

## **HAYWARDS HEATH TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT – CONSULTATION DRAFT**

REPORT OF: BUSINESS UNIT LEADER – PLANNING POLICY  
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Wards Affected: All Haywards Heath Wards  
Key Decision: No  
Report To: Scrutiny Committee for Housing, Planning and Economic Growth  
Date of meeting: 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2020

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### **Purpose of Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to ask the Scrutiny Committee to consider the consultation draft Haywards Heath Town Centre Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).
2. Following its consideration, the Scrutiny Committee is asked to recommend that the Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning approves the document for public consultation.

### **Summary**

3. This report:
  - a) sets out the background to why the Haywards Heath Town Centre Masterplan is needed;
  - b) describes the process of its preparation;
  - c) summarises the broad content of the Masterplan; and
  - d) outlines the next steps.

### **Recommendations**

4. **That the Scrutiny Committee:**
    - (i) **Considers the Consultation Draft Haywards Heath Town Centre Masterplan SPD;**
    - (ii) **Delegates authority to Divisional Leader for Planning and Economy, in consultation with the Cabinet Member, to make typographical, grammatical and photographic editorial changes before consultation; and**
    - (ii) **Recommends that Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning approves the document for public consultation.**
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### **Background**

5. Town centres are at the heart of local communities. They are the retail, community, leisure and business focus for the town. It is vital that town centres remain vibrant and prosperous, supporting economic recovery and growth.

6. The Council's **Economic Development Strategy** (adopted 2018) contains an objective to create "*viable and vibrant town and village centres with their own identity which meet the retail, leisure and employment needs of the growing population*". One of the actions to meet this objective is to "*Develop a Masterplan to help shape the strategic long-term vision for Haywards Heath as a destination and to co-ordinate development and investment to deliver that vision*".
7. Planning Policy also recognises the importance of Town Centres. The National Planning Policy Framework states that "Planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation."
8. The Mid Sussex District Plan (adopted 2018) supports the regeneration and renewal in Town Centres. Policy **DP2: Town Centre Redevelopment** notes that this should be in accordance with Town Centre Masterplans, where adopted.
9. The District Council intends to publish a draft Town Centre Masterplan for Haywards Heath, for public consultation. This will give the community an opportunity to have their say on the future of the Town Centre.
10. The Masterplan (once adopted) will be a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The SPD will provide additional guidance to Policy DP2: Town Centre Development and will be a material consideration in making planning decisions. Upon adoption, scheduled for Spring 2021, the Masterplan will supersede the current Haywards Heath Town Centre Masterplan which was adopted in 2007.

### **What is the role of a Town Centre Masterplan?**

11. The role and purpose of a Masterplan is far reaching.
12. The primary role of a Town Centre Masterplan is to provide a framework for economic vitality, recovery and growth. An adopted Masterplan demonstrates the Town's intentions for regeneration and renewal which in turn provides more clarity for the community, potential investors and those planning development and infrastructure. It can also provide evidence to support bids for future investment and help prioritise investment priorities and decisions.
13. The draft Masterplan cannot set additional planning policy or allocate sites for development or specific uses. Its role is to set a framework and guiding principles, should development opportunities arise within the lifetime of the Masterplan.
14. Alongside guiding principles for specific sites, including design guidance, the draft Masterplan contains high-level transport improvement proposals. These are only indicative concepts; the consultation will enable the Council and West Sussex County Council to gauge the level of support for them and, should they be taken forward into an adopted SPD, the high-level concepts will be the starting point for further detailed design.

15. The Masterplan is not the delivery vehicle for the proposals contained within it. The draft Masterplan contains an Implementation Strategy in the document (section 7) which provides examples of further work or studies that will be required to bring forward schemes, the bodies involved, as well as an indicative timeline.

**Process of preparing the draft Masterplan**

16. The following work has been carried out in preparing the Masterplan:
- The Council appointed Tibbalds and Civic Engineers in early 2019 to provide expert guidance and support, and to draft the Masterplan.
  - The consultants carried out background research and site visits to establish a draft Vision and objectives for the Town Centre and recommended proposals.
  - A Member Workshop, including representatives from the District, Town and County Councils was held in July 2019 to help develop the Vision and Objectives, and to share early findings and potential projects and opportunities.
  - A recent review of the draft Masterplan to ensure it reflects (as far as possible) the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic to ensure it enables economic recovery, reflecting the likely changing role of town centres in the future.
17. The draft Masterplan draws together a series of existing plans, projects and proposals into one place. These include:
- West Sussex County Council’s previous work to assess transport improvements within the town (The ‘Atkins Study’ 2005)
  - The District Council’s work on revising its Parking Strategy, the Economic Development Strategy and Park Improvement Plans
  - Haywards Heath Town Council’s adopted Neighbourhood Plan and its ambitions within “The Art of the Possible” and “Destination Haywards Heath” (2019)

