

TRAFFORD COUNCIL

Report to: Executive
Date: 25 October 2021
Report for: Decision
Report of: Executive Member for Housing and Regeneration

Report Title

Stretford Future High Streets Fund Project

Summary

To address the problems facing Stretford town centre and to reverse its cycle of decline, a bid to the government's Future High Streets Fund was submitted in mid-2020. The bid was successful in securing over £17m for a range of schemes to regenerate and transform Stretford Town centre for the benefit of local residents, businesses and visitors. The Report identifies those schemes and provides an update on progress.

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that the Executive:

- (i) Approves and authorises in principal the undertaking of the schemes identified in Section 2.0 of the report
- (ii) Delegates authority to the Corporate Director of Place to make minor amendments to the schemes as necessary in consultation with the Executive Member for Regeneration and Housing.
- (iii) Delegates authority to the Corporate Director of Place to deliver the schemes, including engaging external resources, commissioning surveys, investigations and any other works required to deliver highways and public realm improvements; and applying for planning permission if required.
- (iv) Authorises the Corporate Director of Governance and Community Strategy to finalise and enter into all legal agreements required to implement the above decisions.
- (v) Receives an update following the public consultation identified in Section 5.1 and every six months thereafter.

Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

Name: Stephen James
Head of Growth, Communities and Housing

Extension: 4330

Background Papers: None

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Stretford Future High Streets Fund Project areas.

Relationship to Policy Framework/Corporate Priorities	The Stretford Future High Streets project supports the Council's Corporate Priorities including delivery of the priorities of 'Successful and Thriving Places' and 'Green and Connected'. It also complements policies in the Draft Trafford Local Plan and the emerging Stretford Area Action Plan.
Relationship to GM Policy or Strategy Framework	At a Greater Manchester level, the Stretford Future High Streets project supports the GM Strategy and GM Local Industrial Strategy 2019,
Financial	Trafford were awarded £17.6m by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) in 2020 to assist in the delivery of works around the Stretford Town Centre that contribute to the overall Stretford Masterplan. In addition to this funding, Section 106 contributions of £1.5m and potential contributions of £3.56m from Trafford Bruntwood LLP this gives a total work package of £22.66m. To assist in delivering the highways and public realm works, an external Project Manager (LK Group Ltd) has been procured and appointed and this will include overseeing the grant claim process in partnership with the Finance Team, financial drawdowns from the JV partner, and monitoring/reporting on progress. The grant is payable per annum based on the original spend profile in the bid – and monitoring and evaluation forms have to be submitted regularly.
Legal Implications:	The Council will need to ensure that any s106 monies are spent in compliance with the s106 agreement and that all grant funding is spent in compliance with the terms on which the funds were granted.
Equality/Diversity Implications	Planning and delivery of projects will ensure compliance with the Council's Corporate Equalities Strategy 2021-2025 to understand clearly how different groups may be impacted, and what mitigation or proactive steps need to be taken.
Sustainability Implications	The works will be delivered in line with a Site Waste Management Plan that will be developed by the team to minimise waste and divert any surplus materials to recycling or re-use schemes. The use of Sustainable Drainage Systems will also be incorporated into the project.

