



# EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION

**REPORT OF:** Executive Member for Regeneration

**LEAD OFFICERS:** Deputy Chief Executive

**DATE:** 9 August 2018

**PORTFOLIO/S  
AFFECTED:** Regeneration

**WARD/S AFFECTED:** Blackburn Central Shear Brow and Corporation Park

**KEY DECISION:** YES  NO

**SUBJECT:**  
**Adoption of the Blackburn Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)**

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The overall aim of the Blackburn Town Centre SPD is to set out how the Council aims to build on the momentum created by recent investment, to broaden our appeal, and to manage the future evolution of the town centre and public facilities in the face of strong competition and changing pressures. It articulates the Council's aspirations for the town centre, identifies investment opportunities and provides further guidance regarding the implementation of adopted Local Plan policies which are of relevance to Blackburn Town Centre.

The town centre planning objectives set out in the Local Plan, and expanded upon in the SPD are:

- Strengthening and focusing the shopping offer;
- Expanding the role of the town centre;
- Protecting and enhancing the leisure offer and developing an evening economy; and
- Establishing a vibrant town centre residential population.

The guidance contained within the SPD will be used by the Council's Development Management team as one of a number of material considerations in the determination of applications for development, particularly supplementing the application of Local Plan Part 2 Policy 26.

In line with Government guidance, the draft SPD was subject to a six week statutory public consultation in March 2018. In total, 13 responses were received and these can be reviewed within the appendices of the SPD, alongside the Council's response to each comment submitted and whether any amendments were made to the SPD as a result.

The SPD is now ready to be adopted by the Council and become a material consideration in planning application decisions.

## 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Board:

Adopts the Blackburn Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

### **3. BACKGROUND**

Blackburn with Darwen has some major positive assets including its landscape setting, urban green spaces and built heritage. We are pressing ahead with plans to capitalise on these assets and attract new housing investment to balance our housing market; but it will be important for this to be matched by an improvement in the area's wider "offer" – the overall range of facilities and opportunities available.

Blackburn town centre has a position as a sub-regional centre for shopping and tertiary education and acts as a focus for cultural, social, business and community life in Blackburn with Darwen and Pennine Lancashire. Given this position, the town centre accommodates larger scale uses such as major retail operators who require large floorplates, and higher-order functions in the administrative and business services sectors. Being at the heart of local and sub-regional communications networks of bus and rail services and lying within walking distance of many local residential areas, the town centre is readily accessible by all sections of the community.

In recent years, many development and regeneration initiatives have taken place in Blackburn. The Local Plan and SPD set out how we aim to build on the momentum created by this investment, broaden our "offer", and manage the future evolution of the town centre and public facilities in the face of strong competition and changing pressures.

Despite these successes, our town centres face a number of significant pressures. Foremost among these is the changing retail environment. Competition from other towns and from out-of-centre shopping outlets continues to grow stronger; and at the same time more and more shopping is done online. There is also the possibility that the steady growth in the amount of money people spend on shopping that we have seen in the past will not continue into the future. In response to these pressures, major restructuring has happened and is still happening in the retail sector, with a number of major operators ceasing to trade or substantially changing their business model. Operators are increasingly selective about where they choose to invest, and are highly focused on a town centre's wider "offer" to its customers, including aspects such as the mix of uses present in a centre, the quality of the physical environment, and management issues such as car parking regimes.

Successful town centres are those which have responded to these issues and become a destination for more than simply shopping. Our key objective in managing development in the town centre is therefore to maintain progress and increase their competitiveness, and to broaden its function, beyond a traditional shopping focus, while managing any negative pressures that such change may bring.

The SPD sets out how the Council plans to do this and sets out priorities of improving connectivity, improving the public realm and greenspace, enhancing gateways into the town centre, encouraging high quality development (including residential) within the town centre and improving the evening economy. The SPD identifies a number of investment areas within the town centre to highlight the opportunities available for new development. These investment areas are:

- Former Markets site;
- Former Thwaites site & surrounds;
- Cathedral Quarter & surrounds;
- Northgate & surrounds;
- Wainwright Way & surrounds; and
- Victoria Street/Barbara Castle Way: Fabric Borders.

