

Report to:	EXECUTIVE CABINET
Date:	23 March 2022
Executive Member:	Councillor Oliver Ryan – Executive Member (Finance and Economic Growth)
Reporting Officer:	Ian Saxon – Director of Place Gregg Stott – Assistant Director Investment, Development & Housing
Subject:	TAMESIDE TOWN CENTRES FRAMEWORK – CONSULTATION DRAFT
Report Summary:	This report sets out the proposed Tameside Town Centres Framework and seeks approval for public consultation to inform preparation of a final draft for adoption by the Council.
Recommendations:	That Executive Cabinet be recommended to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Note the work undertaken to date in respect of the Tameside Town Centres Framework; (ii) Give approval for public consultation on the proposed Tameside Town Centres Framework and notes that a further report will be brought back to the Executive setting out the results of the consultation and a final draft of the Framework.
Corporate Plan:	Key aims of the 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 proposed Tameside Town Centres Framework will support these aims in the areas of job creation, modern infrastructure and a sustainable environment.
Policy Implications:	The Tameside Town Centres Framework will support the policy aims of the Council’s Inclusive Growth Strategy (2021), the Council’s growth priorities agreed at Council February 2020 and the emerging draft Greater Manchester Places for Everyone joint development strategy.
Financial Implications: (Authorised by the statutory Section 151 Officer & Chief Finance Officer)	<p>The report sets out details of the proposed Tameside Town Centres Framework together with a related public consultation. The Framework will be used to guide future strategic work, masterplans and regeneration activity within Tameside’s individual town centres to minimise the risk of a fragmented approach. The Framework will also support the delivery of the Tameside Inclusive Growth Strategy.</p> <p>The financial implications that arise from the implementation of the Framework will be subject to appropriate and robust due diligence. This will include an assessment of the related affordability of the options and proposals that will be subject to Member approval.</p> <p>It is noted that the outcome of the consultation and a final draft of the Framework will be reported to the Executive Cabinet at a later date where the financial implications will be evaluated as</p>

appropriate.

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

As set out in the main body of the report town centres both regionally and nationally are facing a number of challenges. The proposed Town Centre Framework should serve as a helpful tool, sitting alongside other policies to help to navigate these challenges.

The aim of consultation is to facilitate public engagement and feedback. As such 12 weeks is usually considered the best timescale for a consultation process to be open for comment. Particular care will have to be taken in ensuring that there is meaningful engagement post Covid where not everyone has felt able to return to normal.

At this stage the framework is draft only as it is subject to the consultation. It is critical that it is considered as a 'working document' at this time as careful consideration of the feedback from the consultation by the decision makers will be required before a Framework is adopted.

Risk Management:

Risks associated with the project are set out at section 4.

Background Information:

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting Mike Reed, Head of Major Programmes



