

Report



Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Housing

Part 1

Date: 30 November 2017

Subject City Centre Master Plan - Consultation

Purpose To seek Cabinet Member approval to consult with selected partner organisations and residents on a refreshed City Centre Master Plan. The views of these groups are seen as a key part of the Master Plan review process.

Author Development and Regeneration Manager

Ward City wide

Summary City Regeneration and Development remains a key aim of the Council's Improvement Plan. Maintaining the positive momentum behind recent regeneration success is reliant upon understanding the full range of environmental, economic, and social factors that will shape future development in the City Centre.

Work has commenced on the preparation of a refreshed City Centre Master Plan which will identify the Council's priority areas and schemes up until 2026. It is important to capture the views and opinions of key partner organisations and residents on the principles of the refreshed Master Plan.

Proposal Cabinet Member agrees that consultation can commence on a refreshed City Centre Master Plan.

Action by Head of Regeneration, Investment and Housing

Timetable Immediate

This report was prepared after consultation with:

- Head of Law and Regulations (Monitoring Officer)
- Head of Finance (Chief Finance Officer)
- Head of People and Business Change
- Strategic Director - Place

Signed

1. Background

- 1.1 Newport is a key urban settlement in South East Wales. It is a gateway city to Wales and plays a strong role in the regional and national economy. Following the award of City status in 2002, a master-plan containing a long-term vision and objectives was produced for Newport City Centre which has shaped and supported development in the central core of Newport for almost two decades. The vision at the heart of this master-plan was underpinned by a development framework and the identification of a series of key projects. Since 2004, there have been many changes and the post-2008 recession years hit Newport City Centre particularly hard, both in its economic performance and perception as a desirable urban location. The original master plan for the City Centre was reviewed and refreshed in 2011, in light of Newport's emergence from the recession, to ensure the vision for the City Centre remained relevant and Newport's regeneration activity fit for purpose up until 2020. The 2011 refresh confirmed that the tenets of the original 2004 master plan were still valid, but conceded that despite significant progress in developing the banks of the Usk, the City Centre had continued to deteriorate at an alarming rate and was now an urgent priority for action.
- 1.2 By the end of 2015, a number of bold projects had been completed, including the Friar's Walk development. This project took pride of place amongst an array of developments totalling an estimated £250m investment into Newport City Centre as it underwent what has certainly been its most extensive transformation for generations. New high-quality housing, infrastructure, business premises and leisure space have helped transform parts of the City Centre but the task is not complete. With so much change in the City Centre and new funding opportunities arising, it is necessary to once again refresh and refocus the Master Plan document to ensure that it is fit for purpose and meets current needs, aspirations and priorities.
- 1.3 The 2015 Economic Growth Strategy sets forth a vision of Newport as a vibrant versatile city; an area of visible change, with high aspirations, high achievement and shared prosperity. This vision is accompanied by a ten-year framework for action that builds upon progress to date and reflects both the local economic area and emerging regional contexts. At the heart of this Strategy are three key themes of People, Place and Prosperity and it is at the heart of the city where the interaction between people, place and prosperity is at its most dynamic. The continued regeneration and success of the City Centre is therefore critical to delivering the ambitious vision of the Economic Growth Strategy.
- 1.4 City Regeneration and Improvement also remains one of the priorities of the Council's continuous Improvement Plan 2016-18. This again further demonstrates the Council's commitment not to rest on the laurels of its achievement to date, but encourage further investment to place Newport City Centre further up the value chain as a key strategic location for the region, South Wales and the wider UK.
- 1.5 Newport now faces new and exciting challenges as a city; challenges that are reflective of how far Newport has come on its journey in recent years. The City must maintain the momentum generated by the impressive array of redevelopment activity in the City Centre, capitalise on the current positivity for Newport as a lever to generate a new cycle of transformation and growth, and ensure regeneration continues to position Newport at the forefront of the emerging City Region and Severnside partnerships. Yet the fundamental questions that will provide the answers to these challenges remain those of a decade ago: what is the long-term vision for the City Centre? What are its key objectives and how can we implement them?
- 1.6 Work has commenced on the preparation of a refreshed Master Plan which will identify the Council's priority areas and schemes up until 2026. It is important to capture the views and opinions of key partner organisations and residents on the principles of the refreshed Master Plan and understand what the key objectives are amongst these important stakeholders. This will assist the Cabinet in making final decisions on the direction and priorities which will be embedded within a new Master Plan.

