

Partnership working with Hampshire County Council

Report of the Leader / Strategic Regeneration and Partnership (North) and Deputy Leader/ Strategic Regeneration and Partnership (South)

Recommended:

To amend the previously approved Partnership Board structure and parameters as outlined in section 6 with Hampshire County Council and other key stakeholders as appropriate in order to facilitate the delivery of the Andover and Romsey masterplans and other appropriate strategic proposals within the Borough.

Summary:

- The delivery of the Andover and Romsey masterplans are a key priority of the Council. In order to help secure the delivery of the masterplans it requires a close working relationship with partners, including Hampshire County Council. Following the introduction of a new partnership model by Hampshire County Council it is proposed to amend the current structure.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 In December 2021 Cabinet agreed to establish a partnership board to help guide the delivery of the Andover masterplan. This partnership board would formalise the existing working relationship at an advisory and consultative level with key partners.
- 1.2 Since that decision Hampshire County Council has adopted a new model for engagement and partnership working at a Borough scale. To reflect this new approach the Council needs to broaden its partnership board structure and parameters.

2 Background

- 2.1 The regeneration of Andover is one of the leading priorities for the Council. The core elements of the masterplan look to adapt the town centre to reflect the changing ways we use our towns. This includes creating a mixture of uses including a significant number of new homes.
- 2.2 Whilst of different scale the delivery of the South of Romsey Town Centre masterplan is equally important in supporting the long term vitality of the town centre.

- 2.3 Such aspirations complement the Government's drive for growth and their 'Levelling Up' agenda and the principles of supporting and providing the required infrastructure necessary to improve our communities, economy and environment. This includes the Government's ambition for housing growth in particular on brownfield sites
- 2.4 To secure the combination of the Government's aspiration and the successful delivery of the Andover masterplan, Cabinet recognised that the existing working relationships and partnerships with stakeholders, including in particular Hampshire County Council, needed to be formalised. Cabinet agreed to establish a partnership board structure in December 2021.
- 2.5 Since that time Hampshire County Council has introduced a strategic partnership model for working across district authorities rather than specific town regeneration schemes. This intends to allow for a more proactive and collaborative approach to engagement with the aim to maximise resources and capacity and to reduce the existing less co-ordinated working arrangements with the multi-disciplinary working of the County Council. Given this new model it is necessary to amend the Council's partnership board structure.

3 Corporate Objectives and Priorities

- 3.1 Town Centres are one of the four priority areas of the Council's Corporate Plan (2019-2023). Establishing a joint board would help deliver the objective of adapting the town centres and making them attractive, vibrant and prosperous places to be achieved.
- 3.2 The principles contained within the two masterplans also complement the recommendations contained within the Hampshire Vision 2050 document relating to both the changing economy and changing environment agenda, specifically "To maintain, regenerate and develop vibrant settlements across Hampshire to offer attractive, stimulating and thriving business, and cultural and residential environment and communities".

4 Consultations/Communications

- 4.1 The principle of the proposed approach has been discussed with senior officers and Councillors of both Councils. Wider engagement with other key stakeholders would occur in due course.
- 4.2 Both masterplans have been completed following thorough and comprehensive public and stakeholder engagement and each had either Andover Vision or Romsey Future at its foundation. The partnership board proposes that this should continue through a dedicated engagement group but broadened to encompass those economic and growth opportunities across the Borough.

5 Options

- 5.1 The options for consideration are whether to amend the partnership board model with Hampshire County Council and others (option 1) or not (option 2).

