

DRAFT UXBRIDGE TOWN CENTRE VISION FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Cabinet Member & Portfolio	Cllr Eddie Lavery Cabinet Member for Residents' Services
Responsible Officer	Corporate Director of Central Services
Report Author & Directorate	Julia Johnson, Director of Planning, Regeneration and Environment Central Services Directorate
Papers with report	Appendix 1 – Draft Uxbridge Vision Document (circulated separately, copies online and Group Offices) Appendix 2 – Summary Consultation Document

HEADLINES

Summary	To seek approval to commence public engagement on the draft Uxbridge Town Centre Vision
Putting our Residents First Delivering on the Council Strategy 2022-2026	This report supports our ambition for residents / the Council of: Enjoy access to green spaces, leisure activities, culture and arts This report supports our commitments to residents of: A Thriving Economy
Financial Cost	There are no direct financial costs associated with the recommendations to this report. The proposed work will be funded from existing General Fund budget resources within the Strategic Planning and Regeneration service.
Select Committee	Residents' Service Select Committee
Relevant Ward(s)	Uxbridge, Hillingdon West

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Cabinet:

- 1) **Agrees the draft Uxbridge Town Centre Vision (Appendix 1) and summary document (Appendix 2) for public engagement for a period of at least eight weeks to secure residents' feedback on the proposed Vision.**
- 2) **Authorises the Corporate Director for Central Services, in conjunction with the Cabinet Member for Residents' Services, to make any minor textual changes to the Vision, prior to the public engagement exercise.**
- 3) **Notes that following the period of public engagement, and the views received, a final Vision will be reported back to Cabinet for approval.**

Reasons for recommendation

The draft Uxbridge Town Centre Vision has been developed following a period of initial evidence gathering and engagement with over 800 local stakeholders in the summer of 2023. The draft Vision document seeks to establish a direction for future development and activity within Uxbridge town centre. Public engagement on the draft Vision document will provide the opportunity to test the emerging proposals with local stakeholders before the Vision is adopted by the Council.

Alternative options considered / risk management

The Vision could be adopted without further engagement, but this would not build on the positive community response following the initial engagement exercise.

Select Committee comments

The Residents' Services Select Committee will consider and provide any comments on the Vision, as part of the engagement exercise, at its meeting in November 2024.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1. Background

In response to the 'Thriving Economy' commitment in the Council Strategy 2022-2026 and as part of setting out a new spatial vision for the borough in the emerging Local Plan, the council is seeking to create a new blueprint for Uxbridge town centre. Uxbridge is the largest town centre in Hillingdon and is intended to serve a wider metropolitan catchment area. It plays a crucial role in the overall economy of the borough with a mixture of offices, retail and restaurants that are well connected by public transportation.

However, Uxbridge town centre, like many urban centres, faces several economic challenges. These include increasing retail vacancy rates, competition from larger retail hubs, changes in office space demand and the need for diversification beyond traditional retail. Addressing these economic challenges requires a coordinated response. To this end, Hillingdon Council has commissioned a vision for Uxbridge town centre, led by Allies and Morrison Urban Practitioners, supported by Avison Young, Urban Flow, Brunel University, and JA Projects. The Vision aims to provide a strategic framework for the future of Uxbridge, addressing movement, development, public realm strategies, and short-term revitalisation actions. Community engagement has been a crucial aspect, with feedback shaping the proposals.

2. The Emerging Vision

The proposed vision for Uxbridge town centre is to transform it into a vibrant, inclusive space where people can live, work, visit, play, and socialise. The town will focus on sustainability, healthy living, excellent walking and cycling routes, and high-quality public transport. It aims to blend its historical legacy with contemporary needs, fostering a sense of community and inclusivity.

3. Key Issues and Themes

- I. **Economic Resilience:** While not declining, the town centre's economy is vulnerable with high vacancy rates. The vision emphasises diversifying the economic offer, repurposing spaces to meet changing demands, and better serving residents' needs.
 - **Principles:** Diversify the offer, repurpose to meet demands, better serve residents.
 - **Strategic Moves:** Create a leisure and culture focus, support the office market, establish the Civic Centre as a community hub, improve public transport, and introduce residential spaces.
- II. **Serving Local Communities:** The town centre needs to better cater to its local population, addressing the demand for leisure and cultural activities.
 - **Principles:** Enhance community engagement, provide diverse activities.
 - **Strategic Moves:** Engage local educational institutions, support community-oriented spaces and services.
- III. **Enhancing the Environment:** The town's public realm and built environment have potential but are currently underutilised. Improvements in transport infrastructure, green spaces, and overall town character are essential.
 - **Principles:** Restore connections, enhance public spaces.
 - **Strategic Moves:** Improve cycling and bus connections, introduce green spaces, and revitalise key areas like the High Street and Windsor Street.

4. Frameworks

The draft vision includes detailed frameworks for movement, land use, and sustainability:

- **Movement Framework:** Focuses on improving transport connectivity, safety, and accessibility.
- **Land Use Framework:** Proposes mixed-use development to foster economic and social vitality.
- **Sustainability Framework:** Emphasises green infrastructure, energy efficiency, and climate resilience.

5. Delivery

The Vision is also supported by a delivery strategy that outlines short-term and long-term actions to realise the vision. Short-term actions include physical and non-physical interventions to attract more people and create a stronger identity for the town centre. Continuous community engagement and coordinated efforts across various domains will be crucial for successful implementation.

6. Proposed Engagement

It is proposed to undertake public engagement on the emerging Vision which will be led by the council's Strategic Planning and Regeneration Service. The engagement will seek to gain feedback on the proposed approach, add additional comments and build support for the ongoing delivery of the vision. An executive summary of the vision has also been produced to ensure the draft vision is accessible to wide range of stakeholders.

The engagement will primarily be carried out online via survey and workshops, including activities within Uxbridge town centre. The engagement on the draft Vision will be promoted using Hillingdon People, the council's website and social media. It will also be promoted using a network of community and cultural organisations including the Uxbridge BID.

7. Outputs

Following the engagement, the responses received will be summarised in an Engagement report and any proposed updates will be presented to Cabinet to consider as part of a subsequent adoption report.

8. Financial Implications

There are no direct financial costs associated with the recommendations to this report. The proposed work will be funded from the existing General Fund budget within the Strategic Planning and Regeneration Service.

RESIDENT BENEFIT & CONSULTATION

The benefit or impact upon Hillingdon residents, service users and communities?

The proposed Vision for Uxbridge town centre will promote coordinated investment which will have important economic and environmental benefits as well as providing opportunities for the provision of new homes.

Consultation carried out or required

As set out in the main body of the report.

CORPORATE CONSIDERATIONS

Corporate Finance

Corporate Finance have reviewed this report and concur with the Financial Implications set out above, noting there are no direct financial implications associated with the recommendations contained in this report. However, it is noted that the new Vision, once finalised and reported back to Cabinet will need to consider the financial implications for the Council at this time.

Legal

Approval of the vision is a Cabinet function. The vision will not form part of the Council's development plan but would be a material consideration in the Council's decision-making as the Local Planning Authority.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL