

To: Cabinet

Date: 16 June 2022

Report/Comments of: Scrutiny Committee

Title: Town Centre Vision

<b>SUMMARY OF REPORT CONSIDERED</b>	
<b>Report Title:</b>	Draft Town Centre Vision
<b>Purpose/Description of Report:</b>	The report outlined to the Scrutiny Committee the vision which will be used to steer the development of the town centre over the next ten years.
<b>Key Decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Scrutiny Lead Member:</b>	Councillor R Child, Scrutiny Committee Chairman
<b>Relevant Portfolio Holder:</b>	Councillor R Bindloss, Portfolio Holder for Growth and Prosperity

## **1. Introduction and Overview**

The Scrutiny Committee met on 6 June 2022 to consider a report and presentation on the draft town centre vision for Melton Mowbray.

Initially, the Scrutiny Committee were not aware that the vision was a background document, however later in the meeting it was noted that the vision was a background document and will be used to steer the development of the town centre over the next ten years. The vision document is accompanied by an action plan of key projects and activities to be delivered and supported by partner organisations. The vision will help direct investment and funding for the delivery of these projects.

It was explained to Members that the vision evidences the elements identified by the stakeholder consultation events and would support the Council when bids are made for external funding.

## **2. Summary of Feedback/Recommendations for Cabinet Consideration**

- The Scrutiny Committee expressed concerns over the proposed use of consultants on the projects proposed within the vision which had no chance of progressing, although it was explained to Members that consultants would be procured using the correct procedure and would only be used where there isn't the appropriate skill set within the authority.
- Members questioned the funding source for the projects and were informed that external funding would have to be sourced for the projects. It was explained if there was no funding then the projects would not proceed.
- The Committee expressed disappointment that the Council had not successfully engaged with the landlords of the Bell Centre before inserting the project into the vision. It was explained the project is in the vision because it was identified as a priority through the stakeholder consultations.
- A Member commented that youth services should figure more prominently within the vision, as there are references to the lack of provision for young people within the vision.
- The comment was made that the vision is a good document but needs to be a bit more focused, however it was explained that the vision evidences the elements that the stakeholders believe to be important for the regeneration of the town centre.
- One Member stated that it was pleasing to see Pera included within the vision as that has huge potential.
- Car parking was referenced within the vision, however Members commented that there isn't a clear strategy or agenda for car parking. A Member asked what is likely to be spent on the strategy for car parking and what had already been spent, the Regeneration Manager was unable to provide an answer at the meeting and committed to provide an answer outside of the meeting.
- Concern was raised that the vision could lead to more investment for the cattle market, thereby directing resources away from the regeneration of the town centre.
- The comment was made that Melton Mowbray is talked up as the rural capital of food, however the food offer was limited and that it is correct that the vision focusses on enhancing the food offer.
- A Member commented that they were concerned with some of the language of the document, specifically the reference to the economy being low wage. It was felt that this had the potential to be a self-fulfilling prophecy.
- The Committee questioned the short timeframe for considering the vision and the associated levelling up fund and UK shared prosperity fund bids, however it was explained by Officers that the window for the

bids, as announced by central government, was short and there was a huge amount of work to do. In addition, previously the limited resources of the team was diverted towards facilitating the covid business grants.

**Written by: Scrutiny Committee Chairman in consultation with Members of the Scrutiny Committee**