

Guilford Economic Regeneration Programme 2020

Deliverable Masterplan Strategy

Using the successful SARP model as a guide there are a number of stages that GBC should consider taking to establish a deliverable constraint led Masterplan such that it is robust and can form the basis for delivery of a transformational Economic Regeneration Programme.

Critical to the success of any such Strategy would be acceptance of the Council on a non-passive role as Enabling Infrastructure provider / Developer and adoption of an approach that gives priority and weight to the delivery of the key elements of flood defence and improved highways solutions as part of any constraint led masterplan approach.

The COVID 19 situation and the immediate impact it has had on the town centre will require the Council to review and question the priority of and requirement for schemes to be brought forward from the adopted Local Plan.

Previous design study work undertaken will be useful as a basis for knowledge but it is evident that the outcomes from previous work are not current and were not fully informed by validated infrastructure solutions, strategies relevant to current prevailing conditions (current traffic, climate change, sustainable communities, retail down turn, economic resilience), GBC core objectives or land ownerships.

For an Economic Regeneration Programme to be considered deliverable all of the above aspects and interdependencies need to be considered and addressed in any land allocation, visioning and design concept proposals.

Following the SARP model there are a number of stages that would need to be followed;

Organisation

- Organisation of the Scope of the project, The project Team and definition of deliverables into a clear structure for progress and Governance
- Sign Off of initial budget for Team activities
- Restructuring of GBC approach to delivery as a coordinated suite of projects for GBC promotion

Review and Redefinition of Vision, Objectives, Constraints and Outcomes

- Review of project information and data against Council defined objectives in respect of changes in market sentiment and revised ambitions for the town centre since 2017 Vision Statement – definition and sign off of any changes required to the Vision
- Review and Definition of Councils defence requirements for town centre based income direct and indirect
- Review of changes in status to constraints and strategies (Flood Defence and Highways), hinterland sites opportunities and scope of portfolio of current Town centre Projects (GBC and Market led) , short term agreement on actions to advert loss of opportunities / constraints to revised objectives
- Development of Constraints informed Masterplan – Vision, Site Use allocations, infrastructure protection zones, developable quantum, market demand research, land ownerships, consent project
- High Level Strategic / Financial Paper and Report to Council

Funding and Finance for Delivery

- Validate updated Masterplan in Green Book Strategic Business Case to define;
 - Options to Deliver Objectives
 - Benefits – Economic & Social
 - Financial Model
 - Programme / Timeline
 - Risks
 - Commercial Delivery
 - Procurement
 - Management and Governance
- Sourcing of potential Grant Funding sources or long-term infrastructure funding partners
- Definition of Business Case Funding Opportunities and progress of applications with Agencies
- Progress on establishing Infrastructure Delivery Agreements with Partners
- GBC Capital Funding

Delivery of Planning Consents

- Stakeholder Engagement Strategy in respect of changes to Vision, Scope of Regeneration Projects, Desired Outcomes,
- Wider Public Communications / Consultation
- Development of Council Corporate and Planning Policies (Area Action Plan / Amended Local Plan / SDF)
- Implementation of Changes to established current projects

Delivery of Projects

- Definition, detail agreement with stakeholders and procurement for Infrastructure projects
- Definition, detail design, procurement of New Building and Public Realm Projects
- Delivery of Infrastructure
- Delivery of town centre projects by Development Partners, Landowners and GBC Direct

Principle Objectives

The main themes from the 2017 vision require updating in respect of objectives from the drivers of the market changes over the last few years. Outside of the considerations of retail market change and a greater emphasis on affordable housing there is broad alignment on outcomes although the detail of what outcomes may deliver needs to be defined in greater detail. Immediate COVID 19 economic impact on the town centre will require detailed longer term economic assessment.

In addition to the vision-based themes the Council needs to consider and address;

- Defence of Town Centre Direct income (Car Parks / Freeholds / Leases)
- Defence of Town Centre Indirect Income (Business Rates)
- Town centre attractiveness to residents, employment, and as visitor destination
- Acknowledgment of the adoption of an Implementational Role (SARP model) instead of a passive one

Timeline

The draft Programme will outline the headline activities and milestones for taking forward a deliverable Economic Regeneration Programme, with Full Council sign off and approval at each gateway;

Gateway 1

- High Level Strategic Appraisal including constraint analysis
- Budget £500k
- July 2020 to January 2021

Gateway 2

- Development of options and concepts
- Preparation of Business Case
- Submission of Grant applications
- Estimated budget £1.5m
- January to December 2021

Gateway 3

- Grant Funding Award
- Infrastructure planning submissions
- Budget to be agreed (Approved Weyside budget for this stage £2.9m)
- January to November 2022

Assumptions; GBC Procurement Team sign off Procurement Strategy and can formulate procurement documentation for Consultancy team by July 2020.