

Bolton Council

Report to:	Executive Cabinet Member Deputy Leader's Portfolio		
Date of meeting:	9 th November 2020		
Report of:	Director of Place	Report number:	ECMDL763
Contact officer:	Caroline Hansell, Principal Project Officer	Telephone number	01204 336131
Report title:	Little Lever District centre Strategy		
Not confidential			
This report does not contain information which warrants its consideration in the absence of the press or members of the public.			
Purpose:	This report sets out proposals for the implementation of a masterplan and strategy to guide the long-term regeneration of Little Lever District centre and seeks approval for a series of development proposals and key actions following a period of public consultation.		
Recommendations:	<p>The Executive Cabinet Member is requested to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) approve the Little Lever District Centre masterplan and strategy to guide the long-term regeneration of the centre; ii) approve the proposed approach to deliver the masterplan, as outlined in the main body of the report; iii) authorise the Borough Solicitor to carry out all necessary legal formalities where required. 		
Decision:			
Background documents:	Report to Cabinet dated 21/01/19 entitled 'Town Centres Strategy Funding' (CAB508) Report to Council dated 20/02/19 entitled 'Budget Update and Options 2019-21' (CEX011) Report to Council dated 20/02/19 entitled 'Corporate Capital and One-Off Funding 2019-2022' (CEX046)		
Appendices/ Attachments	Appendix 1: Masterplan Report BDP Appendix 2: Masterplan BDP Appendix 3: Baseline Report Appendix 4: Consultation Report Appendix 5: Indicative Phasing Strategy Appendix 6: EIA		
Signed:	Leader/Executive Cabinet Member	Monitoring Officer	
Date:			

Consultation with other officers			
Finance	Yes	30/9/20	Corinne Davoy-Wood
Legal	Yes	30/9/20	Michelle Harris
HR	No	N/A	N/A

Equality Impact Assessment	Yes	29/9/20	Tammy Tatman
(a) Pre-consultation reports Is there a need to consult on the proposals?			No
(b) Post consultation reports Please confirm that the consultation response has been taken into consideration in making the recommendations.			Yes
Vision outcomes Please identify the appropriate Vision outcome(s) that this report relates or contributes to by putting a cross in the relevant box.		1.Start Well	X
		2.Live Well	X
		3.Age Well	X
		4.Prosporous	X
		5 Clean and Green	X
		6.Strong and Distinctive	X

1 INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In September 2017, Cabinet approved the refreshed Town Centre Strategy and Masterplan including a series of interventions and key actions including a framework designed to support the town centre's economy. These documents set out Bolton's ambition and vision to achieve a £1bn regeneration of the town centre and sustain its immediate future to the benefit of the wider Borough and its residents, supported by £100m direct investment from the Council.
- 1.2 The Economic Strategy seeks to ensure that the Bolton of 2030 is active, connected and prosperous with key aims including successful businesses, cohesive communities and a welcoming place to study, work and put down roots. The Economic Strategy identifies the economic vision and ambition for Bolton with a vibrant town centre at its heart: Building homes; providing employment; and making the most of Bolton's quality educational offer. To achieve this, it is vital the Council assists in leading, facilitating and enabling the conditions for economic growth through direct intervention in economic development and regeneration with business and communities. It is against this backdrop that the Council, in consultation with key stakeholders, refreshed its Town Centre Strategy and created a £100 million investment fund to support delivery with the aim of leveraging further funding and investment to regenerate Bolton town centre and sustain its immediate future for the benefit of the wider Borough and its residents.
- 1.3 As a result of the significant progress and in particular in the first 12 months regarding the success in attracting private sector investment proposals, together with the level of forecasted direct delivery by developers, on the 21st January 2019 Cabinet approved a £12m allocation of funding from the £100m Town Centre Strategy Fund to prepare similar strategies and masterplans and carry out targeted interventions within the next tier of larger town centres in Bolton, specifically Farnworth, Horwich, Westhoughton and Little Lever, where this can have the greatest impact.
- 1.4 On the 20th February 2019 Full Council approved an additional £4m of funding from the 2019/20 Capital Programme for further investment in district centres, principally in Farnworth town centre.
- 1.5 Following on from the funding announcement and the successful development of a Town Centre Strategy and Masterplan for Farnworth town centre, approved on the 3rd July 2019 including the process of establishing a Town Centre Steering Group and public consultation, Council Officers were requested to roll out the process of developing masterplans and strategies for the remaining District Centres of Horwich, Little Lever and Westhoughton.
- 1.6 In October 2019, following a competitive tendering exercise via the Chest, BDP (supported by BE Group and CBO Transport) were successfully appointed to develop masterplans and key development proposals for Horwich, Westhoughton and Little Lever District Centres. In consultation with key stakeholders and the public, work on the development of these masterplans has concluded.

