Executive Report
Ward(s) affected: Friary and St Nicolas, Holy Trinity
Report of Director of Planning and Regeneration
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Date: 24 January 2017

**Guildford Town Centre Regeneration Strategy**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Executive Summary</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Corporate Plan (2015-2020) was initially adopted by the Council on 7 October 2015 and was subsequently revised and updated on 26 July 2016. It is an essential part of the Council's strategic framework. The Action Plan within the Corporate Plan sets out a number of key priorities and places responsibility for a number of projects/actions to assist in meeting these priorities with the Major Projects Manager.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Major Projects Team (MPT) is now in place within the Council's establishment to help deliver regeneration, housing, infrastructure improvements and public realm enhancements for the town and wider borough. A particular focus for the MPT is Guildford town centre where numerous opportunities exist to make meaningful change and deliver redevelopment for the benefit of all.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Town Centre Masterplan prepared by Allies and Morrison was approved by the Executive as a guide for the ongoing work of the MPT in March 2016. Whilst the Masterplan is helpful in setting a vision for how the town centre might possibly evolve in the future, it is not a strategy document that sets out how such development might be brought forward.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A draft Guildford Town Centre Regeneration Strategy has now been prepared as an aspirational document that sets out a recommended approach to delivering this growth, developing previously developed land and driving significant town centre improvements. The Regeneration Strategy also sets out a regeneration work programme to set the focus for the MPT to take forward the various project strands associated with the overall strategy. As the Strategy is an aspirational document only, it will not form part of the development plan for the borough or carry any material planning weight. Nevertheless, it does provide a narrative on a number of bids in the Capital Programme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is intended that both the Strategy itself and its work programme are flexible 'living' documents that will adapt over time to take account of new opportunities, external pressures, physical constraints and corporate priorities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is also considered important to engage with the local community and key stakeholders, at the appropriate time, to ensure that the public have an understanding and ‘buy in’ to the overall strategy.

**Recommendations to Executive:**

1. That authority be delegated to the Director of Planning and Regeneration, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to make any minor amendments or corrections as may be necessary to the wording of the draft Town Centre Regeneration Strategy.

2. That, subject to (1) above, the Guildford Town Centre Regeneration Strategy be approved, together with the associated regeneration work programme, as setting the overarching strategic objectives for the ongoing work of the Major Projects Team, who will, where appropriate, present proposals in a manner that is compatible with the Local Plan and planning requirements.

3. That the Guildford Town Centre Regeneration Strategy be published and communicated with our key town centre stakeholders, businesses, and residents.

**Reasons for Recommendation:**

- To ensure the work of the Major Projects Team is taken forward in a strategic manner to enable the town to develop in a structured way to provide housing, commercial, retail and leisure opportunities with first class public realm and transport.

- To demonstrate the Council's commitment to delivering meaningful change and significant improvements within the town.

1. **Purpose of Report**

1.1. The purpose of this report is to seek the Executive’s approval of the Guildford Town Centre Regeneration Strategy, as setting the overarching strategic objectives for the ongoing work of the MPT who will, where appropriate, present proposals in a manner that is compatible with the Local Plan and planning requirements. It also seeks approval of wide communication of the Strategy with key stakeholders to supplement the adopted Corporate Plan and to demonstrate further the Council’s commitment to deliver growth and meaningful improvements to Guildford’s town centre and hinterland.

2. **Strategic Priorities**

2.1. The Town Centre Regeneration Strategy will assist the work of the MPT and will help enable the provision of infrastructure, and redevelopment of key sites, in a coherent planned way. This will support driving Guildford’s economy forward promoting the town for business, providing jobs, new homes and an enhanced public realm for the benefit of all.
3. **Background**

3.1. The Corporate Plan (2015-2020) was initially adopted by the Council on 7 October 2015 and was subsequently revised and updated on 26 July 2016. It is an essential part of the Council’s strategic framework. The Action Plan within the Corporate Plan sets out a number of key priorities, including amongst others: ensuring an attractive, competitive, multi-faceted and vibrant town; enhancing our shopping and leisure offer; improving accessibility and pedestrian environment; unlocking the economic advantages of urban regeneration; and providing for a range of new housing to meet need. The Corporate Plan places responsibility for a number of projects/actions to assist in meeting these priorities to the Major Projects Manager.

3.2. The MPT is now in place within the Council’s establishment to help deliver regeneration, housing, infrastructure improvements and public realm enhancements for the town and wider borough. A particular focus for the MPT is Guildford town centre where numerous opportunities exist to make meaningful change and deliver redevelopment for the benefit of all.

