



Officer and Date

Cabinet

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Item

Smithfield Riverside Strategic Development Framework Shrewsbury

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1 Summary

- 1.1 The Smithfield Riverside Strategic Development Framework (SDF) provides a bold and ambitious vision for one of Shrewsbury's prime development sites. The Shrewsbury Big Town Plan (BTP) Masterplan Vision 2020 identifies the Riverside site's significance and its opportunities in achieving the place-shaping aspirations of the BTP. As a core component in delivery of an investible masterplan for Shrewsbury, the SDF establishes the spatial framework for development that will sustain and enhance the economic, social and environmental performance of the town centre and increase its attractiveness to businesses, investors and developers, residents, and visitors, whether for leisure, tourism, culture or to work.
- 1.2 The Smithfield Riverside SDF provides regeneration objectives for the site and with guiding principles for development, articulates the scale, form, massing and orientation necessary to ensure sensitive and appropriate development. Informed by multi-modal forms of movement, mobility and accessibility the SDF, will inform the use profile and mix, activities, public realm and open space, streets and squares, as well as promote environmental quality and measures that contribute to climate change mitigation.
- 1.3 An experienced multi-disciplinary consultancy team, led by LDA Design and including associates Phil Jones Associates (movement and transport) and Cushman and Wakefield (commercial development and regeneration), were awarded the contract in January 2020.
- 1.4 This Smithfield Riverside SDF has been developed with the engagement of key stakeholders, businesses and partners. Framed around the Big Draw, a two-day design workshop, stakeholders and the general public were invited to shape ideas for the site and create a working vision for the site. Through this vision LDA Design and Shropshire Council have created a deliverable framework which reflects the needs and aspirations of Shrewsbury.

