

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to the Executive for Decision 08 January 2024

Portfolio:	Policy and Resources
Subject:	Fareham Town Centre Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan
Report of:	Director of Planning and Regeneration
Corporate Priorities:	Provide Housing Choices Promote Economic Development

Purpose:

To consider the outcome of engagement with residents, businesses and visitors on their views and ideas about the future of Fareham Town Centre and to endorse the proposed programme for the development of the Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan.

Executive summary:

The Council's Corporate Strategy 2023-2029 includes a clear commitment to the regeneration of Fareham Town Centre. The Town Centre Member Working Group has developed a programme for the development of the Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan by Summer 2024. Specialist advice and expertise has been commissioned to support the development of the strategy and initial community engagement has been undertaken. The results of this community engagement, set out in Appendix A, will inform the identification of options and initiatives in the New Year.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Executive:

- (a) notes the outcome of the Council's engagement with residents, businesses and visitors on the future of Fareham Town Centre; and
- (b) endorses the "Four Pillars" and Strategic Objectives that have been established to inform and guide the Fareham Town Centre Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan as it is developed through the first half of 2024.

Reason:

To produce a Fareham Town Centre Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan in line with the Corporate Strategy and to inform the next steps for the Council following the acquisition of Fareham Shopping Centre.

To attract investment, guide new development and public spaces and ensure that the town centre meets changing needs.

Cost of proposals:

£231,000 has been set aside for specialist strategic advice, masterplanning, communications, engagement, quantity surveyor services and commercial and residential market advice, funded from existing budgets or earmarked provisions.

Appendices:

A: Initial Engagement Summary Report, Redwood Consulting December 2023

B: SWOT analysis, "Four Pillars" of the Strategy and the Strategic Objectives, RivingtonHark December 2023

Background papers: None

Reference papers: Planning for the Future of Fareham Town Centre, 2017 Vision

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Executive Briefing Paper

Date:	08 January 2024
Subject:	Fareham Town Centre Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan
Briefing by:	Director of Planning and Regeneration
Portfolio:	Policy and Resources

INTRODUCTION

1. The Council's Corporate Strategy 2023-2029 includes a clear commitment to the regeneration of Fareham Town Centre, prioritising activities to create a vibrant, attractive environment and recognising the town centre's importance in providing a community focus and delivering local economic growth. The Council intends to drive the regeneration of Fareham Town Centre, recognising the wider placemaking, economic and community benefits that could be delivered by a reconsideration of the scale and function of the retail offer and parking provision, as well as the introduction of new homes and improved leisure facilities.
2. In 2017, the Council published its vision for the Town Centre: Planning for the Future of Fareham Town Centre. This set out the Council's ambitions to provide more homes, cultural and leisure facilities and improve pedestrian access and safety in the Town Centre. The Council has approved over £30m of funding to support the regeneration programme in Fareham Town Centre and acquired Fareham Shopping Centre in September 2023, long acknowledged to be the key missing element in the 2017 Vision.
3. As well as the acquisition of the shopping centre, major investments are currently in progress with the development of Fareham Live and the planned demolition of Osborn Road multi-storey car park in favour of a new surface car park. The Town Centre Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan will connect these developments and those planned by other key landowners, taking into account commercial sensitivities and community aspirations.
4. The Council, as Local Planning Authority, also has an adopted Local Plan Policy BL1 'Broad Location for Housing Growth', which identifies that, through the 'comprehensive mixed-use redevelopment of the area, including a consolidated, varied, and integrated retail and leisure offer', the town centre can deliver up to 620 new dwellings, in addition to improved accessibility and public realm in the town centre. It makes a public commitment that the Council, as Local Planning Authority, will also lead the development of a Fareham Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document in due course.

