



## Full Council Meeting October 12<sup>th</sup> 2021

### Report Title : Community Renewal Fund Update

#### Noting

Report for noting by Full Council

#### Purpose of the Report

To update Members on the progress of a bid in to the Government's Community Renewal Fund

#### 1.0 Background Information

1.1 At the Council meeting held in May 2021 Members approved the Council's inclusion in a bid being led by Derbyshire County Council to the Government's Community Fund. As a reminder, Belper is one of six Derbyshire Towns included in the bid document, the others being Whaley Bridge, Chapel en le Frith, New Mills, Ashbourne, and Wirksworth.

#### 2.0 Progress of the Bid

2.1 The following text is lifted directly from the bid document developed by Derbyshire County Council :

Six towns have been identified for the pilot. Part of this progressive approach by DCC , a menu of support is available to each of the participating towns as set out below:

1. Identify a minimum of 6 vacant premises in 6 individual towns providing meanwhile activities such as display and workshop space, providing a base for 3 new Business Advisors, the County Council is employing as part of Vision Derbyshire, and event and networking space. It is also proposed that the units can support the development of mobility hubs offering cycle maintenance classes, cycle training and stabling for e-cargo bikes.
2. Procure the production of regeneration frameworks reflecting local context, identity and need. These will be documents based on extensive consultation with residents, businesses, Town and District Councils and other key agencies, which will set out a road map for town centre renewal. The frameworks/masterplans will identify:
  - a. opportunities for economic growth, infrastructure improvements including connectivity maximising low carbon mobility
  - b. green energy low carbon projects with pilot initiatives deliverable during the pilot programme, potentially accessing funding from the DCC Green Entrepreneurs Fund
  - c. enable this piloting wifi smart town proposals
  - d. set out a programme for place management
3. Derbyshire Economic Partnership purchased access to the Shopappy platform during 2020 as a response to Covid 19 lockdown to provide an outlet for town centre businesses across Derbyshire 27 market towns. The application seeks to deliver a second phase supporting Shoppappy businesses develop further digitisation skills.



4. Our Derbyshire towns are rich in cultural and heritage resources and creative potential. Our creative strand re:Create will harness these assets to support high street diversification, build distinctive town offer, encourage innovation and vibrancy and drive footfall to our towns.

A wrap around programme of Learning and Capacity Building will support longer term sustainability, focussing on

- Increasing place based intelligence and data
- Increasing knowledge and expertise in place management
- Building future governance arrangements for place management

2.2 The bid was submitted in May 2021 and a decision was expected by the end of the summer as the Government had indicated that any funding would need to be spent by March 2022.

2.3 However, no decision has been forthcoming and with the Comprehensive Spending Review due to take place later this month it is being assumed that the Community Renewal Fund is being subsumed into other funding streams. There is talk for example, of "County Deals" where County Councils agree with Government a range of targets for accelerated growth, housing, carbon reduction etc in exchange for short term additional funding.

2.4 Furthermore, it is known that some Councils in certain parts of the country were considering making a Legal Challenge to the Community Renewal and Levelling Up Funds and had been in discussion with Government about their concerns which could also have contributed to a delay.

2.5 For now the 6 Town Councils and Derbyshire County Council are basically waiting for a Government announcement on the timescale for any funding.

2.6 In the meantime the County Council have agreed to move forward with the procurement of the regeneration frameworks aspect of the bid at their own risk and have appointed a project manager to co ordinate the process. A procurement brief is being developed and all of the Towns have been asked to supply narrative on the issues and outcomes which the Regeneration Framework can help address. A copy of the narrative supplied by Belper is attached

#### **Legislation**

None directly.

**Accessibility Implications** - *Have the recommendations in this report taken in to account the need for Council services and information to be accessible for people with a Disability and if so how is this illustrated.*

Accessibility and Equality considerations will be addressed on a project by project basis.

An EIA has been completed for the bid by Derbyshire County Council



**Climate Emergency Implications** - *Demonstrate any environmental consequences and how these would be addressed*

A number of the proposed projects will have specific environmental and climate change ambitions, particularly work around the innovation frameworks to ensure Green Economic Growth.

**Financial Implications**

As outlined above, if successful, the bid will mean a sizeable amount of investment in Belper possibly leading to further funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund in future bid rounds. This will become clearer once the Comprehensive Spending Review has taken place

The Town Council will most likely need to provide in kind support via Member and officer time

**Recommendation(s)**

**It is recommended that Full Council:**

1. Note the contents of this report
2. Receives a further update once the outcome of the bid is known

**Reasons for recommendation(s)**

The Council has an opportunity to be involved in a programme of projects which will invest in the prosperity and vitality of the Town and benefit its communities



# Community Renewal Fund

## REGENERATION PLAN BRIEF FOR THE TOWN OF BELPER JULY 2021

### Background

The impact of COVID 19, and to a certain extent Brexit, is accelerating a number of social, economic and cultural changes affecting our Town Centres and communities. These changes are being driven by a move to a more digital society, the negative impacts of which affect our social interactions, cultural enrichment, and day to day work, shopping and leisure habits. For our Town and local centres there is a danger of them being hollowed out, losing their economic, social, and cultural vitality, resulting in an overall impoverishment of our social structures, our ability to collaborate, and stifling creativity and innovation.

