

Name of meeting: Cabinet

Date: 21 December 2022

Title of report: Strategic Acquisition of a property in relation to the Huddersfield Blueprint Cultural Heart.

Purpose of report:

This report requests that Cabinet considers the opportunity to acquire a Strategic Long Leasehold asset (subject to existing tenancies) in Huddersfield Town Centre in line with the Huddersfield Town Centre Masterplan.

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? Decisions having a particularly significant effect on a single ward may also be treated as if they were key decisions.	Yes - this report is likely to result in expenditure exceeding £250K.
Key Decision - Is it in the Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports?)	Key Decision - Yes Public Report with private appendices
The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?	Yes
Date signed off by Strategic Director & name	David Shepherd - Strategic Director Growth and Regeneration - 08/12/2022
Is it also signed off by the Service Director (Finance)?	Eamonn Croston - Finance and Accountancy – 07/12/2022
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?	Julie Muscroft – Legal Governance and Commissioning – 12/12/2002
Cabinet member portfolio	Cllr Paul Davies - Corporate Cllr Graham Turner - Regeneration

Electoral wards affected: Newsome

Ward councillors consulted: No

Public or private: Public with Private Appendices

(Exempt information under Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 as the report contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). It was considered that the disclosure of the information would be contrary to confidential terms and that the public

interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information and providing greater openness and transparency in relation to public expenditure in the Council's decision making.)

Has GDPR been considered? Yes

No personal or sensitive data; or other information covered by GDPR is included in this report

1 Summary

Town centres and the high street are experiencing long term structural changes and therefore a new forward-thinking approach is required to support vibrancy and the Council's strategic objectives.

This report is to seek Cabinet approval to purchase a property that will support the delivery of the Cultural Heart regeneration scheme in Huddersfield town centre.

The acquisition of this strategic asset will provide an opportunity for the Council to further control the ownership in the proposed Cultural Heart and support the implementation of the Masterplan, building on other previous acquisitions such as the Piazza and 18 to 28 Victoria Lane.

2 Information required to take a decision

2.1 Huddersfield Blueprint

Kirklees Council launched its ambitious Huddersfield Blueprint ("Blueprint") regeneration vision in June 2019. The Blueprint is a ten-year vision to create a thriving, modern-day town centre that will be accessible, busy, inclusive, family-friendly, sustainable and a safe environment that will stay open longer. The significant regeneration and investment planned for the town will transform Huddersfield, helping to stimulate and induce demand for domestic and international tourism.

The Blueprint focuses on regenerating six key areas of Huddersfield Town Centre: Station Gateway, St Peter's, Kingsgate and King Street/New Street, the Civic Quarter and a new Cultural Heart in the Queensgate and Piazza area.

The strategic aim of the Blueprint is to

- Create a busy town centre with a thriving economy and a balanced offer
- Increase residential living in the town centre.
- Have family and student friendly spaces, attractions, and activities.
- Have an economically vibrant town with improved employment opportunities.
- Refocus the retail core.
- Position Kirklees as a destination for tourism.
- Join up disparate areas in the town centre.
- Regenerate iconic architecture, complemented by new, modern buildings.
- Bring back 'civic pride'.
- Encourage third party private investment.

2.2 Cultural Heart

The aim to create a cultural hub (the Cultural Heart) in the town is a key component of the plan. Its location around the Queensgate market and library area is significant as it will anchor footfall in this area and create a cluster of cultural activities that link back to the Town Hall and also the Lawrence Batley Theatre.

The Council's vision for a new Cultural Heart is to cluster the art gallery, museum, library, archive service and music venue in this area and use the opportunity to

create very high-quality public realm and address the connectivity issues with the university in that area. This is set out further in the Kirklees Cultural Heart – Gateway 2 Cabinet Report (September 2022).

It is proposed that the Council acquires a strategic long leasehold asset (subject to existing tenancies) in Huddersfield Town Centre. A detailed private report with a number of appendices will be considered by Cabinet on 21 December 2022 as the information is exempt in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

Implications for the Council

3.1 Working with People

This report deals with the delivery aspect of one part of the Blueprint. The Blueprint was subject to a number of engagement exercises commencing in 2018 as part of the Blueprint development and then again late in 2019 after the Blueprint launch the Council undertook a Place Standard exercise to benchmark public reaction to the approach and projects. The key report for this can be found by accessing the following link:

<https://howgoodisourplace.org.uk/huddersfield-town-centre/>

As part of initial development work into options around the core projects a number of external stakeholders have been consulted as a way of testing out and developing options. A programme of this scale will continue to require engagement and consultation at various stages of programme development.

Another two phases of public and stakeholder consultation were carried out in Sept/Oct 2022. This consultation builds on the consultation feedback received so far and was another opportunity for the community to consider and help shape the development of these important plans prior to the planning application being submitted.

3.2 Working with Partners

Stakeholders with an interest in the town were involved in the initial development of the Blueprint. The Council will work with potential partners to develop the most appropriate and deliverable plans to bring forward the development of the Cultural Heart.

