

# Public Document Pack



## AYLESBURY VALE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### Democratic Services

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### ECONOMY AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Economy and Business Development Scrutiny Committee will be held at **6.30 pm** on **Monday 26 October 2015** in **The Olympic Room, Aylesbury Vale District Council, The Gateway, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury, HP19 8FF**, when your attendance is requested.

**Membership:** Councillor P Strachan (Chairman); Councillors A Southam (Vice-Chairman), B Adams, A Christensen, P Cooper, B Foster, M Hawke, P Irwin, C Poll and W Whyte

Contact Officer for meeting arrangements: Charlotte Gordon; [cgordon@aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk](mailto:cgordon@aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk);

### AGENDA

**1. APOLOGIES**

**2. TEMPORARY CHANGES TO MEMBERSHIP**

Any changes will be reported at the meeting.

**3. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 10)**

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 15 September 2015, copy attached.

**4. DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

Members to declare any interests.

**5. SKILLS AND TRAINING UPDATE (Pages 11 - 20)**

**6. AYLESBURY TOWN CENTRE UPDATE (Pages 21 - 36)**

**7. WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 37 - 38)**

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## Economy and Business Development Scrutiny Committee

15 SEPTEMBER 2015

**PRESENT:** Councillor P Strachan (Chairman); Councillors A Southam (Vice Chairman), B Adams, J Cartwright, A Christensen, P Cooper, B Foster, M Hawkett, P Irwin, C Poll and W Whyte

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Councillors S Bowles and H Mordue

### 1. MINUTES

That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 June, 2015, be approved as a correct record.

### 2. INFRASTRUCTURE PRESENTATION FROM BUCKS ADVANTAGE AND BUCKS COUNTY COUNCIL

The Committee received two presentations on strategic infrastructure planning, one from Bucks County Council (Mr Stephen Walford, Director – Growth and Strategy was in attendance) and from the Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership (Mr Richard Harrington, Chief Executive was in attendance).

The County Council's presentation explained that infrastructure was built over a number of layers from local site specific requirements progressively up through wider levels of consideration at Local/Town/Neighbourhood, Countywide/LEP, Regional/sub-Regional, and finally national requirements.

While it was acknowledged that Members had particular transport concerns, in particular with Aylesbury, it was explained that there were many other parts to infrastructure provision including:-

- Schools, education and skills.
- Waste transfer stations, recycling centres and disposal sites.
- Mineral sites and their availability.
- Drainage, flood amelioration and mitigation.
- Social care facilities / specialist housing / affordable housing.
- Green infrastructure, open space, parks, play areas, planting.
- Digital infrastructure and connectivity.
- Leisure facilities and libraries.
- Public realm and art.
- Doctors, dentists and healthcare

These were just some of the issues that needed to be considered and addressed in creating and shaping places we lived in.

The Committee was informed that there were two aspects to strategic infrastructure funding that needed to be considered alongside each other, namely, needs versus funding.

Infrastructure needs was established through a number of ways including technical, .e.g. known current capacity constraints within existing infrastructure assets and specific or area-based technical assessment of future implications. There were also socio-political issues to be considered such as community betterment and the vision/aspirations for an area. These needs were then quantified through plans such as a Strategic Economic Plan (SEP), Infrastructure Plan, Local Transport Plan, Neighbourhood Plans and Local Plans.

Having plans in place provided the catalyst, and was often a requirement of central Government, for funding for infrastructure to be attained. Funding could come through a couple of routes – Structural/Planned (Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), Local Growth Fund (LGF)/SEP, LTB and base budgets) or through opportunistic routes such as Section 106/legal agreements, Local Sustainable Transport Funding, the EU or lottery money. It was inevitably the case that there would be financial shortfalls and difficult decisions would have to be taken.

Future infrastructure needs for Buckinghamshire had identified North-South connectivity as a priority for key settlements. As well as this, there were pressures from neighbours on all sides (MK, Luton, Tring, London and possibly Bicester/Oxford). A list was provided of major transport infrastructure needs for coming years, in north south order, but not priority, order, as follows:-

- A421 'Brains Route' Expressway (at feasibility).
- New M40 junction at Bicester.
- East West rail (new Winslow Station)
- HS2.
- Aylesbury East Link Road.
- Princes Risborough Relief Road.
- Possible new M40 junction 3a.
- A404 upgrade at Westhorpe (at feasibility), and Bisham (in RBWM).
- Western Rail Access to Heathrow.
- A355 Link Road in Beaconsfield.
- Crossrail.
- Heathrow Third Runway?

Information was also provided on strategic transport links/roads that might be delivered in the future on the fringes of Aylesbury as part of growth and development.

The Bucks Thames Valley LEP presentation informed Members that the LEP was working to build conditions for sustainable economic growth in the entrepreneurial heart of Britain. The LEP was the County's main voice to Government, and was a public / private sector partnership comprising 5 local authorities, Bucks Business First, Bucks Skills Board and Buckinghamshire Advantage (BA). To date, £150m in inward investment had been obtained which would contribute towards faster broadband and digital infrastructure, better road and rail connections, and help to improve skills delivery. Key achievement included:-

- £53m Local Growth Funding received.
- £40m generated in public and private investment.
- 600 new homes.
- 5,000 new jobs.
- 82,000 m<sup>2</sup> of employment space.

BA had been tasked with a number of responsibilities including managing Growing Places Funding and LGF Rounds 1 and 2, co-ordinating next generation infrastructure investment and driving new work behaviour. In support of all of this, BA was taking the lead and being proactive in putting together a Bucks Infrastructure Plan. The plan would look to identify and promote infrastructure projects that would boost the Bucks Economy and frame an ask of government on local growth priorities. BA's partnership approach meant that a current and reviewable set of agreed local priorities could be agreed, which also demonstrated that Buckinghamshire was taking a clear and consistent approach and which maximised funding for local priorities. The plan would also support the local authorities to demonstrate they were discharging their "Duty to Comply".

Members were informed that local authority input and approval was fundamental to the plan process, as the outcome required an aligned, proactive and innovative set of propositions, not just a wish list of infrastructure projects. This necessitated looking at issues including national, regional and local road/rail, broadband, utility growth and business interventions. It was anticipated that the Bucks Infrastructure Plan would be finalised by the end of 2015.

Members sought further information and were informed:-

- (i) on some of the major infrastructure work currently being delivered by the County Council, which included the Woodlands project, east/west links, delivering new employment land and investing in broadband (including developing 5G).
- (ii) that it was likely that the road capacity was exacerbating business getting in/out of the Vale.
- (iii) that a new Transport Plan for Aylesbury would be put together once the levels of growth for the next 20-30 years were known.
- (iv) that it was important to businesses with the business sites they wanted and which included also the on-site infrastructure they required.
- (v) that it was difficult to obtain infrastructure funding in the short term as CIL money was not allocated to business development.
- (vi) that the Council's Economic Development team had re-started regular discussions with developers through the Developers' Forum. The ED team was proactive in working with applicants and planning to help progress economic development opportunities.
- (vii) that within 3-5 years the County Council would hope to have a detailed road map of transport infrastructure requirements.
- (viii) that the Bucks Infrastructure Plan, in the absence of an adopted Local Plan, was being used to plug the gap and obtain infrastructure monies from Government, and other inward investment into the area.

Members also commented –

- (a) that improving rural broadband and road links from Aylesbury to Milton Keynes, Wycombe, the M25 and M40 should have a high priority in the Infrastructure Plan.
- (b) that the HEDNAs being developed by areas surrounding Aylesbury seemed to be concentrating more on business growth, with an expectation that Aylesbury Vale would be taking any associated housing growth. However, it was important for Aylesbury Vale that employment jobs were created alongside housing growth. If Aylesbury Vale did take extra housing growth for surrounding areas then providing transport infrastructure would be critical.
- (c) that the Council's Economic Development Strategy needed to be very clear to businesses about why they should invest in the Vale and the benefits of doing it.
- (d) that the Infrastructure Plan should also be looking at whether there was a best place to invest infrastructure that would then help to unlock business investment / job growth.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the Director, Growth and Strategy (Bucks County Council) and the Chief Executive (Bucks Thames Valley LEP) be thanked for attending the meeting.
- (2) That the feedback from the Committee be provided for consideration as part of the consultation undertaken on the Bucks Infrastructure Plan.

### **3. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN REPORT**

The Committee received a report that outlined the elements of the draft Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan for the Vale for the period 2015-2018.

At the scrutiny meeting in June 2015, Members had provided with an overview of the Aylesbury Vale Economy and the key issues impacting on it. While many of the key factors that had impacted on the local economy in 2011 were still largely the same in 2014, there had been sufficient changes in some areas, e.g. infrastructure development, to make it prudent to refresh the Strategy and Action Plan going forward for the 2015-2018 period.

