

## **HAMBLETON DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**Report To:** Cabinet  
5 December 2017

**Subject:** **VIBRANT MARKET TOWNS INVESTMENT PLANS**

**All Wards**  
**Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and Finance: Councillor P R Wilkinson**

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### **1.0 PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND:**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the Vibrant Market Towns Investment Plan attached at Annex A for approval.
- 1.2 The Vibrant Market Towns Investment Plan has been developed to support the delivery of the Council's Economic Strategy 2014-2024 'Hambleton A Place to Grow'. One of the themes in the Economic Strategy is supporting the development of Vibrant Market Towns across the District to 'ensure that the towns stay vibrant and evolve to meet future challenges'.
- 1.3 The Vibrant Market Towns Investment Plan sets out how as part of its leadership role, the Council can work in partnership with and build capacity in local stakeholders to support the development of more economically viable and sustainable market towns that will in turn contribute to the growth of the wider economy of the district.
- 1.4 The Investment Plan has been developed by the Vibrant Market Towns Team, with input from other Council teams, Elected Members and local stakeholders. In summary the Investment Plan:
  - Assesses existing evidence base, recent studies and engagement with local stakeholders to outline the key challenges facing the market towns, their strengths, weakness and opportunities for the future with a focus on the town centre/ high street.
  - Considers the key elements of vibrancy and importance of increasing both footfall and dwell time within the towns by people who live and work in the District but also importantly visitors from further afield.
  - Acknowledges that there are important links to be made with other Councils' Strategies, including the Local Plan, Car Parking Strategy and the Commercial Strategy, which will complement the delivery of the Vibrant Market Towns work.
  - Focuses on the economic vibrancy of the town centres, recognising that other community and leisure led projects will also benefit the towns both socially and economically.
- 1.5 The Investment Plan outlines a number of common actions to be delivered across all of the towns, these are:
  - Digital Engagement
  - Professional communications, PR and media
  - Developing the visitor experience
  - Improving the built and natural environment
  - Distinctiveness

- 1.6 It also includes unique project plans for Bedale, Easingwold, Northallerton, Stokesley and Great Ayton and Thirsk which identify a small number of specific projects. These action plans are intended to be living documents which will be updated as part of the annual review process enabling us to respond future opportunities as they arise.
- 1.7 A set of core indicators have been developed to assess the impact of the Investment Plan and baseline data has been collected to identify the current position. In addition to these core indicators, specific outputs and outcomes will be assessed on a project by project basis.
- 1.8 The Vibrant Market Towns team has been employed for 3 years to support the delivery of the Plan and secure the commitment from local stakeholders to take ownership of a longer term local delivery model. The resources required to support the delivery of the Investment Plan will be accessed from a number of funding sources, including the Council's Economic Development Fund and a range of other public sector grants and private sector investment.

## **2.0 LINK TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES:**

- 2.1 The Vibrant Market Towns Investment Plan supports the Council Plan priority of driving economic vitality. More specifically it will help to improve market town vitality and viability support businesses to grow and help maximise private sector investment.

## **3.0 RISK ASSESSMENT:**

- 3.1 There are no significant risks associated with the report.

## **4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

- 4.1 The Vibrant Market Towns Investment Plans include a range of projects to be developed over the next 3 years by the Council and local stakeholders. A number of projects can be taken forward through officer time resource. Where a financial contribution is required from the Council, a budget of £15k per market town has been allocated within the Economic Development Fund to support the delivery of the VMT Investment Plans. The Business and Economy Team will work to secure external investment and grant funding on a project by project basis and any additional financial contributions from the Council will be the subject of a further report to Cabinet for approval.

## **5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:**

- 5.1 There are no legal implications associated with the recommendations of the report.

## **6.0 EQUALITY/DIVERSITY ISSUES:**

- 6.1 Equality and Diversity Issues have been considered in the development of the Investment Plan.

## **7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 7.1 That Cabinet approves and recommends to Council that:

- (1) the Vibrant Market Towns Investment Plan at Annex A is approved;
- (2) the Vibrant Market Towns Team work in partnership with local stakeholders on the implementation of the Plan

- (3) A review of progress against implementation of the Investment Plan is prepared and published after 12 months

HELEN KEMP

**Background papers:** None

**Author ref:** SS

**Contact:** Sam Swinbank  
Business and Economy Manager  
01609 767233

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