



**Report to: Cabinet 21<sup>st</sup> March 2017**

**Report of: Councillor Geoff Williams, Cabinet Member for Economic Prosperity and Growth**

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**Subject: WORCESTER CITY MASTER PLAN UPDATE**

## **1. Recommendations**

- 1.1 The Cabinet approves the allocation £75k from the "City Plan Fund" towards the production of an updated City Master Plan.**
- 1.2 The Cabinet notes the contribution of £25k from Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership towards the costs.**

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 In response to the Scrutiny Committee Review titled 'Traffic Reduction through Positive Behavioural Change Activities', Cabinet agreed that, in parallel with the development of LTP 4, the City Council will work with key stakeholders including the County Council and the LEP to develop and adopt the City Centre Master Plan.
- 2.2 In addition, there are a number of key town planning and economic plans and development projects in place that make it timely for the City Council to consider an update of the City Centre Master Plan – Stage One (July 2012).

These are:

- Local Enterprise Partnership – Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) to 2025 (2014)
- South Worcestershire Development Plan (February 2016)
- Worcester City Plan 2016 -2021 (November 2016)
- The Draft Local Transport Plan 4, (December 2016) – final plan to be published by County Council in Summer 2017
- Worcester City Tourism Strategy (January 2017)
- Commencement of "One Town Review" (March 2017)

## **3. Policy Context**

### **2016 City Plan**

- 3.1 **Section 4** of the 2016 City Plan "A Heritage City for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, provides the starting point for an updated master plan and new transport strategy. It seeks..." the creation of a master plan for the City that brings together the need for sustainable growth and development, whilst maintaining a balance between historic and good quality new buildings and other city assets".

- 3.2 Under **Section 5** "Sustaining Assets", the Plan seeks..."a riverside plan to ensure the Severn, canals and basins are a focus point for tourism and wellbeing in our City, and a focus for social and healthy activity.
- 3.3 **Section 1** "Stronger and Connected Communities", the Plan asks for ..."an accessible City in the physical sense and in the virtual and digital sense".
- 3.4 At **Section 2** "Prosperous City", the plan wants a strategy to "achieve its infrastructure ambitions", and at **Section 3** "Healthy and Active City", the Worcester City Plan wants to see..." transportation improved, reducing congestion, improving air quality, increased cycling and walking, enhancements to the City's ring and radial routes, good links to Worcester Parkway Station, (including rail links) and the development of "rail and ride".

### South Worcestershire Development Plan

- 3.5 SWDP Policies 43, (Worcester City); 44 (City Centre) and 45 (Directions for Growth) support the need for a practical Master Plan to help drive delivery of the Plan's key aims. At page 205-206. Policy 43 seeks to support..."**sustained investment in economic development, aligned with successful advances in sustainable travel, leading to a thriving city and a vibrant and diverse centre with a strong retail and leisure offer**". The policy demands an approach that seeks to deliver, (page 2016):
- a high skill, high value added and knowledge-based economy
  - growth of the City's Further and Higher Education institutions
  - a prestige tourist and historic destination
  - a well managed city centre
  - a city with integrated and high quality transport and infrastructure
  - housing growth
  - business and jobs growth and improved community services and facilities
- 3.6 SWDP Policies 44 (City Centre) seeks the plan to deliver the following:
- **Cathedral Square** and further connectivity to the Cathedral and River
  - **Fire Station/Crown Gate/Angel Place/The Butts**: redevelopment, expansion and greater connectivity to the centre, the riverside and the university
  - **Cornmarket/Trinity House**: redevelopment and public square and better connectivity to St Martin's Quarter and Shrub Hill
  - **Opportunity Zones Development – Shrub Hill; Lowesmoor; Carden Street and Cathedral Quarter & Sidbury**: redevelopment and improvement to provide a city centre commercial offer; mixed use and cultural developments; sustainable travel choices and maintained views of the historic centre
  - **Riverside**: improvement and development opportunities to increase activity; retail and leisure – improved access and public open space, and improved sports and cultural and education facilities. The Riverside could also be an area for commercial development.

