

**Bolsover District Council**

**Meeting of the Growth Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday 6 December 2022**

**Review of Town Centre Regeneration Framework - Shirebrook**

**Report of the Portfolio Holder for Growth / Economic Development**

<b>Classification</b>	This report is Public
<b>Report By</b>	Natalie Etches – Business Growth Manager  01246 242389 / <a href="mailto:Natalie.etches@bolsover.gov.uk">Natalie.etches@bolsover.gov.uk</a>
<b>Contact Officer</b>	As above

**PURPOSE/SUMMARY OF REPORT**

- To review the effectiveness of the Regeneration Framework adopted in 2017 for Shirebrook and surrounding villages and hamlets including Pleasley and Pleasley Vale, New Houghton, and Langwith and Whaley Thorns.

---

**REPORT DETAILS**

**1. Background**

- 1.1 In 2015, the Economic Development Team commissioned BaumanLyons Architects, Camun Lonsdale, and others to produce “Sharing Bolsover! Bolsover District Regeneration Framework”, a strategy for each of the four market towns and their respective surrounding villages.
- 1.2 It was intended that the Regeneration Framework (RF) would form an important part of the evidence base for the emerging Local Plan, informing its place specific policies and proposals; the Local Plan would embody the spatial elements of the RF helping to deliver their key priorities and projects in a co-ordinated manner and critically form the basis for external funding bids.
- 1.3 The project design team, led by Bauman Lyons Architects, were appointed in autumn 2015 and commenced consultations with a variety of local stakeholders, agencies, businesses, community groups and thematic interest groups to develop both town specific and district-wide proposals around emerging themes.
- 1.4 The regeneration framework is intended to:

- prioritise investment providing the framework for targeted and coordinated public/private sector interventions;
- inform funding applications for town centre investment and regeneration;
- address the key priorities identified in Joint Economic Development and Housing Strategy;
- form the basis of work to deliver economic growth and for aligning the district's priorities to maximise inward investment;
- form an important part of the evidence base for the emerging Local Plan, informing its place specific policies and proposals;
- highlight the importance of "place-making", in matching the pace and nature of growth within the district, aligned with the physical characteristics of each discrete part of the District; and
- raise public awareness of place-making proposals and place marketing leading to improved quality and perception of place.

1.5 The four Regeneration Frameworks were accepted and endorsed in January 2017. The Shirebrook town Regeneration Framework is included as Appendix 1.

## **2. Initial Review**

2.1 The Regeneration Framework for Shirebrook identified seven main project areas:

- Remodel and enliven Market Place;
- New pedestrian routes;
- Development of Ashbourne Street and Portland Road Site;
- New and enhanced connections;
- Main Street and King Edward Street Improvements;
- Bring forward development of infill sites;
- and, Pleasley Vale Tourist Loop.

2.2 There were also some 'Stepping Stone' projects for the town centre:

- Gateways, Margins and verges;
- Address fly-tipping around Rainbow Park / Pit mounds;
- Enhancements to alleyways leading to and from the Market Place;
- Support community initiatives;
- and, Paint market place facades.

2.3 The extent to which these projects have been completed or funded would be one key measure of the effectiveness of the Regeneration Framework to date and a scorecard is presented overleaf.

2.4 Unfortunately, the review illustrates that five years on from their adoption, the Regeneration Framework has had little if any impact on the regeneration of the town centre and whilst promoted in bids it has been ineffective in attracting inward investment or funding.

2.5 Although the Development Directorate are working up initiatives and investment opportunities informed by some of the proposals, the Framework is of limited utility in the absence of costings and detailed design noting the generic nature of some of the proposals. The Regeneration Framework can therefore not be relied upon.

