



Agenda item:

Summary

Report for:	Strategic Planning & Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting:	10th January 2017
Part:	1
If Part II, reason:	

Title of report:	Hemel Evolution Update
Contact:	Cllr Graham Sutton, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration Responsible Officer: James Doe, Assistant Director (Planning, Development & Regeneration) Author: Nathalie Bateman, Strategic Planning and Regeneration Team Leader (Infrastructure and Project Delivery)
Purpose of report:	To report on the progress of the Hemel Evolution regeneration projects.
Recommendations	That the report and presentation be noted
Corporate objectives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clean, safe and enjoyable environment • Building strong and vibrant communities • Ensuring economic growth and prosperity • Providing good quality affordable homes, in particular for those most in need • Delivering an efficient and modern council
Implications:	<u>Financial</u>
'Value for money' implications	There are no additional financial implications to this report as the programme outlines capital that has already been approved. <u>Value for money</u> The Hemel Hempstead Town Centre Masterplan identifies the

	<p>key principles, opportunities and proposals for improvements. As projects have come forward to delivery, consultation responses, lessons learnt for efficiency and good practice, and professional recommendations have been carefully considered. Anticipated capital spend on individual projects has been reported to Cabinet for approval.</p>
Risk implications	Risk assessment completed as part of individual projects.
Community Impact Assessment	Community Impact Assessments completed as part of individual projects
Health and safety Implications	None arising from this report
Consultees:	<p>James Doe, Assistant Director (Planning, Development and Regeneration)</p> <p>Mark Gaynor, Corporate Director (Housing and Regeneration)</p> <p>Chris Taylor, Group Manager (Strategic Planning and Regeneration)</p> <p>David Austin, Assistant Director (Neighbourhood Delivery)</p> <p>Joe Guiton, Neighbourhood Action and Children’s Services Team Leader</p>
Background papers:	<p>Hemel Hempstead Town Centre Masterplan, 2013</p> <p>Previous Cabinet reports on Hemel Evolution/town centre regeneration</p>
Historical background <i>(please give a brief background to this report to enable it to be considered in the right context).</i>	<p>The Hemel Hempstead Town Centre Masterplan, adopted in 2013, provides the framework for the delivery of major regeneration projects across Hemel Hempstead Town Centre. As projects have been completed the scope of the team’s work has expanded to design, deliver and implement projects to the wider town centre area and Maylands Business Park. These objectives have been guided by the Corporate Plan, Maylands Masterplan and emerging Two Waters Masterplan.</p>
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	<p>PH - Portfolio Holder</p> <p>HCC – Hertfordshire County Council</p> <p>Hemel Evolution – the group name for a range of activities covering the delivery of the Town Centre Masterplan and other key regeneration projects. This update includes; The Old Town, Gadebridge Park (River Gade), Marlowes Shopping Zone, Bus Interchange, the Plough Zone, Street Furniture, Maylands Urban Realm Improvements, Maylands Business Centre Extension, Durrants Lakes, Jellicoe Water Gardens,</p>

	the Bury, and Parking, Access and Movement.
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Background

1.0 Hemel Evolution Summary

The following summarises regeneration work to Hemel Hempstead to date. These focus on the town centre and Maylands Business Park:

1.1 Completed projects

Bus interchange:

The Bus Interchange has been working well. A six month review was undertaken with Arriva to ensure there were no operational issues. The taxi rank is also working well, however a review over usage should be undertaken once the Water Gardens has been open for six months to ensure that the area is being used to its full capacity once all areas are open for business.

To assist with issues arising from inconsiderate parking along Waterhouse Street affecting the flow of traffic, a new Traffic Order has been put in place to ensure Parking Services can enforce this area.

The Bus Interchange was delivered on time and under budget.

Durrants Lakes (Phase 1)

Repairs have been undertaken to some river and lake banks at Durrants Lakes to facilitate the long term vision to improve connectivity between this area and the moors.

HCC has delivered access improvements identified as part of this project to better connect pedestrian routes with the adjoining green spaces of Durrants Hill Playing Field, Lawn Lane Open Space and Apsley Triangle.

History Tree (or more fondly known as the Tree of Life)

The newly repaired and refurbished tree has been returned to its spot by the Food Court. LED lights have been added and will be connected shortly, to be enjoyed by all.

Marlowes Shopping Area and Bank Court improvements

Pedestrianised Shopping Area and Bank Court works were completed in late 2015. This includes the opening of the fountain in New Town Square which was a very popular feature over the summer period.

Shop vacancy rates have reduced considerably in the town centre from 20% in September 2014 to 9.1% in October 2016.