5. The Council appointed Lambert Smith Hampton in May 2022 advise on the market potential for town centre regeneration through the acquisition of Fareham Shopping Centre to help deliver the Council's vision and ambitions for the regeneration of Fareham. Their advice was that the Town Centre has significant potential to:
 - Reduce overall retail space
 - Create spaces, connectivity and permeability
 - Focus on green space, health and wellness, biodiversity and community
 - Create opportunities for a range of additional town centre uses
 - Create a long-term parking solution
 - Assist in addressing climate change

DELIVERY CAPACITY AND SKILLS

6. Following the acquisition of Fareham Shopping Centre in September, the Council has moved quickly to procure the necessary skills and capacity to both manage the Shopping Centre and develop a deliverable and realistic Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan.
7. In September 2023, RivingtonHark were appointed as Asset Manager for Fareham Shopping Centre and in November 2023 they were also appointed to provide specialist expertise to create a Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan. The Council will achieve better value and quality with RivingtonHark in both roles due to the significant role that the shopping centre will play in the Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan. RivingtonHark are leaders in the specialist area of curation, evolution and improvement of UK town and city centres and manage projects with a value in excess of £1bn, working alongside local authorities, leading pension funds, and Global Capital providers to invest in mixed use projects.
8. The Council has also appointed Leslie Jones Architects to undertake the specialist masterplanning for the Town Centre, and Redwood Consulting to support the extensive community engagement programme that will be required. Further appointments of specialist quantity surveyors and commercial and residential advisors are currently being undertaken.
9. £231,000 has been set aside for this additional specialist advice, funded from existing budgets or earmarked provisions.

PROPOSED PROGRAMME

10. The new Fareham Town Centre Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan will be in place by Summer 2024.

11. The proposed Programme has been developed by the Town Centre Member Working Group as follows:

Project Phase	Key Activities	Date
Step 1 Analysis	Community engagement to understand the needs and aspirations of Fareham's residents, businesses, shoppers and visitors	November and December 2024
	Analysis Report	Executive January 2024
Step 2 Optioneering	Identify options and initiatives Continued engagement throughout with key interest groups, residents, businesses, shoppers and visitors	January and February 2024
	Options Report	Executive March 2024
Step 3 Feasibility and Action Plan	Progress feasibility analysis on priority options and initiatives Develop high-level Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan with short, medium and long-term initiatives	March to June 2024
	Final community engagement on draft Regeneration Strategy and Action proposals	Summer 2024
Step 4 Adoption	Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan	Executive Summer 2024

12. Short-term and meanwhile initiatives will be identified in the Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan, including the creation of a safe and secure evening link between Fareham Live and West Street.
13. Separately, the Fareham Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document will be developed by the Council, as Local Planning Authority, in due course.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

14. A comprehensive programme of consultation and engagement with Fareham's residents, businesses, shoppers and visitors is planned, as set out in the table above, to inform this piece of work.
15. Supported by regeneration consultation experts, Redwood, the Council completed the first stage of engagement about the needs and aspirations of local people for their Town Centre in December.
16. Between Wednesday 29 November and Wednesday 6 December, feedback was encouraged online and at drop-in sessions in Fareham Town Centre, Shopping Centre and Fareham Leisure Centre, with feedback 'drop off' points in the Library and Civic Offices.

17. Over 900 people, businesses and organisations participated in the first stage of engagement and their views have been analysed and presented in the Summary Statement attached at Appendix A.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS/CARBON IMPACT ASSESSMENT

18. No carbon impacts are anticipated as a direct result of the publication of the Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan for Fareham Town Centre, although the environment and carbon reduction will be key considerations within the strategy.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

19. Rapid progress has been made on the Corporate Priority to develop a Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan for Fareham Town Centre since the acquisition of Fareham Shopping Centre in September 2023.
20. The proposed Programme has been developed by the Town Centre Member Working Group and consultants have been appointed to provide the specialist expertise and capacity to engage on and produce the Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan by Summer 2024.

Enquiries:

For further information on this report please contact Sarah Ward, Head of Strategic Sites (01329) 824669.