PROJECT NAME	SUMMARY	OUTCOME
<b>SHIREBROOK TOWN CENTRE PROJECTS</b>		
Remodel and enliven the Market Place	Public realm redesign to create more multi-functional and animated civic space that prioritises the centre as a destination offering recreation, evening economy and entertainment, not just retail.	Aggregates Levy funding has been secured for phase 1 of the remodelling of the Market Square, with a further funding application made to Cultural Development Fund for the delivery of Phase 2.
New pedestrian routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Route between Sports Direct (now Frasers Group) and Shirebrook Town Park.</li> <li>• Route through Hollycroft Farm to Shirebrook Town Park</li> <li>• Improved routes between the Town Centre and train station and Sports Direct utilising Sookholme Road and Hardwick Street footpath.</li> </ul>	<p>Works have been undertaken to explore routes and land ownership, but no physical works have commenced on creating the new pedestrian routes.</p> <p>A substation blocks one of the routes direct from the station through to Sports Direct, and then a development of industrial units would restrict another route.</p>
Development of Ashbourne Street and Portland Road site	Suggested proposals for a new mix of uses including retail, higher density housing and leisure	Works have commenced on the extension of the Council's Ashbourne Court Sheltered Housing Scheme. Development of 24 bungalows has commenced on the development plot adjacent Lidl on Market Close.
New and enhanced connections	Development of town links including missing links to Archaeological Way and Pleasley Vale	Links installed between S/B and PV, work also underway on Sustrans trail to link PV to Meden Trail.
Main Street and King Edward Street Improvements	Long term conversion of shop units as they become available back in to residential so retail is concentrated in Market Place. Narrow the	No work has been done on the conversion of properties back to residential.

	carriageway to improve pedestrian movement.	
Bring forward development of infill sites	Bringing forward small sites within the town for infill housing and co-housing focusing on good quality rental properties or a community centre for new communities and potential for developing a Park and Ride facility near the train station.	No work has taken place on the infill sites.
Pleasley Vale Tourist Loop	Create links to Pleasley Pit Trail from Shirebrook town centre.	The link between Pleasley Pit and Pleasley Vale Business Park has been completed, and the connection between the Meden and Archaeological Trails is planned, with funding from the Sustrans and HS2 Mitigation Fund.
<b>STEPPING STONE PROJECTS</b>		
Gateways, margins & verges	Community led productive greening of verges at Town Centre gateways and excess land in parks.	Whilst these projects have been identified within the Stepping Stones projects, this is a responsibility of the Town Council on the general maintenance and upkeep of the town, and is not a project / intervention which can be led by the District Council.
Address fly-tipping around Rainbow park / pit mounds	Address litter primarily caused by discarded items and packaging from retail sheds.	
Enhancement to alleyways leading to and from the Market Place	Improve connectivity between Market Place and new businesses / civic facilities on Patchwork Row / Carter Lane and to the potential infill sit on Ashbourne Street.	
Support community initiatives	Support small projects initiated by active local groups particularly Shine Shirebrook	A programme of engagement events has been delivered through the Partnership Team, and the Building Resilience Fund.
Paint Market Place Facades	High visual impact, potentially low cost, community led project to kick start the regeneration process.	The Shirebrook Shutter Artwork Project was completed in 2019

