

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

7th November 2007

BROMSGROVE TOWN CENTRE

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Councillor R Hollingworth
Responsible Head of Service	Kevin Dicks

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 To update the Executive Cabinet on the progress of the Town Centre redevelopment and to recommend project management / governance arrangements to ensure successful delivery of the redevelopment programme.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that:

- 2.1.1 Executive Cabinet note the report and endorse the proposals for project management / governance;
- 2.1.2 Executive Cabinet recommend to full Council the release of £10,000 of capital receipts in 2007/8; and that
- 2.1.3 £100,000 per annum included in the Capital Programme for 2008/9 to 2010/11 as part of the review of the medium term financial plan.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 It is widely known and accepted that Bromsgrove Town Centre is in dire need of redevelopment. The state and condition of Bromsgrove town centre is the main complaint and source of dissatisfaction for local residents, visitors & traders.
- 3.2 It is perceived as tired and unattractive. It is not regarded as a primary destination for purposes of shopping and is under utilised in terms of leisure and eating out. The general impression conveyed is of the town centre being run down, unsafe and undesirable.
- 3.3 Bromsgrove town possesses many interesting features. It has buildings of interest and character including a grade one listed church and many buildings of historic interest. It was a former market town mentioned in the Domesday Book and a centre for the medieval wool trade.
- 3.4 The present town centre is a linear development with a number of adjoining, although separated sites. Several attempts have been made to regenerate the town centre, notably the work undertaken in 2003 that led to the

production of a development brief for the market hall site and a planning brief for the bus station.

- 3.5 The retail offer is unsatisfactory with poor covenants, opportunities to eat and drink are extremely limited, leisure is restricted and heavy traffic is threatening the quality of the environment. This situation cannot be allowed to continue if the Town Centre is to survive.
- 3.6 The town centre has to be regenerated if the current flight of business from the town is to be arrested and local residents pride in their town is restored.
- 3.7 In March 2006 the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) acknowledged that the town centre redevelopment had to be one of its key priorities. The LSP and the District Council agreed that regeneration would be most effective through a partnership approach.

4. CURRENT GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

- 4.1 In February 2007 the LSP worked with the District Council to reconstitute its existing town centre group to form a theme group of the LSP. This reconstitution involved widening the membership to include key stakeholders.
- 4.2 The theme group currently meets every six to eight weeks and its membership includes:
 - Leader of District Council
 - District Councillors for the town centre
 - County Councillor for the town centre
 - Member of the equalities forum
 - Representatives of local traders and business
 - Advantage West Midlands
 - Police
 - Representative of Chamber of Commerce
- 4.3 The theme group is supported by the following officers:
 - District Council Corporate Director – Services (new title Executive Director – Partnerships and Projects)
 - District Council Head of Planning and Environment
 - District Council Principal Planning Officer
 - District Council Economic Development Manager
 - County Property Services Officer;
 - County Highways Officers
- 4.4 The theme group reports to the Bromsgrove Partnership at its Board Meetings.

- 4.5 In addition there is a smaller project steering group chaired by the District Council's Corporate Director – Services (new title Executive Director – Partnerships and Projects) consisting of primarily district and county council officers who carry out the technical work associated with the regeneration and report to the theme group.
- 4.6 The current project management and governance arrangements have not allowed the project to progress sufficiently to address the issues referred to above. This report seeks to identify the key issues and define the outcomes (to include project management and governance structure) required to address these issues.

5. ISSUES

- 5.1 There are significant issues that need to be addressed in order to secure a successful town centre redevelopment:
- Development of an Area Action Plan for the town centre as part of the production of the Local Development Framework
 - Procuring a preferred partner for the town centre redevelopment once a strategy has been approved that provides the identified outcomes required.
 - Working with public sector partners to improve services and rationalise asset holdings in or around the town centre releasing sites for re-development.
 - Identify quick wins to build confidence that the Town Centre will be successfully redeveloped
 - Improvements to the Highways infrastructure

Area Action Plan (AAP)

- 5.2 The initial work on the town centre regeneration highlighted the importance of the town centre regeneration work conforming to regulations and law. However, this has to be balanced with actions that reassure disillusioned residents and traders that perceive the town centre being of little interest to the Council.
- 5.3 Therefore, the regeneration of Bromsgrove town centre has to take a balanced approach between planning and action. The development of an Area Action Plan (AAP) with all its consultation and evidence collecting will formulate options for the redevelopment of the town centre. The AAP will provide the parameters for development, indicate land use and will shape the regeneration of the town centre. It will contain a vision for the town centre and determine how the land in the town centre will be developed in keeping with that vision.
- 5.4 The AAP process will ensure Bromsgrove conforms to regulation and laws and will be a forward looking document that will set the standard for a generation. It will contain baseline information on the town centre to include

demography, retail capacity, transport and highways, environmental issues, housing and economic development. It will provide a style guide, information on the built environment and address transportation issues.