3.3 Place Based Working

The development of the Blueprint and the associated Place Standard exercise has engaged town centre stakeholders, businesses, and users to help shape the overall approach to redeveloping Huddersfield Town Centre, including the plans for the Cultural Heart.

The Cultural Heart programme is made up of a number of different projects, some of which will be operated by Council service teams and others by third party

operators. Since their appointment, the design team have applied their resources and experience in working with each of the service teams and involved them in the design to promote positive outcomes. Fact finding visits to similar assets have also taken place to inform the design of the projects within the Cultural Heart.

3.4 Climate Change and Air Quality

The reduction of carbon emissions and the minimization of air quality problems is a key objective for the Blueprint.

In addition, climate change initiatives are associated with the delivery and promotion of other projects and programmes across the town. For example, the promotion of active travel facilities and better connectivity by public transport. Both help to reduce adverse transport derived impacts on communities and public health.

3.5 Improving outcomes for children

The Blueprint includes within it a key objective of providing a family friendly town centre. This means that uses, streets and places will favour all age groups, including children. Part of the strategy to renew the town is to bring in new uses that attract families and young people in a way the town doesn't at present. This means that the introduction of cultural activities and associated food and beverage offers need to be managed in a way that appeals to all age groups.

Additionally, streets and spaces such as the Town Park will be designed with all generations in mind making them both safe and inclusive at the same time.

The range of venues that will be clustered in the Cultural Heart including the park, museum, art gallery, library, food hall and not least the venue will provide opportunities for children to explore, learn and have fun.

3.6 Cost of Living Crisis

Increased activity in the town centre as a result of Blueprint development will increase footfall which in turn helps support the services and businesses that already exist.

3.7 Other (e.g Integrated Impact Assessment/Legal/Financial or Human Resources)

3.7.1 Legal

Section 120 of the Local Government Act 1972 provides the legal framework for Councils to acquire land for the purposes of any of their functions or the benefit, improvement or development of their area. The proposed acquisition will provide an opportunity for the Council to deliver on the early phases of the Masterplan to implement targeted investment and improve the offer of the town centre.

The Council's Disposals and Acquisitions Policy sets out the general principles that govern strategic acquisitions, including having regard to prudent commercial practises. External consultants have been appointed to provide a Red Book Valuation

for the proposed purchase. The Valuation Report is contained within Appendix E to the private report as it is exempt information.

3.7.2 Financial

The proposed strategic acquisition as set out in this report will be met from the Council's strategic acquisition fund allocation within the approved capital plan. The revenue implications of the proposed strategic purchase are contained within the private report as this is exempt information.

4 Consultees and their opinions

No consultation has been undertaken specifically with regard to this item. However there has been extensive consultation on the Huddersfield Blueprint as outlined in section 3.1 of this report.

5 Engagement

No engagement has been undertaken specifically with regard to this item. However there has been extensive engagement on Huddersfield Blueprint as outlined in sections 3.1 and 3.2 of this report.

6 Next steps and timelines

The purchase of this property will support the delivery of the Cultural Heart regeneration scheme in Huddersfield town centre. An acquisition of this strategic asset will provide an opportunity for the Council to control the ownership in the proposed Cultural Heart and support the implementation of the Masterplan, building on other acquisitions such as the Piazza and 18-28 Victoria Lane.

If the Officer recommendations are approved, Officers will seek to exchange contracts by the end of January 2023 and complete the transfer either simultaneously or shortly thereafter.

7 Officer recommendations

The Officers recommendation, having regard to the detail in the private appendices, is to complete the purchase of this strategic asset.

Cabinet is requested to:

- (a) Consider the content of the public and private reports and private appendices;
- (b) Approve the strategic acquisition, as detailed in the red line boundary attached at private Appendix B, and in line with the Agreed Heads of Terms in private Appendix C for the purchase price outlined in the Valuation Report in Appendix E;

- (c) Approve the required capital funding from the Strategic Acquisitions Fund for Huddersfield Town Centre as identified in the Council's Capital Plan;
- (d) Delegate authority to the Service Director for Legal, Governance and Commissioning to enter into and execute any agreements or instruments relating to the acquisition;
- (e) Delegate authority to the Service Director for Development to undertake the strategic and operational management, working with the Service Director for Legal, Governance and Commissioning, to agree relevant leases and management agreements as required.

8 Cabinet Portfolio Holder's recommendations

The Portfolio Holders for Regeneration and Corporate endorse the officer recommendation.

9 Contact officers

Joanne Bartholomew – Service Director for Development –
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Matthew Garbutt – Disposal and Acquisition Surveyor –
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10 Background Papers and History of Decisions

Private Appendix A – Private report on the proposed strategic acquisition
Private Appendix B – Red line boundary plan
Private Appendix C – Agreed Heads of Terms
Private Appendix D – Tenancy Schedule
Private Appendix E - Valuation Report

11 Strategic Director responsible

David Shepherd – Strategic Director for Growth & Regeneration