

# Cabinet



*St Edmundsbury*  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Bury St Edmunds Town Centre Masterplan Progress</b>	
<b>Report No:</b>	<b>CAB/SE/17/035</b>	
<b>Report to and date:</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>	27 June 2017
<b>Portfolio holder:</b>	Alaric Pugh Portfolio Holder for Planning and Growth <b>Tel:</b> 07930460899 <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:alaric.pugh@stedsbc.gov.uk">alaric.pugh@stedsbc.gov.uk</a>	
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<b>Purpose of report:</b>	To inform Members of the progress of the Bury St Edmunds Town Centre Masterplan process; to outline the outcomes of consultation into the issues and options phase for Cabinet to note and offer comments.	
<b>Recommendation:</b>	<p><b>It is <u>RECOMMENDED</u> that:</b></p> <p><b>(1) the outcome of consultation into the Bury St Edmunds Town Centre Masterplan issues and options, as summarised in paragraphs 1.6 and 1.7 of Report No: CAB/SE/17/035, be noted; and</b></p> <p><b>(2) delegated authority be given to the Assistant Director (Growth), in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Growth, to approve the draft Masterplan Report for public consultation.</b></p>	
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<p><i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i></p> <p>No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	

*The decisions made as a result of this report will usually be published within **48 hours** and cannot be actioned until **five clear working days of the publication of the decision** have elapsed. This item is included on the Decisions Plan.*

<p><b>Consultation:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Issues and Options consultation took place between 27 February and 21 April 2017 and included nine public events at various locations and static displays at six other locations. Information was also provided and updated on the Council’s Facebook page. In addition, public meetings were held by partner groups.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Alternative option(s):</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not to prepare a masterplan. This option would result in the uncoordinated approach to the development of the town; and many missed opportunities.</li> <li>The masterplan will eventually become a Statutory Planning Document. As such, there is a mandatory process to go through in terms of options appraisals.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Implications:</b></p>	
<p>Are there any <b>financial</b> implications? If yes, please give details</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None outside the normal resources required.</li> </ul>
<p>Are there any <b>staffing</b> implications? If yes, please give details</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None outside the normal resources required.</li> </ul>
<p>Are there any <b>ICT</b> implications? If yes, please give details</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None outside the normal resources required.</li> </ul>
<p>Are there any <b>legal and/or policy</b> implications? If yes, please give details</p>	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When the Masterplan is adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document it will become a formal planning policy document.</li> </ul>
<p>Are there any <b>equality</b> implications? If yes, please give details</p>	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The process is subject to the council’s Statement of Community Involvement.</li> <li>The Council has a duty to consider the needs of all when preparing the Masterplan document. For example, officers have set up an Accessibility Consultation Group in order to hear the views of those people who can sometimes be harder to reach.</li> </ul>

<b>Risk/opportunity assessment:</b>		<i>(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)</i>	
<b>Risk area</b>	<b>Inherent level of risk (before controls)</b>	<b>Controls</b>	<b>Residual risk (after controls)</b>
Members of the public do not feel engaged	Medium	There is a Communication and Public Engagement Plan in place. This includes numerous events targeting town centre users.	Low
Members of the public do not feel that the issues and options raised in the consultation report are correct	Medium	There will be a 6-week public consultation on the Issues and Options where members of the public will be able to explain what they do and do not agree with.	Low
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>		All Wards	
<b>Background papers:</b> <i>(all background papers are to be published on the website and a link included)</i>		Cabinet Report No: CAB/SE/17/011 <a href="https://democracy.westsuffolk.gov.uk/documents/g3310/Public%20reports%20pack%20Tuesday%2007-Feb-2017%2017.00%20St%20Edmundsbury%20Cabinet.pdf?T=10">https://democracy.westsuffolk.gov.uk/documents/g3310/Public%20reports%20pack%20Tuesday%2007-Feb-2017%2017.00%20St%20Edmundsbury%20Cabinet.pdf?T=10</a>	
<b>Documents attached:</b>		<b>Appendix A</b> – Questionnaire Report <i>(not printed for Members due to the length of document, but available to view on the website at:</i> <a href="https://democracy.westsuffolk.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=131&amp;MIId=3594&amp;Ver=4">https://democracy.westsuffolk.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=131&amp;MIId=3594&amp;Ver=4</a> <b>Appendix B</b> – Town Centre Masterplan map	