**Content of the draft Masterplan**

18. The draft Haywards Heath Town Centre Masterplan is included at **Appendix 1**.

Vision and Objectives (Section 1)

19. The draft Masterplan contains the following 8 objectives to achieve the Vision of re-enforcing Haywards Heath’s role as a vibrant and connected town that attracts business and people:

1	Attracting people to visit, work, and live in the Town Centre
2	Retaining and strengthening the distinct character areas
3	Providing opportunities for sustainable travel and improving public realm
4	Exploring and providing opportunities to improve parking provision
5	Protecting the town’s significant green spaces (e.g. Victoria Park and Clair Park)
6	Creating positive ‘gateway moments’ to define arrival into the Town Centre

7	Providing a framework for enhancing opportunities to live in the Town Centre
8	Providing a framework for 'meanwhile uses' such as pop-ups to increase vibrancy

20. The draft Masterplan identifies the following five key character areas which are the focus for the recommendations proposed:

- Commercial Square and Station
- Perrymount Road
- The Broadway
- South Road (including The Orchards)
- Sussex Road

21. The draft Masterplan contains recommendations and 'Aims and Principles' relating to Public Realm and Transport Infrastructure (Section 4); identifies a number of Opportunity Sites (Section 5) within each of these character areas; and establishes broad principles that apply within the whole of the Town Centre boundary.

#### Public Realm and Transport Infrastructure Improvements (Section 4)

22. The draft Masterplan identifies principles for Public Realm and Transport Infrastructure Improvements, with the aim of strengthening the key character areas, enhancing accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists, integrating the parks, and creating a strong identity for Haywards Heath through improved gateway features and signage at key locations. It is important to note that these proposals are only concept designs which will require further detailed design and development prior to implementation.

23. A summary of the development principles for transport infrastructure and public realm are as follows:

- **Commercial Square and Station** – This is the main point of arrival into Haywards Heath and the proposals for this area relate to making this arrival point more attractive, providing better signage and wayfinding to direct people to key areas such as Perrymount Road, The Broadway and South Road, and improving pedestrian and cycle facilities.
- **Perrymount Road** – This area hosts the towns main cluster of commercial offices and is a key link between the station and the Food/Beverage and Retail focus, this link should be emphasised and enhanced. Proposals for this area relate to improving pedestrian and cycle links, particularly the western footway which is the main route, and improving public realm.
- **Muster Green Gyrotory** – The current configuration of the gyrotory is not pedestrian or cycle friendly, particularly as it forms a key link between the Station and South Road. The proposal is to pedestrianise the Broadway arm which could encourage activities such as markets or events. This in turn would reduce the need for as many crossings and signals.
- **The Broadway** – The Broadway is currently the food and beverage hub for the town, with a distinct character and function. To strengthen this, it is proposed to reduce the dominance of vehicles, improve pedestrian connectivity and enhance public realm.

- **South Road** – South Road currently provides the retail focus for the town. It is vehicle dominated, both in terms of quantity and speed, making it difficult for pedestrians to cross. A key aim of the draft Masterplan is to discourage unnecessary traffic away from South Road (which is often used as a through-route). Reducing speed limits, narrowing the carriageway, increasing the number of pedestrian crossings, and using features to define South Road as the Town Centre rather than a through route, combined with a proposal to make changes to the Tylers Green intersection, should encourage more traffic onto the relief road.
- **Victoria Park** – Victoria Park is an important open space and provides a connection between The Broadway and South Road. There are opportunities to improving this connection whilst also enhancing the appeal of Victoria Park and ensuring any public realm changes enable its use for community events.
- **Sussex Road** – There are numerous independent businesses along Sussex Road and it is a key route for pedestrians and vehicles. Proposals relate to making the roundabout more pedestrian/cycle friendly and helping to better define the area to ensure people recognise they are entering the town centre.
- **Other Measures** – The draft Masterplan also includes proposals to manage/reduce speed limits on key routes; improving wayfinding and signage as well as defining ‘Gateways’ to announce arrival into a town centre environment; and improving the parking offer by increasing capacity, including consolidating car parking into a central location.

#### Opportunity Sites (Section 5)

24. The draft Masterplan identifies “Opportunity Sites” within the Town Centre boundary that have potential for regeneration and renewal and which could help deliver the Vision for the town centre.
25. The identification of these sites does not imply they are available or viable, and additional work will be required to establish the precise opportunities these sites could provide, and how they may come forward – as set out in the Implementation Strategy (section 7).
26. A series of Aims and Principles have been established for each of these areas to guide future development.

