

79/14 Vibrant City Strategy

The Council Cabinet considered a report on the Vibrant City Strategy and recommendations from the Regeneration and Culture Board on the strategy.

The purpose of the report was to propose the Vibrant City Strategy which promoted physical regeneration in the city centre and district centres. Sustainable regeneration required a vibrant city centre, successful district and neighbourhood centres and well-connected communities. This strategy sought to support this through physical improvements to the environment including the connectivity between communities and jobs.

To achieve this, the Vibrant City Strategy proposed a coherent place-making approach for two interlinked and balanced strands of activities:

- a. Vibrant City Centre Programme
- b. Vibrant District Centres Programme

The Strategy presented a new exciting initiative which was a significant departure from previous approaches to physical regeneration. The intention was to fully fund the above mentioned programmes from within the existing approved Derby City Council Capital Plan, ie: with no increase to spending totals subject to the overall affordability of the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan.

The key principles underlying this strategy were:

- City Centre was at the heart of Derby's economy; the district centres were at the heart of local communities
- Effective connections between place-people-economy were necessary to create a vibrant and resilient city
- It was vital to partner with communities to create places that make people feel 'Proud of Derby'.

In summary, the key approach proposed here was to develop a balanced and joined up plan of improvements to achieve high quality place-making in the city centre and key district centres.

Options Considered

1. Do nothing for City Centre

This option was not considered appropriate because the City Centre was the focus for economic, retail and cultural activities. It played an important role in bringing people together from all sectors of the society, providing access to jobs, transport, events and cultural activities.

The role of city centre was changing due to changes in shopping, banking and trading patterns, online technology, and out of centre retail and commercial developments. Increasingly, the role of city centre was becoming a destination of choice, with a key purpose to provide a memorable experience.

Derby City Council was in the process to evaluate and agree its approach to the need for a new performing arts centre, markets and leisure provision. For these reasons, it was considered that there needed to be an aspirational and deliverable plan for Derby City Centre to face these challenges and perform its role as a gateway to the city.

The proposed Vibrant City Centre masterplan was anticipated to co-ordinate these strategic elements and prepare a vision for the future developments of city centre for the next 15 years.

2. Do nothing for District Centres

This option was considered not appropriate because the district and neighbourhood centres played a very important role in keeping the communities together by providing a vibrant hub of activities. With changing demographics, increasing aging population and influx of migrant communities, it was important.

It was also recognised that the district centres needed to be well connected, not just to the communities, but also with other centres and especially, the city centre. In order for the people to have access to jobs, leisure and cultural activities and expand social networks, these centres needed to be connected physically and technologically.

The Vibrant District Centre Programme identified priorities and proposed measures to create truly connected communities with quick wins and long term action plan.

Decision

1. To approve the Vibrant City Strategy as outlined in the report.
2. To note the progress on preparing a new 15 year vision and masterplan for the City Centre.
3. To approve the initial 6 priority centres for the Vibrant District Centre Programme (paragraph 4.13 of the report).
4. To delegate the authority to the Vibrant City Delivery Board to approve the appointment of consultants and contractors, to undertake design, achieve necessary approvals and to implement the schemes, as funding was confirmed.

Reasons

1. Derby played an important role regionally as a leading centre for economic activities. For Derby to sustain its success and maintain its status as a

regional centre, it needed to reinforce its role by strengthening the economy, attract and retain a high skilled workforce and provide a quality living environment to its citizens.

2. The key challenges Derby faced today included - housing need, social cohesion, enterprise growth, skill and employment level, changing nature of retail etc. The Vibrant City Strategy proposed a strategic approach and a deliverable action plan to meet the challenges and achieve regeneration of two key areas of the city – the city centre (the engine of the economy) and the district centres (heart of communities).