

Title: Leamington Town Centre Transformation

Lead Officer: Chris Elliott chris.elliott@warwickdc.gov.uk 01926 456000

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Chris King

Wards of the District directly affected: All Leamington Town Wards

Approvals required	Date	Name
Portfolio Holder	04.09.23	Cllr Chris King
Finance	04.09.23	Andrew Rollins/Steven Leathley
Legal Services	04.09.23	
Chief Executive	04.09.23	Chris Elliott
Director of Climate Change	04.09.23	Dave Barber
Head of Service(s)	04.09.23	Phillip Clarke
Section 151 Officer	04.09.23	Andrew Rollins
Monitoring Officer	04.09.23	Graham Leach
Leadership Co-ordination Group	04.09.23	Cllrs Boad;Falp; and, Hales (for Cllr Day)
Final decision by this Committee or rec to another Cttee / Council?	Yes Recommendation to: Cabinet	
Contrary to Policy / Budget framework?	No	
Does this report contain exempt info/Confidential? If so, which paragraph(s)?	No	
Does this report relate to a key decision (referred to in the Cabinet Forward Plan)?	No	
Accessibility Checked?	Yes	

Summary

This is a two report seeking first of all approval for the release of resources in order to support work to further the Transformation of Leamington Town Centre focussed principally around the Parade; and secondly, for the release of resources to support the progression of an SPD for the Old Town area.

Recommendations

Leamington Transformation Board

- (1) That Cabinet support the focus of the Leamington Transformation Board's work over the next year on updating the 2018 Vision and undertaking master planning work for the Parade and the immediately adjoining area. As these are developed, consideration of movement within the town will be reviewed to support the ambitions of these two elements of work.
- (2) That Cabinet agree to the release of £50,000 from the Community Projects reserve to match the same level of funding as WCC to jointly commission work covering the areas listed in recommendation 1 above.
- (3) That Cabinet agree to delegate to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Programme Director of Climate Change and Head of Place, Arts and Economy and the portfolio holder for Place to conclude with WCC the brief for the joint commission.
- (4) That Cabinet agrees that all WDC's Group Leaders should be represented upon the Leamington Transformation Board.

Leamington Old Town SPD

- (5) That Cabinet note that the Local Development Scheme agreed in December 2022 included a commitment to prepare an SPD for the Old Town area.
- (6) That the Cabinet delegate to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Programme Director of Climate Change, Head of Place, Arts and Economy, and the portfolio holder for Place following a consultation with the Brunswick Ward Councillors to:
 - a. agree to the release of £70,000 from the Community Projects Reserve for the completion of the Old Town SPD work.
 - b. agree to the release of £150,000 over 3 years from the Service Transformation Reserve or other Reserve as the Head of Finance deems appropriate to finance a project officer to spend 50% of time on Parade area and 50% on Old Town area.
 - c. agree to commence a consultation with local community and business groups in the Old Town area as an input into the proposed SPD.
- (7) That Cabinet, delegates authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Place based on feedback from Leamington Transformation Board to determine whether a Round 3 Levelling Up bid for funds should be made and the content of that bid.

1 Reasons for the Recommendation

Leamington Transformation Board

- 1.1 The Leamington Transformation Board (LTB) was set up in 2020 with a remit to bring all 3 tiers of Local Government relevant together to drive forward the

regeneration of Leamington town centre. The original brief and constitution of the LTB is attached at Appendix 1.

- 1.2 The LTB has been reviewing its work and priorities and has concluded that its focus over the next year or so should be on:
 - Refreshing the overall vision for the town centre which was last done in 2018 given how much the world has changed since then.
 - Focusing on delivering real transformation for the town centre by focusing on the Parade and adjoining area as a priority in the context of a clear strategic vision for movement. (The latter will be drawn from the mini-Holland work already undertaken by WCC, the Local Transport plan of WCC and the second stage mini-Holland work that WCC is commissioning separately).
 - Whilst the LTB would need to be cognizant of other proposals in the town centre it should not seek to cover them all; it should focus on the above bullet points.
- 1.3 In addition, the LTB charged WDC and WCC senior officers to identify resources that could deliver these priorities. In summary, the relevant officers from both Councils have agreed that to take these priorities forward each Council would:
 - A joint commission of work covering the items above – for which each authority would commit £50k each.
 - Agree to contribute half an FTE post each toward driving this work forward.
- 1.4 WCC has confirmed its money and the post and so WDC needs to do the same presuming that Cabinet is supportive of the LTB's focus of work.
 - 1.4.1 The Community Projects Reserve could fund the £50k contribution for WDC. However, WDC does not have any existing spare staffing to reallocate to this work so it will be necessary to create a new post. A new project officer on a part time basis would cost circa £25k per annum but as it is also suggested that there is work required to be done to support the Old Town work as well that it would make a more attractive position if it was full time though split between the two projects. A whole cost of £50k per annum is therefore estimated and it is suggested that this is for 3 years. This it is proposed would be funded from the Service Transformation Reserve.
 - 1.4.2 Both the WDC and the WCC posts would be part of a joint Council Project team which would include other WDC/WCC staff currently working on town centre projects. This "virtual" team would also include the Town Clerk of Leamington Town Council. WDC's CEO will act as Project Sponsor for WDC and WCC's Director of Place and Economy likewise for WCC. Cllr King as the Place portfolio Holder would act for WDC as the political lead.
- 1.5 It is suggested that the brief for the work to be commissioned is to go via the WCC procurement process, but that approval of the brief be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Programme Director for Climate Change and the Head of Place, Arts and Economy and the Place portfolio holder.
- 1.6 When the Leamington Transformation Board was originally set up its constitution allowed for the WDC Leader and the Group Leaders of the other groups covering Leamington Town to have places on the Board. However, the outcome of the 2023 elections means that two of the Council's political groups are no longer represented on the LTB. This is contrary to the spirit of what was originally intended that all the Council's political group be involved and

represented. It is proposed therefore that this be addressed by inviting all the Council's Group Leaders to become members of the Board. This could be done under the Chief Executive's delegated powers but given that it does have a political implication it is felt appropriate for the Cabinet to indicate its support on this matter.

Leamington Old Town Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

- 1.7 The Council has previously agreed in December 2022 that in its formal Local Development Scheme that an SPD for the Old Town area should be prepared. The report at that time justified undertaking the work as follows:

"Old Town (Royal Leamington Spa) Regeneration SPD

Leamington's Creative Quarter is a long-established regeneration partnership initiative which has recently made significant progress with its first development on the ground at Spencer Yard, supported the by Future High Street Fund (FHSF). The second development, also supported by the FHSF, is utilising WDC building assets at Stoneleigh Arms on Clemens Street and Old School on Court Street. To maximise the catalyst for further regeneration in the surrounding area of the Old Town, a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is proposed covering Althorpe Street, Court Street, Wise Street, Bath Place Car Park and linking up to Spencer Yard and the Old Post Office / Sorting Office.

The LDS proposes that work between council officers and appointed architects on developing this regeneration framework will continue at the end of 2022 through to Spring 2023. In Summer 2023 it is proposed to consult on the SPD with a view to assessing the responses and amending the document where appropriate and then seeking adoption of the document by the end of 2023.

A significant amount of the preparatory work to produce this SPD will be undertaken by council staff outside of the Policy team, with support from their appointed consultants."

- 1.8 Work on this SPD did start last year initially looking at the Court Street/Althorpe Street area but was somewhat expanded to provide a more comprehensive geography incorporating the scheme devised by WCC that was submitted last year for the Levelling Up Round 2 funding opportunity (see link to the Round 2 bid). It is suggested that the overall thrust of the SPD would be to help shape the area as a low carbon neighbourhood. This would accord with the emerging ambitions of the new Corporate Strategy and set out to be an exemplar for sustainable development. If this is supported in principle and in the light of the proposal below to undertake further consultation it is proposed that the ward members be briefed and that the release of any monies only follows that briefing and is otherwise delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Programme Director of Climate Change and the Head of Place Arts and Economy.
- 1.9 That work has progressed with the aid of external consultancy but to progress further some further funding is required and some staffing resource is required to support the work and is proposed as set out in paragraph 1.3.1 above. The additional funding necessary is £70k which includes all of the necessary documentation and analysis necessary to deliver speedily an SPD for this area.
- 1.10 However, it is felt appropriate that the Council undertake an outreach to the local community/business to ascertain their views on the future for the area is needed rather than to start off with proposals from the Council. This would be relatively low key and pitched to reflect the different communities in the area.

