

|                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| <b>Report To:</b>             | <b>LOCAL PLAN DEVELOPMENT PANEL</b>                       |
| <b>Date:</b>                  | <b>5TH JULY 2022</b>                                      |
| <b>Heading:</b>               | <b>DRAFT HUCKNALL TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN CONSULTATION</b> |
| <b>Executive Lead Member:</b> | <b>NOT APPLICABLE</b>                                     |
| <b>Ward/s:</b>                | <b>HUCKNALL WARDS</b>                                     |
| <b>Key Decision:</b>          | <b>NO</b>   |
| <b>Subject to Call-In:</b>    | <b>NO</b>   |

### **Purpose of Report**

To feedback on the consultation undertaken on the Draft Hucknall Town Centre Masterplan.

### **Recommendation(s)**

It is recommended that the Local Plan Development Panel note the feedback from the Draft Hucknall Town Centre Masterplan Consultation.

### **Reasons for Recommendation(s)**

For information as the Consultation responses will inform the final Hucknall Town Centre Masterplan which will be considered at the Cabinet meeting of 19th July 2022.

### **Alternative Options Considered**

None

### **Detailed Information**

The Cabinet Meeting of 29th March 2022 approved a public consultation on the Draft Hucknall Town Centre Masterplan. The Masterplan consultation was undertaken in accordance with the provisions set out in the Cabinet report over the period from 25th April 2022 to 5.00pm on 24th May 2022.

A total of 43 representations and 1 late comment were received from local residents, businesses, organisations and infrastructure providers. Responses were received in a variety of forms. The majority of responses were through the completion of the online form on the Council's website. Other responses were received through email and paper, a limited number of which completed the consultation form. 34 responses specifically address the consultation questions and the remainder made general comments on the Masterplan.

The Masterplan has to be seen in the context that it aims to provide a long-term framework for future investment and development, which maximises the opportunities for Hucknall and capitalises on its existing assets. As such, it sets out broad over-arching principles and identifies general areas for improvement, which will enable detailed future projects to be worked up in a timely manner and capitalise on available funding. The intention of the Masterplan is to be a high level guide, it is not intended to be prescriptive. The document should be sufficiently flexible in a changing economic and social climate, i.e. to guide but not constrain future projects. Many comments were very specific in their nature and as such do not relate explicitly to the Masterplan or refer to issues which would be more appropriately addressed through detailed project development or at the planning application stage.

A majority of the responses supported the Vision. No specific amendments to the Vision were set out in responses and it is considered that the majority of the responses are reflected in the Vision for the Town Centre.

While the vast majority of respondents considered it was easy to find their way around the Town Centre, the responses highlighted that there is a requirement to improve accessibility and legibility into and around the town centre. This includes facilitating attractive and safe walking routes into the Centre from surrounding areas and safe routes from the transport hub into the Centre. It is identified in responses that more emphasis should be given to signposting places just outside of the town centre, such as the Hucknall Leisure Centre and how they can be incorporated into the Masterplan in terms of accessibility, waymarking etc. The potential for a heritage trail around Hucknall, alongside heritage waymarking was also raised. Accessibility for the disabled was raised in the context of there being no specific reference to this aspect in the Masterplan. It is proposed to amend the Masterplan to emphasise how its objectives, strategy and proposals reflect equality of opportunity for all users of the town centre.

In relation to culture, economic heritage or social benefits, it was set out in responses that there should be more emphasis on heritage. A response highlighted an error in the 'Hucknall in the past' Section which has been amended. Additional text is proposed to recognise the importance of Hucknall's historic heritage and its sense of history. The Masterplan recognises the importance of heritage within the objective of 'Solidifying the identity of the Town' which looks to create a distinct identity for Hucknall. It is also reflected in the Theme 3.6 'An Attractive and Distinctive Place'. The context for the Masterplan is that a substantial part of the Town Centre is designated as a Conservation Area. As such, in planning terms, there is both statutory and national/local policy protection for preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. Responses were received regarding the provision of a Health and Wellbeing Hub. As part of Theme 1 – creating a desirable place to live, the provision of this type of service is recognised. However, it is considered that the Masterplan can be amended to bolster further and identify that the Council is supportive of a new health centre located, if practical, in the Town Centre or edge of centre.