#### ➤ **The Orchards Shopping Centre**

The Orchards Centre is the retail focal point within the town centre. To ensure viability and vitality, the Masterplan sets out three measures that aim to increase footfall, encourage a flourishing night-time economy, and maintain an attractive destination for those wishing to trade (both by retaining existing tenants and encouraging new ones). The Masterplan therefore proposes:

- Incorporating other uses, e.g. leisure or community;
- Improving the public realm and built environment; and
- Enhancing Town Centre parking

➤ **Clair Hall**

The Clair Hall site was identified as an Opportunity Area within the 2007 Haywards Heath Town Centre Masterplan given its strategic location.

The site still represents an opportunity for future regeneration. The Masterplan sets out Aims and Principles to guide future development, this includes establishing the need for such a facility and whether community facilities could be re-provided on this site or elsewhere in the town. Other important principles such as the relationship with existing buildings and Clair Park are also set out.

➤ **MSDC Owned Car Parks**

Objective 4 of the Masterplan relates to the provision of sufficient car parking, to meet existing and future needs. The Town Centre includes three small car parks (Haywards East, Haywards West and Franklynn Road), which are often at capacity. This causes frustration for shoppers, who often circle between car parks to find a space, causing unnecessary vehicle movements, particularly on South Road.

In conjunction with the objectives of the revised Parking Strategy (to be approved late 2020/early 2021), the Masterplan includes Aims and Principles for consolidating the smaller car parks into one or two larger capacity car parks at The Orchards. This in turn will present an opportunity for redevelopment of the smaller car parks, principally for residential use.

➤ **Additional Opportunity Sites**

The Masterplan also identifies 8 additional opportunity sites that have potential for smaller-scale improvements. These are located in prominent/gateway locations, the principles for each relate to supporting vibrancy and vitality.

- Texaco (opposite northern station entrance) – potential for retail and/or residential
- 2 The Broadway – well positioned for food & beverage use on the ground floor with residential/commercial above
- 118-142 South Road (opposite Victoria Park) – improvements to elevation and/or a shop-frontage design strategy
- 59-83 South Road (opposite The Orchards) – opportunity for public realm enclosed by new buildings
- 3-19 South Road – potential for retail on the ground floor and residential above
- The Priory – an important building, could be explored for other uses
- Mill Green Road (Royal Mail) – appropriate for residential subject to relocation of existing uses
- Muster Green/Broadway (on gyratory, adjacent The Star) – mixed use development potential

Policy Interventions (Section 6)

27. As a Supplementary Planning Document, the Masterplan cannot set new policy. However, this Council is scheduled to commence work to review the District Plan in 2021. The Masterplan provides guidance on potential changes to policy in relation to Town Centre uses that could be considered for inclusion in a new District Plan.

## **Consultation**

28. It is important that the community comments on the draft Masterplan as it will shape the long-term future of the Town Centre. Therefore, the draft Masterplan will be subject to 6-weeks consultation following Cabinet Member approval. Consultation will be carried out in accordance with the Community Involvement Plan (Appendix 4).
29. The Council will use the latest digital technology to ensure that the consultation is visual, and map based. The draft Masterplan will be published on the Council's website alongside an interactive map which will allow stakeholders to view the proposals, find further information, and submit responses.

## **Next Steps**

30. Following consultation officers will review the feedback and, where appropriate, changes will be proposed to the Masterplan. The final draft version of the document will be reconsidered by this Committee, before being submitted to Full Council in Spring 2021 for adoption as an SPD.
31. Once adopted the Haywards Heath Town Centre Masterplan SPD will carry weight in the planning decision making process. It will also be used as a marketing and promotion tool in order to stimulate inward investment and to inform any investment funding opportunities.

## **Other Options Considered**

32. An option would be to not prepare a Masterplan and rely on District Plan Policy DP2: Town Centre Development. However, this is a general policy and does not provide the level of supplementary detail or certainty to support economic recovery and ensure inward investment in this location.

## **Financial Implications**

33. The costs of preparing the Haywards Heath Town Centre Masterplan have been funded from the Development Plan specific Reserve.

## **Risk Management Implications**

34. The Government's focus is on economic recovery and growth, and ensuring vitality of Town Centres, which this Masterplan supports.

## **Equality and customer service implications**

35. The draft Masterplan has been subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment (Appendix 5). This concludes that the document does not discriminate against any members of the community that have 'protected characteristics.'

## **Other Material Implications**

36. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) (Appendix 2) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) (Appendix 3) Screening have been carried out on the draft Masterplan. Both conclude that SEA and HRA are not required.

## **Appendices**

1. Draft Haywards Heath Town Centre Masterplan (October 2020)
2. Strategic Environmental Assessment – Screening (October 2020)
3. Habitats Regulations Assessment – Screening (October 2020)
4. Community Involvement Plan (October 2020)
5. Equalities Impact Assessment (October 2020)