

Notice of:	EXECUTIVE
Decision Number:	EX13/2023
Relevant Officer:	Alan Cavill, Director of Communications and Regeneration
Relevant Cabinet Member :	Councillor Mark Smith, Cabinet Member for Business, Enterprise and Job Creation
Date of Meeting:	6 February 2023

TOWN CENTRE ACTION PLAN

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To present the Town Centre Action Plan, arising out of the refreshed Town Centre Strategy (2022) for approval prior to its implementation over the next five years.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 To approve the Town Centre Action Plan attached at Appendix 9a, to the Executive report, for implementation with partners over the next five years and for it to be subject to an annual update and review.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 The approval of the implementation of the Town Centre Action Plan will support the delivery of the refreshed Town Centre Strategy (2022).

3.2 Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.3 Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council’s approved budget? Yes

4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:

4.1 There are no alternative options to be considered at this time.

5.0 Council priority:

5.1 Both Council priorities are supported namely “The Economy: Maximising growth and opportunity across Blackpool” and “Communities Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience”.

6.0 Background information

6.1 In December 2021, after being procured via an open tender exercise by Blackpool Council, CBRE began work on an updated Town Centre Strategy and Action Plan with a view to replacing the extant Town Centre Strategy that had been in place since 2013. The initial draft of the refreshed Town Centre Strategy and Action Plan was completed in March 2022, with the finalised version of the Town Centre Strategy, inclusive of an outline Town Centre Action Plan, completed in May 2022 and approved by the Executive where it was resolved:

- 1. To approve the revised Town Centre Strategy and outline Action Plan at Appendix 3a, to the Executive report, and note the role of this document in guiding the future direction of strategic development in the town centre, coordinating action and in supporting the development of future funding bids and business cases relating to activity within the town centre boundary.*
- 2. To refer the Town Centre Strategy and outline Action Plan (TCSAP) to the Tourism, Economy and Communities Scrutiny Committee for further consideration.*
- 3. To confirm that the Town Centre Strategy and outline Action Plan (TCSAP) will be used as the basis of having further engagement with key partners to finalise the Action Plan including the identification of owners and timelines and to agree appropriate governance arrangements for overseeing its effective implementation*
- 4. To agree that the Action Plan be updated annually in a process lead by the Executive members and reported to the Executive and that the Tourism, Economy and Communities Scrutiny Committee be consulted each year in advance of the Executive meeting and this to start with the 2022 action plan.*
- 5. For an associated communications plan to be prepared to make it clear that the Town Centre Strategy and outline Action Plan has been prepared to build on the successes of the Growth and Prosperity Programme currently delivering major change in the Town Centre.*

6.2 During the initial scoping phase of the refreshed Town Centre Strategy and Action Plan, it was decided that a flexible approach to the creation of the Action Plan element was required, in

order to ensure that new activity within the town centre, and new requirements that fit with the changing focus of an urban centre, could be included within the Action Plan for the period during which the Town Centre Strategy and Action Plan was active. Using the outline Action Plan initially put forward by CBRE in the initial drafting stage, activity began in the summer of 2022, led by Blackpool Council officers, to develop a detailed Action Plan with an initial five-year scope, with the intention to refresh the Plan annually to make it a rolling five-year document.

6.3 CBRE's initial outline Action Plan identified six priority areas to be addressed by the more detailed, rolling Action Plan:

1. Public Realm
2. Zoning and Districts
3. Community
4. Events and Meanwhile
5. Culture and Entertainment
6. Heritage

A seventh, stand-alone priority area was also included, covering areas of Governance and Management across the town centre. These priority areas have formed the basis of engagement activity to formulate the actions that sit within the updated version of the Action Plan.

6.4 In forming this Action Plan, engagement has been undertaken with a variety of internal Council stakeholders, as well as a number of external stakeholders, who hold responsibility for leading on activity across the town centre. Engagement activity has involved one-to-one or small group sessions with each stakeholder, using an Action Plan template to form the basis of discussion, and to prompt the inclusion of actions, as well as the reviewing of actions included by other stakeholders.

6.5 Stakeholders taking place in the engagement activity to formulate the Action Plan covered the following internal and external areas of work:

- Tourism, Economy and Communities Scrutiny Committee
- Growth and Prosperity
- Planning Policy
- Development Control
- Built Heritage
- Economic Development
- VisitBlackpool
- Communications
- Highways
- Transport Policy
- Arts
- Blackpool BIDs (Town Centre and Tourism)
- Ellandi (Blackpool Council retail portfolio asset manager)

- Grand Theatre
- Grundy Art Gallery
- Libraries
- Showtown
- Blackpool Illuminations
- Lightpool Festival

All stakeholders included in engagement activity were taken through the Action Plan template, invited to add in any actions they deemed necessary for inclusion, and also offered the opportunity to provide any additional information, or suggest additional actions, after their engagement sessions.

6.6 All input received via the engagement activity has been taken into account in the formulation of the full draft of the Town Centre Action Plan. For annual updates moving forward, engagement will take place, but will be via a less time-consuming format for stakeholders, most likely via email updates of actions following the circulation of the most recent Action Plan version.

