

Report to: **JOINT MEETING OF OVERVIEW/EXECUTIVE CABINET**

Date: 9 February 2022

Executive Member: Councillor Oliver Ryan – Executive Member (Finance and Economic Growth)

Reporting Officer: Ian Saxon, Director of Place
Gregg Stott, Assistant Director of Investment, Development and Housing, Place

Subject: **ST PETERSFIELD PHASE 1 - MASTERPLAN**

Report Summary: The report outlines the proposals included in the emerging masterplan prepared as part of the Phase 1 work in the St Petersfield area. Specifics of the masterplan includes proposals for a mixed use development across nine development plots comprising high quality, sustainable and healthy office buildings, new residential development, a hotel, food and drink establishment and public realm improving connectivity across the area and with the core of Ashton Town Centre. Details on the next steps to be taken including the preparation of a partnership strategy that will identify a preferred procurement route.

Recommendations: That Executive Cabinet be recommended to:

- (i) Approve the masterplan for adoption, which will guide development in St Petersfield and act as a material consideration when consulting on planning applications in the area and ensure that proposals for development in the area will comply with the principles, parameters and vision for St Petersfield.
- (ii) Note the next steps in relation to preparing a delivery/partnership strategy that will identify a preferred option for the procurement of a development partner(s) to start to develop the sites.
- (iii) Enable the Director of Place to manage the programme of works associated with the delivery strategy to be prepared for the St Petersfield area, in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance and Economic Growth, which will be subject to the usual governance and transparency requirements;
- (iv) Further updates will be provided to Executive Cabinet on completion of the delivery/partnership strategy included in the Phase Two commission underway.

Corporate Plan: Key aims of Corporate Plan are to provide opportunities for people to fulfil their potential through work, skills and enterprise and to ensure modern infrastructure and a sustainable environment that works for all generations and future generations. The proposals outlined in this Report supports these aims in the areas of job creation and environmental sustainability.

This proposal supports the policy aims of the Council’s Inclusive Growth Strategy 2021- 2026 as a Key Employment Site, the Council’s growth priorities agreed at Council February 2020 and the

emerging Places for Everyone at the Greater Manchester level.

Policy Implications:

The proposed interventions will support the policy aims of the Council's Inclusive Growth Strategy 2021, Tameside Climate Change & Environment Strategy, the Council's growth priorities agreed at Council February 2020 and the draft Greater Manchester Places for Everyone joint development strategy.

**Financial Implications:
(Authorised by the statutory
Section 151 Officer & Chief
Finance Officer)**

The report provides an update on the emerging masterplan relating to Phase 1 of the St Petersfield area of Ashton.

The value of the additional Council Tax and Business Rates revenue funding that the Council will realise via the proposed increased residential and commercial units in the locality will be subject to further due diligence. This be ascertained once the related development plan has been confirmed and necessary planning approval(s) have been granted.

Members should note that the procurement of the delivery partner(s) for the confirmed development plan will be subject to a separate report in accordance with the delivery / partnership strategy.

**Legal Implications:
(Authorised by the Borough
Solicitor)**

Our towns and cities: the future - Delivering an Urban Renaissance, DETR, 2000 states that "*Master plans are about setting out a vision for an area undergoing change and a strategy for implementing that vision. They are about taking the initiative in terms of design, layout, houses, jobs and services. Critically, they must show local people what an area might look like in the future.*" The master plan should determine the key principles of future development of St Petersfield by defining issues including

- Distribution and interrelationship of activities/uses.
- Relationship between spaces and buildings (existing and new).
- Degree of 'permeability' – visual and physical.
- Best location of different type of uses.
- Movement networks within and out with the site.
- Provision of infrastructure.

The development of this master plan like any other needs to be undertaken as a collaborative process between the Council and all relevant stakeholder. As such Members need to be content that a sufficiently robust process of consultation and engagement has been undertaken in producing this master plan. This engagement is critical as the master plan will form part of the council's planning process and all applications, unless material considerations indicate otherwise will be determined in accordance with it. This report is not seeking any resolutions in relation to the procurement of development partners which will be subject to a separate report in due course.