- 1.7 It is therefore recommended that consultation be undertaken in two stages; stage one being with the Newport Economic Network and the Business Improvement District, and stage two being a wider public consultation. This approach will engage with the private and public sectors, all of which have an important part to play in the future of the City Centre.

2. Financial Summary

- 2.1 The proposed consultation would have a financial cost in terms of staff time attending meetings as well as advertising and printing costs. However, correspondence will be sent out electronically where possible and relevant information will be made available on the Council's website. Any costs will be met within the existing Urban Regeneration budget.

3. Risks

- 3.1 The following key risks are identified in relation to undertaking a consultation exercise:

Risk	Impact of Risk if it occurs* (H/M/L)	Probability of risk occurring (H/M/L)	What is the Council doing or what has it done to avoid the risk or reduce its effect	Who is responsible for dealing with the risk?
Failure to Progress with the Master Plan	H	L	A draft Master Plan has been developed to clearly identify and prioritise regeneration within the City Centre and immediate area. The views of key stakeholders are seen as an important and integral part of the process but does not preclude the Cabinet from making a decision on the adoption of a refreshed Master Plan.	Development and Regeneration Manager
Loss of Momentum City Centre	H	M	The ongoing effort to regenerate the city centre is contingent upon sizeable capital investment. The Council has a key role to play in facilitating the development of sites and premises where the market is unlikely to intervene, as has been demonstrated in the completion of Friar's Walk. The Council is exploring a number of future funding options to ensure this funding is available, for example, recent applications to the Heritage Lottery Fund and the forthcoming Targeted Regeneration Investment Fund.	Development and Regeneration Manager

4. Links to Council Policies and Priorities

- 4.1 The refreshed City Centre Master Plan will dovetail and add value to the Council's strategic priorities, importantly the Improvement Plan's aim to continue the regeneration and development of the city centre.
- 4.2 The project also supports Newport's Economic Growth Strategy, which sets out a ten year programme for delivering growth across the city centre through capital redevelopment. The Strategy Action Plan identifies that creating a safe, attractive city centre is a key to promoting an excellent economic environment.
- 4.3 Encouraging economic growth and reducing the number of vacant and derelict sites will contribute towards the aims of Newport's Wellbeing Plan, reducing material deprivation, increasing access to services, safety at home, satisfaction with area and indicators on community resilience.
- 4.5 Finally, with new Welsh Government funding becoming available, having an up to date and focussed Master Plan will ensure that Newport is well-placed to respond quickly and confidently to funding opportunities.

5. Options Available and considered

- 5.1 Two options are available. To consult with identified key stakeholders, or to not engage with our key stakeholders.

6. Preferred Option and Why

- 6.1 To consult with identified key stakeholders in order to understand social and economic aspirations and priorities for the City Centre.

7. Comments of Chief Financial Officer

There are no financial impacts in terms of consultation as they'll be contained within existing revenue budgets.

The delivery of the Master Plan is dependant, to a large extent, on developer led and financed schemes/projects and that will be challenging in the current context. The Council's financial capacity to contribute/fund schemes is clearly very restricted though, as demonstrated by Friar's Walk, there are other methods by which the Council can assist in bringing forward schemes, where desirable/needed and using these other methods will continue, as needed, and therefore the need to manage financial and other risks will continue to be critical.

8. Comments of Monitoring Officer

There are no specific legal issues arising from the Report at this stage as the Cabinet Member is only being asked to agree the draft City Centre Masterplan for the purposes of consultation, both with key partners and the wider public. The refresh of the previous Masterplan seeks to build on the successes of the significant economic development and regeneration carried out in the City Centre over the past few years and will provide a framework for the delivery of future economic growth and well-being.

9. Comments of Head of People and Business Change

The City Centre Master Plan is now in its third revision and has become an established means of communicating aspirations and plans for development and regeneration in terms of priority areas and schemes. It seeks to build on the considerable work to date whilst providing a long term and integrated framework going forward. Section 15 of this report outlines the relevance of the masterplan to the

Council's sustainable development duties and the importance placed on the regeneration and prosperity of the city centre in terms of wider wellbeing is well established. The proposal to now consult with stakeholders and the wider public on the draft document is supported.

