

**Name of meeting: Economy and Neighbourhood Scrutiny Panel**

**Date: 6<sup>th</sup> January 2022**

**Title of report: Small Centres Update**

**Purpose of report:** To provide the Panel with an update on the Small Centres Programme.

Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?	Not Applicable
Key Decision - Is it in the <u>Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports)?</u>	No Private Report/Private Appendix – No
The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?	Not Applicable
Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> & name	20 <sup>th</sup> December 2021 - David Shepherd
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance?	N/A
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?	N/A
Cabinet member <a href="#">portfolio</a>	Cllr Eric Firth – 21 <sup>st</sup> December 2021 Cllr Peter McBride – 17 <sup>th</sup> December 2021

**Electoral wards affected: Batley East and West; Cleckheaton; Heckmondwike; Holme Valley South**

**Ward councillors consulted: No**

**Public or private: Public**

**Has GDPR been considered? Yes**

## 1. Summary

This report provides the Panel with an update on the Small Centres programme. In particular:

- Background and recommendation to Cabinet in March 2021
- Progress on engagement through place standard exercise
- Progress on Master/Investment planning
- Anticipated Next Steps

## 2. Information

### Background and Introduction

- 2.1 In March 2021 Cabinet considered a report which proposed investing in town and village centres outside of Huddersfield and Dewsbury. The report was based upon an initial investment of £10m across the district.
- 2.2 The Initial Cabinet report proposed that 4 key centres – Batley, Cleckheaton, Heckmondwike and Holmfirth be the focus for the initial round of investment – each being allocated £1.5m each.
- 2.3 The proposal was matched with a clear process to follow. Essentially the key elements are:
- Ward members at the heart of the programme
  - Place Standard exercise to be undertaken
  - Investment/Master plan to be prepared for each centre with sign off by Strategic Director and portfolio holder
  - Projects to a value of £1.5m to be agreed
- 2.4 In addition to the above the report set out the types of project that could be funded. This includes:
- supporting retail, employment, community, and local centre activity;
  - sustainable travel and climate change measures;
  - improved community safety;
  - culture, art, and leisure activities; and,
  - public realm/landscaping, heritage, conservation, and better design
- 2.5 The cabinet report can be found by following this link:

[V5 Final Small Centres Cabinet Report 16th March 2021.pdf \(kirklees.gov.uk\)](#)

### Engagement – Place Standard

- 2.6 Part of the process to assemble a programme of investment for each of the identified small centres has been to undertake a stage of community engagement. To ensure that this is consistent across the

four towns the Place Standard tool has been utilised. This encourages conversations about any place, using some simple questions. The questions help build up a picture across a number of themes. There are 14 themes in all ranging from moving around through to play and recreation to social contact and feeling safe. The link to the Council's work in this area can be found below:

<https://howgoodisourplace.org.uk/our-places/>

2.7 The table below sets out the key dates for undertaking the exercise in each of the four centres and participation rates:

Centre	Dates for Place Standard	Number Taking Part	Initial Member Discussion Workshop/Walkabout
Batley	12 <sup>th</sup> July to 9 <sup>th</sup> August	253	5 <sup>th</sup> October 16 <sup>th</sup> December
Cleckheaton	1 <sup>st</sup> Sept to 11 <sup>th</sup> Oct	312	29 <sup>th</sup> October
Heckmondwike	4 <sup>th</sup> Oct to 8 <sup>th</sup> Nov	157	2nd November
Holmfirth	6 <sup>th</sup> Sept into Early Nov	466	Anticipated January 2022

Analysis of the process does take some time and our Citizen Engagement team is working towards completing that element. The following sections set out progress to date.

2.8 Batley Emerging Issues – There were 253 responses. The latest version of the feedback report is attached as Appendix 1.

