

REPORT TO CABINET

Title: **VISION FOR MAIDENHEAD TOWN CENTRE**

Date: 22 January 2009

Member Reporting: Councillors Burbage/Mrs Knight

Contact Officer(s): Peter Hitchen, Planning Policy Manager Tel: 01628 796055

Wards Affected: All Wards

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Cabinet of the outcome of the recent consultation on the 'Vision for Maidenhead Town Centre' overseen by The Partnership for the Rejuvenation of Maidenhead (PRoM), and to recommend that the report, subject to amendments, be endorsed and adopted as basis for developing a strategy for the town centre.
- 1.2 PRoM was established in 2007, with the Council and local organisations and interests acting in Partnership to promote the improvement and regeneration of the town centre. The partnership has proved successful in providing a body with cross-party support and chaired independently by Bob Dulson the current Chairman of the Maidenhead Civic Society.
- 1.3 Early in 2008 PRoM commissioned the preparation of a Vision and Action Plan to provide the basis for future strategies and a framework within which the town centre could prosper and develop. Consultants DTZ and BDP were engaged to prepare a 'Vision' drawing upon earlier work and studies some of which had been produced as part of the Local Development Framework. The consultants' final report, 'A Vision for Maidenhead Town Centre' was presented to PRoM in August 2008, with a formal launch in September 2008.
- 1.4 Consultation on the 'Vision' took place between 30 September and 14 November. A total of 38 submissions were received, the majority in support of the approach towards town centre improvement and regeneration. Some changes have been put forward as a result of comments received, in particular relating to the role of the existing High Street, and these changes are recommended for inclusion in the final document as part of this report.

2. RECOMMENDATION: That:

- i) **The Vision and Action Plan be adopted as a strategy for the town centre, subject to the recommended changes in the consultation report;**
- ii) **The final report and changes be delegated to the Head of Planning in consultation with the Lead Member for Planning and Development following consideration by PRoM;**

- iii) **The final document to provide a basis for further work on the Local Development Framework and the emerging Sustainable Community Strategy.**

What will be different for residents as a result of this decision?
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Residents will have a clear picture of the approach towards town centre regeneration and the scale of work to be undertaken to achieve the 'vision'.
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3. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Partnership for the Rejuvenation of Maidenhead (PRoM), established in 2007, represents a joint partnership of town centre interests with membership drawn from local organisations, business interests, and cross party Council representation together with professional officer support.
- 3.2 PRoM was set up by the administration with opposition support. It is independently chaired and has a majority of lay (i.e. non-politician) members, representing a cross-section of community interests. It makes recommendations for action to the RBWM Cabinet via the Leader of the Council who is also Lead member for Maidenhead Town Centre. As such, therefore, it operates as an advisory body to the Council and its officers.
- 3.3 As part of its original remit, PRoM's aim is to find and promote agreed solutions for the regeneration of Maidenhead Town Centre. Also, PRoM's deliberations and decisions will be used to inform the preparation of the Local Development Framework, including the revised Core Strategy and other planning documents, with regard to Maidenhead town centre.
- 3.4 PRoM determined that its priority should be to develop a 'Vision' which would set the context and future strategy for town centre rejuvenation. Consultants DTZ and BDP were engaged to prepare a 'Vision' drawing upon earlier work and studies some of which had been produced as part of the Local Development Framework. The consultants' final report, 'A Vision for Maidenhead Town Centre' was presented to PRoM in August 2008. All representatives of PRoM were supportive of the final report and agreed this should be made available for public comment and feed back.
- 3.5 A total of 38 comments have been received from individuals and organisations within the town. A report summarising these has been prepared along with suggested amendments to the Vision document. This report of consultation is available in Group Rooms, Members' Rooms and from Democratic Services. The report proposes amendments that the Council would commend to PRoM, and on the basis of these, this report recommends that the Council endorses and adopts the Vision and Action plan as providing a strategy for further work on the town centre. As such, this document will supersede the previous document published in January 2007 (*Maidenhead Town Centre: Towards 2026 – A Plan for Partnership Action, Discussion Draft*).

3.6 During 2009, work will be proceeding on the Local Development Framework. The Action Plan within the 'Vision' has highlighted the need for detailed proposals to be brought forward for key areas of the town centre. It is intended that the work on detailed proposals should form part of the formal plans for Maidenhead Town Centre. This will reflect the importance of the town for the provision of new services and infrastructure and also its position as a sub-regional centre within the Draft South East Plan.

4. OPTIONS AVAILABLE AND RISK ASSESSMENT

4.1 Options

	Option	Comments	Financial Implications
1.	To agree the recommendations of the report regarding comments on the current consultation and to adopt the 'Vision'.	This would carry forward the joint working and cooperation of town centre interests, and provide a basis for the formal planning policy framework to be developed through the LDF.	Revenue: A programme of works has been approved for the town centre and is fully funded. There will be future expenditure on improvements which will be partly funded through revenue Capital: Some potential projects will require a mix of capital funding and S106 funds
2.	To take no action on the consultation and not adopt the 'Vision'.	Not recommended. By not adopting the 'Vision' the Council would not meet its objective in relation to PRoM nor would it meet the expressed needs and priorities of the community.	Revenue: Committed works for the town centre would proceed on the basis of currently agreed budgets only. Capital: None

4.2 Risk assessment

4.2.1 By incorporating the proposed amendments within the 'Vision', adding clarity over its purpose and function, any risks of delay will be overcome. Moreover, the formal policy framework will be set within the emerging Local Development Framework, and the statutory process involved will ensure the soundness of that policy.

5. CONSULTATIONS CARRIED OUT

5.1 The preparatory work undertaken by the consultants included a stakeholder workshop bringing together a wide variety of interests in the town centre. Following the 'sign off' by PRoM, the launch of the Vision and Action Plan involved press and media briefings, numerous public engagements by Bob Dulson the PRoM Chairman,

and also a stakeholder meeting to update the previous involvement and how this had informed the final vision. The document was made available on the Council's web site with invitations to comment by 14th November, and copies were made available for public inspection in the Town Hall and library.

5.2 PRoM considered the suggested responses to the Vision and Action Plan at its meeting on 12 January 2009, and agreed to support the suggested changes to the final document.

6. COMMENTS FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

6.1 The Panel endorsed the report.

7. IMPLICATIONS

The following implications have been addressed where indicated below.

Financial	Legal	Human Rights Act	Planning	Sustainable Development	Diversity & Equality
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	N/A

Background Papers:

A Vision for Maidenhead Town Centre – Final report to PRoM September 2008
 Consultation Report and schedule of changes, December 2008