The Economic Development team had recently undertaken a survey to help provide some further input and feedback on the key issues the refreshed ED Strategy would need to address. Data was still being gathered from this and Members were informed of these emerging issues and themes at the meeting.

The draft Economic Development Strategy (EDS) key themes had then been used to develop the Action Plan which set out the range of actions, key leads and key partners involved in delivering the key actions. The Action Plan would be used to guide and monitor this economic development work being undertaken in the District. The activity areas were more fully explained in the appendices to the Committee report, which also included information on how they would be monitored and reported to the scrutiny committee via the work programme.

The Action Plan had 6 strands, namely:-

- Delivering the strategy – which focussed on the steps that would be taken to make the EDS a reality. Progress against the identified tasks would be regularly monitored and an Annual Report compiled to highlight the progress made.
- Supporting new enterprise – which aimed to build on Aylesbury Vale's strengths as a centre for enterprise and one of the best places in the UK to start a business. This would also focus on creating an environment in which entrepreneurship was recognised and celebrated.

Enterprise education in schools and Further Education (FE) and Higher Education (HE) would also be supported locally, as exemplified by the University Campus Aylesbury Vale (formerly known as the Waterside Academy). Potential new businesses would be supported, where appropriate, with access to funding and first stage premises, and provided with first class access to advice. Business networking would be encouraged to develop a strong sense of identity for local businesses.

- Supporting existing businesses to grow – businesses would be supported and encouraged to grow and expand locally. A mix of modern premises were available and meant that businesses could expand or re-locate within the Vale to

employment land in areas including Silverstone, Haddenham, Westcott and Berryfields.

Aylesbury Vale would continue to strive to meet the challenge of providing job opportunities in both mainstream and high value emerging and knowledge based sectors, to ensure the Vale economy continued to have a relevant, dynamic, resilient economy offering a wide range of employment.

- Attracting inward investment to the Vale – the EDS and Action Plan recognised that encouraging new business creation and the growth of existing businesses in the Vale could not be relied on alone to meet job growth targets. Therefore, there would also be a major focus on Aylesbury Vale as an exciting and dynamic inward investment business location, as part of the South East Midlands and Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnerships.

As part of one of the fastest growing areas in the UK, the Vale would create a unique positioning that was attractive to ‘niche’ segments of the business market, emphasising the opportunities for higher value employment types, the potential to exploit the proximity to Oxford & Cambridge, especially with the advent of East West Rail, and the excellent location close to the M40, M1 & M25, lying midway between London and Birmingham.

- Infrastructure Development – there would be regeneration of the overall quality of employment space available within the Vale and upgrade and identification of other employment sites, in line with the emerging Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP) and the Aylesbury Town Centre Improvement Plan.

It was also planned to regenerate other key road and rail infrastructure such as the Eastern Link Road and East West Rail. Superfast Broadband would be rolled out further to rural and “not spot” areas to ensure wider coverage in the Vale in support of communities and business. The Local Enterprise Partnerships would identify infrastructure projects that were suitable for new Government funding streams for unlocking and help create a revolving fund to provide capacity.

- Growing our own workforce for the future knowledge economy – the availability of an appropriately skilled workforce was key to keeping pace with the increasing demand for higher skilled occupations and new and emerging market opportunities. Aylesbury Vale had to secure its future in the knowledge economy through responding to employers recruitment needs now and in the future.

To do this would require investment in the research and innovation skills of young people and providing alternative career paths, including vocational and apprenticeship opportunities, part of which would be met by the University Technical Centres (UTCs). Aylesbury Vale needed to focus on what it was good at including: supporting entrepreneurialism, exploiting its current knowledge economy research assets, exploiting ‘niche’ markets and encouraging multi-and cross-disciplinary workforce skills.

The 6 strands comprised 47 activity areas that had been reviewed and prioritised. These work areas had been discussed at the scrutiny meeting in June 2015 and the work areas for 2015/16 had been listed as:-

- Key employment sites.
- East/West Rail and HS2.
- LEP delivery programmes.
- The Aylesbury Vale Estates Business Plan.
- Skills Development.

- Support for business growth within the Vale.
- Inward Investment.
- Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan.
- Enterprise – start up businesses.
- European funded programmes – bidding and delivery.
- Economic Performance.
- Broadband.
- Business Support to market towns including Buckingham and Winslow.
- Visitor Economy.

A one page survey had been sent out in July-August asking key stakeholders to prioritise the following factors impacting on economic growth:-

- A) Enterprise culture.
- B) Business Retention and Growth.
- C) Competitive Knowledge based economy.
- D) Articulating a compelling Aylesbury Vale offer.
- E) Enabling infrastructure.
- F) Growing our own workforce.

23 replies had been received and a summary of them was provided to Members. While there had been a small number of replies, there had been general agreement that collaborative and effective partnership working was essential to delivering economic growth. The identified first choice priorities had been B), E) and D). The second choice priorities had been F) and D. At the same time, it had also been commented that all of these priorities were important and it was virtually impossible to differentiate between them.

Member requested further information and were informed as follows:-

- (i) that while the ED team did all they could to put interested people and investors in contact with local people, it was then up to these people to work together to progress issues, something that was often out of the control of the Council.
- (ii) on the current 2015/16 estimated budget for the Council's economic budget activities, including employee costs, special grants information.

Members also commented:-

- (a) that while the strategy identified strands and action areas, more work needed to be done to develop an overarching vision for the Vale and to then articulate this to people, particularly those outside of the Vale.
- (b) that more needed to be done with educational facilities to develop people with the 2 skills for which there were national shortages, IT and engineering.
- (c) that it would be helpful to differentiate within the 47 activity areas in areas such as:-
  - actions that helped maintain existing businesses, helped to grow existing businesses or were linked to inward investment.
  - those that were Aylesbury specific, or that focussed on a market town, or rural areas.

RESOLVED –



- (1) That the Cabinet Member and Officers be requested to consider the feedback from this meeting in finalising the Economic Development Strategy 2015-2018 and the accompanying Economic Development Action Plan.
- (2) That Members with any further comments on the Strategy or Action Plan should provide them directly to the Economic Development team.

#### **4. AYLESBURY VALE BROADBAND**

In April 2015 the Council had approved the establishment of the Aylesbury Vale Broadband Company and agreed for the Council to allocate up to £1.536m of the New Homes Bonus funding for the rollout of broadband in the Vale. This included providing funding of up to £200,000 for a pilot project in the North Marston and Granborough area.

The Committee received a report updating Members on the Aylesbury Vale Broadband project and outline business plan. Mr Andrew Mills, one of the directors of the AV Broadband Company also attended the meeting to provide a verbal update on progress and to answer questions from Members.

The Business Plan was attached as Appendix 1 in the confidential section of the Committee report. Both the Business Plan and some information on the current position of the project contained commercially sensitive information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972. Members referred to this information during their discussions.

Members were informed that information on the project progress that was able to be made publicly available could be accessed at [www.avbroadband.co.uk](http://www.avbroadband.co.uk).

The plans for the next areas for investment from the rest of the AVDC funds will be considered once the North Marston and Granborough network has been implemented and evaluated later in the year. This will be done alongside the potential areas for future investment in relation to the next phase of the Connected Counties project.

Member requested further information and were informed as follows:-

- (i) that the work of the AV Broadband Company and the Connect Counties work would still not provide full high speed broadband coverage across the whole of the District. As such, AVDC had been talking with BT on how matched funding might be used, from within the £1.536m agreed by Council, to reach even more villages across the Vale through the Superfast Extension Programme. The LEP had identified a number of preference areas across the county where there was a high business/home working incidence and this included a number of areas in the Vale. These villages included Ashendon, Aston Abbots, Bishopstone, Calvert Green, Charndon, Drayton Parslow, Hardwick, Great Brickhill, Lillingstone Lovell, Newton Longville, Stewkley, Thornton, and Wingrave and Rowsham. These areas had been identified as areas that had very poor or no broadband coverage, where a high level of demand had been expressed either through the previous Connected Counties scheme or the AVB project.
- (ii) that 48 Parishes had registered an interest in getting superfast broadband in their areas.
- (iii) that all of the homes in the pilot project area would be connected with fibre to the home, that would provide the best long term economic and social benefits. It would also provide quicker upload speeds, something that was particularly important to local businesses.

