

## **PLACE DEVELOPMENT - FUNDING ALLOCATION**

<b>Head of Service:</b>	Victoria Potts, Head of Place Development
<b>Wards affected:</b>	(All Wards);
<b>Urgent Decision?(yes/no)</b>	No
<b>If yes, reason urgent decision required:</b>	
<b>Appendices (attached):</b>	N/A

### **Summary**

The Council has been successful in securing funding to enable the development of a community led masterplan for Epsom Town Centre as follows: -

- £100,000 through the LEP Regional Projects Development Fund to fund the development of an Epsom Town Centre Masterplan.
- £125,000, from The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Round 2 of the PropTech Engagement Fund to fund digital community engagement associated with the Epsom Town Centre Masterplan

In addition, as part of a Joint East Surrey bid, the Council has been successful in securing £125,000 through the LEP to provide a Shared East Surrey Economic Development Initiative.

### **Recommendation (s)**

**The Committee is asked to:**

- (1) Agree to delegate authority to the Head of Place Development to use the allocation of £100,000 awarded to the Council through the LEP Regional Projects Development Fund for the development of an Epsom Town Centre Masterplan.**
- (2) Agree to delegate authority to the Head of Place Development to use the allocation of £125,000 awarded to the Council through The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Round 2 of the PropTech Engagement Fund digital community engagement for the Epsom Town Centre Masterplan**

**(3) Agree to delegate authority to the Head of Place Development to use the allocation of £125,000 to the four East Surrey local authorities through the LEP to provide a Shared East Surrey Economic Development Initiative.**

## **1 Reason for Recommendation**

- 1.1 Epsom and Ewell Borough Council is required to comply with the terms and conditions for spending the funding as it has been awarded for the development of an Epsom Town Centre Masterplan, digital community engagement for the Epsom Town Centre Masterplan, and a Shared East Surrey Economic Development Initiative.

## **2 Background**

### 2.1 Epsom Town Centre Masterplan

- 2.2 The Council is faced with some difficult decisions about how it can plan to accommodate growth to meet central government policy. There are several potential development opportunities within Epsom Town Centre that could come forward separately in isolation, promoted by each respective landowner/developer.

- 2.3 The development opportunities in Epsom Town Centre have the potential to significantly contribute towards accommodating growth but presently, there is not an up-to-date document to guide development in the Town Centre. The Town Centre Masterplan provides the opportunity plan comprehensively for development to ensure that there is a coordinated approach to address the following: -

- The parameters for development of the sites that have been submitted through the Local Plan Call for Sites for development (Utilities, Ashley Centre, UCA)
- The facilities and infrastructure that would be needed to support the development of key sites (parking, retail, social, community, transport)
- Environmental Improvements to the town centre that could be facilitated through development proposals (through development itself, CIL and S106)
- Key principles for retention, enhancement or development of areas that would not be subject to major development proposals

- 2.4 The masterplan will be a key part of the Local Plan 2022-2040 evidence base and will inform the emerging Local Plan's Strategy in relation to potential likely housing delivery and infrastructure requirements.

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- 2.5 The Council was successful in securing £100,000 through the LEP Regional Projects Development Fund to fund the development of the masterplan.
- 2.6 The early consultation will be undertaken between June and September with the feedback informing the preparation of a master plan by the end of the year. This will inform the Local Plan and its spatial strategy which will include another opportunity for more formal public consultation on the plan for Epsom and Town centre and the rest of the borough.
- 2.7 PropTech Engagement Fund Round 2
- 2.8 The Planning for the Future White Paper published in August 2020 set out the government's aspiration for a digital-first approach to modernise the planning process, encouraging digital innovation across planning services. One element of this is to support local planning authorities to use digital tools to support a new civic engagement process for local plans, making it easier for people to understand what is being proposed and make it easier for people to feed in their views into the system through social networks and via their phones. The purpose is to make the planning system more accountable and democratic and offer alternative routes to engage alongside traditional forms of engagement.
- 2.9 The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities has been providing local planning authorities with the opportunity to trial digital services through their PropTech Engagement Funds. The selected projects should aim to demonstrate how digital citizen engagement can support the following:
- Incentivise communities to positively engage in planning conversations.
  - Engage a more representative range of citizens in decision-making.
  - Inform the community on trade-offs and outcomes through development.
  - Establish meaningful baseline data and, where possible, integrate digital and traditional engagement best practice.
- 2.10 The Council submitted a bid through the PropTech Engagement Fund to enable the Masterplan for Epsom Town Centre to be developed in conjunction with the community, enabling residents and businesses to shape the future of Epsom Town Centre. This will also help the Council to understand more about the capabilities of digitisation, and to support the learning and development of planning officers which could then be used in the preparation of the Local Plan.