Therefore, in common with what many commentators have been saying, there is a need to re imagine our Town Centres, and deliver an economic vision and enhanced experience which will counteract the erosion of valued positive social and cultural norms by the “stay home and click” paradox. This challenge also represents a huge opportunity using the theme of “Building Back Better” to create Town Centres which better integrate the approach to commerce, innovation, work, and leisure, and facilitate improved cultural enrichment and community well being. All towns have individual characteristics which together reveal their USPs and there is an opportunity to enhance these at scale to strengthen subregional identity and build greater economic resilience.

Furthermore, there is a once in a generation opportunity to align this work with that needed to develop a greener, more sustainable ecosystem in our towns, where we make the best use of technological innovation and integrate it with the community empowerment and well being gains brought about by tackling the climate change challenge as a whole community. By grasping this opportunity and aligning the behavioural and technological changes required our communities will be at the forefront of meeting and exceeding our net zero targets.

### Strategic Context

Belper has a recently adopted Neighbourhood Plan which provides an effective, locally developed planning and enabling framework. Its significance is enhanced as the Planning Authority, Amber Valley Borough Council, does not have an up to date Local Plan, Alongside this the Town Council has developed a Corporate Plan which sets out a number of ambitions which link to the outcomes identified below.

## The Challenge for Belper

Belper and in particular its Town Centre is regarded by some observers as a success story; a place of independent shops, pleasant surroundings and a vibrant community. Despite this there is evidence that Covid 19 and possibly Brexit is having a negative impact, with more empty shops, the gradual disappearance of banks, and some employment and key heritage locations failing to be positively exploited to create wealth and stimulate innovation. The town also suffers from the negative impacts of traffic on the A6, has a main shopping thoroughfare still accessible by vehicular traffic and little effective co ordination of how future housing, leisure, commercial and heritage features will be delivered.

The town, in common with a number of similar towns in Derbyshire, needs to respond, to develop a new vision for the future, a strengthened and more compelling USP, and provide opportunities for investment and innovation. An approach which incorporates Green credentials is particularly attractive as it provides an opportunity to also use its powerful and cherished industrial heritage in a modern setting. Belper was at the centre of the first green industrial revolution which effectively harnessed clean energy but more importantly built a sustainable ecosystem around it which, as well as delivering economic benefits, also improved social cohesion and improved living standards. In delivering a modern version of this paradigm, Belper would be able to address the challenges it faces and at the same time provide added value to the status of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage site by using the past to help design the future.

### Key Outcomes

There are a number of outcomes which the Town wishes to deliver which include the following :

- A more welcoming High Street core which injects vitality into the area and preserves the space as the vibrant heart of the community
- The development of “clusters” in the green economy and creative digital sectors to help stimulate innovation and enterprise
- Improved connection between spaces within the Town Centre to promote the use of walking and cycling for residents and visitors
- Regeneration of key brownfield and Heritage sites in the Town to enhance prosperity and enhance the setting of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage site
- Reimagine the use of Industrial land to broaden the range of employment uses and create innovation space.
- New Housing which successfully implements green layout, design and materials
- Better use of Transport Infrastructure assets to reduce vehicle movements and emissions and encourage green modes of transport ( The town has a Train station and a Bus Station )

- Improvements to Green infrastructure and access to nature in order to better utilise natural capital assets and enhance their setting
- Develop opportunities for the Town to support local sustainable food production and a reconnection to the rural farming community
- To lead in improving key economic indicators such as GVA per worker, business survival, apprenticeships, as well as Carbon Zero targets and sector growth in the green and digital creative economies

### **Outcome Characteristics**

There are some significant outcome characteristics which need to be delivered as part of the process of addressing these outcomes :

- The identification of projects and initiatives able to attract private and public sector investment and align with the emerging requirements of the UK Shared Prosperity and Levelling Up Funds
- Engagement with a wide variety of stakeholders including leading edge private sector innovators in the Green and Digital economies
- Community leadership and ownership of interventions to help drive positive change over the longer term
- The ability to share learning and develop common approaches to interventions which will assist other towns and have the potential of delivering economies of scale

### **Delivering the Outcomes – “Not just a Masterplan”**

To respond positively to Belper’s challenges and deliver the outcomes identified above the Council requires the delivery of 2 key outputs:-