3.3. On 22 March 2016, the Executive approved the Town Centre Masterplan (TCMP) prepared by Allies and Morrison as a guide for the ongoing work of the MPT who will, where appropriate, present proposals in a manner that is compatible with the Local Plan and planning requirements. The Masterplan includes a number of suggestions about how key sites within the town centre and its hinterland could potentially be redeveloped to provide growth for the town to support its role as a retail and business centre, and to bring forward additional housing on previously-developed land in sustainable locations, to help meet identified needs and to reduce development pressure on the green belt. A range of house types, sizes and tenures will be considered, including rental property.

3.4. The TCMP draws a vision of a changing Guildford over a period of 20 years, which extends its attractive retail and leisure offer, while maintaining its heritage. It creates a largely pedestrian centre around key anchor sites and generally makes a more attractive place for people to live and work. To achieve the desired quality of environment, the Council aims to discourage through traffic, and encourage visitor traffic, promoting a ‘travel to and not through’ model to reduce intrusive traffic and encourage locals and visitors to adopt other modes of transport.

3.5. Whilst the Masterplan is helpful in setting a vision for how the town centre might possibly evolve in the future it is not a strategy document as to how such development might be brought forward and it has limited, if any, weight as a material consideration in planning terms. The natural next stage for the MPT was to take the ‘vision’ forward and to realise this in to an aspirational Strategy for bringing forward key sites in the short to medium terms and setting longer-term objectives. It is important to note that, like the Masterplan, this Strategy, if approved, will also not form part of the development plan for the borough and will not carry any material planning weight.

3.6. A draft Guildford Town Centre Regeneration Strategy has now been prepared and is attached as Appendix 1 to this report. The Strategy sets out a recommended approach to delivering this growth, developing previously-developed land and seeking to drive significant town centre improvements. The Regeneration Strategy also sets out a broad regeneration work programme to set the focus for the MPT to take...
forward the various project strands associated with the overall strategy – albeit it is intended as a flexible, living, document.

3.7. The Strategy sets out our view of the current situation and the key drivers and themes behind the need for regeneration in the town centre. It goes on to identify the managed change that is required and how this could be delivered, culminating in a regeneration work programme setting out proposed actions in the short and medium term.

3.8. The Executive is requested to approve the Guildford Town Centre Regeneration Strategy and associated regeneration work programme, as setting the overarching strategic objectives for the ongoing work of the MPT. This is with the aim of ensuring the work programme for the MPT is taken forward in a strategic manner to enable the town to develop in a structured way to provide housing, commercial, retail and leisure opportunities with first class public realm and transport.

3.9. It is also requested that the Executive endorses communication of the Guildford Town Centre Regeneration Strategy with our key town centre stakeholders, businesses and residents in order to demonstrate the Council’s commitment to delivering meaningful change and significant improvements within the town.

3.10. Ongoing progress updates on the Work Programme supporting the Regeneration Strategy will be reported to the Executive at appropriate stages.

4. Consultations

4.1. No formal consultation has taken place in preparing the Town Centre Regeneration Strategy. However, informal discussions have been undertaken with lead councillors and key internal and external stakeholders to assist in shaping the overall approach.

4.2. The purpose of the Strategy is to support and inform the work programme of the MPT. It is an aspirational document that will not carry any weight in planning terms and, therefore, formal public consultation is not required or necessary. Nevertheless, individual redevelopment projects outlined in the work programme will, of course, be the subject of wider public consultation, either at the planning application or pre-planning stage, as considered appropriate.

5. Equality and Diversity Implications

5.1. The Town Centre Regeneration Strategy is intended to improve Guildford for the benefit of all residents, businesses and visitors to the town and does not discriminate in any way against any groups. No equality or diversity implications have been identified.