- (iv) that, unfortunately, due to a number of issues a local cable laying team had had to be replaced with another team.
- (v) on a range of issues associated with the effective day-to-day running of the business, e.g. subscriptions management, staffing for the AVB company, customer support and service, and on how customer accounts would be managed.
- (vi) that AVB had been overwhelmed by the support it had received from community volunteers, which had both assisted in progressing the pilot project and minimising costs.
- (vii) on the work and business experience of Mr Mills.
- (viii) that AVDC had not considered working with other partners to establish the Aylesbury Vale Broadband Company. A tendering process had not been necessary to select Mr Mills as the contracted amount was below the Council's prescribed procurement limits.
- (ix) that the pilot project area had been chosen as Mr Mills had a good knowledge of that area. The list for future projects had been put together with knowledge from known community demand, as well as where it was believed that there would be a good take up of the service.
- (x) that by becoming an NGA, AVB would be able to apply for matched funding for projects.
- (xi) that AVB were confident that there would be a good take up of broadband in the pilot project area.
- (xii) that the Council had taken legal advice to confirm that it was able to establish a limited liability company.
- (xiii) that AVB would be responsible for maintaining the fibre cable.
- (xiv) that AVB had a very good name in the local community and intended to comply with the Open Internet voluntary Code of Practice, and to deal promptly with any customer complaints.
- (xv) that once the broadband service was up and running, it was anticipated the first customers would go live in October 2015, AVB would be happy to report back to the committee with information on income breakdown and costs.

In agreeing that some parts of Appendix 2 needed to be updated, it was –

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the current position on the establishment of the Aylesbury Vale Broadband Company (AVB) and progress made to date in rolling out the programme in the Vale be noted.
- (2) That Members who had any further queries regarding AVB should send them to Officers, with replies then circulated to all Members of the Committee.
- (3) That further reports on AVB be provided to the scrutiny committee, after the first quarter of operations and after six months.

## **5. WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee considered their work programme for the period up until March 2016. It was agreed that agenda items for future meetings would be:-

- (i) 26 October 2015 meeting
  - Aylesbury Vale Estates Business Plan.
  - Draft Economic Development Strategy.
  
- (ii) 7 December 2015 meeting
  - Strategic Engagement with key partners.
  - Investment Opportunities to encourage new businesses.
  - Inward Investment Strategy.
  
- (iii) 20 January 2016 meeting
  - Skills Development and Education.
  - Aylesbury Vale Broadband update.
  
- (iv) 15 March 2016
  - To be confirmed.

RESOLVED –

That the work programme be agreed, as discussed at the meeting.

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## SKILLS AND TRAINING UPDATE

Tracey Aldworth

### 1 Purpose

- 1.1 To provide scrutiny members with an insight into the skills shortages faced by a local employer.
- 1.2 To update members on the progress made by local partners in addressing the issues of skills to ensure we have a work ready workforce which meets employers' skills needs.
- 1.3 To hear from local partners how they are responding to the skills and training needs of our current and future workforce to ensure we have a work-ready workforce to support employment growth in Aylesbury Vale and Bucks.

### 2 Recommendations/for decision

- |   |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>2.1 To further explore with partners what the skills gaps are in Aylesbury Vale and Bucks and how they are hindering the growth of existing businesses located in the Vale as well as hindering investment to the district.</li><li>2.2 To Propose what further support the council and its partners can provide to employers to address current and future skills gaps to ensure a work ready future workforce</li></ol> |
|---|

### 3 Supporting information

- 3.1 Members were given testimonial evidence by a leading major employer in the district of the difficulties experienced in recruitment and skills issues at the Economic Development and Business Development Scrutiny Committee in February 2013. Members were informed that this was a common issue among local businesses and that further support was required by employers to address this. This was then followed by the Economic Development and Business Development Scrutiny Committee in March 2013, where a review was undertaken with regard to the identification of the skills needs of Aylesbury Vale businesses and members were provided with presentations of local training providers to understand what the most significant education and skills training issues were to support future growth.

**(See Annex 1 for the Economy Scrutiny Committee, 4 February 2013 Minutes for referencing the local skills provision and challenges experienced by local employers)**

**(See Annex 2 for the Economy Scrutiny and Business Development Committee, 25 March, 2013 Minutes for review of the training provision and skills support within Aylesbury Vale)**

- 3.2 As a result, our previous chair, Cllr Pearl Lewis wrote to all education and training providers about two projects members were looking to invest in, to address the improvement of links between education, business and training providers and the difficulty of young people accessing information on alternative vocational career paths, as opposed to the traditional route to

University to support skills development within Aylesbury Vale and Bucks. The projects included an advertising/promotional campaign stressing the importance of alternative career paths in Buckinghamshire and an employment conference.

- 3.3 Members were then updated at the Economy and Business Development Scrutiny meeting in September 2014 of the 'Bucks Going for Gold' project which provided a web portal to support young people with accessing information on a broad range of opportunities that were available to them including details on Apprenticeship programmes within a wide spectrum of areas including business admin, electrical and engineering, amongst others.

**(See Annex 3 for the Economy and Business Development Scrutiny, 3 September 2014 Minutes referencing the 'Bucks Going for Gold' project)**

- 3.4 One of the key building blocks of the Economic Development strategy 2011 to 2014 is "the need to ensure that the current and future workforce skills are appropriate for the 21st century global marketplace, as well as offering young people alternative career paths to help retain professionals, graduates, apprentices and qualified technicians in the local economy". This echoes the messages that economic development and other partners are receiving from local businesses in the area. Therefore, education and training partners need to be more responsive to the needs of businesses, with learners selecting training and qualifications that is appropriate to business and employer skills needs.
- 3.5 The UK Commission's Employer Skills Survey report in 2014 reported that too many organisations were experiencing difficulties with recruiting the skilled people they needed and that this posed "serious risks to the health and survival of businesses and to their bottom line performance". The survey revealed a sharp rise in skills shortages which may be holding back the UK's economic recovery. The report indicated that this was not a new phenomenon and that such deficiencies had persisted over time in some sectors and occupations, indicating that there was a need to take decisive action. The report also revealed that as well as a growing shortage of certain skills, there was also evidence of a surplus and mismatch of skills in other areas. The report highlighted the pressures on skills investment and revealed the amount spent on training by employers had fallen by £2.5 billion since 2011 to further exasperate the situation.
- 3.6 The SEMLEP Business Survey 2015 surveyed just under 2000 businesses in the South East Midlands and reported that a third of businesses currently had skills gaps within their existing workforce. The report identified that almost half of the businesses that have had any vacancies in the last 12 months, found some vacancies hard to fill. Job Specific and technical or practical skills remained the two most frequently mentioned skills that have been difficult to obtain when recruiting from outside the organisation. The report revealed that advanced IT skills, sales and marketing skills, technical or practical skills as the main skills lacking within current workforces. From the Aylesbury Vale businesses surveyed, the most difficult skills to obtain included technical or practical skills, sales and marketing skills and advanced IT skills.

- 3.7 South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership (SEMLEP) has recently started to build a network of 'Enterprise Advisers' across the South East Midlands to work directly with the leadership of individual schools and colleges in order to develop effective employer engagement plans. The partnership aims to improve the careers and enterprise activities of schools and colleges, improve employer engagement with schools and colleges and ensure that programme and activities are delivered which provide young people with the best choices. SEMLEP has also launched a new partnership "Inspiring The Future" which aims to provide a free brokerage service to link local businesses to schools and colleges to help create a workforce with the talent and aspirations that meets the needs of its growing economy. As part of SEMLEP's support to skills development, the "SEMLEP Apprenticeship Ambassador's Network" provides not only promotion of Apprenticeships but shares best practice, encourages and mentors businesses that are keen to take on or introduce Apprenticeships to their workforce and is made up of large and small apprenticeship employers across the South East Midlands. SEMLEP's Skills Forum provides an ideal opportunity to link education providers with business to ensure they meet employers' needs.
- 3.8 The Bucks Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership (BTVLEP) Skills and Employability Board was recently set up to support BTVLEP with its skills Strategy. The Bucks Skills Hub is at the centre of the activities for the Bucks Skills & Employability Programme and was recently launched and will provide an online presence to improve engagement between schools, employers and training providers.
- 3.9 The BTVLEP Skills and Employability Programme will provide;
- i. a closer engagement between Schools and employers to work ready employees;
  - ii. information, advice and guidance to young people by showcasing opportunities in Bucks
  - iii. increasing apprenticeship opportunities including higher level apprenticeships
- 3.10 University Campus Aylesbury Vale (UCAV) is a partnership between Aylesbury Vale District Council (AVDC) and Buckinghamshire Education, Skills and Training (BEST). BEST is an educational partnership formed by Aylesbury College and Buckinghamshire New University in order to pool the partners' leadership, industry links and expertise, enabling them to deliver a broad range of educational opportunities to meet the region's education and skills needs, including the delivery of degree level courses and professional development programmes at UCAV. The facility will also include two technology centres and will combine research, innovation and education to support the delivery of technician and higher level workforce skills development within Aylesbury and Bucks.
- 3.11 It is proposed that a local employer will be presenting to provide an overview of the difficulty in recruitment and skills gaps and local partners will present the local support available to address employer skills needs.
1. A local business, tbc
  2. Ian Harper, General Manager University Campus Aylesbury Vale (UCAV) will be providing members of the committee with an overview of the goals

and aspirations of UCAV and inform members how this new facility will support skills growth and development within Aylesbury Vale/Bucks wide.