Carbon Reduction	The Stretford Future High Streets Project will deliver active travel improvements to support increased cycling and walking. Traffic calming measures will be put in place to effectively slow the traffic and give more priority to pedestrians and cyclists.
Resource Implications e.g. Staffing / ICT / Assets	Existing resources will support delivery of the schemes identified.
Risk Management Implications	A Risk Register has been produced and will be monitored and updated as required.
Health & Wellbeing Implications	The schemes delivered as part of the Stretford High Street Fund Project will contribute to improving the health and wellbeing of local residents.
Health and Safety Implications	The works will be delivered in accordance with the Construction Design Management Regulations (CDM 2015) and will also comply with the New Roads and Streetworks Act.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Stretford Town Centre has been recognised as a town in need of public intervention to support its regeneration as it currently fails to meet the needs or aspirations of the community, and has suffered from a cycle of decline. The town centre is dominated by Stretford Mall, an inward facing shopping centre built in the 1960/70s. The footprint of the Mall dominates the 'core' of the town centre and the town lacks a traditional 'High Street'. The Mall's blank concrete facades are uninviting, inflexible and unsuitable for modern retail and high street uses. In addition, the existing infrastructure and highways hamper on-foot accessibility to/from the Mall to other parts of the town centre, adding to the overall effect of disjointedness and inaccessibility adversely affecting the local community.
- 1.2 The Council is committed to addressing Stretford's problems that has been illustrated by the joint venture (JV) with development partners Bruntwood, to acquire Stretford Mall (cost c£17m) to gain control of this key asset. The Council has also taken steps to acquire other strategically important assets in the town centre, including land on Lacy Street (cost c£900k), and through having control of these assets and the Mall, the Council is now in a position where it can take steps to deliver a comprehensive transformation of Stretford rather than a series of piecemeal interventions.
- 1.3 To deliver a comprehensive and co-ordinated approach to the regeneration of Stretford, linked to the JV, and secure a once in a generation opportunity for its wholesale improvement, a Future High Streets (FHSF) bid was submitted in late 2020. The bid was successful and the Council was awarded c£17.6m for a range of schemes to regenerate Stretford town centre to benefit residents, businesses and visitors alike.
- 1.4 Through the FHSF, the Council will deliver transformative change to Stretford Mall and the surrounding town centre area through the creation of a new 'High Street' through the Mall, with improved public realm which is better suited to the requirements of a modern town centre providing retail, leisure and commercial opportunities. In addition, the funding will be used for other configuration changes to the Mall site and surrounding infrastructure to help unlock redevelopment of the wider town centre and create over 600 additional new residential units to help bring vibrancy back to Stretford. In addition, existing S106 monies of c£1.5m will be used as part of the overall 'funding pot' as a contribution towards the public realm improvements; and c£3.5m is anticipated from the JV resulting in a total budget of c£22.6m.

2.0 Strategic Framework

- 2.1 The Future High Streets Fund Project, apart from complementing the works delivered through the JV, has been set in the context of the strategic framework for the town driven by the Council. A comprehensive, long-term approach to the regeneration of Stretford Town Centre is set out in the approved Refreshed Masterplan (January 2018) which seeks to facilitate considerable investment and development in the Town Centre and tackle the long-term cycle of decline.
- 2.2 The Council has also commenced preparation of an Area Action Plan (AAP) for Stretford. The Stretford AAP area covers approximately 70ha, siting between the Civic Quarter AAP to the north and the green landscape of the Stretford Meadows and Playing Fields to the south. It comprises the exiting Stretford Mall which is at the heart of the AAP. The Stretford Town Centre Area Action Plan sets out more detailed

policies for the area in order to ensure that the scale of development and proposed changes for the area is positively managed and guided by a robust planning framework. It seeks to meet the aspirations of the local community and the Council to improve the area as a whole, as well as the places within it. In doing so, the AAP will promote the effective use of land, meeting the need for homes and other uses, whilst safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. The AAP seeks to provide clarity and increased certainty about how the opportunities for improving Stretford Town Centre will be realised and to ensure its challenges are addressed.

- 2.3 The AAP will ensure that the scale of development and change proposed for the area over the next 10-15 years and beyond, is positively managed and guided by a robust planning framework, shaped and supported by the local community. The AAP forms part of the Council's Development Plan and will sit alongside the Trafford Local Plan and Places for Everyone, forming part of the Development Plan framework for the Stretford area.

3.0 Stretford Future High Street Fund Project - Schemes

- 3.1 The successful bid to the Future High Streets Fund identified a number of schemes to address the major problems the town centre is facing, and to transform it into a vibrant and sustainable place that meets the needs of the local community (see Appendix 1). Those schemes, with the corresponding estimated budget that make up the c£17.6m FHSF Grant, are identified in Table 1 below.

Table 1 – FHSF Schemes and Estimated Cost

Scheme	Description	Estimated Cost (£m)
1	Reconfiguration of Chester Road Entrance to Stretford Mall to form new linkage to the car park and service yard.	3.44
2	Works to allow the formation of a new ground floor linkage through Stretford Mall to enable the creation of an extended 'High Street' along King Street.	7.79
3	Reconfiguration of the Barton Road / Kingsway traffic lighted junction and associated highway and landscaping works to enable the site for mixed use development.	1.85
4	Reconfiguration of the highway and re-landscaping of Kingsway between Barton Road and Chester Road junctions to enable better pedestrian access to key town centre assets.	3.25
5	Pedestrian/cyclist upgrade measures to Chester Road Junction.	0.38
6	Preparation of land between Chester Road junction and Bridgewater Canal to unlock Lacy Street for development	0.26
	Inflation Contingency	0.63
	Total	£17.6

[Note – the schemes above are not listed in any priority/delivery order]
 - the costs are estimates only and may be subject to change

3.2 Schemes 1 and 2 identified above relate to the transformation of the Stretford Mall site and they will be led/delivered by the Council/Bruntwood Joint Venture. Schemes 3 to 6 cover highways and public realm improvements and delivery of these will be led by the Council.

