land within Council ownership in the masterplan area is high. The amount and location of land ownership is a positive enabling influence to shape future development and early investment in projects, which in turn will stimulate market interest, activity, momentum and partnership opportunities.
- 4.6 The vision for the masterplan is to 'make Heywood a characterful and attractive town for the local community and city region. Enable connected, sustainable, urban residential growth. Provide more comfort for pedestrians in the town centre create a place for people to stop and stay.' This will be achieved through objectives relating to place, movement and land use.
- 4.7 There are 7 design principles:
  1. Define the town centre
  2. Well connected
  3. Traffic movement
  4. Establish gateways
  5. Uplift public realm
  6. Provide improved town centre parking

## 7. Density

### Framework Masterplan

- 4.8 The masterplan area has been split into the 3 character areas of town centre, civic and edge of centre to respond to the existing and proposed townscape/urban design context. The design principles reinforce these character areas.
- 4.9 The framework masterplan rationalises the design principles into an overarching single vision, setting a framework for the development of an illustrative masterplan, and setting parameters for future development opportunities. It establishes principles of connectivity, place-making and development opportunities.
- 4.10 Two options are presented which illustrate various methods of accommodating the design principles in terms of highways and vehicle movement solutions which have been developed in conjunction with Rochdale Council's highways team and independent transport consultants. Option 1 was identified by township members as the preferred approach but it was also agreed that option 2 should be retained to allow further exploration of more significant public realm interventions that could bring about greater benefits for Heywood and the town centre.
- 4.11 The construction of the J19 relief road from the M62 will also reduce traffic through Heywood town centre, particularly HGV traffic, and is an opportunity that must be taken and capitalised on to reduce traffic flow through the town centre and improve the environment for walking, cycling and ultimately shoppers and residents which the masterplan seeks to capitalise on.
- 4.12 Whilst both options require further modelling, costing and testing, it is important that these principles are set out and identified in the masterplan to support further funding bids and work. It is also important to state there would be further opportunities for formal public engagement in due course as part of the development of any of those schemes.

### Interim Opportunities

- 4.13 A series of 'interim' options are possible whilst a preferred highways solution is progressed and modelled. These include:
- Tidy up and declutter – Remove and/or consolidate signage; merge functions (e.g. place bins & signage on lampposts); replace & upgrade street furniture.
  - Car park – Upgrade and expand Hill Street parking area.
  - Pocket Park – Upgrade of space between Market St & Dawson St and improve open space off Brunswick St.

- Civic Square – Reconfigure junction of York St/Market Place; Closure of LCpl Stephen Shaw MC Way to general traffic. Create bus-only public square.

### Next Steps

- 4.14 Once the Heywood Town Centre Masterplan has been adopted, bids for funding to support more detailed modelling and design work can be prepared when appropriate funding opportunities arise. This is particularly important given the likely government focus on 'levelling up'.
- 4.15 The masterplan will provide an approved strategy to support any future funding bids for the township. It will be key in identifying areas where funding is needed, such as walking and cycling funding, and will provide the evidence to support the funding bids.
- 4.16 The masterplan also provides a mechanism to allow the council to secure funding for further work on highways and public realm investigations which are needed to progress further work on detailed proposals.

### Alternatives Considered

- 4.17 Not to adopt the masterplan. The adoption of the masterplan is required to guide future development in line with the vision and objectives and to unlock future funding for the township. If the masterplan is not adopted, it will make it very difficult to bid for funding opportunities and would mean missed opportunities for funding and economic development.

<h3>Costs and Budget Summary</h3>
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- 5.1 The Heywood Town Centre Masterplan has been funded via an allocation from the Council's Capital Programme.
- 5.2 The masterplan supports the process of bidding for future external funding opportunities.

<h3>Risk and Policy Implications</h3>
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- 6.1 The masterplan is not creating new policy and is in accordance with adopted Council policy.
- 6.2 The masterplan allows members to identify their vision and priorities for Heywood and supports the process of applying for and unlocking future funding. Not adopting the masterplan creates a risk that Heywood Township may miss out on opportunities for funding, in an increasingly competitive environment.
- 6.3 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendation in this report. There may however be legal implications arising from projects/work which come forward as a result of the masterplan being adopted and advice should be sought as appropriate.

Consultation
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- 7.1 Heywood Township members have been engaged in the production of the masterplan. Broadway Malyan, with support from officers in planning and highways services, ran a number of engagement sessions with members and a walk around of Heywood Town Centre to develop a vision and identify key themes that are reflected in the masterplan document.
- 7.2 Further work is required on detailed proposals which will be subject to public consultation.

Background Papers	Place of Inspection
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8. Heywood Town Centre Masterplan	Appendix 1
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