

## COUNCIL

17 December 2018

# OAKHAM TOWN TASK AND FINISH GROUP FINAL REPORT

### Report of the Strategic Director for Places

Strategic Aim:	Reaching our Full Potential	
Exempt Information	No	
Cabinet Member(s) Responsible:	Mr O Hemsley, Leader and Portfolio Holder for Rutland One Public Estate & Growth, Tourism & Economic Development, Resources (other than Finance)	
Contact Officer(s):	Steve Ingram, Strategic Director for Places	01572 720 singram@rutland.gov.uk
	Natasha Taylor, Governance Team Manager	01572 720991 ntaylor@rutland.gov.uk
Ward Councillors	Mr R Alderman - Oakham South West Mr O Bird – Oakham South West Mr B Callaghan – Oakham South East Mr J Dale – Oakham North East Mr R Gale – Oakham North West Mr A Mann – Oakham North West Mr A Lowe – Oakham South East Mr A Walters – Oakham North East	

### DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS

That Council:

1. Thanks the Task and Finish Group for its work and recommendations on the Town Centre
2. Agrees in principle to establish a Partnership Board (independent of the Council) to take forward the Town Centre work subject to a future report following the consultation in recommendation 3
3. Delegates authority to the Director of Place to consult the groups represented on the Task and Finish group to seek agreement to participate in a Partnership Board
4. Approves initial funding of £2,000 for the Partnership Board
5. Notes the comments on potential deliverability of proposals (section 5)

## **1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To receive the final Report of the Oakham Town Task and Finish Group along with accompanying evidence which has been referred to Council following consideration at the Growth, Infrastructure and Resources Scrutiny Panel on 15 November 2018.
- 1.2 To seek agreement in principle to establish a Partnership Board (independent of the Council) to take forward the Town Centre work.
- 1.3 To seek authority to consult the groups represented on the Task and Finish group to request agreement to participate in a Partnership Board, independent of the Council, to take the work forward.
- 1.4 To support some initial work on the Town Centre to be funded from General Fund reserves.

## **2 BACKGROUND AND MAIN CONSIDERATIONS**

- 2.1 RCC Full Council resolved to set up a Task and Finish Group to consider the future regeneration of Oakham Town at its meeting on 15 January 2018.
- 2.2 The composition and terms of reference for the group were agreed by the Growth, Infrastructure and Resources Scrutiny Panel at meetings on 15 February 2018 and 22 March 2018 respectively. The Terms of Reference are attached at Appendix C.
- 2.3 A website page was created to provide updates and information on the work of the group, including a link to the terms of reference, and can be found at:  
  
<https://www.rutland.gov.uk/my-council/council-news/update-from-the-chair-of-oakham-task-and-finish-group/>
- 2.4 The Group met at least once a month from April through to October, with smaller informal sub-group meetings taking place between the main meetings in order to progress work.
- 2.5 Survey work was carried out between May and October 2018 which included Town Centre and Visitor Surveys, Business Surveys and an Online Survey. The evidence collected through this period has been compiled into the "Evidence Report" (Appendix B).
- 2.6 Growth, Infrastructure and Resources Scrutiny Panel were asked to review the report and evidence, provide feedback and consider recommendations on proposals to put forward to RCC Full Council on 15 November 2018.
  - i) At the meeting on 15 November 2018 the Scrutiny Panel approved the following responses to the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group (Section 9 of Appendix A):

Recommendations from the Task and Finish Group	Response of the Growth, Infrastructure and Resources Scrutiny Panel
<p>Confirm their acceptance of the Evidence-base Report and its validity to determine regeneration priorities for Oakham.</p>	<p>That the Panel positively endorses the work undertaken by the Task and Finish Group and accepts the Evidence-Base Report in terms of its positive contribution to the enhanced understanding of many of the current issues affecting Oakham. However, whilst being meritorious the report can only ever form part of the applicable evidence base because it will obviously be supplemented from other sources.</p>
<p>Support a community engagement process to ensure consultation with stakeholder groups and the wider community.</p>	<p>That the Panel also positively endorses the need for an extended community and stakeholder consultation process, where applicable, through a communication, consultation and engagement strategy developed by the Partnership Group</p>
<p>Agree the creation of an Oakham Regeneration Partnership by January 2019, comprising the following working groups (as detailed above, pp14–19):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Parking, Signage, Traffic &amp; Pedestrian Issues.</li> <li>b) Place-making, Enterprise &amp; Marketing.</li> <li>c) Co-ordination and Communication.</li> </ul>	<p>That the Panel supports the potential creation of an Oakham Regeneration Partnership and recommends that the Council commits to being a proactive and engaged partner in any such an arrangement.</p>
<p>Agree the following support for the work of the Oakham Regeneration Partnership to enable it to deliver town benefits as set out in the Task and Finish Group's recommendations, with measurable improvements by June 2020, including some 'quick wins' by September 2019,:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Help to develop and maintain a communications strategy</li> <li>b) Financial management of projects by allocation of budgets and sourcing</li> </ul>	<p>That the Panel agrees that the Council, as an active participant, should commit appropriate targeted resources, on an equitable basis, in order to support the work of the partnership. The levels of any such contribution will also need to recognise the nature of the contributions from other partners and acknowledge the financial and other pressures already placed upon Council resources.</p>

