

I am Bob Comlay and I am here representing Havant Civic Society:

We share your objectives and aspirations for the regeneration of Havant and welcome the adoption of an interventionist approach for delivery. We also welcome the statement that: "Where necessary the Council will utilise its Compulsory Purchase Powers to bring forward schemes and will make the required budget available."

The Cabinet have heard that 'Communication is crucial for the regeneration programme' and Havant Civic Society believes that openness is fundamental to that communication. To this end, we see no justification for the exemption of entire documents; redaction of detail where necessary should suffice.

### **Turning to the content:**

We have taken a high level view of the strategy presented and are cautious about placing too much focus on some of the visionary detail. At this early stage in the programme, spending too much time 'down in the weeds' simply distracts attention from more fundamental concerns regarding overall programme governance.

The document defines five Regeneration Areas, rather awkwardly attaching the Civic Plaza area to Havant Town Centre.

In the six outline 'Vision' statements, we note that the Civic Plaza Area is now conveniently singled out for attention.

Having arbitrarily included the Civic Plaza area in a 'regeneration area', the first of the three Regeneration Programme phases appears to be taken up exclusively by delivery of change in this space.

For Phase 1 to be viable and acceptable, it must deliver tangible demonstration of the new 'interventionist approach' and demonstrate commitment to the use of Compulsory Purchase. Phase 1 must include at least one measurable 'quick win' for each of the five regeneration areas.

**For Havant Town Centre**, we would seek:

- Immediate action on 44-54 West Street to end a decade of dereliction
- Urgent intervention with central and regional government to facilitate the replacement of the footbridge between the Civic Plaza area and the Town Centre. This lies at the heart of the town gateway, spanning the 'aesthetically

pleasing railway station' 'to seamlessly and effortlessly link the campus to the other character areas of the Town Centre'. Words taken from the Vision.

We accept that bringing these regeneration projects into Phase 1 will require significant investment, but through demonstration of real and visible progress in each of the regeneration areas, the programme will gain the trust and support of the community.

**On the subject of Governance and Management**, we have two significant issues:

1. Regeneration programme detail must be freed from exemption, redacted only where commercially necessary and only at the essential detail level.
2. The Governance Structure chart omits detail of External Stakeholders.

In the interests of constructive and effective two-way communication, we expect to see local communities represented at the External Stakeholder level. While our primary focus is on the needs of the community using Havant Town Centre, we also expect to see representation of the professional communities who provide for our health, education and safety.

### **Turning to Havant Town Centre**

The vision statement notes the importance of the 'historic core of the town centre', but our objections to the removal of East Street from the 'Town Centre' in the Draft Local Plan remain ignored. *We believe that East Street's recent promising self-regeneration will be at risk if the Local Plan continues to downgrade its importance in the eyes of the Council.* Putting East Street back in the Town Centre and retaining accessible parking in the East Pallant area are critical factors for both businesses and less able residents.

### **In conclusion**

If the prolonged lack of investment in renewal in the Borough is to be reversed, then demonstration of intent and evidence of progress is essential. You must bring the communities with you through direct engagement at the stakeholder level. Without that involvement, and without genuine quick wins in each of the regeneration areas, the communities will be left seeing at least five more years of decay and stagnation while Phase 1 may appear to deliver just another expensive upgrade to the Civic Plaza area.