## **1. Key issues and reasons for recommendations**

### **1.1 Background**

- 1.1.1 The Bury St Edmunds Vision 2031 document was adopted by St Edmundsbury Borough Council (SEBC) in September 2014. The preparation of a masterplan for Bury St Edmunds town centre is referred to in Policy BV27 of this document.
- 1.1.2 The masterplan boundary was determined in Policy BV27 (see Appendix B for a map). The boundary covers a wide area of the town centre, broadly defined by Tayfen Road to the north, Parkway and Chalk Road to the west, and the Rivers Lark and Linnet to the south and east. Please note that although there is a defined boundary, the masterplan will consider what lies beyond that boundary and how it relates to the town centre.
- 1.1.3 The aim of the masterplan is to set guidelines for the future growth and development of Bury St Edmunds town centre and to provide the framework for individual development proposals to be assessed when they come forward.
- 1.1.4 The masterplan will also address:
- a) town centre uses (including retail and leisure);
  - b) opportunities for mixed use development;
  - c) town centre traffic management, including car parking and sustainable travel options;
  - d) heritage conservation and the quality of the environment;
  - e) art and the public realm; and
  - f) accessibility for all town centre users (including the influence of the mental health agenda and Families and Communities Strategy).
- 1.1.5 Town Planning experts, David Lock Associates and Peter Brett Associates, were appointed in early November 2016 to deliver the masterplan, working closely with officers and other stakeholders.

### **1.2 Governance**

- 1.2.1 The Council is legally responsible for the masterplan; the final Masterplan will become a formal Supplementary Planning Document.
- 1.2.2 The governance is provided by the councillor representation for Bury St Edmunds, jointly with Cabinet.
- 1.2.3 The masterplan is being co-produced; as such, a Bury St Edmunds Town Centre Masterplan Working Group has been created, which consists of:
- a) Portfolio Holders for Planning and Growth (Chair of the Working Group), and Families and Communities;
  - b) St Edmundsbury Borough councillors;
  - c) Bury St Edmunds Town councillor;
  - d) Suffolk County councillors;
  - e) Business representative groups;
  - f) Trader association representative; and
  - g) Heritage/environment representative groups.

1.2.4 Bury St Edmunds ward members also have a governing role and are invited to attend meetings at strategic points in the process.

### 1.3 **Timescales**

1.3.1 Indicative timescales for the masterplan are outlined below:

- a) **Stage 1**: Analysis and baseline review - w/c 7 November 2016; **Completed**
- b) **Stage 1a**: Presentation of initial findings - w/c 12 December 2016; **Completed**
- c) **Stage 2**: Preparation of issues and options report – w/c 19 December 2016; **Completed**
- d) **Stage 2a**: Issues and options consultation period – w/c 27 February 2017; **Completed**
- e) **Stage 3**: Production of draft masterplan - w/c 24 April 2017; **In Progress**
- f) **Stage 3a**: – Consultation lead-in and preparation – w/c 17 July 2017;
- g) **Stage 3b**: Draft masterplan consultation period – w/c 31 July 2017;
- h) **Stage 4**: Finalise masterplan – w/c 11 September 2017;
- i) **Stage 5**: Handover – Week 50 – w/c 6 November 2017; and
- j) Full Council adoption of Masterplan as Supplementary Planning Guidance – by the end of 2017.

