

**CABINET**  
**13 May 2021**

**REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING, ECONOMY AND REGENERATION**

**TIVERTON TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION MASTERPLAN PROJECTS**

**Cabinet Member**                      **Cllr Richard Chesterton**  
**Responsible Officer**              **Mrs Jenny Clifford, Head of Planning, Economy & Regeneration**

**Reason for the Report:** Members will be aware that this authority has undertaken work with regard to regeneration and investment masterplanning for Tiverton town centre. This work commenced prior to the current pandemic. This report seeks to both update members on work to date, but also critically, to provide feedback on consultation meetings held with Ward Members, Tiverton Town Council and Tiverton Town Centre Partnership that were focused around the key intervention projects to be included in the masterplan. Due to current bid opportunities and the need to ensure readiness for submissions, this report focusses on potential projects.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 1. That Officers explore the opportunities to bring forward the projects and initiatives as outlined and prioritised in this report.**
- 2. That Property Services seek funding opportunities to be in a position to proceed with feasibility appraisal of:**
  - a) The opening connecting the Pannier Market and Fore Street (as detailed in para 4.3), and**
  - b) Design, scope and cost a future redevelopment of the Phoenix Lane area in association with public and private investment, should funding become available in the future.**

**Relationship to Corporate Plan:** The draft Tiverton Town Centre Masterplan will provide guidance on the planning and delivery of development within Tiverton. It will contribute towards the delivery of 4 key priorities as relating directly to the Corporate Plan 2020-24 including:

**Homes:** to promote the regeneration of the town centre by working with landlords and property developers to improve and increase the supply of quality housing;

**Environment:** to encourage new housing and commercial developers to be 'exemplar' in terms of increasing biodiversity and decreasing carbon use;

**Economy:** to identify strategic and tactical interventions to create economic and community confidence and pride in the places we live; and

**Community:** to promote new and more integrated approaches to better health and living.

## **Financial Implications:**

This report does not identify the capital funding sources or arrangements that will be needed to deliver the regeneration opportunities for the redevelopment sites that are identified within the draft Masterplan. Funding is likely to involve a range of public and private sector investment.

There is no budget available to the Council in the current financial year for designing the projects detailed within this report in line with the feedback following the Tiverton Town Centre project liaison consultation meetings. However there is potential to seek revenue funding to assist with project development costs. This revenue funding opportunity would enable the Council to position itself to capitalise on future funding opportunities and for the projects to be 'shovel ready' Sources of revenue funding could include the Community Renewal Fund which is also to be considered at this meeting.

Any proposals to regenerate, develop or invest in these assets with financial implications for the Council, would be considered in detail as part of a subsequent and separate decision making process.

## **Budget and Policy Framework:**

Although some of the projects listed within the report do have funding identified, the bulk of the proposals currently do not have funding. The purpose of this report is to have schemes developed to a state of readiness for future external funding opportunities as and when they occur. Where any schemes are assessed to fall outside the existing policy framework and/or budget, further decisions will be required and may need to go to Council.

The Policy Framework consists of both statutory documents that have to be adopted or approved by the Council, as well as locally determined policies and strategies that form an integral part of the decision making process. Once adopted, the masterplan would have Supplementary Planning Document status and be a material consideration for planning decision-making purposes.

**Legal Implications:** The process for preparing and adopting the Tiverton Town Centre Masterplan will need to comply with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 and the Council's Statement of Community Involvement. Whilst the Adopted Masterplan will not form part of the Development Plan, it will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications relating to the town centre.

Each project will be subject to its own legal covenants.

**Risk Assessment:** As projects arising from the masterplan are developed an assessment of risk will be undertaken as part of project development. Failure to support the regeneration of Tiverton Town Centre would in itself lead to deterioration in commercial activity, a less vibrant centre, less coordinated development and uncertainty over essential infrastructure. Since the initiation of this project COVID-19 has introduced a significant risk to economic prosperity. The masterplan will need to

take into account this change in economic circumstances and the need to complete this work is now more vital than ever.

A full risk assessment will be undertaken as the projects in the masterplan are developed.

