

BOLSOVER DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE ON 22nd JUNE 2026

**REGENERATION FUND – UPDATE ON THE FORMER BOLSOVER CO-OP
FOODSTORE**

REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR GROWTH

Classification	This report is Public
Contact Officer	Head of Business Growth

PURPOSE/SUMMARY OF REPORT

To seek approval from the Executive for the repurposing of the former Co-Operative Food store in Bolsover, rather than the demolition option as set out in the Regeneration Fund Investment Plan.

REPORT DETAILS

1. Background

- 1.1 Bolsover district is experiencing significant health and social inequalities. Recent public health evidence highlights higher levels of deprivation, lower life expectancy, higher levels of children living in low-income families, higher digital exclusion risk, higher community need, higher youth unemployment and lower levels of qualifications compared with regional and national benchmarks.
- 1.2 The Public Health Locality Review identifies the need for a more tailored, preventative and community-based approach, with priorities including children and young people, mental health and wellbeing, healthy resilient communities, social connection, financial inclusion, healthy lifestyles and stronger community engagement.
- 1.3 Discussions are currently taking place with strategic health partners to best address the health needs of our local communities.
- 1.4 In addition, the Council recently commissioned Local Creative Project Ltd and Bauman Lyons Architects, funded through UKSPF at a value of £50,000, to explore how the former Co-op building and wider site at Town End could become a catalyst for cultural, social and economic renewal in the town centre. A feasibility report has been developed which presents the outcome of that work: a clear and evidence-led vision for a creative hub, documenting the case for why this form of cultural infrastructure can strengthen Bolsover's identity and future resilience.

- 1.5 Across the UK and internationally, Creative Hubs are understood not as singular types of buildings but as an ecosystem of spaces that bring people together to create, learn, collaborate and access opportunities: hubs act as nurturing environments where people connect, share skills, access support and develop their creative, cultural or entrepreneurial practice.
- 1.6 In Bolsover, the term Creative Hub has been intentionally adopted as an inclusive label for a space that encourages creativity in all its forms. This encompasses a wide variety of activities and functions, including conversations and community gatherings, arts and cultural events, dedicated workspaces, social areas, and multi-use rooms designed for learning, skills development, digital making, health and wellbeing activities, and enterprise support.
- 1.7 The Creative Hub is envisioned as a civic asset that is accessible to all, aiming to nurture talent, foster confidence, strengthen community cohesion, and promote enterprise. Its purpose is not solely limited to cultural activities; instead, it serves as a practical and inclusive space that supports a diverse range of functions such as making and digital fabrication, learning and skills enhancement, cultural programming, community gatherings, enterprise development, wellbeing initiatives, and accessible workspace provision.
- 1.8 Bolsover is an Arts Council England Priority Place and is also listed by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) as a Culture Priority Place, strengthening the case for targeted cultural investment linked to health, skills, young people and regeneration.
- 1.9 Taking these two priorities into consideration, an emerging proposition has been presented to the Strategic Commissioning Board for the repurposing of the Bolsover Co-op building.
- 1.10 The Council have therefore been working to explore opportunities to shape the proposition and for the former Co-op building to become a Health and Creative Hub in the heart of Bolsover town centre.
- 1.11 This would position creativity as part of a wider health, wellbeing and neighbourhood support model. The Hub could combine a Health on the High Street offer with creative health activity, workshops, exhibitions, events, youth engagement, skills development and community support. It would place healthier lives, health provision and prevention at its core.

2 Reasons for the report

- 2.1 The work done to date, and the conversations with health, cultural, and skills partners demonstrate that Bolsover has both the strategic conditions and the local appetite to develop a flexible and multi-functional facility that reflects the town's people, heritage and ambitions. This is further supported by the recent consultation through both the engagement hub at 8 Cotton Street and Town of Culture Expression of Interest (EOI) development, as well as considering the engagement undertaken across partners, young people, community groups and Council teams. The feedback shows strong consensus that Bolsover needs centrally located, flexible and welcoming space providing; places for learning and making; opportunities for young people; engagement in health and wellbeing and

addressing challenges of the local community; and a visible cultural presence that brings activity, pride and footfall back into the town centre.

- 2.2 The proposal for a health and creative hub strongly aligns with the Bolsover Local Plan, national cultural policy, and regional investment frameworks. The Creative Hub element of the proposal supports the Local Plan's goals to revitalise the town centre, diversify activity, strengthen the visitor economy, promote skills and enterprise, and celebrate heritage and identity. Cultural infrastructure is increasingly recognised as central to high street renewal, with Arts Council England (ACE), the Local Government Association (LGA) and East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA) emphasising culture as a driver of footfall, wellbeing, business confidence and economic resilience.
- 2.3 For ACE, the Hub aligns with Priority Place principles, demonstrating place-based partnership, community ownership, and a strategic commitment to cultural infrastructure. For EMCCA, it aligns with ambitions for inclusive growth, skills development (especially digital and creative skills), enterprise support and investment readiness.
- 2.4 The proposal ensures alignment with the Government's commitment to delivering its national programme of renewal with 3 principles for reform of: (i) joining up services around people's lives; (ii) stopping problems earlier; and (iii) giving more power to local areas in partnership with communities and civil society. In a letter to the Chief Executive Officer from the RT HON Steve Reed OBE MP, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, it sets out the drive for new Neighbourhood Health Centres, with the NHS publishing guidance to NHS regions and Integrated Commissioning Board's (ICB) that set out the strategic framework for how ICBs and NHS England regions, working with providers, should identify and develop Neighbourhood Health Centre schemes to support neighbourhood health.
- 2.5 The programme is still to be developed with partners, but could include:
 - creative health workshops, exhibitions, activities and events
 - social prescribing and non-clinical wellbeing activity
 - health advice, prevention, signposting and early intervention
 - young people's programmes focused on confidence, skills and progression
 - links to a potential government Youth Hub offer
 - creative and technical skills pathways
 - community-led activity supporting connection, belonging and resilience
 - partner services delivered in an accessible town centre setting.
- 2.6 The "Co-op Hub" would sit alongside complementary regeneration projects to create a more coherent town centre offer. These include:
 - 36/36a Market Place - proposed Creative Maker Spaces supporting making, creative enterprise, workshops and local production.
 - Bolsover Community Business Centre - supporting the community and voluntary sector and creating an improved community hub in the former White Swan public house.
 - Wider town centre regeneration activity focused on civic pride, footfall, services, skills and community infrastructure.

