

Hale and Sale Moor Place Plans

Executive Decision Statement to Extraordinary Meeting, Pandemic Scrutiny Committee by Cllr James Wright, Executive Member for Housing and Regeneration

15th October 2010

Background

In May 2019 Trafford Council appointed Nexus Planning, working alongside technical consultants WSP, Gillespies and Buttress Architects, to prepare two Village Place Plans for Sale Moor and Hale Village Centres (appendix one and two). The overall aim of the Plan process was to ensure that we would have a Plan in place that would make Hale a great place to visit, for businesses to thrive and to improve movement in and around the centre. We are confident that following a robust process we have a Plan that does just that.

The Place Plans will help guide future policy, actions and investment within the village centres and assist in ensuring that Sale Moor and Hale best meet their full potential as centres that serve their local communities. They will seek to make Sale Moor and Hale sustainable and viable centres, well equipped to meet the current and future needs of its residents and visitors, and effectively support local businesses.

The initial information gathering and discussions with key stakeholders in respect of the Hale Place Plan commenced in July 2019. From the beginning, the priority was to ensure a robust and inclusive engagement strategy was in place. We are confident that the engagement strategy enabled a collective response from all members of the local community including local businesses, organisations, residents and visitors to the area.

Reason for Statement

The Hale (and Sale Moor) Place Plans were adopted at Council Executive on Monday 28th September. Leading up to Executive, the Council received a number of comments in regards to the Plans and comments in relating to the consultation process that the Plans had gone through. Ahead of the Executive meeting on 28th September, the deadline for receiving questions for Executive from members of the public was 4pm Friday 25th September. Two questions were received in relation to the Hale Place Plan, both of which questioned the adequacy of the consultation process. A response was provided to ward members ahead of the Executive and a full statement was made by the Council's Executive Member, Cllr James Wright and the Leader of the Council, Cllr Andrew Western. Both statements were in support of the adoption of the Place Plans setting out how the Place Plans had been consulted on in detail and that the findings of the consultation supported the recommendation for adoption.

Consultation and Timeline

In order to ensure the consultation was as wide and robust as possible, that it could be properly resourced and professionally supported a consultant team, led by Nexus Planning was set up. In deciding which team to appoint to prepare the Plan, Nexus

had demonstrated particular strengths in public consultation having scored highly on the requirements of the brief set out. In addition, Nexus had recently completed the Trafford Retail and Leisure Study (2019) meaning they already had excellent local knowledge of the retail and leisure sector in the area. The team set out an Engagement Strategy to set the parameters for the consultation exercise. The ES detailed how and when people would be consulted in regards to formulating proposals and considering what the overall Vision and Objectives were from the outset.

A meeting was held with local ward members at the Mercure Hotel on 3rd July 2019 where the consultant team took them through the Hale Engagement Strategy. Ward members kindly provided details of local organisations, faith groups, schools and other stakeholder who we should contact to engage them in the process. Ward members had no other particular concerns with the Engagement Strategy and were invited to provide further comments on the Engagement Strategy following the meeting. No comments were received by Council officers or the consultant team.

The consultation process involved two stages;

- Stage 1 – The consultation period ran from 8th August to 20th September 2019. Surveys were publicised via online sources, the Council's website and social media accounts, circulation by local community groups and organisations and through hand-delivery within the village itself including paper copies and a deposit point at Hale Library.
- Stage 2 – The public consultation on the draft Place Plan for Hale was undertaken between 14th January and 11th February. This stage involved the presentation of a draft Place Plan following previous consultation and evidence gathering.

Even though there were two specific stages to consultation, meetings were held with key stakeholders, local organisations, businesses and local ward members throughout and an 'open door' approach was taken to ensure we were able to capture the views of as many people as possible.

Over both consultations, there were well over 600 responses to the consultation. In comparison with the Sale Town Centre Public Realm consultation in 2017, there were 608 responses to the consultation which is on par with the Hale Place Plan response. However, Sale is a Town Centre and so has a higher population and footfall which makes the Hale response even more impressive.

