

**REPORT TO THE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY PANEL  
MEETING OF 25 MARCH 2021**

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**Status:** For Discussion  
**Title:** Lutterworth Town Centre Masterplan  
**Report of :** David Wright, Economy & Business Service Manager  
**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr King, Economic Development  
**Where from:** Economy & Business Service  
**Where to next:** Cabinet

Objective: To seek the views of the Scrutiny Panel on the proposed changes to the Lutterworth Town Centre Masterplan to enable it to progress through to the Cabinet.

1 Outcome sought from the Panel

- 1.1 The Panel considers the changes to the Lutterworth Town Centre Masterplan and refers any comments to Cabinet.

2 Background

- 2.1 Harborough District Council has committed to producing Masterplans for its two Market Towns as part of adopting the Economic Development Strategy 2018-2023. This is to ensure that the viability and vitality of the town centres and secure their roles as a local destination for retail, leisure and hosting community network events. The Lutterworth Town Centre Masterplan process has been undertaken through gathering policy, access, place and market intelligence whilst gaining a range of stakeholder views to inform the preparation of the document. The production of this plan will form the evidence base to inform the implementation of the relevant policies of the Harborough Local Plan 2011 – 2031 (adopted April 2019).
- 2.2 Lutterworth has historical provenance dating back to 1068. In 1214 Lutterworth was given the rights to hold markets. Part of the town centre's key buildings for example the Shambles Inn and parts of St Mary's Church date back to the 13<sup>th</sup> Century. In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century the town became the posting station for the stagecoaches on the Leicester to Chester turnpike with many of the hotels from that period still in place such as the Greyhound, Denbigh and Hind. The Victorian era and the arrival of rail created a way to access the town, although the town lost its connection to railway network in 1962. Significant expansion in Lutterworth occurred in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, not least due its strategic location in the centre of England and its excellent road connections.
- 2.3 In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century due to its location, on the A426 Leicester–Rugby road and adjacent to the M1 motorway at Junction 20, Lutterworth has expanding considerably, with industrial developments and has grown beyond its initial boundaries. Located within a few miles of the M6 motorway and A5 trunk road it is an attractive locality for the logistics

industry. Lutterworth also has good access to the large shopping centres in Rugby and Leicester.

- 2.4 The southern bypass, the A4303, was opened in 1999, for traffic from the M1 progressing towards the A5, as an alternate route to travelling through Lutterworth town centre. However, this has not been as successful as was hoped. Heavy and light vehicles, as well as domestic cars continue to use Market Street to traverse across the town centre. This has become a challenging matter for the local community, particularly as the area is now an Air Quality Management Area. In some areas Crossing of High Street/ Market Street can be challenging, disrupting the linkages across the town centre.
- 2.5 The Masterplan aims to provide a 5 to 10-year public realm framework strategy, which has been developed for the town centre through consultative process. This aims to enable greater access to the town centre and redress the balance between people and cars. The Masterplan aims to provide an overall framework to make the town centre more attractive, by strengthening its market town character. The frameworks will include high quality design, street hierarchy and public realm initiatives using a mix of street furniture; signage; soft and hard landscaping and possibly public art in ways that integrate with the historic conservation area. Linking the town centre to its surrounding areas is vital to make this a place that local people will choose to visit.
- 2.6 The Masterplan is designed to ensure that Lutterworth Town Centre is an active destination. The Plan considers the means of getting to the town centre, living in the town centre and ensuring accessibility for all ages and abilities. Moreover, in alignment with the recently Economic Development Strategy (2018 – 2023, revised in 2019), the Masterplan aims to ensure that the town centre is open and accessible for business.

### 3 Updates to the Lutterworth Town Centre Masterplan (since 15 January 2020)

- 3.1 Detailed work and engagement took place on the Lutterworth Town Centre Masterplan throughout 2019, leading up to a report to the Communities Scrutiny Panel on 15 January 2020.
- 3.2 It was recognised at the Panel that there was a requirement for further engagement with Lutterworth Town Council to ensure that their views were adequately reflected in the Masterplan.
- 3.3 Between March and Autumn 2020, work on the Masterplan unfortunately had to go on hold, due to the focus on Covid response and recovery, and latterly the change over from an interim to a permanent Service Manager.
- 3.4 Having picked up the work on the Masterplan in late 2020, there was a need to review it in the light of the experience from the Covid pandemic, the significant budget pressures that the Council faces and the recognition that the previous draft Masterplan had been slightly over ambitious, with certain projects which would have been very difficult and costly to deliver.
- 3.5 The focus has been to ensure that the final plan encourages increased visitor footfall, enhances the visual amenity of the town centre and has clear and deliverable outcomes.
- 3.6 Two very positive workshops were held with Lutterworth Town Council during early 2021, plus informal discussions with few key stakeholders including the Lutterworth

Retail Forum, Lutterworth Town Estates, Blooming Lutterworth, as well as colleagues and Service Managers within the Council.