- 5.5 The AAP will provide the planning policy for the town centre and form an integral part of the Local Development Framework. The AAP will define the shape and character of the new Town Centre.
- 5.6 The AAP process has a number of stages. Once the baseline information has been gathered a series of options for the town centre will be formulated. These will be prepared after consultation with key stakeholders and members of the community. The options will be subject to a period of consultation known as the Issues and Options Stage.
- 5.7 The responses to the Issues and Options Stage will be analysed and a preferred option will be identified. The preferred option will dictate the strategy to be adopted for identifying an appropriate development partner.
- 5.8 Work on the preparation of the AAP will commence as soon as possible and the District Council has allocated resources for this purpose. The Council is engaging CBRE, a leading property consultancy firm with extensive town regeneration experience to carry out the work on the AAP. This will ensure the AAP reaches the preferred option stage by Autumn 2008.

Preferred Partner

- 5.9 The second issue is related to the identification of a development partner. It is suggested that this process commences once the AAP process has identified the preferred option. Until this preferred option is known, meaningful discussions with potential development partners would be premature. However it is recommended to commence the preliminary work required in preparation for this appointment. This preliminary work will include the preparation of the OJEU advertisement (Official Journal of the European Union) as previously agreed by the Executive Cabinet.
- 5.10 In order to progress this the Council will be supported in the production of marketing material that will set out the over-arching strategy for successful regeneration of Bromsgrove as well as site-specific details relating to the PQQ process which is integral to the OJEU. It was intended that external support be engaged with the Council's Procurement Officer in devising a programme which will successfully address OJEU requirements.
- 5.11 Ahead of this main appointment, it is recommended we look to develop the Market Hall site as this will immediately demonstrate the Council's commitment to the Town regeneration. It is therefore recommended that the Market Hall site is brought forward for redevelopment as soon as possible and the preparatory work is undertaken to enable the selection of the preferred partner by March 2008. The District Council's procurement manager has been charged with identifying the way forward with regard to

the procurement of a preferred partner – this will include the process to be followed, timescales and the selection criteria to be used.

Public Sector Partners

- 5.12 The issue of wider partnership needs to be pursued further particularly with the County Council. A number of the important sites within the town centre with a potential for redevelopment are in the ownership of the County Council. The Police, Fire Authority, New College and the Primary Care Trust also have potential development sites.
- 5.13 The District Council and County Council as part of the Government's Shared Services agenda are keen to work together and with our other public sector partners to improve the public service provision in Bromsgrove. From initial meetings between the public sector partners, it is considered there are opportunities to work together and consolidate the public sector property portfolio. This would bring forward surplus sites for development and capital generation.
- 5.14 Potential opportunities arising would include the provision of shared District & County offices to include an improved Worcestershire Hub, a new Library and Leisure Centre.
- 5.15 The County Council have further demonstrated their commitment to the project by facilitating the appointment of a designated project manager (see later). The County Council will also play a significant role in seeking to improve the highways infrastructure.
- 5.16 It is recommended the work to rationalise the public assets is undertaken by the County Council as they have the capacity and expertise to do this.

Quick Wins

- 5.17 In discussions between officers of BDC and the County it has been identified that there is a possibility of a couple of quick wins with regard to the Town Centre – primarily associated with the development of the Market Hall site, Parkside Middle School site and the bus station.
- 5.18 It has been concluded that the bus station is a non starter at this moment as the site is in multiple ownership and we do not currently have a policy on which to enable use of CPO powers (this will be developed as part of the LDF). It is therefore recommended we concentrate on the Market Hall site and Parkside Middle School site in the first instance.
- 5.19 The first proposal is, having accepted BDC want to keep ownership of the Market Hall site, we approach certain "quality end" food retailers such as M&S, Waitrose and Sainsburys and ascertain their interest in the site and follow this up with more formal meetings to explore ideas. If an acceptable proposal is put forward, the District would procure the shell for the food

retailer to fit out in return for the retailer entering into a lease for say 20 years paying an open market rent. The Economic Development Officer at BDC is currently progressing these contacts and has been asked to prepare a separate report outlining the proposals for the Market Hall site including how we sustain the business whilst we are developing the site.

5.20 The second proposal is to bring forward the proposed new Health Centre to be developed on part of the existing Parkside Middle School site. This will be a landmark building on the edge of the Town Centre and will show both the County and District Council's commitment to both the health of the residents of Bromsgrove and the regeneration of the Town Centre.

5.21 Finally, it is acknowledged that the appearance of actual physical change will be a year or so away. In the meantime a series of smaller 'quick wins' are being considered. These include modification to the parking arrangements around the bus station and an active programme of high street events designed to build momentum for business and raise the centre's profile in surrounding areas. This would include specialist street markets, street theatre, and a significant programme of events around Christmas under the heading of Christmas in Bromsgrove. This will involve improvements to Christmas lights, a possible ice rink and a seasonal market.