- 1.7 Guidance from the Ministry of Homes, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), updated November 2019 on promoting Healthy and Safe Communities states the importance of the design and use of the built and natural environments, including green infrastructure as major determinants of health and wellbeing. Planning and health need to be considered together in terms of creating environments that support and encourage healthy lifestyles, and in terms of identifying and securing the facilities needed for primary, secondary and tertiary care, and the wider health and care system (taking into account the changing needs of the population). A healthy place is one which supports and promotes healthy behaviours and environments and a reduction in health inequalities for people of all ages. It will provide the community with opportunities to improve their physical and mental health, and support community engagement and wellbeing. Although the masterplans have significant focus on the physical aspects of the place, the Council has been keen to ensure the development of the masterplans for the town centres are about the people of each area and that any investment has a wider socio-economic impact, to assist in the delivery of the Council's Economic Strategy focussing on inclusive growth. Each masterplan therefore considers the needs of the local community and how the town centre can promote healthier lifestyles.
- 1.8 This report focuses on the development of a masterplan for Little Lever District centre, which has been developed in partnership with key stakeholders and in consultation with the public and considers the current issues and challenges facing the district centre. The masterplan has identified six key development proposals to support the transformation of Little Lever District centre.
- 1.9 It is proposed that any funding allocated to Little Lever is targeted to key interventions within the town centre which will have the greatest impact, together with cross-cutting interventions such as infrastructure investment that will benefit the town centre as a whole. Interventions include the long term proposal to redevelop the precinct site and create a new town square, new use for Memorial Library, highways improvement works to two key gateways into the town centre, improvements to shopfronts and promotion of residential development in key locations. It is proposed that external advisors and services will be procured, as required, to support the delivery of the Little Lever District Centre Strategy and secure the necessary private sector investment. A range of potential delivery options will be utilised.
- 1.10 The strategy for Little Lever District centre is outlined within this report with full details including target interventions, masterplan framework and economic benefits set out within the proposed Masterplan Report attached at Appendix 1. Collectively this report and the Masterplan comprise the strategy for Little Lever District centre.
- 1.11 It is considered vital that the Council leads and facilitates the adaption and evolution of Little Lever District centre through a strategy that will significantly strengthen the diversity of uses across the district centre and will enhance the townscape through upgrading and redevelopment of the buildings and spaces.

- 1.12 Without the Council's direct intervention, the risk is the delivery of the development proposals/target interventions will not be achieved. The private sector will not deliver economic objectives on its own. The Council will need to assist in leading, facilitating and enabling the conditions for economic growth through direct intervention in economic development in partnership with business and communities. An indicative action plan for the delivery of the six development proposals/key interventions is detailed in this report.

2. ISSUES

- 2.1 Across the UK, town centres are facing challenges to their future vitality and viability. Many town centres are suffering from falling retail sales, reduced footfall, rising vacancies and high maintenance costs. These issues have been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. Town centres need to become places that offer more diverse attractions, providing a range of different activities and uses for all such as more independent shops, housing, leisure, vibrant food and drink offers, social and community hubs and business and workspace and cultural enterprises, all of which should be designed to function as intergenerational spaces.
- 2.2 'The Portas Review: An independent Review into the Future of our High Streets' (2011) confirms this requirement, reimagining town centres as 'destinations for socialising, culture, health, wellbeing, creativity and learning' as well as 'places that will develop and sustain new and existing markets and businesses'. The Public Health England's report 'Healthy High Streets: Good Place-making in an urban setting' (2018) recognises that healthy streets are assets that promote and improve the health of local residents and users and the wider community. To achieve such improvements, high streets need to feature good quality design and furniture and provide accessible, safe and communal spaces that can be used to create healthier, safer and more cohesive communities.
- 2.3 Little Lever district centre is a small linear centre, often referred to as the 'village centre', structured around the main high street that runs through the centre, stretching from the independent indoor market at Coronation Square to the southeast, to the large Tesco superstore and car park to the northwest. The town centre performs a localised role, catering primarily for service and top-up food shopping needs (Management Horizons Index, 2008).
- 2.4 The poor quality of the area is heavily influenced by the characteristics and structure of its main spine, in particular its fragmented structure, the dated retail precinct, poorly maintained shop frontages and the public realm around the precinct's square. There is no significant comparison or evening economy offer in the centre and the centre could decline further without positive intervention. Other negative influences on the layout of the town centre include the perceived unsafe junction's northwest of Market Street and Coronation Square to the southeast as well as the increasing level of vacancy along the road.
- 2.5 Little Lever comprises of a small number of convenience outlets, including a mid-sized Tesco food store, Spar, Nisa Local, two newsagents and Little Lever market

