

Place Select Committee
Overview Meeting 2022
21 February 2022
Town Centres Development

Context

Members are reminded of the Council's Vision that supports decision-making:

A place where people are healthy, safe and protected from harm

- This means the Borough will be a place where:
 - People live in cohesive and safe communities
 - People are supported and protected from harm
 - People live healthy lives

A place that is clean, vibrant and attractive

- This means we will enjoy:
 - Great places to live and visit
 - Clean and green spaces
 - Rich cultural experiences

A place with a thriving economy where everyone has opportunities to succeed

- This means that the Borough will have:
 - A growing economy
 - Improved education and skills development
 - Job creation and increased employment

The Council plays its part in making sure this is achieved by being a Council that is ambitious, effective and proud to serve.

- This means that we will make sure that we provide:
 - Financial sustainability and value for money
 - Dedicated and resourceful employees
 - Strong leadership and governance

Performance Reporting

Performance across the Council Plan was reported on a six-monthly basis to Executive Scrutiny Committee. Please see the link:

<http://www.egenda.stockton.gov.uk/aksstockton/users/public/admin/kab71.pl?cmte=SCR>

TOWN CENTRES DEVELOPMENT

Director – Garry Cummings

Relevant services include:

- Town Centres Development

COUNCIL PLAN 2021-2024

The Council Plan sets out the aims and objectives for all services and is refreshed on an annual basis.

The key 2021-2022 priorities for Town Centres Development are attached at Appendix 1.

EMERGING ISSUES

Service delivery is influenced by a range of internal and external factors that develop over time. Emerging challenges and opportunities are summarised as follows:

There is continued pressure on the retail sector at a national level with a variety of effects on the vitality and function of our town centres. How consumer confidence is rebuilt and the potential impact of inflationary price increases on goods will play a key part in the next twelve months performance and growth of businesses in our town centres

Understand the impact of Covid-19 on the retail sector, how that applies at a Borough wide level and how best to support town centres to function more effectively in response to changing visitor/consumer needs will also be critical.

PRIORITIES FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

Billingham

- A bid to Round 2 of the Levelling Up Fund will be prepared once details on the new funding round is announced in Spring 2022. The business case will incorporate feedback received on the Round 1 bid to maximise the chances of securing funding for Billingham Town Centre.
- To consider the findings of the Valuation and Condition Survey reports and determine the most appropriate option to safeguard the long-term future of Billingham Town Centre.

Ingleby Barwick

- Public consultation sessions will be held on 21 & 23 February to seek views and ideas on improvements to the existing play area and proposed extension to Romano Park.
- Consultation will take the form of public and online sessions and the community will be able to view the high-level proposals and give feedback. Feedback will then be collated and used to inform the design and programme of the scheme.
- From there interventions will be delivered at Romano Park and Romano Park extension

Norton

Duck Pond

- The first phase of the Duck Pond improvement scheme consisted of the installation of the new replacement fountain and deep cleaning of the duck pond and these works were completed on Thursday 30 September.
- Phase 2 of the works, involving public realm works will be delivered in 2022

Highways & Public Realm improvement scheme

- Develop and deliver plans for the southern end of Norton High Street include the creation of a northbound, one-way system as well as improvements to pedestrianised areas and public realm.
- The current scheme was presented to residents and businesses on 1 & 3 December 2021 and an online engagement platform was available from 1-17 December. The sessions were well attended and over 100 responses were received.

