



CABINET

Tuesday, 07 March 2023

Subject	Leiston Town Centre Masterplan Framework
Report by	Councillor Craig Rivett Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development
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Is the report Open or Exempt?	OPEN
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Category of Exempt Information and reason why it is NOT in the public interest to disclose the exempt information.	Not applicable
Wards Affected:	Aldeburgh & Leiston

Purpose and high-level overview

Purpose of Report:

To approve the Leiston Town Centre Masterplan Framework document and the high-level conceptual designs contained within, as the basis to guide the future development of Leiston town centre that will attract future private and public sector investment.

Leiston has a strong and proud history of industry, however the decline the Garrett long shop engineering works, which has only been partially offset by the Sizewell nuclear developments. More recently Leiston Town Council and local community have developed a Neighbourhood Plan for the town including a vision and policies to inform and chart future land use, leisure and amenity plans for Leiston to 2029. It is proposed that this Masterplan Framework document once approved provides a basis to inform a review of the current Neighbourhood Plan.

Leiston Community Land Trust (LCLT) have also developed a positive business plan for the town, which proposes the opportunities for regeneration of three key sites – Post Office Square, Church square and Market square. The LCLT has already raised the necessary funding to design and deliver the extensive public realm improvements to Church square, which were formerly opened June 2022.

The Masterplan Framework provides Leiston with the opportunity to consider the positive work already completed within the town, the existing plans and proposals that have been prepared for three key sites by the LCLT and to develop these further within a wider town centre plan. The Masterplan Framework aims to address some of the fragmentation that exists across the town, improve the connectivity between the identified character areas, develop Leiston's unique selling point further and provide short to long-term aspirational high level concept design options for the town. Once completed and delivered, this approach will drive sustainable economic viability of the wider town centre, attracting further public and private sector investment, to ensure long term vitality and recovery of the town, and with links to the potential construction of Sizewell C.

Options:

Option 1 – Not to approve the Leiston Town Centre Masterplan Framework Vision. It will be difficult to progress the regeneration of the town in a structured and cohesive manner at this time, necessary to appease funding opportunities such as the Levelling Up Fund in addition to private sector investment. The development and delivery of projects without the masterplan framework could deliver a fragmented and disjointed approach to the wider regeneration of the Leiston town centre over time.

Option 2 – Approve the Leiston Town Centre Masterplan Framework, which will enable the development of detailed short, medium and long-term project development options and design concepts in readiness for future funding application opportunities, which if successful, will drive the regeneration of the town centre and ensure its inclusive and sustainable viability through a cohesive, strategic high-level plan. This will also act as a catalyst for a submission to the Levelling up Fund round 3 and other future external funding opportunities

Recommendations:

1. That the Leiston Town Centre Masterplan Framework document be approved to inform the future development of development projects within the town.
2. That the subsequent development of projects be approved, to include feasibility and business case development based on the outcomes of the masterplan, including working with other landowners
3. That future funding bid opportunities be approved to draw down external funding support to deliver projects once developed.

Corporate Impact Assessment

Governance:

The future governance arrangements necessary to drive, develop and deliver the short-, medium- and long-term objectives and resulting projects is to be determined in consultation with the key Leiston stakeholders including Leiston Town Council, Leiston Community Land Trust, Leiston Together and East Suffolk Council, following approval of the masterplan Framework document by Cabinet.

It is likely that a Place Board type structure will be adopted however, this is subject to further consultation with local stakeholders.

ESC policies and strategies that directly apply to the proposal:

East Suffolk Economic Strategy, East Suffolk Council 2020-2024

East Suffolk Visitor Economy Strategy

Leiston Neighbourhood Plan 2017

Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, East Suffolk 2020

East Suffolk Cycling and Walking Strategy 2022

Leiston Conservation Area Appraisal, December 2014

Other Strategies Considered:

A Route to Net Zero in Leiston, Technical Report Summary, Net Zero Leiston

Traffic Management Strategy

Leiston Community Land Trust Business Plan 2021

Environmental:

The Masterplan Framework considers the East Suffolk Cycling and Walking Strategy, proposing improved connectivity to existing routes around the town centre, North, West and Southeast of the town.

Biodiversity improvements to each of the existing green spaces are proposed and in preference to introducing further green space within the existing urban, historic high street.

Leiston's Net Zero aspirations to reduce carbon emissions is considered within the Masterplan Framework high-level concept designs, to support the development of a more sustainable town centre.

Equalities and Diversity:

A high-level Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been completed for this project and more detailed EqIA's will be completed for each of the resulting future each of the future projects to be developed.

Financial:

There are no immediate financial implications resulting from the approval of the masterplan framework. This will be used as a robust evidence base when applying for external funding, such as the Levelling Up Fund, to fund project recommendations flowing from the framework.

Human Resources:

No impact.

ICT:

Not applicable

Legal:

No impact at this stage.