of external funding.	
c) Input in feasibility planning and expertise in project development from relevant council officers.	
d) Initial funding of £2,000 for admin, postage, printing, paper etc.	

ii) Growth, Infrastructure and Resources Scrutiny Panel requested that officers begin a high level feasibility study of the recommendations in the report in order to provide further detail regarding potential deliverability of proposals.

iii) The Scrutiny Panel also recommended to Council the approval of the Oakham Town Task and Finish Group Recommendations and Future Framework Report (Appendix A) including establishing a budget of £2000 for initial funding of the Partnership Group.

### **3 CONSIDERATION OF THE WAY AHEAD – TOWN CENTRE PARTNERSHIP**

- 3.1 It is clear from considering the highlighted examples of best practice brought to the table that thriving market towns and other places are those where there is demonstrable ongoing buy in from all parts of the community. As such in this instance it is essential that in order to continue to promote the economic prosperity and future wellbeing of Oakham that the informal partnership that has effectively come together is continued in some form.
- 3.2 The report recommends that three groups are established (page 14) to take the work forward with one group (the Communication and Coordination Group) being responsible for the Oakham Future Framework and effectively coordinating work of the other groups.
- 3.3 At this stage, the Council sees the Communication and Coordination Group as being in effect a Partnership Board. If Council are in agreement then the Council will proceed to seek agreement from the other partners to establish such a Partnership. Once it is established the Council will cede all responsibility to the Partnership itself making it independent of the Council. The Partnership can then proceed to set up further sub groups should it so wish.
- 3.4 Setting up the partnership will involve:
- Determining membership – so contacting local bodies to see whether they wish to be involved building on the proposed membership set out in the Task and Finish report
  - Establish a process for nominations and appointment of a Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and members
  - Establishing Terms of Reference and Governance processes (rules of operation around voting, conflicts etc)
- 3.5 The Council would wish to be part of the partnership but not be the Chair. This would give the Partnership independence but allow it to access Council expertise

and resources. As with any independent body, it would also be able to lobby the Council and other bodies for funding to support work moving forward.

- 3.6 This process will take some time but the Council would aim to have all of the infrastructure in place by Annual Council in May. Because of the elections due in May and purdah from the end of March, it would not be appropriate to appoint members (from any organisation that has elections due) in advance of this date.

#### **4 REPORT ON POTENTIAL DELIVERABILITY**

- 4.1 Further to the Scrutiny meeting, Council officers have begun work on assessing the feasibility of proposals. This work is still in progress.
- 4.2 If proposals are feasible then it does not necessarily mean that the Council will proceed to implementation. There are various reasons for this:
- Some recommendations may be outside of the remit of the Council – the feasibility work will highlight where the Council is responsible or not for matters raised
  - Some recommendations may be better led or delivered by the Partnership Board itself rather than the Council – this was a point well made at the Scrutiny meeting
  - Some issues will require funding (from whatever source) and any Council commitment will require approval by either Cabinet/Council
- 4.3 The Council's aim will be to have completed its feasibility work to present for discussion at one of the initial meetings of the Partnership Board. The Board can then revisit recommendations, undertake additional work or take on more views as necessary and determine an appropriate way forward.
- 4.4 Notwithstanding the above comment, the Council is very supportive of the overall vision and has set out in section 5 some initial observations from feasibility work.

#### **5 INITIAL OBSERVATIONS FROM FEASIBILITY WORK**

##### **5.1 PARKING (page 15)**

- 5.1.1 The Council is looking at options for increasing parking spaces and is confident this can be done by summer 2019.
- 5.1.2 A trial Zoning System will be considered for a period of time so impacts can be assessed.
- 5.1.3 Car park pricing will be looked at in 2019. Modelling will need to be done to look at various options.
- 5.1.4 The Council is looking to implement cash free car parking through introduction of "contactless" machines alongside the RinGo system.
- 5.1.5 The issue of planning considerations for parking is covered in the new Local Plan (Appendix 2).