hall. The enlarged Tesco opened its doors in October 2014, after relocating from 63 Market Street, the site of the new health centre and library. The relocation of Tesco to the edge of the Town Centre serves to draw trade away from the other town centre shops as shoppers who come and go from that food store have little incentive to make linked trips to the main retail centre at the southern end of Market Street.

- 2.6 Little Lever has very few national retailers: the main ones being Tesco, Spar, Cohens Chemist and the Post Office. Overall around 20 percent of outlets are in comparison use, against national averages of 40-50 percent. In terms of services, the focus is on hairdressing, with six hairdressers/barbers in the town centre along with a tattoo artist, tanning salon and two massage facilities. Little Lever also has a laundrette and an estate agent, as well as two dentists, children's nursery, an existing medical practice and the current library. Service users account for around a third of outlets, close to the national average, however there are no banks and building societies located in Little Lever. Little Lever has been tested for unmet demand with 18 national chain retailers that do not already have a presence locally, Savers Health & Beauty indicated they would consider properties in the centre with a sales area of 2,000-3,000 sqft (187-279 sqm) and ancillary space of 500 sqft (47sqm).
- 2.7 The recently approved housing schemes near the district centre will act as a regeneration boost to the area and will help to increase footfall. The developments include namely the development of 22 dwellings off Victory Road to the north east of the Tesco superstore, as well as the approved scheme for 8 dwellings off Lever Street west of Tesco. Other planned residential developments include a scheme at Creams Paper Mill and an Extra Care Scheme at Lever Gardens which will have the potential to drive additional footfall into the centre.
- 2.8 House prices in Little Lever are below the Greater Manchester (GM) average, significantly for detached properties, where the GM average is £308,914 against a Little Lever norm of £176,813. Little Lever house prices fall £50,000-£60,000 below the GM/North West average for all other property types.

3 MAIN BODY OF THE REPORT

3.1 Policy Context

- 3.1.1 The need for the regeneration of Little Lever District centre is well founded in planning policy both at national, regional and local level. The Masterplan is set within this context.

3.2 National Policy Context

- 3.2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published in July 2018 sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The development proposals/target interventions are consistent with NPPF Chapter 2 Achieving Sustainable Development, Chapter 5 Delivering a sufficient

supply of homes, Chapter 7 Ensuring the vitality of town centres and Chapter 8 Promoting healthy and safe communities.

3.3 *Regional Policy Context*

3.3.1 The emerging Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF), due for publication in November 2020, will help direct and shape development across the conurbation for the next 15 years. Its emphasis on the majority of this growth taking place on urban land in the most accessible locations, will help minimise the loss of greenbelt land and prioritise the re-use of previously developed land. With around 200,000 new homes required by the conurbation by the GMSF by 2037, the existing towns have a key role to play. The GMSF also clearly recognises that main town centres are important local economic drivers providing the focus for office, retail, leisure and cultural activity to their surrounding area.

3.3.2 The plan also seeks to boost competitiveness of the north of the conurbation with strong focus on regeneration and enhancing the role of town centres including Little Lever. Opportunities to further increase the population catchments of these centres will be promoted, coupled with new infrastructure and amenities including new and improved public spaces and green infrastructure. In doing so development will be carefully managed to ensure that the local distinctiveness of each main town centre is retained and enhanced. The GMSF fully recognises the need for town centres to adapt if they are to continue to flourish and support the needs of surrounding communities.

3.4 *Local Policy Context*

3.4.1 The Core Strategy, adopted in March 2011, is Bolton's key Local Plan document. It describes what the Council, its formal partners and others with an interest in the future development of the Borough including members of the Community want Bolton to look like in the future up to 2026, and the planning policies that will be used to make it a reality, it reflects the spatial aspects of the work of the Council and its partners. The subsequent Allocations Plan (2014) sets out how this will be implemented on a Proposals Map for Little Lever and the Borough as a whole.