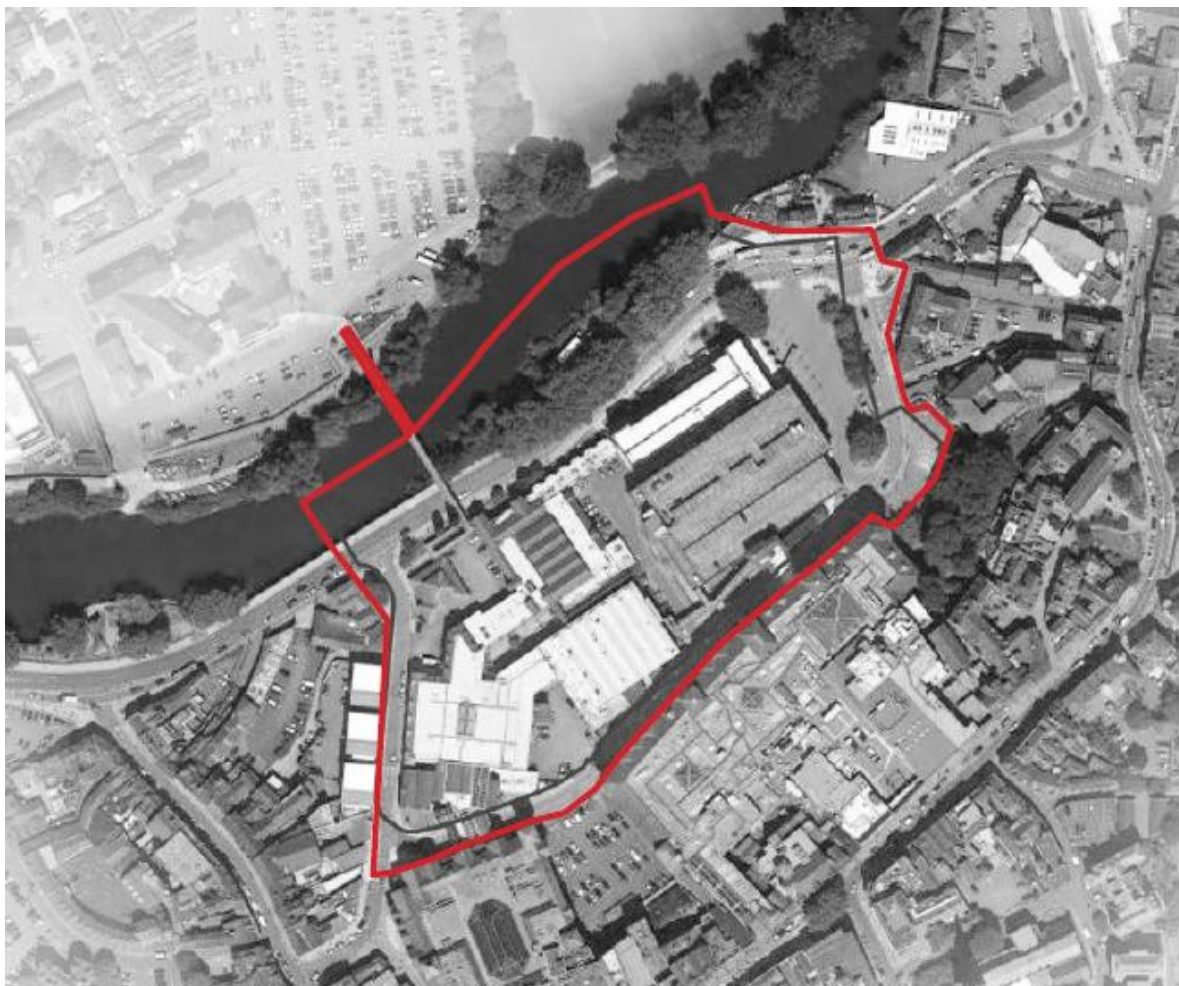


Figure 1: Smithfield Riverside Strategic Development Framework Area

1.5 The Smithfield Riverside SDF provides an assessment of commercial viability and deliverability, with the aim of attracting developer/investor interest in bringing this site forward and as a catalyst for the town's wider development, in line with the aspirations of the Shrewsbury BTP. The approach will inform the procurement and delivery strategy, as detailed in recommendation 3 of this report.

1.6 The commission was extended to include Frankwell side of the Riverbank, to explore the opportunities on the other side of the River and to ensure that the balance of uses is looked at in the whole and also ensure linkages, routes and placemaking principles are maintained and maximised.

2 Recommendations

1. Cabinet agrees that the draft Smithfield Riverside Strategic Development Framework be subject to public consultation for a period of six weeks, commencing on a date to be agreed by the Executive Director of Place in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Assets and Regeneration.

- 2. Cabinet agrees that the officers will report back to Cabinet on the outcome of consultation and present the final Riverside Smithfield Strategic Development Framework for approval.**
- 3. Cabinet authorises the Executive Director of Place, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Assets and Regeneration, to develop a procurement and delivery strategy (to be informed by the finalised SDF) for the site's redevelopment.**

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3 Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 3.1 The Smithfield Riverside SDF identifies the challenges and physical constraints to be addressed, as well as the wider opportunities to be gained, from driving forward the redevelopment of the site in a timely manner and with pace. The guiding principles and recommendations of the SDF have been informed and developed in consultation with stakeholders and aligns with the aspirations of the Shrewsbury Big Town Plan (2018) and the recently launched Masterplan Vision (2020).
- 3.2 The physical constraints and challenges of the site and its context adjacent to the River Severn include:
- Parcels of land prone to flooding: liaison with the Environment Agency will identify technical solutions to facilitate development.
 - Demolition of existing structures: sequence, phasing, accessibility and logistics.
 - Realignment of Smithfield Road: highway implications and service utilities diversions.
 - Re-provision of:
 - bus station or alternative facility, due to proposed redevelopment of existing location.
 - car parking to replace the Raven's Meadow multi-storey car park: this facility is
 - Topography and ground conditions.
 - The existing footbridge connecting the site to Frankwell: this is not accessible to those with specific needs and will benefit from replacement with a more suitable structure, realigned to proposed links and movement, that will further support the vision of the SDF and the wider Shrewsbury BTP.
- 3.3 The nature and scale of the above constraints, whilst expected, will have an impact on the deliverability and viability of the riverside redevelopment. The indicative development capacity and mix considered in the SDF provides a reference point from which to further appraise viability and deliverability and forms the basis for the request to progress the procurement and delivery strategy, as recommendation 2.
- 3.4 The proposed procurement and delivery strategy will also consider the impacts and implications of the recent Covid pandemic. The economic impacts of Covid remain unpredictable, however, recent measures put in place to ensure social distancing in the town, have allowed many of the movement and public realm principles to be tested. These interventions have demonstrated the resilience of the town and its ability to continue to perform well, despite the restrictions and compared to similar town centres both locally and nationally, demonstrates strong patterns of recovery.

- 3.5 The Smithfield Riverside SDF will be subject to a high-level Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessment (ESIIA). More detailed assessments will be undertaken for specific projects as they come forward.

