
Bromsgrove Town Centre 2040 Vision

Relevant Portfolio Holder		Councillor Karen May
Portfolio Holder Consulted		Yes
Relevant Head of Service		Ostap Paparega
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Wards Affected		Sanders Park Bromsgrove central
Ward Councillor(s) consulted		
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Run & grow a successful business• Affordable & sustainable homes• Sustainability Communities which are safe, well-maintained & green
Key Decision		
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.		

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet RECOMMEND that:-

- 1) Recommendation 1; Cabinet endorse the Bromsgrove 2040 Vision**

2. BACKGROUND

Following the Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on town centre across England, NWedR (on behalf of Bromsgrove District Council) appointed Burrell Foley Fischer (BFF) to produce the Bromsgrove 2040 Vision. The brief for the work was to deliver a vision for the town centre up to 2040. The vision needs to be adaptable and resilient to change, one that will support the future development of the area, and provide the right level of services to meet the needs of both residents and business population. The vision will be important to provide the context for the statutory plan making process.

BFF were appointed via a competitive tender to set out the vision, identify the levers for change, and to propose an implementation strategy to bring the vision into life. The first stage of their work was to understand and set out the strategic context of the town centre. Following on from this initial stage the document provides evidence and analysis on key issues such as the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and relationship with high street vacancy rates (including recent data), a review of challenges in terms of access and connectivity through the town centre and identifies the regeneration of specific sites that have been vacant or underused for some time.

The analysis shows that pre-Covid-19 there were a small number of sites within the town centre that were vacant (9), however, the pandemic made the situation worse with Bromsgrove experiencing a doubling of vacancies, and in line with national trends. More recent data taken in Feb 2023 finds that vacancy rates in the town centre has grown with 24 units found vacant. These are privately owned and managed units.

The current vision that Bromsgrove District Council's (BDC) has adopted for its town centre is set out in its economic priorities, this seeks to diversify and strengthen the offer within the town centre to meet changing customer requirements. The objectives are based on implementing key structural interventions aimed at improving the town centre's vitality, vibrancy, attractiveness and competitiveness:

- Focus on residential uses, with an emphasis on high quality housing
- Provision of high-quality flexible workspaces, including co-working and co-location, building on Bromsgrove's attractiveness for start-ups and micro-enterprises
- Introduce and expand the range of uses that encourage and increase 'dwell' time, such as food & beverage and leisure
- Provision of multi-functional workspaces with a specific focus on the emerging creative industries sector, bringing arts, culture and tech together

- Deliver public realm & green infrastructure with multi-purpose use to enable 'meanwhile' / 'pop-up' activities in key town centre locations

3. VISION OVERVIEW

3.1 The 2040 Vision provides a unique place-making opportunity to consider setting an ambitious, yet deliverable, vision which delivers major social, economic, and environmental benefits and strengthen Bromsgrove Town Centre's viability, vibrancy, and attractiveness. The document is founded on the need to regenerate and the opportunity to redevelop major unused or underused sites which will attract people and investment to the town centre, these sites are:

1. Windsor Street Site – recommended for residential development and associated public realm improvements

2. Churchfields Car Park – recommended for residential development on an underused car park

3. School Drive site (former Dolphin Centre) – recommended for residential development

4. Former Market Hall Site – recommended for commercial and cultural uses.

5. Stourbridge Road Site – recommended for either a commercial or mixed residential led development with a commercial offer

3.2 The Vision considers pedestrian access through the high street, highlighting where Bromsgrove currently has limited infrastructure to support walking and cycling journeys, and the subsequent effect of this on car use for short journeys. The document examines car parking use and trends and provides data on current car parking capacity. Analysis is provided on car park usage in the town centre which identifies two sites Churchfields Multistorey and the School Drive which are significantly underutilised (below 25% occupancy).

- 3.3 There is a review of planned public realm interventions to improve connections across the town centre, with the intention to create an improved sense of continuity and cohesion. The suggested improvements include replacement of pedestrian paving, resurfacing and realignment of highways, decluttering and rationalisation of street furniture, parking reconfiguration, augmentation of access routes and the selective planting of trees, shrubs, and perennial plants.
- 3.4 A final element of the document concerns access to sustainable transport, and the improvements needed to walking and cycling routes. This includes analysis on the current sustainable transport (cycle, bus, rail) provision and their location and distance from key sites within the town centre. Emphasis is given to the understanding how new residential developments will affect transport and parking needs in the future and how this can be managed through both road and transport improvements.
- 3.5 The document pulls together key factors that impact on the look, feel and overall experience of the Bromsgrove town centre by its users, and sets out an implementation plan. This vision is principally delivered through the key intervention sites and associated public realm accessibility improvements to ensure that Bromsgrove Town Centre is fit for purpose over the next 20 years.

Delivery

- 3.6 The 2040 Vision will be delivered in several stages. The first stage (January 2022 – March 2025) includes the re-development of the former Market Hall site for flexible workspace, community and food & beverage uses and site clearance and remediation works on Windsor Street site to unlock the site for residential use. These two projects are part of the Levelling Up Fund programme. The delivery of the Levelling Up Fund Programme is overseen by a Programme Board, which is chaired by the Leader of the Council.
- 3.7 A Project Board has been set up for the redevelopment of the School Drive site (former Dolphin Centre). The Board is chaired by the Chief Executive. The project is at feasibility stage with work being undertaken on site options appraisals, concept designs and viability appraisals.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The works on the former Market Hall and Windsor Street sites are funded by the Levelling Up Fund grant (£14.6m) and a £1.6m match funding from Bromsgrove District Council.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Specific legal advice is being commissioned for each project.

6. STRATEGIC PURPOSES - IMPLICATIONS

Relevant Strategic Purpose

- 6.1 This project supports the following Strategic Purposes and Priorities:

Strategic Purposes: Run & grow a successful business; Affordable & sustainable homes; Communities which are safe, well-maintained and green

Priorities: Economic development and regeneration; a balanced housing market

Climate Change Implications

- 6.2 Through the redevelopment of the sites, energy efficiency measures and Low and Zero Carbon technologies will be explored and may be introduced with a view to reduce operational energy consumption and the associated carbon emissions targets. Specific solutions and targets will be explored as the designs are progressed as well as a commitment to achieving a minimum BREEAM 'very good' rating on suitable sites.

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 7.1 There are no equalities and diversity implications.

Operational Implications

- 7.2 The operational implications of each of the individual projects will be outlined in the respective proposals/reports.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 As part of the governance and reporting requirements a risk register and issues log has been (or will be) produced for each project.

9. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Bromsgrove Town Centres Strategy
- Bromsgrove District Plan – Town Centre Extracts
- GBSLEP – Town and Local Centres Framework

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet
2023

15th March

10. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	BDC Head of Planning	
Lead Director / Head of Service	Head of NWedR	
Financial Services	BDC S151 Officer – Peter Carpenter	
Legal Services	BDC Legal – Claire Green?	
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)	Barbara to advise	
Climate Change Officer (if climate change implications apply)	Barbara to advise	