

<b>Title of meeting:</b>	Cabinet
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	26 July 2022
<b>Subject:</b>	Regeneration of the City Centre
<b>Report by:</b>	Tristan Samuels, Director of Regeneration
<b>Report Author:</b>	Ian Maguire, Assistant Director Economic Development & Anna Limburn, Strategic Project Manager
<b>Wards affected:</b>	Charles Dickens
<b>Key decision:</b>	No
<b>Full Council decision:</b>	No

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## **1. Purpose of report**

1.1. This report builds on the previous City Centre reports and sets out how the Council's wider agenda to ensure that the City Centre and high street plans for economic development and culturally led regeneration continue to prosper, by accommodating the permanent and meanwhile growth this part of the city needs and putting people back into the place.

1.2. The city centre area has for many years been a Council priority, defined in the current and emerging local plans as an area set aside for housing and economic growth, within the wider City Centre. A City Centre Masterplan was produced in 2012 and updated in 2020 to support the emerging Local Plan.

1.3. This report is providing an update on the Council's approach to improving the City Centre and highlights progress of delivery of the regeneration of the city centre, following the Cabinet Decisions taken previously in October 2021 and March 2022.

## **2. Recommendations**

That the Cabinet:-

- 2.1. Note the high level of activity taking place in and around the city centre, as referenced in the report and appendices, along with the proposed stewardship role the council intends to play to ensure that the future activity and growth in this area is curated sensibly and can be delivered.

- 2.2. Agree to progress the recommendations and actions suggested in the Unlocking Your Place Potential (UYPP) Report in full.
- 2.3. Note the progress made by officers, on work delegated by Cabinet in March 2022, to determine an appropriate and achievable delivery strategy for the City Centre North (CCN) workstream.
- 2.4. Note the progress made by officers on land assembly as approved under the Cabinet and Full Council meetings in October 2021 and Cabinet in March 2022.
- 2.5. Note the progress made by officers on the development of a meanwhile strategy, following the production of a business justification cases for the proposals.

### **3. Background**

3.1. The City Council has recognised the importance of the City Centre in previous reports and having noted the challenges these economic and socially important spaces are facing the Council is proposing to take a more proactive approach to managing the Commercial Road High Street area.

3.2. The city centre is spatially defined in the "*City Centre Development Strategy*", (a link to the strategy is provided in the background documents) a plan showing the proposed masterplan area is available in appendix A. The strategy was recently consulted on as part of the Local Planning Authorities (LPA) regulation 18 consultation. The document was received during the consultation and broadly results in 3 distinct geographical locations, the Southern, Central and Northern City Centre areas and seeks to define how those spaces could be used to enhance the identity of each, encourage footfall and ultimately result in economic development that the City Centre needs.

3.3. As has been noted previously the changing nature of high streets was already evident, prior to the pandemic, with greater online retailing impacting on the viability of traditional retail dominated high streets. Since the pandemic there has been an acceleration in closures of retail units in the high streets with notable vacancies such as Burtons and Debenhams in Commercial Road highlighting the ongoing challenges for the city.

3.4. In response to all the challenges this High Street faces the Council is planning and currently supporting a significant number of projects, these were presented to Cabinet in March 2022 within a brochure that details how the City Centre is likely to evolve over the coming years; a copy can be found in appendix B. The City Centre Regeneration brochure highlighted how over 20 known projects and interventions are guiding the likely revitalisation and reimagining of the City Centre space. Principally this sees a rationalisation of the defined and understood City Centre.

3.5. This brochure shows a pipeline of both private sector development and regeneration opportunities, alongside a wide range of council led interventions and

projects, including proposals for cultural events and programmes, utilising the Future High Streets funding won for public realm improvements alongside the opportunities created by large scale development in the area and the hope of future Levelling Up Funding success.

3.6. As part of the Future High Street funding the council has benefitted with support from the Future High Streets Taskforce. Officers have engaged with the Taskforce, to ensure our High Street proposals meet their high standards and were pleased that in the latest report from the High Street Task Force the mentor supported our proposed plans. The latest "Unlocking your Place Potential" report is attached in appendix C.

