
REPORT TO:	Environmental & Development Services Committee	AGENDA ITEM: 10
DATE OF MEETING:	18th November 2010	CATEGORY: DELEGATED
REPORT FROM:	Director of Community Services	OPEN
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	Gill Hague X5742 gill.hague@south-derbys.gov.uk	DOC:
SUBJECT:	Planning for future phases of Swadlincote Town Centre Improvements	REF:
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	Swadlincote	TERMS OF REFERENCE: EDS03

1.0 Recommendations

- 1.1 Members note the content of the report;
- 1.2 Members endorse the setting up of a joint officer working group with the County Council to produce a draft new Vision & Strategy document for Swadlincote Town Centre; and
- 1.3 Agree that a report on progress but submitted for consideration at a future date.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 To comply with Members request that the Committee work programme include a report on the funding of future phases of improvements to Swadlincote Town Centre.

3.0 Detail

Background

- 3.1 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 guiding future work to enhance its vitality and viability. It was also a vehicle for guiding the regeneration of the town in a way that recognised and preserved its special character and heritage. An update and monitoring report was published in September 2005 setting out some of the significant achievements particularly in regard to bringing vacant town centre sites such as the then Granville Public House (now the Sir Nigel Gresley) back into beneficial use.
- 3.2 In June 2001 English Heritage joined partners with the District Council to bring about improvements and restoration of the historic buildings in the town centre, which was also a Conservation Area. The scheme known as HERS provided match

funding and is now known as a PSiCA. This match funding continued until 2010. English Heritage and Derbyshire County Council agreed to provisionally provide £20,000 and £10,000 for the next three years in order to keep the scheme running as English Heritage felt that the improvements were not yet at a critical mass that would in future be self supporting without intervention. (Minute CL9 of 20/05/2010 refers)

- 3.3 Whilst improvements were being made to shop fronts and vacant sites redeveloped the public areas around them had changed little since the pedestrian zone scheme was implemented in the early 1980s. A major facelift was needed and after much drafting and public consultation in June 2006 Members agreed the Town Centre Public Realm Masterplan. The proposed works included re-paving, de-cluttering the streets, better lighting and signing, and improvements to approaches, car parks and gateways.
- 3.4 The masterplan was designed as a tool for guiding comprehensive but phased improvements to the public realm over a period of about fifteen years and it was accepted that funding would not be available to deliver the whole project in one go. In anticipation of the adopted masterplan Committee had agreed in January 2006 that where appropriate, contributions towards implementing the Swadlincote Town Centre Masterplan be negotiated from developers seeking planning permission for commercial development within and adjacent to the Town Centre.
- 3.5 Work on drawing up costed proposals for the public realm works was in fact enabled by a Section 106 Agreement contribution from Morrisons, which also included money for carrying out some of the works. More recently a contribution was received from Sainsburys.
- 3.6 To date phase 1 has been completed, works to the first part of phase 2 – West Street are complete other than for tree planting which is to be carried out in November and works to the second part of phase 2 – The Delph are due to be completed this financial year.

The Future

- 3.7 The target in the Council's Corporate Plan for 2012 is to Design Phase 3 and explore options for funding.
- 3.8 Works still to be implemented when funds are available are the repaving of High Street, Market Street & Midland Road and improvements to Civic Way and around the bus station. The Masterplan was a comprehensive document and the phasing of works was customised to fit the amount of funding available at the time. The next logical step would be to repave High Street as a continuation of the works undertaken in The Delph.
- 3.9 We are now 10 years on from the time when the evidence base and proposals were drawn up for the original Vision & Strategy document. Of the original sites/buildings in need of redevelopment/refurbishment many have been restored or have new uses. However, there are now other sites/buildings that within the next few years will have deteriorated to the degree that if we were to draw up a Vision & Strategy document now they would be identified as having no historical value and therefore have potential for redevelopment – Swadlincote Market is an example.
- 3.10 The District Council owns a considerable amount of land in the town centre. The County Council also owns land within or on its edge. There is therefore an

opportunity to draw up a revitalised Vision & Strategy document that will continue the momentum of revitalising the town. Provision of public services could be provided in a joined up way in state of the art shared modern buildings that would free up the remaining land for sale or private investment. This in turn would provide funds to implement the remaining phases of the public realm improvements via Section 106 contributions.

- 3.11 The County Council's Property Services Department is rationalising its property holdings and has ambitions to establish a hub in Swadlincote that would provide its services in the southern part of the County. This is likely to be implemented in the later phase of their programme, which would mean operational activity would commence in approximately three to four years time. Such a timescale would give both authorities time to work together and with potentially other public partners and the private sector to investigate, consult and prepare a new Vision & Strategy Document for Swadlincote Town Centre.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 None at present as work will initially be undertaken by existing staff.

5.0 Corporate Implications

- 5.1 The rolling forward and refreshing of the Vision & Strategy will contribute towards delivering the Corporate Plan theme of Sustainable Growth & Opportunity as regeneration of the town centre bolsters the local economy, helps local businesses to thrive and increases choice for Swadlincote visitors and shoppers. An officer working group would require attendees from several Council departments.

6.0 Community Implications

- 6.1 The rolling forward and refreshing of the Vision & Strategy will contribute towards delivering the Sustainable Community Strategy theme of a Sustainable Environment as appropriate investment in the town will continue to halt environmental decline and secure its long term viability.

7.0 Conclusions

- 7.1 The timing is appropriate to revisit the existing Vision & Strategy for Swadlincote Town Centre to prepare a new document that is fit for purpose for the future.

8.0 Background Papers

- 8.1 None other than referred to in the report.

