

**Bolsover District Council**

**Meeting of the Local Growth Scrutiny Committee on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2023**

**Review of Town Centre Regeneration Frameworks – South Normanton**

**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 / 07989 146973 <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 South Normanton and surrounding villages and hamlets including: Pinxton, Blackwell, Hilcote, Newton, Tibshelf, and Westhouses.

---

**REPORT DETAILS**

**1. Background**

- 1.1 In 2015, the Economic Development Team commissioned Bauman Lyons 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 was 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 South Normanton town Regeneration Framework is included as Appendix 1.

## **2. Details of Proposal or Information**

2.1 The Regeneration Framework for South Normanton identified three main project areas:

- Redesign and re-establish the Market Place as the heart of the Village;
- New and enhanced connections to greenways;
- and, Bring forward the development of infill sites.

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

- Shopfront improvements;
- Empty space above shops and vacant looking units;
- Pilot town team;
- and, Gateways, verges, and margins

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 it has been ineffective in attracting inward investment or funding to deliver the initiatives.

2.5 South Normanton and Pinxton have seen significant levels of inward investment with the commercial developments, but these lay on the outskirts of the town and as such have little impact on the investment of the town.

2.6 The Development Directorate are unable to work up detailed costed initiatives and investment opportunities, informed by some of the proposals in the Framework document, as it is of limited utility, noting the generic nature of some of the proposals. The Regeneration Framework can therefore not be relied upon.

PROJECT NAME	SUMMARY	OUTCOME
<b>SOUTH NORMANTON TOWN CENTRE PROJECTS</b>		
Redesign and re-establish Market Place as the heart of the Village	High priority urban design project and delivery to improve pedestrian movement and experience in the Village Centre including improved signage and replacement of the Market Place clock.	No progress to date
New and enhanced connections to greenways	Development of connection to Blackwell Trail and upgrades along The Common and Alfreton Road to create a 'shared route.'	No progress to date
Bring forward development of infill sites	Prioritise and promote development of brownfield and long term vacant sites in the Village Centre for diverse types and scales of housing.	No progress to date
<b>STEPPING STONE PROJECTS</b>		
Shopfront improvements	Trial period of no shutters on shop windows and/or pilot shutter art project. Development of design guide for shop windows and shop signage.	No progress to date. however, Derbyshire Business Rates Retention Programme has an allocation of £13,000 to direct towards investment in shopfront uplifts
Empty space above shops and vacant looking units	Utilise unused shop windows as displays for new online businesses and start-ups. Refurbish suitable upper floors into residential with demonstrator project in a BDC/PC owned property.	No progress to date
Pilot Town Team	Greater devolution of governance to promote collective and interdependent working between neighbouring villages and Parish Councils. Initiate a 'Best Kept Village Centre' competition, share resources and solutions to challenges each village has in common.	No progress to date. Recent restructure of the Executive & Partnership's' Team means each town centre has a Policy Officer 'assigned' to work within the town and surrounding villages and hamlets to establish links with the community to bring forward community investment.
Gateways, verges and margins	Seven sites identified at key vehicular and pedestrian entrances into the Village Centre providing opportunities for community led greening, artwork and signage.	No progress to date. See 3.1. point 3 below

PROJECT NAME	SUMMARY	OUTCOME
	Traffic signage to be rationalised at junction of A38.	