3.7. Dr Jo Morrison, High Streets Task Force Expert, undertook the High Street Task Force's (HSTF) review of Commercial Road, made six recommendations in the Unlocking Your Place Potential (UYPP) report:

- Share the final version of this report with everyone that attended the Unlocking Your Place Potential meeting - **actioned**.
- Arrange an away day with a wide range of public sector, business and community leaders to review challenges facing the city centre and the feedback from the UYPP visit: **to be re-arranged, postponed from May to allow new portfolio lead to be appointed**.
- Form a new and comprehensive partnership structure to shape the strategy for the centre, oversee projects and coordinate plans and activity **to be actioned requires lead officer appointment**
- Your new partnership structure should then identify who will own or action the areas for improvement identified in your Fishbone Analysis **to be actioned following agreement from senior PCC leaders**
- A further recommendation is that the views and feedback of existing local residents and new local residents are regularly sought in order to help shape and validate the range of improvement plans over time **to be actioned**
- Our final recommendation is that the work and resulting outputs of the new partnership are published regularly and widely via a range of media. Doing so would help to foster an inclusive culture for the city centre communities **to be actioned**

3.8. Building on the UYPP report, a number of additional offers of support have been received from Cultural Place makers like Future Cities, the Design Council, who felt a Shared Vision for the City Centre was required and further offers of support from FHS Taskforce. All will be considered with the Portfolio holder shortly.

3.9. *Safer Streets 3 - £450,000* - targeted crime prevention to reduce violence against women and girls (VAWG) in public places, using crime data and Police Environmental Visual Audit.

- Mentors in Violence prevention pilot in schools and colleges (2 colleges, 3 schools in Portsmouth)

- Development of a network of safe spaces adjacent to public places (shopping areas, parks etc) where women and girls can receive a trauma informed response (10 venues in Portsmouth)
- Safe and strong artwork to be displayed around the city to raise the positive profile of women and girls as intrinsically valuable rather than objects to be desired (5 locations in Portsmouth)
- A local intelligence mapping service which will enable women to report concerns via text and then receive a follow up call from a local provider (city wide)

#### **4. Southern City Centre**

4.1. The southern part of the City Centre links the commercial High Street running north of the railway station and the main University of Portsmouth buildings around and south of Winston Churchill Avenue. This area benefits from significant and important heritage and cultural assets such as the Guildhall and Victoria Park. The interventions seen and expected in this area focus on this cultural and experiential offer, supporting the night-time economy in Guildhall Walk and the green infrastructure at Victoria Park.

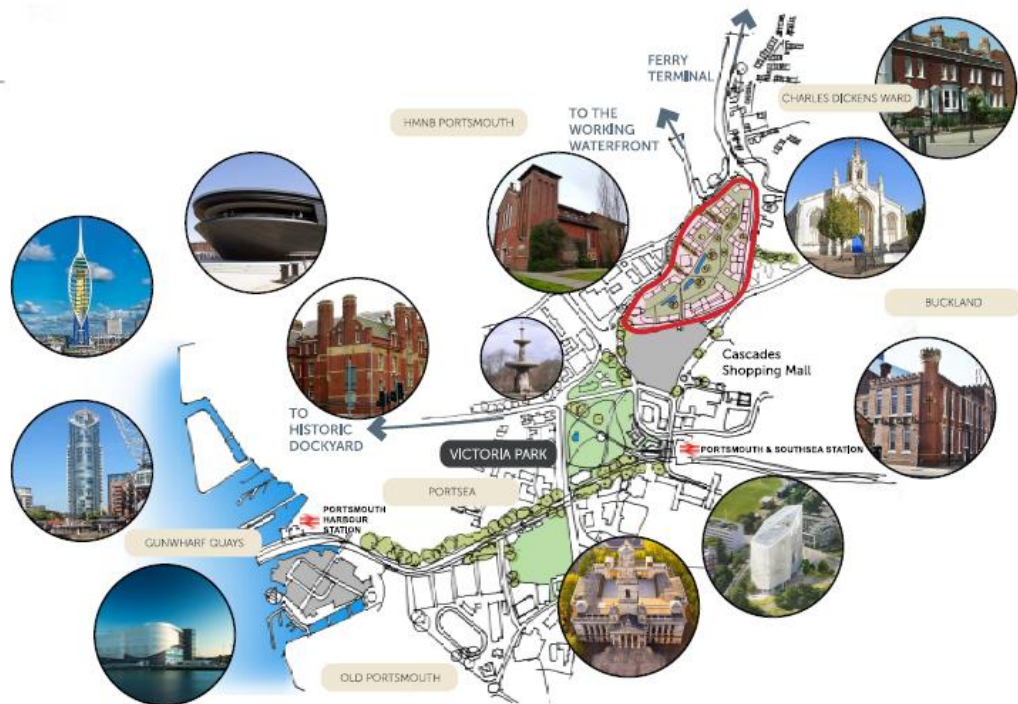
4.2. *Safety of women at night (SWaN) Fund - £100,000* - the following projects will be delivered in partnership with OPCC and IOW Council. Working across the city centre, this initiative will:

