

BRIEFING	TO:	IPSC
	DATE:	8 September 2020
	LEAD OFFICER:	Dan Watson Investment & Economic Initiatives Manager, R&E 01709 254 569 Daniel.watson@rotherham.gov.uk
	TITLE:	Town Centre Masterplan Update

1. Background

- 1.1** On 11 September 2017, Cabinet resolved to adopt the Town Centre Masterplan. This Masterplan included a range of interventions, with the following identified as key projects:
- A leisure led **Forge Island** redevelopment;
 - Introduce high-quality **public realm**, in key locations in the town centre, and improve linkages between Forge Island and the town centre core to fully realise the benefits of the Forge Island development;
 - The redevelopment of **Rotherham Markets**;
 - The development of **housing** sites within the town centre.
- 1.2** Good progress has been made with many projects identified in the Masterplan, as well as additional projects that have arisen since its adoption, these include:
- **University Centre Rotherham** – A new £10.5m town centre campus, offering degrees and professional training qualifications in a state-of-the-art teaching facility;
 - National **Tram Train Pilot** – A unique national pilot scheme that connects heavy and light rail infrastructure, systems and operations together to provide a new transport service between Sheffield and Rotherham;
 - Rotherham **Interchange** Refurbishment – A £12m refurbishment and modernisation of the Rotherham Interchange enhancing the public transport infrastructure present in the town centre;
 - **George Wright** – A major renovation of Grade II Listed building as a boutique hotel with associated bar and restaurant;
 - **Westgate Chambers and Domine Lane** – A £10.7m redevelopment in a prime central location providing, retail space and 61 apartments;
 - **Keppel Wharf, Old Market and Imperial Buildings** - Work underway to increase the residential space at Keppel Wharf overlooking the river and incentives are being offered to attract new niche businesses to vacant refurbished retail spaces in the Grade II Listed Imperial Buildings;
 - **Makers Emporium** - Unique retail space on the High Street bringing together a mixture of crafters, makers, artists and designers, trading from a shared and professionally managed retail unit. In the 6 years since opening, over 120 small businesses have been supported by the project.
- 1.3** The delivery of the Masterplan is supported by an allocation in the Council's capital programme referred to as the Town Centre Investment Fund (TCIF). This has been utilised to progress and deliver some key schemes and importantly is acting as the Council's match funding for several funding applications currently ongoing. These funding applications are needed to deliver the Masterplan in full and deliver the transformational vision for the town centre.

2. Key Issues

2.1 Funding Update

2.2 Sheffield City Region (SCR) Funding

An application for Local Growth Fund (LGF) funding of £2.8m has been made to contribute towards the delivery of the Forge Island enabling works. The costs of the scheme are currently supported by a £1.5m LGF loan which was awarded in 2016 to fund the purchase and clearance of the site. This application requests approval to convert the loan into a grant and to secure a further grant of £1.3m to contribute towards the construction of the flood defence works critical to unlocking the site as quickly and efficiently as possible.

LGF funding will contribute towards the costs of safeguarding the development and surrounding area(s), providing a capital contribution towards the total cost of the site acquisition and enabling works specifically the flood wall, with RMBC and other stakeholders funding the canal barrier construction which will be delivered in 2021/22. The flood wall will incorporate landscaping along the canal frontage to create a high quality, modern waterside destination for Forge Island providing flood protection for a 1:100 year plus climate change event, as required by the Flood Risk Toolkit.

The Full Business Case was submitted on 10 June 2020 and has been through both external and internal appraisal panels. It will now go to the Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA) Board in September 2020 for a decision, with the expectation that funding will be made available this financial year.

2.3 Get Building Fund

On 1 June 2020 the MHCLG wrote to Councils highlighting their key role in supporting local recovery, including through existing local growth programmes which will serve as an important economic stimulus. Recognising the challenges associated with delivering capital programmes this year, MHCLG has committed to working with each LEP to review local growth fund programmes and develop a shared understanding of how delivery will be managed, and what support may be needed from Government.

As part of that process, MHCLG is exploring the acceleration of departmental funds to support the delivery of capital projects in order to stimulate the economy over the next 18 months. This includes inviting Councils to come forward with ideas for bring forward delivery of existing Government funded capital projects to generate new activity within 18 months, help create jobs and raise overall demand in the economy.

In addition, funding of new exceptional, shovel-ready capital projects which can be delivered within 18 months will be considered. Where considering new projects, these must deliver on two overarching objectives – driving up economic growth and jobs and/or supporting green recovery – and would primarily enable:

- town and city centre modernisation through targeted infrastructure investments unleashing their longer-term economic potential.
- investment in physical connectivity to improve the functioning of the local economy.
- investment in innovation ecosystem including through improvements to research and development facilities driving up business productivity.
- improvements to human capital.
- improving digital connectivity, in order to support economic performance, particularly in more isolated areas.

Working with city region partners, the Council submitted project outlines to Government for decision which included projects to further the delivery of the Town Centre Masterplan as follows:

Town Centre Masterplan Delivery Contribution – grant request £2.18m:

Public Realm - improvements to the key streets in the heart of the pedestrianised Rotherham Town Centre. Works will include the upgrade of Bridgegate, Effingham Street, College Street and Howard Street, as well as the replacement of existing street furniture and lighting. Works will improve accessibility around the town centre and help with DDA compliance.

The HE Hub - owned by RMBC with RNN currently holding a long lease for the site. The current building is now vacant and surplus to requirements to RNN Group following the completion of the University Centre Rotherham in September 2018. The site forms part of the wider Markets redevelopment area.

Riverside Precinct - located on the east bank of the River Don, the site forms an integral part of the first stage of development on Forge Island, connecting the main island site to the rest of the town centre.

The proposal is to demolish the existing buildings on site and undertake works to prepare the site for future development, and therefore forms part of the advanced enabling works to prepare the site for development by the Council's Forge Island development partner, Muse Developments Ltd.

2.4 Future High Street Fund

Following the success of the Council's Stage 1 Bid and having been invited to Stage 2 of the process - business case development; the requirement was to work up detailed HM Treasury Green Book compliant business cases with developed/detailed designs and costings. The Council received £150,000 of revenue funding to work up these detailed project proposals based on the initial plans outlined in the Expression of Interest. The robustness of these will be key to determining how much, if any, funding each individual Authority will be allocated at Stage 3.

The Council's Final Bid aims to secure funding for the following proposals:

- 1) Rotherham Markets, Library & Community Hub - Rotherham Markets is an important economic and social hub in the heart of the town centre. This will be redeveloped to reinforce this role delivering an Innovative Test Space for Enterprise, Learning and Culture as well as high quality public realm, delivering a pioneering new flexible shared space of markets, libraries and community hubs;
- 2) Riverside Gardens (currently Riverside car park) - A playful green space connecting Forge Island with the heart of the town providing recreational space for residents and visitors. This intervention is critical to the flow of pedestrians between Forge Island and the town centre, ensuring continuity of a high-quality experience and encouraging further dwell-time within the town centre core;
- 3) Grimm & Co (The National Centre for Folk & Fairy Tales) – a new home for the internationally-renowned Grimm & Co, a new cultural, learning and visitor destination will take root in a beautiful Grade II* Listed Church. This proposal forms part of the priority for a Child Centred Borough and for the Children's Capital of Culture 2025;
- 4) Safe & Smart Streets - Providing a high-quality environment and connecting key sites across the town centre. Proposals seek to address the key challenge of safety and security concerns expressed by users of the town centre by providing well-lit, secure and more welcoming public spaces. Proposals also allow for the introduction of events, a programme of public art, playful trails, sculptural street furniture and high-quality planting and green space will connect and frame our landmarks.

Having submitted the Business Case and supporting documentation on the 5 June 2020 the Council must now wait for the MHCLG to review and score the Bid against the HM Treasury guidance across the following key areas:

- 1) Strategic case – how the proposals fit with the stated vision for the town centre and align with local, regional and national strategies.
- 2) Economic case – balancing the costs of the proposal against the identified benefits and outputs, producing a Benefit Cost Ratio.
- 3) Commercial case – stating how the proposal responds to analysis of current markets and identified demand.
- 4) Financial case – summarising the detailed costs of the proposals, how match funding will be incorporated, and profiling spend.
- 5) Management case – detailing how the projects will be governed, delivered and evaluated as well as how identified risks will be managed.

Successful submissions will be announced in Autumn 2020.

2.5 Towns Deal Fund

The Town Deal is a £3.6bn programme seeking to “unleash the economic potential” of 100 places across the country. Rotherham has been given the opportunity to access £25 - 50 million. The focus will be on increased economic growth through regeneration, improved transport, better broadband connectivity, skills and culture.

A Town Investment Plan (TIP) is due for submission by 30th October 2020. The plan will focus on the economic growth corridor which stretches from Templeborough through the town centre and out to Eastwood.

Towns Fund Accelerated Funding (£1m) – grant funding to deliver capital projects as part of the emerging Towns Fund proposals. The funding is for this financial year, project proposals need to be submitted to MHCLG by 14 August 2020 and need to be accompanied by confirmation from the S151 officer that this spending is in line with the Towns Fund intervention framework. The guidance advises that government is “particularly encouraging projects that will support towns in responding to immediate challenges, including:

- Improvement to or new parks and green spaces and sustainable transport links;
- Improvements to town centres including repurposing empty commercial properties;
- Demolition or site remediation where this will have an immediate benefit.”

A range of options are being reviewed and will be available following feedback from MHCLG.

3 Delivery Progress

3.1 Forge Island Development

The Council’s development partner Muse Developments Ltd were granted planning permission for the site on 18 June 2020. This proposal includes the following:

- Multi-screen cinema;
- Hotel;
- Food and drink units;
- High quality public realm;
- New pedestrian footbridge over the River Don;

The Council are supporting Muse in progressing negotiations with key anchor tenants for the site, with announcements expected soon. Images and plans can be viewed [here](#).

3.2 Forge Island Flood Defences and Enabling

Work is now at an advanced stage on the flood defence, enabling and public realm improvements on Forge Island.

The current phase of works comprises the installation of sheet metal piled flood defences along the west side of the site and a flood gate on the north (Bridge Street) side, forming part of the ongoing Rotherham Renaissance Flood alleviation Scheme (RRFAS), which will eventually run from Templeborough to Kilnhurst via Rotherham Town Centre.

The flood defence wall is situated 8 metres away from the adjacent Sheffield and South Yorkshire Navigation Canal to allow maintenance of this historic feature, and this has created an opportunity to create very high-quality public open space, which will enable the public to enjoy this previously neglected section of the water course.

The canal footbridge adjacent to Rotherham Lock has been restored, new footpaths are being created in the form of re-used cobbles from the previous towpath. coupled with modern setts; and Coreten steel planters are being introduced which will accommodate extensive tree and shrub planting as well as a low-level lighting scheme.

The highlight of these works will be the construction of terraced amphitheatre adjacent to Rotherham Lock which as well as providing a seating area will also provide access to the upper deck of the wider leisure development that is being developed in partnership with Muse Developments Ltd.

Colleagues in the Councils Network Management Unit are well-advanced in preparing site investigation and preliminary design works as part of the construction of a flood barrier at the confluence of the River Don and canal at Browns Cut.

An additional scheme on the site has seen the introduction of a fish pass at Masbrough Weir. This allows native species such as salmon and trout to reach their traditional upstream spawning grounds for the first time in two centuries; a testimony to the improved river quality and the co-ordination of works and investment by the Environment Agency, Don Catchment Rivers Trust and Rotherham MBC.

See Appendix A

3.3 Rotherham Markets Redevelopment

The redevelopment of the Rotherham Markets Complex is a key project in the adopted Rotherham Town Centre Masterplan (TCM) and forms a major part of the Council's Final Future High Street Fund Bid submitted in June 2020. It is in need of significant investment and modernisation to ensure it can provide for current and anticipated future demand in addition to continuing to perform its key role in the town centre as an economic and social activity hub.

The development of this project, and others contained within the Town Centre Masterplan, is overseen and guided by the Town Centre Masterplan Project Board.

A development brief was prepared for the site and consultants were appointed in July 2019 to prepare plans, the lead architects commissioned and working with the Council to develop these plans is Greig & Stephenson Architects. Concept plans have been developed for the entire Rotherham Markets complex, also incorporating the planned relocation of the Central Library to the site; this specific element being led by RMBC Building Consultancy Unit. Significant stakeholder engagement has been ongoing throughout this design development process to ensure that stakeholders are aware of and involved in the development process and their input is captured and considered accordingly.

3.4 Concept Design

A concept design has been prepared to RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects) Stage 2 (Concept).

3.5 Rotherham Town Centre Public Realm

The Masterplan identified a package of interventions including public realm improvements, across several key strategic areas, to help improve the function, aesthetics and linkages into and across the core of Rotherham town centre. It highlighted the critical importance of public realm enhancements to help encourage and improve movement and connectivity, particularly between Forge Island and the wider town centre, and to improve the physical environment and experience within the town centre.

