

Report to: Council

Report Ref: C1906
Meeting Date: 3rd June 2019
Agenda Item: 12
Prepared By: Town Clerk



Subject: Town Centre Masterplan

1.0 BACKGROUND

The Knutsford Neighbourhood Plan commits the Town Council to developing a Town Centre Masterplan:

- *The Town Council is committed to working with the Borough Council and local land and property owners to deliver a Masterplan for the future of the town centre area.*
- *The Town Council will assess options for a scheme to manage vehicle access and traffic flow to reduce vehicle dominance of the town centre, reduce pollution and improve the environment for town centre users.*
- *The Masterplan will identify and provide guidance for development sites within the town centre, including the town centre car parks, King Street and Princess Street, Canute Place, and other town centre locations.*
- *The Masterplan will seek to support town centre living, small scale independent retail and a new outdoor town centre meeting place or square.*

(Knutsford Neighbourhood Plan, p84)

The work on a masterplan has already been started by the Neighbourhood Plan's Town Centre working group. A draft core of the masterplan, comprising proposals for a limited vehicle access scheme, an increase in town centre parking spaces and development on car parks has been prepared by the working group and was presented to members at a briefing in late 2018 and again following the elections in May 2019. This scheme has also been shared with a panel of Cheshire East Council officers in December (Highways, Assets and Planning) for an initial assessment and it has been indicated that the highways proposals will need a full external assessment. It was presented again to a panel of the planning team at Cheshire East Council in May 2019 for their advice on moving the matter forward. At this stage the proposals have not been shared publicly as they are a working draft form.

The working group as established under the Neighbourhood Plan Committee was officially disbanded as part of the adoption of the Neighbourhood Plan.

It is therefore recommended that a new working group be established, reporting directly to Full Council, to take forward the task of developing a masterplan. A draft terms of reference has been prepared.



2.0 DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE

1.0 The Working Group shall comprise:

- a. At least three councillors, determined by Council
- b. One Cheshire East councillor (who may also be a town councillor)
- c. Representatives of the various stakeholders in the town centre (including without limitation residents, businesses, landlords., officials of Cheshire East Council), as are required from time to time
- d. The Town Clerk and Town Centre Manager in an advisory capacity

Membership to be reconfirmed / changed by Council at its first meeting at the start of a new Mayoral year.

2.0 At its first meeting (or first in a new Mayoral year) the working group members shall:

- a. Review these terms of reference
- b. Appoint an elected member as Lead Member to speak on behalf of the working group to council
- c. Appoint a chairman (who need not be a councillor) who should lead in organising meetings and activities and ensure that all working group's members are kept informed, and suitably involved with progress

3.0 In line with the task set by the Council, the purpose and remit of the working group is to:

- a. Develop proposals for a Town Centre Masterplan, in accordance with the Neighbourhood Plan, for consideration by Council, building upon the studies and proposals already made by the Neighbourhood Plan Town Centre Working Group.
- b. Act as a forum for representatives of the various stakeholders in the town centre to communicate and cooperate in the ongoing development of the Masterplan
- c. Recommend studies, third-party appraisals and other such gathering of information as may be required, and to make the case to Council for budget funding to support such studies where essential external expertise is needed

4.0 The group does not have delegated powers to make decisions or commitments on behalf of the Town Council nor should exceed its purpose and remit (above) without the Council's sanction to a change to this Terms of Reference

5.0 The group reports to Council.

6.0 The group shall provide timely reports to the parent body in the following manner:

- a. A verbal update report to each Council meeting.
- b. A report recommending formal consultation at the appropriate stage, including a full draft masterplan
- c. Written reports as necessary

7.0 Meetings of the working group are not usually public meetings.



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3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Council does not have a budget for the development of a Masterplan, yet there will likely be significant costs in developing one including for consultation, research and external consultants. At this stage the exact costs are unknown.

The Town Clerk and working group Chairman have discussed the initial stages and recommend that Council approves a budget of £1,500 for the working group to utilise to undertake initial research and a town centre users' consultation to provide initial input into the content of the Masterplan. Authority to incur expenditure within this budget will be delegated to the Town Clerk acting in consultation with the elected members of the working group.

4.0 DECISIONS REQUIRED

Council should consider establishing a Town Centre Masterplan working group as outlined and appoint members to it.



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