3.3 To assist in delivering the highways and public realm works, an external Project Manager (LK Group Ltd) has been appointed following a compliant procurement process. LK Group will also perform an overall management and coordination role across the project as a whole, including Stretford Mall. They will also oversee the grant claim process in partnership with the Finance Team, financial drawdowns from the JV partner, and monitor/report on progress.

Council/Bruntwood JV Schemes

3.4 The Council/Bruntwood Joint Venture scheme for the Stretford Mall site includes the following:

- Works to the multi-storey car park including removal of the entrance ramp to unlock additional land for future development such as residential and commercial space, and configuration changes to the upper levels to allow other uses.
- Removal of part of Stretford Mall's roof and alterations to the multi-storey car park to enable the creation of a new expanded 'High Street' along King Street with improved retail and leisure units better suited to market demand.

The changes to the roof above the internal King Street section of the Mall and the multi-storey car park will not only unlock land for residential development but will also enable upper floors of the car park to be pedestrianised for a variety of other uses, such as open-air markets and events; building upon the good work of existing community groups, including the Friends of Stretford Public Hall, have already achieved in enhancing the real sense of community in Stretford. The highways and landscaping works will serve to improve the key access points across the town centre, particularly improving pedestrian access from the residential areas to key town centre sites including Stretford Mall, Lacy Street, Stretford Public Hall, and Stretford Library.

The planning application for Stretford Mall and the wider site will be validated within the next few weeks and comprises a 'Hybrid' application, seeking full planning consent for the demolition of part of the Mall and outline consent for a mixed use development. This development will include commercial, community and residential uses as well as public realm, landscaping and highway works. It is anticipated that the planning application will go to Development Committee in February 2022.

With regards King Street, the planning application will seek full planning permission for works including the removal of the roof to this part of the Mall, as well as improvements and alterations to the building frontages adjacent to King Street. The planning application is expected to be submitted when the wider Mall application is made valid, with a likely target Planning and Development Committee date in January 2022.

Council Led Schemes

3.5 The Council led highways and public realm improvement schemes include the following works:

Barton Road Junction

- Remove guard rails and street clutter from streets and central reservations where possible and improve pedestrian access across the junction.
- Respond to and interface with the proposals for Kingsway.
- Respond to and interface with the proposals for Stretford Mall.
- Introduce segregated cycle lanes / crossings.
- Improve pedestrian permeability from the north, south and west; include safe places to cross; and enhance the pedestrian environment.
- Create an appropriate gateway space into Stretford Town Centre.
- Create a more accessible and visible retail space for the existing business on this junction.

Kingsway

- Remove guard rails and street clutter from streets and central reservations where possible and improve pedestrian access across the junction.
- Respond to and interface with the junctions at Barton Road and Chester Road
- Re-balance and de-engineer the Kingsway corridor to provide equitable space for pedestrians, cyclists, buses and other vehicles. The scheme should aim to introduce segregated cycle lanes which tie into existing and proposed cycle infrastructure on Chester Road, Barton Road and Urmston Lane and Edge Lane.
- Introduce green infrastructure including trees and shrub planting to improve air quality, increase bio-diversity and soften the existing overall character.
- Introduce and integrate a nature-based solution to surface water drainage.
- Enhanced north / south pedestrian / cycle permeability between Stretford Town Centre and the Victoria Park Neighbourhood
- Improve and increase the public realm interface between Stretford Town Centre and Kingsway
- Improve and increase the public realm interface between the Victoria Park Neighbourhood and Kingsway.
- Take account of and respond to the redevelopment proposals for Stretford Mall including access for, pedestrians, cyclists, public transport users, deliveries, servicing and car parking.

Chester Road

- Remove guard rails and street clutter from streets and central reservations where possible and improve pedestrian access across the junction.
- Respond to and interface with the junctions at Kingsway and Edge Lane.
- Respond to the separately designed and constructed cycling provision to the A56.
- Improve and increase green infrastructure to the junction and central reservation.
- Improve the subway access routes and green space adjacent to Stretford Public Hall.
- Investigate the potential to improve the signal timings to the junction for vehicles and pedestrians.

Edge Lane

- Remove guard rails and street clutter from streets and central reservations where possible and improve pedestrian access across the junction.
- Improve the sense of arrival / gate way from the Metrolink stop and form a logical route to the town.
- Respond to and interface with the junctions at Kingsway and Chester Road.
- Respond to the separately designed and constructed cycling provision to the A56.
- Improve and increase green infrastructure to the junction and central reservation.