3. Ruth Farwell, Bucks Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership (BTVLEP) will provide members with an overview of the strategic position of the BTVLEP Skills and Employability Programme.
4. Jackie Campbell, Skills Development Manager, (BTVLEP) will provide members with an overview of the “OppsinBucks” initiative which was recently launched to provide a platform for educators and employers to work together to deliver practical skills and real experience based learning opportunities.

Mena Caldbeck,  
Background Documents

Business Relationship Officer Ext. 5657  
Names of Background documents



## Annex 1

### ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MINUTES

4 February, 2013

#### 5. SKILLS PROVISION

Members received a report that set the scene prior to the meeting of 25 March on the subject of Skills Provision following reports that local businesses were finding it difficult to recruit staff with suitable skills. Some had reported that many applicants lacked even the basic literacy skills.

To determine the exact position it was proposed to conduct a review that encompassed the skills needs of Aylesbury businesses whilst scrutinising the level of education, training and skills that were available through local education facilities and training organisations with the overall aim to understand the biggest barriers to future employment growth.

The format of the meeting was to cover the following issues:-

- Current skills trends and issues as applied to Buckinghamshire economy
- What are biggest barriers to growth of Buckinghamshire employers?
- What are providers/trainers currently doing to address any of the issues and how could we do better?
- What are providers doing to up skill the workforce which will lead to further job creation?
- What are the immediate to medium term opportunities and challenges?
- Where might we work alone or across LEP boundaries with others and why?
- What could be done differently?
- What do we do next and what will be achieved in the short term?

Members considered the above proposals and were supportive with the inclusion of the following:-

- There would need to be a company in attendance that was currently experiencing recruitment problems
- Consideration to be given to expanding the scrutiny to include basic education provision
- The attendance of BCC's Cabinet Member responsible for Education
- Information on the National Apprentice Association should be included
- The meeting must establish the facts, proposals to remedy the situation would follow at the next meeting

RESOLVED –

1. That the report be noted
2. That the comments of Members, as shown above, be considered as part of the scoping requirements for the next meeting.

## Annex 2

### ECONOMY AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MINUTES

25 March, 2013

#### 4. BUSINESS SKILLS AND TRAINING REVIEW.

Following on from the meeting on 4 February 2013, Members received a report that set out the current position on the subject of Skills Provision following reports that local businesses were finding it difficult to recruit staff with suitable skills or training.

To determine the exact position it had been proposed to conduct a review that encompassed the skills needs of Aylesbury Vale businesses whilst scrutinising the level of education, training and skills that were available through local education facilities and training organisations with the overall aim to understand the biggest barriers to future employment growth.

To enable Members to fully appraise the situation the following people attended to give presentations which clarified the present situation within each of their respective organisations:-

Heather Dean – Bucks Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership (BTVLEP)

Jane Mason – Bucks Business First (BBF)

Christopher Edwards – ARLA

Tim Keighley – Aylesbury College

Bev Flanagan – University Technical Centre (UTC)

Ian Harper – Aylesbury Training Group (ATG)

- a) The BTVLEP, working in partnership with BBF, explained that a skills group had been formed to analyse the evidence received from researching 700 employers. Various skills gaps and the need to gather more information had been identified.

Phase 2 of work had been agreed as,

- Consultation with specific employment sectors: learning networks
- 'Skills and Recruitment' portal in development
- Opportunities for local employers to provide work experience
- Improve the supply chain of suitably skilled people for specific sectors
- Opportunities for local employers to work with graduates inside and outside the county

The short term aim was to establish a "1 stop shop" as a single point of contact for employers looking for skills supply.

Long term the aims were to promote Apprenticeships, enhance work experience opportunities and to improve graduate retention in Bucks.

- b) Similarly, BBF had collaborated to research on a skills study. An aging workforce had been identified which made raising the awareness of the work possibilities, via training and apprenticeships, open to young potential

workers, most important. A major consideration would be changing the mind-set of young people to encourage them into engineering related jobs via apprenticeships.

Events aimed at raising work readiness were planned via a “Work Wise Week”, promotion of work experience and establishment of a recruitment and skills portal.

Grants up to £4,000 had also been put in place for employers that recruited an apprentice.

- c) The presentation from ARLA showed the frustration suffered by a major employer in trying to recruit educated people that had been trained to a reasonable standard.

Criticism was placed on the present education system that targeted scholars for university but placed no priority on the education of those that either were not capable of obtaining the requirements of university or wanted to obtain more “hands on” skills to work in engineering or associated trades.

In the short term ARLA required people with key skills in engineering disciplines and dairy competence. Engineers had been impossible to find in the Aylesbury Vale area.

In order that their new venture opened on time, with staff that had the basic skills required for the dairy industry, ARLA had instigated their own operational plan whereby potential workers would be given the required skills to a basic level of competence.

Also, in partnership with Aylesbury College and Aylesbury Training Group, ARLA would be putting in place a series of three month training sessions and had introduced the Eden Engineering Apprenticeship scheme. Eden Engineering is a ground-breaking apprenticeship driven by the whole dairy industry to provide an Advanced Apprenticeship for maintenance technicians and engineers with the aim of producing world class staff for tomorrow’s dairy industry. Bids for funding had been placed with Central Government.

- d) Aylesbury College was the number one provider of apprenticeships in Buckinghamshire in partnership with business to develop skills and to build and grow the workforce. After approaches from Taylor Wimpey and ARLA, partnerships had been formed to put in place specific training schemes that would produce young workers with the dedicated skills required.
- e) UTC was a new venture, built within the grounds of the Aylesbury College that would take students at 14 – 16 years old. Training was technically focused and shaped by employers to meet their specific needs. Specialisation of this nature gave students a very high employability within their technical environment.

Major employers in the construction and ICT industries had approached UTC with their specific needs and training was being tailored to satisfy those shortcomings.

- f) ATG was a 22,000 sq. ft. training facility specialising in Levels 2 – 4, advanced apprenticeships, work experience and young apprenticeships (Diplomas). One of its speciality courses was to train cycle engineers. It considered itself to be an independent employment agency.

Members expressed a general disappointment and concern that there was such a wide disconnect between education and employment and welcomed any initiative that would redress the balance whilst recognising that training

organisations should not shoulder all the blame as funding issues had often dictated which training they were able to offer. However, there were a number of issues concerning which Members expressed a view on or commented generally, including the following:-

- Members expressed an interest in knowing more about what can be done to tackle the 30% of young people that had no interest in participating in any training and what schools could do, at a lower level to encourage participation.
- It had been reported that Buckinghamshire had a record of only retaining one in five of the graduates that passed through the counties universities. Members were interested to know if this had been investigated and if it had what the reasons were.
- Schools that pushed pupils towards university rather than promoting an equal route towards NVQ training were producing a lot students that graduated with a degree in a diverse subject that did little to enhance their work ready skills or attractiveness to potential employers. Members were of the opinion that Bucks County Council Education should be asked to give their opinions/reasons as to why the education system was working in this way.
- Schools and employers should also be encouraged to spread the message to parents that young people can benefit from NVQ/Diploma or apprenticeship training.
- Availability of apprenticeships needed to be made more accessible and better exposure given to encourage young people to take up the training being offered. Although the hourly rate of £2.65 per hour for an apprentice was recognised as a major obstacle to achieving progress.
- Some Members advocated that AVDC should fund a number of apprentice placements and that AVDC should also compel its suppliers to take on apprentices.

RESOLVED –

1. That the disconnect between education and employment be recognised.
2. That Bucks County Council Education be asked to explain the workings of an education system that did not produce young people that had the necessary work readiness skills and had not been encouraged to participate in training by raising awareness of the training on offer to pupils.
3. That the education system better involve parents to further raise awareness.
4. That AVDC continued to work in partnership with organisations that were likeminded to encourage a change in mind-set so that, in the near future, employers were able to take advantage of a ready supply of young, potential engineers that already possessed a basic level of training and were mindful of progression.

## **Annex 3**

### **ECONOMY AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MINUTES**

**3 September, 2014**

#### **6. SKILLS UPDATE**

Members received a report that updated them on the current progress of work being carried out to address the skills issues relating to young people's access to information and opportunity to a wider range of career paths. Members were also asked to note the progress of opportunities for Apprenticeships and Traineeships and to support the project by marketing it through the AVDC media channels and encouraging our partners to do the same.

In 2013, the scrutiny committee had undertaken a review of skills and employment issues. During that review Members raised concerns about the lack of Information and support to young people to be able to make real choices for alternative career paths and asked that more be done to highlight the options.

