



Prosperous Communities Committee
Date: 30th January 2018

Subject: Market Rasen 3 Year Vision / Strategy and disposal/transfer of WL Area Office to Market Rasen Town Council.

Report by:

Director of Commercial & Economic Growth

Contact Officer:

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Purpose / Summary:

To maximise the benefits derived from housing led growth to create a self-sustaining town with capacity to address social, economic and environmental issues.

<p>RECOMMENDATION(S):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Endorse the emerging 3 Year Vision and Strategy to ensure Market Rasen maximises the benefits from planned housing growth. <p>To recommend to members of Corporate Policy & Resources Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">2. To approve an “in principle” allocation of £200k funding from the Capital Programme towards the delivery of growth projects detailed within the strategy subject to:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consultation and support for the strategy• Setting up of an agreed implementation mechanism i.e. CIO• Suitable financial regulation3. To approve the recommendation to conclude disposal/transfer of the Area Office to Festival Hall.

IMPLICATIONS

Legal:

Legal advice/fee's involved in disposal of Area Office

Financial:

Ring fence £200k from WLDC Capital Programme

Staffing:

No changes as a result of this report. Any future management, administration and monitoring of the CIO (Town Team Partnership) will continue using existing staffing arrangements.

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights:

Consultation process will be openly promoted to ensure the widest possible views from stakeholders/the local community to ensure openness and transparency.

Establish a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) as a legal entity for the re-constituted Town Team Partnership. The main intended benefits of a CIO is that it has a legal personality, the ability to conduct business in its own name and limited liability so that its members/trustees will not have to contribute in the event of financial loss.

Expand the range of services, organisations and interventions for more disadvantaged areas of the community, in order address in-equality and provide a sustained and collective contribution to overall improvements in health and living conditions.

Risk Assessment:

N/A

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities:

None

Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

Emerging West Lindsey Housing Strategy 2018-2022

Adopted Central Local Lincolnshire Plan

Call in and Urgency:

Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)

Yes

No

Key Decision:

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications

Yes

No

1 Background:

1.1 Within the last seventeen years there have been a number of initiatives focusing on Market Rasen's regeneration and future development:

1.2 Market Rasen Development Trust

A limited-by-guarantee company formed in 2001 with a mission: 'to regenerate the town and surrounding area, enabling community development and economic growth to the benefit all local people. Market Rasen was one of twelve market towns in the East Midlands to be part of the national Market Towns Initiative (MTI). The Market Rasen Development Trust published an Action Plan in 2005 and was successful in engaging with the community, running town events and setting up a community hub which is still operational. The more ambitious plans within the Action Plan were not all realisable due to lack of match-funding.

1.3 Market Rasen Business Improvement Group

A CIC incorporated in August 2012. Run by volunteer Directors from local business and community groups. MR BIG were successful in winning the first round of Portas Pilot funding and were one of twelve towns nationally to be granted £100k of funding to regenerate the town centre. They won a further £110k through the government's High Street X Fund in 2013. Four 'promises' formed the basis of a two-year action plan: Put the Market Back in Market Rasen; Town Tidy; Marketing; High Street Sustainability. A review of progress and strategy for year 2 highlighted the success of monthly markets, branding and marketing for the town and a national award-winning heritage tour. The MR BIG CIC was dissolved in July 2017 and its legacy and remaining budget is being taken forward by a newly-formed Town Partnership (with Lincolnshire Chamber of Commerce) and Market Rasen Town Council.

1.4 Neighbourhood and Community Plan 2013 to 2016

During 2013 the Town Council led discussions with stakeholders including Market Rasen Development Trust and MR BIG on the development of a town plan. There are only limited papers from these discussions and the Plan was not advanced. In 2016 West Lindsey District Council and the Town Council explored the option of developing a Neighbourhood

Plan. The Town Council agreed to focus efforts on producing the current Vision and Strategy rather than a Neighbourhood Plan.