Lacy Street

- Preparation of land between Chester Road junction and Bridgewater canal to unlock Lacy Street for development.
- Create access and visibility to the Bridgewater canal.
- Improve pedestrian / cycling access between Edge Lane to Lacy Street.

4.0 Stretford Future High Streets Fund Project - Delivery Structure

4.1 It is imperative that delivery of the Stretford town centre FHSF schemes are effectively co-ordinated and tracked, and the government's monitoring requirements are met. Therefore a Steering Group has been established to provide strategic direction and oversight, with a FHSF Delivery Group sitting underneath to focus on delivery of the schemes and co-ordination between the partners and their consultants.

4.2 The FHSF delivery structure forms part of the overall structure established to co-ordinate all works and plans currently underway in Stretford, such as the Stretford Area Action Plan, which is overseen by the Stretford Masterplan Strategic Board.

5.0 Highways and Public Realm Improvement Schemes Next Steps

5.1 The procurement process has commenced to appoint consultants for the highways and public realm design works. The brief has been issued with a closing date of 24 September 2021. The overall timeframe is as follows:

Description	Approximate Date
Appoint Design Team	October 2021
Outline Design	January 2022
Public Consultation*	July 2022
Tender for construction works	August/September 2022
Contractor Start on Site**	January 2023

Note - *Consultation may take place with other events planned by the JV.

**Depending on the design, it is likely the works will be phased and will commence in different times in different areas of Stretford.

5.2 Following appointment of the consultants, the designs for the highways and public realm improvements will be developed along with costings. Public consultation will

be carried out on those designs and subject to the response and the need to make amendments if necessary, it is anticipated that works will start on site in January 2023.

6.0 Other Options

- 6.1 The regeneration of Stretford town centre is essential to address the cycle of decline that has adversely affected it for a number of years. The successful Future High Streets Fund bid will transform the town centre for the benefit of residents, businesses and visitors. If the schemes identified in the bid are not delivered then the cycle of decline will continue that will negatively affect the local community.

7.0 Consultation

- 7.1 A public consultation event was held at Stretford Mall in November 2019 to gather initial thoughts and feedback from the public on ideas and what they wanted to see as part of the regeneration of Stretford Town Centre. A further event was held at Stretford Mall in January 2020 which was well attended gaining over 3,000 interactions with residents and around 200 feedback forms received. The results of the consultation were used to deliver an initial masterplan approach for; retail, food, public space, commercial and residential opportunities in Stretford within a well-knitted and connected community.
- 7.2 It was the intention that these ideas would be tested with the general public at another event in March 2020, however this was postponed and moved online due to the pandemic. The consultation became multi-channel and a website was developed, supplemented by postal forms and a free-phone telephone line. The website had good interaction and feedback was monitored on social media platforms. Furthermore, online public events with key stakeholders and residents were held to gain specific feedback. This resulted in 2,100 video plays on the website with 6,400 online hits and 200+ postal forms being received.
- 7.3 As identified in 5.1 above, it is anticipated that a public consultation exercise will be held in July 2022 with regards proposals for the highways and public realm improvement works. In addition, consultation exercises will be carried out on the Stretford Area Action Plan Regulation 18 and 19 stages) that covers the Stretford FHSF project area. These are expected to take place in early / mid 2022 respectively. The planning applications for Stretford Mall and King Street, there will be a statutory three week consultation period for each application which will give local residents and other interested parties the opportunity to comment on the proposals. These applications will be publicised via site notices, press notices and letters to surrounding properties with all responses taken into consideration and reported to the Planning and Development Management Committee. All information submitted with the planning applications will be available to view on the Council's website.

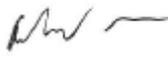
8.0 Reasons for Recommendation

- 8.1 The Executive is asked to approve the Stretford Future High Streets Fund schemes so that the long-awaited regeneration of Stretford town centre can take place to benefit local residents, businesses and visitors. It represents a once in a generation opportunity to end the cycle of decline and restore Stretford town centre as a destination in its own right.

Key Decision (as defined in the Constitution): Yes
If Key Decision, has 28-day notice been given? No

Finance Officer Clearance (type in initials)...PC.....
Legal Officer Clearance (type in initials)...TR.....

[CORPORATE] DIRECTOR'S SIGNATURE

(electronic)..... 

To confirm that the Financial and Legal Implications have been considered and the Executive Member has cleared the report.