### 3. Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 On its own terms, the Regeneration Framework has not been successful because very little has been achieved and it can be seen five years since adoption:
- there has been limited interventions in Shirebrook both in and around the Market Square through the Shirebrook Shutter Improvement Scheme, and more latterly through the Shirebrook Shopfront Improvements Scheme
  - there has been no successful funding applications for town centre investment and regeneration to date, although the team are progressing a number of funding opportunities for the town;
  - no evidence the key priorities identified in Joint Economic Development and Housing Strategy have been addressed;
  - inward investment appears to have been limited to the development of industrial and commercial space on the periphery (Portland Drive, Vernon Street, Weighbridge Road).
- 3.2 The Market Square is still one of the biggest in England, and is used on a regular basis for local traders and retail, but the RF recognised the opportunity to bring back the civic heart of the town. It is also acknowledged that this square needs character and a variety of flexible spaces to host cafes, outside seating, trees / planting / water feature, as well as an events area to introduce culture and arts to the town.
- 3.3 The Framework also considers the improvements to the shop facia and shutters around the edge of the Square and whilst investment has been made in the new shutters and artwork (led by a community artist), there is a considerable way to go with investment and uplift of the buildings on the periphery of the Market Square.
- 3.4 There is a considerable pot of money available through the Business Rates Retention Programme (£270,000) for the Shop Fronts Improvements Scheme but the take up of the scheme has been low, in part due to the post pandemic limits of available cashflow by the shop owners, as well as some landlords unwilling to invest, and the tenant unable or unwilling to invest in the property which isn't theirs. A refresher period of engagement with the businesses is underway between the Economic Development Officers and the Partnership's Policy Officer for Shirebrook.
- 3.5 The proposals for the redevelopment of the Market Square will create an inclusive space promoting a sense of ownership, improving community cohesion through a shared sense of pride, which in turn will reduce crime and anti-social behaviour that blights the town centre for existing businesses, local residents and visitors.
- 3.6 Phase 1 of the project includes the erection of a miner's memorial commissioned and paid for by a local community group with the support of public crowd funding (to the value of £180,000). Match funding from the Town Council and the aggregates levy (£100,000) will pay for the resurfacing of the area of the square and tree planting adjacent to the memorial and this element of the proposal is the subject of a current application for planning permission.
- 3.7 Funding from the Cultural Development Fund is sought for Phase 2 of this project, which will see regeneration of the remaining area of the Market Square and include

the provision of a new amenity building and a flexible space that can be used to accommodate market stalls and to host events. This element of the scheme requires prior approval having deemed consent under the provisions of a Local Development Order.

- 3.8 Funding from the Cultural Development Fund is also sought for the infrastructure required to enable Shirebrook to become a 'smart town' through the provision of high 5G connectivity and public Wi-Fi to provide improved digital connectivity in the Market Square and surrounding town centre. This component of the scheme does not require planning permission and no separate construction or engineering works are required to implement this proposal.

Figure 1: Aerial picture of Shirebrook Market Place



Figure 2: Illustration of Improved Market Square

#### 4.3 Visuals

The proposed visual illustrates the proposed public realm improvements and new pavilion building within the market place on an average day.



Figure 61: Aerial View with Day-to-Day Activity

- 3.9 As part of the works, there is a proposal for the construction of a Pavillion Building which will house public toilets, storage for the market stalls and equipment, and also a café and kitchen.
- 3.10 The Cultural Development Fund application is for £5m investment in to the town with the Market Place redevelopment as described above, but also for the repurposing of an industrial building within the town to provide The Challenge Hub. This building will draw in artists, creatives and makers providing a building fitted out with the latest in creative technology, such as AR/VR and 3D printers, and will link with further education providers including Chesterfield College and University of Derby to facilitate an accessible and affordable hyper-local resource for communities to work with the technology, receive advice and support from the peers and professional and technical support to help them grow their existing businesses, or start up their own business.
- 3.11 Therefore, the hub will play a crucial role in boosting the productivity and the economic value of the creative sector in the local area by providing our target audience with access to technology and bespoke business support to incubate product and service innovations and give them the time, space and opportunity to explore and experiment with new technologies and new ways of working and thinking.
- 3.12 In part, this bid to CDF picks up some of the elements of the Regeneration Framework but goes far beyond including issues that are relevant today – digital connectivity and decarbonisation, which are not highlighted in the Regeneration Framework. It is not clear whether these issues have grown in importance over the last five years such that they may not have been expected to have been prioritised in 2016 or whether this is an omission – either way the Framework now feels out-dated in these respects.