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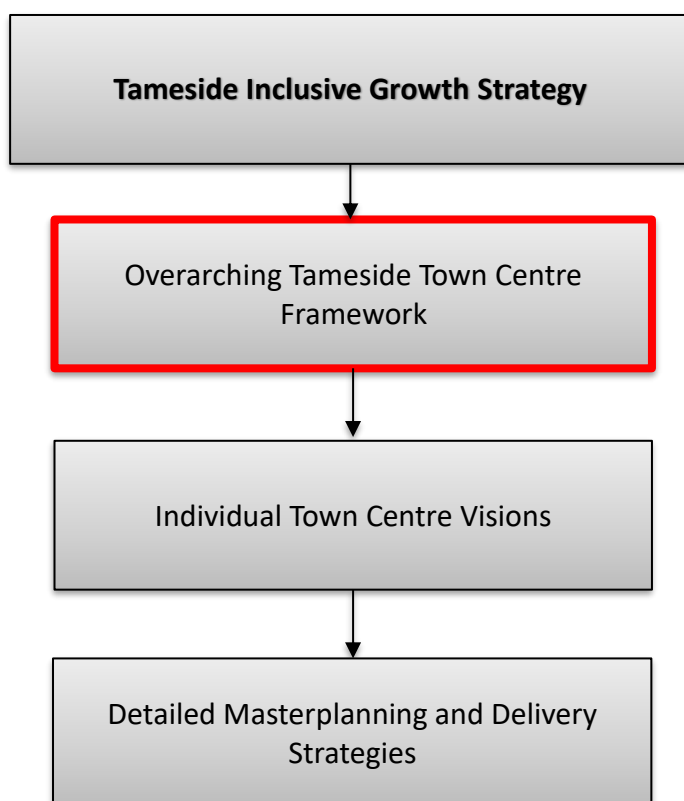
1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Tameside Council recognises that its main town centres, Ashton-Under-Lyne, Denton, Droylsden, Hyde, Mossley, and Stalybridge are crucial components to the economic, environmental and social wellbeing of the borough. Each town centre provides a unique but complementary offer, where Tameside's residents and visitors should be able to easily access a range of facilities and services; and locations where businesses can grow and reach their full potential.
- 1.2 Nationally town centres are facing a number of significant challenges and it will be necessary for our town centres to evolve and adapt as places where people want to live, work, shop and spend quality time. The structural change and pressures facing town centres has only been exacerbated by the significant impact of the COVID-19 pandemic with rising retail vacancies, declining footfall, and increased shopping online. There is a significant opportunity for Tameside's town centres to rebuild and reinvent themselves as the heart of their communities, with a diversification of offer and increase of other uses, including residential.
- 1.3 Whilst a number of the town centres have undergone, or are undergoing, improvement works to make them more vibrant places for people to enjoy shopping, working, visiting and living, there has not previously been an overarching Strategic Framework to set this work in context.

2. TAMESIDE TOWN CENTRES FRAMEWORK

- 2.1 It is proposed that a Tameside Town Centres Framework be produced to cover each town centre within the borough and to act as a strategic 'umbrella' to coordinate future development and regeneration activity. The Framework is intended to complement Tameside's Corporate Plan and support delivery of the Tameside Inclusive Growth Strategy (2021). It will also align with existing and future studies and strategies for the town centres.
- 2.2 A draft Tameside Town Centres Framework (**Appendix A**) has been prepared for consultation prior to a final draft being brought back to Executive Cabinet for adoption. The Framework will help to provide the direction of travel to create more prosperous and investable locations which meet local needs and ensure that each town centre has the right offer of retail, food and drink, leisure, commercial, community and residential uses, as well as supporting infrastructure required. It will be important that the activity within each centre is tailored to meet local need and harness individual strengths and distinctiveness to help set them apart from their competitors.
- 2.3 The ambition is to create improved town centre environments where businesses feel that they can start up, grow or invest. Moreover, they should also be places where residents can access the facilities and services they need, and provide a strong sense of place which the community are proud of and engage with.
- 2.4 The Framework is intended to provide the context for the development of strategies for each of the individual town centres and start to realise the opportunities that exist in the Town Centres across the borough over the next 15 years, support formal planning guidance and provide a strategic co-ordinated approach to future development and activity.
- 2.5 Figure 1 below sets out the role of the Tameside Town Centre Framework in relation to the Tameside Inclusive Growth Strategy and individual town centre plans.

Figure 1: Strategic Hierarchy



3. PROPOSED STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

3.1 The Framework identifies a number of priority themes for improvement within the town centres. These are summarised below:

- **Place:** to ensure a holistic approach to place making and build resilient and flexible town centres that are sustainable and contribute to the health and well-being of those that access them. They will be responsive to change, attractive to the local population they serve and welcoming to those from further afield. Uniqueness and distinctiveness will be encouraged to ensure our centres build in what makes them great places. Local communities will be at the heart of place shaping and decision making.
- **Heritage and Culture:** As our town centres evolve and change to meet the needs of current and future communities, our aim is to protect and promote the heritage value that contribute to local distinctiveness. Tameside has many buildings and structures of architectural and cultural importance that offer value and attract both visitors and investment. Tameside has a rich cultural and ethnic mix which will be celebrated so that the town centres meet the needs of people from all backgrounds.
- **Environment and Health Places:** New development should embrace the principles of sustainability and opportunities for low-carbon development. Tameside's ambition is to have some of the healthiest and greenest town centres in Greater Manchester that recognise the value of nature, greenery and accessible spaces for people. Our town centres will ensure that all of these play an important role in place making which will benefit the health and well-being of local populations by providing green spaces in town centres that are well connected to where they live.
- **Transport, Accessibility and Movement:** Tameside's town centres will be highly accessible by sustainable modes of transport. They will attract people on foot and by bicycle and ensure that when people access the centres, they are able to move about freely in a safe manner. Our town centres will be highly accessible by motor vehicles

and sufficient parking provision will be incorporated in proposals along with EV charging points will ensure Tameside's electric motor drivers have somewhere to charge their vehicles.

- **Retail and Leisure:** The structural change and pressures facing retailers within Tameside's town centres has only been exacerbated by the significant impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a consequence, retail vacancies have increased, footfall has reduced and more people are shopping online. As demand for traditional retail within town centres has reduced, there are opportunities for more specialist and independent retailers offering something different. A strong leisure offer can also help make a town distinctive and contribute greatly to its success through a strong food and drink offer and other attractors.
- **Markets:** Markets can be a positive asset to town centres both attracting visitors, increasing spend and encouraging entrepreneurship. A combination of both permanent and temporary markets across Tameside play an important role in town centre distinctiveness and provision of a diverse and vibrant offer.
- **Commercial:** Increasing the levels of employment in town centres can bring great benefits to local communities as well as supporting the retail and leisure offer by increasing the potential customer base. There are a number of opportunities to attract businesses, through development of Council land and buildings and working in partnership with landlords, which will have a positive impact on the town centres.
- **Housing:** Residential provision in the town centres is vital to the local economy, increasing the vitality of the town centres and the customer base of retailers, leisure operators etc. Increasing numbers of people who are active outside of traditional shopping hours also contributes to increased feelings of safety. New residential neighbourhoods will be created in and around our town centres including affordable homes, thoughtfully designed to be safe, welcoming and encourage local living.
- **Employment and Skills:** Our ambition in Tameside is to create an employment and skills system where our town centres provide opportunities that respond to the needs of residents and businesses and contributes to the growth and productivity of the Tameside economy.
- **Marketing and Promotion:** Tameside's town centres will be promoted and branded using the strengths, opportunities and distinctive qualities that each town centre offers.
- **Collaboration:** The Framework will act as a strategic 'umbrella' to coordinate future development and regeneration activity in each of Tameside's town centres. This will require the full range of Council services to work collaboratively alongside collaboration with public, private and community/voluntary organisations and local communities to avoid a fragmented approach.

4. RISK

- 4.1 Without an overarching Framework, there is a risk of a fragmented and uncoordinated approach to the improvement and regeneration of each of the town centres in Tameside. As individual strategies and projects are progressed they will be subject to their own detail risk registers.

5. PUBLIC CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The proposed consultation will run 9 May to 29 July 2022 (12 weeks) subject to approval. The consultation will take the following approach set out below. Face to face sessions may be held but depending on any COVID-19 pandemic restrictions at the time and public health considerations; it will be necessary to keep this under regular review. The project team will ensure that all groups have the opportunity to contribute through networks or bespoke consultation mechanisms, including:
- Online

- Virtual stakeholder/partner workshops
- One to one virtual stakeholder/partner sessions

5.2 The consultation findings will inform a final draft to be considered for adoption in September 2022.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 Following Executive approval, the Town Centres Framework will be used to guide future strategic work, masterplans and regeneration activity within Tameside's individual town centres. Without an overarching Framework, there is a risk of a fragmented and uncoordinated approach to each of the Tameside's towns. The final Tameside Town Centres Framework will act as a strategic 'umbrella' to coordinate future development and regeneration activity in each of the centres and set the individual strategies for each of the centres in context.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 As set out at the front of the report.