

<b>Subject:</b>	Regeneration Projects Update	<b>Status:</b>	For Publication
<b>Report to:</b>	Cabinet	<b>Date:</b>	4 <sup>th</sup> March 2015
<b>Report of:</b>	Head of Health, Housing and Regeneration	<b>Portfolio Holders:</b>	Regeneration, Tourism and Leisure/Housing and Environmental Health
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Forward Plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	General Exception <input type="checkbox"/>	Special Urgency <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Community Impact Assessment:</b>	Required:	No	Attached: No
<b>Biodiversity Impact Assessment</b>	Required:	No	Attached: No
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Steve Jackson</b>	<b>Telephone:</b>	<b>01706 252404</b>
<b>Email:</b>	<b>stephenjackson@rossendalebc.gov.uk</b>		

<b>1.</b>	<b>RECOMMENDATION(S)</b>
1.1	Members note the contents of this report.
1.2	Members approve the outline Year 3 Work Programme for the Rossendale Together Barnfield Partnership.
1.3	All future minor amendments to the strategy and programme be delegated to the Head of Health, Housing & Regeneration in consultation with the Portfolio Holders.

## 2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 To provide Members with an update on Regeneration projects.
- 2.2 To seek approval for a Year 3 Programme of activity for the RTB Partnership.

## 3. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 3.1 The matters discussed in this report impact directly on the following corporate priorities:
  - Priority 1: Regenerating Rossendale:** This priority focuses on regeneration in its broadest sense, so it means supporting communities that get on well together, attracting investment, promoting Rossendale, as well as working as an enabler to promote the physical regeneration of Rossendale.
  - Priority 2: Responsive Value for Money Services:** This priority is about the Council working collaboratively, being a provider, procurer and a commissioner of services that are efficient and that meet the needs of local people.
  - Priority 3: Clean Green Rossendale:** This priority focuses on clean streets and town centres and well managed open spaces, whilst recognising that the Council has to work with communities and as a partner to deliver this ambition.

## 4. RISK ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no specific risk issues for members to consider arising from this report.

## 5. BACKGROUND AND OPTIONS

- 5.1 There are a number of projects being delivered, developed and operating across the Borough and this report seeks to provide an update for Members.

### *Rawtenstall*

- 5.2 Consultation on the town centre masterplan and new bus station was carried out

throughout 2014 and the planning application for phase 1 of the development is due to be considered by the Council's Development Control Committee in March 2015. If planning consent is granted it is intended to start preliminary works on site during April with the major works commencing in the summer.

- 5.3 The RTB Partnership have been successful in securing £1.85million through Lancashire LEP Growth Deal funding to support the development of the future phases of the development which will include retail, leisure and a small amount of housing units and create around 225 new jobs.

*New Hall Hey*

- 5.4 In December 2014 Marks & Spencer confirmed their intention to open a store on the New Hall Hey development. This followed on from many months of discussions and negotiations with M&S and it is intended that the new store will be open by April 2015.

*Bacup Townscape Heritage Initiative*

- 5.5 In January 2014, the Heritage Lottery fund announced that Rossendale had been successful in its bid for a £2million Townscape Heritage Initiative fund for Bacup.

- 5.6 This provides funding over a five year period to support capital works which includes improvements to key buildings within Bacup town centre and a public realm scheme. These programmes are complimented by a programme of community activities and skills training opportunities.

- 5.7 The programme commenced in April 2014 and during this first year a range of work has been undertaken to set up and raise awareness about the scheme prior to the commencement of the physical works delivery phase. These have included:

- The development of a comprehensive package of training and learning initiatives which will be on offer during 2015. The programme includes Training on construction skills such as working with lime mortar and sash window repair, as well as subjects of more general interest such as heritage crime and researching building history.
- The publication of the initial sketch design for public realm improvement around St James' Square in the summer of 2014. This was followed by a period of engagement and debate on the proposals that raised a number of points that any final design would need to address. Further engagement on emerging designs is due in the Summer of 2015, with delivery of a scheme programmed around the building improvements.

The Communications & Engagement group launched the 'Time Traveller' theme at the Bacup and Stacksteads Carnival, and a programme of events focussed on 'Bacup 1914' took place during November and December. These included a theatrical performance, lectures, exhibitions and culminated with the Mrs Ibbits Christmas event at Bacup Nat.

- We have also committed to organising a public update event before the summer of 2015 to provide further information about the scheme and the phasing of future works.

- 5.8 The first phase of physical works on site will start shortly, starting with the Pioneer Buildings before moving on to St James Street.

*RTB Partnership*

- 5.9 The 2015/2016 Work Programme for the RTB partnership is detailed below and lists a range of projects which the Partnership will focus upon during the next 12 months. It should be noted that additional projects may be added throughout the year as new opportunities

present themselves.