- 3.7 Whilst the original draft Masterplan, dated December 2019, is enclosed as Appendix A as background to this report, please note that a number of pages have removed, as they are no longer relevant, and a number of others will be amended prior to being presented to Cabinet.
- 3.8 The main proposed changes and updates to the Masterplan are summarised in Appendix B to this report.
- 3.9 Any additional comments or amendments from the Scrutiny Panel can be incorporated into the final Masterplan, which will presented to Cabinet on 11 May 2021.
- 3.10 Officers from the Economy and Business Service will attend this meeting to assist the Scrutiny Panel.

#### 4 Points for discussion

##### 4.1 Points for discussion include:

- Has there been adequate public and stakeholder consultation and engagement in developing the Lutterworth Town Centre Masterplan?
- Are the proposals appropriate for the Lutterworth Town Centre?
- Are the proposals realistic and feasible in the current economic climate and circumstances?
- Is there anything missing, or which should have been given greater emphasis, in the Lutterworth Town Centre Masterplan?
- Are there any lessons which can be learnt from this process and applied to the development of the Market Harborough Town Centre Masterplan?

#### 5 Impact on Communities

- 5.1 A key aim of the Lutterworth Town Centre Masterplan to ensure that the town centre is inclusive and accessible as a local destination for retail, leisure and for hosting community network events.

#### 6 Legal Issues

- 6.1 In order to be able to implement the provisions of the Masterplan, it will be necessary for the District Council to engage with third party property owners as the implementation of the plan proceeds.
- 6.2 Whilst the District Council will clearly lead the implementation of the Masterplan, specific aspects of the work may be subject to collaboration and liaison with partners including Lutterworth Town Council and Leicestershire County Council, as well as formal approvals from the County Highway Authority, the District Local Planning Authority and Conservation Authority.

#### 7 Resource Issues

- 7.1 The final document will include updated preliminary costs for projects that could be undertaken to deliver the Masterplan. Further work will be required to consider firm

costs, priorities and funding opportunities to ensure that the projects are deliverable and achievable.

- 7.2 The resources to start implementing the Lutterworth Town Centre Masterplan, include £400,000 from a Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership Business Rates Pooling grant, £90,000 from the Council's Capital Programme, as well as future Section 106 funding. It is also hoped and anticipated that the Masterplan will form the basis for a range of future grant applications aimed at town centre improvements and regeneration.
- 7.3 Once firm proposals are developed, detailed reports will be provided to Council for approval to proceed.

## 8 Equality Analysis Implications/Outcomes

- 8.1 The original Equality Impact Assessment is attached as Appendix C to this report, and it is believed that this is still a relevant analysis.

## 9 Risk Management Implications

- 9.1 The original Risk Register is attached as Appendix D attached to this report.
- 9.2 Identified risk number 12 related to time delays. Obviously, no-one anticipated the delays resulting from the focus on Covid pandemic. However, considerable work has taken place over the last few months to get the project back on track.

### **Background papers:**

- Harborough Economic Development Strategy 2018-2023 (revised 2019)
- Tourism Strategy for Leicester & Leicestershire
- Harborough Local Plan 2011-2031
- Masterplan Policy review – appended to 15 January 2020 report
- Lutterworth Market Report – appended to 15 January 2020 report
- Lutterworth Lanes Proposals – appended to 15 January 2020 report
- Access and Movement – appended to 15 January 2020 report
- Masterplan Roadshow consultation – appended to 15 January 2020 report
- Future High Street research – appended to 15 January 2020 report

### **Previous report:**

- Report to Communities Scrutiny Panel on 15 January 2020

### **Appendices:**

- Appendix A – Annotated Draft Lutterworth Town Centre Masterplan (December 2019)
- Appendix B – Proposed changes & updates to Lutterworth Town Centre Masterplan
- Appendix C – Lutterworth Town Centre Masterplan Equalities Impact Assessment
- Appendix D – Lutterworth Town Centre Masterplan Risk Management Implications