

Aldershot Town Centre Transition Plan

DRAFT MARCH 2019

Background

Ten straight year of footfall decline have led to challenging times for High Streets nationally, with news of retail closures continuing. Since 2008, Aldershot has seen the loss of a number of major multiple retailers including M&S, Next, Burtons and Topshop and, the once thriving town centre is now a shadow of its former self. Whilst the town centre continues to have a lot of which it can be proud - award winning floral displays, a vibrant events programme, two theatres, a cinema and restaurants, the support of loyal and passionate residents, its place as the Home of the British Army - the decline of the retail offer has had a significantly detrimental effect. A 'new model' of town centre is required – one that is not so reliant on retail, but attracts people to take part in a variety of activities, including dining, leisure and sport, culture and the arts, entertainment and medical services. It will also contain business premises, offices and residential. The Aldershot SPD of January 2016 identified a number of key regeneration sites in the town centre, with three of these – Union Street East, the Galleries & High Street car park, and the Railway & Bus Station - on the brink of delivery. Demolition and construction work on these sites will create substantial disruption to the access and trade of existing businesses, and measures will be required to make this period of transition as painless as possible. The 'Aldershot Town Centre Transition Plan' outlines a number of activities that should be considered to keep the town centre as healthy and vibrant as possible throughout this period of change. The structure of the plan has been based on the recommendations of the LGA report 'Revitalising Town Centres' (May 2018). Longer-term activities and governance arrangements – for example, visioning, planning policy, parking strategy, public realm strategy, Digital High Streets, etc – are considered elsewhere.

