

REPORT 4

HARBOROUGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO THE CABINET MEETING OF 6 SEPTEMBER 2021

PUBLIC REPORT: Y

EXEMPT REPORT: N

Report Title	Lutterworth Town Centre Masterplan
KEY DECISION	Yes – In order to be able to start implementing the delivery of the Lutterworth Town Centre Masterplan.
Report Author	David Wright, Economy & Business Service Manager
Purpose of Report	To seek the views of Cabinet on the proposed Lutterworth Town Centre Masterplan to enable it to progress through to Council for formal approval.
Reason for Decision	To enable the Masterplan progress through to Council for formal approval and eventual implementation and delivery.
Portfolio (holder)	Cllr Phil King, Economy
Corporate Priorities	CO 1 Keeping the District a great place to live, work and visit. KA.01.04 Develop in partnership the local visitor economy particularly in respect of the District's two market towns. CO4: Improving Tourism for the District KA.04.01 Develop in partnership the local visitor economy.
Financial Implications	The Masterplan includes preliminary costs for projects. Further detailed work will be required to consider firm up costs, priorities and funding opportunities prior to implementation. The resources to start implementing the Lutterworth Town Centre Masterplan, include £400,000 from a Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership Business Rates Pooling grant, £130,000 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.
Risk Management Implications	The original Risk Register is attached as Appendix D attached to this report. The 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.
Environmental Implications	The Masterplan seeks to improve the environment of Lutterworth Town Centre to make it a more attractive place to visit.
Legal Implications	In order to be able to implement the provisions of the Masterplan, it will be necessary for the District Council to

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	<p>engage with third party property owners as the implementation of the plan proceeds.</p> <p>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.</p>
Equality Implications	The original Equality Impact Assessment is attached as Appendix C to this report, and it is believed that this is still a relevant analysis.
Data Protection Implications	None
Consultation	The development of the Lutterworth Town Centre Masterplan has involved a considerable amount of public consultation and engagement with key local stakeholders.
Options	There were two options for the Market Place area, which are set out in the report and within the Masterplan.
Background Papers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harborough Economic Development Strategy 2018-2023 (revised 2019) • Tourism Strategy for Leicester & Leicestershire • Harborough Local Plan 2011-2031 • Masterplan Policy review • Lutterworth Market Report • Access and Movement • Masterplan Roadshow consultation • Future High Street research • Report to Communities Scrutiny Panel on 15 January 2020 • Report to Communities Scrutiny Panel on 25 March 2021
Appendices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appendix A – Draft Lutterworth Town Centre Masterplan • Appendix B – Lutterworth Town Centre Masterplan Equalities Impact Assessment • Appendix C – Lutterworth Town Centre Masterplan Risk Management Implications
Recommendation	<p>1. That Cabinet review and make any comments on the proposed Lutterworth Town Centre Masterplan and following that review, recommends to Council the adoption of the Lutterworth Town Centre Masterplan as Council policy.</p>

1. Background

- 1.1 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).

- 1.2 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 13th Century. In the 18th and 19th 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 20th century, not least due its strategic location in the centre of England and its excellent road connections.
- 1.3 In the 21st Century due to its location, on the A426 Leicester–Rugby road and adjacent to the M1 motorway at Junction 20, Lutterworth has expanded 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.
- 1.4 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.
- 1.5 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.
- 1.6 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.

2 Progress

- 2.1 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.
- 2.2 At that stage, it was acknowledged that there was a requirement for further engagement with Lutterworth Town Council to ensure that their views were adequately reflected in the Masterplan.
- 2.3 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.
- 2.4 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.
- 2.5 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.
- 2.6 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.
- 2.7 The original draft Masterplan, dated December 2019, was reviewed in the light of the feedback. The key changes are summarised below:
 - The proposed Lutterworth Lanes projects were removed on the basis that they were too expensive, would result in the loss of one of the key town centre car parks, had major challenges in terms of deliverability and did not fit in with the scale of Lutterworth, as well as potentially detracting from the proposals for the Market Place.
 - There should be a much greater focus on the Market Place and Town Hall car park area to reinforce this as the historic focal point of the town, particularly with the new Lutterworth Museum being developed in this area. There were two options; either the relatively simple creation of a public realm plaza area on the existing Town Hall Car Park, which would incorporate the weekly Market; or the more ambitious option of reconfiguring the current Bell Street, which currently dissects the area, and reinstating the original Station Road joining the High Street in front of the Town Hall, which would create a much larger public space. Either option would involve Leicestershire County Council agreeing to sell/ transfer the Town Hall car park.
 - A reduced scope of works to the Northern and Southern Gateways to the town in order to reduce disruption and cost to areas where interventions, such as Yorkstone paving, may not really be noticed or make a major difference.
 - A similar slight reduction to the scope of works to parts of George Street further away from the centre of town, where these may not really make a major difference.
 - A renewed focus on trying to redress the balance between pedestrians and vehicles on Church Street, including widening pavements, traffic slowing, raised

crossing areas and introducing design and materials which enhance the Conservation Area, reinforce pedestrian priority and maximise dwell time.

- 2.8 The proposed Masterplan was presented to the Communities Scrutiny Panel on 25 March 2021 and feedback from the Panel has been built into the final draft Masterplan.
- 2.9 Since this time, discussions have been ongoing with Leicestershire County Council in relation to both, the possible sale or transfer the Town Hall car park, in order to allow us to start implementing the Masterplan, as well to obtain feedback on the highways aspects of the Masterplan, and particularly the feasibility of the proposals for the Market Place.
- 2.10 Leicestershire County Council have now confirmed their willingness to sell the Town Hall car park, subject to them declaring it surplus to requirements. This option will be discussed as part of the implementation of the Masterplan, once further due diligence has been undertaken.

3 Points for discussion

3.1 Points for discussion include:

- That Cabinet agrees that the proposals contained within the proposed Lutterworth Town Centre Masterplan are appropriate, realistic and feasible for the Lutterworth Town Centre.
- That there is nothing missing, or which should have been given greater emphasis, within the Lutterworth Town Centre Masterplan.
- That Cabinet are content to refer the Lutterworth Town Centre Masterplan to Council for approval as Council policy.

4 Conclusion and Next Steps

- 4.1 Officers now feel that the Lutterworth Town Centre Masterplan represents a realistic and deliverable plan, which should help improve the attractiveness and vibrancy of Lutterworth over the next 5 – 10 years.
- 4.2 The next steps are to seek formal adoption of the Masterplan by Council, after which implementation can commence, including taking forward LLEP and Capital programme funded projects, as well as using the Masterplan to tap into new funding opportunities as and when they emerge.