

Customer and Community Scrutiny Committee Report  
Report of Director of Development  
Author: Mike Harris  
Tel: 01483 444200  
Email: [mike.harris@guildford.gov.uk](mailto:mike.harris@guildford.gov.uk)  
Relevant Lead Councillor(s): Paul Spooner  
Tel: 01252 341666 Email: [paul.spooner@guildford.gov.uk](mailto:paul.spooner@guildford.gov.uk)  
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## Draft Town Centre Masterplan

### **Officer recommendation:**

That the Committee endorses the draft Town Centre Masterplan (copy attached) for public consultation. The draft masterplan focuses on the key issues of opening up access to the River Wey, creating more pedestrian priority zones and reducing the adverse impacts of traffic in the town centre as well as creating development sites for housing, retail, leisure and business.

### Reason(s) for Recommendation:

The masterplan builds on the Town Centre Vision (2014) prepared by Allies and Morrison. The masterplan is a non-statutory document and will form part of the Local Plan evidence base. The evidence base will be used to inform the preparation of the next iteration of the Local Plan.

### **1. Executive summary**

- 1.1 The Executive meeting of the 25 November 2014 approved expenditure of £290,000 for the development of a Town Centre Masterplan. Allies and Morrison Urban Practitioners were awarded the contract with specialist support from ARUP in respect of transport and infrastructure advice and Bilfinger GVA providing property advice. WSP Parsons Brinckerhoff has been independently contracted by the Council to provide advice on the transport impacts of emerging proposals put forward by the masterplan team.
- 1.2 The Committee is requested to endorse the draft Town Centre Masterplan (copy attached) for public consultation.

## **2. Strategic Priorities**

- 2.1 The masterplan of the town centre provides a framework for the development and growth of the town and will enable infrastructure to be provided in a coherent planned way, this will drive the economy forward promoting the town for business, providing jobs, new homes and public realm for the benefit of all.
- 2.2 The needs of all who use the town centre from local residents to businesses and visitors have changed and guidance is required for the planned development of the town. Many surrounding towns have undergone redevelopment and are providing a greater challenge to the ongoing economic prosperity of the town.

To address these key issues and provide evidence to inform the Local Plan process consultants, Allies and Morrison Urban Practitioners were appointed to prepare a draft Town Centre Masterplan for consultation. This draft masterplan has built on the Guildford Town Centre Vision (2014), and incorporated informal engagement with major landowners and key stakeholders. The key development principles are:

- Open up access to the River Wey,
- Create more pedestrian only zones and public areas,
- Reducing the adverse impacts of traffic in the town centre,
- Provide development sites in the Town for housing, business, leisure and retail.

## **3. Background**

- 3.1 At its meeting on 26 June 2014, Executive recognised the importance of a masterplan for the town centre and set aside £350,000 from the 2013-14 under spend in a reserve to finance the development of a masterplan subject to a further report to Executive.
- 3.2 The forecast cost of the town centre master planning exercise is £290,000 made up as follows:-

Master planning consultants	£120,000
Transport studies	£100,000
Property advice	£25,000
Environmental reports	£25,000
Project management	£20,000

- 3.3 The master planning commission has been tendered in accordance with Council procurement procedures as approved by the Executive at its 25 November meeting with a minimum of four tender bidders. Allies and Morrison Urban Practitioners supported by ARUP and Bilfinger GVA have been appointed to prepare the masterplan. Bilfinger GVA is responsible for commercial property advice and ARUP for providing inputs in relation to movement, highways

engineering and flood risk management.

- 3.4 WSP Parsons Brinckerhoff has been independently contracted by the Council to provide advice on the transport impacts of emerging proposals put forward by the masterplan team.
- 3.5 The draft masterplan builds on the findings of the Guildford Town Centre Vision, which was published by the Council for consultation alongside the draft Local Plan. The draft masterplan adopts a wider study boundary and will form part of the draft Local Plan evidence base. In this context, the masterplan incorporates a thorough assessment of the existing baseline situation and is therefore likely to build upon and move beyond the 2014 Vision report.

#### **4.0 Masterplan boundary**

- 4.1 The boundary for the masterplan is appended to this note (see Appendix 1). As noted above, this incorporates a wider hinterland area, enabling a more thorough and comprehensive assessment of the role and function of central Guildford, beyond the core town centre area, but central to the station.

#### **5. Masterplan objectives**

- 5.1 The masterplan brief has identified the following project requirements:
- Identify property and transport/movement development opportunities taking account of fluvial flood risk and recommending mitigation.
  - Promote active use of the riverside and the River Wey.
  - Improve pedestrian and cycle links to and along the River Wey and to key destinations including Guildford Cathedral, the University of Surrey's Stag Hill and Manor Park campuses, the Royal Surrey County Hospital, the Surrey Research Park, and the wider town and area.
  - Improve the pedestrian experience in the town centre.
  - Promote high quality and environmentally sustainable new architecture and public realm including the palette of materials, including frontages and other urban design opportunities for sites and/or areas.
  - Promote a balance of residential, retail and commercial uses.
  - Improve the evening economy.
  - Raise the profile of, and better integrate, the town centre's many heritage assets.
  - Demonstrate appropriate densities for sites, showing scale, massing and capacity.
  - Facilitate access by sustainable modes, tackle traffic congestion in and on the approaches to Guildford town centre, and make appropriate arrangements for servicing, resulting from an informative dialogue with the GOTCHA (Guildford Town Centre Highway Assessment) project team.
  - Propose the mechanisms by which a local delivery body could be created and set out its role and terms of reference.

- Propose a delivery strategy including a viability assessment. The delivery strategy will demonstrate proposed phases, including a temporary uses strategy, which identifies which sites might effectively accommodate pop-up uses. It will identify delivery partners, funding sources, links to other projects, and risks.
- Demonstrate how the views of stakeholders and the community have been considered and addressed.