- 2.7 Together, these projects could create a connected ecosystem of spaces and services across Bolsover town centre: creative production, community support, health and wellbeing, skills development, enterprise and civic participation. **The aim is not to create a traditional cultural venue or a purely clinical health space, but a practical, welcoming high street hub where residents can access health services, support, take part in creative activity, build confidence, develop skills and connect with others.**

3 Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 As part of the £15m Regeneration Fund the investment plan approved by MHCLG sets out that the funding allocation of £1.9million for the Co-op in Bolsover will be used for the *“acquisition, demolition and site clearance of the former co-operative food store buildings and hard landscaping that currently have a negative impact on the townscape of the area. It will enable the reconfiguration of the site to create a new public boulevard and urban green space, unlocking the gateway in to and along Town End, through to the library, high street and onward to Bolsover Castle. This will align to the work being done through the Place Narrative programme and we think that there is an opportunity to look at a more comprehensive scheme in this area in the longer term, which could include cultural, leisure, and retail space, with the possibility of town centre living. However, in the short term, this is enabling the derelict site to be cleared and better utilised, reducing the ASB and negative perceptions of Bolsover as a vibrant tourism destination. Bolsover District Council will own and have responsibility for the upkeep and future development of the site following project completion”*.
- 3.2 Any change to the proposed activities within the investment plan were proposed by the Project Sponsor to the Council’s Strategic Commissioning Board. The change in project proposal has been considered by the SCB and a recommendation from its April meeting to bring a report to the June Executive meeting for a formal decision to amend to the scope of the investment plan for this particular site and retain the existing building for conversion.

4 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 4.1 The Council could consider the alternative, and approved approach of demolition and site clearance of the building and use any remaining funds to develop architectural proposals for a redevelopment of the site, including the car park to the rear of the site. This would leave a large vacant and undeveloped site within the town centre, which could be disposed of or redeveloped by the Council.
- 4.2 Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) has been considered with the option of demolition. No commitment of funds to any redevelopment can likely be considered until the new unitary authority is formed, which will delay any redevelopment options for the site.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. To approve the change in project proposal from demolition of the building to the creation of a Health and Creative Hub.

2. That a further report be brought back to the Executive updating on progress and discussion with strategic partners and third-party funders.
3. That Executive delegate the approval of the business case for the Health and Creative Hub to the Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Council's Strategic Commissioning Board.
4. That Executive delegate the acceptance of any third-party funding and/or match funding for delivering the Health and Creative Hub to the Section 151 Officer.

Approved by Councillor Tom Munro, Portfolio Holder for Growth

IMPLICATIONS:

<u>Finance and Risk</u> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Details: Covered throughout the report.	
On behalf of the Section 151 Officer	
<u>Legal (including Data Protection)</u> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Details: The Council is able to use the Regeneration Fund for the revised proposal.	
On behalf of the Solicitor to the Council	
<u>Staffing</u> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Details: There are no direct staffing implications arising from this report.	
On behalf of the Head of Paid Service	
<u>Environment</u> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Details: Repurposing the former Co-op building presents potential environmental benefits through the retention and reuse of the existing structure, reducing demolition waste, construction emissions and loss of embodied carbon. It also provides an opportunity to incorporate sustainable refurbishment measures and support a more sustainable town centre use through the effective reuse of a central site. These benefits should be balanced against the environmental advantages associated with the approved demolition proposal, particularly the creation of public green space, and reflected in the final design through appropriate landscaping, sustainable drainage and long-term building efficiency measures.	

DECISION INFORMATION:

<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Please indicate which threshold applies:</p> <p>Is the decision a Key Decision? A Key Decision is an Executive decision which has a significant impact on two or more wards in the District, or which results in income or expenditure to the Council above the following thresholds:</p> <p>Revenue (a) Results in the Council making Revenue Savings of £75,000 or more or (b) Results in the Council incurring Revenue Expenditure of £75,000 or more.</p> <p>Capital (a) Results in the Council making Capital Income of £150,000 or more or (b) Results in the Council incurring Capital Expenditure of £150,000 or more.</p> <p>District Wards Significantly Affected: <i>(to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the District)</i> Please state below which wards are affected or tick All if all wards are affected:</p> <p>Is the decision subject to Call-In? <i>(Only Key Decisions are subject to Call-In)</i></p> <p>Consultation carried out: <i>(this is any consultation carried out prior to the report being presented for approval)</i></p> <p>Leader <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Deputy Leader <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Executive <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SLT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Relevant Service Manager <input type="checkbox"/> Members <input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>(a) <input type="checkbox"/> (b) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>(a) <input type="checkbox"/> (b) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>All <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Bolsover</p> <p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
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Links to Council Ambition: Customers, Economy, Environment, Housing
Economy, Environment

DOCUMENT INFORMATION:

Appendix No	Title
1	Correspondence from Secretary of State re: Neighbourhood Health Hubs
2	Letter to providers re Neighbourhood Health
Background Papers	
None.	