10. Comments of Non-Executive Members

Councillor M Al-Nuaimi:

- Reading the enclosed report, I thought the revision of the city centre Master Plan(MP) was available as a separate document to the 8-page report enclosed with your email.
- If it's the principle of consultation that the cabinet member wish to receive comments on by November 30th, then of course such would be supported.
- Changes have taken place in the city centre since the last revised Master Plan was agreed and the economic outlook has changed markedly in recent years. Consulting with the Newport Economic Network and Newport Now in stage 1 would be both necessary and desirable. Consulting with the public in stage 2 sounds reasonable.
- The report correctly outlines the links and interplay that exist between the revised MP and the 2015 Economic Growth Strategy. The latter with its 10 year action plan has the city centre regeneration as a main plank and a catalyst for delivering economic prosperity. The report also correctly links the MP with the priorities of the 2016/18 Council Improvement Plan.
- But in order for the consultation stage 1 at least, I'm of the opinion that the consultees (both public and private sectors) would need a few ideas from the Council about the future of the city centre. For example with the decline in retail activities that has affected the traditional retail streets in Newport (e.g the High st and Commercial St), what would Council like to see taking the place of retail? What are our thought in that direction?
- With the progress that has been achieved with increasing residential uses under the VVP, does Council propose to build on that progress and how? How can we increase the sustainability of living, working and being entertained in the city centre? How does Council make the city centre a viable place in which to live by existing and new residents? How can we encourage the city centre to become a vibrant environment and to offer enjoyable night economy outlets?
- These are example questions. I'm not suggesting the MP specifies these rigidly, but we need ideas and possibilities suitable for discussion with and in conversation with private and public sector partners and businesses.
- I also feel that a successful consultation might involve holding events along the lines of the Newport city summits to engage wider involvement and enable partner consultees (and the public) to contribute. We need to encourage the flow of ideas about the city centre and its place in the lives of future generations.

Response from the Cabinet Member:

The comments from Cllr Al-Nuaimi are welcomed and it is agreed that constructive engagement with stakeholders is essential to agreeing the priorities and future direction of an effective revised master plan. As noted by Cllr Al-Nuaimi, the Cabinet Member report is only seeking approval for the principle of the consultation exercise.

11. Comments of Cabinet Member

Cabinet Member has approved the report and fully supports the opportunity to engage with stakeholders and work together to shape the next phase of City Centre regeneration.

12. Scrutiny Committees

None.

13. Equalities Impact Assessment and the Equalities Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 contains a Public Sector Equality Duty which came into force on 06 April 2011. The Act identifies a number of 'protected characteristics', namely age; disability; gender reassignment;

pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation; marriage and civil partnership. The new single duty aims to integrate consideration of equality and good relations into the regular business of public authorities. Compliance with the duty is a legal obligation and is intended to result in better informed decision-making and policy development and services that are more effective for users. In exercising its functions, the Council must have due regard to the need to: eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act; advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. The Act is not overly prescriptive about the approach a public authority should take to ensure due regard, although it does set out that due regard to advancing equality involves: removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics; taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these differ from the need of other people; and encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

14. Children and Families (Wales) Measure

Although no targeted consultation takes place specifically aimed at children and young people, consultation on a draft Master Plan will be open to all of our citizens regardless of their age. People replying to consultations will not be required to provide their age or any other personal data, and therefore this data will not held or recorded in any way, and responses will not separated out by age.

15. Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The scheme complies with the requirements of the Act, addressing the following key points:

- Long term: the refreshed Master Plan will aim to identify priorities areas and projects for investment which will bring important sites back into viable long-term beneficial use and raise the economic performance of the city centre.
- Prevention: Understanding and establishing priorities will enable the authority to fully identify opportunities to break the cycle of decline, preventing further deterioration of a key area of the City which has potential to grow and become more sustainable.
- Integration: The consultation will promote integration with partners, particularly in encouraging community safety and resilience. Vacant properties in the city centre are undeniably a factor in encouraging crime and anti-social behaviour and this in turn affects the health and well-being of all individuals.
- Collaboration: The Master Plan will involve close collaboration across sectors with a range of potential public, private and third-sector partners.
- Involvement: Consultation with identified key stakeholders is a key part of ensuring that the City Centre and the immediate area continues to evolve and grow into a vibrant and viable part of the City.

16. Crime and Disorder Act 1998

Section 17(1) of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 imposes a duty on the Local Authority to exercise its various functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area. Vacant and derelict commercial properties encourage crime and disorder and exacerbates the poverty and deprivation that contribute towards the causes of crime. Targeting priority areas and projects will discourage such activity and help create opportunities for the economic growth in the City Centre.

17. Consultation

Comments received from wider consultation, including comments from elected members, are detailed in each application report in the attached schedule.

18. Background Papers



Masterplan 2020
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Date: 30 November 2017