3.4.2 Policy OA6: Little Lever and Kearsley has identified the town centre as serving the south-eastern part of the borough and states that the centre would be allowed to expand for additional convenience floor space if a site became available. It also seeks to:

- Identify Little Lever town centre as serving the south-eastern part of the borough. The centre would be allowed to expand for additional convenience floor space if a site became available.
- Conserve and enhance the character of the existing physical environment.
- Respect and enhance the built form and pattern of existing development.
- Develop new or expanded medical and health facilities as Little Lever.

3.5 **Market Drivers and analysis**

3.5.1 A baseline review (Full Report can be viewed at Appendix 3) of potential market opportunities and town centre uses, undertaken by BDP, has identified the following areas for growth in Little Lever:

- *Residential*

The baseline report has demonstrated an undersupply of housing in Little Lever, including flats. Semi-detached houses dominate in housing market transactions, as recorded on Zoopla and Land Registry, accounting for 61.1 percent of market sales since 2014. In comparison, the flat market has a limited role, accounting for only 5.2 percent of sales in Little Lever. This reflects the limited stock of flats in the town.

Bolton as a borough is required to bring about housing development of some 2,500-3,750 homes in the boroughs 'other areas' by the end of the local plan. Given the focus of GMSF on local centres for the development of new houses, the market opportunity identified for housing is considered to comply with local and regional policies.

- *Retail*

The reasonable offer of local cafes in the town centre suggests a good daytime trade/footfall and is a positive aspect to build upon, however the evening economy is limited. The offer of local independent retailers is good and the baseline studies has demonstrated there is evidence for further demand from such retailers.

- *Leisure, Gym and Hot Food*

Little Lever is in the shadow of Bolton and Bury for major leisure uses. It is considered that the scale of the town would make it difficult to attract more national multiple retailers/leisure operators, however there is potential to introduce new spaces for leisure, events and hot food in the town centre.

3.6 Vision for Little Lever District Centre

3.6.1 The Little Lever town centre Steering Group was established in June 2019, consisting of community and faith representatives, landowners, businesses, ward councillors and officers. This group has had an influential role in shaping the vision and masterplan over the past 12 months it has provided clear direction for the master planning process to ensure outcomes benefit local communities and deliver the scale of ambition desired. A stakeholder event was held on the 10th December 2019, with around 40 attendees. The discussions held at this event contributed to a visioning and master planning process for the town.

3.6.2 The draft masterplan and key development proposals were shared with the public and comments welcomed through the completion of either a paper copy or online questionnaire from 27th January until the 23rd February. 253 people responded to the questionnaire and around 200 people attended the two drop-in sessions on a Wednesday afternoon/early evening (5th February) and a Saturday (8th February). (Appendix 4, Consultation Report).

3.6.3 This has resulted in a new vision for Little Lever being developed:

“Little Lever has a strong and proud local community. The new library and health centre will reinforce the town centre as the heart of the community and a place to meet, as well as a place to satisfy day to day shopping needs. Improvements to the public realm to make it easier for pedestrians to cross busy roads will make the town centre a safer and more attractive place to visit and will better link High Street and the Indoor Market and the Tesco superstore to Market Street.”

3.7 Physical Development Proposals

3.7.1 In order to realise the market potential of the district centre and to meet the aspirations of local people, a strategy has been developed to underpin the long-term regeneration of Little Lever District centre which will benefit the current and future residents and businesses in the area.

3.7.2 The strategy helps to focus future town centre development on Market Street, to create a strong heart to the district centre, whilst providing better pedestrian linkages from Market Street to Tesco superstore to the west and the indoor market on High Street to the east. The new library and health centre will be at the heart of the regenerated district centre. The building work on this project has now started and a new use will need to be found for the existing library building and former health centre site.

3.7.3 The strategy will look to create:

- A district centre for families – Making Little Lever a great place to visit with children, friends and family.
- A district centre people want to shop in – encouraging new, modern shops that provide goods you need, making it possible to shop local.
- Little Lever evenings – A district centre to visit at all times
- Live in Little Lever – promoting Little Lever as an attractive place to live in new apartments and town houses, with district centre services and shops on the doorstep.