Stockton

- Complete relocation of businesses form Castlegate Centre
- Continued management and marketing of tenants and units in Wellington Square
- Begin demolition of Castlegate Shopping Centre
- Begin design of new civic buildings

Thornaby

- Finalise business case documentation for submission to govt in ay 2022
- Work with partners, stakeholders and town deal board to develop and deliver interventions

Yarm

- Design and deliver a package of interventions at Preston Park Museum & Gardens, Yarm Town Hall and High Street as well as improvements to cycle links across Yarm and Eaglescliffe.
- Undertake consultation on proposals for Yarm High Street in summer 2022
- Yarm Town Hall – A planning application has been submitted for the refurbishment of Yarm Town Hall. The building will be transformed into a Heritage Centre with community learning space and works are expected to start on site in summer and complete by the end of 2022.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Billingham

- Securing Levelling Up Funding through round 2
- Considering valuation advice and taking a view on viability of acquisition and redevelopment of centre

Ingleby Barwick

- Work is ongoing to resolve issues relating to the lease arrangements and permitted use on the land proposed for the Romano Park extension.
- Lease Variation – SBC (freeholder) is liaising with Robertson's (leaseholder) to vary the terms of the lease which would enable SBC to bring forward development on the land proposed for the Romano Park extension. Legal documentation is being prepared and once agreed by both parties, the proposal will be presented to Robertson's Board for approval which will take a further 12-16 weeks.
- Land appropriation – there is a separate legal process to appropriate the land from an educational use to use recreational / leisure uses. This change of use requires formal approval from the Department for Education and an application is being prepared to make a robust case for approval. This will be submitted in the coming weeks.

Norton

Duck Pond

- Phase two of the scheme consists of the public realm and surface improvements to the duck pond area. Community Services were scheduled to complete the works before the end of 2021, however due to the availability of materials and delivery timescales a revised start on site date of late Spring has been agreed.

Highways & Public Realm improvement scheme

- Feedback from the public engagement sessions has been reviewed by the technical project team to ensure the current scheme layout is the most appropriate and effective option when considered against wider scheme factors including public realm and accessibility, car parking, vehicle access and movement, buses, taxis, loading and markets / events.
- The findings of the public engagement is currently being prepared into an engagement summary report which will be issued by the end of February.

Stockton

- Demolition of Castlegate planned to begin May 2022. The remaining tenants in Castlegate Centre are likely to be relocated shortly after but will not be affected by the first phase of demolition
- Key challenge will be to ensure disruption from demolition is minimised and that the different phases of work are properly communicated to businesses and the public to ensure as little disruption as possible
- Opportunity for further engagement, where appropriate, as detailed design process for Stockton Waterfront and new civic buildings is underway

Thornaby

- Key challenge to continue with greater level of design for interventions identified under the towns fund
- Opportunity to transform vacant, derelict sites into quality, new public facilities and skills opportunities for residents of Thornaby and the wider borough
- Opportunity to link interventions into the emerging Fairer Stockton programme

Yarm

- All Levelling Up Funding must be spent by March 2024 and work needs to continue at pace to ensure the interventions are designed, developed and delivered within a tight programme.
- Yarm Town Hall - a revenue bid is being prepared to the National Heritage Lottery Fund to develop an Activity Plan, which will outline how the project will involve a wider range of people in heritage and add value to the Heritage Centre proposal. If the funding is not secured then the scale of the project will need to be reduced accordingly.
- Public Toilet - Yarm library has been identified as the most appropriate location to ensure continuous provision of public toilet facilities in Yarm High Street once the Town Hall restoration is underway. The scheme cost and delivery programme is currently being agreed
- Consultation on potential works on Yarm High Street

POTENTIAL AREAS FOR IN-DEPTH REVIEW

Members are reminded that topics are being sought for the Scrutiny Work Programme 2022-2023. Using the information provided as part of the performance updates and this Overview meeting, the Committee is invited to identify potential topics for review within this theme.

Proposed topic suggestion to be considered at Executive Scrutiny Committee on 22 March 2022:

APPENDIX 1: COUNCIL PLAN – KEY PRIORITIES 2021-2022 (TOWN CENTRES DEVELOPMENT)

Making the borough a place with a thriving economy where everyone has opportunities to succeed means creating:

- A growing economy
- Improved education and skills development
- Job creation and increased employment

We have identified these key priorities for 2021-22 to help us achieve this vision. This year we will:

- Develop and implement the vision for our town centres, recognising and understanding the full impact COVID-19 will place on their use.
- Understand and respond to the implications of changes in travel patterns as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.