

Report to Portfolio Holder for Growth and Regeneration

Subject: Ambition Arnold, RIBA Stage 02 public consultation

Date: 20th of May 2025

Author: Assistant Director of Housing, Growth and Regeneration

Wards Affected

All

Purpose

To seek approval to undertake public and stakeholder consultation to inform the development of Ambition Arnold's RIBA Stage 02 plans for Arnold North.

Key Decision

No

Recommendation(s)

THAT:

- 1. Public and stakeholder engagement be undertaken to support the development of Ambition Arnold's RIBA Stage 02 plans for a new arts centre (including a theatre) leisure centre and library for Arnold North.**

1 Background

- 1.1 In 2022 the Council approved a budget of £200,000 to support the development of a town centre masterplan and feasibility works, branded Ambition Arnold.
- 1.2 The approval was based upon the understanding that to address the issues of decline in Arnold town centre a strategic masterplan was required on which to base a robust scheme for improvements that are deliverable and commercially and economically viable. The strategic plan providing a framework for future development and leveraging funding and investment.

- 1.3 In November 2023, the Council was successful in securing an additional £150,000 One Public Estate Programme 10 funding to extend and support the wider Ambition Arnold project.
- 1.4 In 2023 the Council appointed, through the SCAPE framework, Wilmott Dixon, to undertake the Ambition Arnold masterplan and relevant feasibility works to RIBA stage 02 (concept designs).
- 1.5 Wilmott Dixon's supply chain includes Leonard Design Architects who have been appointed to undertake a masterplan exercise. RIBA stage 02 drawings focussing on plans for a new arts centre (including a theatre) leisure centre and library are being finalised in preparation for the public and stakeholder consultation.
- 1.6 Ambition Arnold's Visionary Masterplan was approved by Cabinet on the 12th of December 2024. Work is underway to develop and complete a viable business case for the north of Arnold Town Centre.

2 Proposal

- 2.1 It is proposed that approval is given to undertake public consultation on Ambition Arnold's RIBA Stage 02 plans for Arnold North. The consultation will inform the final masterplan document that will be presented to Cabinet later in the Autumn 2025.
- 2.2 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken to inform the engagement approach (Appendix 1). This approach will include ensuring that RIBA stage 02 plans will be available to the public and stakeholders both online and at drop-in events at both the Arnold Library and at the Arnold Summer Fair on 21st June 2025.
- 2.3 A web page will also be made available to the public with an opportunity to submit opinions online or via a paper option including large print.
- 2.4 The Council is also intending to use established forums to update stakeholders and other groups such as the Youth Council, Seniors Group, Developers Forum, Gedling Business Partnership, South Place Based Partnership, etc.

3 Alternative Options

3.1 Do Nothing

The Council has the option of not undertaking consultation to inform the development of Ambition Arnold's RIBA Stage 02 plans for Arnold North. However, this option has been rejected on the basis that the Council has a statutory obligation to undertake a consultation. Under section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 ('the 1999 Act') there is a requirement for the Council to secure continuous improvement in the way its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness (known as the 'best value duty'). In order to decide how best to fulfil the best value duty, the Council has an obligation under section 3(2) of the 1999 Act to consult representatives of persons who use or are likely to use the services provided.

Furthermore, given that the Council undertook a consultation exercise in relation to the visionary masterplan it could be suggested that this established an expectation, and therefore an implied duty, to consult further, once more detail was added to this masterplan.

4 Financial Implications

- 4.1 The cost of the consultation materials is included in the Wilmott Dixon's contract that includes display boards and materials.

5 Legal Implications

- 5.1 Engagement with the local community and those who use or are likely to use the services subject to future change is required under the 1999 Act as part of the Council's best value duty as set out above. There may also be a legitimate expectation that the Council would consult and so in doing so the Council discharges this duty.

- 5.2 Consultation should be undertaken properly and should ensure the process is fair and considered. The principles of consultation should be followed ensuring the consultation is clear, concise, for a specified period, targeted, evaluated and the results communicated back to the community. Where consultation is not undertaken or not undertaken in a meaningful way this could expose the Council to the risk of challenge by means of Judicial Review.

6 Equalities Implications

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed to ensure that the consultation is inclusive to all groups.
- 6.2 The Council must comply with the public sector equality duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. By ensuring consultation with a wide range of people this would enable the Council to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it by encouraging participation in public life and enabling wide ranging views to shape the Arnold North masterplan and the future of Arnold North.

7 Carbon Reduction/Environmental Sustainability Implications

- 7.1 A Carbon Impact Assessment has been completed. The consultation wherever practical will use online materials and feedback options to minimise waste and carbon emissions.

8 Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix 1 - AA Riba 02 EIA
- 8.2 Appendix 2 - AA Riba 02 CIA

9 Background Papers

- 9.1 Ambition Arnold Visionary Masterplan Cabinet Report
- 9.2 Leader Decision - Arnold Town Masterplan

10 Reasons for Recommendations

- 10.1 The Council is seeking the views of residents and stakeholders to inform the development of an Arnold town masterplan. The masterplan is to provide a framework for regeneration, investment and funding for the future that can support the long-term sustainability and prosperity of the town.

Statutory Officer approval

Approved by:

Date:
On behalf of the Chief Financial Officer

Approved by:
Date:
On behalf of the Monitoring Officer