

Executive Report

Ward(s) affected: Friary & St Nicolas and Holy Trinity.

Report of Managing Director of Guildford Borough Council.

Authors: Michael Lee-Dickson, Regeneration Lead and Andrew Tyldesley, Town Centre Lead.

Tel: 01483 444617

Email: [michael.lee-dickson@guildford.gov.uk](mailto:michael.lee-dickson@guildford.gov.uk) and [andrew.tyldesley@guildford.gov.uk](mailto:andrew.tyldesley@guildford.gov.uk)

Lead Councillor responsible: John Rigg

Tel: 07870 555784

Email: [john.rigg@guildford.gov.uk](mailto:john.rigg@guildford.gov.uk)

Date: 21 July 2020

## **Guildford Economic Regeneration Programme Masterplan Strategy**

### **Executive Summary**

In July 2019 the Council made the following resolution; *That the process for bringing forward, within the term of this Council, a sustainable Town Centre Master Plan Development Plan Document be commenced immediately, and the Director of Planning and Regeneration be authorised to engage external master-planning consultancy advice to assist in this process*".

On 24 March 2020, the Leader of the Council agreed to the setting up of a Masterplan Board and appointment of a specialist advisor to brief and scope the appointment of an external professional team to contribute to the delivery of a proactive strategy for the comprehensive regeneration of Guildford town centre.

The continued retail down-turn, that is likely to have been extenuated by the COVID19 situation, and the impact it has had on the town centre will require the Council to review and question the priority of and requirement for schemes to be brought forward from the adopted Local Plan.

Therefore, a strategy that will have greater overall economic benefit to the town centre has been formulated.

### **Recommendation to Executive**

The Executive is asked to agree the following:

- (1) To set up a Guildford Economic Regeneration Programme Masterplan Board to be chaired by the Lead Councillor for Regeneration
- (2) To adopt the draft Guildford Economic Regeneration Strategy and draft structure organisational plan as set out in Appendices 1 & 2 to this report.
- (3) To appoint an external specialist advisor and professional team with the responsibility to deliver a strategy specifically for the regeneration of Guildford town centre.

Reason(s) for Recommendation:

- 1) This programme has major benefits for Guildford's community and businesses by delivering a pro-active strategy to address the economic and physical constraints facing the town, including the retail downturn and the impact of the COVID19 situation.
- 2) To support resolution C029 of the Council made 23 July 2019.

**Is the report (or part of it) exempt from publication? No**

## **1. Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to seek endorsement of the process for setting up a pro-active delivery strategy for Guildford's Economic Regeneration Programme Masterplan.
- 1.2. It has been agreed that a new Town Centre Masterplan will be prepared. It is proposed that there will be a constraint led pro-active delivery strategy for Guildford Economic Regeneration Programme which will include specific work programmes including:
  - Flood Defence
  - Transportation (improving resilience and adding capacity).
  - Housing Delivery
  - Environment & Climate Change
  - Social/Arts
- 1.3. The approved revenue budget of £500,000 for the current financial year (2020-21) will fund Stage 1 of the programme. A milestone report with recommendations will be presented to the Executive in January 2021 and the Council may decide not to progress any further / implement recommendations at this stage.

## **2. Strategic Priorities**

- 2.1. The formation of the Programme will lead to a positive impact on the supply of housing and quality of retail and commercial space in the town centre leading to economic regeneration.
- 2.2. The implementation of the programme supports the delivery of a range of housing needs, particularly affordable homes as prioritised in the Corporate Plan 2018-2023.
- 2.3. The Council declared a Climate Emergency on 23 July 2019 and the programme will prioritise environmental impact throughout the process.

## **3. Background**

- 3.1. In July 2019 the Council made the following resolution; *"That the process for bringing forward, within the term of this Council, a sustainable Town Centre Master Plan Development Plan Document be commenced immediately, and the Director of Planning and Regeneration be authorised to engage external master-planning consultancy advice to assist in this process"*.

- 3.2. As a result of this resolution, Corporate Programmes submitted a paper to Executive on 24 March 2020 setting out its preliminary recommendations on how the Masterplan process should be taken forward. Although the Executive did not take place due to the COVID-19 crisis, the Leader of the Council was still able to make the following decision
- (1) That a Town Centre Masterplan Programme Board be established and chaired by Councillor John Rigg.
  - (2) That a procurement specialist be appointed for the purpose of a delivery led town centre project who will advise the Council on the recruitment of a team of specialists, including planners, to lead on the delivery of a portfolio of projects that will together contribute to the comprehensive regeneration of Guildford town centre, and be responsible for delivering the projects that are identified as supporting the future of the Town Centre as well as the evidence base that will inform an aspirational document to explore the development potential of the Town Centre.
- 3.3. Following the motion at full Council, Corporate Programmes submitted a revenue bid in the 2020-21 budget for funding to undertake and procure a delivery led masterplan for the town centre. This was approved by Full Council on 5 February 2020 in the sum of £500,000. Whilst it is envisaged the production of a masterplan including evidence base will be in excess of this for which a future business case for funding will be required, we consider no more than £500,000 will be spent in the first financial year.