Project Description, High-Level Outputs & Delivery Team	Code	Key Deliverable	Officer Lead	Service	Activities to assist through period of transition	Comment on progress, status and any recommended actions	RAG status as at xxx
<p>Project Description:</p> <p>Transition plan established to assist Aldershot Town Centre maintain health and vibrancy throughout the period of construction works as major regeneration schemes are developed.</p> <p>Vison for Aldershot: SPD – January 2016</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A revitalised town centre offer 2. Town centre living 3. A family-friendly town centre 4. An improved cultural offer 5. Investing in streets and spaces 6. Affirming the Victorian heritage <p>Funding Secured:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBC <p>RBC Delivery Team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBC <p>Key Delivery Partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ATC Task Force • Other Businesses • Resident forums <p>Key Documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aldershot TC Stategy 		<p>EVIDENCE & OBJECTIVES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree a draft list of activities • Ensure stakeholders buy-in to engender 'collective responsibility' • Track trends and agree PI's 	Town Centres, Culture & Events	Economy, Planning & Strategic Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult with key stakeholders, including L&C, Shaviram, RDP, Grainger, the Military, retailers, community and residents groups, using feedback to revise Transition Plan. • Create a baseline summary document of research and knowledge to date. • Establish the best ways to monitor local trends and agree a suite of PI's to measure the economic and public health of the town centre.e.g. footfall data, sales figures, vacancy rates, surveys, etc. • Seek examples of best practice from similar towns centres that have experienced significant transition periods e.g. Bracknell. 		
		<p>TRANSPORT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking – a customer led approach • Travel, access, connectivity and wayfinding 	Parking	Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and summarise the conclusions from previous Aldershot town centre parking studies undertaken in the past five years. • Recommend a short-term parking strategy, focused on maximising access to town centre services (location, capacity and convenience) and promoting economic vitality and vibrancy (charging incentives) throughout the transition period. • Consider the parking recommendations presented as part of the Grimsey Review 2. • Consider the effect of the regeneration site construction works on travel movements, to and around the town centre, and put in place arrangements for alternative measures to mitigate disruption. • Review pedestrian and vehicular way-finding signage to ensure clear and accurate. 		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aldershot SPD – Jan 2016 • Regenerating Rushmoor Programme - ongoing • High Street 2030: Achieving Change – Dec 2018 • 25 factors to improve the vitality and viability of town centres • LGA: Revitalising Town Centres – May 2018 • Grimsey Review 2 – June 2018 	<p>ENVIRONMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleanliness • Anti-social behaviour • Placemaking – buildings, public realm and streetscape 	<p>Contracts</p> <p>Community Safety</p> <p>Town Centres, Culture & Events</p> <p>Regeneration Team</p>	<p>Operations</p> <p>Operations</p> <p>Economy, Planning & Strategic Housing</p> <p>Regeneration & Property</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review current cleaning arrangements to ensure they are fit for purpose to deliver results and keep town clean and tidy throughout transition period. • Consider a ‘Big Tidy Up’ initiative • Review the success of the PSPO in tackling anti-social behaviour and bolster enforcement if required. • Consider retailers call for an alcohol ban in the town centre. • Re-launch the Shop watch radio scheme. • Introduce initiatives to improve the environmental quality of the town centre e.g. graphics on hoardings, dressing empty units, reducing street clutter. • Ensure a comprehensive street furniture maintenance programme is in place to maintain an attractive street scene. 		
	<p>BUSINESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influence the business mix to enhance quality and distinctiveness • Support the evolving retail offer – through flexible space, mentoring, marketing, etc • Encourage meanwhile uses • Support a Café Culture 	<p>Regeneration Team / Ec Dev / Town Centres, Culture & Events</p>	<p>Regeneration & Property / Economy, Planning & Strategic Housing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider support to existing key retailers to ensure their retention through the transition period. • Create a ‘register of empty properties’ and engage regularly with their landlords • Develop a meanwhile strategy to bring vacant units back into use. • Consider how to encourage new independent businesses into the town centre, including start-ups, creative hubs, pop-up shops, etc. • Encourage the provision of flexible space to support these new businesses. • Support new and existing independent businesses through business mentoring and marketing. • Work closely with the Wellington Shopping Centre and the Westgate Leisure Park to support their health and vibrancy through the transition period. • Consider encouraging the relocation of key business from elsewhere in the town, to the town centre. • Encourage businesses located outside the town centre to establish a presence in the centre e.g. local colleges, football club, museum. • Consider the benefits of encouraging a ‘street cafe culture’. • Review engagement with businesses, and enable development of a business led model e.g. Business Improvement District. 		
	<p>PROMOTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote a programme of community driven events and markets 	<p>Town Centres, Culture & Events</p>	<p>Economy, Planning & Strategic Housing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a comprehensive programme of town centre events designed to drive maximum footfall and foster civic pride. 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a collective place brand supported by a marketing strategy • Promote the visitor economy through the arts, culture and heritage offer 	<p>Markets Team</p> <p>Town Centres, Culture & Events</p> <p>Corporate Communication Team</p>	<p>Regeneration & Property</p> <p>Economy, Planning & Strategic Housing</p> <p>Customer Experience</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage community organisations and individuals to create and deliver new events through the creation of a grant fund. • Review format of existing events, and consider whether construction works will necessitate any changes in their delivery. • Consider the benefits of creating a semi-permanent performance space. • Consider introducing a shopper loyalty scheme. • Explore ways of working with nearby organisations that attract significant footfall, to bring those people into the town centre e.g. theatres, Westgate, football club. • Review the current weekly market offer, and consider procuring a new operator? Seek best practice examples e.g. Altringham and Shrewsbury. • Consider how the existing market offer may be affected by construction works, and propose changes to its delivery. • Consider options for the provision of a 'permanent market area' throughout the transition period. • Approach visiting food and speciality markets. • Explore the 'Teenage Market' model www.theteenagemarket.co.uk • Establish a marketing & communications plan designed to encourage footfall into the town centre during the transition period. 		
	<p>TECHNOLOGY / DIGITAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embrace digital opportunities through a digital strategy • Help businesses upskill in their digital capabilities • Explore ethical ways of using data from existing sources (parking, social media interaction, etc) 	<p>Economic Development / ITI</p>	<p>Economy, Planning & Strategic Housing / IT, Projects & Facilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish opportunities for any short-term benefits presented by Digital High Street project work. • Exploit opportunities provided by the new 'Games Hub', due to open at the end of 2019. • Provide opportunities for independent businesses to upskill in their digital capabilities through training and mentoring. 		
	<p>PEOPLE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community engagement and coordination, backed by a communications plan • Clear structure for productive stakeholder partnership working 	<p>Regeneration Team / Ec Dev / Town Centres, Culture & Events</p> <p>Corporate</p>	<p>Regeneration & Property / Economy, Planning & Strategic Housing</p> <p>Customer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review structure of stakeholder partnership working, ensuring collaboration and collective responsibility e.g. Town Team • Ensure major stakeholders – Rushmoor Development Partnership, London & Cambridge, Shaviram, Grainger, etc – are engaged and on-board. • Continue to develop our pro-active residents groups, bringing them along the journey and engendering ownership and responsibility. • Reach out to wider groups of residents – new Wellesley tenants, Military families, the Nepali community, young people – to encourage their involvement. • Look to work more closely with Nepali business owners. • Create a clear communications plan to disseminate information and keep 		

			Communication Team	Experience	stakeholders engaged.		
		FINANCE					
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable funding of the transition plan Understand the 'connected value' of activities 	Regeneration Team / Ec Dev / Town Centres, Culture & Events	Regeneration & Property / Economy, Planning & Strategic Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively seek public funding streams to finance delivery of the plan. Consider opportunities for attracting private sponsorship and commercial income to support implementation of the plan's activities. 		
		FUTURE PLANNING					
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rolling delivery plan and parallel action plan Review progress 	Regeneration Team / Ec Dev / Town Centres, Culture & Events	Regeneration & Property / Economy, Planning & Strategic Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use established governance arrangements to produce a rolling action plan to coordinate delivery 'on the ground'. Use available qualitative and quantitative evidence, including agreed performance indicators, to monitor impacts and changes. Use examples of best practice from elsewhere, stakeholder feedback, and monitoring evidence to continually develop the transition plan and rolling action list. Ensure short-term transition plan activities are consistent with the long-term vision of the town centre. Ensure transition activities are delivered in the context of any longer term strategies e.g. parking, public realm, design guidance, heritage trail, digital high streets, etc. Ensure agreed activities are delivered in the context of demographic, mobility, technological, retail and other national environmental and economic changes. 		