5.10 The outline RTB Work Programme for 2015/2016 will focus on the following, but is flexible enough to allow other opportunities that may present themselves;

- Delivery of the first phase of the Rawtenstall Town Centre scheme and further consultation and development of the wider masterplan for the site of the former Valley Centre.
- Continue to work with the owners of the New Hall Hey site to find a solution for the redevelopment of the full site.
- Work to support the delivery of the Bacup Townscape Heritage Initiative programme.
- Development of a scheme to bring the semi-derelict Waterside Mill back into use as a commercial building.
- Development of options for schemes for residential housing
- Development of a list of priority sites and projects for years 4 & 5

5.11 Progress will be monitored by Board Members which include the Leader of the Council, the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Tourism and Leisure and the Chief Executive.

#### *Haslingden Task Force*

5.12 The Haslingden Task Force held its first meeting in March 2014 led by the Leader of the Council and has held three further meetings over the past year. Its focus is on bringing together key partners to develop a high level strategic approach to the issues facing the town and to develop and co-ordinate activities.

5.13 The Task force has developed a 5 point plan for Haslingden Town Centre which focuses action on projects and initiatives which will support and promote the town centre. The plan will focus on the following 5 priorities:-

- Town Centre Public Realm
- Shop front improvements
- Town Centre leaflet / Shop local promotion
- Market(s)
- Car parking

#### *Promoting Rossendale*

5.14 A Promoting Rossendale Board has been established comprising of a range of volunteers, venues, accommodation providers and partners with the aim of changing perceptions of Rossendale as a place to visit, live, work or do business and develop an increasingly competitive offer.

5.15 The Board will oversee the development of a sustainable, co-ordinated communication approach so that Rossendale's voice is clearly heard in the market and will work to strengthen the visitor economy of Rossendale, building on the strengths of existing attractions and leveraging for further support.

5.16 Throughout the year the Board have supported a number of activities across the valley including:-

- The development of '48 hours in Rossendale packages' for visitors
- Ensuring that Rossendale features on key tourism websites such as South Pennines

and Visit Lancashire sites.

- Developing a calendar of events for the year, with a mixture of established events and sourcing new ones – including the Rossendale 60's festival, Christmas events and the development of a Performing Arts Festival.
- Inclusion of the Valley's walking routes on 'Walk Britain.'

5.17 In addition to the activities of the Board, the Council developed a 'Christmas in Rossendale brand' which was launched to promote Christmas activities across the borough. Promotional materials produced included banners, flags and flyers which were distributed to public buildings, businesses and traders across the borough.

5.18 Throughout the year a successful series of town centre events, focussed on Rawtenstall and Bacup markets was delivered, increasing footfall and providing a boost for traders. These included:

- Bacup Easter Festival
- Rawtenstall Easter and 60s Family Fun Days
- Bacup Hippie Market
- Christmas Sparkles on Rawtenstall Market
- A Bacup Christmas Cracker

5.19 Feedback from the market traders has been very positive with them reporting increased footfall and new visitors to the market.

#### *Cycle Routes*

5.20 The Council has been awarded £2million via Lancashire LEP in order to continue the progression of the strategic cycle routes which form the Valley of Stone Greenway project. This will in turn be supported by match funding from Lancashire County Council.

5.21 The project aims to promote healthy lifestyles and activity by creating a safe and attractive cycle route between Rawtenstall and Rochdale Railway Stations, following the corridor of the former railway all the way to the Common at Greenbank Road and Taylor Street and will include the Britannia Greenway and the iconic tunnel through the Glen at Waterfoot

5.22 The route should also provide a strong attraction for tourists and visitors coming to Rossendale which, in turn, will benefit the Valley's economy. The aim is to complete the route works by the end of 2016.

#### *Rossendale Museum*

5.23 The museum is now operated and managed by the Whitaker Organisation who have brought about significant change in the way the museum, known as the Whitaker, operates and engages with visitors.

5.24 This year has been the first year of formal 'trading' and has seen the venue go from strength to strength. Key achievements to date are:-

- Tourism + Heritage Business of the Year 2014
- Appeared over 30 times in the last 12 Months in the Free Press
- 40% increase in the usage of the Educational Room by Community Groups and Associations.
- Developing more Diverse audiences, including the current 'New Moons' exhibition

about East Asian Communities across Rossendale, there has been a marked increase of visitors from Minority Communities in 2014.