3.8 Public Consultation

3.8.1 BDP developed a draft Masterplan that focussed on a number of key development proposals (KDP) and interventions that have the most to offer Little Lever District centre and the wider area, both in the short and long term. The proposals were developed following a process of evidence gathering, market viability and option testing and have been informed by stakeholder consultations and a period of public consultation alongside testing the deliverability of the proposals.

- KDP One: Redevelopment of the precinct for shops and apartments
- KDP Two: New town square
- KDP Three: Former library building
- KDP Four: Relocation of war memorial
- KDP Five: Town centre gateways
- KDP Six: Shopfront/business frontage facelift scheme
- KDP Seven: Promotion of housing development in and around the town centre

- 3.8.2 The period of public consultation ran from Monday 27th January to Sunday 23rd February. A questionnaire was made available online and promoted via the Council's website, via social media and press releases in the Bolton News. A printed version of the questionnaire was available on request and copies were available in a number of public places throughout the town. An information sheet summarising the proposals was made available on the website to permit intelligent consideration and response.
- 3.8.3 Two drop-in events were held at Little Lever Memorial Library on a Wednesday 5th February afternoon/early evening and a Saturday 8th February so that residents and businesses could view the proposals on consultation boards and have the opportunity to speak to Officers and members of the Consultant team if they wished. The drop-in events were promoted on the council's website, on social media and in the local press. Around 200 residents/business representatives visited the drop-in events to give their views and 253 responses were received via the consultation questionnaire. A copy of the full consultation report can be found at Appendix 4.
- 3.8.4 In light of the comments received on the draft Masterplan from the period of public consultation the following changes were agreed at a meeting of the Little Lever town centre Steering Group in March 2020:

- *KDP 1: Redevelopment of the precinct site to create new shops with apartment living above.*

The proposal was to redevelop the precinct site to create shops and cafes at street level with apartments above. Some new short stay car parking would be provided on Market Street to help attract passing trade. Four floors of apartments above the shops will increase town centre living which will improve the vibrancy of the town centre, especially in the evenings.

There was a mixed response to this proposal. The majority agreed that the precinct did require work, but many wanted this limiting to shops and businesses. A better retail/business mix was welcomed by most. There were mixed views about housing on the site with most preferring one or two storeys to four which they felt was more in keeping with surrounding premises and would retain a 'village' feel.

In response to the comments received the redevelopment of the precinct will remain as a key development proposal to create shops and cafes at street level with apartments above including the provision of on street parking on High Street. A total of up to 50 one/two bed apartments are now proposed above commercial ground floor spread out across two rather than four storeys.

- *KDP 2: New Town Square*

This proposal was to create a new town square between the new library/health centre and the redeveloped precinct which would become the heart of the district centre. The town square could be used for markets and other events but at other times could be used for parking.

Many respondents were in agreement with this proposal, saying it would be a focal point of the village and a nice place to sit and enjoy markets and events which, together with a better retail offer, would attract locals and visitors. Many felt it should be a dedicated space and did not like the idea of it doubling up as car parking. Some questioned where people would park if they were attracted to events.

In response to the comments received it was agreed to retain the development of a new town square which will become the heart of the town centre, between the new library/health centre and the redeveloped precinct (KDP 1). This will complement the wider redevelopment of the Precinct site with an enhanced and easy to use parking offer. The town square could be used for markets and events throughout the year but provide much needed car parking the rest of the year.

It was noted however that as this key development proposal is linked to KDP 1 and the availability of land, it will not be possible to implement this KDP in advance of KDP 1.

- *KDP 3: New use for Memorial Library*

Once the new library and health centre is built the former library will become vacant. This proposal was to secure a new use for the library building and redevelop the surrounding area (including the garages to the rear) for mixed use development. This would involve the relocation of the war memorial.

People were keen to see the building used but were upset by the proposal and felt that the war memorial should remain in situ. A few people didn't see why the library should move, but many suggested other uses for the building, which was an important landmark. These included activities for young people, a police/CCTV station, council/housing services, retail/food and drink establishments and health services. Many suggested that the building should be used for community use. There was the concern about the proposal to develop the garages to the rear, which housed thriving businesses.

In response to the comments received it was agreed to retain the key development proposal in the masterplan but only the Memorial Library and immediate area surrounding it – omitting the garages. A commercial or public facing use were considered to be acceptable.

