



Report to Council

Date: 15th July 2020

Reference number:

Title: Aylesbury Garden Town Vision and Masterplan

Relevant councillor(s): Bill Chapple and Steve Bowles

Author and/or contact officer: Lisa Michelson/Stephen Hill

Ward(s) affected: Aylesbury wards

Recommendations:

Recommendation 1:

To approve the Masterplan and 2050 Vision for Aylesbury Garden Town.

Reason for decision: The Aylesbury Garden Town Masterplan has been the subject of extensive public engagement and provides the basis of a comprehensive delivery strategy to transform Aylesbury into a Garden Town over the coming decades, achieving the 2050 Vision.

Content of Report

1.1 Work has been ongoing over the last 18 months to produce an AGT Masterplan and associated high level Vision. To move forward on the future delivery programme the Council needs to sign off and approve the Masterplan and Vision. The Vision sets out the high level aspirations and principles for what Aylesbury should look like as a Garden Town by 2050. The Vision identifies 8 key principles which build on Aylesbury's heritage, strengths and opportunities as a Garden Town to tackle the Town's challenges head on and for the benefit of all. This series of interrelated principles underpin proposals and initiatives within the Masterplan. The Masterplan sets out in detail how the AGT Vision will be delivered through a comprehensive and co-ordinated town-wide plan. Together, they provide the framework from which the programme will be derived.

- 1.2 The Vision and Masterplan have been the subject of extensive engagement with key stakeholders throughout its 18 months development. The public consultation on the Draft Masterplan took place over 6 weeks from the 6th January until 14th February 2020 and received largely positive feedback. In response to the main issues raised, a series of key changes and actions have been made to move the Draft AGT Masterplan to a final version (available here: <https://www.aylesburygardentown.co.uk/masterplan>) A Statement of Community Involvement has been produced and is available alongside the Masterplan, this sets out a summary of the key issues raised and amendments are set out on pages 20-22 of this document. Specifically, appropriate images have been sourced and amended within the Vision (Appendix 1) and final Masterplan, to convey aspirational and inspirational examples of high quality, sustainable development. An Executive Summary of the Masterplan has been produced and is provided at Appendix 2. The Executive Summary contains a more succinct and digestible programme of key actions and projects, which will be updated on a regular basis to ensure continued relevance in years to come. At the meeting on 15th June 2020 Cabinet requested one final amended to the Executive Summary to read “Aylesbury will be a prime location for investment and job creation in Buckinghamshire” rather than “the location”.
- 1.3 It is recommended that the Vision, Masterplan and accompanying Executive Summary and Statement of Community Involvement are now approved by the Council. It should be noted that these documents have been recommended by Cabinet for approval, and the requested amended to the Executive Summary has been undertaken. Approval by the Council will provide the documents with status and weight needed to ensure the Vision and Masterplan objectives can be realised to make Aylesbury a truly transformational Garden Town.
- 1.4 Following approval, emphasis will then turn towards delivering the proposals of the Masterplan. The current crisis has increased our awareness of the importance of access to green spaces and nature, high quality living environments, and walking and cycling for our health and wellbeing. It has also heightened our sense of community through collective action to support the vulnerable and the need to ensure Aylesbury town centre recovers from the Covid 19 induced recession, to become a central focus for community, cultural and social activities . The delivery of projects identified in the masterplan will help Aylesbury’s communities to recover from and build on the positives that have emerged from this unprecedented challenge. Action to invest in the town centre as a priority and delivery of the Gardenway proposals will help to achieve this, alongside creation of new accessible walking and cycling routes. Creation of high quality new neighbourhoods with local community hubs will also support Aylesbury’s recovery and its future resilience.

- 1.5 Feedback during the consultation emphasised the importance of the town centre in supporting the local economy and providing a focus for community activities. Addressing the challenges facing the town centre will be even more pertinent as Aylesbury looks to recover from the Covid-19 crisis, and therefore the production of a Town Centre Action Plan will be prioritised and can be used as a major opportunity to create a positive response to the recovery of the town.
- 1.6 Over April, the AGT Project Team undertook an impact assessment of the current crisis on the AGT programme for 2020/21. Given the largely long term and regenerative impacts of the programme, the projects identified represent a major opportunity to enhance the environment, economy and social role of Aylesbury over the coming years and decades. This will be particularly important as Aylesbury looks to recover from the imminent recessionary effects of Covid 19. It is, therefore, considered that the key priorities and projects as defined in the Masterplan should still be pursued and, accordingly, that it is important to also progress the refinements to and evolution of the governance and delivery arrangements for the project in order to best support and enable this.
- 1.7 At its meeting on 15th June 2020 Cabinet approved a recommendation that the existing AGT Board was amended and extended slightly. The Board membership has evolved to be in line with Buckinghamshire Council, and the key role going forward in providing strategic oversight. This will provide for a greater focus on Programme delivery, with increased community involvement, to reflect the important role of Town and Parish Councils in delivering services and the establishment of the Community Boards. The key purposes, core functions, and proposed membership of the Strategic Oversight Board have been incorporated into the draft Terms of Reference, which were appended to the June Cabinet report.
- 1.8 As the AGT programme is transitioning into more of a delivery focus (based on implementing the proposals contained within the masterplan), it is was also appropriate to consider a revised and refocussed programme delivery structure, to sit alongside the evolution to a Strategic Oversight Board. Consequently, Cabinet approved that the Programme Delivery Team (PDT) was refined to ensure a clearer decision making and co-ordination process.
- 1.9 Whilst the Board has oversight and will direct the delivery of the AGT Programme, it has no statutory decision making powers. Formal decision making (for example on planning applications; statutory plan making; funding allocations) will continue to take place through the existing decision making routes and structures of the organisations represented on the Board, but with the added benefit of clear reporting and recommendations (when relevant) from the Board.

Other options considered

2.8 The Masterplan and 2050 Vision have been subject to extensive consultation and engagement.

Legal and financial implications

None identified.

Corporate implications

The AGT Programme promotes sustainable development for Aylesbury and proposes climate change mitigation measures and responses up to 2050.

Consultation and communication

The results of the AGT Masterplan consultation process have also been taken into account as well as the impacts of the current Covid 19 crisis.

Next steps and review

The approved Masterplan will provide the basis for the programme of projects for the new AGT Strategic Oversight Board.

Background papers

None.

Appendices: Appendix 1 2050 Vision, Appendix 2: AGT Masterplan and Vision Executive Summary.

Your questions and views (for key decisions)

None relevant