The timeline below evidences that the consultation went above and beyond in order to drum up interest and responses to the survey. The timeline below includes information relating to each stage of the Plan preparation process:

July - September 2019 (Stage 1)

This stage involved initial evidence gathering and discussions with local members and key stakeholders. The purpose was principally to ask the community's and stakeholder's views on the issues and opportunities in Hale as well as the overarching Vision and Objectives and the strategy for the future of the village.

- Press release issued asking for people's views on what they wanted Hale to look like in the future and asked local people to identify issues and opportunities.
- Local ward members were invited to a meeting at The Mercure Hotel, Wednesday 3rd July in order to provide a briefing on the nature and scope of work being undertaken.
- 24th July 2019 – letters handed out to every single business in the village centre asking that they completed the surveys. It was agreed at the initial meeting with ward members that the boundary would concentrate on the village centre.
- Letters were written and hand delivered to individual businesses in Hale in order to promote the consultation and ensure their involvement.
- The consultation period ran from 8th August to 20th September 2019 and surveys were publicised via online sources, the Council's website and social media accounts, circulation by local community groups and organisations and through hand-delivery within the village itself.
- In total, 516 local community surveys were completed in Hale from both the business and local community. This large number of responses was attributed to the efforts of all involved in publicising the consultation to ensure as many people as possible were aware of it. An explanation has been provided in the report as to why it appears there were a low number of business responses. Many businesses told us they completed the resident survey instead – we told members and Denise Laver that this was the reason.
- As car parking had been raised as a possible issue early on, a separate car parking survey was instructed and undertaken by WSP consultants. The scope of the work (agreed by the Council's Parking Services Manager and Highways Manager) included parking surveys of the publicly available on-street and off-street parking within Hale Village centre and surround streets (see Figure 1). Survey times were between 09:00 and 21:00 over the course of Thursday 19/09/2019, Friday 20/09/2019 and Saturday 21/09/2019. As well as off-street parking, the following car parks were included in the survey:
 - Victoria Road Car Park;
 - Cecil Road East Car Park; and
 - An informal parking area opposite Cecil Road East Car Park (referred to as CP3).

Surveys were taken on what was considered a worst case scenario;

- Schools were reopen,
- They were carried out on the busiest days and the busiest times of day, and
- Brown Street car park was closed ready to start construction. When complete, around 50 car park spaces would be allocated back to the public.

Figure 1 – Extent of Parking Survey in Hale.



September - November 2019

- 3rd September 2019 – letters and copies of the surveys handed out to every business in the village centre. The consultant team used this opportunity to discuss the Plan with local businesses.
- Throughout October and November, Council officers and the consultant team held meetings with stakeholders including the owner of the Ashley Hotel, Forward Property Group and other key stakeholders, a list of which are included in Appendix B. In addition, Nexus Planning and Council officers had approximately 20 telephone conversations with Denise Laver from the Hale Civic Society to discuss any concerns she had with the Plan. These appeared to be mainly related to parking.
- A number of stakeholders were identified following the meeting in July with ward members. The group included residents, local businesses and organisations along with members from Hale Central and adjoining wards. These identified stakeholders were invited to a meeting at the Bowling Club in Hale on 20/10/19 to go through some of the findings of the initial consultation work and to discuss some of the early thought around what the Plan might include. Attendees at the event included ward local ward Cllrs, business and organisations including Denise Laver.
- At the event, the specialist consultants who undertook the survey went through the findings of the survey. The car parking survey was carried out at the busiest times of the week and was considered a worst case scenario given the ongoing development at Brown Street. Attendees were made aware that once the development was completed, more parking spaces would become available. In short, the survey agreed that, at times, available parking

spaces were low but the majority of the time there was enough parking in the centre of Hale to deal with demand.

January/February 2020 (Stage 2)

- A public consultation on the draft Place Plan for Hale was undertaken between 14th January and 11th February.
- A permanent exhibition space was set up in Hale Library including boards and hard copies which were replenished regularly.
- A survey was publicised locally digitally and in person asking for people's views on the draft proposals and findings of the consultation so far. There were 132 responses to the survey in total.
- A special exhibition event was hosted on Saturday 1st February at Hale Bowling Club. The event was publicised via social media, Council website and posters were put up in public places and a number of local businesses in Hale. There were approx. 100 attendees.