Risk:

- Not approving the Masterplan Framework will negatively impede Leiston's opportunity to progress positive project development and aspirational regeneration to deliver the town's vision and ambitions aligned with other ESC towns e.g. Lowestoft and Felixstowe.
- Uncertainties over a Neighbourhood Plan review to be led by Leiston Town Council and supported by East Suffolk Council and informed by the outcomes of this Masterplan Framework.
- External funding opportunities require grant and funding applicants to be *shovel ready* in terms of their regeneration projects with an informed, sound and cohesive long-term strategic plan in place. If Leiston does not have this Strategic plan in place, there is a risk that it will not be possible to develop projects to a *shovel ready* stage and to draw down external investment to enable the regeneration of the town.
- Managing expectations of businesses and the community who will want to see the recommendations come forward very quickly. This will be addressed through regular communications and updating the community on future potential opportunities.
- Some of the recommendations may be unviable for development following further feasibility, however the masterplan vision sets out several options for development.
- Most of the sites rely on third party land and buildings and there is a risk in respect of their interest and engagement in the planned opportunities.

External Consultees:

The development of the Masterplan Framework has been widely consulted with external key stakeholders and the Leiston community. External consultees include the following:

Leiston Town Council
 Leiston Together
 Suffolk County Council
 Leiston Community Land Trust
 Suffolk Constabulary

	<p>Citizen Advice Bureau Suffolk Libraries Leiston General Practice Surgery Alde Valley High School Long Shop Museum The Co-Op Super Market Modece Architects</p> <p>The extensive consultation process has included 1-2-1 consultations with key internal and external stakeholders, open public consultation events, online surveys, workshop events with the local high school and further discussions held at each stage of the project development.</p>
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Strategic Plan Priorities

Select the priorities of the Strategic Plan which are supported by this proposal: <i>(Select only one primary and as many secondary as appropriate)</i>		Primary priority	Secondary priorities
T01	Growing our Economy		
P01	Build the right environment for East Suffolk	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P02	Attract and stimulate inward investment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P03	Maximise and grow the unique selling points of East Suffolk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P04	Business partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P05	Support and deliver infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
T02	Enabling our Communities		
P06	Community Partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P07	Taking positive action on what matters most	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P08	Maximising health, well-being and safety in our District	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P09	Community Pride	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
T03	Maintaining Financial Sustainability		
P10	Organisational design and streamlining services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P11	Making best use of and investing in our assets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P12	Being commercially astute	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P13	Optimising our financial investments and grant opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P14	Review service delivery with partners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T04	Delivering Digital Transformation		
P15	Digital by default	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P16	Lean and efficient streamlined services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P17	Effective use of data	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P18	Skills and training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P19	District-wide digital infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T05	Caring for our Environment		
P20	Lead by example	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P21	Minimise waste, reuse materials, increase recycling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P22	Renewable energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P23	Protection, education and influence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

XXX	Governance		
XXX	How ESC governs itself as an authority	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Build the right environment for East Suffolk</u></p> <p>The Masterplan Framework will enable the long-term sustainable regeneration of the wider Leiston town centre through extensive public realm improvements, to provide a cohesive and connected town and build upon the positive work already undertaken through the Neighbourhood Plan and the Business Plan development. The short, medium and long-term high level concept design options detailed with the Masterplan Framework document are informed through wide consultation with key stakeholders and the local community, to build on the existing plans e.g. Leiston Business plan and Neighbourhood plan, to provide a sustainable, improved environment for the future.</p> <p><u>Attract and stimulate inward investment</u></p> <p>The Masterplan Framework documents will be used by ESC and partners to draw down external public and private sector funding by demonstrating a place that has a considered, joined up, informed and cohesive long-term strategic plan for the area. Funders, particularly government departments, are increasingly requiring this level of strategic, high level conceptual design readiness.</p> <p><u>Support and deliver infrastructure</u></p> <p>The Leiston Town Centre Masterplan Framework includes ten key sites proposed for future development over the next 1–15-year period. Some of these sites will require significant infrastructure improvements including for example the delivery of the Road Traffic Management Strategy and proposed developments at Market Square and the Waterloo Centre.</p> <p><u>Taking positive action on what matters most</u></p> <p>The Masterplan Framework includes a short, medium and long- term prioritisation for delivery of proposed regeneration across the town centre. The determination and inclusion of the ten key sites within the project footprint have been informed and prioritised through consultation, feedback received, and consideration of existing plans developed by Leiston key stakeholders e.g., Neighbourhood Plan and the Business Plan. These plans have informed the high-level concept designs and the 1–15-year delivery plan.</p> <p><u>Maximising health, well-being and safety in our District</u></p> <p>The Traffic Management Strategy proposes extensive infrastructure improvement to the existing road and footpath network within Leiston Town centre, to provide a much safer and greener environment that will encourage improved cycling and pedestrianisation of some of the town centre. A potential opportunity for a new GP surgery proposed at the Waterloo Centre to reflect increasing health demand and growth within the town.</p> <p><u>Community Pride</u></p> <p>Leiston is in urgent need of wider regeneration of its town centre, with some areas being dilapidated and requiring significant restoration. The Leiston Town Centre Masterplan Framework provides a high-level strategic plan for major regeneration of the town centre. This will instil community pride and make Leiston a more attractive place for communities, visitors and tourists contributing to their health and wellbeing and the economic sustainability and the economic viability of the town.</p>			