6. Financial Implications

6.1. There are no specific financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report in terms of the publication of this aspirational Regeneration Strategy itself. However, the various projects identified within the Work Programme would, of course, have financial implications in themselves.
6.2. The Council’s capital programme includes the following budgets for individual projects for 2016/17:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Total 2016/17 Capital Programme Budget</th>
<th>Future Years Budget included in current capital programme</th>
<th>New bids for approval by Council on 8 February 2017</th>
<th>Total Project budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Property Acquisition</td>
<td>£10m</td>
<td>£20m</td>
<td>£5m</td>
<td>£35m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bedford Wharf</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£17.7m</td>
<td>£23m</td>
<td>£40.7m</td>
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<tr>
<td>Portsmouth Road</td>
<td>£0.7m</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£0.7m</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guildford Park Car Park (general Fund)</td>
<td>£11.3m</td>
<td>£18.2m</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£29.5m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guildford Park Housing Project (HRA)</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£16m</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£16m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Street Redevelopment</td>
<td>£0.9m</td>
<td>£20.2m</td>
<td>£8.5m</td>
<td>£29.6m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walnut Bridge</td>
<td>£2.6m</td>
<td>£0.6m</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£3.2m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mill Brook Car Park</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£1m</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£1m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapel Street public realm</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£2m</td>
<td>£2m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable Movement Corridor</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£9.9m</td>
<td>£9.9m</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guildford West (Park Barn) station</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£5m</td>
<td>£5m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town Centre Transport Package</td>
<td>£0.2m</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£0.2m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guildford Gyratory</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£12m</td>
<td>£12m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bright Hill Development (General Fund)</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£13.5m</td>
<td>£13.5m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bright Hill Development (HRA)</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£3.5m</td>
<td>£3.5m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTALS</strong></td>
<td><strong>£25.7m</strong></td>
<td><strong>£93.7m</strong></td>
<td><strong>£82.4m</strong></td>
<td><strong>£201.8m</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.3. We are currently working to translate the projects set out in the Strategy into viable schemes. Where funding has not already been identified or approved, bids for emerging schemes will be submitted for approval and inclusion in the Council’s provisional capital programme as part of the annual business planning process. Where schemes are on the provisional capital programme, a further, more detailed
business case, will be submitted to Executive for approval prior to the project starting.

6.4 In developing the detailed business case for each individual scheme, the Council will undertake an options analysis on the potential delivery mechanisms and financing of the scheme. In formulating the Council’s capital programme, unless capital receipts, grants and contributions are predicted, and have been reasonably estimated, we have assumed that the Council will finance the projects in full, thus increasing the Council’s underlying need to borrow. The actual decision and timing of any external borrowing will be made as part of the Council’s treasury management strategy. The implications of financing the proposed capital programme from borrowing are shown in the general fund capital programme report, which can be found elsewhere on this agenda, and will also be considered by full Council on 8 February 2017. The principal implications of financing the projects from borrowing are the net revenue impact of the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP), interest, ongoing running costs and any rental income of the scheme. The net revenue impact will directly affect whether the Council needs to raise its Band D Council Tax in order to pay for the schemes.

6.5 Projects marked as Housing Revenue Account (HRA) will be financed from HRA reserves.

7. Legal Implications

7.1. The Town Centre Regeneration Strategy is an aspirational document providing an overall vision and links with the Corporate Plan. It is a non-statutory document. This means it cannot be relied upon in decision-making and carries no weight in the determination of planning applications.

8. Human Resource Implications

8.1. There are no specific Human Resource implications arising from the recommendation in this report, although scoping, planning and delivery of the various projects as set out in the Regeneration Work Programme contained in the Strategy document will, of course, invariably involve resource implications for the MPT and wider Council.

9. Summary of Options

9.1. The identified options for the Executive are as set out below:

- To not adopt the Guildford Town Centre Regeneration Strategy and to let the existing and emerging Local Plans and planning policy be the main focus and guide for the work of the Major Projects delivery team on the basis of the planning weight that can be afforded to the relevant allocations and policies. This is the ‘do nothing’ option (not recommended).

- To approve the Guildford Town Centre Regeneration Strategy and regeneration work programme contained within it, to guide the work of the Major Projects Delivery Team, and secondly to endorse wide communication of the Guildford Town Centre Regeneration Strategy with our key town centre stakeholders, businesses and residents. This is the recommended option.
10. **Conclusions**

10.1. The draft Town Centre Regeneration Strategy and the associated regeneration work programme sets out a vision and a structured approach to delivering meaningful retail and business growth, new housing, infrastructure improvements and significant enhancements to the environment and public realm within Guildford town centre. The Executive is therefore asked to give its support to the Strategy so that the MPT can take forward its identified programme of works, together with internal and external partners, for the overall benefit of Guildford.

10.2. It is intended that both the Strategy itself and its work programme are flexible ‘living’ documents that will adapt over time to take account of new opportunities, external pressures, physical constraints and Corporate priorities. We will also engage fully with the local community and key stakeholders on specific projects to ensure their views are properly taken in to consideration.

11. **Background Papers**

Town Centre Masterplan documents available at: [http://www.guildford.gov.uk/tcmp](http://www.guildford.gov.uk/tcmp)


12. **Appendices**