- 'Community in Motion' active bystander training for staff and support services working in the Night-time Economy (NTE) (100 people trained)
- Safe Spaces network at Night, building upon the Safe Space work above focused on NTE (5 venues in Portsmouth)
- 'With You' project working directly with women in the sex industry (focusing on two clubs, 5 massage parlours in Portsmouth)
- 'Stay Safe' pilot, led by Shaping Portsmouth to trial use of cloud-based technology to support those working in the NTE to get home safely (200+ licences issued to staff in Portsmouth venues)

4.3. The Council is also actively looking for more funding from the Levelling Up Fund, to support initiatives in the City Centre, focused on the Cultural threads across the city. The bid, if funded, will transform the area, increasing visitor numbers and ensuring that local people will have an attractive and safe place to engage with the city's culture and heritage with a sense of pride. We are asking for investment in three key assets:

- Cultural Spine - creating a safe and accessible gateway to the city's cultural heart, linking key cultural assets together and better connecting them to public transport and active travel options
- Guildhall Renaissance - A major overhaul and refurbishment of facilities to enable a broader range of events
- New Theatre Royal Regeneration - breathing life into a historic venue and ensuring its future.

Making Cultural Connections



## 5. Central City Centre

5.1. The central part of the City Centre contains the Cascades shopping centre and the main 'high street' at Commercial Road and Arundel Street. This area is retained to support town centre uses and shopping and retail.

5.2. There are a number of major projects proposed for this part of the City Centre, some of these re-developments that are coming forward include a number of high density proposals incorporating tall buildings.

5.3. Planning permissions have been recently granted in respect of the following:

- 56 Arundel Street - 22 storey building delivering 76 dwellings and commercial, granted September 2020 (19/01919/CS3). This has now lapsed.
- 12-28 Arundel Street - Part 7, 21 and 28 storey building delivering 591 student bedsits plus commercial, approved August 2021 (20/01464/FUL)

5.4. There are also existing applications awaiting decisions, like the Post Office building and land adjacent, which propose in the order of 176 dwellings and a hotel which are expected to be presented to Planning Committee later this year (20/00407/OUT and 20/00152/FUL).

5.5. Other schemes under advanced pre-application discussion - and subject to Planning Performance Agreements (PPA) - include:-

- The re-development of the former Debenhams store (up to 38 storeys) comprising dwellings, student rooms and commercial units; and
- The Matalan site adjoining the station (up to 33 storeys) comprising a mix of build-to-rent and co-living units and office/F&B uses).
- Negotiations continue in respect of land south of Catherine House.

5.6. The market continues to come forward with proposals for high density developments, notably high-rise, close to the City Centre and main railway station. All proposals bring with them a series of significant public realm enhancements which the planning team will need to ensure come forward in a suitably co-ordinated and consistent, complementary fashion.

5.7. Officers continue to liaise with The Department for Levelling Up, on the project change request. Funding has been received, the concept exists (Appendix 25 draft public realm plan attached in appendix D), and we anticipate a final decision from Levelling Up likely to follow in the next few weeks to allow progression to delivery.

5.8. The market has moved to its new location in the southern end of the precinct, allowing free space for the public realm improvement project mentioned in 5.7 above.

5.9. Phase two of the market relocation is now underway following significant delays due to covid restrictions and the impact of the pandemic on the traders, many of whom did not return to regular trading until May 2022. The strategy for the market is focused on staffing to encourage more traders to the market and to uplift the look and feel of the market in its new location, post covid. All of which aims to create new and exciting opportunities for street trading in the City Centre.

## **6. Northern City Centre**

6.1. The northern parts of the City Centre will see the greatest change. Reflecting national and market trends the retail floorspace of the City Centre is reducing and this area will therefore primarily become a residential space, supported by public green space. This brings more activity into proximity of the City Centre's high street and night-time economy as well as creating more homes and opportunities to support transport and active transport improvements.

6.2. An outline planning application for a development masterplan is due to be submitted to the Local Planning Authority shortly. This development, at the northern end of the City Centre, is designed to breathe new life into the area and support the Council's aspirations for sustainable communities, better connectivity and greener travel. It will knit into current communities and provide substantial green open space for all. It will be pedestrian and cycle lead, with a revised network designed to improve air quality and the navigation within the City Centre.

6.3. This new development of c2,300 homes with 10,000m<sup>2</sup> of retail and employment, will have recognisable urban forms, with more formal facades creating

high class urban frontages. The residential units will be built to modern space standards and deliver sustainable living through opening up to the green spaces at ground floor, which will in turn anchor the new neighbourhood, blurring the boundaries between homes and nature.