At the Cabinet meeting held on 23 December 2019, the decision was made to agree the design proposals and to release funding in the approved capital programme to implement phase one of the public realm improvements detailed in the Town Centre Masterplan.

Bridgeway was identified as the first section of public realm to be delivered as part of phase one. Subsequently, it has been decided that the proposed works to College Street, with its additional parking, should be brought forward and delivery accelerated.

The locations proposed for improvements as part of the public realm scheme have been split into two phases with the first phase including: Bridgeway, Frederick and College Street. Outline designs and artist impressions are provided in Appendix B.

Bridgeway

The Bridgeway scheme is the most advanced in terms of design (RIBA4) and deliverability, with a tender for materials having been issued and a supplier procured. The Highways Delivery Team (HDT) are to undertake the works.

College Street

A decision has been made to bring forward the delivery of the College Street scheme. To help accelerate the scheme designs to RIBA3 have been requested and are being produced. A Traffic Regulation Order is now in place for the additional 11 parking spaces. This will bring the total number of parking spaces in this location to 19.

Frederick Street

Frederick Street concludes phase 1 and has also been prioritised for delivery due to the funding requirements associated with the Transforming Cities grant the Council will receive towards its delivery. The funds are administered through the Sheffield City Region and to be eligible the expenditure must be defrayed in 20/21 (£300k) and 21/22 (£100k). The project is currently being designed by the Landscape Design Team and will be delivered by HDT.

Phase 2 of works includes Effingham Street and Howard Street.

Howard Street

This provides the link from the newly completed Frederick Street and the Passenger Transport Interchange to Market Square and the Markets, transforming the retail heart of the town.

Effingham Street

This will deliver an improved layout of market stalls and provide additional space for traders and space to expand the offer to other street markets including continental food markets. It is currently estimated that works on site would start in early 2022.

Riverside Gardens including Upper Millgate (dependent on FHSF funding)

To help avoid the risk that the Forge Island scheme is delivered with the unattractive riverside car park still in situ, undermining the impact of this transformational project and its connectivity with the wider town centre with one side of the riverbank being aesthetically poor, the Council has included a landscape option within its Future High Streets Fund bid. Designed to give this site a new purpose in the context of Forge Island and the wider town centre, it would be referred to as Riverside Gardens and will draw people, especially children and families to what is a neglected part of Rotherham town centre. Utilising the riverside location and the change in levels to create a fun landscape for play and interaction.

3.6 Town Centre Housing

The Council's contractor Willmott Dixon has started work across three sites delivering 171 new homes for sale, Council rent and shared ownership. Millfold House on Westgate has been demolished and foundations are being dug at the former Sheffield Road car park and the former Henley's garage site on Wellgate.

The schemes have been given new names:

- Sheffield Road car park will be known as 'Westgate Riverside' (72 homes)
- Millfold House: 'Millfold Rise' (45 homes)
- Henley's Garage: 'Wellgate Place' (54 homes)

See Appendix C for plans and images.

4. Key Actions and Indicative Timelines

4.1 Forge Island Development

The development programme is subject to completion of agreements with end users. Interest from end users remains strong despite the impact of Covid 19 and agreements with key anchor occupiers are expected in the very near future

4.2 Forge Island Flood Defences and Enabling

These works are due to be completed in September 2020.

4.3 Rotherham Markets Redevelopment

Progressing the markets redevelopment as proposed is dependent upon a successful outcome to the Future High Street fund submission. The full business case was submitted on 5 June 2020 and a decision is expected in "autumn". Subject to this decision this would allow for approval of detailed designs in December 2020 and potentially a start on site in January 2022.

4.4 Rotherham Town Centre Public Realm

Indicative delivery programmes:

Site	Start	Finish
Bridgegate	September 2020	November 2020
College Street	January 2021	May 2021
Frederick Street	January 2021	June 2021
Howard Street	May 2021	July 2021
Effingham Street	February 2022	June 2022
Riverside Gardens Upper Mill	January 2022	September 2022

4.5	<u>Town Centre Housing</u> The first completed homes are expected at Wellgate Place before Christmas 2021, with all three sites due to finish by Spring 2022.
5. Recommendations	
5.1	Progress towards delivery of key schemes within the Town Centre Masterplan and associated timeframes is noted.