## **6. Work undertaken to date**

- 6.1 The consultant team led by Allies and Morrison have prepared the draft Town Centre Masterplan for public consultation subject to committee approval.

## **7. Key master planning principles**

- 7.1 The emerging masterplan identifies a series of major targets, which are summarised as follows:
- a) To establish a flexible, deliverable masterplan which responds to key physical constraints in the study area including flood risk.
  - b) To repair and revive Guildford by achieving a step change in place-making through the design of exemplary streets and spaces for people.
  - c) To focus on the Wey corridor as a beautiful linear park and location for new evening economy and leisure uses.
  - d) To achieve a sustainable shift in movement patterns and behaviour through a balanced approach to car parking including park and ride and strategy of interceptor parking at the edge of the core town centre.
  - e) To reinforce and enliven the experience of visiting Guildford through a diverse town centre offer of shops, food and drink venues, offices and leisure activities.
  - f) To animate the core town centre waterfront area as a hub for leisure, restaurants, cafes and the evening economy.
  - g) To define new opportunities for town centre living in sustainable, well-connected neighbourhoods.
  - h) To explore opportunities to downgrade the gyratory system with a view to creating better connections to the River Wey from the town centre and valuable new spaces.
  - i) To ensure proposals in the masterplan respond to the existing character and assets of central Guildford including the management of key views and sensitive historic environments, and maximises opportunities in areas of change.
  - j) To define a heritage quarter which enhances Guildford's historic fabric and assets.

## **8. Draft illustrative masterplan**

- 8.1 The emerging draft illustrative masterplan identifies an indicative approach to the design of key sites - see Appendix 4. Although the masterplan layout is still undergoing refinement, the current version provides a broad direction of travel for review and endorsement.

Key points to highlight:

- The draft masterplan layout currently illustrates an approximate residential capacity of 2,551 homes. This represents an appropriate estimate of the area's development capacity over the next 15 years and beyond.
- The initial review of viability indicates that the majority of proposals perform positively from a viability perspective. Work is ongoing in relation to the cost and delivery of the linear park.
- Technical work to consider the transport impacts of the master plan team's proposals for the town centre highway network, including the gyratory area, is ongoing.
- The Environment Agency's formal response to the draft masterplan during the consultation will be critical to site development and to ensure that the proposed redevelopments are compliant in relation to flood zone management issues.
- The Council will undertake a process of confidential engagement with leaseholders who might be affected by the plans.
- The deliverability of the individual sites will be fully evaluated as part of the master planning exercise..

## **9. Consultation**

- 9.1 Presentations have been given to:

- The Executive 19 May 2015
- Ward Councillors 22 June 2015
- Experience Guildford 7 July 2015
- Business community 10 July 2015
- All Councillors 28 July 2015

- 9.2 All major landowners in the masterplan area have been contacted and the key aspects of the masterplan have been discussed.

## **10. Next Steps**

- 10.1 We are now seeking approval to consult on the draft masterplan.. Public consultation will not commence until approved by the Executive at the meeting of the 29 September. The consultation will run for 6 weeks from the 2 October to the 16 November. There will be a permanent display at the Swan Lane

exhibition shop which will be manned on 10 days . The consultation period, exhibition dates and how feedback can be provided will be publicised in advance. Business seminars will be arranged. Communication will be through the Web, Press ,radio and Social Media as advised by our PR and Marketing Team.

## **11. Financial Implications**

- 11.1 The preparation of the draft masterplan and related traffic studies are within the approved expenditure.

## **12. Legal Implications**

- 12.1 The master planning process, whilst providing overall vision and links with the Corporate Plan, is a non-statutory document. This means it cannot be relied upon in decision making. It will, however, form part of the Local Plan evidence base.

## **13. Human Resource Implications**

- 13.1 There are no human resource implications.

## 14. Key Risks

### 14.1

Risk	Mitigation
To complete the supporting traffic studies within the town centre masterplan timetable.	Meet regularly with the consultants providing the data.
To deliver a solution for a bus interchange	Meet regularly with the consultants working on traffic flows.
To consult with all relevant stakeholders within the agreed timetable.	To have the resources to manage the project.
Proposed development in flood zone 2, 3a and 3b	Continue dialogue with the Environment Agency on flooding and mitigation required.
Land ownership/land assembly	Consult with the landowners and occupiers and establish regular dialogue.

## 15. Suggested issues for overview and scrutiny

- 15.1 To review the baseline data prepared by our consultants Allies and Morrison.
- 15.2 To review the Draft Town Centre Masterplan Report prepared by our consultants Allies and Morrison.
- 15.3 To review and analyse the proposals put forward by our consultants Allies and Morrison in respect of:
- residential densities
  - provision of open space
  - traffic movements
  - parking provision
  - bus interchange provision

## 16. Conclusion

- 16.1 The draft Town Centre Masterplan contains proposals for the comprehensive redevelopment of parts of the existing town centre. It proposes redevelopment of

a large number of sites that will make a significant contribution to meeting the councils housing, employment and retail needs in a sustainable and sympathetic manner. Those proposals that are taken through into the Local Plan will help secure the future health and vitality of the town centre.

## **17. Background Papers**

17.1 Allies and Morrison Town Centre Vision, available:

[Guildford Town Centre Vision 2014](#)

## **18. Appendices**

- 18.1 Appendix 1 Draft Guildford Town Centre and Hinterland Masterplan Report  
Appendix 2 Draft Masterplan proposed Development Blocks and Flood Zones preferred scenario 1  
Appendix 3 Draft Masterplan proposed Development Blocks and Flood Zones preferred scenario 2  
Appendix 4 Draft Masterplan Viability Report