- 1.11 In 2022, the Council made a bid under the Levelling Up Round 2 scheme for capital funding for works in Old Town. The feedback suggested that the bid should be re submitted but as a regeneration scheme than as a transport one. Round 3 of that scheme is approaching (precise timescales are not yet known though) and given that the Government usually only gives short notice it is appropriate for officers to ask Cabinet for its inclination on whether to submit a bid or not. The risk in applying is that a bid requires effort for no promise of a return but if successful the money could help fulfil the ambition for the Transformation of Leamington Town Centre.

2 Alternative Options

- 2.1 The Cabinet could choose to decline all these recommendations or vary them but unless there is commitment to provide resources then WDC will not be able to make any headway on the items for which the LTB has agreed are priorities nor will the Council be able to deliver the SPD for Old Town as agreed in the LDS in December 2022. It is hard to see therefore what other options there are for the Council to consider.

3 Legal Implications

- 3.1 This report doesn't of itself generate any legal issues, but the outcomes of such work agreed may do.

4 Financial Services

- 4.1 The proposals have an ask of the Community Projects Reserve in total of £120k albeit over 2 financial years and of the Service Transformation Reserve of £150 over 3 years.

5 Business Strategy

- 5.1 Warwick District Council has adopted a Business Strategy which sets out key areas for service delivery. This proposal will have the opportunity of having positive impacts in relation to:

Health, Homes, Communities,

Green, Clean, Safe,

Infrastructure, Enterprise, Employment,

Effective Staff,

Maintain or Improve Services

Firm Financial Footing over the Longer Term

It should be noted though that the Council is preparing a new Corporate Strategy which will overtake the current Business Strategy.

6 Environmental/Climate Change Implications

- 6.1 The proposals of themselves will not impact directly on the environment or climate change but the outcomes of the work to be commissioned if they can be implemented should have positive implications regarding air pollution and on CO2 commissioned especially from travel arrangements but also from new development. The commission will also need to take on board climate adaptation issues. The Programme Director of Climate Change will be involved in the agreement and sign off of the commission.

7 Analysis of the effects on Equality

- 7.1 Equality Impact Assessment implications will need to be considered as part of

the outcomes of the work to be jointly commissioned.

8 Data Protection

8.1 There are no Data Protection implications arising from this report.

9 Health and Wellbeing

9.1 Health and wellbeing implications will need to be considered as part of the outcome of the jointly commissioned work.

10 Risk Assessment

10.1 The greater risks lie in not progressing this work as the town centre especially the Parade area and the Old Town will continue to stall as they are now and be subject to ad hoc proposals which will not necessarily deliver a comprehensive nor appropriate regeneration. A decision to defer to or to not do this work will not guarantee no change since both areas are affected by dynamics which need to be managed actively not simply left alone.

10.2 In progressing this work, risks could occur in ensuring effective engagement and consultation. Some issues may well be contentious, but the consultation process should seek to enable debate positively not to avoid the issue. Positive handling will enhance reputation and the reverse is also true. The commission will need to seek out positive ways for engagement to occur.

10.3 Working with another agency as is proposed may reveal different priorities and emphasis and this if unmanaged (or badly managed) would represent a real risk to the proposed work. However, the LTB with an independent Chair which brings all of the relevant Local Authority tiers together offers the place to discuss and resolve differences.

10.4 There are the usual risks with such projects associated with ensuring the work remains within budget and that staffing can be obtained as proposed. The estimates however seem reasonable at this stage though it is recognised that staff recruitment remains a challenge which could take longer to fill than anticipated. However, the Council's work on its People Strategy will help with recruitment.

11 Consultation

11.1 Consultation is proposed as one of the recommendations and the proposed jointly commissioned work will involve significant consultation.

Background papers:

Report to Cabinet 7th December 2022 on Local Development Scheme

Supporting documents:

Terms of Reference of Leamington Transformation Board