6.4. Note that an update on project progress around land assembly and delivery strategy has been sent to the portfolio holder.

6.5. Charlotte Street and Unicorn Junction works under South East Hampshire Rapid Transport (SEHRT) programme are due to start later this year as part of a wider programme to improve bus travel times across the city. With the dualling of Hope Street planned to follow, subject to funding being secured.

## **7. City Centre Management**

7.1. This breadth of opportunities however does bring with it a greater need to coordinate the diverse set of functions that the Council that are operating in the shared space that is our City Centre.

7.2. Due to the range of statutory and discretionary services undertaken by the City Council several different service areas are engaged across the Regeneration, Culture Leisure and Regulatory Services, and Housing Neighbourhood and Building Services directorates as well as our PFI with Ensign Colas. This is currently leading to a lack of place ownership and the potential for conflict, duplication, and wastage.

7.3. The Council has a stewardship role to ensure the success of this space and that needs to be recognised in order to reduce the risks mentioned, and to maximise the opportunities to deliver change and improvement in our City Centre. It has been proposed by officers that a City Centre Place Development Manager role is introduced, as a pilot programme for up to 3 years.

7.4. It is intended that this role would play a coordinating role with other service areas delivering statutory services in the City Centre space and would play a leadership role for the discretionary service delivery and events in this area.

7.5. It would also provide capacity to support new projects and programmes in the City Centre including bringing forward a potential new Business Improvement District.

7.6. A key benefit would also to act as a single point of contact to the businesses and stakeholder groups within the commercial heart of the City Centre to ensure they can play the best part in driving forward the inevitable change in this area.

7.7. Funding for this role would need to be identified, both for the initial pilot period and, ideally, in the longer term. A paper will be brought to the portfolio holder with proposals both on how best to use and fund the post, to be considered in due course.

## 8. Meanwhile Use

8.1. Meanwhile or temporary uses of Council owned assets are always be encouraged where possible and viable or where tangible economic benefits are anticipated. With that in mind the team are considering a range of meanwhile uses currently.

8.2. A proposal for meanwhile use of council owned land on Pye St/Pan St to create "Portsmouth Discovery Forest" is being considered. The proposal aims to provide a green space with over 200 trees grown locally, to be replanted in and around the City Centre and within the proposed new green lung of the CCN development site. The proposal could deliver a biodiversity study/education area, living walls and food growing with community uses. This will all support the development of Portsmouth's green corridors for wildlife, improving air quality, biodiversity, people's health and education, subject to the business justification case being approved. The team will also be engaging with local schools and interest groups to help manage and care for the space. This concept aligns with corporate priorities and Portsmouth's greening strategy. We are working cross directorate with public health, culture, leisure and economic development and housing to deliver the plans.

8.3. The Council let the vacant Sainsbury's building to the indoor skate park company last year for a period of 3 years with 6 month rolling breaks to allow the redevelopment to proceed when needed. While not fully open yet, it has opened to the public on a trial basis on a few occasions and is hoping to be fully open for the summer holidays.

8.4. A key part of the city's economy is SME's and currently a proposal to use the empty City Buildings, at the top of Commercial Road as an enterprise centre, with co-work and hot desk space is being considered. In addition to the main area, the Council will look to bring back the Playland unit, which is fire damaged. Proposals and business justification plans are under discussion.

8.5. In partnership with key stakeholder organisations, the Council is exploring meanwhile-use options for a number of sites across the city. Project examples include:-

- a proposed a start-up business support provision funded by a Housing Association.
- A separate, skills and welfare centre, targeting unemployed adults and young people is a proposed contractor led project building on successful project-based work piloted elsewhere in the country. The skills and welfare centre would bring together a range of businesses and contractors working in partnership with the council, charity, and welfare sectors to provide focused support to address skills gaps and move people into employment.



8.6. All projects are designed to complement existing service provision and maximise engagement with vulnerable groups. Both pieces of work are developments from the cross council social value work.

## **9. Engagement and Communication Strategy**

9.1. The team continues to actively promote the wider City Centre vision, with regular update on the City Centre website and promotional material being developed.

9.2. The team continues to work closely with other projects and teams working on City Centre schemes, including SEHRT, Clean Air Zone, transport, property, the bids team and economic development, to coordinate on communications and engagement activity and present a cohesive narrative for the future of the City Centre.

9.3. It is anticipated that the Council working collaboratively with the University of Portsmouth to find ways to promote the opportunities in the high street and wider City Centre area using virtual tours and walk throughs alongside traditional methods, to ensure that more residents, stakeholders and businesses can be engaged.