Risk Management:

Risks associated with the proposal are set out at Section 6

Background Information:

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting Greg Stott, Assistant Director of Investment, Development and Housing, Place
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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to outline the proposals and details included in the emerging masterplan for St Petersfield that has been prepared using Evergreen Funding. A team of consultants led by LDA Design including CBRE, TODD Architects, Curtins and Partisan have prepared a masterplan and development prospectus supported by consultation work with major stakeholders, businesses, local residents and local ward members.
- 1.2 The report also provides details as to the next steps which will involve the preparation of a Deliver/Partnership Strategy along with

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The successful redevelopment of Ashton Old Baths (AOB) as a Digital Incubator Centre, with its 700 square metres of office space being fully let within a couple of months after its opening. Since then, it has maintained 90%+ occupancy levels until early 2020. This has breathed new life into the area as a potential focus for inward investment in the borough by the rapidly growing digital and creative sector. Realising an average inclusive rent value of £33 per square foot, AOB has shown that there is an appetite for the right space outside of Manchester City Centre, with the development plots on St. Petersfield offering an opportunity for the borough to attract businesses.
- 2.2 As set out in the Tameside Inclusive Growth Strategy (2021), St Petersfield provides a clear opportunity for Tameside to create a modern, tailored development that can provide a hub for the growth of the digital, creative and tech sector in the borough. The installation of a Dark Fibre network into the area, and the completion of a data centre in Ashton Old Baths, ensures digital connectivity to match that available in Media City. As part of the Eastern Growth Cluster, and coupled with its location on the edge of Ashton Town Centre, with transport links to Manchester and Leeds digital hubs, this strategic connectivity means the area can help Tameside take advantage of the growth of an industry that GM is already at the forefront of.
- 2.3 Whilst there has been an impact on demand for office space and increase in remote working during the COVID-19 pandemic, recent market review studies undertaken as part of the St Petersfield masterplan work, have identified a continued demand for offices and meeting space, as part of well-designed, flexible development with high levels of physical and digital connectivity.
- 2.4 The vision for St. Petersfield has been subject to a number of iterations since development of the area stalled with the financial crash of 2008. These previous iterations have been used to inform the most recent masterplan work taking into account the changing economic, social and environmental climate.
- 2.5 Following approval at Executive Cabinet on 28 April 2021, a multi-disciplinary consultant team were appointed to prepare the masterplan and a market appraisal in order to determine the demand for certain types of uses in the area. A development prospectus (Appendix 2) has also been prepared for St Petersfield which will be used as a promotional document and to generate market interest.
- 2.6 As an aside, but with significance to the future of St Petersfield, there are a number of legacy issues relating to St Petersfield. A report was approved by Executive Cabinet in September 2021 which provides an update on these issues as well as assurances that the Council are putting in place measures to resolve them.

3. CONSULTATION

- 3.1 At the start of the commission, the consultant team were asked to prepare a consultation/engagement strategy in order to identify who would be consulted, when and how. The consultant team spoke to a number of Council officers (highways, planning, estates, open space, digital), Tameside College, key stakeholders and land owners, local ward members, residential representatives and businesses.
- 3.2 All of the above key consultee groups were invited to an initial walk around of the site 1 July 2022. This provided an opportunity to discuss the thoughts, opinions and ideas that consultees had for the area and that would feed into the evidence base gathering exercise that would inform the initial draft proposals of the masterplan. The same consultees were invited to a follow up walk around of St Petersfield and meeting at Ashton Old Baths on 22 October 2021. The emerging draft proposals of the masterplan were shared at this meeting and received very positive feedback from those who attended. Comments at this event were fed into the final stages of the masterplan.