## **Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) – Local Enterprise Partnership**

- 3.7 The SEP describes Worcester city as ...“the main urban area and civic and cultural centre of the county. It has the potential to develop as an ‘engine’ for growth. At present, the service sector in the city is currently underdeveloped given its location and position as the principal centre for the county”.
- 3.8 The SEP in Appendix F, sets out important key improvement projects for the City:
- Develop a new strong commercial offer in the city centre
  - Support University/College growth
  - Development of 4-6k homes in 2 Urban Extensions
  - City Centre Public Realm Improvements
  - More River Crossings
  - New City Cultural Hub – Royal Porcelain Factory
  - Regeneration of Shrub hill, Lowesmoor, Cardman Street and Cathedral Quarter/Sidbury – (particularly through improving the strategic access to the main road/rail networks)
  - Rapid Transit Link between a new Parkway Station and Shrub Hill
  - Worcester 6 Technology Park

## **Draft Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) – County Council**

- 3.9 The draft LTP4 sets out some key issues for Worcester City: “The busiest section of the A-road network is the A44 Worcester Bridge in the City Centre. High levels of demand have led to peak period congestion, journey time unreliability, environmental issues and the designation of three Air Quality Management Areas in Worcester (Dolday/Bridge Street, Lowesmoor and Rainbow Hill and St John’s), with a number of other parts of the city are being monitored.”
- 3.10 The draft LTP4 also suggests 3 main improvements for the City:
- Nine key arterial road corridors to be improved in terms of traffic flow, along with a number of active cycling and walking corridors
  - Station improvements to Shrub Hill and Foregate Street, and
  - The development of a Worcester City Transport Strategy

## **One Town Review (OTR) – Place Partnership**

- 3.11 OTR will begin in March 2017 and will map the property assets of the public estate, including the City and County Councils. This will then lead to an assessment of opportunities to improve public services and gain better value from public assets. This process will contribute to the development of the City’s Master Plan.

## **4. Delivery & Governance of a Worcester City Master Plan Update**

- 4.1 The following 3 groups will oversee the development of the City Master Plan Update:
- City and County Officers Group, including consultants/project officers;

- Cabinet/Policy & Resources Committee Working Group and
- City Strategic Delivery Board – City, University; College, County Council, Place Partnership, Network Rail, Training, Employment & Business representatives; Major land owner and public transport representatives

4.2 Overall Master Plan– there are likely to be 6 work stages:

- **Spatial and Economic Assessment:** Review strategic spatial and economic plans for the City, and its relationship to County settlements and the West Midlands. One Town Review needs and opportunities.
- **Transport Assessment:** Review strategic and local transport plans and strategy for the City
- **Site Development** and key Opportunity Areas. One Town Review needs and opportunities.
- **Urban Design** context for areas and key sites, and public realm and connections to transport infrastructure
- **Area and Site delivery mechanisms** – funding; partnering; delivery mechanisms/vehicles; delivery resources and timescales
- **Overall summary, plan and key actions.**

These stages would include coordinating and servicing the governance mechanisms.

4.3 Indicative costing

Overall costs of up to £100k covering:

- Urban Design
- Site Development
- Valuations
- Transport and Infrastructure Modelling

4.4 Timescales will be agreed with appointed consultants, however it is envisaged that the 2017-18 outline programme will be as follows:

- Procurement, inception and reviews Q1
- Sites & Urban Design Q1-2
- Delivery Mechanisms Q2-3
- Adoption of Master Plan Q3

## **5. Alternative Options Considered**

5.1 The alternative option of delivering the updated Master Plan from in-house resources is not considered viable as the City Council does not have the capacity to produce the document within the required timescale nor the technical capability.

## **6. Implications**

6.1 Financial and Budgetary Implications: It is proposed that this project is funded with £75k from the City Plan Fund with an additional £25k contribution from the LEP.

- 6.2 Legal and Governance Implications: These are set out in Section 4 of this report.
- 6.3 Risk Implications: Risks will be managed through adherence to formal procurement and project management procedures and financial contingency planning.
- 6.4 Corporate/Policy Implications: These are set out in section 3 of this report.
- 6.5 Equality Implications:  
This Plan will positively support equality by supporting the creation of a plan that will deliver a range of development and infrastructure improvements for all City residents, businesses and agencies. Implementation will be subject to equality impact assessment.
- 6.6 Human Resources Implications: Management of the project will be provided from existing staff resources.
- 6.7 Health and Safety Implications: There are no health and safety implications relevant to this report.

**Ward(s):** All wards  
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**Background Papers:** LEP Strategic Economic Plan 2014; County Local Transport Plan 4 Draft Dec 2016; City Council Comments on LTP4 14<sup>th</sup> Feb 2017 Cabinet; SWDP Feb 2016; 2016 Worcester City Plan; 2012 Worcester City Master Plan (WCMP) – Stage One