1. A Green Masterplanning document which incorporates a powerful set of Green ambitions which not only delivers step change innovation in the physical environment but also demonstrably places the community at the centre of helping to own and steer change. The plan must also:
  - Be capable of attracting key innovators in the private sector willing to pilot new initiatives borrowing some of their inspiration from examples such as Toyota’s “woven city” and the “Smart Cities”.
  - Demonstrate how heritage, the natural and built environment and market segmentation around retail, commerce, Leisure and Recreation, Arts and culture successfully merge and integrate to produce an enriched Town Centre experience.
  - Help create a strong and unique USP for the Town but also complements other towns in Derbyshire to help facilitate a “whole Derbyshire” offer



- The plan could take the form of a supplementary planning document ( SPD ) or be more of a standalone document. The key to deciding on the precise form will be the ability to deliver the second key output as set out below

2. An investment prospectus identifying key interventions which are fully costed, suitable to attract private sector interest, and link to the emerging priorities of the emerging UK shared prosperity fund and other funding streams. The prospectus to also identify a number of potential pilot projects which could be used to develop further business cases, build relationships with the private sector, and share learning.

### Masterplan Geography

Below is a map of the Town which indicates the Masterplan area and includes the land within the red line area. The Masterplan work may well reveal the need to extend the area outwards and this will require discussion to ensure that potential opportunities are not missed





## **Detailed Requirements and process for Expressions of Interest**

We are seeking expressions of interest from suitably qualified and inspirational consultant teams to lead in the production of two key outputs outlined above. You must also clearly demonstrate your understanding of the challenges and the key outcomes and also the approach required to the engagement of stakeholders and the Community

We require a team with the flair and enthusiasm necessary to excite us and if you are interested in competing for some or all of this work please read and consider the following detailed requirements before submitting expressions of interest in strict accordance with the requirements set out below.

### **Schedule of actions**

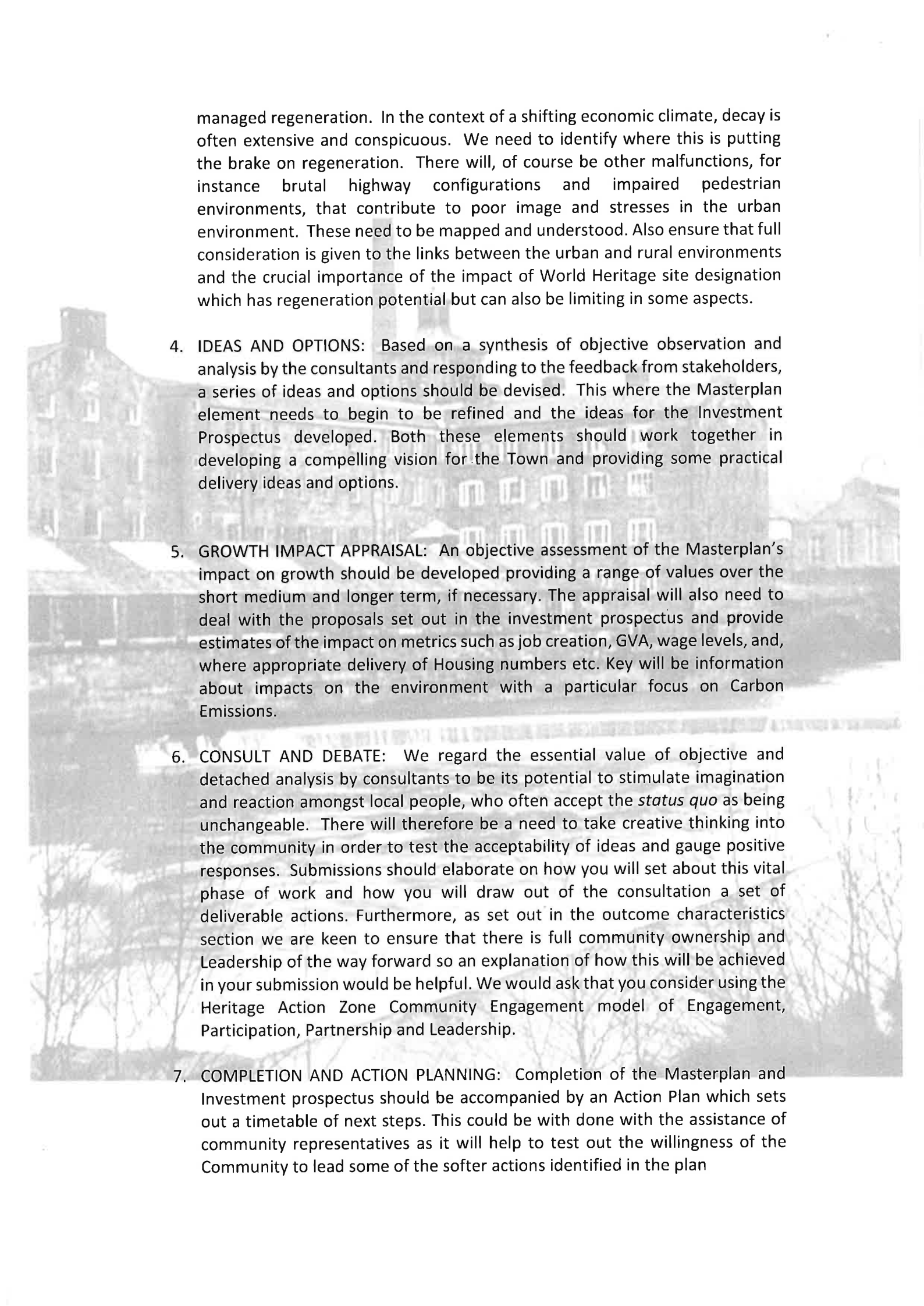
There follows a list of actions that will be expected to take place in the course of the work. They are listed in a rough sequence thought to be most effective but submissions should elaborate on how your team will approach the sequence and include the possibility of doubling back where necessary to review impressions and conclusions. You may also suggest additional actions or amended descriptions provided the fee budget is not exceeded as a result.