**Equality Impact Assessment:** Equality issues continue to be considered as part of the ongoing preparation of the Masterplan work. An equality impact assessment will be made available at time of consultation.

**Impact on Climate Change:** A core principle within the Draft Tiverton Town Centre Masterplan is to support the Council's commitment to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2030. The Draft Tiverton Town Centre Masterplan has regard throughout to climate change.

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 Our town centres have had a number of challenges in recent years such as the impact of changing shopping habits, changing expectations about the role and function of high streets and of course the unprecedented impact of the COVID19 pandemic. Town centre regeneration has arguably never had such significance. In response to the pandemic a number of funding opportunities are being made available through various funding programmes. In order to seize such opportunities this report sets out potential schemes which could be further developed into a state of readiness. These projects provide an opportunity to deliver visible economic and environmental improvements in the town. Important to the town's regeneration will be the commitment towards zero carbon development and maximising opportunities to contribute towards tackling the wider climate emergency crisis.

## **2.0 BACKGROUND**

2.1 The Council has previously resolved to develop a masterplan for Tiverton Town Centre. It will form a key document for the regeneration of the town; enhancing the town's economic prospects and providing a clear strategy to ensure the town meets its full potential as an attractive and thriving market town of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

2.2 In accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement, the masterplan has been subject to Stage 1 public consultation which related to the scope of the proposed contents of the masterplan undertaken between 30<sup>th</sup> April and 10<sup>th</sup> June 2018. The summary of consultation feedback and emerging themes was presented to Cabinet at its 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2018 meeting. It is envisaged that a draft Masterplan will be subject to Stage 2 consultation in the autumn (2021). In the interim additional liaison has taken place with local ward members, Tiverton Town Council and the Tiverton Town Centre Partnership regarding emerging opportunity sites for development and enhancement.

2.3 A report was presented to Cabinet at its 6<sup>th</sup> August 2020 meeting setting out the direction of travel for the emerging work including the process to develop a long-term town centre recovery plan. It described a range of outputs including prioritisation of strategic interventions which crucially recognised the importance of identifying proposals that can be delivered in the short term that will make a meaningful and lasting contribution towards COVID19 related recovery. Importantly, it also set out opportunities for the Council's commitment to the climate change declaration to be put at the heart of the town centre's role, function and regeneration.

### 3.0 REPORT OF MEETINGS: CONSULTATION

3.1 An informal presentation was given to Cabinet members on the 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2020 with a broad description and outline of key intervention sites including a prioritised action and delivery plan for each site. It is worth noting that the key intervention sites presented to Informal Cabinet had an emphasis towards Mid Devon District Council assets and included:

- a) Riverside (Mountbatten Road)
- b) The Plumb Centre
- c) Market Walk
- d) West Exe South Car Park
- e) Fore Street
- f) Cinema / Phoenix Lane
- g) Bus Station / Becks Square
- h) Pannier Market
- i) Town centre – wide.

A plan showing the location of these key sites is at **Appendix 1** to this report.

3.2 The same list of projects was then presented at a Ward Member Briefing on the 8<sup>th</sup> January 2021, a Town Council Briefing on the 13<sup>th</sup> January 2021 and the Tiverton Town Centre Partnership meeting on the 27<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

The summary of key findings was as follows:

