

REPORT TO:	Environmental & Development Services	AGENDA ITEM: 8
DATE OF MEETING:	25 August 2011	CATEGORY: DELEGATED
REPORT FROM:	Director of Operations	OPEN
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	Mike Roylance, 01283 595725 mike.roylance@south-derbys.gov.uk	DOC:
SUBJECT:	Swadlincote Town Centre Vision: Project Plan	REF:
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	All	TERMS OF REFERENCE: EDS03, EDS10 & EDS11

1.0 Reason for Exempt

1.1 Not Applicable.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- Support the proposed approach to the refresh of the Vision & Strategy for Swadlincote Town Centre.

3.0 Purpose of Report

3.1 To seek Member's support to progress the refresh of the Vision & Strategy for Swadlincote Town Centre.

4.0 Executive Summary

4.1 Not applicable.

5.0 Detail

Background

5.1 In February 2001 the Swadlincote Town Centre Vision & Strategy document was adopted. The aim of the document was to set out an agreed framework for raising the profile of the town as a centre for retailing, service and leisure, and to guide future work to enhance its vitality and viability. An update and monitoring report was published in September 2005, outlining the significant progress that had been made.

5.2 Further major progress has been made over the last five years, with substantial investment by all sectors, including: restoration and extension of Sharpe's Pottery Museum; new Morrison's and extended Sainsbury's supermarkets; improvement and restoration of numerous historic buildings including shop fronts within the Conservation Area; construction of the new Swadlincote Health Centre; implementation of the first two phases of the town centre public realm masterplan including improvements to West Street and The Delph; street tree planting as part of

the creation of The National Forest; introduction of CCTV, the Alert Box scheme and other community safety measures; and, currently under construction, extensive new retail and leisure floorspace including a five screen cinema.

- 5.3 In November 2010 Members endorsed the establishment of a joint officer working group with Derbyshire County Council to produce a draft new Vision & Strategy document for Swadlincote town centre. The District and County Councils have significant land holdings in the town centre. The County Council is rationalising its property holdings and has ambitions to establish a hub in Swadlincote that would provide services to the southern part of the County.

Principles

- 5.4 Work on the new Vision & Strategy is underway. It is proposed that the principles that underpinned the 2001 document will broadly be retained. These were as follows (summarised):

- **Comprehensive:** A single project cannot regenerate a town centre. An ongoing series of initiatives is vital to build community support and create lasting progress.
- **Incremental:** Small projects make a difference. They demonstrate that 'things are happening' in the town centre and hone the skills and confidence needed to tackle more complex problems.
- **Self-help & public/private partnership:** The town centre needs the involvement of the grass roots communities and the support and expertise of both the public and private sectors to fund and implement initiatives.
- **Identifying and capitalising on existing assets:** Local assets provide the solid foundation of a successful town centre improvement initiative.
- **Quality:** The town centre and any improvements/initiatives must be synonymous with quality.
- **Change:** Changing community attitudes and public perceptions and practices is essential to sustain a town centre that is fit for purpose.
- **Action-oriented:** Frequent, visible changes in the look and activities of the town centre will reinforce the perception of positive change.

Research & Consultation

- 5.5 A range of research and consultation activities will be undertaken drawing on both recently undertaken studies and new research. The views of both town centre businesses and the local community will be sought. The findings will be used to update the comprehensive research undertaken in 2001 and to get feedback on the emerging proposals.
- 5.6 The broad timescales envisage that the research and development of proposals will be undertaken over the Summer. This will provide the basis for the main consultation activity in the Autumn. Following analysis of the feedback, the proposals will be revised and a draft Vision prepared over the Winter.

6.0 Financial Implications

6.1 None at present as work will initially be undertaken by existing staff and through existing budgets.

7.0 Corporate Implications

7.1 Promoting the vitality and viability of Swadlincote town centre contributes directly to the Corporate Plan's vision to 'make South Derbyshire a better place to live, work and visit' and to the theme of 'Sustainable Growth & Opportunity – strengthening South Derbyshire's economic position within a 'clean' and sustainable environment'. It will also contribute to the other themes in terms of safer communities (Safe & Secure) and delivering community based recreational and cultural activities (Lifestyle Choices).

8.0 Community Implications

8.1 Promoting the vitality and viability of Swadlincote town centre contributes directly to the South Derbyshire Partnership's Sustainable Community Strategy vision of 'a dynamic South Derbyshire, able to seize opportunities to develop successful communities, whilst respecting and enhancing the varied character of our fast growing district'. 'Sustainable Development' is highlighted as a key theme, with the aim of achieving 'sustainable existing and new communities that meet the population's needs and aspirations.

9.0 Conclusions

9.1 A decade on from the publication of the original Vision, the completion of phase two of the town centre public realm masterplan and the imminent opening of the new retail and leisure development provides an appropriate time to refresh the strategy.

10.0 Background Papers

10.1 None other than those referred to in the report.