The Sedley and Gunning Principles

It should be noted that the Hale Place Plan is not a statutory planning document and so is not included in the Council's recently adopted Statement of Community Involvement (September 2020) which sets out how, when and who with in regards to consulting on statutory planning documents such as the emerging Local Plan. However, in the respect of transparency, accountability and being as socially inclusive as possible, the below demonstrates how the four Gunning principles were adhered to in the preparation of the Hale Place Plan.

- **Gunning 1** – Consultation must be at a time when proposals are still at a formative stage

Council response:

All proposals in the Plan are at an informative stage. The Place Plans are fairly high level documents and here have been no firm details included in the Plan. It is stated for each proposal that more detail in regards to design, highways etc will be required in order to take proposals forward to the next stage which will also be the subject to public consultation. The Covid-19 situation has been considered and acknowledged accordingly by the consultant team and will be further considered when specific proposals are subject to further consultation, therefore it was not considered appropriate to reconsult.

- **Gunning 2** – Sufficient reasons must be put forward for any proposal to permit "intelligent consideration" and response

Council response:

As detailed in the 'Consultation Timescale' above, two stages of consultation have been carried out with the local community. The initial stage of consultation generated more than 500 responses from the general public and local businesses with the second stage generating over 130 responses. Throughout the consultation, the consultation and Council officers have

continued to meet and speak with local people and businesses to discuss the Plan. There has been a 'door always open' approach to this work and despite the consultation stages having timescales, emails and telephone calls have been taken throughout. At each stage, the consultation responses have been collated, analysed and used to formulate plans and proposals by the team of professional consultants appointed to prepare the Hale Place Plan. Council officers have been closely involved throughout the preparation of the Place Plans and have reviewed the evidence and amends to the Plans. A Consultation Statement summarising the findings has been prepared at each stage of consultation including the final Place Plan to inform the development of the plan and the formulation of proposals.

- **Gunning 3** – Adequate time is given for consideration and response

Council response:

There are no statutory timescales to be applied in consulting on such documents. At the first stage of consultation, people were given 4 weeks to respond. However, on reviewing this and ensuring adequate time was allocated, the consultation was extended to 20th September and so a total period of just over 6 weeks. This is considered an adequate amount of time for people and businesses to respond.

Consultation on the draft Hale Village Place Plan ran from Tuesday 14th January until 10th March 2020 – so a total of 8 weeks. This is considered an adequate amount of time for people and businesses to respond. As already stated, meetings were held with local members and stakeholders on request, outside of the formal consultation periods.

- **Gunning 4** – The product of consultation is conscientiously taken into account by the decision maker(s)

Every element of the consultation findings has been taken into consideration throughout the preparation of the Plan and formulation of proposals. It was stated at the beginning, this would be a community-led Plan and that is what has been achieved. The main issue raised throughout has been parking. The Council were asked at the beginning to ensure that whatever was proposed, that there would be no reduction in parking. The Plan complies with this requirement and as a result, there is no loss to parking in the area. In actual fact, there has been a small increase in the number of spaces which could potentially be used as a Parklet. This is not a statutory document and so the consultation undertaken has gone above and beyond. The additional consultation event which took place at Hale Bowling Club was an additional event included in response to the request from some of the local community. The event was very well attended (around 100 people). Many people were able to come and speak to us about the Plan and we were able to explain what the proposals were.

Engagement with Local Businesses

As stated, and in addition to the meetings identified with the Forward Property Group, the engagement process has endeavoured to engage with as many local businesses as possible. On two separate occasions, surveys were hand delivered to local businesses. Officers delivering the surveys didn't just drop the surveys and move quickly onto the next one, they stopped and spoke to some businesses and directed them to the survey. As with the nature of this type of Plan, engaging businesses is not easy. However, a number of businesses turned up at the stakeholder events and public consultation events that were held (detailed in the Consultation Timeline section). Appendix A lists all of the businesses or local organisations that were spoken with whilst hand delivering surveys, at an event or on one of the walk-arounds the village.