Similar concerns had been raised across Buckinghamshire in 2013 about the opportunities for young people to get into work, Buckinghamshire County Council had put forward nine recommendations designed to better prepare young people for the world of work. Among these recommendations was suggested the development of a 'ready for work passport', which would be offered to young people in schools and colleges. The report also recommended that school governing bodies appoint a lead member for careers advice and to hold head teachers to account over their statutory duty to provide high quality careers guidance to all pupils. In addition it was considered that schools should develop more partnerships with local businesses and for primary school teachers to raise awareness of employment as part of pupils' preparation for secondary school.

The Committee was informed of a new project named Going for Gold that had been set up, and being led by Buckinghamshire CC which was to be formally launched on 14 September 2014. AVDC was a member of the project group. The project would encourage and support people of all ages to take up apprenticeships and traineeships in a range of different careers.

Members noted that a contribution of £5,000 had been made available from AVDC's Economic Development budget to support and promote this project.

**RESOLVED-**

That the report be noted and the Going for Gold project supported.

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## AYLESBURY TOWN CENTRE IMPROVEMENT PLAN – UPDATE

Teresa Lane

### 1 Purpose

- 1.1 To provide an update on the progress made in implementing the actions in the Aylesbury Town Centre Improvement Plan including major AVDC developments.

### 2 Recommendations

- |     |   |
|-----|---|
| 2.1 | Members note the report and the progress made in implementing the actions which will be detailed in a supporting presentation to the committee. |
|-----|---|

### 3 Supporting information

#### *Developing the Plan*

- 3.1 In 2013, the Economy and Business Development Scrutiny Committee and the Cabinet approved an Improvement Plan for Aylesbury town centre. A summary leaflet of the Plan is attached as Appendix 1. A full version of the Plan can be found at [www.aylesburyvalec.gov.uk/aylesburytowncentreplan](http://www.aylesburyvalec.gov.uk/aylesburytowncentreplan).
- 3.2 To recap, the Improvement Plan was developed by AVDC in liaison with Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC), and Aylesbury Town Council (ATC). A range of private sector stakeholders including Aylesbury Vale Advantage (AVA), Bucks Business First, Grosvenor Estates (then managing agents for Friars Square Shopping Centre) Aylesbury Vale Estates (owners of the Hale Leys Shopping Centre), Aylesbury Old Town Residents, members of the Aylesbury Town Centre Partnership and the general public were also consulted before the Plan was finalised in 2014.

#### *What the Plan covers*

- 3.3 The Plan has four key elements:
- i) The establishment of seven guiding principles designed to enable partners to collectively and carefully manage the future development of the town centre (see pages 11-15 the full Plan).
  - ii) Identifying a Vision and unique selling point for the town centre ie what do we want Aylesbury town to be and be known for, what will be the compelling reason(s) for people to live, work and visit? (Appendix 1 page 4 or page 17 of the full Plan).
  - iii) Defining two strategic aims to determine what action should and needs to be taken. These reflect the guiding principles and the Vision. (Appendix 2, or page 19 of the full Plan).
  - iv) A set of actions for the different areas of the town eg Kingsbury together with a set of actions which support the whole of the town centre eg setting up a joint marketing group to promote the town centre in a consistent and engaging way. (Appendix 2 pages 6 -11 or see the full Plan inserts).
- 3.3 The actions included in the Plan are varied in terms of their importance and scale. A presentation will be given at the meeting summarising the progress

made but overall good progress has been made on a number of the actions. Some still need funding to be sourced before work can begin whilst others, particularly those relating to highway improvements, are dependent on other strategies and policies being developed by partners.

### ***Impact of the Plan***

- 3.4 Although the Plan has no statutory status, since being finalised and published, it has had considerable influence on a range of other strategies, policies, and decisions both within and outside the council. For example, It has been referred to by Development Management when considering town centre planning applications, by Licensing and Economic Development when reviewing policies and formed part of the suite of marketing material to invite developers to bid for the Phase 1 works relating to Waterside North. Externally, letting agents have promoted the Plan to attract new retailers to the town and most recently Savills used the Plan as part of their marketing material for the sale of Friars Square Shopping Centre.

### **Governance arrangements**

- 3.5 The Governance arrangements for the delivery of the Plan have worked well. An officer Steering Group with membership from the three councils meets regularly. Lead Officers for delivery of the actions in the Plan attend the Steering Group as well as chairing their own Sub-Group. The setting up of the Sub-Groups has enabled AVDC to follow through its commitment to involve a many interested parties as possible in the detailed implementation of the actions. Examples will be included in the presentation.

## **4 Major AVDC town centre developments**

- 5.1 Waterside North (predominantly the current Exchange Street car park), and Waterside South (the opposite area where the theatre is located) are two areas featured within the Plan.
- 5.2 The action for Waterside South has focused on the delivery of the University Campus Aylesbury Vale (UCAV) and for Waterside North, the development of a masterplan for land within the ownership of AVDC and BCC who own adjacent land.

### **University Campus Aylesbury Vale**

- 5.3 The campus is a partnership between AVDC and Buckinghamshire Education, Skills and Training (BEST). The cost of the building is being funded by AVDC as part of its on-going investment in the town centre, and the campus will be leased to BEST, an educational partnership formed by Aylesbury College and Buckinghamshire New University.
- 5.4 BEST, which will fund the fit-out of the building and manage its operation, is a separate company operating alongside the two institutions and provides a vehicle to pool the partners' leadership, industry links and expertise, enabling them to deliver a broad range of educational opportunities to meet the region's education and skills needs. Through BEST, Bucks New University and Aylesbury College will provide degree level courses and professional development programmes at the campus.



- 5.5 UCAV will initially include two technology centres combining research, innovation and education:

**The Telehealth and Assistive Technology Centre**

Building on the success of Aylesbury College's Assisted Living Lab, the UCAV centre will provide an innovation hub for existing and new businesses within the Assisted Living Technology sector.

Professional development courses up to Postgraduate level will support the private and public social care sector, alongside the living lab offering technician and higher workforce skills. The centre will also provide opportunities for research into innovative and cutting edge practice.

**The Cyber-Security Technology Centre**

The Cyber-Security Technology Centre will develop and deliver cyber-security and cyber-fraud services with a high level of direct employer engagement where Aylesbury already has major specialist business expertise.

- 5.6 The Campus construction is almost complete and by the time of this committee meeting, the Campus will have been handed over to BEST for final fit-out. The only outstanding work will be the completion of the landscaping scheme as part of the new public space which surrounds the campus and canal basin making a new pedestrian link between Walton Street, Waitrose, Travelodge and the theatre.
- 5.7 The ground floor is identified for use as two restaurants and a café, will not be let by the time the Campus opens. The letting agents are very confident that in longer term restaurant/café operators will move to Waterside South but in the meantime, BEST are considering short term alternative uses including conference centre facilities.

**Waterside North**

- 5.8 In July 2013, public consultation was held on a masterplan for Waterside North and more specifically for phase 1 of the development. Plans will be available at the meeting but in summary, they allowed for:

**BCC land**

- the demolition of one of the former police station buildings
- the demolition of the rear of the old county offices to enable a new temporary surface car park to be built to offset some of the spaces which will be lost as a result of the AVDC development outlined below
- the conversion of the remaining office building for residential, a restaurant and civic use
- a new public square and public space linking the Walton Street with the AVDC development on Exchange Street

## **AVDC land**

- the development of up to five restaurants with a residential scheme above
- the provision of a new public square between the cinema and the new restaurants