2.9 Cleckheaton – There were 312 responses to the exercise. In terms of engagement methods a wide variety were used. This included:

- Posters and postcards delivered to town centre shops and town centre banners
- Letter to town centre businesses & contact with Spenningsdale Chamber of Trade
- Town centre presence: Cheapside, Library, Indoor market stall; Sykes Fold Coffee morning and Springfield House/Church Grange session, Wellness Bus, Farmer's Market
- Social media posts, emails to community group contacts,
- Cllrs networks.
- Batley and Spenningsdale place based working frontline staff network.
- College open day, and information distribution with Cleckheaton foodbank boxes

The outcomes from this are still being analysed and a report will be produced before the end of January 2022.

2.10 Heckmondwike – 157 responses have been received. Here the engagement methods included:

- Posters and postcards delivered to town centre shops.
- Town centre banners
- Letter to town centre businesses
- Town centre presence: Library, Wellness Bus, Morrisons entrance, Brighton Street Community Centre,
- Green Park event,
- Social media posts,
- emails to community group & mosque contacts,
- Cllrs networks.
- Batley and Spennings place based working frontline staff network.

The outcomes from this are still being analysed and a report will be produced before the end of January 2022.

2.11 Holmfirth – 466 responses have been received. For the first 2 weeks the focus was on promoting the engagement in the town centre (local businesses, library, community venues) and surrounding villages (noticeboards and general stores). All 200 town centre businesses were sent a letter encouraging them to take part and were visited by council staff. In addition it was promoted via local social media networks and council staff contacts with local groups, events, schools and parents, library users, Holme Valley parish council.

2.12 From week 3 drop-ins for the public were held at Holmfirth Library (weekly) and at Holmfirth Market (weekly on alternate days). On one day the Wellness Bus was parked at Crown Bottom car park. Promotion and conversations also took place on-street in Holmfirth centre.

2.13 During November, when groups were comfortable meeting again, there were in person group conversations with representatives of local groups; Holmfirth Business Association, River Holme Connections, HOTT (Holmfirth Transition Town), Holmfirth Festival organisers, Holmfirth Civic Society and the 8-12 years youth club at the Phoenix Centre.

2.14 The paid Facebook adverts had the following reach in Holmfirth: 418 clicks on the Holmfirth place standard page, 3,786 people were reached (saw the content on Facebook), and 13,007 impressions were made (number of times content on Facebook was displayed to people).

#### Master/Investment Planning

2.15 As part of the process of developing projects and delivering the small centres programme Cabinet required master/invest plans to be developed for each of the four identified small centres. This approach will help set projects in a wider context and help create a plan for the

future. This will in turn help to identify projects for delivery both as part of the small centres programme and for the life time of the plan.

- 2.16 The Place Standard results and the other engagement are important for informing the investment/master plans moving forward. We will need to create a clear link between engagement, planning and delivery.
- 2.17 It is our aim to use the master/investment plans to create a vision for each centre with clear objectives. Where projects identified as part of the plan are unfunded the presence and agreement of the plan will help in future funding bids.
- 2.18 Officers have appointed two sets of consultants to take this process forward. One – ARUP – has been appointed to lead the exercise in North Kirklees – Batley, Cleckheaton and Heckmondwike. The other – Steers – will work on Holmfirth.
- 2.19 An important part of this stage is to ensure that all funding – both existing and future opportunities – is in full view. This approach will enable officers to maximise opportunities and improve both quality and deliverability of projects.
- 2.20 The master planners aim to work between January and June 2022 on this part of the process.
- 2.21 Once the masterplan has been completed it will need to be agreed by the Strategic Director and the lead Cabinet portfolio holder.

### The Anticipated Next Steps

#### *Engagement*

- 2.22 Completion of the Place Standard reports is an essential first step as this information is required to inform the investment/master plan work and also helps to start to identify potential projects.
- 2.23 In addition it is intended that a plan of continuous engagement with ward Members is put in place as we move through the stages of delivery. This will not only be beneficial in terms keeping Members informed it will also be a valuable way of feeding in local knowledge at all stages.

