

# Lichfield City Centre Public Realm Strategy

Report of the Cabinet Member responsible for Major Projects

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Agenda Item: 4  
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Key Decision? YES  
Local Ward Members All Members



**CABINET**

## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Lichfield City Centre Public Realm Strategy (“Strategy”) sets out a thematic strategy and high-level work programme to develop a consistent approach to improving the streets and public areas of the City centre and maintain a long-lasting palette of materials and clear identity that can be enjoyed by residents, city centre workers and visitors to Lichfield city centre.
- 1.2 The Strategy includes an analysis of the existing public realm and development of high-level ideas for improvements, which were tested through extensive stakeholder and public consultation. These ideas were further refined and costed and are included in the Strategy. The Strategy will act as a guide and source of reference for future regeneration and highway schemes. It is worth noting that some of the ideas in the high-level work programme may be funded and delivered as part of future regeneration programmes.
- 1.3 The Council appointed Gleeds Management Services, Austin:Smith:Lord Architects and Hydrock Consulting to produce the Public Realm Strategy for Lichfield city centre, as part of the Lichfield City Centre Masterplan.
- 1.4 The final Strategy document has been recommended by the Lichfield City Centre Masterplan Project Board to the Cabinet for approval. The work programme for the project implementation will be further developed, funding bids made as appropriate and discussions with stakeholders will take place to ensure the continued momentum to allow for delivery of projects.

## 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that members of the Cabinet:
  - i) agree the principles for the public realm set out in the Public Realm Strategy at [Appendix A](#) and the Executive Summary of this document attached at **Appendix B** ;
  - ii) agree the initial list and prioritisation of projects included in the high-level work programme as set out at pages 92-97 of the Strategy;
  - iii) agree to delegate authority to the Cabinet Member responsible for Major Projects, in consultation with the Head of Economic Growth and Development, to engage with partners, land-owners and funders to implement actions and activity agreed by the Project Board in the Public Realm Strategy, except for projects and programmes that need further Cabinet or Council consideration and approval.

## 3. Background

- 3.1 The Lichfield City Centre Masterplan was endorsed by the Council in October 2020. The Delivery Plan was agreed by the Project Board earlier this year and sets out the actions to deliver the first 5 years of the Masterplan. This document set out that the delivery of a Public Realm Strategy was a priority and that the Strategy should be delivered by January 2022. In addition, the Delivery Plan also sets out that 5 public realm enhancement projects should be completed by 2025, with 4 public art installations to be installed, new visitor information signs implemented and at least 50 new trees planted.
- 3.2 Gleeds Managements Services (“Gleeds”) were commissioned in March 2021 to undertake work to develop a Public Realm Strategy that will enable the Authority, working with partners, to provide a distinctive and high-quality public realm across Lichfield city centre. The team appointed also comprised Austin:Smith:Lord Architects and Hydrock Consulting.
- 3.3 The work of the appointed consultants builds upon and includes further development/critical appraisal of the ideas and ambitions of seven Public Realm Priority Projects set out in the Masterplan. This further work has led to the consultants concluding that the proposed circular Minster Pool Walk (included within the Masterplan) should not be developed further, and instead proposed the development of better linkages to the Cathedral along Bird Street.
- 3.4 The consultants undertook detailed investigations into the quality of the existing public realm, using the objectives from the Masterplan as a basis for a SWOT analysis. This led to the establishment of key themes which are:
- Wayfinding & Movement & Hierarchy of Pedestrian routes
  - Principles of Public Realm Design
  - Hierarchy of Street Uses
  - Streets and Spaces (which sets out the ideas for improvement projects in certain locations)
  - Signage
  - Lighting
  - Public Art
  - Green infrastructure

Guidance for improvements focussed on these themes is included within the document. This guidance includes initiatives such as wayfinding information systems, improved interpretation and directional signage, new public art, new tree planting, improved street furniture and paving and the development of a Lighting Plan.

- 3.5 The Strategy sets out projects to be delivered over the forthcoming years. These are based on locations with the document detailing the existing issues with the locality and proposing interventions to overcome these issues. The Order of Cost table (pages 92-97 in the Strategy) sets out the consultants’ views on the priority for the delivery of each project, including what aims/benefits each priority is set to deliver. High level indicative costs are included for each intervention to help establish what funding the Council will need to bid for and put in place for each project. In addition, a Success Criteria matrix is set out at pages 98-99 which lists measures of success and each project’s impact on each measure.
- 3.6 The work undertaken by the consultants was informed by stakeholder and public engagement which included stakeholders such as Staffordshire County Council, Lichfield City Council and Lichfield Cathedral. The public consultation took place between Monday 21 June and Sunday 11 July 2021, to allow members of the public the opportunity to provide feedback on the emerging ideas. During this period, display boards showing proposals were set up in a central unit within Three Spires Shopping centre, with the consultants and Officers on hand to answer any queries. The display was also available to view via the Council website. A questionnaire was used to garner public opinion and this was available online and via a paper copy. A series of “walkshop” events also took place, with the lead Landscape Architect guiding