- 3.13 In addition, the Regeneration Framework does not include any detailed designs, project plans, delivery plans or costings. This may be appropriate because where the Regeneration Framework is successful is in: [highlighting] *the importance of “place-making”, in matching the pace and nature of growth within the district, aligned with the physical characteristics of each discrete part of the District.* It is a very beautifully produced aspirational document that seeks the highest quality of design for the District for the benefit of its residents and to make the place attractive to visitors and the people who work here.
- 3.14 However, where this approach fails is that it offers no substance to support bid writing or funding applications. The relevant work had to be commissioned separately for the Cultural Development Fund bid. The team were able to secure £20,000 of Transformation Reserve and Planning Policy budgets to commission the necessary studies and detailed designs required to inform the bid development.
- 3.15 This injection of a small amount of seed funding is much more beneficial to informing work and resource planning and gives the team the detail it requires to be able to test the viability of schemes and develop proposals / funding bids. The £20,000 enabled the commissioning of detailed designs, cost viability, and delivery schedules.
- 3.16 The production of the Regeneration Framework cost £180,000, and one of the main omissions from the document is the design detail as well as horizon thinking – giving consideration to how changes could influence design / delivery, such as environmental sustainability and digital advancements.
- 3.17 The biggest takeaway from the Regeneration Framework and the development of funding propositions is that the Framework simply does not address the fact that improvements to the public realm are not an investment proposition for the private sector and again, whilst the importance of return of social value may have grown over the last five years, failing to monetise the intangible benefits of public realm improvements means the Framework simply does not demonstrate how the various projects would represent value for money. The Regeneration Framework also doesn't consider or address the socio-economic issues and how these can be impacted through successful delivery of the proposed initiatives.
- 3.18 Therefore, members should very carefully consider the status given to this particular Regeneration Framework, which may be said to prioritise style over substance.

#### **4 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection**

- 4.1 To recommend a refresh of the Regeneration Framework for Shirebrook: this option was rejected because the costs of addressing the points raised in the above review of the document would be unduly inhibitive.
- 4.2 To recommend that the Regeneration Framework for Shirebrook is put forward as an adopted planning document to allow more weight to be attached to it: this option was rejected because the document is out dated and would not meet the necessary thresholds to be adopted as a supplementary document.
-



**RECOMMENDATION(S)**

1. That members note the contents of this report
2. That members compare the findings in this report with the forthcoming reviews of the three remaining Regeneration Frameworks to inform next steps.

<b><u>IMPLICATIONS:</u></b>	
<b><u>Finance and Risk:</u></b> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Details:</b> The report is for noting	On behalf of the Section 151 Officer
<b><u>Legal (including Data Protection):</u></b> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Details:</b> This report is for noting and refers solely to documents in the public domain so does not raise any legal issues or any data protection issues.	On behalf of the Solicitor to the Council
<b><u>Staffing:</u></b> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Details:</b> This report has been completed as part of the service area's day to day work.	On behalf of the Head of Paid Service

**DECISION INFORMATION**

<b>Is the decision a Key Decision?</b> A Key Decision is an executive decision which has a significant impact on two or more District wards or which results in income or expenditure to the Council above the following thresholds:  <b>BDC:</b> Revenue - £75,000 <input type="checkbox"/> Capital - £150,000 <input type="checkbox"/> <b>NEDDC:</b> Revenue - £100,000 <input type="checkbox"/> Capital - £250,000 <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Please indicate which threshold applies	Yes/No
<b>Is the decision subject to Call-In?</b> (Only Key Decisions are subject to Call-In)	Yes/No

<b>District Wards Significantly Affected</b>	None
<b>Consultation:</b> Leader / Deputy Leader <input type="checkbox"/> Cabinet / Executive <input type="checkbox"/> SAMT <input type="checkbox"/> Relevant Service Manager <input type="checkbox"/> Members <input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes  Details:

<b>Links to Council Ambition (BDC)/Council Plan (NED) priorities or Policy Framework including Climate Change, Equalities, and Economics and Health implications.</b>

<b>DOCUMENT INFORMATION</b>	
<b>Appendix No</b>	<b>Title</b>
1	Sharing Bolsover – Regeneration Framework for Shirebrook town
2	Shirebrook Town Centre Health Check 2022
<b>Background Papers</b>	
<i>(These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when preparing the report. They must be listed in the section below. If the report is going to Cabinet (NEDDC) or Executive (BDC) you must provide copies of the background papers)</i>	
None	