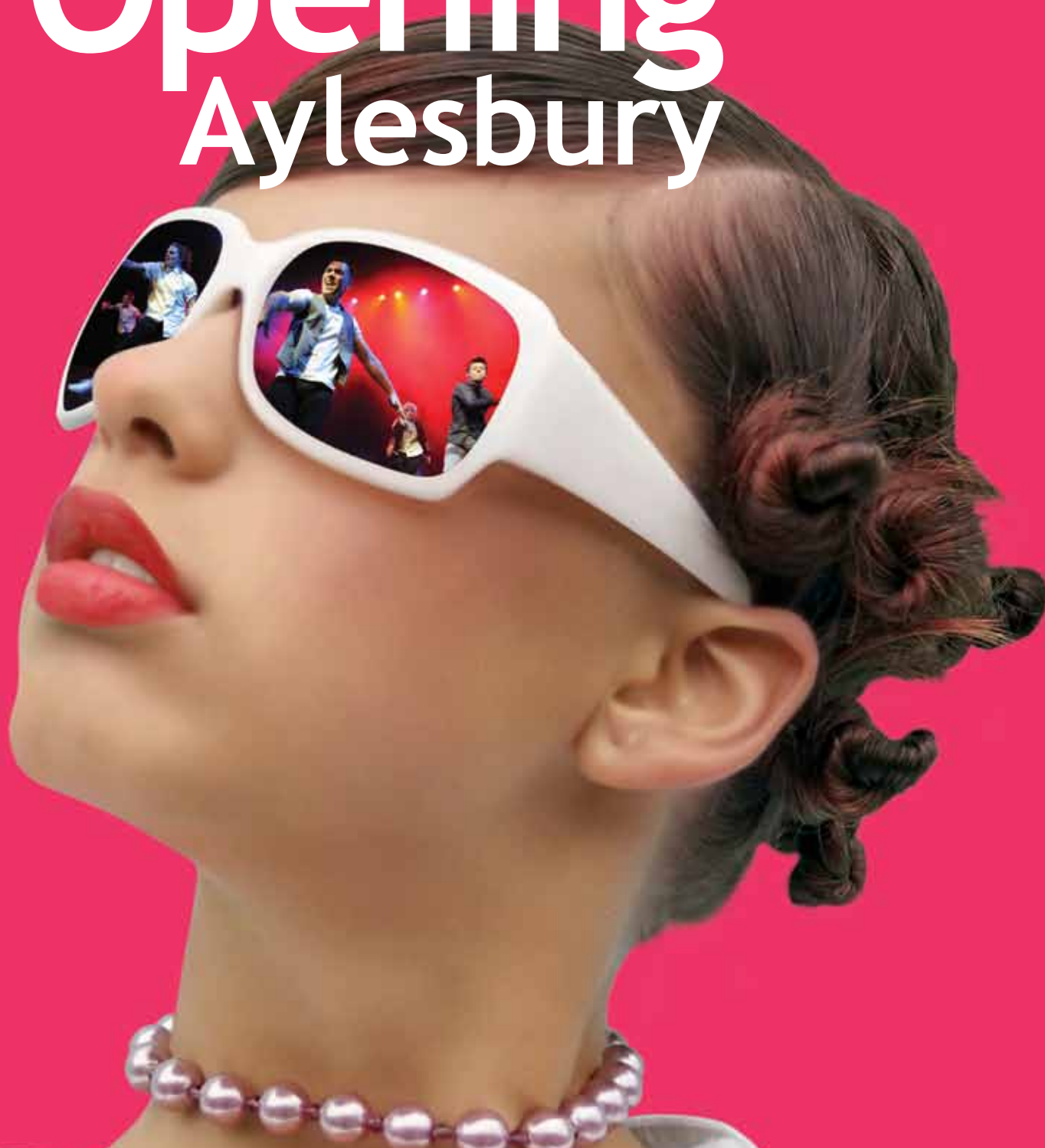
- 5.9 Outline planning permission for phase 1 was granted in 2014. Since then, BCC have completed the demolition of the relevant buildings and the car park construction is advanced and is expected to open in November. Charges will be the same as those charged by AVDC for Exchange Street although the car park will be managed by the same company that manages BCC's on-street parking in the town centre.
- 5.10 AVDC has been following a procurement process to select a development partner for its phase 1 mixed-use scheme. This process is almost complete and a report is to be considered by the November Cabinet and the Finance and Services Scrutiny Committee recommending the appointment of a development partner before consideration by council in December. If council approves the appointment (and the capital expenditure needed to support the development in the first instance), work is expected to start on site in autumn 2016.
- 5.11 In the meantime, work is also beginning on bringing forward phases 2 and possibly 3 of the masterplan. This will involve collaboration of partners and stakeholders in the town centre, including the County Council, the Town Council. Adjoining landowners such as Aylesbury Vale Estates which owns Hale Leys Shopping Centre will also be part of the discussions. The work on the masterplan will require other actions in the Improvement Plan to be progressed. One of the most important of these is the future parking arrangements for the town.

## **6. Resource implications**

- 6.1 All actions in the Improvement Plan have resource implications either of a capacity or financial nature which are identified as the detailed delivery plans are developed for each action. Progressing actions has been dependent on one or both of these factors and sources of possible funding are continuously explored.

Contact Officer	Teresa Lane 01296 585006
Background Documents	A draft improvement plan for Aylesbury town centre – report to Cabinet June 2013 Approved Aylesbury Town Centre Improvement Plan published April 2014

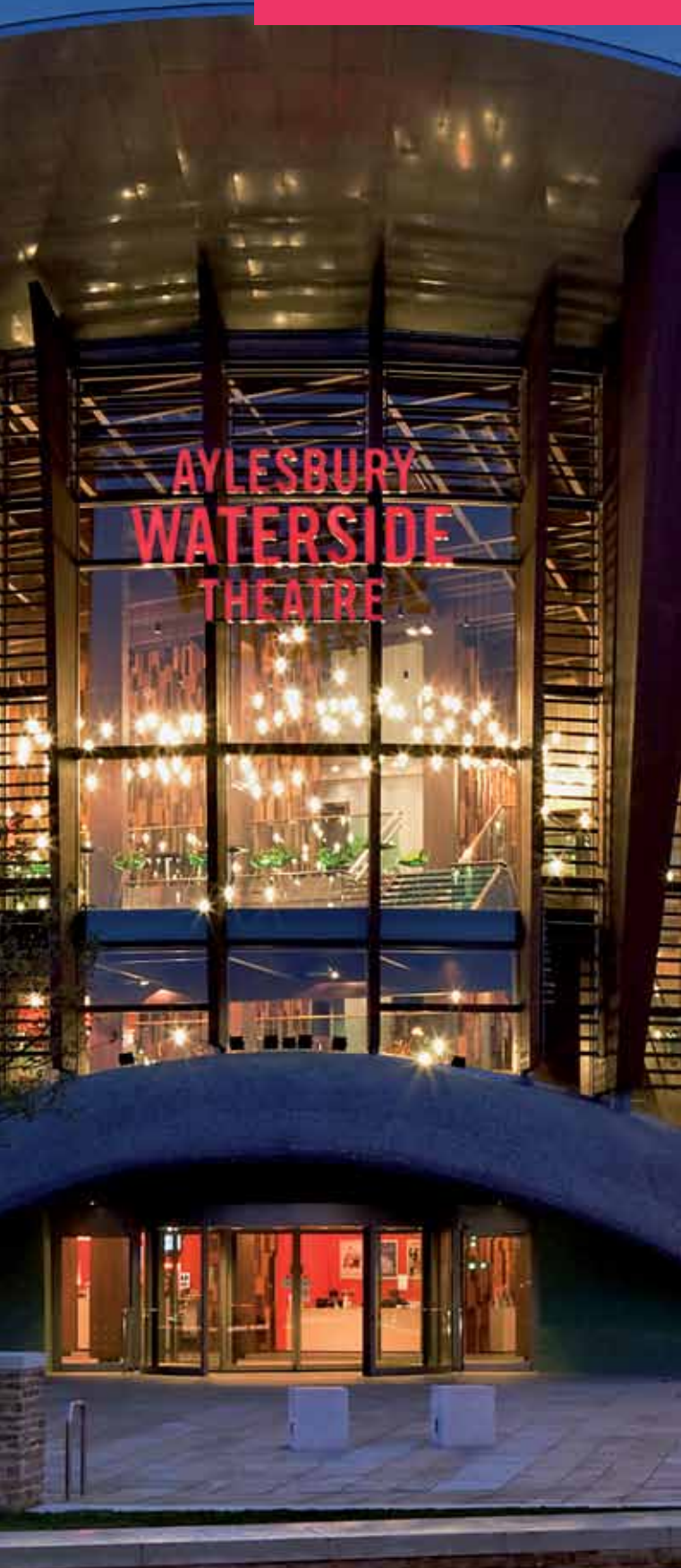
# Eye Opening Aylesbury



## Spotlight on the Town Centre Plan

Page 25

# Aylesbury town centre - the main attraction



We all want our nearest big town to be a really class act - somewhere attractive and easy to get to, with great entertainment, shops, cafés, pubs and restaurants. Somewhere we want to spend time in with family and friends.

It's as true for our county town, Aylesbury, as for anywhere. And we've developed the Aylesbury Town Centre Plan with partners to make sure this is how the town grows and develops in the future.

## What's the point of the Plan?

The Plan brings together a whole host of improvements which will build on the multi-million pound investment already made to transform the town centre. These improvements will help Aylesbury to thrive and prosper, as shopping habits change and people start to use their town centres in a very different way.

We've worked closely with Aylesbury Town Council and Buckinghamshire County Council to develop the Plan. So, whether we're planning for new developments, doing up roads and public areas, or helping landlords fill their empty premises, we can work together to do this in a careful, co-ordinated, way to:

- help preserve the town's history and heritage.
- encourage sustainable, mixed-use development, attracting people of all ages to live, work and spend leisure time in the town centre.
- create beautiful, flexible public spaces, suitable for events and for people to spend time in.
- make the town centre easier to get to and around.



The Plan sets out a focus for our work in the form of a vision for Aylesbury in the future.