### 1.4 **Communications plan**

1.4.1 There is a dedicated communications officer on the core officer group and a communications plan is in place. The key messages for the masterplan are:

- a) **Ambition** - Bury St Edmunds has one of the best retail, culture and leisure centres in the region and continues to attract people from across Suffolk and neighbouring counties. Our ambition is for our town to continue to be vibrant and prosperous, especially as other centres are looking to increase their offer - so we need to start planning for the future.
- b) **People** - West Suffolk is a desirable place in which to live and Bury St Edmunds will grow by at least another 5,740 homes between 2012 and 2031, meeting the various demands for homes, including affordable housing. We need to look to 2031 and beyond to make sure we have the right mix of town centre, culture and leisure, not just to meet demand for our own increasing number of residents, but also to continue supporting the local economy by promoting Bury St Edmunds as a visitor destination and boosting visitor spend.
- c) **Future investment** - We know that there are current pinch points to the parking and roads infrastructure; a new masterplan gives us the opportunity to tackle these issues, plan for future growth and ensure that the town centre is accessible for people with a range of different needs. We will work with our partners to make it simple and convenient for everybody to walk, cycle, catch the bus or the train and use a mobility scooter. We also recognise that there is limited vehicle capacity in the historic streets of the town centre.

- d) **Track record** – Twelve years ago St Edmundsbury Borough Council drove forward plans for the arc development, which included investing in The Apex. Despite opening during the recession in 2009, the arc has been a huge success story, adding modern architecture to the town’s heritage and playing a major role in the vibrancy of the town which has a shop vacancy rate lower than the national average. St Edmundsbury Borough Council also led on the project to establish a Business Improvement District (BID) for the town. Amongst other things, the BID – Ourburystedmunds - now runs a series of popular town centre events, all designed to increase footfall and spend in the town. All of this has established the town’s strong market position and has seen it win various accolades including being named as one of Britain’s top five high streets (East Anglian Daily Times, October 2015).

## 1.5 **Public engagement/consultation plan**

- 1.5.1 Firstly and foremost, in terms of engagement and consultation this is a co-produced Masterplan.
- 1.5.2 There is a dedicated public engagement/consultation plan in place which is regularly updated.
- 1.5.3 There are two formal six-week public consultation periods during any masterplan process. The first of these was the Issues and Options consultation which has now been completed. The second will be the Draft Masterplan consultation in Summer 2017.
- 1.5.4 Two groups, in particular, have been actively involved in consultation to date (and continue to have an active role throughout):
- a) **Bury Assembly of Associations** – the 11 residents’ associations operating within the Town Council boundary area. The main estates across the town and the medieval grid and Southgate and Eastgate Street areas are represented.
  - b) **Accessibility Working Group** (created specifically for the masterplan) – 10 organisations representing people with additional needs who live, work, shop and visit Bury St Edmunds town centre. The organisations participating in this group are:
    - i. Age UK Suffolk
    - ii. Avenues East
    - iii. Bury Dementia Action Alliance
    - iv. Leading Lives
    - v. SEBC Families and Communities Officer – Vulnerable People specialist
    - vi. St Nicholas Hospice
    - vii. Suffolk Coalition of Disabled People
    - viii. Suffolk Deaf Association
    - ix. Suffolk Family Carers
    - x. Suffolk Mind
    - xi. West Suffolk Blind Association
    - xii. West Suffolk National Autistic Society

- 1.5.5 During the formal consultation periods there will be public displays at several venues, including:
- a) West Suffolk House reception
  - b) Apex
  - c) Library

At each public display there will be information posters, copies of the Issues and Options Report, roller banners, hard copy questionnaires, a ballot box (to post questionnaires), business cards (with a link to the online survey).

There will also be several events taking place throughout the consultation period, for example:

- a) Market stalls;
- b) Evening drop-in following market day in a central location (e.g. Apex);
- c) Sessions at main supermarkets;
- d) Session at key locations; and
- e) Additional community events.

At each event, which will be staffed by the project team and where possible members of the Working Group, there will be hard copy questionnaires, copies of the Issues and Options report, roller banners and business cards.