1.5 Vision Group Report

In April 2013 West Lindsey District Council commissioned Rose Regeneration to develop a vision for Market Rasen. A number of meetings with stakeholders were held and a report published in July 2013 (not available on-line). The Report highlighted the challenges facing the town and the opportunities, via a community-led plan, to engage investors and develop a strong brand for the town and secure its future strategic development.

1.6 Market Rasen Town Council

The Town Council's Vision and Strategy is partly a legacy from previous initiatives but largely based around projects and activities that have commenced within the last few years. Since May 2015, the Council has continued to work with an external consultant to develop discrete projects such as:

- Festival Hall
- Police Station & Magistrates Court
- Development of the town Vision and Strategy

These projects depend upon and are limited to the passion and drive of the individuals involved in their development. The risk is that these, along with other proposed projects will not realise their full potential due to funding and resource constraints. The end result creates a perception that a lot of money is spent on projects that never actually come to fruition. It is hoped that the current Strategy, with support from West Lindsey District Council, will provide a resilient framework for the town's development.

2 Lessons Learnt:

2.1 The above initiatives have served as catalysts for action in terms of the town's development, but the weakness has been in ensuring these are done in a cohesive, planned, strategic way with continued succession planning built in.

2.2 Past initiatives have shown:

- Strong endeavours from individual organisations but limited success from those individual organisations in working together for a common goal – i.e. the town's future.
- A disconnect between West Lindsey District Council's ambitions for the town's development and the town (residents and businesses) engaging with this agenda.
- A perception that Market Rasen is worse off than other towns – Brigg, Gainsborough, Caistor – and that West Lindsey 'favours' Gainsborough to the detriment of Market Rasen.
- Stop / Start progress which give the perception that 'nothing works' in Market Rasen.

2.2 Steps to mitigate these weaknesses could include:

A clear, cohesive strategy for the town's growth and future development, with buy-in from all parts of the community. (The Three-Year Vision provides a framework of aspirations and this will be developed into a delivery plan with outcomes and timelines.)

Public ‘buy-in’ from WLDC - Support and funding from West Lindsey District Council to demonstrate commitment to the town’s development. (Visible and tangible support like the WLDC funded Wolds Festival in October 2016 along with support for the Vision and its delivery.)

Building a team approach with all parts of the community working together and learning to put the common goal (the town’s development) first rather than individual agendas. There has to be a ‘bottom-up’ and detailed approach as a team. Past initiatives have failed because they were ‘top-down’ and did not bring people on board. (This will require clear communication and transparent decision-making around the delivery of the Vision.)

Leadership, knowledge and skills to deliver the Vision. The delivery mechanism for the Vision (i.e. an independent body such as a CIO) will need the right knowledge and skills (legal, business, and community) and strong leadership to gain the trust of the town’s community. Support is also required from West Lindsey District Council in identifying suitable people and balancing the leadership needed to deliver the Vision whilst involving all parts of the community.

Good PR and clear communication between partners in delivering the Vision. Support from West Lindsey District Council communications teams in publicising positive stories, events, and progress on the delivery of the Vision’s priorities.

3 Market Rasen – Role of the Town:

3.1 The vision within the emerging West Lindsey Housing Strategy 2018-2022 is that **“Everyone has access to good quality housing which meets their housing need and aspiration, in a pleasing environment which enables a healthy lifestyle.”** This means that everyone should have the opportunity to access good quality housing whereby they can build happy, successful and prosperous lives.

3.2 The Central Lincolnshire Local Plan focuses on the delivery of sustainable growth that meets the need for homes and jobs. Within this plan Market Rasen, defined as a market town, will be the focus for significant but proportionate growth. Consequently the role of the town is already changing, as are the pressures that it is experiencing, physically, economically and socially. Residential development land is allocated which can accommodate 640 dwellings.

3.3 To date planning for in excess of 500 new homes has been granted or is in the planning system for determination and the Town Council acknowledge that successfully attracting this investment is the material difference. Whilst this presents a number of opportunities, there are concerns amongst residents about the impact this will have on infrastructure and capacity along with a declining retail offer within the town centre. In recent months West Lindsey District Council have re-evaluated car parking charges in Market Rasen to try and alleviate this issue.

