

Subject:

Rossendale Sustainable Economic
Development Programme

Status:

For Publication

Report to: Cabinet

Date: 10th September 2008

Report of: Head of Regeneration

Portfolio

Holder: Regeneration and Leisure

Key Decision: Yes

Forward Plan General Exception Special Urgency

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To note the progress in the development of the Rossendale Sustainable Economic Development Programme (RSEDP) and to approve the further development of its constituent projects.

2. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 2.1 The matters discussed in this report impact directly on the following corporate priorities and associated corporate objective.
- Delivering Regeneration across the Borough (Economy, Housing)
 - Promoting Rossendale as a cracking place to live and visit (Economy)

3. RISK ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 All the issues raised and the recommendation(s) in this report involve risk considerations as set out below:
- There is no direct financial risk arising from this report. However, the delivery of the programme does assume some amount of match funding from the Local Authority which has been identified within the Capital Programme.
 - There is a reputational risk which could arise if the Council is unable to progress projects through the NWDA process and/or should delivery of the projects fail once approved.

4. BACKGROUND AND OPTIONS

4.1 The Rossendale Sustainable Economic Development Programme is the re-focused successor to the previously approved and North West Development Agency-funded Rossendale Brownfield Land Programme. This delivery plan takes account of revisions of the Regional Economic Strategy (RES) and the Lancashire Economic Strategy (LES) and addresses the delivery difficulties encountered by the earlier programme.

4.2 The programme offers an opportunity to develop and deliver projects in appropriate and, sometimes, innovative ways and to both contribute and 'add value' to the range of other regeneration work that both on-going and planned within the Borough. This regeneration work is being guided by a number of key plans and strategies, including the Borough's Sustainable Community Strategy, the Rawtenstall and Bacup & Stacksteads Area Action Plans, the Local Development Framework, the Borough's Economic Development Strategy and has been informed by complimentary research, studies and plans, for example the King Sturge Employment Land Study.

4.3 The objectives of this Programme are:

- To address current market failures, by facilitating the provision of a commercial property offer that will encourage and enable small and medium sized sector companies to establish and grow in order to maximise local employment and increase local wage levels.
- To safeguard jobs and encourage the growth of higher value jobs, particularly in the service sector.
- Where possible to work in a sustainable manner and within the rich construction heritage of conservation areas and listed buildings to find new and modern commercial property uses through refurbishment and adaptation.
- To bring vacant Brownfield sites into productive employment use, including mixed use redevelopment when appropriate.
- To achieve high private sector leverage and investment, particularly working with property owners, investors and developers.
- To improve the appearance and functioning of our town centres
- To improve Rossendale's image and reputation as a prudent location for investment.
- To encourage sustainable business activities with low carbon footprints and focus investment in the "Mainline 464 travel to work corridor" – the primary bus route serving the district.
- To reduce worklessness.

4.4 Set out below are a range of interventions to be delivered through this programme.

Some are generic solutions whose application is possible through a choice of locations. These will be determined through project development and subsequent work with private sector and other public sector partners. Such generic solutions provide flexibility of investment choice at this stage to ensure that investment commitment is made only when specific project deliverability is assured, thereby protecting the ability to ensure delivery of the programme objectives.

4.5 Other solutions are project specific. Here work is ongoing with key partners to deliver against the programme's vision and objectives and project development is now at a stage to appropriately include within the programme – and to give increased confidence to partners who are inputting time and money with us to bring forward truly worthwhile projects.

4.6 The investment within the programme is primarily capital expenditure and focuses on key locations where the vision and objectives of the programme can be realised. However, it is recognised that each project will require detailed project planning incorporating robust consultation and communication plans. Thus ensuring member and community involvement.

4.7 Rossendale Borough Council will manage the programme in consultation with both the North West Regional Development Agency (NWDA) and the Rossendale Partnership. Progress will be reported to Overview and Scrutiny Committee on an annual basis with further reports being presented to Cabinet as the individual projects are progressed.

4.8 The Council's Regeneration Team working in partnership with Lancashire County Developments Limited (LCDL) are engaged in the development and delivery of individual projects within the programme; working together to provide the necessary skills, experience and capacity to deliver the programme.

4.9 In order to 'activate' the funding each project has to go through a rigorous and staged appraisal process. The first stage is submission of a 'Concept Form' to the NWDA for a first stage appraisal. If this is approved the project then moves on to the 'Detailed Application Stage' and undergoes further appraisal by the NWDA before recommendations are made to support the project. It is only after this stage does the funding element become approved and eligible for expenditure.

4.10 Each of the projects are currently at various stages, the details of which are as follows.

- *Rossendale Business Village* (Rising Bridge) -The Concept Form submitted has been appraised and approved to the next detail stage. A community consultation event has been held and discussions commenced with the Council's Planning Team with a view to submitting a planning application in the near future.

- *Baltic Bridge* – The Concept Form will be completed and submitted by the end of August. There has been a lot of preliminary activity and consultation around the design and scope of the project. Focus groups are being held from Saturday 9th through to Wednesday 13th August which will inform the contents of the Concept Form.
- *Haslingden Town Centre Public Realm* – Walkabouts with Ward members were held in June 08 and some potential sites have been identified which will inform the development of the Concept Form.
- *Rawtenstall Town Centre Public Realm* – The Concept Form is being developed which will involve consultation with local members and will be submitted shortly.
- *Rossendale Vocational Training Centre* – Substantial preliminary work has been undertaken with Accrington and Rossendale College. The Concept Form is being developed. A business case has been developed with Accrington and Rossendale College and Learning Skills Council (LSC). The outcome of this is that the most likely site is a new build development on plot 5 Futures Park. This will form the basis of the bid within the Concept Form.
- *Refurbishment and Modernisation of vacant commercial property* - Concept Form has been submitted and is awaiting/is in the process of appraisal by NWDA. Some potential sites have been identified which could be further developed as funding is released.
- *Redevelopment of Brownfield sites* – The Concept Form has been submitted and appraised by NWDA who have responded with further questions which are now being addressed. A potential site has already been identified and could provide an ‘early win’ should funding be released.

COMMENTS FROM STATUTORY OFFICERS:

5. SECTION 151 OFFICER

- 5.1 The Rossendale Sustainable Economic Development Programme has significant financial implications for the Council as a source of funds for supporting the capital costs required to create economic development and regeneration. The programme is also currently supporting staffing costs within the Councils Regeneration Team.

6. MONITORING OFFICER

- 6.1 Each Scheme will require detailed project planning and will need to be evaluated on a project by project basis.

7. HEAD OF PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (ON BEHALF OF THE HEAD OF PAID SERVICE)

- 7.1 There are no Human Resources implications.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The programme presents provides a real opportunity to regenerate key economic sites across the Borough. As delivery of the programme progresses it is hoped that the regeneration of these key sites will act as a catalyst to attract and secure funding from the private sector and other public sector agencies

9. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 9.1 That progress on the development of the Rossendale Sustainable Economic Development Programme be noted.
- 9.2 That Cabinet approves the further development of the projects within the Rossendale Sustainable Economic Development Programme as detailed in this report.

10. CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

- 10.1 Alongside consultation on individual projects, other consultees include the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Leisure, Rossendale Regeneration Board, NWDA and the Board of Lancashire County Development Limited.

11. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Is an Equality Impact Assessment required	Yes
Is an Equality Impact Assessment attached	Yes

12. BIODIVERSITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Is a Biodiversity Impact Assessment required	Yes
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