Overall the project progressed well with few complaints during the build period. The final account for the project is being finalised but is estimated to finish over budget by £360,000 – 7% of the total project cost. However the project also brought in an income of approximately £105,000 from Hertfordshire County Council contributions and S106 contributions which are not included in the above figure. The overspend was largely due to the need for an upgraded power supply to serve the Marlowes.

Capital & Regional Real Estate Investment Trust cited “significant investment from the local authority” as one of the main reasons for its £35.5 million acquisition of The Marlowes Shopping Centre¹ in January 2016. Capital and Region have since acquired more property in the town centre, bringing its total investment to c£54 million.

Maylands Urban Realm Improvements

A range of hard landscaping improvements have been completed along Maylands Avenue between Breakspear Way/Maylands Avenue junction and Wood Lane End junction. Improvements include new shared footway/cycleway and street furniture including recycling bins, benches and signage. Two entrance totems have been installed and illuminated. Soft landscaping will be undertaken at the entrance to Maylands Avenue during the planting season and completed by spring 2017.

The project will be delivered on time and within budget.

The Old Town

There has been ongoing progress made with network management at HCC and the six utilities companies to ensure that the area has the correct paving reinstated following any works. However, it should be noted that some items are bespoke and there may be a lead-in time for reparation.

The Plough Zone

At Heath Park the riverbank softening works have now been completed, to complement the new footpath works and infrastructure undertaken in 2015. The works comprise the removal of the old concrete riverbank and replacement with new planting. The main impact will be more noticeable in the spring (2017).

1.2 Ongoing projects:

Jellicoe Water Gardens

Works commenced August 2015 and will be completed in early 2017. Delays have occurred throughout the programme, initially as a result of the design and manufacture of bridges, where a replacement rather than a refurbishment route had to be taken. The new bridges are copies of Jellicoe’s original design. The river has been enhanced following silt removal with new toeboard edging, fish passes and marginal planting. The majority of hard and soft landscaping works are complete throughout the Gardens, with finishing works dependent on weather conditions. The repair of the damaged bank and collapsed highway footpath along Waterhouse Street was added to the Water Gardens contract. Of the new features being provided through the restoration, the bespoke play area and Friends’ building are behind schedule and will be ongoing into January 2017. Further remedial works are also required to the flower garden which has a significant drainage problem. This will be resolved over the winter period to ensure the restored Gardens look their best during spring and summer 2017. A Water Gardens launch event is planned for May/June.

Maylands Business Centre Extension

Works have commenced to build an extension to the Maylands Business Centre. Design work has been completed and planning permission obtained. Enabling works including site clearance is complete. Phase 2 which comprise the building works, has commenced recently. The project is due to complete in May 2017, and will provide five new commercial units to the centre.

¹ <http://capreg.com/media-centre/headlines/trading-update-and-acquisition-of-the-marlowes-centre--hemel-hempstead.html>

Street Furniture

The Marlowes to Queensway section of the project is almost complete with the final painting being carried out in the New Year. The focus of the remaining budget will be public realm improvements to Waterhouse Street. All works to be completed Mar/Apr 2017.

1.3 New projects:

The Bury

Feasibility work is currently underway to explore potential development options of the Bury site in order to provide additional funding to cover costs associated with the refurbishment of the Bury, and the delivery of a museum, café and supporting ancillary uses (income based). This work will also provide us with necessary evidence to support a Heritage Lottery Fund expression of interest submission for external funding. A detailed timeline for the project will be set out once the feasibility work is complete.

Gadebridge Park – River Gade

The Environment Agency has prepared a feasibility report on options to improve the sustainability of the River Gade through Gadebridge Park. This will reduce flood risk by realigning the channel to a low gradient within the floodplain and improve sustainability by diverting spring flows into the main channel. These currently discharge from the culvert by the Bury into Kings Langley fishing lake. Visitors' experience of the river will also be enhanced by new riverside footpaths and shallow beached areas. These improvements have the potential to complement the plans for a new splash park and play area being developed by Environmental Services. Officers are currently working with the Environment Agency in developing its plans which in due course will need to be submitted formally for agreement as the Council is the owner of the Park.

Parking Access and Movement

Officers have been working with HCC and consultants to provide improved access arrangements to the Water Gardens car parks, and improve traffic movements and pedestrian access along Waterhouse Street. Proposals will be worked up in early 2017 and submitted to the Council for consideration and approval.

Durrants Lakes (Phase 2)

Development of phase 2 of the Durrants Lakes project will commence in 2017. This will focus on improving connectivity from Durrants Hill Road car park to Apsley triangle via two pedestrian bridges and a linking footpath. Opportunities to increase community use of the area will be investigated through additional recreation activities.

- 2.0 A powerpoint and verbal presentation will be made at the meeting to update the Committee on recent and planned activities to regenerate Hemel Hempstead.