

**Subject:** Rawtenstall Town Centre  
Masterplan

**Status:** For Publication

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**Report to:** Full Council

**Date:** 14<sup>th</sup> October 2010

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**Report of:** Planning Manager

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**Portfolio**

**Holder:** The Leader of the Council and Regeneration

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**Key Decision:** Yes

Forward Plan

General Exception

Special Urgency

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**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To update members on progress on the preparation of a Masterplan/Supplementary Planning Document for Rawtenstall Town Centre including options for the Valley Centre.

**2. CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

- 2.1 The matters discussed in this report impact directly on the following corporate priorities:-
- Delivering quality Services to our customers
  - Delivering regeneration across the Borough
  - Encouraging healthy and respectful communities
  - Keeping our Borough clean, green and safe
  - Promoting the Borough
  - Providing value for money services

**3. RISK ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 All the issues raised and the recommendation(s) in this report involve risk considerations as set out below:
- Implementation of a scheme for the Valley Centre and enhancements to Rawtenstall town centre are dependent on private sector investment and the availability of public funding.

## 4. BACKGROUND AND OPTIONS

- 4.1 Dealing with the problems of the Valley Centre in Rawtenstall is a key priority for this Council and for the Borough's residents. A number of measures have been taken to address this issue:
- Negotiations with the existing owners
  - Serving a notice on the owner under Section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act to tidy up the existing structure
  - Pursuing options for working with a Development Partner to build a new scheme on a larger site incorporating Council land and buildings
  - Consideration of options for a Compulsory Purchase Order if necessary and viable.
- 4.2 Negotiations with the existing owner to redevelop the site have so far proved unfruitful. Serving the Section 215 notice has however been productive. It has resulted in the appearance of the existing premises being considerably improved and positive feedback being received from the public.
- 4.3 A longer term solution is however required. The Council has had preliminary discussions with a number of interested parties and has published an initial Expressions of Interest document (OJEU notice). In parallel to this consideration is being given to pursuing a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) should negotiation with the existing owner be unsuccessful and no alternative option can be found.
- 4.4 A comprehensive evidence base is necessary to substantiate the need for a CPO. This has to examine potential options and that no alternative route is available to deliver the Council's objectives. Equally, if the Council is to work effectively with a Development Partner it is necessary to have a clear, independent understanding of the economic and physical options available. This should be set out clearly within a vision for the Town Centre as a whole.
- 4.5 The adopted Local Development Scheme (LDS) sets out the Planning documents that the Council proposes to prepare. One of these is a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for Rawtenstall Town Centre. The Study into the Valley Centre fits within the context of the broader revitalisation of Rawtenstall. It was therefore decided that any consultant study to be produced would both guide redevelopment of the Valley Centre and form the also form the basis for Rawtenstall Town Centre DPD.
- 4.6 Following interviews in May a multi-disciplinary team headed by the consultancy BDP was appointed. The project team also includes regeneration and property experts and transport engineers. The initial phase of work has comprised of a comprehensive evidence collection exercise. This has included a review of existing documents, meetings with developers, the property industry, officers and an urban design appraisal of the town centre. A full evidence base document has now been produced and is being considered by officers. This draws a number of conclusions including:

- The challenge of attracting higher quality national retailers to the Borough especially in the current economic climate
- The importance of independent shops
- The quality of the townscape of Bank Street but the potential for further enhancements

4.7 The consultants are putting together initial options for consideration by officers and the Steering Group in September. A full four week public consultation will be held in October. This will include at least one public consultation event led by BDP as well as the document being made available for comment in public libraries, council offices and over the internet in line with the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

4.8 The results of the consultation will be considered by officers and BDP and a final document produced by the end of the year. This will be used to either guide Development Partners or the CPO process. It will also form the basis for a final consultation prior to proposed adoption as an SPD. Members will be asked for their comments on the document prior to adoption.

#### **COMMENTS FROM STATUTORY OFFICERS:**

#### **5. SECTION 151 OFFICER**

5.1 Funding for this study and subsequent consultation has already been approved from the Economic Regeneration Earmarked Reserve, as reported in the monthly financial monitoring reports.

#### **6. MONITORING OFFICER**

6.1 Included within the report.

#### **7. HEAD OF PEOPLE AND POLICY (ON BEHALF OF THE HEAD OF PAID SERVICE)**

7.1 No Human Resource implications.

#### **8. CONCLUSION**

8.1 Progress is being made by consultants on developing an evidence base and identifying options for the redevelopment of the Valley Centre and the enhancement of Rawtenstall Town Centre. This will be essential information for engaging with potential developers, the public and possibly the legal process. It is evident from the work undertaken so far that substantial challenges remain but that opportunities do exist to change this area.

#### **9. RECOMMENDATION(S)**

- 9.1
- That members note the contents of the Report and authorise the Steering Group and Officers to continue working with the consultants to develop the most appropriate options.

- That members authorise the publication of the document as part of a formal Supplementary Planning Document consultation.

## 10. CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

- 10.1 The consultant attends meetings of the Rawtenstall Project Steering Group. This includes Borough and County Council members including the Leader of this Council, a representative from the Chamber of Trade, Regenerate Pennine Lancashire and District and County Officers. A full four week public consultation is programmed to occur during October.

## 11. COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Is a Community Impact Assessment required No

Is a Community Impact Assessment attached No

## 12. BIODIVERSITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Is a Biodiversity Impact Assessment required No

Is a Biodiversity Impact Assessment attached No

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Background Papers	
Document	Place of Inspection
BDP Evidence Base document	One Stop Shop