9.4. The CCN planning application has been kept as flexible as possible and is based on the objectives set out in Portsmouth's emerging Local Plan and reflects the core policies of the administration, it also provides an opportunity to canvas residents on the proposed wider area improvements and how best to shape the spatial plans of the City Centre.

9.5. The community will be engaged with a view to how best to improve the High Street in a number of consultation sessions blending the need to consult on the reserved matters of the project with the wider improvements. On the CCN project residents, businesses and community stakeholders will have the chance to feed into plans for the central green space and public park, and the design codes that will help shape the look and character of new buildings.

9.6. We will set out a programme of activity that will draw on different forms of engagement, such as formal consultation, focus groups, roadshows, pop-up events, briefings, information sharing (media, council channels including social media, newsletters and Flagship) and school visits.

9.7. The focus will on be engaging with different groups in effective and meaningful ways, depending on the phase of the project, the topic and the stakeholders involved. We want to strike a balance between involving the community and oversaturating people with consultation. It will be important to work closely with other related projects and teams within the council.

## **10. Reasons for recommendations**

10.1. The main body of the report gives specific details to the background of the recommendations all of which are considered by officers as important to ensure the Regeneration of the City Centre and its associated benefits.

10.2. The 2012 Local Plan requires updating to reflect current market trends for retail high streets and housing need and the recent Masterplan, the City Centre Development Scheme, identifies the City Centre North as a location for substantial housing growth along with associated employment floorspace. This opportunity formed part of emerging policy S1 consulted on in 2021 as part of the Local Plan Regulation 18 Consultation.

10.3. The Cabinet has approved a range of decisions in both October 2021 and March 2022, which enable the various workstreams to be developed, these include:

- Approve the Land Assembly strategy for the City Centre Regeneration project
- Delegate authority to the Director of Regeneration and S151 Officer on the advice of the City Solicitor in consultation with the Leader to:
- Negotiate and complete acquisitions of legal interests, on the basis of a statutory Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) Compensation Code, in land required for the delivery of the City Centre Regeneration scheme
- To procure and appoint specialist advisers for Land Referencing Agents and Specialist compulsory surveyors.
- To approve progress of all work necessary to establish a case for the CPO of land required for the City Centre Regeneration scheme.
- To approve in principle the use of CPO powers for the acquisition of the land (indicatively shown in in the redline and note that the making of any CPO order will be subject to further report to Cabinet confirming various criteria have been met. Within the decision, Cabinet note redline plan.
- Delegated authority to the Director of Regeneration and the S151 officer to deliver meanwhile uses in all PCC owned assets where possible and viable to do so, to further support the economic recovery of the City Centre.
- Delegated authority to the Director of Regeneration and S151 Officer on the advice of the City Solicitor in consultation with the Leader to investigate funding and delivery options including internal delivery and potential partnering options for the City Centre North Development.

## **11. Integrated impact assessment**

See appendix E.

**12. Legal comments**

12.1. There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report. Legal Services will continue to provide legal oversight and support to the project as it develops.

**13. Director of Finance's comments**

13.1. There are no direct financial implications as a result of approving the recommendations within this report.

13.2. The report suggests various requirements for funding for both revenue and capital initiatives. Each of these will be appraised individually and a request for funds will be agreed either within existing cash limited budgets or the approved capital programme. Alternatively, there may be a requirement to bid for additional corporate resources or access further borrowing that will need to be agreed by full Council.

13.3. Each of these initiatives will be financially appraised to ensure that they are affordable and sustainable on going from a revenue perspective.

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Signed by:

**Appendices:**

Appendix A - City Centre Development Strategy - Masterplan Area

Appendix B - City Centre Projects Brochure

Appendix C - Unlocking your Place Potential Report by the Future High Street Taskforce

Appendix D - FHS Public Realm Improvement Plan - Commercial Road (Draft)

Appendix E - Integrated Impact Assessment

**Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972**

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

<b>Title of document</b>	<b>Location</b>
Cabinet Report October 2021	<a href="#">Regeneration of the city centre part thereof CPO resolution report.pdf (portsmouth.gov.uk)</a>
Cabinet Report March 2022	<a href="#">City Centre Regeneration report.pdf (portsmouth.gov.uk)</a>
City Centre Development Strategy	<a href="https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Portsmouth-City-Centre-Development-Strategy-Jan-21_compressed.pdf">https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Portsmouth-City-Centre-Development-Strategy-Jan-21_compressed.pdf</a>

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by ..... on .....

.....  
 Signed by:

**Appendix A - City Centre Development Strategy - Masterplan Area**