## 1.6 **Issues and Options consultation**

1.6.1 Consultation took place between Monday 27 February and Friday 21 April 2017.

1.6.2 During the formal consultation periods there were public displays at several venues, as noted in 1.5.5 above.

There were also several events which took place throughout the consultation period, for example:

- a) Market stalls - 2 Wednesday, 1 Saturday;
- b) Evening drop-in following market day in a central location (e.g. Apex);
- c) Sessions at main supermarkets – Waitrose, Sainsbury's, Tesco and Asda;
- d) Session at Bury Leisure Centre; and
- e) Additional community events.

Each event was staffed by members of the project team and where possible members of the Working Group.

In addition, a public meeting was hosted by The Bury St Edmunds Society in partnership with the Churchgate Area Association. This was attended by members of the project team. In addition, members of the project team were invited to make a presentation to the Moreton Hall Residents Association.

1.6.3 Information was also provided on the Council's Facebook page, which was constantly monitored and updated. The Facebook engagement reached more than 23,200 people. There were many posts and comments throughout the

eight weeks. The post that launched the consultation saw the greatest level of engagement with 123 likes, 2 loves and one dislike plus more than 180 comments.

## 1.7 **Presentation of initial findings – headline issues**

- 1.7.1 The Issues and Options Report was accompanied by a questionnaire which asked relevant questions around key issues and a range of masterplan options. For each question seeking an opinion, in addition to the options agree/don't know/disagree, there was an opportunity to provide other comments in a free text box.
- 1.7.2 To view the full responses received to the consultation please see Appendix A – Questionnaire Report.
- 1.7.3 In total, 1,143 responses were received. 875 filled out the questionnaire online. Our website analytics suggest that the majority of the visits to our Bury St Edmunds Town Centre Masterplan pages came via Facebook, followed by Google.

### Respondents

- 1.7.4 The given gender of respondents was:
- |           |     |
|-----------|-----|
| a) Male   | 42% |
| b) Female | 57% |
| c) Other  | 1%  |
- 1.7.5 The given age range of respondents was:
- |                      |     |
|----------------------|-----|
| a) Under 16          | 1%  |
| b) 16-24             | 5%  |
| c) 25-34             | 11% |
| d) 35-44             | 16% |
| e) 45-54             | 19% |
| f) 55-64             | 20% |
| g) 65-74             | 19% |
| h) 75 and over       | 7%  |
| i) Prefer not to say | 3%  |
- 1.7.6 The occupation/relationship of respondents with the town centre was:
- |                                      |     |
|--------------------------------------|-----|
| a) a Bury St Edmunds resident        | 73% |
| b) working in Bury St Edmunds        | 31% |
| c) a visitor to BSE - <10 miles away | 13% |
| d) a visitor to BSE >10 miles away   | 5%  |
| e) a student                         | 3%  |
| f) retired                           | 20% |
| g) other                             | 3%  |
| h) prefer not to say                 | 2%  |

### Key Objectives and Issues

- 1.7.7 A number of statements were presented setting out the overarching key objectives the masterplan will seek to address. Respondents were asked whether they agreed with each statement. The response was overwhelmingly



positive with approval ranging from 77% to 97% across the eight key objectives.

1.7.8 Respondents were asked to select which of 11 key issues they thought were the most important to address within the town centre, being able to select all that applied. The results were:

- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| i. Preserving the unique local identity and character of the town centre  | 76% |
| ii. Preserving and enhancing the historic buildings and spaces  | 68% |
| iii. Improving the links between the arc shopping centre and the old town   | 55% |
| iv. Making sure the town centre is enjoyed by all sections of the community (including young and older people and people with disabilities) | 52% |
| v. Making sure there is a good mix of uses (i.e. businesses, shops, hotels, housing) in the town centre                                     | 52% |
| vi. Encouraging better access into and around the town centre for pedestrians, cyclists and those with mobility requirements                | 49% |
| vii. Providing enhancements to streets, walkways, squares, parks and public spaces  | 46% |
| viii. Encouraging better access into and out of the town centre for public transport  | 41% |
| ix. Better walking routes and directions from the train station to the town centre  | 41% |
| x. Encouraging better access into and around the town centre for car users  | 39% |
| xi. Identifying spaces for new businesses, services, offices and leisure and cultural facilities as the town's population grows             | 29% |

