

Report to Cabinet

9 February 2022

Subject:	West Bromwich Interim Planning Statement (IPS) and West Bromwich Masterplan (Masterplan)
Cabinet Member:	Cabinet Member Regeneration and Growth: Councillor Padda
Director:	Director of Regeneration & Growth Tony McGovern
Key Decision:	Yes
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1 Recommendations

That Cabinet;

- 1.1 Notes the outcome of the public consultation and the response to the representations received.
- 1.2 Approves the West Bromwich Interim Planning Statement and West Bromwich Masterplan.



2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 Following public consultation, approval of the West Bromwich Interim Planning Statement (IPS) and associated West Bromwich Masterplan (the Masterplan) will provide the Council with an updated framework to guide the further regeneration of West Bromwich which is the borough's Strategic Centre. The documents will bridge the gap between the current statutory Local Plan document, the 2012 West Bromwich Area Action Plan, and its replacement expected to be adopted in 2024.
- 2.2 The documents are non-statutory and non-binding. They do not formally replace the existing development plan allocations in the WBAAP/SAD DPD which remain extant.
- 2.3 This report responds to minute 36/20 of the Cabinet meeting held on 5th Feb 2020 which required a report to Cabinet on the outcome of Public Consultation on the IPS and Masterplan.

3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	<p><i>Best start in life for children and young people-Education Issues.</i> An expansion of existing high-quality education facilities will be promoted through the Masterplan.</p>
	<p><i>People live well and age well.</i> The proposals and initiatives contained in the masterplan will encourage additional health facilities, together with other facilities that promote healthy activity and lifestyles.</p>
	<p><i>Strong resilient communities.</i> The documents will promote a successful, distinctive centre, and aid community life.</p>
	<p><i>Quality homes in thriving neighbourhoods.</i> Residential redevelopment is a key component to bolster a smaller more viable centre. Quality, sustainable homes serviced by excellent facilities are to be an objective of the documents.</p>
	<p><i>A strong and inclusive economy.</i> The documents seek to repurpose vacant land & sites. This will help local companies expand, attract inward investment and protect jobs.</p>





A connected and accessible Sandwell.

The proposals build on West Bromwich's highly accessible and excellent public transport links, promoting further sustainable active travel projects.

4 Context and Key Issues

- 4.1 The IPS will provide a 'Land Use Planning' update for the town. The current adopted Local Plan, the West Bromwich area Action Plan (WBAAP) (2012) contains policies and proposals for retail, office, and residential development in West Bromwich which are increasingly out of date, affected by numerous factors including the reduction of retail, and COVID-19.
- 4.2 The development plan for West Bromwich cannot be updated in advance of the Black Country Plan, programmed to be adopted 2024. The IPS is intended to fill the 'planning policy gap', so the council can be guided in its decision making. The IPS and Masterplan are running in tandem, The two documents in combination embrace possible future land use changes and support development/regeneration interventions which would be contrary to the adopted Local Plan but which align with emerging policy as expressed in the Draft Black Country Plan, and which will ultimately be included in the review of the West Bromwich Area Action Plan (WBAAP).
- 4.3 Savills were appointed in Nov 2020 to develop a Masterplan, in conjunction with Council Officers. The Masterplan will drive forward the next stage of regeneration investment for the town and provide a future vision, so the town can prosper. The Masterplan underpins the projects identified under the Town Investment Plan and will help to identify and unlock future investment to enable sustainable growth.
- 4.4 The Masterplan has development options which are supported with financial viability appraisals and phasing plans. This will inform the next stage of works which will involve the Council working through and identifying a realistic but manageable development strategy. This will probably involve looking even deeper into the site areas/parcels and phasing plans being considered and identifying a manageable delivery method within each site zone. It is therefore acknowledged and expected that given the size of the larger zones identified for change this will require a step change in its delivery.