#### **4. Work to date**

- 4.1. Using the successful Weyside Urban Village (WUV) model as a guide, we have formulated a draft organisational structure chart to establish a deliverable constraint led masterplan forming the basis for delivery of a transformational Economic Regeneration Programme for Guildford.
- 4.2. A constraint led master plan needs to be fully informed and validated by infrastructure solutions, strategies relevant to current prevailing conditions (current traffic, climate change, sustainable communities, retail downturn economic resilience) and land ownerships. For an Economic Regeneration Programme to be considered deliverable all of the above aspects and interdependencies need to be considered and addressed.
- 4.3. The draft structure chart sets out the organisation necessary to manage the 10 sub projects and five sub property projects. The draft organisation chart is attached as **Appendix 2**.
- 4.4. The proposed Strategy for the Guildford Economic Regeneration Programme is attached as **Appendix 1**. A critical success factor of any such Strategy would be acceptance by the Council of a pro-active role as Enabling Infrastructure provider and adoption of an approach that gives priority and weight to the delivery of the key elements of flood defence and improved highways solutions as part of a constraint led masterplan.
- 4.5. The retail down-turn, COVID19 situation and the impact it has had on the town centre will require the Council to review and question the priority of and requirement for schemes to be brought forward from the adopted Local Plan.

- 4.6. The Strategy sets out a timeline for taking forward a deliverable Economic Regeneration Programme for Guildford incorporating three Gateways with Full Council sign-off and approval at each gateway as shown in the Table below;

Gateway 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Preparation of detailed briefs.</li> <li>▪ Procurement of Consultant team.</li> <li>▪ High Level Strategic Appraisal including constraint analysis</li> <li>▪ Preparation of LEP Feasibility Funding bid for Gateway 2.</li> <li>▪ Consideration of Development Plan Document (DPD) process</li> <li>▪ Budget £500,000</li> <li>▪ August 2020 to January 2021</li> </ul>
Gateway 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Development of options and concepts</li> <li>▪ Preparation of Business Case</li> <li>▪ Submission of Grant applications</li> <li>▪ Estimated budget £1.5 million, of which there is no budgetary provision in the MTFS</li> <li>▪ March to December 2021</li> </ul>
Gateway 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Grant Funding Award</li> <li>▪ Infrastructure planning submissions</li> <li>▪ Budget to be agreed (Approved Weyside budget for this stage £2.9 million), of which there is no budget provision in the MTFS</li> <li>▪ January to November 2022</li> </ul>

- 4.7. Gleeds Cost Management Ltd. have been appointed to advise the Council on the structure of the programme, the briefs and scoping documentation required for the professional team to deliver the projects. The Council's Procurement and Legal teams advised on Gleeds' appointment under the ESPO framework.
- 4.8. The Council's Procurement team is advising on the most appropriate routes to market for the procurement of the external professional team to ensure compliance and value for money. The Masterplan Architects will be procured via OJEU and other consultants by Framework Competitions or Non-OJEU Invitations to Tender.
- 4.9. Whilst bids will be sought from consultants to undertake the work required to reach all three Gateways, the contract would be clear that the phases would only proceed one at a time in line with the funding and there will not be the absolute guarantee of all the work.
- 4.10. Environment Agency data will be reviewed by our specialist flood consultant, Floodline Consulting. This initial Flood relief report will form the basis of flood feasibility work to be carried out as part of one of the sub-programme's workstreams.

## 5. Proposed Actions

- 5.1. Set up a Guildford Economic Regeneration Programme Masterplan Board. The Board will agree upon and appoint an expert to prepare a brief and scopes for the appointment of the external professional team.
- 5.2. Procure and appoint the professional team including a Project Management Consultancy to manage the programme on behalf of the Council. This team will be managed and overseen by the Council's Lead for Regeneration.

## **6. Consultations**

- 6.1. Councillor John Rigg, Lead Councillor for Regeneration, recommends approval.
- 6.2. No public consultations have taken place. Public consultation will be undertaken later as part of the programme process. A Stakeholder matrix and an initial programme of consultation with stakeholder groups will be established as part of Stage 1.