3.4 It’s within this context that the 3 Year Vision and Strategy is of such importance. The Plan will articulate a vision for Market Rasen over the next three to five years highlighting how its distinctive strengths should be safeguarded and be central to the future of the town as well as outlining opportunities for development in the short, medium and longer term.

These will address some of the existing weaknesses and contribute to the comprehensive improvement of Market Rasen as a place to live, work and invest.

3.5 Market Rasen Town Council is committed to ensuring the vision, strategy and subsequent delivery plan is driven by sound local leadership. This will require good governance and accountability along with robust project management and delivery of measureable economic outputs.

4 The Market Rasen Vision

4.1 Market Rasen Town Council formally adopted the 3 year Vision and Strategic Priorities (see Appendix 1) at full council meeting held on 10th January 2018. The Vision for a strong and vibrant community is organised around the following Strategic Priorities:

- **Environment and Heritage** - Making Market Rasen an attractive place to live, work in and visit.
- **Health and Wellbeing** - Addressing poor health outcomes and social vulnerability.
- **Leisure and Culture** - Giving people of all ages in Market Rasen a wide choice of music, entertainment, theatre and live events
- **Development and Economy** - Ensuring Market Rasen develops the housing, business and commercial capacity for its future growth; helping to address skills deficits.
- **Transport and Access** – Influencing responsible bodies and transport providers to deliver a good quality and affordable service for residents and businesses.

4.2 Market Rasen Town Council agree to work with West Lindsey District Council, town residents and businesses, stakeholders, and appropriate organisations to deliver the Vision's Priorities over the three-year period.

4.3 As per point 7.1 of the Vision document, Market Rasen Town Council supports the work currently being undertaken, in partnership with stakeholders, to set up a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (or other appropriate independent body) to deliver the commercial and capital projects within the Vision.

4.4 As part of the community and stakeholder engagement on the Vision document it is proposed that the following meetings are scheduled and led by Market Rasen Town Council:

- Tuesday 30th January, 6 – 7 pm – Festival Hall reference group and other key community partner.
- Tuesday 13th February, 8.30 am to 8.30 am – Business Breakfast at The Advocate Arms Hotel. Invite to town businesses, shops and traders via the Town Partnership
- Saturday 3rd March – 10 am to Midday. Open Town Meeting with presentation of the Vision at 10 am and questions and answer session afterwards. (Church Room, Market Place.)

5 West Lindsey District Council - Structure & Governance

5.1 The consultation process will be openly promoted to ensure the widest possible views from stakeholders and the local community in order to ensure openness and transparency.

West Lindsey District Council officers have agreed to work with Market Rasen Town Council in the following areas;

- Development of the vision and strategy and aligning it to the wider West Lindsey strategic objectives.
- Support for the consultation phase and engagement with the wider Market Rasen community.
- Interim business development services – including HR, systems and development, corporate governance etc.
- Financial regulation and support to set up the Board.

5.2 West Lindsey District Council will work with members of the “Mr Big” Team, Market Rasen Town Council and the Lincolnshire Chamber to develop a newly constituted Town Team Partnership. It has been agreed that remaining money and assets from the Mr Big project (previously managed by WLDC) are transferred to the new Partnership. This would provide a “seed” fund to help the Partnership to get established and deliver the necessary consultation process required to develop the strategy and subsequent delivery plan.

5.3 The Town Team Partnership are proposing to establish their legal entity as a CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation) or equivalent. This is a formal structure that can be used by non-profit organisations. The main intended benefits of a CIO is that it has a legal personality, the ability to conduct business in its own name and limited liability so that its members/trustees will not have to contribute in the event of financial loss. A CIO need only register with the Charity Commission rather than Companies House, therefore reducing bureaucracy for the charity.