KDP 4: Relocation of war memorial

A war memorial is set into the façade of the existing Little Lever Memorial library and is a valued local memorial and the focus of community gatherings. Under the proposal this war memorial would be sensitively relocated to the Memorial Gardens at the western end of Market Street, where an appropriate and more spacious setting can be provided. A small commercial café or kiosk could also be provided to cater for those who wish to spend some time in the gardens,

Half of the respondents disagreed with this proposal with many thinking moving the war memorial was disrespectful to those who had given their lives in conflicts and it was not too much of a sacrifice to close the road occasionally. There were also concerns that the memorial could be damaged in the move and that it would be

tucked away and vandalised in the Memorial Gardens. A number of people were against a café or kiosk being present as it was not in keeping with the Memorial Garden which contained graves.

In response to the comments received and in acknowledgement of the recent listed status given to the war memorial it was agreed to remove this KDP from the masterplan.

KDP 5: Town Centre Gateways

This proposal is to improve the junction with Market Street and Church Street with a traffic light controlled junction containing pedestrian crossing phases to provide a safer and more pleasant pedestrian experience. There is also the opportunity to replace the roundabout at the junction with Market Street and High Street with similar pedestrian crossing improvements to enhance pedestrian safety and amenity by creating a safer environment for pedestrians and cyclists.

The majority of respondents agreed with this proposal feeling that the safety of pedestrian and motorists needed improving urgently. Those answering 'partly' or 'no' were concerned about added congestion as a result of traffic lights.

In response to the comments received it was agreed to retain this as a KDP in the masterplan however acknowledging the need to undertake traffic modelling to understand the impact these proposed works will have on journey times and the surrounding road networks. Consideration to be given, in the proposals developed, to the installation of traffic calming measures, where required, to prevent vehicles taking short cuts through residential areas to avoid the main routes through the Village centre.

KDP 6: Shop Front/business frontage facelift Scheme

This proposal is to give business/shop units along the northern side of Market Street (opposite the precinct) a facelift. This proposal would make Little Lever a more attractive place for residents and visitors and may lead to an increase in trade for local shops and businesses.

The vast majority of respondents agreed with this proposal. It was felt that the facelift scheme would make the area more attractive and could increase trade. Some people suggested that the scheme should be extended to cover more premises. There was concerns about spending public money on private businesses and while some wanted uniformity in a scheme, others felt individuality was important.

In response to the comments received it was agreed to retain this as a KDP in the masterplan. It was agreed however to increase the target area to include properties on High Street as well as Market Street.

- *KDP 7: Promotion of housing development in and around the District Centre*

Sites for consideration include those already with planning permission to the west and north of Tesco superstore and a cleared site at the back of Hannon Holmes Ltd.

There is also a sizeable Council-owned site between High Street and James Street beyond which lends itself to mix of housing, open space and long stay car parking.

In response to the comments received it was agreed to retain this as a KDP in the masterplan and to include the soon to be vacant health centre site on Mytham Road and adjacent site currently used by a Dog Walking club for residential development, subject to planning. (View table 1 for a plan of the site)

Table 1



3.8.5 The outcome of the public consultation along with proposed amendment to the Masterplan as detailed above was shared with members of the Little Lever town centre Steering Group held on the 10th March 2020. The proposed way forward was agreed by all members of the group and the masterplan was amended to reflect these changes.

4. CROSS CUTTING THEMES/SOCIAL INTERVENTION

4.1 By diversifying the use of town centres, they can become community hubs and meeting places that are vibrant and cater for all age ranges. There are a number of ways to achieve this and the Council have been successful in implementing this approach in Bolton town centre with events such as the Food and Drink Festival, Winter Festival and Ironman but also with community facilities such as Bolton One, Central Library, etc. It is not intended that Little Lever attempts to compete with this approach, however opportunities do exist to tackle the wider social issues that are present in the town through a similar, albeit smaller scale that caters for Little Lever residents. Little Lever is set to benefit greatly from the development of the new Library and Health Centre in the heart of the District Centre which will become a central community asset.

4.2 Through the stakeholder event and public consultation exercise a number of cross cutting themes were identified and below is a summary of the approach proposed to address them.

4.3 *Health*

4.3.1 As stated in paragraph 1.7 Guidance from MHCLG on promoting healthy and safe communities (updated November 2019) states the design and use of the built and natural environments, including green infrastructure are major determinants of health and wellbeing. Planning and health need to be considered together in terms of creating environments that support and encourage healthy lifestyles.