Key site	Comment
Riverside	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extend the concept the riverside walk to include Carpenter's Close / Palmerston Park Woods / West Exe Recreation Ground.</li> <li>• Consider opportunities to enhance the flood defences themselves e.g. planting, murals, children's artwork.</li> <li>• Improve the lighting along the riverside.</li> <li>• Consider opportunities to include benches along the riverside.</li> </ul>
Plumb Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove as a key intervention site as re-occupation almost complete</li> </ul>
Market Walk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integration of leisure uses generally supported whilst integration of residential uses was mixed.</li> <li>• Officers to review how upper floors can be occupied.</li> <li>• Officers to consider a canopy though the whole of market</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>walk to facilitate additional market stalls or other activities.</li> <li>Consider dividing Unit 17 (former Londis) into smaller units.</li> <li>Remove the flat roof addition to Unit 17 (former Londis) to facilitate outdoor seating / spill out space.</li> </ul>
West Exe South Car Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General support for the demolition of the toilet block but future redevelopment to consider some form of public convenience provision.</li> <li>Officers to review opportunities for frontage onto the Riverside or onto West Exe South (flood issues and loss of parking acknowledged).</li> </ul>
Fore Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Officers to review a 'hybrid' scheme with the removal of two shops and the flats above.</li> </ul>
Phoenix Lane	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A redeveloped cinema to be retained in the locality.</li> <li>Officers to review the relocation of Burma Star War Memorial, either on west side of Phoenix Lane in combination with the enhancement of the Well or at Angel Hill.</li> </ul>
Bus Station / Becks Square	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bus station to be retained in this locality.</li> <li>Redevelopment to include public conveniences.</li> <li>Becks Square probably not to be included at this stage due to current market conditions.</li> </ul>
Pannier Market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Officers to consider enhancement of the old pig pens</li> <li>Officers to consider integration of other uses including leisure e.g. summer time fake beach, winter time ice rink.</li> </ul>
Town centre - wide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Signage is a priority including signing the riverside from West Exe South Car Park.</li> </ul>
Other projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Include the River Exe Hydro project.</li> <li>Ensure there is a strong emphasis on new and improved pedestrian / cycle routes and bike parking.</li> <li>Ensure there is a strong emphasis on electric vehicle infrastructure.</li> <li>Ensure there is a strong emphasis on new and improved open spaces / meeting spaces including as a location for events.</li> </ul>

Table 1

## 4.0 UPDATE ON KEY PROJECTS

4.1 Following consultation feedback and in consultation with colleagues from Property, Leisure and Climate Change a summary update of key projects for inclusion in the masterplan is provided including some new and amended projects, as follows:

Project	Proposed Ranking	Action	Timescale
Town Centre – wide	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Signage.</li> <li>Seating.</li> <li>Public Realm Strategy.</li> <li>i) Identification of new &amp; improved 'pocket parks' / opportunities for re-greening for</li> </ul>	<p>S/T</p> <p>M/T</p> <p>M to L/T</p> <p>S/T</p>

		<p>biodiversity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilities Plan (including public toilet provision, parking (including coaches), accessibility, click &amp; collect).</li> <li>• Town centre brand (identity &amp; destination).</li> </ul>	<p>M to L/T</p> <p>S to M/T</p>
Riverside (Mountbatten Road)	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plant community orchard &amp; woodland.</li> <li>• Investigate opportunity for a pedestrian route between the community orchard and town centre.</li> <li>• Riverside seating.</li> </ul>	<p>S/T</p> <p>L/T</p> <p>S/T</p>
Market Walk	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secure reoccupation of vacant units.</li> <li>• Scope project for redevelopment of units 17-20 including occupation of upper floors, removal of flat front roof canopy to Unit 17, possible division of larger units, integration of other uses including leisure.</li> <li>• Scope redevelopment of whole site to ensure suitable units for small to medium sized enterprises to trade from &amp; possible inclusion of residential at upper floors.</li> </ul>	<p>S/T</p> <p>S/T to M/T</p> <p>L/T</p>
River Exe Hydro project (new to the list)	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning application under consideration</li> </ul>	<p>S/T</p>
Pannier Market (new to the list)	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scope enhancement of the pig pens and the offering in the Pannier Market wider area.</li> </ul>	<p>S/T</p>
Multi Modal & Movement Strategy	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cycle routes &amp; cycle parking seen as a priority. Following stakeholder consultation now separated from town centre – wide project list to raise priority.</li> <li>• Multi modal movement strategy. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Identification of new and improved foot &amp; cycle routes in &amp; out of town centre with bike stands &amp; seating.</li> <li>ii) Identification of locations for electric vehicle infrastructure.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>S/T to M/T</p> <p>M/T</p> <p>ST</p> <p>S/T</p>
Riverside circular route (West Exe – Palmerston Park Woods - West Exe Recreation Ground). (New to the list)	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification and risk assessment of route, vegetation clearance &amp; surfacing (as required), signage, seating &amp; promotion.</li> <li>• Scope enhancement of flood defences &amp; West Exe Riverside lighting.</li> </ul>	<p>M/T</p>
West Exe South Car Park	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scope demolition, creation of additional parking and enhancement works.</li> <li>• Scope redevelopment opportunity (Riverside v West Exe South frontage including provision of p.c ).</li> </ul>	<p>S/T</p> <p>L/T</p>
Fore Street	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scope &amp; cost feasibility of revised regeneration</li> </ul>	<p>S/T</p>