4 Financial Implications

- 4.1 The costs incurred in the preparation of the Smithfield Riverside SDF, have been met by a budget previously approved in December 2018.

- 4.2 The development of a provisional procurement and delivery strategy for the site's redevelopment, as recommendation 3 of this report, will require the allocation of further funding of up to £250,000. This will enable:

- Site investigations and appraisals, including utilities and infrastructure implications.
- An appraisal of vehicle movement, servicing and parking.
- Market analysis and the mix of appropriate uses.
- Identification and financial modelling for a range of development approaches.
- Scope procurement options/framework for engagement with the development market.
- Legal consideration, requirements and assurance.
- Delivery sequencing and phasing.
- A basis for the production of development prospectus(s) aligned to development phases.

- 4.3 A phased approach of this work will be undertaken to progress in stages, breaking down the funding requirement into smaller elements. The first phase of the procurement and delivery strategy is estimated at no more than £40,000 and each phase will be reviewed before progressing to the next stage. This will be identified from existing revenue budgets within the Economic Growth service area.

- 4.4 As development proposals and projects come forward, in the context of the Smithfield Riverside SDF, and subject to the Council's role being determined, they will be subject to further business case assessment, financial appraisal, and the Council's governance and reporting procedures. Access to the Council's Capital Programme will be pursued at a later date where projects will be appraised on an individual basis following the process detailed in the Capital Strategy.

5 Background

- 5.1 The Smithfield Riverside SDF commenced with a programme of consultation and engagement. This process commenced with the innovative and engaging two-day workshop titled the 'Big Draw', attended by a broad and representative range of stakeholders, including local businesses, education bodies, residents, community/interest groups and multi-agency partners. The outcomes provided a robust basis on which to shaping ideas, identify objectives, develop a

collective vision for the site, with a deliverable framework, that reflects the needs and aspirations of Shrewsbury.

- 5.2 The initial Riverside commission was extended to include the quayside of Frankwell, to ensure the framework references, and integrates with, its river corridor context. This also ensures mutually supportive principles and opportunities are identified for activities either side of the river, whether in the context of the predominant demolition and comprehensive rebuilding of Riverside or the selective redevelopment amongst existing building on Frankwell.
- 5.3 The plan outlines aspirations for the site that align and robustly support the recently launched Shrewsbury BTP Masterplan Vision 2020: creating vibrant new living, leisure and work destinations within a socially and commercially attractive and enviable riverside setting. Connecting key localities across the historic town centre, such as the proposed Station Square, Riverside Park, intertwined with high quality public realm and open spaces, that celebrates the River Severn at the heart of the masterplan. Creative, transformational infrastructure proposals include the relocation, and down-scaling, of Smithfield Road to create commercially attractive, high-value mixed-use development sites, whilst facilitating the creation of an exemplar riverside parkland setting to the Severn.

Scope and Purpose

- 5.4 The *scope and purpose* of the Smithfield Riverside SDF can be summarised as follows.
- Provide a framework and guiding principles for the future detailed masterplanning, design and delivery of the Riverside area.
 - Identify constraints, challenges to be addressed and opportunities to unlock the sites development potential.
 - Inform the optimum scale, massing, orientation and mix of uses.
 - Provide the basis for the development of a procurement strategy and delivery plan with phasing and sequencing scenarios.
 - Contribute to the evidence base that will inform development prospectus that aims to foster market confidence and developer appetite.
- 5.5 The Smithfield Riverside SDF provides the following *outcomes*.
- Planning and Regeneration Context: The SDF is aligned to the current core strategy and the emerging local plan. The SDF is framed by the Shrewsbury Big Town Plan masterplan vision.
 - An appraisal of challenges and constraints, including, but not exclusively, flooding, viability, movement and parking.
 - Smithfield Riverside vision statement:

Celebrating the jewel in the Severn:

The evolution of Smithfield Riverside towards a mixed-use destination for Shrewsbury and beyond.