1.7.9 All age groups agree on the top three issues:

- Preserving the unique local identity/character of the town centre
- Preserving and enhancing the historic buildings and spaces
- Improving the links between the arc and the old town

1.7.10 The 0-34 year olds rank 'Improving the links between the arc and the old town' higher than 'Preserving and enhancing the historic buildings and spaces'

1.7.11 The 65+ age group rank 'Making sure there is a good mix of uses...' at no.7 of 11, but the two younger age groups rank this higher at no.s 4 and 5. Students rank this issue at no.1

#### Key Questions

1.7.12 What you like to see more of in the town centre?

1.7.13 Respondents were asked to select from a list of options they would like to see more of in the town centre.

- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| 1. Independent shops  | 80% |
| 2. Cultural events and facilities (e.g. theatres, cinemas, live music, art galleries) | 54% |
| 3. Independent cafes and restaurants  | 45% |
| 4. Capacity for larger attractions and events   |     |

(e.g. outdoor events, festivals)	36%
5. National retailers	32%
6. Leisure and sports facilities	22%
7. Hotels and guest houses	21%
8. Housing	19%
9. Pubs and bars	15%
10. Other	11%
11. National/international cafes and restaurants	8%
12. Offices	6%

1.7.14 All age groups and both retired and visitor respondents agree on the top three:

1. 'Independent shops'
2. 'Cultural events and facilities'
3. Independent cafes and restaurants

1.7.15 Over 82% of retired respondents and 80% of visitors ticked they would like to see more independent shops

1.7.16 Students rank the 'Capacity for larger attractions and events' at no. 3 rather than 'Independent cafes and restaurants'

1.7.17 The 65+ groups rank 'Housing' at no. 5 while 0-34 yr olds rank it at 10 and students rank it at 8

1.7.18 What additional type of residential accommodation should be developed in the town centre?

1.7.19 Respondents were asked to select from a list of options for what additional types of residential accommodation they would like to see more of in the town centre.

1. Housing that is affordable	58%
2. Flats or apartments for older people	44%
3. Sheltered accommodation for older people	35%
4. Housing for single people	35%
5. Housing for people needing care or support	
6. (e.g. those with additional needs)	30%
7. Housing for families	28%
8. None	16%
9. Other	8%

1.7.20 Housing that is 'affordable' ranks top for all age groups apart from the 65+ and retired respondents where it ranks 2<sup>nd</sup> with 'Flats or apartments for older people' at no.1

1.7.21 'Housing for single people' ranks highly for the 0-34 age group

1.7.22 'Housing for families' ranks at no.3 with the 0-34 age group and students, but at no.s 5 or 6 for other groups

1.7.23 15.6% of all residents ticked that there should not be any additional housing in the town centre, however this figure is much smaller at 3.3% for the student group