This vision will help us rejuvenate the town centre and encourage job growth, while looking after all the things that make it unique - a delicate balancing act when that means different things to different people.

Some of the work will be about continuing and expanding what we're doing already, some will be completely new, while some of it will be fact-finding work to look at all the options. We'll be able to carry out certain projects straightaway, while for some of the more ambitious medium-term and long-term work, we will have to bid for funding.

Over the next few pages, we hope to give you a flavour of the Plan - and explain how it will help Aylesbury grow as an exciting destination of choice - and centre for entertainment and the arts.



The development of this Plan has been led by Aylesbury Vale District Council, working closely with Aylesbury Town Council and Buckinghamshire County Council.

The delivery of the Plan will involve working with a wide range of partners from both the public and private sector.



# Setting the scene - what will Aylesbury be like in the future?

Our Vision for Aylesbury in the future:

## The Vision

Aylesbury will:

...be a high profile, sub-regional centre for entertainment and the arts, which has added a distinctive edge to its market town heritage.

...be a distinctive, 'best in class', modern market town, which is attractive, safe, sustainable and accessible.

...provide a quality, day and evening environment in terms of leisure, retail and food and drink, which attracts and brings together people of all ages and communities from within its enviable catchment.

We want Aylesbury town centre to grow as:

...a centre for entertainment and the arts

- with a great cultural offer, building on existing attractions such as Aylesbury Waterside Theatre, Queen's Park Arts Centre and the Buckinghamshire County Museum and Roald Dahl Children's Gallery.
- known for its street performance, film and art galleries, as well as its high profile events and festivals, such as the Roald Dahl Festival and Aylesbury Music Festival.
- with a vibrant live music scene in the town centre, built on the legacy created by the Friars' era of the 70s and 80s.



## ...a modern market town which is attractive, safe, sustainable and accessible

- with Aylesbury's history and heritage (such as the Old Town, the canal and the King's Head) sitting alongside quality, modern, attractive new developments - which in turn respect and reflect its market town past.
- where historic places such as Market Square are more visible from and reconnected to surrounding areas.
- where streets and public spaces are easy, safe and pleasurable for everyone to use and consideration is given to pedestrians and people with less mobility... with parks and trees lessening the impacts of climate change and improving biodiversity.
- where the Old Town residential area and modern, mixed use development elsewhere in the town centre have helped to attract new residents, including commuters, who can find everything they need in the town, rather than having to go elsewhere for work or leisure.
- with better links both within the town and to the surrounding countryside and where public transport, cycling and walking are more convenient, without compromising the needs of shoppers and visitors for car parking and access.

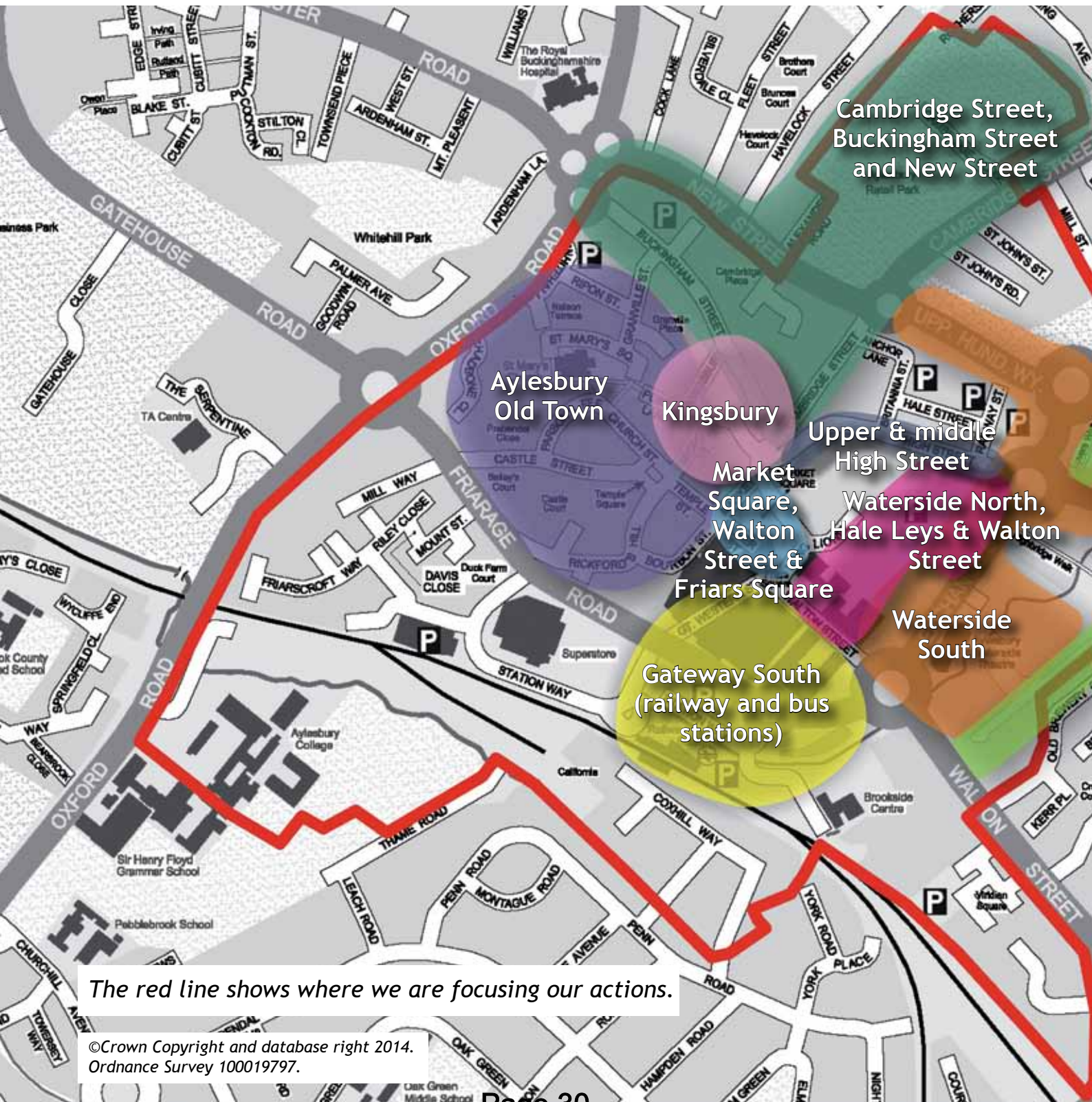
## ...a quality day and evening hub for leisure, shopping, food and drink

- with a better range of leisure, shopping, pubs, eating places, services and jobs, to attract more visitors, residents and workers - and help to retain the Vale's school and college leavers and graduates.

distinctive  
'best in class'  
modern  
attractive safe  
sustainable  
accessible high  
profile  
sub-regional  
centre for  
entertainment  
and the arts  
distinctive edge  
market town  
heritage  
quality day  
and evening  
environment  
leisure retail  
food drink  
attracts people  
of all ages  
destination  
of choice



# How the Plan will help Aylesbury take centre stage



The red line shows where we are focusing our actions.