## **7. Key Risks**

- 7.1. Failure to prepare and implement a strategy for Guildford town centre is likely to lead to a decline in its attractiveness to residents, business and visitors/shoppers.
- 7.2. The Council has declared a Climate Emergency. An implementable strategy is required that will address the causes of this emergency and be part of a raft of actions that will be identified to start to reverse the situation.
- 7.3. Flooding is a major risk to residents and businesses. A clear strategy and implementable plan will be addressed through this programme to alleviate this risk. Flood risk reduces the value of the Council's assets causing further risk of failing to meet housing targets. This risk will be reduced by having a clear strategy and implementable housing delivery plan for the town centre.

## **8. Financial Implications**

- 8.1. At its meeting on 5 February 2020 the Council agreed to fund a revenue bid of £500,000 for the work described in this report as part of the Masterplan Development Plan Document (DPD) process. Further annual budget allocation of £125,000 for 2021-22 and 2022-23 was also provisionally agreed but subject to final approval at the relevant budget meetings in February 2021 and 2022 to progress a DPD through to regulation 18 consultation. To progress the programme beyond the first Gateway will require additional funding to that set out above.
- 8.2. Subject to the outputs of the Guildford Economic Regeneration Programme, a number of capital projects may be developed as part of an overall programme for development for the town centre. As these capital projects come forward, a capital bid for funding will be required to be submitted for approval by Full Council as part of its provisional capital programme.
- 8.3. Funding bids to external parties and government agencies will also be submitted for grant funding to aid the development of the programme. An application for LEP feasibility funding will be prepared during the first phase for gateway 2. The net cost to the Council of these capital schemes will increase the Council's underlying need to borrow and have a direct impact on the General Fund revenue account by way of Minimum Revenue Provision and external borrowing costs. There is currently no allowance for this in the capital vision.

## **9. Legal Implications**

- 9.1. The Council's Legal and Procurement functions will be instructed in relation the procurement of the consultancy services to ensure compliance with the Council's legal duties including the Public Contract Regulations 2015 and the Council's Procurement Procedure Rules.

- 9.2. Compliance and best value for money will be achieved by procuring all 3 Gateways at once, the tender documents as well as the contract terms will ensure that the Council is under no obligation to proceed with Gateways 2 and 3 without the requisite funding being in place.
- 9.3. The Legal team will be instructed to draft the appropriate contract terms for each of the consultancy services as well as any funding agreements to ensure the Council is appropriately protected.

## **10. Human Resource Implications**

- 10.1. There are no human resource implications arising from this report.

## **11. Equality and Diversity Implications**

- 11.1. A preliminary assessment of the proposal has taken place and it is considered that these duties are not engaged at this stage.

## **12. Climate Change/Sustainability Implications**

- 12.1. The Council declared a Climate Emergency on 23 July 2019. Environmental impact will be taken into account throughout the programme including:
- carbon emissions
  - energy use
  - waste / recycling
  - air quality
  - water supply/conservation
  - flood / climate resilience
  - procurement (economic, social and environmental, community well-being)
  - biodiversity
  - public health of communities
  - collaboration with statutory partners, agencies and/or businesses to tackling climate change

## **13. Summary of Options**

- 13.1. To endorse and continue with the establishment of the Guildford Economic Regeneration Programme – Masterplan Strategy, up to Gateway 1. This will enable the commencement of the production of a constraint led pro-active delivery strategy for Guildford's town centre and help in achieving the objectives of the Council's Corporate Plan 2018-23.
- 13.2. Do not endorse the programme and cease work thereby delaying the delivery of a strategy for the Economic Regeneration of Guildford town centre.

## **14. Conclusion**

- 14.1. This programme has major benefits for Guildford's community and businesses by delivering a pro-active strategy to address the economic and physical constraints facing the town, including the retail downturn and the impact of the COVID19 situation.
- 14.2. The Executive is asked to endorse the process set out below;

- a) Setting up a Guildford Economic Regeneration Programme Masterplan Board to be chaired by Councillor John Rigg.
- b) The appointment of a specialist advisor to brief and scope the appointment of an external professional team to contribute to the delivery of a pro-active strategy for the comprehensive regeneration of Guildford town centre.
- c) Endorse the Guildford Economic Regeneration Strategy and draft structure organisational plan.

## **15. Background Papers**

[23 July 2019 Full Council Notice of Motion – CO29: Town Centre Master Planning](#)

[24 March 2020 Executive Committee Report – Item 10: Town Centre Masterplan](#)

## **16. Appendices**

Appendix 1: Draft strategy

Appendix 2: Proposed Organisational Structure