## **5.2 TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT AND PEDESTRIAN SAFETY (pages 15-16)**

- 5.2.1 The Council will consider undertaking a speed survey to inform any changes to traffic calming measures including the possibility of pedestrian crossings.
- 5.2.2 The issue of reducing heavy vehicles in the Town Centre would be discussed via the Board to get business views.
- 5.2.3 The Council is keen to deliver some Town Centre enhancements like pavements and will seek to incorporate this into a bigger holistic project.
- 5.2.4 The standard run off lane is not required in a 40mph limit and risks increased speeds towards Oakham.
- 5.2.5 Additional surveys into Air Pollution will be considered.

## **5.3 SIGNAGE (page 16)**

- 5.3.1 The Council plans to do a full review of all town centre signage which will pick up the majority of issues raised in this section.

## **5.4 ENVIRONMENTAL ENHANCEMENT AND TOURISM (page 17)**

- 5.4.1 A number of issues in this areas such as pedestrian signage will be covered as part of the signage review. Additional signage for the Castle has already been created and is pending installation.
- 5.4.2 Many of the issues in this section will need to be led by the Partnership Board supported by the Council.
- 5.4.3 Options for extending the Castle and Museum opening hours are under review.
- 5.4.4 The installation of heritage lighting is possible and funding options are being considered.

## **5.5 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (pages 17-18)**

- 5.5.1 The Council believes that the infrastructure for collecting and sharing information regarding events and activities exists (Library/Rutland Information Service) but is not used by all parts of the community. The Council plans to use its communication team to promote this.
- 5.5.2 The Council would like to see more events in the Town Centre and believes this is an area that the Partnership alongside Discover Rutland and the Oakham Events group can take forward.
- 5.5.3 Local bus provision will be reviewed next year.

## **5.6 MARKETING AND ENTERPRISE (page 18)**

- 5.6.1 The Council believes that marketing of the town is a matter for the Partnership alongside Discover Rutland and others building on some of the work highlighted above.

## **5.7 ENCOURAGING ECONOMIC GROWTH (page 18)**

- 5.7.1 The Council is supportive of a trade organisation coordinating business activity in the town.
- 5.7.2 Many of the suggestions in this section e.g. loyalty cards, 'retail trail', and Sunday opening are matters for the Partnership.

## **6 CONSULTATION**

- 6.1 The views of the Oakham Business Community, Visitors, Town Centre Users and the general public have been sought through a series of surveys as detailed in the Evidence Report (Appendix B).
- 6.2 All representative members on the Task and Finish Group have been asked to consult with their respective organisations throughout the process so far.
- 6.3 The Final Report of the Task and Finish Group promotes the need for a comprehensive communication, consultation and engagement strategy developed by the Partnership Group.
- 6.4 The Council will also seek the formal agreement of the other bodies involved for their participation in the Partnership Board. Once this agreement has been received, the Council will consult with partner bodies in drafting governance documents for presentation to a future Council meeting.

## **7 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 7.1 Council are asked to support to the recommendations or suggest an alternative way forward including asking another body to take responsibility for setting up a Partnership Board.

## **8 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 There is no dedicated budget set aside to support this initiative although the Council may be able to offer support for appropriate proposals that accord with its adopted aims and ambitions.
- 8.2 Council are requested to approve a budget £2,000 to support the work of the Partnership Board.

## **9 LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS**

- 9.1 The other organisations involved will need to have the agreement of their parent bodies to participate in the Partnership Board. Once we are clear that they are willing to be involved then proposals and formal governance arrangements can be produced and brought to the relevant bodies for the specific approvals.
- 9.2 Should the Partnership Board make recommendations which are the responsibility of one of the partner organisations, such recommendations will be subject to the governance and decision making processes of that organisation. This is the reason for seeking the formal views of the partner bodies on the establishing of the Partnership Board.

## **10 DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 A Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA) has not been completed because there are no risks/issues to the rights and freedoms of natural persons.

## **11 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 11.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been completed. No adverse or other significant issues were found.

## **12 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

- 12.1 There are no community safety implications.

## **13 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS**

- 13.1 There are no health and wellbeing implications.

## **14 CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 14.1 To consider the response and recommendations of the Growth, Infrastructure and Resources Scrutiny Panel and endorse the Final Report of the Oakham Town Task and Finish Group.
- 14.2 To confirm the Council's commitment to the Forward Framework through the establishment of a Partnership Board.
- 14.3 To note that feasibility work into recommendations is ongoing.

## **15 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 15.1 There are no additional background papers.

## **16 APPENDICES**

- 16.1 Appendix A - Oakham Town Task and Finish Group Recommendations and Future Framework.
- 16.2 Appendix B - Oakham Town Task and Finish Group Evidence Base Report.

**A Large Print or Braille Version of this Report is available upon request – Contact 01572 722577.**