

This Report will be made public on 21 May 2021

Report Number: **OS/21/01**

**To:** Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
**Date:** 1 June 2021  
**Status:** Non Key  
**Responsible Officer:** Ewan Green, Director of Place  
**Cabinet Member:** Cllr David Wimble, Cabinet Member for the District Economy

**SUBJECT:** FOLKESTONE TOWN CENTRE PLACE PLAN

**SUMMARY:** This reports presents an update on progress to develop the Folkestone Town Centre Place Plan. The report sets out the context for this, engagement undertaken and the emerging key themes and interventions from which the plan will be developed.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. To receive and note report OS/21/01.
2. Overview and Scrutiny Committee are invited to comment on the report and to provide feedback on the engagement undertaken, key themes identified and the emerging interventions in order to inform the finalisation of the plan.

## 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Members will be aware that the Council Corporate Plan 2021-30 'Creating Together Tomorrow' recognises the need to reinvigorate all district town Centres, particularly investing in Folkestone town centre.
- 1.2 To achieve this the Council will work with partners and communities to develop a Folkestone Place Plan which will set out a vision and direction for Folkestone town centre including necessary infrastructure investment required to achieve sustainable change. Alongside physical interventions the plan will also consider future management and animation of the town centre.
- 1.3 The rationale underpinning development of the plan is to set an ambitious, medium to long-term direction of travel in order to ensure a successful and vibrant future for Folkestone's Town Centre
- 1.4 In order to progress the Place Plan a consultant team led by urban design specialists We Made That has been appointed to provide expert technical advice, undertake wide ranging engagement and develop the final plan and associated interventions and actions.
- 1.5 The objectives of the Place Plan are to:
  - Create collective vision for the Council and wider stakeholders
  - Key Investment/development opportunities - setting our ambition
  - Establish a civic 'heart' & purpose - "One public estate"
  - Create great animated public spaces for residents and visitors
  - Create a broader leisure offer 'for all'
  - Encourage Town Centre living as a vital component of a vibrant mixed use with a strong evening economy and meeting our housing need.
  - Create an exemplar in sustainability and reap the benefits of compact growth
  - Foster a dynamic/flexible employment environment transitioning away from a solely retail lead economy
  - Deliver a shift in transport movements & maximise accessibility
  - Future town centre animation, markets, management and maintenance
  - Link to the "The Place Campaign" to promote Folkestone
  - Identify the challenges, issues and the potential solutions
  - Set out how the many different partners play a role in the future of the Town Centre.
  - Review and test existing plans to ensure that impacts of COVID 19 and market trends are recognised
  - Set an Action Plan for Folkestone Town Centre
- 1.6 In addition to the above, the development of the Place Plan will also include a review of the Council's current licensing policy in relation to the future of the town centre. This will then inform the review of the District wide policy which is being undertaken.

## 2. PUBLIC AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

2.1 Public and stakeholder engagement is crucial to the development of the Place Plan. Members have previously considered the Stakeholder Engagement Strategy which was developed to ensure that as wide as possible a range of stakeholders and the community have the opportunity for meaningful engagement to inform the plan.

2.2 In summary, to date public engagement activity has included:

- 4 virtual workshops discuss priorities and ambitions, with 46 local organisations and community based groups
- 38 one to one conversations with key stakeholders
- 3 Youth focus groups completed with pupils from Folkestone Academy
- A public webinar event with 188 attendees

2.2 In addition the dedicated Place Plan web page is regularly updated and presents an opportunity for ongoing engagement via email or written submissions. Please refer to: <https://www.folkestone-hythe.gov.uk/folkestoneplaceplan>

2.3 It is planned to hold a further public webinar event on 10 June 2021. Further detail on engagement and feedback is contained in the Appendix.

## 3. PLACE PLAN - EMERGING PRIORITIES AND INTERVENTIONS

3.1 The emerging Place Plan is based on a 'Grand Challenge' which has been set out as:

*To overcome decline and challenge in Folkestone's Town Centre by embracing opportunity, celebrating what's great and bringing the town's communities together.*

3.2 This has been developed further into the following 6 'Missions' which seek to distil key issues to be addressed in the plan:

<b>1. Celebrate what's great</b> Make the most of Folkestone's best assets - its coastline, its communities, its heritage and its creativity - to attract visitors and enhance the lives of residents.	<b>2. Town centre for the future</b> Reinvigorate the Town Centre core by identifying opportunities for a new range of uses, community services and employment opportunities.
<b>3. A place for all voices</b> Work with the people of Folkestone to develop proposals that are meaningful to all, now and into the future.	<b>4. Moving sustainably</b> Create an environment that better connects the town centre and surroundings and supports active movement and enables healthy lifestyles and wellbeing.

<p><b>5. Access to opportunity</b> Embed opportunities for support, skills and training to allow all residents of Folkestone to benefit from change.</p>	<p><b>6. Deliver quality</b> Ensure that quality of delivery meets Folkestone’s full potential and secure the support of all partners who will be needed to deliver on the ambitions of the Place Plan.</p>
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3.3 A range of Action Areas have then been developed which outline potential interventions from which an Action Plan will be developed as part of the finalised plan. The Appendix provides further detail on this.

3.4 Committee are invited to provide feedback on the engagement activity undertaken, key themes identified and the emerging interventions in order to inform the finalisation of the plan.

**4. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES**

4.1 There are no perceived risks.

**5. LEGAL/FINANCIAL AND OTHER CONTROLS/POLICY MATTERS**

**5.1 Legal Officer’s Comments**

There are no legal implications in this report.

**5.2 Finance Officer’s Comments**

There are no financial implications in this report.

**5.3 Diversities and Equalities Implications**

The Place Plan will consider the needs of all residents regardless of whether or not they have a protected characteristic. The differing needs of people, including those with different protected characteristics, will be considered during the review as it progresses.

The final draft Place Plan will be the subject of an Equalities Impact Assessment Screening.

**6. CONTACT OFFICERS AND BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Councillors with any questions arising out of this report should contact the following officer prior to the meeting

Ewan Green, Director of Place  
Telephone: 07783659864  
Email: [ewan.green@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk](mailto:ewan.green@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk)

The following background documents have been relied upon in the preparation of this report:

None

**Appendix: Place Plan Update Report**