6. PROJECT MANAGEMENT & GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

6.1 As acknowledged earlier it is accepted that the project has not progressed as quickly as originally envisaged. In order to address this and given the complex nature of issues that need to be addressed, the need to look at things holistically and to ensure that the project adheres to the project timetable the following governance arrangements are proposed:

- Project Steering Group (to report to Bromsgrove Partnership bi-monthly on progress) made up of:
 - Leader of Bromsgrove District Council
 - District Councillors for the town centre (Namely Ted Tibby and Rita Dent)
 - Leader of Worcestershire County Council
 - Chief Executive, Bromsgrove District Council
 - Executive Director – Partnerships and Projects, Bromsgrove District Council
 - Director Corporate Services, Worcestershire County Council
 - Representative from the Police
 - Representative from the Fire Authority
 - Representative from the Primary Care Trust

It is envisaged that this group would be supported advised by:

- Highways
- County Property Services
- BDC Planning Officers

This would replace the current arrangements outlined at Section 4.

6.2 The terms of the Project Steering Group are being presented to the Executive Cabinet for their approval. The proposed terms of reference are the newly constituted group would:

- Oversee the process and evaluation criteria for the selection of a town centre redevelopment partner;
- Oversee the development of the AAP
- Oversee the marketing of the Market Hall site
- Ensure that all public sector assets are reviewed and a rationalisation plan is produced which improves the public service provision.
- To ensure that all issues are brought together into one holistic plan
- Guidance and opinion on issues and ideas;
- A sounding board for plans and proposals;
- Performance management through approval of targets, deadlines and oversee progress
- Advice on actions recommended by officers and other regeneration staff.
- A forum for town centre stakeholders;
- A route for consultation with the community and businesses

6.3 In order that the project is progressed as quickly as possible the Project Steering Group needs to be suitably empowered by the main partners in order that 90% of the decisions can be made by that group. It is acknowledged that some decisions will need to be referred back to one or more of the partners however these need be kept to a minimum. An example of a decision that will need to be referred back to partners is the AAP to the District Council. In order that the Steering Group is suitably empowered all partners need to ensure that decision makers are included on the group.

6.4 It is proposed that the existing theme group is continued to ensure that stakeholders views are sought on proposals in the full knowledge it is NOT a decision making forum.

6.5 Presently there is not a designated project manager for the town centre redevelopment. The project is currently being led by the Executive Director – Partnerships and Projects, however given the magnitude of the project and complexity of issues involved it is recommended that a Project Manager is appointed. The Project Manager will require support and assistance from all stakeholders who will have to make available appropriate resource.

6.6 It is further recommended the post would sit within the Head of Strategic Projects unit at the County Council. This unit is led by Peter Parkes and it is envisaged that Peter's wealth of experience could be called upon as appropriate. The appointed Project Manager will work primarily on the Town Centre project although will also undertake County and District Council

projects. It is suggested that a salary of approximately £50-55k is needed to attract a suitable candidate and this cost will be split proportionately between the District and the County Council.

- 6.7 A diagram of the overall project governance arrangements is shown at Appendix 1.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The cost of the Project Manager would be split proportionately between the County and District Council. The estimated cost including on costs is £67,200 – the share for BDC is £33,600 for a full year and assuming a start date of 1st January 2008 would result in a cost to BDC of £8,400. It is recommended that £10,000 is funded from capital receipts. It is recommended that £35,000 per annum is included within the capital programme for 2008/9 to 2010/11.
- 7.2 There will be a requirement for some additional funding in order to progress the project and this will need to be determined by the project manager once appointed however it is recommended that an additional £65,000 per annum is included in the capital programme for 2008/9 to 2010/11. An overall provision of £100,000 per annum.
- 7.3 The cost of bringing the Market Hall Site to the open market will be borne by the District Council and this will form part of the business case for disposal (by lease).
- 7.4 The cost for making Parkside site available for the New Health Centre will be borne by the County Council.
- 7.5 The costs involved in the rationalisation of the public asset portfolio will be shared in an equitable manner between the District, County and our public sector partners.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Procurement of the town centre preferred partner is subject to OJEU.

9. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES

- 9.1 The project links directly to the Council's Regeneration objective.

10. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 10.1 There are significant risks associated with this project and it is suggested that one of the first tasks for the project manager would be to compile a full risk register.

11. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Improving the town centre is key to improving the district and increasing confidence in the Council.

12. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

12.1 Will be considered at all stages of the town centre project.

13. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Procurement Issues
Preferred partner procurement
Personnel Implications
Appointment of project management resource
Governance/Performance Management
Effective governance and performance management will be key to delivery of a joined up project
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime and Disorder Act 1998
Will be taken account of in the development proposals
Policy
Local Development Framework
Environmental
Will be taken account of when project is progressed

14. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

Portfolio Holder	Yes
Chief Executive	Yes
Executive Director – Partnerships and Projects	Yes
Assistant Chief Executive	Yes
Head of Service	Yes
Head of Financial Services	Yes

Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	Yes
Head of Organisational Development & HR	Yes
Corporate Procurement Team	No

15. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – overall project governance arrangements

16. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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