#### *Investment/Master Planning*

- 2.24 The development of the investment/master plans is also an important next step in this process as outlined above this will run until Summer of this year.

### *Developing Projects*

- 2.25 Alongside the investment/master plan stage are officers are opening up dialogue with ward members on potential projects to be developed. At this stage it clear that it is important to understand where other funding is being committed to those centres so that the small place funding can complement and add value.
- 2.26 In Batley there is feedback on Commercial Street and Market Place. As a result the small centres team is liaising with Major Projects on how best to join up funding secured through West Yorkshire Combined Authority - Streets for People (SfP) and Transforming Cities Fund (TCF) - to deliver a more impactful project.
- 2.27 In Heckmondwike TCF will help deliver a new bus station and some improvements to the highway network. There are also aspirations to bring the library into a more central space. Joining up funding will help connect the projects and ensure the changes are meaningful.
- 2.28 A similar approach will be taken in Cleckheaton and Holmfirth.

### *Attracting Future Funding*

- 2.29 An important part of the small centre programme will be utilising the Council's investment to attract funding from other resources. Officers are already looking at current national level funding streams such as Levelling Up. In addition it can also help support the enhancement current planned projects.

### *Remaining Small Centres Funding*

- 2.30 The cabinet report from March 2021 allocated £6m to the four key centres identified above. This means that a further £4m will be available to deliver changes in other town and village centres in district. A further Cabinet Report will be required to outline how this will be administered. This is likely before the end of June 2022.

## **3. Implications for the Council**

### **3.1 Working with People**

As part of the Small Centres process the Council has undertaken a series of engagement events through the Place Standard exercise to seek information to feed into this process. The methods for this are set out in section 2 above

### **3.2 Working with Partners**

The Place Standard exercise set out to be as inclusive as possible and reach out to a wide range of audiences. Individual projects will engage partners as required

to ensure that delivery is aligned with community expectations. The potential for overlapping working with external funding partners has already been identified.

### **3.3 Place Based Working**

Place-based Working is a core element of Kirklees Council's Corporate Plan. The process of supporting our town and village centres is an important part of strengthening communities and place in a way that is informed by our citizens. To ensure that we deliver the right projects the Place Standard approach and the ensuing master planning process will help us to assemble a range of local information and intelligence to help us achieve the best outcomes. This will assist in understanding areas better, their networks and the assets within them and then will be used to deliver solutions and outcomes.

### **3.4 Climate Change and Air Quality**

The Council has declared a Climate Emergency and has adopted a 'net zero' carbon emissions target for 2038. All projects delivered will be assessed on a case by case basis to ensure that the right principles are applied to ensure they achieve or come as close to this objective as possible.

### **3.5 Improving outcomes for children**

The regeneration of town and village centres requires a family friendly emphasis. The projects being delivered should reflect the need encouraging families back into the towns.

### **3.6 Other (Legal, Financial or Human Resources)**

The bringing forward of projects involves considerable financial, legal and human resources to achieve. The service is reliant on a skilled core group of council staff working alongside numerous other council service areas, bringing in other specialist skills where appropriate.

## **4. Next steps and timelines**

Sections 2.17 to 2.23 set out the anticipated next steps.

## **5. Officer recommendations and reasons**

Officers recommend that this update is noted and that work continues to develop investment/master plans and projects for the identified centres.

## **6. Cabinet Portfolio Holder's recommendations**

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder has been consulted with regard to the contents of this report and supports the officer recommendation.

## **7. Contact officer**

Simon Taylor – Head of Town Centre Programmes  
01484 221000 - [simon.taylor@kirklees.gov.uk](mailto:simon.taylor@kirklees.gov.uk)

## **8. Background Papers and History of Decisions**

Cabinet Paper – Small Centres – 16<sup>th</sup> March 2021  
Appendix 1 – Batley Our Town

## **9. Strategic Director responsible**

David Shepherd – Strategic Director Growth and Regeneration

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