The majority of respondents agree with the objective of building up the Town Centre as a destination with a diverse range of services such as leisure, cultural and arts attractions, and a vibrant nightlife. There is a mixed response in relation to the nature of retail within the Town Centre

with some support for more local shops and other support for national retailers and banks in the Town Centre. There was support for indoor leisure activities. For businesses there were proposals for lower business rates for shops and lower rents. It has to be borne in mind that there is a market based economy and this limits the ability of the Masterplan to influence these aspects. A significant number of the proposals are considered to fall within the broad Masterplan themes set out in Section 3. The more specific proposals are helpful in considering and informing development projects.

A response highlighted that it was considered that the size of the Town Centre should be reduced. The boundary of the Town Centre is reflective of the Local Plan definition of the Town Centre. Consequently, there are not considered to be grounds to reconsider the extent of the Town Centre through the Masterplan.

In relation to aspects that fall into the Masterplan and car parking, responses included additional landscaping, improved lighting, CCTV coverage, more disabled/child parking spaces and the provision of more electrical charging points.

Crime and anti-social behaviour were referred to in responses. Planning has a role to play in relation to crime and anti-social behaviour but this is substantially linked to designing out crime and designing in community safety. This is reflected in the Masterplan's objective to 'Enhance Perception of Safety and Design out Crime'. It is emphasised that the Council and its partners challenge and seek to reduce anti-social behaviour wherever possible.

Specific comments have been made in relation to some of the priority projects and, where appropriate, additional information has been included. The proposed Transport Hub received majority support from respondents but set out more specific proposals of various aspects to the Hub with suggestions that the Hub should have facilities such as toilets and a coffee shop. Some of the priority projects reference alternatives to external roller shutters and it is recognised there needs to be a balance between security and visual impact.

The responses highlighted the greening of the Town Centre including planting of trees. This is reflected in the Masterplan with its nature and wildlife objective, the strategic emphasis on a high quality public realm and the various Themes including 'an attractive place'. This also supports mental health and well being objectives.

One aspect raised that is not specifically identified in the Masterplan is the potential for reducing flooding and, where practical, the de-culverting of the Baker Lane Brook. An additional objective for the Masterplan is proposed 'To Reduce Flood Risk'. This reflects that there may be opportunities to reduce flooding through projects while improving biodiversity habitat and providing additional open space for local residents to enjoy.

A revised Hucknall Town Centre Masterplan and a consultation statement will be considered by the Cabinet on 19th July 2022.

## **Implications**

**Corporate Plan:** While there are no implications from this report for the Corporate Plan, if adopted, the Masterplan will contribute towards the strategic objectives in the Corporate Plan,

allowing the Council to serve the communities and residents of Ashfield, deliver services that are good quality and value for money, and plan strategically for the future to ensure sustainability.

**Legal:** There are no legal implications contained within the report. [RLD 23/06/2022]

**Finance:** There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. [PH 27/06/2022].

| Budget Area                                 | Implication |
|---|-------------|
| General Fund – Revenue Budget               | None        |
| General Fund – Capital Programme            | None        |
| Housing Revenue Account – Revenue Budget    | None        |
| Housing Revenue Account – Capital Programme | None        |

**Risk:**

| Risk  | Mitigation |
|---|------------|
| There are no known risks associated with the report |            |

**Human Resources:** There are no direct Human Resource implications within the report.

**Environmental/Sustainability:** If adopted, the Masterplan will provide the opportunity to enhance and invigorate the town centre, providing an attractive environment in which to shop, visit, live and work. Along with a potential for improved connectivity, this will encourage sustainable travel pattern for the local catchment population.

**Equalities:** An Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken for the draft Masterplan, which identified no issues. Amendments are anticipated to the draft Masterplan to emphasise how its objectives, strategy and proposals reflect equality of opportunity for all users of the town centre.

**Other Implications:** None

**Reason(s) for Urgency:** Not applicable

**Reason(s) for Exemption:** Not applicable

**Background Papers**

Draft Hucknall Town Centre Masterplan, March 2002. (Available on the Council's website <https://www.ashfield.gov.uk/planning-building-control/local-plan/hucknall-town-centre-masterplan/> )

## **Report Author and Contact Officer**

Neil Oxby

Forward Planning Officer

neil.oxby@ashfield.gov.uk

01623 457381

## **Sponsoring Director**

David Lawrence

INTERIM DIRECTOR OF PLACE AND COMMUNITY

david.lawrence@ashfield.gov.uk

01623 457444