

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 18 January 2024

REPORTING OFFICER: Executive Director Environment and Regeneration

PORTFOLIO: Deputy Leader

SUBJECT: Terms of Reference Widnes Town Centre Panel

WARD(S) Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to propose Terms of Reference for the Widnes Town centre Panel.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Executive Board agrees the proposed terms of reference outlined in Section 3 of this report.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 At the last meeting of the Executive Board (7th December 2023), Members agreed to the establishment of a Widnes Town Centre Panel to guide further future work associated with the regeneration of Widnes Town centre.

3.2 The proposed Terms of Reference (ToR) are set out below.

3.3 Role of the Town Panel.

The role of the Town Panel is advisory and will offer advisory comments for reporting to the Executive Board.

It will help guide the delivery of the approved actions that are agreed by Executive Board.

These will be

- To take forward a town centre vision; obtain consensus and agreement as to the key ingredients needed to develop a successful town centre.
- To develop a Masterplan specific to developable and deliverable schemes.
- To identify potential delivery mechanisms and funding routes.

Specifically,

- 3.4 The panel will advise and comment on recommendations to the Executive Board as follows:
- Consider the advantages of the delivery mechanisms and vehicles presented by officers to be applied to the regeneration of the town centre.
 - Comment on the preparation of a brief to commission consultants to undertake master planning work in the town centre.
 - Comment on the development of a cost benefit analysis of the short – medium and longer term interventions that have been identified in the Vision Document Action Plan.
- 3.7 In addition, it is proposed that the panel will proactively and positively promote the emerging Widnes Town Centre Vision and will seek to work collaboratively with wider town centre stakeholders.
- 3.8 The Panel will comment on the submission of future bids for External Funding.
- 3.9 The Panel will comment on the development and co-ordination of Town Centre plans and initiatives.
- 3.10 The Panel will monitor milestones and key performance indicators relating to agreed priorities and actions for delivery.
- 3.11 The Panel will contribute to scanning the horizon for future / further regeneration opportunities in the town.
- 3.12 Panel Membership
- It is proposed that the Chair of the Panel will be the Deputy Leader of the Council, as portfolio holder for Major Projects. The following Executive Board Members will be invited to become members of the Panel:
- Portfolio Holder for Climate Change.
 - Portfolio Holder for Environment and Urban Renewal.
- 3.13 In addition, the Panel will comprise one representative from each Widnes Ward. Members from each ward will be invited to appoint a representative as well as a substitute representative.
- The local Member of Parliament will also be invited to join the Panel.
- In selecting and nominating representatives, Ward Councillors may wish to take into account the following criteria:

- 3.14
- A demonstrable passion and commitment to the development of the town's future.
 - Ability to meet the time commitments of the panel and attend the panel regularly.
 - A knowledge or expertise in relation to town centre regeneration and or town centre management.

Future Arrangements

It is suggested that initially, (i.e. for the first 12 months of operation), the Panel will comprise Councillors from Halton Borough Council and the local MP. However, it is anticipated that in the future The Council would wish to extend the membership of the Panel to include a wide variety of key stakeholders including for example:

- Larger Halton based businesses – employer.
- Community and Voluntary sector.
- Town Centre retail.
- Education and skills.
- Health and wellbeing.
- Housing.
- Local Authority Senior Management.

These arrangements would be reviewed as outlined in section 3.20.

3.15 Meetings

Meetings will be held quarterly.

3.16 Secretariat support will be provided by the Council's Environment & Regeneration Directorate.

3.17 Meetings will not be open to the press and public.

3.18 Minutes of the meetings will remain confidential, unless otherwise stated at the meetings.

3.19 Panel members will be expected to attend regularly. However, if panel members are unable to attend, they will still be required to read papers and make their views known to the chair of the panel in advance of the panel meeting.

3.20 The Terms of Reference (ToR) will be reviewed as required, but no later than 1st December 2024.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There are no further policy implications at this stage

5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no financial implications identified at this stage.

6.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

The previous report to the Executive Board explained that town centres historically provide the major economic focus of a local area, and therefore, this work will have implications for all the Council's priorities.

7.1 There are no risks identified at this stage.

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 As previously reported, higher unemployment levels and lower health outcomes are close to the town centre. The regeneration of Widnes town centre should look to support and improve social outcomes in these areas. This would include better access to a broad range of employment opportunities, and access to a wide range of health, community, public transport, and support services.

9.0 **CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 The previous report acknowledged that consideration of the impacts of climate change, including reducing the carbon footprint, mitigation and adaptation will be required.

13.0 **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

'None under the meaning of the Act.'
