

**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**

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| 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. |
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**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.

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Background Documents

A draft improvement plan for Aylesbury town centre –  
report to Cabinet June 2013  
Approved Aylesbury Town Centre Improvement Plan  
published April 2014