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2.11 The Council was successful in securing the full fund allowance of £125,000. While the Masterplan will be developed in conjunction with this initiative, the Masterplan will be consulted on using more traditional methods to ensure that all sections of the community can inform and shape this.

### 2.12 Shared East Surrey Economic Development Initiative

2.12 Even before the challenges presented by COVID-19 and Brexit, there have been concerns that, despite its clear economic advantages, the East Surrey sub-regional economy was not meeting its full growth potential and has been losing ground in terms of productivity.

2.13 The East Surrey four local authorities have been successful in securing funding from the LEP to develop an initiative focussing on aligning economic development activity area to enable it to fulfil its growth potential, create a shared regional identity, enhance the service offer to the business community and communicate this new proposition effectively to businesses and stakeholders.

2.14 A successful bid for £125,000 was submitted to the LEP for the following areas of work to support economic development across the sub-region:

- Transport study
- Primary business research
- Deliberative workshops
- Place branding and marketing
- Advocacy

## **3 Risk Assessment**

### Legal or other duties

#### 3.1 Equality Impact Assessment

3.1.1 None arising from this report.

#### 3.2 Crime & Disorder

3.2.1 None arising from this report.

#### 3.3 Safeguarding

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3.3.1 None arising from this report.

### 3.4 Dependencies

3.4.1 The preparation of an Epsom Town Centre Masterplan is dependent on utilising the funding that has been awarded. It will form a key part of the Local Plan evidence base to inform the strategy around how Epsom Town Centre will change over the next 15 years.

3.4.2 The coordination of potential development opportunity sites within Epsom Town Centre with the necessary supporting infrastructure is dependent on developing a strategic and cohesive masterplan.

3.4.3 The successful bids from the LEP to develop the Epsom Town Centre Masterplan and the PropTech Engagement Fund are intrinsically linked enabling the masterplan to be developed in conjunction with the community, enabling residents and businesses to shape the future of Epsom Town Centre.

3.4.4 The Shared East Surrey Economic Development Initiative is dependent on working collaboratively with other East Surrey local authority partners and businesses.

### 3.5 Other

3.5.1 None arising from this report.

## 4 Financial Implications

4.1 Financial implications are set-out in the body of the report. The funding has been awarded and must be utilised in accordance with the terms and conditions of the respective awards.

**Section 151 Officer's comments:** The proposals in this report are fully externally funded. With no additional funding required from the Council, the proposed workstreams can be considered and determined by Licensing & Planning Policy Committee.

## 5 Legal Implications

5.1 There are no direct legal implications. The funding must be spent for the purposes that it has been awarded.

5.2 **Legal Officer's comments:** none arising from this report

## 6 Policies, Plans & Partnerships

6.1 **Council's Key Priorities:** The following Key Priorities are engaged:

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- 6.2 The Masterplan will contribute towards delivering the Council's Vision and objectives identified in its Four-Year Plan.
- 6.3 The digital consultation enabled by the PropTech Engagement Fund supports the Council's Smart and Connected key theme
- 6.4 The Shared East Surrey Economic Development Initiative will support the Council's Opportunity & Prosperity key theme
- 6.5 **Service Plans:** The matter is included within the current Service Delivery Plan.
- 6.6 **Climate & Environmental Impact of recommendations:**
- 6.7 The masterplan itself has a key role in identifying how Epsom Town Centre can change over the next 15 years having regard to climate and environmental objectives.
- 6.8 **Sustainability Policy & Community Safety Implications:**
- 6.9 The masterplan has a role in identifying how Epsom Town Centre can achieve sustainable development.
- 6.10 **Partnerships:**
- 6.11 The Council will work with the community and multiple stakeholders on the preparation of the masterplan including key partners and stakeholders such as landowners and the County Council.
- 6.12 The Shared East Surrey Economic Development Initiative is dependent on working collaboratively with other East Surrey local authority partners and businesses.

## 7 Background papers

- 7.1 The documents referred to in compiling this report are as follows:

### **Previous reports:**

- None

### **Other papers:**

- None