1. **OBSERVATION:** A critical and detached analysis of the study area is required. Strengths and weaknesses will be detected and an outsider's view should be formed on which interventions are desirable and practical. These observations must also be made in light of the picture we have provided of the Town and its context. We expect that this phase will involve a number of onsite visits and walks around the Town.
2. **ENQUIRY:** This action comprises two complementary forms of enquiry. First is the scrutiny and digestion of documentary information about the study area and its context – a list of relevant documents relevant to this desk study action can be provided. Crucially, however, we expect your team to be able to refer to other pieces of work and associated studies which help to tackle the challenges presented above.

The parallel exercise involves engaging with stakeholders, including Community representatives in dialogue about the observations in 1 above – what could be termed 'exchange of perceptions'. We can assist with identifying appropriate stakeholders but the skills of the successful consultants are expected to include means of identifying and establishing contact with stakeholders, so your submission should elaborate on this.

You will wish to carry out your own research on items such as landholding interests in order to engage with all relevant stakeholders.

3. **HELPING TO STIMULATE CHANGE:** Image is regarded to be a major, if not the predominant, factor in the receptiveness of places to both spontaneous and



managed regeneration. In the context of a shifting economic climate, decay is often extensive and conspicuous. We need to identify where this is putting the brake on regeneration. There will, of course be other malfunctions, for instance brutal highway configurations and impaired pedestrian environments, that contribute to poor image and stresses in the urban environment. These need to be mapped and understood. Also ensure that full consideration is given to the links between the urban and rural environments and the crucial importance of the impact of World Heritage site designation which has regeneration potential but can also be limiting in some aspects.

4. **IDEAS AND OPTIONS:** Based on a synthesis of objective observation and analysis by the consultants and responding to the feedback from stakeholders, a series of ideas and options should be devised. This where the Masterplan element needs to begin to be refined and the ideas for the Investment Prospectus developed. Both these elements should work together in developing a compelling vision for the Town and providing some practical delivery ideas and options.
5. **GROWTH IMPACT APPRAISAL:** An objective assessment of the Masterplan's impact on growth should be developed providing a range of values over the short medium and longer term, if necessary. The appraisal will also need to deal with the proposals set out in the investment prospectus and provide estimates of the impact on metrics such as job creation, GVA, wage levels, and, where appropriate delivery of Housing numbers etc. Key will be information about impacts on the environment with a particular focus on Carbon Emissions.
6. **CONSULT AND DEBATE:** We regard the essential value of objective and detached analysis by consultants to be its potential to stimulate imagination and reaction amongst local people, who often accept the *status quo* as being unchangeable. There will therefore be a need to take creative thinking into the community in order to test the acceptability of ideas and gauge positive responses. Submissions should elaborate on how you will set about this vital phase of work and how you will draw out of the consultation a set of deliverable actions. Furthermore, as set out in the outcome characteristics section we are keen to ensure that there is full community ownership and Leadership of the way forward so an explanation of how this will be achieved in your submission would be helpful. We would ask that you consider using the Heritage Action Zone Community Engagement model of Engagement, Participation, Partnership and Leadership.
7. **COMPLETION AND ACTION PLANNING:** Completion of the Masterplan and Investment prospectus should be accompanied by an Action Plan which sets out a timetable of next steps. This could be with done with the assistance of community representatives as it will help to test out the willingness of the Community to lead some of the softer actions identified in the plan



