

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

3rd November 2010

BROMSGROVE HIGH STREET – RESURFACING & PUBLIC REALM UPGRADE

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Del Booth
Relevant Head of Service	John Staniland
Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 The Bromsgrove Town Centre Regeneration Programme is looking to facilitate a high quality upgrade of the Public Realm in the Town Centre.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to update the Cabinet on progress with the Regeneration Programme and seek a commitment to provide funding to allow for the next phases of the Regeneration Programme: Specifically the funding for the resurfacing of the High Street and a high quality upgrade of the general Public Realm in the Primary Shopping Area.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Cabinet are asked to recommend to Full Council the approval of :
- 2.1.1 The addition of £1 million to the 2010/11 Capital Programme to fund the majority of the upgrade and resurfacing in the Town Centre. This is to be financed from:-
- (i) balance of capital receipts arising from the sale of the industrial units (£500k)
 - (ii) contribution from Worcestershire County Council from sale of capital receipts within the Town Centre (£500k).
- 2.1.2 The addition of a further sum of £500k to the 2011/12 Capital Programme once a final assessment can be made of the monies available from the Section 106 agreement with Sainsbury's
- 2.1.3 That a revenue budget of £5k in relation to extending the Regeneration Programme into 2010/11 is allocated from balances.
- 2.2 Cabinet are asked to note that a further report will be presented to request approval for the final contribution of £500k arising from future asset disposals in the Town Centre.

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3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Bromsgrove District Council Cabinet formally approved a proposal in November 2007 to initiate a Public Partnership led Regeneration Programme supported with £300k capital funding over 3 years to fund the management and operation of the project.
- 3.2 A Regeneration Manager, jointly funded by Worcestershire County Council, was subsequently appointed in May 2008. The Regeneration Programme was then constituted with common aims and objectives agreed across a Regeneration Partnership of Bromsgrove District Council, Worcestershire County Council, Worcestershire Primary Care Trust, West Mercia Police and Herefordshire and Worcestershire Fire and Rescue Service
- 3.3 This enabled a partnership working and integrated cross-functional approach to; the town centre environment and public realm; transport issues; economic development; and a 'Total Place' approach to the Public Estate: Partners agreed to collaborate in an overall Area Property Review to regenerate the declining town centre, draw out cost savings and improve services to the community
- 3.4 The Area Action Plan (AAP) is designed to deliver a vibrant, sustainable and attractive town centre. It is intended to do this by increasing the number of visitors and the number of people living and working in the town centre. The strategy to achieve this is to; upgrade the public realm; enhance the conservation area; effectively utilise Bromsgrove's natural assets to provide for open and green spaces in the town centre; improve accessibility and connectivity; reduce through traffic; create new larger and modern retail premises in an extended primary shopping area; extend the hours of activity in the town centre; create new employment sites; promote new housing developments and the use of vacant spaces above shops.
- 3.5 The Area Action Plan is due to be published for final public consultation at the end of this year. However, in advance of this strategic planning framework, it has been possible for the Regeneration Partnership to already make progress in an initial or first phase of the Public Property Rationalisation and Regeneration of the town:

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- WCC made land available to facilitate a new PCT funded Health Centre, which is under construction and due to open in April 2011
- A development site has been identified and outline agreement reached to provide a new combined Police & Fire station within 3 years and this has helped Worcestershire to be one of only 6 fast-track 'Total Place' initiatives in the whole Country
- New award winning Public Conveniences have been completed by the District Council
- A collaborative project between County and District Councils provided an upgraded Bus Station which has resulted in a significant increase in passenger numbers
- The strategically important George House site at the southern most end of the High Street has been procured by the District Council to facilitate a landmark development
- A £70,000 shop-fronts scheme part funded by both County and District Councils has been launched and a further scheme has successfully converted empty spaces above shops into new homes
- The Market Hall has been demolished and the Street Market moved onto the High Street with a resulting increase in footfall to the Town Centre evidenced by its annual Health Check which also shows a drop in empty shops, which are now below the national average

4. KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 These initial developments have shown a tangible commitment to the regeneration of Bromsgrove, which has helped to attract private development funds into the town. These in turn will lead to obtaining mandatory private contributions (e.g. 'Section 106' or 'Section 278') to infrastructure improvements required to facilitate the public realm and transport upgrades required for the town.
- 4.2 Investment in the Public Realm was the catalyst for the rapid projection of Leicester into the top ten retail cities in the country. More locally, recent successful projects in Evesham and Pershore have also demonstrated the positive impact of public realm investment. An attractive public realm will:
- attract visitors and shoppers into town
 - increase the number of people living in town
 - support the investment proposition for leading retailers
 - tangibly demonstrate public investment in the town
 - prove the deliverability of the Area Action Plan

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- 4.3 It is vital for the regeneration of the town that a seamless public realm is created throughout the primary shopping area with a consistency of design that will deliver a high quality redevelopment. This approach will enable a programme of works to be to deliver a consistent scheme over 4 phases: High Street Central, High Street North, Birmingham Road & The Strand, High Street South and Worcester Road.
- 4.4 The completion of the second phase of the property review in conjunction with the implementation of the Area Action Plan will require the procurement of Private Partner Developer(s). This will then enable a phased construction programme of the various redevelopment sites throughout Bromsgrove Town Centre to be prepared, together with commercial terms and planning obligations. This process will begin early in 2011 and be instrumental in finalising the detail of the funding for the various elements of the overall public realm development. As well, of course, as the integration of the overarching management of the public realm construction project into the overall Regeneration Programme.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The initial £300k funding for the operation of the Regeneration Scheme has been well managed with sufficient money retained to allow for the continued funding of 50% the Regeneration Team costs into a fourth year in 2011/12. The County Council have agreed to match this.
- 5.2 A small revenue budget is required for the Regeneration Programme for the legal fees, public consultation and inward investment marketing purposes over the next 18 months.
- 5.3 The County Council is the Highways Authority for Bromsgrove High Street. Halcrow, the County Council's retained Highway Consultants, have estimated the total cost of a high quality refurbishment scheme at £2m.
- 5.4 At a meeting of the County Council Cabinet of the 21 October 2010 it was decided that £0.5million of their receipt from the release of land for the new Bromsgrove Health Centre be reinvested into the town to upgrade the High Street Central Section between the Housman Statue and the New Road crossing, to include Church Road.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

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6.1 The Planning application by Sainsburys was considered by Members at Planning Committee on 28 June 2010 and Members resolved that it should be granted subject to conditions and a section 106 agreement. The 106 agreement provides for the following contributions to be paid by Sainsburys.:

- £347850 towards Bromsgrove Town Centre public realm improvement measures
- £100000 towards sustainable transport objectives
- £50000 towards walking and cycling schemes in Bromsgrove
- £10000 air quality monitoring on Birmingham Road Bromsgrove

Members should note that the 106 agreement has not yet been finalised and further negotiations are taking place. As a consequence of this the formal planning permission has not been issued. Members should further note that there may be a significant delay before the scheme is implemented; a five year permission has been approved and there is currently no fixed start date for the development.

6.2 As far as possible the 106 agreement will protect the Council's interests in securing the contributions from Sainsburys. However Members need to be aware that there is currently no certainty as to the timescale for those monies to be received. Further, as with any legal agreement that has not yet been finalised there is a risk, albeit a relatively low risk, that if Sainsburys decided not to proceed with the scheme then no section 106 monies would be received.

7. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Meets the Council priority of improving the Town Centre viability.

8. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES

8.1 Town Centre Regeneration

9. RISK MANAGEMENT INCLUDING HEALTH & SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

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- 9.1 Failure to resurface the pedestrianised High Street in question could adversely affect the investment proposition being created in Bromsgrove town centre in order to lever private funds for infrastructure improvements
- 9.2 Failure to refurbish the High Street North and High Street South to the same standard as Birmingham Road, the Strand and High Street Central could result in a disjointed and 'two-tier' town centre and threaten the ability to attract retailers and lever private investment in other parts of the public realm scheme.
- 9.5 Omitting a section of pedestrianised High Street will leave the area looking unattractive, potentially reducing footfall and spend in the area.
- 9.4 Poor retail performance due to an unfinished or poor quality High Street renovation scheme may close existing shops and prevent new ones opening.
- 9.5 These risks are being controlled within the overall Risk and Issues Register of the Town Centre Regeneration Programme, which is managed by the Regeneration Programme Manager and overseen by The Town Centre Steering Group, the Portfolio Holder and the Head of Service.

10. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 External Customers will benefit from an improved and more accessible town centre and modern more efficient public service facilities.

11. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 The existing public realm is difficult to navigate for the disabled because of surplus street furniture, uniform paving design and uneven surfaces. The new public realm will make the town centre equally accessibly for all.

12. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS, PROCUREMENT AND ASSET MANAGEMENT

- 12.1 A minimum of 50% of the funds of the refurbishment of the High Street have been raised from 3rd party sources, with the prospect of further private sector funds being secured.

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- 12.2 The funds committed can also be used as match for a bid for Heritage Lottery Funding Townscape Heritage Initiative, which matches 3:1. This may give a further £1million towards Town Centre Regeneration in terms of Historic Buildings in the Conservation Area.
- 12.3 Procurement of the Design will be via appointment of an Urban Design/ Landscape / Planning Architect by Bromsgrove District Council as the main individual funder.
- 12.4 Procurement of the Works themselves will be via negotiation with the County Council, either in respect of a 278 Agreement for Bromsgrove District Council to appoint a contractor and carry out the works, or via agreement to pass the funding package to Worcestershire County Council for addition to their Capital Works Programme.
- 12.5 Town Centre Assets for potential redevelopment will be identified by the Area Action Plan, together with the disposal mechanism. This may be by individual disposal or by part of an overall agreement with a Partner Developer(s) to develop a package of public sector sites to deliver the Area Action Plan. This mechanism will be brought to Cabinet for approval prior to implementation.

13. CLIMATE CHANGE, CARBON IMPLICATIONS AND BIODIVERSITY

- 13.1 The Area Action Plan contains measures in respect of climate change, carbon reduction and biodiversity and the public realm design and the redevelopment of Bromsgrove District Council sites will conform with these policies.

14. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1 The funding of the Regeneration Programme Manager, Regeneration Programme Projects Assistant and the Bromsgrove District Council Partnerships and Projects Manager will continue for up to another 24 months.

15. GOVERNANCE/PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 15.1 The Governance and Performance Management of the Regeneration Programme is managed by the Regeneration Programme Manager and

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overseen by The Town Centre Steering Group, the Portfolio Holder and the Head of Service. Provision for continued funding of this approach for the duration of the proposed works are contained in the recommendations.

16. COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS INCLUDING SECTION 17 OF CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998

16.1 The New Public Realm will be designed with Community Safety and Crime Reduction in mind. A technical report on this matter has been produced which will form part of the design parameters for the Architects appointed.

17. HEALTH INEQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

17.1 The Public Realm upgrade will provide a healthier and cleaner environment, especially in terms of additional green spaces and hence improved air quality.

18. LESSONS LEARNT

18.1 Extensive benchmarking has been carried out of other public realms schemes so as to identify best practice and avoid costly design errors.

19. COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

19.1 The Area Action Plan Issues and Options Consultation resulted in over 1200 responses with the state of the Public Realm identified as the primary issue and priority for action by the Community.

19.2 Further consultation with the Regeneration Programme Stakeholder Forum and Disabled User Group has reached similar conclusions.

19.3 A public consultation will take place on the proposed design.

20. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

Portfolio Holder	Yes
Chief Executive	Yes
Executive Director (S151 Officer)	Yes

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Executive Director – Leisure, Cultural, Environmental and Community Services	No
Executive Director – Planning & Regeneration, Regulatory and Housing Services	Yes
Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships	No
Head of Service	Yes
Head of Resources	No
Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	Yes
Corporate Procurement Team	No

21. WARDS AFFECTED

21.1 All Wards affected

22. APPENDICES

Plan – Development Phases

23. BACKGROUND PAPERS

23.1 Bromsgrove District Council Cabinet Report November 2007

24. KEY

Section 106 – payments to the planning authority in order to discharge planning obligations/conditions

Section 278 – a mechanism by which works to the highway are carried out or funded by third party developers to discharge planning obligations/conditions

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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