6 Option Appraisal

Option 1

- 6.1 The success of any regeneration programme is in part down to the strength of its partnership and the working arrangements between the various decision makers, delivery bodies and key landowners. Whilst both Councils have a strong history of working together this has been on a less co-ordinated basis and meant making the most of opportunities when they arise across the Borough. By adapting the board structure to complement the County Council model it allows progress to continue in a structured way across the Borough and afford this Council the earliest possible insight into potential opportunities (funding or otherwise) for co-operation and co-ordination on issues likely to influence the masterplan projects and wider shared strategic issues particularly those linked to economic development, infrastructure, regeneration and growth.
- 6.2 To reflect the County Council's model it is proposed to amend the structure to form a single overarching Partnership Board for the whole of the Test Valley Borough area. The board will provide a mechanism to consider and advise on strategic issues including, but not limited to, place making; phasing, infrastructure delivery; bids for external funding and engagement. Having a borough wide board would not only provide opportunity for progress with the two town centre masterplans but also the ability to cover other opportunities that may arise in other areas of the Borough beyond the scope of the masterplans.
- 6.3 It is proposed that at this stage the board would only comprise the Council and Hampshire County Council. Over time, it is likely the membership of the board will be updated to reflect the evolving nature of the partnership. For example in due course the membership could be widened to include other partners such as Enterprise M3 LEP and key landowners.
- 6.4 The composition of the Partnership Board is an important factor with the need to establish the correct balance and numbers to ensure that momentum can be maintained. Initially the group would comprise Councillors from both the County Council and Borough Council. It is proposed that this would include the County Council's Leader and Executive Member for Policy & Resources and Economic Development. It is also proposed that the Leader of the Council would be a member in his role as the Borough's Portfolio Holder for Strategic Regeneration and Partnership (North) and as chair of Andover Vision with the Deputy Leader also being a member in his role as Portfolio Holder for Strategic Regeneration and Partnership (South) and as chair of Romsey Future. The Housing and Environmental Health Portfolio Holder from the Council will also be a member in order to provide a Borough wide perspective.
- 6.5 The board will be advisory in nature only. Formal decision making will rest with the relevant party and will be made in accordance with its normal processes and procedures.

- 6.6 Reporting to the Partnership Board would be two Strategy Groups which would cover Andover and Romsey respectively. Other groups could be convened as necessary to deal with appropriate opportunities within the Borough. The main aim of each Strategy Group is to bring the strategic partners together to advise on the delivery of the masterplan and the regeneration of Andover and Romsey town centres. Initially the group would be made up of County Council and TVBC Councillor representatives. Eventually the membership could expand to include other organisations such as the EM3 LEP and other strategic partners who are either landowners, have a statutory function related to the implementation of the specific masterplans, or are potential funding bodies. The composition of the two Town Centre groups need to be distinct from each other to reflect the nature of the two towns.
- 6.7 It is proposed that there would be two groups reporting to each of the Strategy Group. These would be:-
- 1) A Delivery and Implementation Group – An officer based board made of representatives of HCC, TVBC and other agencies as required. The main focus of the group would be on the delivery and implementation aspects of the regeneration and masterplan work.
 - 2) A Stakeholder Engagement Group - This group would be formed from the existing community partnership of Andover Vision and Romsey Future and include Town Councillors from the respective town councils. The main purpose will be to ensure that the community led nature of engagement and communication on the masterplan is continued through into the delivery phase.
- 6.8 Option 1 is the recommended option. Should this option be agreed officers would undertake more detailed discussions on the working arrangements and membership, including the drafting of Terms of Reference, with officers from the County Council. The initial working arrangements including Terms of Reference will need to be confirmed by Cabinet.

Option 2

- 6.9 Without introducing the County Council's partnership model the partners would still continue to work together but would lose the potential for greater, more structured progress to be made and be at odds with more strategic collaborative working. There is also the risk of having to react in a less planned way with the potential consequence of missing opportunities. It is for this reason that this option is not recommended.

7 Risk Management

- 7.1 An evaluation of the risks indicate that the existing controls in place mean that no significant risks have been identified at this time.

8 Resource Implications

- 8.1 The recommendations contained within this report can be met from within existing resources and budgets.

9 Legal Implications

- 9.1 There are no legal implications arising from the recommendation. The proposed board will have no legal or decision making powers. Each constituent organisation will take any decision in accordance with its own legal obligations and procedures.

10 Equality Issues

- 10.1 There are no equality issues arising from this recommendation

11 Other Issues

- 11.1 Sustainability and Addressing a Changing Climate.

- 11.1.1 Through establishing the partnership structure it will help facilitate the delivery of many infrastructure improvements that assist in addressing climate change and completing a sustainable town centre redevelopment.

- 11.2 Property Issues

- 11.2.1 The Council is a main landowner for both areas included within the Andover masterplan.

- 11.3 Wards/Communities Affected

- 11.3.1 Whilst focus on the projects in Andover and Romsey the partnership board could have an influence on the whole Borough.

12 Conclusion and reasons for recommendation

- 12.1 The delivery of the two masterplans are a key priority of the Council. In order to help secure their delivery it requires a close working relationship with partners, including Hampshire County Council. It is proposed that this relationship is formalised through a joint partnership board structure for the Borough.

Background Papers (Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D)

Andover Masterplan (2020)

South of Romsey Town Centre masterplan (2020)

HCC Cabinet Report 15/03/22 - "Local Regeneration and Growth Partnerships with District Local Authorities"

Confidentiality

It is considered that this report does not contain exempt information within the meaning of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, and can be made public.

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| No of Annexes: | None | File Ref: | N/A |
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| Report to: | Cabinet | Date: | 22 June 2022 |