

Equality Impact Assessment Level 3 FULL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Accrington Area Action Plan

Executive Summary

The Accrington Area Action Plan (AAP) is a formal Development Plan Document (DPD) and sets out the statutory planning policy for how Accrington town centre will change over the next 10-20 years. The APP does not just focus upon setting the policy framework against which planning applications will be assessed, but also considers how the regeneration of the town centre should be proactively delivered and co-ordinated by the public and private sectors in partnership.

As the AAP is a statutory document, the document along with a wide range of supporting documents and evidence base will be submitted to the Secretary of State for a decision on the 'soundness of the plan'. Together with the Core Strategy, the AAP will be the first Development Plan Document to be produced by the Council.

Background

The need to develop an AAP for Accrington stems from the Accrington Town Centre Strategy (2005 – 2008) and its six strategic objectives including:

- Strengthening the Retail Position;
- Becoming a Visitor Destination;
- Enhancing the Quality of the Environment;
- Improving Access, Movement and Transport;
- Promoting Investment and Business Development; &
- Improving Educational and Training Opportunities

The strategy identified the need to develop a Masterplan for Accrington Town Centre which would provide a conceptual roadmap for its regeneration and provide a firm evidence base for future planning policy direction in order for the centre to continue to serve the changing needs of the local community, businesses and visitors alike.

The Accrington Town Centre masterplan produced by Urbed was approved by Cabinet in July 2008 as a conceptual framework. The original aims of the Consultant's Brief given to URBED were to provide: -

- A vision and image for the town centre to deliver future prosperity and make a statement of expectations;
- A detailed Masterplan for the town centre based on an assessment of options;
- Solutions to the long standing issues including road system improvements and a site for the new bus station;

- An action plan of key projects and site development opportunities which will act as drivers with immediate action priorities;
- Identify early wins to stimulate investment and provide a platform for long-term sustainability;
- Proposals for enhancing the quality of the environment/design;
- A schedule of costings for each proposal within the Masterplan and recommendations for funding; and
- Proposals for effective delivery of the Masterplan.

Methodology and Sources of Data

The AAP process began in 2007 when the original town centre masterplan was undertaken by planning consultants Urbed. There has been a wide range of stakeholder engagement which has been recorded and used in developing the details of the AAP.

The direction of the AAP has been shaped by the following factors building upon the Masterplanning process:

- The policy context (national, regional and local planning policies);
- The Sustainable Community Strategy and other relevant Borough Strategies;
- The findings of specialist studies;
- Stakeholder and community engagement;
- Development pressures; &
- Sustainability Appraisal of the likely social, economic and environmental effects of the Plan including the need for sustainable development, to protect the quality of life and ensure access for all.

Assessment on Impact on Equality

Equality Group	Potential Adverse Impact	Comments
Race, Religion and belief	No	
Gender	No	
Disability	Yes	There are a wide range of development opportunities presented as part of the AAP which will hopefully materialise in new physical developments or

		improvements to existing buildings, roads and facilities within the town. Any new development proposals will be subject to meeting requirements of the Disability and Discrimination Act 1992 (amended 2005)
Sexual Orientation	No	
Age	No	

Consideration of Alternative Approaches/Mitigation of Negative Impact

The AAP addresses these key issues and provides the spatial framework to guide future development and improvement. It involves a pro-active approach to promoting and managing change to ensure that Accrington remains a thriving and sustainable town centre. Failure to take action and to plan for growth will result in stagnation and loss of investment, pressure for inappropriate development and out-of-town development.

Monitoring Arrangements

In order for the AAP to be considered 'sound' it must be able to demonstrate that the plan is deliverable. An 'Implementation' section has been completed in the AAP which lists the methods by which the plan will be implemented. A delivery strategy is put forward with a 'town centre development board' which would consist of key council officers to ensure the implementation of and delivery of the AAP and its detailed briefs.

As part of the delivery, the Council have undertaken an exercise based on a 'Impact Matrix' of projects which could be delivered over the first 3 years. These are clearly shown in the AAP under Phase 1 projects.

The plan will be monitored on an annual basis and a table of 'performance indicators' have been listed in the AAP which will be followed as part of any monitoring.

The AAP will also be monitored in terms of its performance against the objectives and targets included in the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) to assess its contribution towards sustainable development. This will help to determine whether policies and objectives need to be amended or replaced if adverse effects are identified.

Formal Consultation

Statutory requirements under the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008 mean that all consultation throughout the process of the document should be publicly available and details of all reports can be found on the Council's website.

A separate report is available on all the consultation which was carried out prior to the AAP being published, a further report is available listing all the comments received during the 'publication' stage and what the Council's responses are.

What's next (could be subject to change)

Submission of the AAP to the Secretary of State	December 2010
Pre- hearing meeting with an appointed Inspector	February 2011
Examination in Public	April 2011
Await for final report from the Inspector on the 'soundness' of the AAP	July 2011

Publication of the EIA

The AAP will be available on the Council's website together with all the relevant background and baseline studies which have been completed as part of the production of the document.

Hard copies will also be available in the following public places: Accrington Library, Accrington Town Hall, Accrington Market Hall, Council offices at Scaitcliffe House, Council offices at Cannon Street.

Conclusions

The AAP document does not show any adverse impact on the equality groups. The AAP will bring about change, but the changes presented in the policy framework will help to regenerate the town centre over the next 10-15 years.

The AAP status provides the development direction with the necessary statutory weight it needs to be developed and acts as a vehicle for guiding and attracting private and public sector investment together with wider planning tie in with the Hyndburn Local Development Framework.

The documents need to progress in order for it to be part of the Local Development Framework and be used to support any planning applications which may come in for these sites.

This Full Impact Assessment has been completed to the best of our knowledge

Details of Officer Completing Full Impact Assessment

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Signature:	
Date	October 2010

Details of Departmental Equalities Representative

Name:	
Post Title	
Department/Section	
Contact Number	
Signature:	
Date	

If any actions have been identified, please indicate date of review:
(This is usually 12 months after the initial EIA has taken place)