4.3.2 Linkages will be made across a number of the development proposals to ensure the Council will:

- Work with our partners to ensure a co-ordinated approach is taken to reduce crime and antisocial behaviour in Little Lever district centre;
- Tackle social isolation, in particular focussing on the older members of the community to ensure that they are engaged and fulfilling their potential within the community;
- Take into account new models of health and social care to meet the needs of local people and improve access;
- Develop a 'green' environment that makes the best use of the existing Mytham Park and the Manchester, Bolton and Bury canal breach. This could include cycle and walking routes to promote healthy living; and
- Investigate opportunities for increased access to health services in Little Lever district centre.

4.4 *Community Events*

4.4.1 To encourage/support local businesses and communities and attract people to the town, opportunities will be investigated to utilise Market Street and other areas of the town for hosting events and other activities that promote additional footfall. This could mirror the events that take place in Bolton town centre and include pop up businesses/specialist markets. There is also an opportunity to build momentum for the larger events such as the Food and Drink festival by hosting smaller local events on the lead up to these. Housing providers as well as other community networks would be able to work with communities to develop proposals.

4.4.2 To improve community and youth service provision in the district centre consideration to be given to the opportunity presented by the new Health Centre and Library as a new community asset.

4.5 *Digital*

4.5.1 Developing digital infrastructure in Little Lever to facilitate changing working patterns i.e. working from home and business incubation.

4.6 *Connectivity*

4.6.1 To reduce reliance on vehicles across the town centre in the future, to improve social distancing measures in response to the Covid 19 pandemic and to encourage 'Active Travel' (walking and cycling) and the use of public transport consideration to be given to:

- Prioritisation of pedestrian and cycle movements across the town centre with the creation of filtered neighbourhoods;

- Improving active travel to the town centre from surrounding neighbourhoods; and
- Making linkages to the Bee network and TfGM's Streets for All programme.

4.7 *Little Lever's Unique Selling Point (USP)*

4.7.1 Any new development should enhance the unique character of the area as a 'village' centre which should be preserved and celebrated, wherever possible.

4.8 Next steps

4.8.1 When it comes to implementing the masterplan, every effort will be made to secure funding from external sources to supplement Council funding. Recommendations and decisions regarding bids for external funding, and allocations of Council funding will be subject to the presentation of a future report to the Executive Cabinet Member and portfolio holder for Development and Regeneration (Deputy Leader) for approval.

4.8.2 Governance will be developed in accordance with the Council's Constitution. The Council will utilise internal resources and liaise with partners and relevant groups where required. The intention is to continue with the Little Lever town centre Steering Group, whose membership has been drawn down from ward members, education providers, landowners, businesses, community and faith groups and housing providers. As plans are developed, the community will be consulted through the Steering Group.

4.8.3 Please find attached at Appendix 5 an indicative action plan for delivery of the six development proposals as detailed in this report.

5. IMPACT AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1 FINANCIAL

5.1.1 On the 21st January 2019 Cabinet approved a £12m allocation of funding from the £100m Town Centre Strategy Fund to create strategies and masterplans in consultation with the local community and support targeted interventions in Farnworth, Horwich, Westhoughton and Little Lever town centres where they will ultimately attract private sector investment and secure development proposals.

5.1.2 On the 20th February 2019 Full Council approved an additional £4m of funding from the 2019/20 Capital Programme for further investment in district centres, primarily in Farnworth town centre. This is additional to funding already allocated to projects within the Council's mainstream capital programme, which also funds (and continues to fund) projects in other district and local centres.

5.1.3 The level of funding given to any town will depend on the overall content and quality of the strategy and masterplan and the level of support needed to initiate development.

5.1.4 BDP and team of consultants have undertaken an costing exercise to determine a level of funding that would be required to deliver each of the KDP's as listed above. A portion of the Council's funding would be required to support the delivery of the masterplan in Little Lever with the aim of leveraging further funding and investment to

regenerate the town centre and sustain its immediate future to the benefit of its residents. The Council's funding is also designed to unlock private sector and other public sector investment and to secure capital receipt and income generation to the Council, which would then be reinvested into the Town Centre Strategy Fund to recycle the fund thus enabling further investment where possible. Investment will create significant development value and achieve wider economic benefits including economic spend.

- 5.1.5 The breakdown of the investment by proposal is outlined below, however the costs provided are only indicative and each proposal will need designing and fully costing which may lead to an increase in the amount being asked for.