The Council and consultation team had been made aware of a survey undertaken by the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) into car parking in Hale. However, working collaboratively, it may have been considered appropriate for the Council and consultation team to have been offered the opportunity to input into any evidence gathering. In any instance, the findings of the survey have been considered. However, in regards to this survey:

1. From our knowledge, it only included businesses and disregarded residents and visitors to the area, all of which use the village centre for parking,
2. The Council commissioned an independent and robust car parking survey. The results of which were presented at the stakeholder event and are available on request.
3. The FSB survey appeared to be administered without the context of what the Hale Place Plan is about.
4. In survey comments, some people are responding to and upset with questions about a reduction in the parking spaces. There is no reduction in parking spaces in the Hale Place Plan. In actual fact, a few additional spaces have been identified. More detailed design work would be required to determine actual numbers.

On reflection, the efforts of the FSB would have been more effectively put into encouraging more businesses to complete the Hale Place Plan consultation surveys.

Changes in the Final Place Plan

The purpose of a final plan is to refine and improve the content and proposals of the draft plan by considering all of the responses received throughout the consultation. In light of the responses received, there were a number of changes in the Final Plan from the Draft Plan. These include:

1. A key push from the local community was to stream-line the plan. As such, some 'repetitive' text was removed and the document shortened
2. An update to the consultation summary to reflect the latest round of findings,
3. An update to refer to latest policy, the COVID situation and Trafford Design Guide,

4. An update to the Vision and Objectives and details around these (principally picking up comments from Trafford officers)
5. Settling on the preferred options for both the Bowling Green and the Clock tower. There was also an update to the preferred option to pick up comments from the community and Trafford Officers
6. Introduction of the option of Parklets throughout the centre.

In summary

This statement responds to the request for call-in of the Place Plan in respect of the consultation process. The Council is confident that the consultation process was carried out in a transparent and accountable manner. In any kind of engagement exercise similar to this, the aim is always to speak to as many people as possible and a 'door always open' policy with Council officers and members of the consultant team was always in operation. The statement demonstrates that the consultation fulfils the Gunning Principles and that the response from the local community was on par with similar studies of this character.

Appendix A – List of businesses engaged in the Plan process

Local businesses and organisations were spoken to at stakeholder and public consultations, whilst hand delivering surveys, on walk-arounds in the village and by telephone.

1. Hale Library
2. Hale Community Trust
3. Hale Clean Air Group
4. Hale Bowling Club
5. Hale Civic Society
6. GM FSB – Robert Downes who represents numerous businesses in the area.
7. Britannia Hotel
8. Mercure Hotel
9. Clark Art
10. Steven Stone Jewellers
11. Costellos
12. Jamie Shepherd – owner of numerous businesses and properties in Hale
13. John Hammond – Managing Director of East Coast Concepts (Victors) and key stakeholder
14. Barber Barber
15. Costa
16. JoJo Mama Bebe
17. Bladons
18. Juniper
19. Hale barber Shop
20. Picture Framers
21. The Railway Pub
22. Pizza Express

Amey, TfGM and numerous other Council services have also been involved from the start of the process.

Appendix B – List of Key Stakeholders and Ward Members invited to take part

Carole Candish	Hale Civic Society
Denise Laver	Hale Civic Society
Chris Candish	Local Committee - former Cllr
Jamie Shepherd	Forward Property Group
Helen Brazier	Hale Community Trust
John Hammond	East Coast Concepts
Patrick Carrington	Hale Clean Air Group
Philip Parker	Hale Village Bowling Club
Qamar Hussain	Amey
Faye Drinkwater	Transport for Greater Manchester
Liz Smith	Hale Community Trust
Elaine English	Hale Community Trust
Robert Downes	Greater Manchester Federation of Small Business
Stephen Cox	Greater Manchester Federation of Small Business
Chris Manka	Greater Manchester Federation of Small Business
Simon Edmondson	Greater Manchester Federation of Small Business
Phillip Braunstein	Greater Manchester Federation of Small Business
Anna Jones	Trafford Council
Alan Carton	Resident
Alan Mitchell	Local Member
Bridget Garner	Railway Public House
Patricia Young	Local Member
Denise Haddad	Local Member
Alan Mitchell	Local Member
Dylan Butt	Local Member
Dave Morgan	Local Member
Patrick Myers	Local Member
Sean Anstee	Local Member
Karen Barclay	Local Member
Claire Churchill	Local Member