- Have gained a Full Wedding Licence 2014-2017
- Fully employed 5 FTE staff, 2 Part Time staff, 7 Casual Staff , 9 weekly Volunteers and 10 Casual Volunteers for Event support

#### *Ski Rossendale*

- 5.25 During 2014, Officers from the Council have been working with the Directors of Ski Rossendale Limited to develop a bid for Sport England's Improvement Fund.
- 5.26 The bid was successful and will see the resurfacing and extension to the current nursery slope and a fully redeveloped reception and changing area with a café/restaurant on the first floor.
- 5.27 Officers will continue to work and support the directors of Ski Rossendale Limited through the delivery stages of the scheme which are expected to be complete later in 2015.

#### *Rogue Landlord Scheme*

- 5.28 In December 2013 the council were successful in being awarded £79,000 of funding from the Department of Communities and Local Government to support the development of a new scheme to deal with rogue landlords in Rossendale. The main focus for the scheme will be co-ordinated action across a number of agencies (DWP, Trading Standards, HMRC etc) to target rogue landlords operating in Rossendale and will include prosecution where evidence exists of criminal activity.
- 5.29 During the delivery of the scheme we have inspected over 350 properties and taken a range of follow up actions encompassing both formal and informal action from Improvement Notices to an Interim Management Order as well as Interviews Under Caution and follow up prosecution.

Where appropriate other agencies have been involved and these have included Police, HMRC, DWP, Fire, Border Agency, Social Services, HSE investigative / enforcement work is ongoing. We have undertaken joint investigations in 21 cases.

- 5.30 This work had highlighted the importance of such a role in providing advice and support to many of Rossendale's private sector tenants and to be able to be in a position to take and enforce effective action against poor landlords.

#### *Empty Homes 2015 -2018*

- 5.31 In 2014 the Council was successful in a bid to the Homes & Communities Agency for funding to continue a scheme to bring empty homes back into use in Rossendale.
- 5.32 As mentioned above, Officers will prepare options for the Cabinet to consider how this new scheme should be delivered in Rossendale.
- 5.33 The £1.75million scheme aims to bring 100 homes back into use by 2018.

#### *Up and Active*

- 5.34 Up and Active is a 12 month pilot project in Rossendale and Pendle, launched in February and funded by LCC Public Health, aimed at getting inactive people more active, particularly

those from more socially deprived communities. The project operates borough wide, but with targeted activities focussed on Worsley and Irwell wards

- 5.35 £75,000 was allocated from LCC in August 2014, with a further £20,000 agreed from RBC. A website has been developed [www.upandactive.co.uk](http://www.upandactive.co.uk) which will provide a comprehensive list of activities available in each local area, together with key messages to stress that being active is for everyone, and that there are free or inexpensive activities available on the doorstep. The website features an innovative registration and barcode system to support monitoring and tracking of activities.
- 5.36 Community engagement is a key element of the project and the Council is working with officers from the Leisure Trust and local community groups to deliver targeted activities in local neighbourhoods. Activities developed so far include Zumba classes at Bacup Family Centre, a Pram Walk for new mums in Victoria Park, circuit and boot camp sessions in Bacup for inactive young people and Yoga and Family Zumba sessions in conjunction with Haslingden Community Link, with many more activities planned including a focus on the Borough's parks.

#### *Counter Fraud Fund*

- 5.37 Rossendale has led a successful bid to the DCLG for funding to establish a pilot programme to tackle non benefit related Council Tax and NNDR fraud. The Council has been awarded £150,000 to deliver the initiative which will be delivered in partnership with Rochdale MBC.
- 5.38 The initiative will challenge the deletion and exemption of both residential and non-domestic premises from the Valuations Office rating list where it is suspected that owners have knowingly submitted proposals to prevent paying relevant property taxes or are using avoidance tactics to prevent properties being completed and returned to the VOA's Ratings List. The pilot will consider a number of scenarios and look to identify where fraud/avoidance has been committed as part of this process and put in measures to recoup these costs and/or enforcement action where appropriate.

## **6. SECTION 151 OFFICER**

- 6.1 Financial matters and implications are noted in the report.

## **7. MONITORING OFFICER**

- 7.1 No additional comments.

## **8. POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT**

- 8.1 As part of the development and implementation of projects outlined above, consultation and community engagement will be undertake as appropriate.
- 8.2 This report provides only an update overview of new and existing regeneration projects. It is not determined therefore, the content of this report will not have any adverse or disproportionate impacts under the Council's Equality Policy or associated equality duties, and has not been assessed for equalities impacts.
- 8.3 Each project will/has given consideration to equalities specifically related to that project in a relevant and proportionate manner.

8.4 Portfolio holders, RTB Board Members and the RTB Operational Group have been consulted.

**9. CONCLUSION**

9.1 There has, and continues to be, significant progress in achieving our ambitions for the borough and both leading and supporting bids for external funding and working with partners to provide the necessary resources to deliver projects and initiatives for Rossendale.

No background papers.