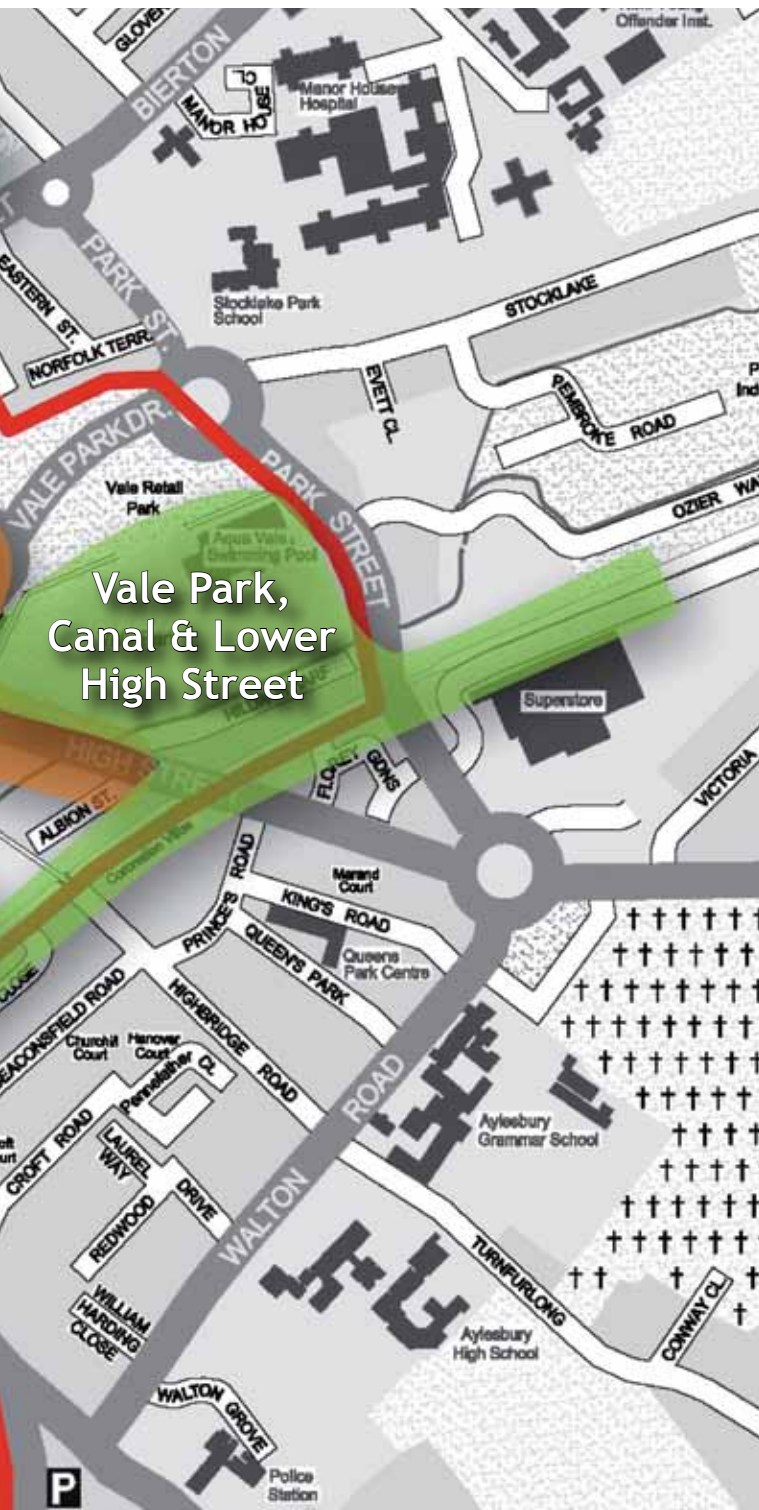
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## Action Plans

The Plan groups Aylesbury town centre into nine neighbouring and interlinking areas, with an action plan of improvements for each, as well as one which applies to the town centre as a whole.

The full Plan, with all of the actions, is available on our website, but the following pages give you a flavour of what we're planning in the future.



## Market Square, Walton Street and Friars Square

We'll work with landlords and businesses to make more of this area as a key shopping, catering and leisure hub.

Work will include:

- looking at how it's used by pedestrians and vehicles, so we can decide how to create better links with the rest of the town and improve the layout, surfaces, street furniture, signage and lighting.
- carrying on with our work to improve the markets and to attract new retail and leisure operators into the area.
- working with landlords to make sure future development in the area happens in a co-ordinated way.
- helping to create better links between Walton Street and other town centre locations, such as the new Waterside North site.
- preventing parking on the square in the evenings and at other inappropriate times.





## Kingsbury

We plan to rejuvenate Kingsbury as a key heritage area and gateway to the Old Town and make it a more appealing place for residents, visitors and businesses.

Work will include:

- setting up a stakeholder group with Kingsbury traders, landlords, residents and other key organisations to come up with an action plan. This will look at what physical improvements are needed, such as lighting, surfaces and seating.
- looking at how we can enhance its sense of heritage and draw visitors from Kingsbury into the Old Town.
- lobbying government for new powers to stop clusters of betting shops from overwhelming town centres.

## Aylesbury Old Town

We want to preserve and enhance this residential area as a key part of the town's history and heritage, in keeping with its conservation area status, and make the most of its cultural and leisure potential.

Work will include:

- promoting the Old Town through better signage from other areas of the town centre to make the most of the visitor potential offered by Buckinghamshire County Museum and St Mary's Church.
- investigating ways to protect buildings from large vehicle damage.





## Gateway South (railway and bus stations)

We want to make this area more welcoming as a key arrival point for visitors and link it more attractively and effectively to other points in the town, including the shopping areas.

Work will include:

- carrying out improvements to the physical environment, including the nearby pond and wooded area near the station car park.
- improving the signage from here to other town centre places.

## Upper and middle High Street

From the top of Market Square to the High Street/Exchange Street roundabout, we want the High Street to be a more attractive shopping environment and more vital part of the shopping route.

Work will include:

- looking at extending the pedestrianisation from upper High Street.
- developing a plan for some physical improvements (such as surfaces, street 'furniture', lighting and signage).
- connecting middle High Street with Waterside North as part of our planning for the new scheme.
- working with the owners of Hampden House to bring the vacant offices back into use and marketing our former offices at 66 High Street to return them to full occupation.



## Cambridge Street, Buckingham Street and New Street

### Cambridge Street

We aim to improve the quality and attractiveness of this street as a shopping area.

Work will include:

- looking at pedestrianisation and other physical improvements.
- working with Sainsbury on the redevelopment of their existing store to ensure it enhances the overall shopping offer and environment.

### Buckingham Street and New Street

Our plan here is to improve the physical environment, reduce the dominance of the car and integrate it more fully into the rest of the town centre and the shopping route.

Work will include:

- developing a vision and masterplan for the area, which will cover pedestrian access and links between the two streets, as well as the potential for green spaces and parking.



## Vale Park and the Grand Union canal

Here, we want to make the most of two of the town centre's key assets and link them better with the rest of the town centre and surrounding countryside.

Work will include:

- improving the environment and access in the park and carrying out a review of the skate park.
- working with the Canal & River Trust to promote the canal facilities to users, visitors and residents.
- working with adjacent landlords to improve canal access and frontages.

## Waterside South

We want to break down the 'concrete barrier' of the inner ring road and make it easier to get from the rest of the town to Aylesbury Waterside Theatre, Aqua Vale, Vale Park and the retail parks.

Work will include:

- carrying out a feasibility study for remodelling Exchange Street, including the underpass to Vale Park.
- working with Aylesbury College and Buckinghamshire New University to deliver a new education centre at the head of the canal basin offering degree-level qualifications, as well as commercial and professional courses. It will include two new restaurants and a café and new public space for everyone to enjoy.

# Waterside North

This area sits across Exchange Street from the theatre, primarily on the site of the current surface car park. Our aim is to develop the site in phases, in order to improve the shopping, catering and housing on offer in the town centre. We also want the development to strengthen links to, and help rejuvenate, neighbouring areas such as Market Square, Walton Street and middle High Street.

Work will include:

- developing a masterplan for the site in collaboration with adjacent landowners and partners, Buckinghamshire County Council. This will take into account which buildings and land should be included, how the buildings will be used in the future, how we can use the development to develop pedestrian links with nearby areas such as the High Street and Hale Leys shopping centre - and enhance their ability to attract new investment.



# Across the town centre as a whole

We and our partners already carry out a significant amount of work which applies across the whole town centre.

This includes planning for new developments, town centre management, leisure development and licensing and organising events. We also market and promote the town centre to attract visitors, investors and businesses.

This work supports the individual action plans and we'll build on it as part of the Aylesbury Town Centre Plan, adding new initiatives such as:

- a review of our current planning policies to ensure they support the delivery of this Plan.
- the development of a Parking Plan and a Transport Plan.
- working with landlords to attract high quality retailers.
- a new programme of sporting, cultural and arts activities and events, including major festivals.
- a review of all town centre taxi rank positions to make sure they reflect new development in the town centre.
- a co-ordinated signage plan and de-cluttering programme.
- a joint partnership group to boost our marketing work to promote the town centre to visitors, businesses and investors.
- a new Culture and Arts Forum to help develop a co-ordinated plan for arts and performance across the town centre.
- working with landlords and tenants to improve their frontages to enhance the general environment and their business prospects.



# And on with the show...

We want to make sure we're *all* proud of Aylesbury as a growing, quality destination and centre for entertainment and the arts. So, the Plan reflects the views of local people and organisations and will continue to do so as we go forward.

And remember this is just a flavour of the exciting work we're planning for the town centre. So, if you want the bigger picture, please take a look at the full Plan on our website at [www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/aylesburytowncentreplan](http://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/aylesburytowncentreplan)

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**ECONOMY AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2015/16**

**26 OCTOBER 2015**

Item	Contact Officer	2015										2016		
		A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	
Skills and Training Update	Mena Caldbeck							X						
Aylesbury Town Centre Update	Teresa Lane							X						

**7 DECEMBER 2015**

Item	Contact Officer	2015										2016		
		A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	
Budget	Andrew Small										X			
Aylesbury Vale Estates Business Plan	Teresa Lane										X			

30 JANUARY 2015

Item	Contact Officer	2015										2016		
		A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	

15 MARCH 2015

Item	Contact Officer	2015										2016		
		A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	
Inward Investment Strategy	Mal Hussain												X	
Draft Economic Development Strategy	Mal Hussain												X	