6.7 Actions included within the Action Plan will also assist in forming the basis of investment in its implementation through any relevant sources including specifically the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF).

One of the 13 projects outlined within Blackpool’s now approved Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan is titled ‘Town Centre Interventions, and is designed to address issues across the town centre that are frequently overlooked in their eligibility to receive centralised funding. Areas that are outlined for coverage by Shared Prosperity Fund investment include the following priorities, initially outlined in the refreshed Town Centre Strategy:

1A - Streetscape: Furniture and planting; Promenade gateways

1B - Environment: Biophilia

1C - Illuminate: Lighting enhancements

2C- Signage and Wayfinding: Visual appearance; key entry and decision points; Pedestrian traffic flow

£1.5m (£1.2m in capital funding; £300,000 in revenue funding) is outlined in the Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan to go help to implement Town Centre Interventions, the detail of which is to be worked up to reflect the requirements of the SPF approval..

6.8 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 List of Appendices:

7.1 Appendix 9a– Town Centre Action Plan

8.0 Financial considerations:

8.1 Whilst there are no financial considerations to be taken into account relating directly to the Action Plan, each action will require consideration of financial implications prior to any delivery. Those actions that relate to Blackpool Council activity will, when being initiated, be subject to appropriate consideration of financial impact on an individual basis.

9.0 Legal considerations:

9.1 None at this stage.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 Whilst the Action Plan itself will not carry any direct risk, the actions contained within the Action Plan will often carry some risk. Each action will, when in the initiation phase, be subject to appropriate risk management processes.

11.0 Equalities considerations:

11.1 Equalities have been considered across various elements of stakeholder feedback during the formulation of the Action Plan, and the feedback has been reflected in a number of actions.

12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

12.1 Blackpool Council's Strategy and Climate Lead and Low Carbon and Sustainability Officer were both involved in a specific engagement session intended to address specific climate and sustainability-related actions that should be included in the Action Plan, as well as to consider other actions and assess their potential sustainability and climate impacts.

The input from the Strategy and Climate Lead and Low Carbon and Sustainability Officer during the session has been incorporated into the Action Plan.

13.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken:

13.1 Engagement regarding this Action Plan has taken place in two parts.

Firstly, extensive engagement activity was undertaken during the drafting process of the refreshed Town Centre Strategy, carried out by CBRE between December 2021 and March 2022. The refreshed Town Centre Strategy, and themes outlined via the broad engagement activity undertaken during the drafting process, have formed the outline structure of the new Town Centre Action Plan.

In specifically formulating the Action Plan, a second round of engagement has been undertaken, carrying out individual and small group sessions with town centre stakeholders assessing the Action Plan template, inputting new actions and reviewing other actions that had already been added. These sessions were carried out with Blackpool Council officers leading on areas of work impacting on the town centre, as well as Blackpool BIDs and Ellandi, as current asset managers of Blackpool Council's retail portfolio.

14.0 Background papers:

14.1 Town Centre Strategy and Action Plan (EX21/2022 16 May 2022)

15.0 Key decision information:

15.1 Is this a key decision? No

15.2 If so, Forward Plan reference number:

15.3 If a key decision, is the decision required in less than five days? No

15.4 If **yes**, please describe the reason for urgency:

16.0 Call-in information:

16.1 Are there any grounds for urgency, which would cause this decision to be exempt from the call-in process? No

16.2 If **yes**, please give reason:

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

17.0 Scrutiny Committee Chairman (where appropriate):

Date informed:

Date approved:

18.0 Declarations of interest (if applicable):

18.1 None.

19.0 Summary of Discussion:

19.1 Mr Alan Cavill, Director of Communications and Regeneration, presented the report the Executive. Mr Cavill highlighted that the action plan worked to ensure the Council and partners delivered the priorities of the Town Centre Strategy approved on the 16 May 2022.

Councillor Mark Smith as relevant Cabinet Member highlighted the important improvements and investments in the town centre from the Council, its wholly owned companies and the private sector. Councillor Smith explained that this had made the Town Centre Action Plan even more necessary so that all parties understood their roles and responsibilities moving forward.

20.0 Executive decision:

20.1 The Executive agreed the recommendation as outlined above namely:

To approve the Town Centre Action Plan attached at Appendix 9a, to the Executive report, for implementation with partners over the next five years and for it to be subject to an annual update and review.

21.0 Date of Decision:

21.1 6 February 2023

22.0 Reason(s) for decision:

22.1 The approval of the implementation of the Town Centre Action Plan will support the delivery of the refreshed Town Centre Strategy (2022).

23.0 Date Decision published:

23.1 7 February 2023

24.0 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

24.1 The Executive noted that there were no alternative options for consideration.

25.0 Executive Members in attendance:

25.1 Councillor L Williams, in the Chair
Councillors Brookes, Campbell, Farrell, Hobson, Hugo, Smith and Taylor

26.0 Call-in:

26.1

27.0 Notes:

27.1 The following non-Executive members were in attendance: Councillors Hunter and Jackson