For more than a thousand years the dramatic loop of the River Severn has inscribed Shrewsbury’s historic centre. As Shrewsbury grows over the next few decades, it must adapt to the climate emergency and to the rapidly evolving patterns of living, working and leisure. The town centre will grow too, possibly beyond the loop of the river, and over time, it will evolve. Its attractions are manifest, everything set within a short walk or cycle, marked by wonderful buildings, streets and public spaces, increasingly traffic-free, and every part framed by river. It is the picture of an extraordinary zero-carbon place. In our vision for Smithfield Riverside this part of town dramatically changes its role. A part of the town, that has largely been forgotten about for centuries, suddenly takes centre stage, becoming a unique destination within this wonderful historic town. The river is the destination, where Smithfield Gardens replaces a busy road, where what was the back of the town, now becomes the route to a dramatic new bridge over the river to Frankwell. An area that has always been vulnerable to flooding is now designed to be more resilient and adaptable such events. It will be distinctive but deeply rooted in Shrewsbury, reflecting its character and knitting into its everyday life. It will be a pleasure to walk or cycle in Riverside, whether you are just passing through or, more likely, you are dwelling in its many high-quality public space or dipping your toes in the River Severn. Riverside will be a place where visitors and residents will be drawn to, making the most of its fantastic river setting and its many cafés bars and restaurants. A place for businesses to lay down roots and grow, as well as for communities to flourish in a vibrant town centre setting. What better opportunity will there be to live and work and spend your leisure time in an entirely new part of the town centre, with everything you need.

- Regeneration objectives of the SDF derived and assessed in the context of the Shrewsbury BTP. The seven objectives below set the standards and aspirations for the site and provides the framework for future proposals.



Figure 2: Regeneration Objectives of the Smithfield Riverside SDF

- Suite of *Core Design Principles* including;

- Built form and layout
- Movement and access
- Use and activities
- Public spaces and streets
- Environment and climate
- *Key moves* that underpin design principles;
 - Unlocking the site through strategic demolition programme.
 - Re-imagine Smithfield Road to create safer public realm for pedestrians and cyclist and to promote public transport.
 - Creating a waterfront destination, accommodating vibrant leisure, commercial and other activities.
 - Forge links and connections to the town centre and its environs through network of green and blue routes.
- The Framework Plan: an illustrative plan to demonstrate the principles of the Smithfield Riverside SDF:



Figure 3: Illustrative Masterplan for Smithfield Masterplan (extract)

- Land use and development capacity: indicative scenarios for the mix and location of viable and market relevant uses attractive to potential development partners/investors.

- Outlining potential delivery options, mechanisms, sequencing and phasing appropriate to the scale of development proposed by the Smithfield Riverside SDF.

Smithfield Riverside Strategic Opportunities

5.6 The redevelopment of the Smithfield Riverside site offers a once in a generation opportunity to deliver significant place making, through an ambitious, bold yet sensitive and sustainable mixed-use development on a comprehensive basis and at scale. The site has the potential to not only to transform this site, but to also act as a catalyst for redevelopment and opportunity for growth of the whole of the town centre. Consequently, the SDF recognises the immediate context to Smithfield Riverside in delivering the following.

- Creating a cultural destination: supporting Theatre Severn in sustaining a cultural quarter.
- Better connecting Shrewsbury: integrate the site through creating new links and supporting those already in place/under development, including the Shrewsbury Connect Park and Ride facility.
- Unlocking and improving open space: create a key green space for Shrewsbury.
- Celebrating the Riverside: making the most of the waterfront setting.



Figure 4: Illustrative Vision for Smithfield Riverside (extract)

Development Capacity, Delivery and Phasing

5.7 The Smithfield Riverside SDF provides the basis for developing a procurement and delivery strategy. It highlights future opportunities for bringing this significant site forward and the procurement options and delivery vehicles that need to be assessed against the Council's objectives, as well as those mutually shared with the Shrewsbury BTP partners and stakeholders.

5.8 In summary, the proposed procurement and delivery strategy will:

- Defines delivery *objectives*.
- Articulates development *principles*.
- Identifies delivery *mechanisms*.

5.9 Procurement and delivery strategy considerations, relevant to the Smithfield Riverside SDF include:

- Public Procurement options, including open or restricted procedures, competitive procedures in negotiation or with dialogue.
- Site enabling works: demolition, infrastructure works and site remediation.
- Procurement approach, rationale and controls: comprehensive site development versus incremental plot sales or hybrid approach.
- Options for development:
 - Disposal of sites post securing of planning permission
 - Development management – direct delivery by the Council
 - Contractual agreement – i.e. development agreement
 - Contractual partnership – i.e. master development agreement
 - Joint venture (JVCo.)
 - Investment Partner (InvestCo.)
- Identify potential sources of investment funding:
 - Capital receipts, revenue and borrowing
 - Public sector partners
 - Grant funding
 - Private sector investors/developers

5.10 The above considerations form the basis of the Procurement and Delivery Strategy as detailed in recommendation 2 of this report.

