



**AGENDA ITEM:**

**CABINET: 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2021**

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**Report of: Corporate Director of Place and Community**

**Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor Ian Moran**

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**SUBJECT: A REGENERATION PLAN FOR SKELMERSDALE TOWN CENTRE**

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Wards affected: Skelmersdale North and Birch Green Wards

**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To seek approval to the funding arrangements for the preparation of a Regeneration Plan for Skelmersdale Town Centre.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 To note that Lancashire County Council (LCC) has made a provisional award of £245,900 from its Lancashire Economic Recovery and Growth Fund (LERG Fund), to the Skelmersdale Regeneration Plan, subject to the Council making a 15% contribution to the project cost.

2.2 That the Council makes a 15% contribution to the cost of the Skelmersdale Regeneration Plan in the sum of £43,100.

2.3 That the Council accepts the award of £245,900 from LCC's LERG Fund, which represents 85% of the project's cost.

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**3.0 BACKGROUND**

3.1 At its meeting in March 2021 Cabinet resolved:

A. That a Place-Shaping Hub made up of the partners (outlined in paragraph 3.5 of the report) be established.

B. That the Terms of Reference of the Place Shaping Hub be agreed as follows: "To create and develop a Regeneration Plan for Skelmersdale Town Centre, that meets the aspirations and key priorities for the Council and its partners, initially concentrating on the area outlined at Appendix A and consider other specific, but connected, pieces or work around other key regeneration projects in the wider Skelmersdale and Up Holland area, including Estates Regeneration and Green Infrastructure proposals, including consideration of available funding."

- 3.2 A bid was made to LCC's LERG Fund to appoint Consultant's to undertake this project and a project brief was agreed by the Place Shaping Hub which was subsequently tendered via the Chest.
- 3.3 The tenders have now been evaluated and a preferred consultant identified.
- 3.4 Based on the bid submitted by the preferred consultant LCC have made a conditional award of £245,900 from its LERG Fund, subject to the Council making a 15% contribution to the project cost in the sum of £43,100.

#### **4.0 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 Health and wellbeing will be a central pillar of any development proposals in the Skelmersdale Neighbourhood, with walking and cycling particularly needing to be promoted through the Place Plan and a range of leisure uses enhanced. Any final development, which should bring new high standard development and improved transport links, should have significant health and wellbeing benefits for both the residents/users of the new development and existing residents within the town, as well as visitors and users of the town centre and Tawd Valley Park.

#### **5.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The delivery of a sustainable development in Skelmersdale Town Centre will bring various positive benefits for sustainability and the community, from redeveloping the vacant school sites (which are currently an eye-sore and a potential danger where anti-social or criminal behaviour takes place within them) to developing much needed housing and commercial / leisure development to create a more balanced town centre. It will also ensure that access across the Tawd Valley is fit for purpose and connects the rail station to the core of the town centre.
- 5.2 Any new development will also need to be balanced with the potential loss or replacement of some open space, and so the relationship with the Tawd Valley Park project and with Green Infrastructure and Playing Pitch Strategies for Skelmersdale will be crucial in off-setting the loss of open space in terms of quantity by improving the quality of open space and playing pitches on offer in the rest of Skelmersdale.
- 5.3 The development of a wider Community Plan and future pipeline projects will enable further economic, social and environmental benefits through the town.

#### **6.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 To Council will be required to make a contribution of £43,100 which represents 15% of the project cost. This will lever in £245,000 from LLC's LERG Fund.

6.2 As set out in the report to Cabinet in March 2021, the Place-shaping Hub and preparation of the Town Centre Regeneration Plan will involve input from various teams from across the Council and various partners to ensure a sustainable and deliverable Plan that respects all aspects of the neighbourhood and surrounding areas. Through the budget setting process there will need to be consideration of the staff resource required to manage the specific project going forward, as the current Skelmersdale Project Manager post is only temporary until March 2022. There will also be a need to resource the new Cabinet Working Group through Member Services.

## **7.0 RISK ASSESSMENT**

7.1 The preparation of a Regeneration Plan for Skelmersdale Town Centre carries very little risk in and of itself. There may be risks in the implementation and delivery of those proposals in the future, should the Council have a role in that, and these will need to be carefully managed and appropriately communicated to ensure that public expectation is managed, however, that should not preclude from preparing a Plan to guide the development of this area for the benefit of Skelmersdale and West Lancashire in general.

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### **Background Documents**

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

There is no direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders in the preparation of a Place Plan or establishment of a Place-Shaping Hub. Therefore, an Equality Impact Assessment is not required.

### **Appendices**

There are no appendices