

For publication

**Consideration of the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum
report on the Town Centre (TV000)**

Meeting: Cabinet

Date: 24 April, 2018

Cabinet portfolio: Town Centres and Visitor Economy

Report by: Senior Democratic and Scrutiny Officer

For publication

1.0 Purpose of report

- 1.1 To present for consideration by Cabinet the report and recommendations of the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum on how the council ensures a thriving town centre offer for current and future users.
- 1.2 The report also provides the statutory written notice that must be given by the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum to Cabinet to take required action as at Section 3.4 below.

2.0 Recommendations

That Cabinet consider the recommendations of the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum as set out below.

- 2.1 Signage, cleanliness, general appeal (which includes the challenges currently being faced where rough sleepers are deterring locals and visitors alike) and connectivity between areas needs to be improved as does the transport infrastructure in order that visitors gain an immediate positive first impression to enable them to speak positively about Chesterfield and encourage others to visit.
- 2.2 To consider re-branding with a new more generic tag-line for the town with the intention of bringing a clear focus to potential international and wider-UK visitors.
- 2.3 That measures, such as Purple Flag status, are considered to bring more life to the town during the currently quiet periods – 3pm onward.
- 2.4 A review (frequency, location, size, type) of the market is required to provide an offering that meets the changing wishes of the modern-day customer.
- 2.5 That ways to open up the town for a major event and cultural space are explored to broaden the appeal with a wider offering of activities focusing on areas as diverse as film, art, literature, food, jazz, busking and cheese, to name just a few, with a particular focus on enhancing the evening activities with night markets and live entertainment.

3.0 **Background information**

- 3.1 During the 2017/18 scrutiny work programming sessions, the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum appointed a Scrutiny Project Group to look into the way that the council is preparing for the future developments that will impact on the town centre by having an overview of the regeneration projects and evaluating how they support the revitalisation of the town centre.

- 3.2 The Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum approved the scope for the project in June, 2017. This set out how the group would evaluate the council's fulfilment of its Council Plan priorities of developing our great town centre and making sure that local people benefit from growth in Chesterfield Borough by ensuring that the town centre broadened its offer, appeal and connectivity, and that developments with linkage to the town centre considered their impact and had a joined up approach.
- 3.3 Further information and background detail are contained within the Scrutiny Project Group's report attached at Appendix 1 which provides the purpose of the review and its findings.
- 3.4 Statutory Scrutiny Committees are also required to provide written statutory notice to Cabinet requiring action in response to its scrutiny report and recommendations. These actions require Cabinet to:
- i. Consider the attached report and recommendations;
 - ii. Indicate the actions it proposes to take if any; and
 - iii. Publish its response within 2 months of the receipt of the report.

With regard to i and ii above, the Council's Constitution provides for Cabinet to consider the report at the earliest practicable opportunity.

4.0 **Scrutiny Project Group report**

- 4.1 The report of the Scrutiny Project Group was considered and its recommendations approved by the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum on 13 March, 2018.

5.0 **Risk considerations**

5.1 Risks relating to the review and its recommendations, as well as mitigating actions are shown below:

| Description of the Risk | Impact | Likelihood | Mitigating Action | Impact | Likelihood |
|---|--------|------------|---|--------|------------|
| The town centre could lose out on vital footfall and economic growth through not being prepared for the influx of visitors from nearby developments if the recommendations in the report are not supported. | H | M | <p>The report has brought together views from members of the public, local businesses and key stakeholders, and combined this with research into national trends and statistics in order to form recommendations that are based on well examined evidence and contribute positively to a vision for the town centre.</p> <p>Throughout the report the scrutiny project group has highlighted the positive steps already being taken in some areas and seeks to ensure this same approach is seen through all projects impacting on the town centre.</p> <p>The recommendations do not need to be implemented to a specific timeline and can be supported through increased partnership working and aligning of future projects and service plans to achieve the vision of the report.</p> | M | L |
| Some of the recommendations place additional financial and resource implications on the Council that are not provided for in current service plans and budgets. | H | H | No implementation schedule has been built into the recommendations to allow them to be actioned as and when funding becomes available. They can be viewed as an aspirational achievement that can be built into service plans to enable services to contribute towards the delivery | M | M |

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|--|--|--|---|--|--|
| | | | <p>when resources allow.</p> <p>Working with partners and local businesses is emphasized throughout the report as a way to work collaboratively with the council and encouraging partners to contribute towards a shared vision. There are several regular events in the town centre that are not organised by the council; the council can continue to develop new relationships with event providers to attract more events into the town centre.</p> <p>Creating a Business Improvement District would require buy-in from local businesses and still incur some cost to the council as a landowner in the town but would help to deliver the recommendations and ensure a collaborative approach.</p> | | |
|--|--|--|---|--|--|

6.0 Considerations

- 6.1 A preliminary equality impact assessment (EIA) has been carried out to understand any positive or negative impacts of implementing the recommendations. No negative impacts were identified and it is expected that the review will have a positive impact due to the broadened offer of cultural events and improved accessibility and safety of the town centre. More details can be found in the EIA attached at Appendix 4.
- 6.2 Throughout the review, the project group have considered the financial and resource implications of the recommendations and recognise the difficulty in dealing with the on-going funding cuts from central government. Officers from across the council have been consulted on the proposals and the

recommendations have been aligned where possible to plans or strategies that are in their development stages.

- 6.3 In addition, no timescale has been built into the recommendations so that they could be introduced on a phased basis, as and when funding or resources become available. The group has also been mindful to suggest ways of achieving the recommendations rather than specifying how they should be achieved so that they can be used as a means for future consideration.

7.0 **Recommendations**

That Cabinet consider the recommendations of the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum as set out below.

- 7.1 Signage, cleanliness, general appeal (which includes the challenges currently being faced where rough sleepers are deterring locals and visitors alike) and connectivity between areas needs to be improved as does the transport infrastructure in order that visitors gain an immediate positive first impression to enable them to speak positively about Chesterfield and encourage others to visit.
- 7.2 To consider re-branding with a new more generic tag-line for the town with the intention of bringing a clear focus to potential international and wider-UK visitors.
- 7.3 That measures, such as Purple Flag status, are considered to bring more life to the town during the currently quiet periods – 3pm onward.
- 7.4 A review (frequency, location, size, type) of the market is required to provide an offering that meets the changing wishes of the modern-day customer.

7.5 That ways to open up the town for a major event and cultural space are explored to broaden the appeal with a wider offering of activities focusing on areas as diverse as film, art, literature, food, jazz, busking and cheese, to name just a few, with a particular focus on enhancing the evening activities with night markets and live entertainment.

8.0 **Reasons for recommendations**

8.1 To demonstrate the areas where change is most needed and provide proposals for how this could be achieved.

8.2 The contribute towards the delivery of the Council Plan objectives under the priority "To make Chesterfield a thriving borough."

Decision information

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|---|---|
| Key decision number | Non-key 79 |
| Wards affected | All |
| Links to Council Plan priorities | To make Chesterfield a thriving borough, to develop our great town centre and to make sure that local people benefit from growth in Chesterfield Borough. |

Document information

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|---|---|
| Report author | Contact number/email |
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| Background documents These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when the report was prepared. | |
| <i>This must be made available to the public for up to 4 years.</i> | |

| Appendices to the report | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Appendix 1 | Scrutiny Project Report on the Town Centre |
| Appendix 2 | Notes from public and Chesterfield Champions focus groups |
| Appendix 3 | The Value of Arts and Culture to People and Society, Arts Council England |
| Appendix 4 | Preliminary Equalities Impact Assessment |