		scheme with stakeholder engagement.	
Cinema / Phoenix Lane	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scope with stakeholder engagement the relocation of the Memorial Garden / Burma Star.</li> <li>• Open discussions with local businesses &amp; other landowners.</li> <li>• Scope Phoenix Lane for redevelopment.</li> </ul>	M/T  M/T  L/T
Bus Station / Becks Square	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scope bus station and Becks Square redevelopment.</li> </ul>	L/T

Table 2

4.3 Officers request authority to explore the opportunities to bring forward the projects and initiatives as informed by the consultation responses, aligned with the emerging masterplan and prioritised. Following consultation feedback Officers within Property Services also seek authority to progress matters associated with the Fore Street opening to undertake initial survey and costings work required to revise the project in line with feedback from stakeholders. This feasibility work would investigate the removal of both 1 and 2 ground floor units with removal of associated upper floor accommodation.

## 5.0 PLANNING POLICY ADVISORY GROUP

5.1 The Planning Policy Advisory Group (PPAG) considered this emerging work at a meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> April 2021. There was broad support for the proposal with additional comments as follows:

- Members were keen to see the signage improvements delivered as a priority (Project list amended accordingly)
- Flexible workspace and were encouraged that premises were being adapted in the town to accommodate this. (This theme can be incorporated in the masterplan)
- The need for enhanced digital connectivity. (The town centre Wi-Fi project will be important to delivering an improvement)
- There needs to be consideration of the visual appearance and attractiveness of the Pannier Market and its surroundings (As a listed building complex in a conservation area this is an important factor in any future proposals).
- The importance of town centre toilet provision in convenient locations
- The importance of public access to the River Exe frontage. (Future opportunities for enhancement will be investigated).
- The relocation of the Burma Star War Memorial to Angel Hill was strongly supported. (The previous project will be reviewed)
- That any lighting on West Exe riverside to be respectful of wildlife.
- Climate priorities to be interwoven through the document. (The importance of climate change to the document has been identified and content reviewed taking this into account).
- Whether there were wider regeneration opportunities within the core of the town.

## 6.0 NEXT STEPS

- 6.1 This report has focussed on project opportunities within the Tiverton Town Centre Masterplan area in order to ensure schemes can be developed for potential funding bid opportunities. The scale of ambition with regard to the number of schemes that can be developed will be dependent on the availability of external funding such as the Community Renewal Fund and in some cases private investment.
- 6.2 Section 4 of this report outlines current thinking on a range of work outputs. In addition to development of Council owned assets it will also include ongoing engagement with private land owners to better understand the extent of their ambitions with the aim to comprehensively achieve a meaningful regeneration of Tiverton town centre. Officers also seek authority to progress matters associated with the Fore Street opening to undertake initial survey and costings work required to revise the project in line with feedback from stakeholders.
- 6.3 A provisional timetable for the next stages in the production of the masterplan is set out as follows:

Action	Date
Landowner meeting (private sites)	May / June 2021
Finalisation of draft masterplan	May to September 2021
Cabinet Approval (for Stage 2 consultation)	September 2021
Stage 2 Public Consultation	Autumn 2021
Adoption	Early 2022

<b>Contact for more information</b>	Christie McCombe, Area Planning Officer <a href="mailto:cmccombe@middevon.gov.uk">cmccombe@middevon.gov.uk</a>
<b>Background Papers</b>	Cabinet 2 <sup>nd</sup> April 2015; 28 <sup>th</sup> September 2017, 8 <sup>th</sup> March 2018, 22 <sup>nd</sup> November 2018; 6 <sup>th</sup> August 2020.
<b>Circulation of the Report</b>	Councillor Richard Chesterton Cabinet Member for Planning & Regeneration