Once the SPD is adopted, it will become a material consideration in assessing planning applications for development within the town centre, providing additional details to the Local Plan policies.

#### **4. KEY ISSUES & RISKS**

The SPD will provide an informed and consistent reference in the preparation, consideration and decision making process relating to planning applications for new development in Blackburn town centre. This will make a positive contribution to the operation of the Planning Service and will help to improve both the service to service users and the standard of development carried out across the town centre.

#### **5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

The Blackburn Town Centre SPD provides additional detail on a number of Local Plan policies, most notably:

##### ***Core Strategy (Local Plan Part 1) (2011)***

Policy CS12 – Retail Development

Policy CS17 – Built and Cultural Heritage

##### ***Local Plan Part 2: Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (2015)***

Policy 26 – Town Centres – a Framework for Development

Policy 29 – Assessing Applications for Main Town Centre Uses

Policy 30 – Managing Specific Uses within Town Centres

Policy 31 – Development in Defined Shopping Frontages

Policy 10 – Accessibility and Transport

Policy 11 – Design

Policy 39 – Heritage

Policy 34 – Tourism

#### **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no direct financial implications of adopting the SPD. Any future developments impacted upon through the requirements of SPD which include financial implications will be outlined in the appropriate reports.

#### **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) are intended to expand on policy or provide further detail to policies in the Development Plan Documents but do not have development plan status. This SPD supplements and interprets the policies of the Core Strategy and Local Plan Part 2: Site Allocations and Development Management Policies, as well as setting out the parameters against which any proposals will be assessed, to assist in the delivery of the key aspirations for the town centre. The adopted SPD will be a material consideration in the assessment of planning applications across the town centre.

SPDs are to be made in line with paragraph 153 of the National Planning Policy Framework which sets out that “Each local planning authority should produce a Local Plan for its area. This can be reviewed in whole or in part to respond flexibly to changing circumstances. Any additional development plan documents should only be used where clearly justified. Supplementary planning documents should be used where they can help applicants make successful applications or aid infrastructure delivery, and should not be used to add unnecessarily to the financial burdens on development”

In line with Government guidance, the draft SPD was published for a six week statutory public consultation period in March 2018. Regulation 12 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 requires authorities to publish the draft document for formal public participation and invite representations. Once the consultation period has ended, the regulations also require authorities to prepare a statement setting out details of those consulted when preparing the SPD, a summary of the main issues raised by those persons; and how those issues have been

addressed in the supplementary planning document; This statement is included as an appendix in the SPD.

## 8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

None

## 9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Please select one of the options below. Where appropriate please include the hyperlink to the EIA.

Option 1  Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) not required – the EIA checklist has been completed.

Option 2  In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA link here)*

Option 3  In determining this matter the Executive Board Members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA attachment)*

## 10. CONSULTATIONS

A scoping letter was sent to relevant organisations in May 2016 setting out the proposed scope of the draft Blackburn Town Centre SPD and inviting comments on it. 14 responses were received, but no objections were raised.

In March 2018, the draft SPD was published for a six week consultation period. Letters and emails were sent to stakeholders on the Strategic Planning mailing list which invited comments to be submitted on the draft document. The comments received have been summarised and added as an appendix within the SPD.

## 11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

The recommendations are made further to advice from the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer has confirmed that they do not incur unlawful expenditure. They are also compliant with equality legislation and an equality analysis and impact assessment has been considered. The recommendations reflect the core principles of good governance set out in the Council's Code of Corporate Governance.

## 12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

All Declarations of Interest of any Executive Member consulted and note of any dispensation granted by the Chief Executive will be recorded in the Summary of Decisions published on the day following the meeting.

**VERSION:** 1

**CONTACT OFFICER:** Laura Ainscow-Gorst

<b>DATE:</b>	05/7/2018
<b>BACKGROUND PAPER:</b>	