



# Executive Committee

Abbey Ward

16 September 2009

## TOWN CENTRE STRATEGY

(Report of the Acting Head of Planning and Building Control)

### 1. Summary of Proposals

The report seeks the endorsement of the Town Centre Strategy and authorisation for Officers to work on projects associated with the Town Centre Strategy.

### 2. Recommendations

- I. **The Committee is asked to ENDORSE the Town Centre Strategy as detailed in appendix A.**
- II. **The Committee is asked to instruct Officers to work on projects associated with implementing the Town Centre Strategy**

### 3. Financial, Legal, Policy Risk and Sustainability Implications

#### Financial

- 3.1 There are no financial implications associated with endorsing the Town Centre Strategy. However as detailed within the Town Centre Strategy at Appendix A, there will be costs associated with implementation. Separate reports seeking funding will be brought to this committee.

#### Legal

- 3.3 Under Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000, the Council has the power to do anything which it considers is likely to achieve the promotion or improvement of the economic well-being of its area.

#### Policy

- 3.4 Planning Policy Statement 6: Town Centres

This document points out that town centre strategies can play an important and complementary role in ensuring the continued vitality and viability of centres. They may be part of the evidence base for development plan documents, including area action plans and for supporting the use of compulsory purchase orders for site assembly.

### 3.5 Draft Planning Policy Statement 4: Planning for Prosperous Economies

This document points out that Regions\local authorities should achieve sustainable economic growth through flexible and pro-active policies which recognise the needs of the market. This includes good supply of land which meets the needs of different types of business.

In addition it maintains a strong 'town centres first' policy by:

- i) removing current 'need test' for planning applications
- ii) replacing existing need + impact tests with improved impact test- clearer, more robust and holistic framework for assessing the impact of proposals
- iii) improving approach to consumer choice and retail diversity by supporting small shops and independent retailers

### 3.6 Regional Planning Guidance

The West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) Phase 2 Revision (Preferred Option) sets out the Comparison Retail Floorspace Requirements 2006-2026 for Redditch, which are 30,000m<sup>2</sup> (2006-2021) and 20,000m<sup>2</sup> (2021-2026). The WMRSS sets out a network of centres and identifies Redditch as a Strategic Centre in Tier 4. The principle centre in the Borough is the Town Centre which is the most preferable and sustainable centre in which to accommodate major retail development, large scale offices or other uses that may attract a number of visitors to the Town.

#### Risk

- 3.7 The Town Centre Strategy identifies the key issues facing the Town and opportunities for the future. Failure to address these issues could result in the continuation of the problems, their exacerbation or mean that Redditch Town Centre does not achieve its full potential.

#### Sustainability / Environmental

- 3.8 The Town Centre Strategy will address a range of environmental issues including sustainability and climate change.

#### Report

## 4. Background

- 4.1 In February 2009 a brief was put together which invited consultants to tender for a Town Centre Strategy. The brief set out a number of requirements which included making recommendations on:
- a) Town centre development and economic development
  - b) The public realm, environment and urban design
  - c) Partnership, resources and management
  - d) An Action Plan to implement the Strategy
- 4.2 In March 2009 Arup working alongside market experts Jones Long La Salle and Urban Design Specialist Martin Brown were appointed by Redditch Borough Council to deliver a Town Centre Strategy for Redditch.
- 4.3 The approach taken to the development of the strategy was divided into three stages, the first of which being data collection and analysis in which a baseline position for Redditch was produced through an evidence review and the context set within which the strategy developed. Stage two of the approach was the undertaking of a Stakeholder Workshop in which the findings of the evidence review were tested, a shared vision developed, in addition to the establishment of a series of priority actions and opportunities to assist in moving towards the vision. Building upon the outputs from the first two stages, a strategy was then developed.
- 4.4 A Draft report was received on the 23 July 2009 whereby Council Officers and key portfolio holders assessed the document and reported any key comments or observations. Any changes reported were then incorporated into a revised document presented at a Joint ECAP and PAP on the 20 August 2009 for members input. The document was also presented at Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the 02 September 2009 and at a Stakeholder Workshop on the 08<sup>th</sup> September 2009. The final report was received on the 08 September 2009.

## 5. **Key Issues**

- 5.1 The strategy supports the sustainable future development of the town centre. It contains proposals for activities to support the economic priorities. However, some of the activities will require additional resources and guidance from members. Consequently it is envisaged that budget bids and reports on the detail of specific projects will be reported to members in due course.

5.2 Chapters 9 & 10 of the Strategy (Appendix A) examines the potential outcomes of the Strategy projects and actions and sets out a framework for implementation and investment, including a delivery vehicle strategy, delivery mechanisms, funding, risk assessment, phasing strategy and action plan. The priority projects and actions are listed below;

### 5.3 Tackling the ring road

Short term	Down grading the Ring Road - Investigations
Medium/Long Term	Delivering Change – breaking the concrete collar

### 5.4 A Sense of Arrival and Signage

Short term	Minor Changes
Medium/Long Term	New Signage System

### 5.5 Improving the Café and Restaurant Offer

Short to Medium Term	Encouragement of A3 Uses
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### 5.6 Enhancements to Church Green to secure its Role as a Focal Point for Community Activities

Short term	Increase activities on Church Green. Complete public realm improvements. Improve signage. Detailed scheme for regeneration of St Stephens Church
Medium/Long Term	Regeneration of St Stephens Church

### 5.7 Tackling the Train Station area

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Short term	Develop regeneration scheme.
Medium to Long Term	Redevelopment of the Train Station Area

### 5.8 Rejuvenation of Silver Street/Royal Square

Short term	Ringway Investigations
Medium to Long Term	Redevelopment of Silver Street/Royal Square

### 5.9 Improving Public Spaces and Car Parking

Quick Win	Car Parking Study
Medium/Long Term	Car Parking Strategy

### 5.10 Improved Lighting, Safety and Security in the Town Centre

Quick Win	Develop lighting strategy. Undertake safety and security audit.
Medium Term	Improve lighting in centre

### 5.11 Encouraging Town Centre living

Short term	Review opportunity to include residential development in existing SPDs
Medium/Long Term	Increased Residential Development

### 5.12 Town Centre Management

Quick Win	Set up of Town Centre Management or Partnership
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# Executive

Committee

16 September 2009

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### 5.13 Business Support Scheme

Quick Win	Investigate Business Support Scheme
Medium Term	Deliver Business Support Scheme

### 5.14 Shop Enhancement Scheme

Quick Win	Investigate shop enhancement scheme
Medium Term	Deliver Shop Enhancement Scheme

- 5.15 The Strategy identifies the right mix of substantial opportunities to deliver change, with quick wins through small steps which indicate a positive direction of travel, establish support, build momentum and achieve 'buy in'.

## 6. Other Implications

- Asset Management - No Implications.
- Community Safety - Town Centre Strategy will consider and promote the enhancement of community safety.
- Human Resources - No Implications.
- Social Exclusion - The Council's economic priorities aim to tackle social exclusion by encouraging a strong local economy and creating opportunities for all residents to benefit from the local economy.

## 7. Lessons Learnt

None, this is a new issue.

## 8. Background Papers

None.

9. **Consultation**

This report has been prepared in consultation with Key Stakeholders, Planning Advisory Panel (PAP) and Economic Advisory Panel (ECAP).

10. **Author of Report**

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11. **Appendices**

Appendix A - Town Centre Strategy (to follow)

12. **Key to Terminology / Abbreviations**