### **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 no successfully targeted and coordinated public/private sector interventions in South Normanton's town centre, in part due to the lack of public funding to be able to deliver public realm and enhanced connections;
  - there has been no successful funding applications for town centre investment and regeneration to date, in part due to the lack of large scale investment proposal being designed or costed to inform such a bid proposal;
  - and, the stepping stone projects are heavily reliant on third party investment and engagement – the rationalisation of the signage on the J28 / A38 cannot be delivered without Highways England (Motorway) and Derbyshire County Council (Highways), and neither party have been engaged in the proposals since the completion of the Regeneration Framework.
- 3.2 One key takeaway from this Regeneration Framework is that there is no significant large scale regeneration initiative proposed with a large parcel of land or growth opportunity. The proposals are small in scale, but with a focused investment could have an impact on the town centre if the businesses, stakeholders, and public agencies are all engaged.
- 3.3 Where there is no land opportunity or if the Council does not have control over the land and/or buildings; it will have limited influence over its future use, which will more often than not be determined by the commercial imperatives of the landowner and/or developer subject to the relevant party obtaining the necessary planning permissions. For example, shop improvement schemes will require investment by the owner / occupier, and this is made more difficult in a post-COVID / cost of living crisis where there is a lack of disposable capital to invest.
- 3.4 There has been little progress on the Stepping Stone projects proposed as part of the regeneration framework by the District Council as it would be the responsibility of the Parish Council and/or local property owners to bring forward investment and uplift schemes at this localised level.
- 3.5 The Derbyshire Business Rates Retention Pilot scheme allocated £13,500 to improvements within the town centre in 2019. The proposal initially included for a feasibility study, but this was revised away from a feasibility to allow a number of important issues around traffic and potential development opportunities to resolve, which would lead to a more meaningful design study to re-interpret the Market Street/High Street area at a later date.
- 3.6 The local community proposed a grant programme to improve the appearance of the shopfronts, which will contribute to the overall attractiveness and confidence of the area, by improving the street scene, helping boost the image and perception of the Market Street/High Street area, and encourage private investment in the

properties. This, in turn, will improve the vitality of the town centre and make it a vibrant place for local businesses and retailers, shoppers and visitors from the town and further afield. It is anticipated that the £15k will deliver around 7 shopfront improvements, which is roughly a budget of £2000 per shop. Improvements will include:

- Refurbishments to the shop sign
- Minor repairs and application of artwork to shutters, which, in turn will serve to animate the town centre.

3.7 A variation request is with Derbyshire County Council for approval.

3.8 Finally, South Normanton's Regeneration Framework also includes proposals for the surrounding villages and hamlets of: Pinxton, Blackwell, Hilcote, Newton, Tibshelf, and Westhouses but whilst these projects are out of scope of this report, an addendum will be provided that further evidences the identified issues with this particular Framework.

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

4.1 To recommend a refresh of the Regeneration Framework for South Normanton: 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 South Normanton 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 previous area reviews to inform next steps.

Approved by Councillor Liz Smyth  
Portfolio Holder for Growth / Economic Development

#### **IMPLICATIONS:**

**Finance and Risk:**            Yes             No

**Details:** The report is for noting

On behalf of the Section 151 Officer

**Legal (including Data Protection):**            Yes             No

**Details:** 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

**Environment:**

Please identify (if applicable) how this proposal/report will help the Authority meet its carbon neutral target or enhance the environment.

**Details:** The report is for noting

**Staffing:** Yes  No

**Details:** 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**

<p><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:</p> <p><b>Revenue - £75,000</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Capital - £150,000</b> <input type="checkbox"/>  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Please indicate which threshold applies</i></p>	No
<p><b>Is the decision subject to Call-In?</b>  <i>(Only Key Decisions are subject to Call-In)</i></p>	No

<p><b>District Wards Significantly Affected</b></p>	<p>South Normanton wards, Pinxton, Blackwell, Hilcote, Newton, Tibshelf, and Westhouses.</p>
<p><b>Consultation:</b>  <b>Leader / Deputy Leader</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Executive</b> <input type="checkbox"/>  <b>SLT</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Relevant Service Manager</b> <input type="checkbox"/>  <b>Members</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Public</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Other</b> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Details:</p>

<p><b>Links to Council Ambition: Customers, Economy and Environment.</b></p>
--

<b>DOCUMENT INFORMATION</b>	
<b>Appendix No</b>	<b>Title</b>
1	Sharing Bolsover – Regeneration Framework for South Normanton town
2	Town Centre Regeneration Frameworks – South Normanton (Addendum)
3	South Normanton Town Centre Health Check Summary Report
4	Tibshelf Town Centre Health Check Summary Report

**Background Papers**

*(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 Executive you must provide copies of the background papers).*

**None**