- 1.7.24 What changes, if any, would you like to see to parking within the town centre?
- 1.7.25 Respondents were asked to select from a list of options for what changes to parking they would like in the town centre.
1. Increased number of short stay (up to 3 hours) car parking spaces in town centre 46%
  2. Increased number of long stay (over 3 hours) car parking spaces in town centre 47%
  3. Other 25%
  4. Additional car parking spaces for disabled users 17%
  5. None 15%
- 1.7.26 Over 40% of respondents ticked that they would like to see more parking, with an increase in long stay parking slightly more popular than short stay
- 1.7.27 Over 23% of respondents feel we need an increased number of parking spaces in town, both long and short stay
- 1.7.28 Over 25% of those aged 65+ would like to see additional parking for disabled users
- 1.7.29 13.9% of all respondents do not think there needs to be any changes. Ticks from visitors support this figure
- 1.7.30 What changes would you like to make to green spaces in and around the town centre?
- 1.7.31 Respondents were asked to select from a list of options for what changes to green spaces they would like in the town centre.
1. Improved access to more green and open spaces (e.g. alongside River Lark) 71%
  2. Provision of more attractive pedestrian and cycle routes, in and out of, and around the town centre 60%
  3. Enhanced quality of existing green spaces 56%
  4. Additional tree and shrub planting 54%
  5. Enhanced provision of wildlife habitat 52%
  6. provision of better signage and information boards 43%
  7. Provision of more outdoor health and fitness facilities 31%
  8. Other 12%
  9. None 2%
- All groups ranked 'Improved access to more green and open spaces' at no.1, with over 65% ticking this option
- 1.7.32 The 'provision of more attractive pedestrian and cycle routes...' ranks more highly with the 0-64 age groups than the over 65s
- 1.7.33 Over 65s rank 'Enhanced quality of existing green spaces' and additional planting' more highly, as do visitors

- 1.7.34 20.7% of 65+ year olds selected 'Provision of more outdoor health and fitness facilities' compared with 41.3% of 0-34s
- 1.7.35 'Better signage and information boards ranked highest with over 65s and visitors from more than 10 miles away

Free text responses

- 1.7.36 All free text responses were analysed individually and a total of 5,857 individual comments and suggestions recorded. Of the free text responses analysed, the top ten areas of comment across the entire questionnaire were:

1. Increased/improved provision of seating areas and social spaces
2. Pedestrianisation of town centre/more pedestrian areas and/or discourage vehicles
3. Cyclists/walkers - improved routes into/around town
4. Public spaces - Pavements - improvements/repairs
5. Environment - more trees/planters/floral displays
6. Parking - Park & Ride
7. Toilets - increased provision in town centre
8. Environment - more litter bins/less litter
9. Public transport - Improve bus service into BSE/around centre
10. Accessibility - improve pedestrian safety, especially crossings

- 1.7.37 Other responses of quantitative note across the key objectives were:

- i. Accommodating and supporting growth
  - Increased provision of spaces for and promotion of arts
  - Community facilities including venues and support
- ii. Maintaining a strong historic heart
  - Investment in and preservation of heritage
  - Promote, celebrate and improve information about heritage
  - Historic buildings to be used appropriately, accessible and not left empty
- iii. Identifying and arc of opportunity
  - Provision of affordable/social housing
  - Improved/retained green spaces
- iv. Supporting thriving mixed use neighbourhoods
  - Utilise spaces above shops
  - Mixed housing provision for all ages
- v. Providing welcoming gateways and approaches
  - Cheaper/more affordable parking
  - Pay on Exit parking
- vi. Encouraging vibrant, well designed streets and spaces
  - Improved signage and lighting
  - Outdoor seating, i.e. 'café culture'

- vii. Managing and enabling accessibility for all
  - Improved disabled access around the town centre, especially into shops and venues
  - Increase/improve disabled toilet/change facilities
- viii. Capitalising on green and blue spaces and edges
  - Preserve and improve access to river/water meadow areas
  - Improved habitats

## 1.8 **Next steps**

- 1.8.1 The next stage of the masterplan process is for the consultants to prepare the draft masterplan, informed by the consultation responses to the issues and options report. This will be informed by the Masterplan Working Group prior to the second stage of consultation.

## 1.9 **Draft Masterplan Report for consultation – delegated authority requested**

- 1.9.1 In conclusion, the draft masterplan report will go out for public consultation at the end of July 2017.
- 1.9.2 The Masterplan Working Group will be informed and amendments implemented within the draft masterplan report as part of their lead role in co-producing the masterplan. However, officers have asked that Cabinet gives delegated authority to the Assistant Director Growth, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Growth, to approve the draft Masterplan Report for public consultation.