the public around the city centre to provoke discussion on how it can be improved. In total, 605 people responded to the questionnaire, with the majority of those respondents (86%) being Lichfield residents. 526 of the respondents (87%) completely agreed or somewhat agreed with the principles of the 2020 Masterplan - that a scheme of public realm improvements was required. The responses received to the specific questions, along with the supporting narrative, highlighted that local people support the delivery of these projects, and their inclusion within the final public realm strategy. Details of the survey responses can be found at **Appendix A** to the [Public Realm Strategy](#).

- 3.7 Following on from the submission of the final draft and, if approved by the Council, it is proposed to further develop the work programme for the priority projects set out by the consultants. This will require further stakeholder engagement (especially where there are 3<sup>rd</sup> party landowners) to determine feasibility, cost and funding sources and resource needs. For larger projects further public consultation may be required.
- 3.8 As with any strategy, it will be essential to keep it and the implementation of the work programme under review and ensure that the aims and benefits of the projects to be delivered are further explored and success measures identified and measured against appropriately.
- 3.9 The final strategy document has been considered by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee Task & Finish Group at a meeting held in October 2021. The group raised the following comments:
- *Strategy and Action Plan presented to the group showed a clear thematic approach that the Council wishes to take in terms of the future public realm within the city centre.*
  - *It was accepted that it is the intention that the Strategy provides a set of principles that will be considered when delivering public realm projects.*
  - *It was highlighted that projects included within the Strategy relate to land/property in different ownerships, so there will need to be significant involvement of key partners when implementing projects.*
  - *The Task and Finish Group were happy for the Strategy and Action Plan documents to go forward to Cabinet for approval.*
- 3.10 Cabinet is asked to accept the Public Realm Strategy document and agree the high-level work programme as set out in the Order of Cost table on pages 92-97 of the Strategy.

### **Resource requirements**

- 3.11 As part of delivering the programme of projects, consideration will need to be given to the resources required to implement these projects. As far as possible, in-house resources will be utilised, but given the specialist skills and knowledge that will be required for some of the work streams or tasks associated with them, the Council may need to look to procure external advice and guidance.

### **Governance Arrangements**

- 3.12 The governance and arrangements for managing the delivery of the Public Realm Strategy and high-level work programme remain the same as those for the delivery of the Masterplan. This is through a Member-led Project Board, reporting directly to Cabinet, with a Member Task & Finish Group, comprising Members from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee to scrutinise the decision making and progress of the Project Board
- 3.13 Due to the additional inputs from other areas across the Council, as well as some of the projects needing input and agreement from external stakeholders and landowners, it is proposed to set up a further task group to drive forward the projects and ensure that the relevant bodies are part of the implementation team. Some of the projects may be delivered or funded (in full or in part) by external bodies.

## **Finance**

- 3.14 The Public Realm Strategy document sets out in the Order of Cost table estimates as to what the costs for each project could be and more detail on the basis of these costs is given in the Order of Cost Summary and Elemental Summary (pages 100-107 in the Strategy). However, these estimates will need to be considered further as detailed plans and proposals for the projects are developed.
- 3.15 To determine the viability of interventions, it is recommended that a Business Case approach is implemented so robust proposals are included in the Medium Term Financial Strategy. It is also noted that all potential funding routes will be explored as part of this work and funding streams from other public and private sources will be bid for if they are suitable and relate to the project being proposed.

## **Concluding remarks**

- 3.16 The Public Realm Strategy is a key document in the City Centre Masterplan and is important for the development of a consistent guide and palette for the regeneration of Lichfield city centre. The projects that will be developed from it will help develop a thriving economy, increase the attractiveness of Lichfield and attract more people into the city centre.