- 4.5 Significant outcomes proposed by the Masterplan include for example:
- 1359 new dwellings
 - £6.6 Million extra expenditure by new residents in the West Bromwich
 - 1740 local jobs
 - 12000m2 new retail floorspace (to replace 30000 m2 of time expired vacant retail floorspace)
 - Significant Health, Education & Community uses
 - Improved public transport accessibility.
- 4.6 Public consultation feedback and findings as part of the Towns Investment Plan Bid/Deal have been utilised by the consultants in shaping the masterplan, together with reflecting the Council's Inclusive Economy Deal and 2030 Vision and Big Plan for A Great Place.
- 4.7 To further support the data analysis for the masterplan and to capture our 'youngest views' of the town a school writing and Illustration competition was held with the Lyng Primary School (yrs 4-6) during spring 2021. A workshop was also held on online with Sandwell College to understand the key issues and challenges facing the younger generations within West Bromwich. Several important themes were explored by the students including health, education, sustainability and wellbeing and it was clear from their work that they were passionate about their town and community. Key messages from both consultations focussed around an improved town offering a safer, more attractive place, more green spaces, residential and better shopping and education provision. A better leisure/exercise provision offer and more independent shops/markets was raised together with a general poor image/perception of the town and then linking onto crime/antisocial behaviour. These are some of the key challenges that the masterplan aims to support and address through the proposals put forward.
- 4.8 A Cabinet Workshop was held on 30th June 2021, where various development options were presented. Members were keen to see a step-change in West Bromwich and endorsed the development of the comprehensive ambitious option for the Masterplan, whilst recognising the delivery challenges linked to land ownership, funding requirements, and the timescale involved in the delivery of such wholesale change.



4.9 A robust engagement plan was conducted for 4 weeks from 21st July to 20th August 2021. This was publicised in the local press, Sandwell Herald, through online platforms (facebook/twitter) and through West Bromwich Town Groups Mailing records. It included the Councils website and face to face sessions in the Town Centre to engage with residents, shoppers, local businesses and other stakeholders.

4.10 The completed IPS and Masterplan are appended to this report (at A and B respectively). The outcome of the public consultation is contained in the Consultation Report Summary as Appendix C.

4.11 Key Consultation Results:

89 formal responses to the online questionnaire were received, these were overwhelmingly supportive of the need for change in West Bromwich

- 83% agreed a Masterplan/Vision would be good for the Town
- 82% supported future regeneration for the Town to grow,
- 85 % thought the Town could be visually improved,
- 12 % thought the Town had a good image.

After these questions, respondents were asked for further comments on West Bromwich & the IPS/Masterplan proposals. Crime/Anti-Social Behaviour were the most frequent issues raised, with 47 of the 89 responses (52%) directly referencing Crime/ASB.

Other issues included, support for greening of the centre (11%), maintenance/litter issues (11%) and other Sandwell Towns missing out (9%) Community Spaces needed (4%), Youth Facilities required (3%).

Issues that were also raised, but less frequently included:

need to repurpose space, Affordable Housing, evening economy, Libraries, Vermin, more disabled facilities and toilets required, need to maximise housing provision & lack of demand for office accommodation.

4.12 With regard to crime/ASB, the Masterplan and IPS will assist by increasing levels of natural surveillance, reducing vacancy rates, raising levels of night time activity with more town centre dwellings and an enhanced night time economy, and through the use of 'secured by design' for new development.



4.13 Face to face meetings in the Centre of West Bromwich were well attended & successful events, with shoppers, market traders, shop keepers and Shopping Centre operators among the attendees who supported the proposals. The most negative feedback was received from online consultation methods, showing the value of the face to face meetings.

Twitter for example, had only negative comments:

'Don't bother, wasted far too much money on The Public',

'Decries millions spent on WB over last decade. Hates the town, money can't change it, Sad.'

'Query loss of food court, closed down, a waste of money.'

'Outdoor market horrible to walk past.'

4.14 Amendments in response to consultation have included clarifying Queens Square site density issues, and the need for further work with stakeholders on the access from New Street to Astle Park, while the consultation responses summary on crime/ASB have been shared with West Midlands Police. Other issues are addressed in the IPS/Masterplan such as Greening of the Centre, providing more homes, repurposing vacant space, community facilities etc.