Proposal	Cost
1. Redevelopment of the precinct for shops and apartments*	£12,811,468.00*
2. New town square	£372,906.00
3. Former library building	
Option 1: New use commercial construction	£99,600.00
Option 2: New use public facing business	£199,200.00
4. Town centre gateways	£1,169,630.00
5. Shopfront/business frontage facelift scheme	£645,600.00
6. Promotion of housing development in and around the town centre (Council owned site between High St and James St) *	£10,834,536.00*

* A budget estimate has been provided for KDP 1 and KDP 6 but as progress will be subject to: the assembly of land; securing a developer partner through a Joint Venture or similar agreement; the development of a funding strategy this project would be a long term proposal. Private sector led, subject to identification of a viable scale and mix of uses.

Note: These figures do not include the following: VAT where applicable, Planning and development costs, Contingencies, Legal, professional and consultancy fees, Site abnormalities or improvements to existing drainage, Site surveys, Finance costs where applicable, Construction industry inflation beyond Q3 2020. As a result of these omissions the figures quoted in paragraph 5.1.4 are likely to increase.

5.2 LEGAL/PROCUREMENT

- 5.2.1 In order to achieve delivery of the development proposals/target interventions as detailed in this report consideration will be given to delivery options including, but not limited to, the following (within which there are potential variations):

- Land Disposals and Land Acquisitions in accordance with the Council's Constitution;
- Outsourcing the delivery of works, supplies and services in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders and procurement procedures (for example, contractors, developers, professional services, advisors);

- Joint Venture potentially involving ownership and control by a range of stakeholders including (but not limited to) staff, the Council, or independent providers. There are a number of potential structures, including:
 - Partnership based structures
 - General partnerships (including contractual joint ventures)
 - Registered limited partnerships
 - Limited liability partnerships
 - Private limited companies.

5.2.2 The Director of Place will work with the Borough Solicitor and Deputy Chief Executive to identify the most appropriate delivery model and, where so authorised by the Constitution shall negotiate the terms of any arrangements and carry out the practical formalities required to implement the development proposals. Where those proposals fall outside the scope of the Constitution, authority will be sought from either Cabinet or the relevant Executive Cabinet Member, as appropriate.

5.2.3 Where the Council is making investment decisions, the legal requirements such as State Aid implications will be fully considered by the Director of Place and Borough Solicitor.

5.2.4 The development and regeneration of land not in Council ownership will be encouraged through ongoing engagement with landowners. Within the development proposal areas, where appropriate the Council will also make strategic acquisitions of land as part of its target interventions as outlined above, Where proposals require land to deliver key infrastructure and/or critical mass of comprehensive development, the Council will give due consideration to the use of its Compulsory Purchase powers, if necessary, to acquire outstanding land interests as required. In doing so the Council will need to be satisfied that there is a compelling case in the public interest as a key part of that consideration.

5.3 HR

5.3.1 The implementation of the Little Lever District centre masterplan will be supported by the Council's town centres and major developments team led by the Growth and Regeneration Team.

5.4 CLIMATE CHANGE

5.4.1 Officers will seek to mitigate any negative impacts on the climate when implementing the key development proposals set out in this report.

6. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)

6.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council must have due regard to:

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- Advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and

- Fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

6.2 It is therefore important to consider how the proposals contained within this report may be positively or negatively affect this work. To support this analysis, an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) screening form has been completed for the proposals outlined in this report and is appended to this report (Appendix 6).

6.3 The EIA looks at the anticipated (positive and/or negative) impacts of the proposals on people from Bolton's diverse communities and whether any group (or groups) is likely to be directly or indirectly differentially affected.

6.4 The proposals outlined in this report have been designed to enhance and regenerate Little Lever district centre, which in turn, benefit residents, customers and visitors alike in this area. However, it has been noted that due to the nature of the proposal, it is possible that there could be some adverse impact for people with disabilities but any potential for differential impact will be prevented through the planning control and building control processes. This analysis is set out in more detail in the EIA.

7 VISION 2030

7.1 Within the Vision 2030 Strategy, the Council will strive to deliver services more efficiently, through service improvement, redesign, recommissioning and decommissioning, based on evidence of impact. The proposals within this report contribute to this strategic council aim.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 The Executive Cabinet Member is requested to:

- i. Approve the Little Lever district centre master plan to guide the long-term regeneration of the centre,
- ii. Approve the proposed approach to deliver the masterplan, as outlined in the main body of this report
- iii. Authorise the Borough Solicitor to carry out all necessary legal formalities.