4. MASTERPLAN PROPOSALS

- 4.1 The St Petersfield masterplan comprises a vision for the area which would appeal to the city region's fast growing Digital, Creative and Tech Sector, utilising the boroughs newly installed dark fibre network. A total of nine development plots have been identified and the proposals for each development plot are connected by the improvements to the public realm and highways.
- 4.2 An extensive market appraisal, led by CBRE, has identified a need for a choice of high quality, healthy workspaces which offer a variety of floorplates, working environments and amenity space.
- 4.3 Along with the key challenges and opportunities and setting the context for the regeneration of the area, the masterplan includes a number of appraisals including green infrastructure, drainage & utilities, cycle and walking connectivity, vehicular movement, clear defined objectives, a land and public realm framework, and design principles. These elements combine to establish a robust masterplan that will enable future planning applications to be assessed against and will ensure that any proposals for development in the area comply with the principles, parameters and vision of the masterplan in delivering an exemplar scheme for St Petersfield.
- 4.4 A branding strategy prepared alongside the masterplan proposals establishes a place identity that people of Ashton will recognise and related to. 'Weaving Ashton's rich history with new patterns of working' ensures that developers are aware from the beginning, the type of development St Petersfield will be which is an exemplar scheme that has sustainability, health & well-being and a new 'hybrid worker' at the core of the proposals. The development prospectus presents the opportunity of St Petersfield and the potential to be part of something special; a unique offer to attract developer interest to this area of Greater Manchester.
- 4.5 The nine development plots include proposals for approximately 61 new homes, 18,000 sqm commercial/office floorspace, 4,500sqm hotel space, and ancillary food and beverage establishments. Along with an improved public realm, this quantum of delivery have the potential to create 1,900 new jobs £1.75m business rates income and c£100m GVA for the borough.
- 4.6 RIBA Stage Two designs carried out on Plots 6 and 9, detail the type of office development that could be accommodated in the area. The designs ensure that sustainability is embedded in the process of development from the start and will use modern construction methods and innovative design to deliver a low/zero carbon development across the St Petersfield area.

Proposals for new developments in the area will need to comply with the priorities set out in the Tameside Council Climate Change and Environment Strategy.

- 4.7 By building on the success of Ashton Old Baths and by ensuring that development is sensitive to the Conservation Area it sits in, a new future for St Petersfield will provide a place for businesses to collaborate and grow, for people to live in a high quality home, to visit and spend time at their leisure in a much improved public realm that better connects St Petersfield to the core of Ashton.

5. NEXT STEPS

- 5.1 The Council is looking to engage and partner with the private sector to deliver on the huge opportunity that St Petersfield presents. This masterplan and prospectus sets out the scale of the opportunity and the strength of vision the Council has for the area.
- 5.2 A delivery/partnership strategy has been instructed and will identify a preferred procurement route for the delivery of the site. A further report to seek approval on the preferred procurement route will be prepared for Executive Cabinet in the Spring 2022.
- 5.3 The Council is looking for a partner who has a shared ambition and commitment to deliver the vision for St Petersfield through a long-term working arrangement. The Council is now looking to enter into dialogue with investors and development partners to inform the developing masterplan and unlock early phase development opportunities on the site.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 The main risks associated with the delivery of the St Petersfield masterplan recommendations have been identified in the table below.

Risk Area	Detail	RAG Rating	Mitigation	RAG Rating
Procurement	Lack of interest in the market to demonstrate deliverability of the scheme in the masterplan.	Yellow	Early market appraisal work has been undertaken by CBRE which has demonstrated sufficient interest from the property market to deliver development in the St Petersfield area.	Green
Procurement	Lack of willingness or interest from potential development partners for the Council.	Yellow	The Council has been approached by a number of developers expressing an interest in developing the site and partnering with the Council on its delivery. The next stage of work recently commissioned will firm up delivery proposals and identify a preferred procurement route.	Green
Financial	Insufficient budget to contribute to delivering the scheme.	Red	The Council will ensure that the preferred procurement route will demonstrate best value for money and ensure that a partner(s) is able to provide the financial investment required to deliver the scheme either as a single opportunity or through a phased approach that may include multiple partners.	Yellow
Financial	If plots are not delivered, the	Red	This delivery strategy will ensure that the sites are brought to market in a timely	Yellow

	Council will be liable for the service charge payments on the void spaces in the area. This liability is identified in the report to Exec Cabinet on 29 September 2021, 'St. Petersfield Legacy and futures work.		manner. Evidence from early market appraisals suggests there is developer interest for St Petersfield.	
Programme	Lack of resource capacity to undertake workstreams in line with expectations.		Internal resource has been identified to meet expectations of the programme.	

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 As set out at the front of the report.