Alternative Options	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Members could decide not to approve the Public Realm Strategy</li> <li>2. Members could decide not to implement the proposals or request alternative proposals as set out within the Public Realm Strategy</li> </ol>
Consultation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Public Realm Strategy has been subject to officer, key stakeholder and public engagement as outlined in the main body of this report.</li> <li>2. The Lichfield City Centre Masterplan Task &amp; Finish Group have considered the document. Their comments are set out at section 3.9.</li> <li>3. There will be public engagement and consultation as necessary on major projects that come forward as part of the work programme.</li> </ol>
Financial Implications	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The implementation of the Public Realm Strategy and the projects emanating from it will potentially require additional revenue and capital funding from the District Council. More detailed work will be carried out to determine the scale and nature of funding. It should also be noted that potential funding from external partners will also be explored be it from the private and/or public sectors.</li> </ol>
Approved by Section 151 Officer	Yes
Legal Implications	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. There are no legal implications directly arising from the approval of the Public Realm Strategy</li> <li>2. As projects come forward there will likely be legal/legislative issues associated with the works, as well as legal procurement matters. These will be considered in due course as part of the Project Plan for each project.</li> </ol>
Approved by Monitoring Officer	Yes
Contribution to the Delivery of the Strategic Plan	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Public Realm Strategy and the associated delivery documents will particularly help to support and deliver the Council's strategic objectives of developing prosperity and shaping places to benefit residents and business.</li> <li>2. The implementation of projects will also assist in enabling residents and those who access services and facilities within Lichfield city centre to live healthy and active lives.</li> </ol>
Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Implications	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. An Equality Impact Assessments is being undertaken to explore the impacts that may arise out of this strategy and associated action plan.</li> </ol>
Crime & Safety Issues	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Improved city centre lighting could help to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour in the evenings.</li> <li>2. Improved signage will help people to navigate safely around the City.</li> </ol>
Environmental Impact	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Some of the projects that will emanate from the work programme will be contribute to the Council's ambitions regarding sustainable development. For example, projects that seek to remove vehicles from some streets will improve the air quality. Moreover, the Strategy seeks to encourage additional tree planting and encourage additional cycle and walking usage.</li> </ol>
GDPR/Privacy Impact Assessment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Not applicable</li> </ol>

	Risk Description & Risk Owner	Original Score (RYG)	How We Manage It	Current Score (RYG)
A	The work programme and delivery of the Priority projects is not supported by the key stakeholders and public  -LDC	Likelihood: Yellow Impact: Red Severity of Risk: Red	The public and other key stakeholders have played an active part in the formulation of the Public Realm Strategy, therefore it should reflect the aims and objectives as set out previously.  Further public consultation can take place on specific projects as they are brought forward for delivery.	Likelihood: Yellow Impact: Yellow Severity of Risk: Yellow
B	There is no available funding for the projects proposed  - LDC	Likelihood: Red Impact: Red Severity of Risk: Red	A budget will be drawn up and approved within the MTFS and reported on regularly Officers are in the process of identifying funding streams which could be suitable for the implementation of projects. Further collaborative work with key stakeholders will identify other sources of funding and bids will be made into the Capital Programme.	Likelihood: Yellow Impact: Red Severity of Risk: Red
C	Officer resource may not be available, and delivery of the projects may be delayed	Likelihood: Red Impact: Red Severity of Risk: Red	Additional recruitment took place for a further team member within the Major Development Projects team in December 2020. Further resource requirements for the team are currently being identified and additional resource will be recruited as required	Likelihood: Yellow Impact: Yellow Severity of Risk: Yellow
D	The works undertaken have a detrimental impact on business and footfall during construction and results in requests for Business Rate reductions	Likelihood: Red Impact: Red Severity of Risk: Red	The work programme for each project will be carefully managed and phased as appropriate to prevent as much disruption as possible. Ongoing consultation and dialogue with the businesses and residents.	Likelihood: Yellow Impact: Yellow Severity of Risk: Yellow
E	The public realm strategy places additional guidance for design on the development of the major development sites, resulting in viability issues	Likelihood: Yellow Impact: Red Severity of Risk: Red	The Masterplan sets out the vision for development on each of the major development sites. It is considered that the guidance set out in the Public Realm Strategy will help shape development proposals, albeit it should not impact on the viability of any scheme. This will be closely monitored.	Likelihood: Green Impact: Yellow Severity of Risk: Yellow
F	Third party landowners may not want to implement schemes on their land	Likelihood: Red Impact: Red Severity of Risk: Red	Close consultation has and will continue to take place with the landowners, including Staffordshire County Council and Lichfield City Council.	Likelihood: Yellow Impact: Yellow Severity of Risk: Yellow
G	Necessary planning permissions or consents are not approved	Likelihood: Yellow Impact: Red Severity of Risk: Red	Pre-application discussions would take place prior to planning application to ensure proposals are acceptable in planning terms	Likelihood: Green Impact: Yellow Severity of Risk: Yellow

## Background documents

[Appendix A – Lichfield City Centre Public Realm Strategy](#)

Appendix B - Public Realm Strategy - Executive Summary

## Relevant web links

None