5.4 The Market Rasen Town Team Partnership will be able to utilise their CIO to prioritise and agree the capital projects to take forward, provide capacity to apply for grants or other sources of funding and to create a more robust mechanism for project management and delivery.

6 West Lindsey District Council - Financial Support

6.1 West Lindsey District Council is committed to supporting Market Rasen Town Council to communicate and deliver its vision and agreed strategic capital projects in order to deliver economic growth benefits to the area. The Council has therefore ring fenced up to £200k of funding from the capital programme. This will provide Market Rasen Town Council with the opportunity to draw down vital funds to help unlock specified social and economic projects. The funding is designed to help secure or attract external funding either from local organisations and in particular the County Council and Local Enterprise Partnerships or from regional, national and European funding bodies.

6.2 The funding will be conditional and subject to details of agreed capital projects being set out explicitly within the Market Rasen vision and strategy. This will enable stakeholders and investors to understand how Market Rasen plans to maximise the benefits from housing growth in order to sustain the wellbeing of the town. The strategy will include details of;

- Required funds to unlock projects
- Match funding and/or other sources of funding
- Job creation

- Economic impact assessment and GVA

6.3 Capital projects will also need to demonstrate measured outputs/outcomes and clearly link back to strategic objectives outlined with West Lindsey District Council Economic Development Strategy.

6.4 Within the Market Rasen Town Council strategy, plans are underway to re-furbish Festival Hall and to create a modern vibrant community hub for the town. West Lindsey District Council will consider the disposal/transfer of their former Area Office as part of the strategy.

6.5 At the current time the Council recognises that a face to face service is required in Market Rasen and would therefore need to retain desk/office space or would be amiable to relocation to other premises such as the Old Police Station.

The requirements from West Lindsey District Council are set out below:

- Room/desk availability -Monday/Tuesday and Thursday reducing in May to Monday/Tuesday only.
- Access to a desk and phone only on Wednesday – telephone enquires only
- A self service area to accommodate a stand-alone computer that customers can use to access West Lindsey Services.

The Council are continuing to review how services are delivered which may result in changes to face to face services in the future.

6.6 Disposal of any Council owned assets needs to be compliant with the Physical Assets Disposal and Acquisition Policy November 2012. This policy outlines the disposal process and procedure. The policy allows for disposal to a special purchaser, as in this case Festival Hall, Market Rasen if all of the following considerations are addressed:

Criteria	Compliance
True Value	Given the location of the office within the Festival Hall the commercial value is limited. The WLDC will retain a lease of the roof as this houses solar panels which yields a feed in tariff.
Special Considerations	Creation of wider regeneration scheme in this case support to the 3 year Vision
Costs and Liabilities	WLDC will have no ongoing costs associated with his asset transfer.
Use & Potential	Addressed in the True Value consideration above
Planning & Value	MRTC are a “Special purchaser” given their ownership of the Festival Hall they have the

All Disposal Options	ability to regenerate the entire building as a central project integral to the success of the 3 Year Vision.
Marketing	
Age & Condition Architectural / Historic Interest/Contamination	The building is historically or architecturally significant, rather it is a community asset.
Exit Costs	None other than legal costs associated with the retention of the roof by WLDC via a lease.
Third Party Rights	Not applicable

7. Timescales:

7.1 See table below

Action	Who Responsible	Date
Endorse 3 year vision for consultation	MRTC	Jan 2018
Recruitment to the Town Partnership (beyond those already proposed) Constitution established	MRTC/WLDC	Feb 2018
Establish CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation)	MRTC/WLDC/Chamber/Mr Big	Feb/Mar 2018
Transfer of Mr Big Funds to CIO	WLDC	Feb/Mar 2018
Complete consultation with key stakeholders, community and business champions. Key capital projects identified	All	March 2018
Transfer of Area Office to Festival Hall		March 2018
Capital project documentation completed and approved by WLDC	Town Team Partnership	April/May 2018
£200k ring fenced and available for drawdown against specific projects or programmes	WLDC Capital Programme	May 2018 (tba)