Making best use of and investing in our assets

Several ESC owned assets are included within the Masterplan Framework project footprint, including the historic building off main Street and home to the existing town council offices and library, 16a – 22b Sizewell Road and land within the Market Square site. The Masterplan Framework proposes positive options and best uses of these sites and assets going forward, to contribute toward the delivery of the councils' key objectives and to promote Leiston's sustainable economic regeneration.

The masterplan Framework proposals include a number of sites and assets that are in third party ownership where engagement with those owners has not fully progressed at this time.

Lead by example

By ESC investing in its own assets as detailed above, it is anticipated that Leiston will be the catalyst to attract wider private and public sector investment. This is demonstrated in other ESC towns e.g., Lowestoft, where other private sector owners have invested in their own properties as a direct result of the Council's positive investments and interventions.

Background and Justification for Recommendation

1 Background facts	
1.1	Town centres across the country are competing to regenerate and recover, particularly post the Covid pandemic. A Masterplan Framework informed and owned by the community and key stakeholders is necessary to ensure the town's future development is aligned with local aspirations and vision. Lowestoft provides a recent example of how this high-level strategic approach is now driving positive regeneration of the wider town centre by providing a joined up, informed approach to the planning and development within the town.
1.2	Extensive previous work undertaken within Leiston, including the Neighbourhood Plan development, Traffic Management Strategy and LCLT's work in developing their Business Plan for the regeneration of three key sites within the town and the delivery of the Church Square public realm improvements, is the catalyst for this Masterplan Framework development. These studies and existing development plans have been thoroughly reviewed and triangulated through extensive consultation, to inform this piece of work. This current thinking and proposed development in Leiston is taken forward by the LDA Design team to provide ambitious high level concept designs, to enable the economic, social, and environmental viability of Leiston, through progressive regeneration and ability to draw down public and private sector funding.
1.3	This document will be used to provide the context and strategic framework necessary, to identify and prioritise projects and enable their corresponding business case development, supported through detailed feasibility studies. This state of readiness will ensure that future developed projects are 'shovel ready' to inform future funding bid applications, to draw down private and public sector investment necessary to regenerate the town.

2 Current position

2.1	Leiston was a successful historic industrial town, famous for its engineering production and manufacturing through the growth of the Garrett Long Shop works manufacturing production line, which exported engineering products across the world. More recently, nearby Sizewell has seen the development of two nuclear power stations, Sizewell A and B, with a third power station Sizewell C granted a Development Consent Order in July 2022. It is considered that this further development would impact on the surrounding nearby towns particularly Leiston, as well as present significant opportunities to promote the town's recovery and growth.
2.2	The previous work undertaken in Leiston and referred to in section 1.1, informed the selection of the ten key sites that make up the project footprint and are listed and detailed within the Masterplan Framework document. The project footprint is further defined by six identified distinct character areas, which provide improved connectivity and coherence across the town and addresses the fragmentation that currently exists.

3 How to address current situation

3.1	LDA Design were appointed as principal designer for this project after a competitive tender process Autumn 2022. The successful supplier is required to consider the regeneration and high-level urban planning opportunities within the agreed project footprint in Leiston Town Centre. The development of the resulting Masterplan Framework will provide a high level coherent, joined up strategic plan and concept designs to inform the future development of the town, building on the positive work already completed by Leiston Town Council and the LCLT. The Masterplan Framework, once approved by ESC Cabinet, will be used to identify and prioritise potential key projects to be developed through the business planning and feasibility process. This work will then enable the preparation and submission of future funding applications when funding opportunities become available, to draw down significant public and private sector investment to Leiston, to promote its regeneration and sustainable development over the next 1-15 years. This has not previously been possible in Leiston.
3.2	The Leiston Masterplan Framework is informed through wide consultation with key internal and external stakeholders and a broad sector of the local community. Further public consultation is necessary in terms proposals to come forward and engagement with landowners is required in terms of those sites and assets not under the Local Authorities ownership.

4 Reason/s for recommendation

4.1	To provide Leiston with a Masterplan Framework and ambitious high-level vision, which will over time facilitate and influence the regeneration and sustainable economic viability of the town, by attracting significant public and private sector inward investment.
4.2	To provide a sense of place to establish Leiston as a more attractive, vibrant, and desirable destination place. This will allow people to primarily spend increased leisure time, whether during the day, or as part of the night-time economy, to encourage people to dwell and shop.

Appendices

Appendices:	
Appendix A	Leiston Town Centre Masterplan Framework

Background reference papers:	
None.	