6 Engagement activity

6.1 Through the 'Big Draw', a two-day engagement and workshop session, which was held in February 2020; businesses, stakeholder and partners were invited to help shape and collaborate on the development of the plans and ideas for Riverside. LDA have continued to develop and test the framework with partners and key stakeholders which has helped shape the objectives, parameters and principles within the framework.

- 6.2 The Big Town Plan Masterplan Vision sets the overarching framework for the SDF, which builds on the objectives and principles in the BTP. The BTP has been created through a series of workshops with businesses and residents. The BTP festival in January 2021, launched the consultation on the Masterplan Vision with a series of webinars and events and an online consultation platform. The consultation concluded on the 3 March 2021.
- 6.3 The Smithfield Riverside SDF has been developed in line with the 'Big Moves' and the principles outlined for the Riverside Character area in the SBTP Masterplan Vision. The SDF is not prescriptive on the design *intent* for the area, rather it robustly defines the design *principles and parameters/criteria* by which future development must adhere, if the wider aspirations of the site are to be realised. This will enable the Council to incentivise high quality design, appropriate to the Shrewsbury's unique character, prescribed through the procurement process. As the Smithfield Riverside SDF moves into the design and development phases, this will enable more detailed engagement and collaboration, involving residents, stakeholders and partners in design process.
- 6.4 It is proposed to undertake a public consultation exercise for the Smithfield Riverside SDF for a period of six weeks. This will be consistent with the consultation approach adopted for the Shrewsbury Big Town Plan (2018) and the recently launched Masterplan Vision, concluding on 3 March 2021. The commencement date for the Smithfield Riverside SDF consultation is proposed to start after the Masterplan Vision consultation has concluded and the findings appraised. This will ensure the outcomes of this process can provide further context and be aligned to the consultation process proposed for the Smithfield Riverside SDF.

7 Climate Change

- 7.1 Following the declaration of the Climate Emergency, the Smithfield Riverside SDF and any future delivery and procurement will include Council expectations on new developments. The SDF sets out an aspiration for sustainability and responding to the climate emergency. *Smithfield Riverside will be recognisably sustainable and responsive to the environmental sensitivities of the site, as well as responding to the climate emergency and its impacts in Shrewsbury.*

The following principles should be considered for the site:

- Design and plan to mitigate against the impacts of flooding across the site, as well as being resilient to the effects of climate change.
- Any development or alteration to the flood plain must not impact upstream or downstream flooding and mitigation.
- Development proposals must provide safe means of access in the event of flooding for all, however development which would activate ground floors can be considered if necessary mitigation measures are put in place.
- Development must maximise access to light.

- A more natural, larger river front part should seek to mitigate against flooding where possible.
- The impact of wind through the site must be fully assessed to ensure wind-funnelling does not create uncomfortable public spaces and street environments, encouraging use and dwell time of spaces and contributes to a perception of safety throughout the day.
- Public realm should seek to incorporate green and blue infrastructure where possible to provide resilience against the effects of climate change.

8 Conclusions

- 8.1 The Smithfield Riverside SDF provides an opportunity to sustain and grow the future commercial viability of the town. The Smithfield Riverside SDF aims to achieve a design, place-led approach for the redevelopment of the site, which is underpinned by delivery. The vision for Smithfield Riverside is therefore ambitious, yet deliverable. It outlines a flexible framework for the design and delivery of development on the site. It has been shaped through an engaged and iterative design process which has tested the capacity for change across the site. The next steps will be to move this forward to develop a procurement and delivery strategy for the site.

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List of Background Papers

Cabinet report November 2018 - Shrewsbury Big Town Plan

Cabinet report December 2018 – Shrewsbury Shopping Centres

Cabinet report January 2020 - Shrewsbury Big Town Plan Masterplan Vision

Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)

Cllr Steve Charmley

Local Members

Peter Adams, Dean Carroll, Nat Green, Kevin Pardy, Ioan Jones, Julian Dean, Ted Clarke, Pam Moseley, Hannah Fraser, David Vasmer, Alan Mosley, Peter Nutting, Jane McKenzie, Keith Roberts, Tony Parsons, Alex Philips, Kate Halliday, Gwen Burgess

Appendices

Appendix 1: Smithfield Riverside Strategic Development Framework (Final draft)

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