4.15 Further information on the Consultation responses are in Appendix C.

5 Alternative Options

5.1 The alternative to endorsing this Interim Planning Statement and Masterplan is that the existing development planning framework as set out in the West Bromwich Area Action plan becomes increasingly out of date. This will diminish the prospects of securing investment and development for the continued regeneration of West Bromwich.

5.2 It is considered that not providing an IPS and Masterplan would mean this gap between the existing Local Plan and WBAAP, and the revised version, -after 2024 at the earliest -would be too great. Following endorsement, the IPS and Masterplan will form a material planning consideration that can fill in this gap.

5.4 The Masterplan aims to provide business confidence in a number of intervention areas/zones (development sites) whilst also providing a clear, deliverable vision for West Bromwich Centre.



It will be achieved by creating :

- a metro gateway, a new Town Square for events and a high quality public realm
- green links, parks and enhancements to the sustainable transport network.
- A major mixed-use community including residential and employment.

This will involve:

- reduction of 30000m2 of vacant & time expired retail space, to be replaced with up to 12000 m2 new retail space,
- about 1300 new dwellings.
- New residents will help contribute £6.6 million to the Town Centre, and support about 200 jobs in retail & leisure uses,
- 15000m2 of Community/Leisure uses.

This will create a vibrant, attractive and sustainable Town Centre.

The Masterplan will be underpinned by priorities of the Councils 2030 Vision (the Corporate Plan) and Inclusive Economic Growth deal and will be in the Sandwell Plan.

6 Implications

Resources:	<p>The adoption of the Masterplan and IPS has no implications on resources. If adopted the documents will be uploaded on to the Councils website.</p> <p>The delivery of the long-term vision set out in the Masterplan will require significant public-sector funding over a number of years in order to deliver the scale of change set out in the document. Separate reports to Cabinet will be brought forward at appropriate times on specific projects.</p>
Legal and Governance:	<p>There are no direct Legal and Governance considerations. The IPS and Masterplan are informal non-statutory documents.</p>



Risk:	There are no direct risk implications arising from this report. Non-approval would carry the risk of increasing numbers of non-conforming development being proposed with no up-to-date framework against which planning decisions could be taken.
Equality:	An EIA has not been carried out. The IPS/Masterplan does not create policy, it sets out the expected direction of travel of emerging policy and can be a material planning consideration when determining applications. Individual projects proposed in the Masterplan will be subject of their own EIAs at part of the development process.
Health and Wellbeing:	<p>The built and natural environment is a key environmental determinant of health and wellbeing. The linkages between health and the built and natural environment have long been established and the role of the environment in shaping the social, economic and environmental circumstances that determine wellbeing is increasingly recognised and understood.</p> <p>The approach to be taken to the development of places and housing in West Bromwich would enable healthy, safe and secure sustainable places and homes that are built in active and social streets that are accessible to all. Being at the centre of Sandwell’s public transport network, the town centre facilities of West Bromwich would be accessible to a wide range of people from surrounding areas, and existing and future residents of the town would be able to access areas and facilities outside it, such as Dartmouth Park and Sandwell Valley.</p> <p>Along with walkable streets to safely connect neighbourhoods, soft landscaping, street trees and natural meeting places would enable people to be connected to jobs, other social infrastructure and spaces to relax, play and socialise.</p>
Social Value	The IPS and Masterplan will engage and create social value opportunities for residents to ensure jobs, skills and apprenticeships. They will work alongside schools and voluntary organisations in the promotion of community engagement.



Developing a masterplan for places and housing would respond to the needs of residents, employees and visitors across the life course and help to provide young people and families with the best start in life. The masterplan would help to encourage physically, economically and socially active populations, and ensure that older generations can retain their independence in safe, secure, inclusive, social and healthy environments.

7. Appendices

- A - West Bromwich Interim Planning Statement
- B - West Bromwich Masterplan
- C - Consultation Report Summary.

8. Background Papers

West Bromwich Area Action Plan (2012)
Report to Cabinet – 5th February 2020

