



North Tyneside Council

Culture and Leisure Sub Committee

Tuesday, 24 January 2023

Tuesday, 31 January 2023 Spirit of North Tyneside Wing, 2nd Floor, Wallsend
Customer First Centre, The Forum, NE28 8JR **commencing at 6.00 pm.**

Agenda Item	Page
1. Apologies for absence	
To receive any apologies for absence from the meeting	
2. Substitute Members	
To be notified of the appointment of any Substitute Members	
3. To Receive any Declarations of Interest and Notification of any Dispensations Granted	
You are invited to declare any registerable and/or non-registerable interests in matters appearing on the agenda, and the nature of that interest.	
You are also invited to disclose any dispensation in relation to any registerable and/or non-registerable interests that have been granted to you in respect of any matters appearing on the agenda.	
Please complete the Declarations of Interests card available at the meeting and return it to the Democratic Services Officer before leaving the meeting.	
4. Minutes	5 - 8
To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 2 November 2022.	
5. An Ambition for Wallsend	9 - 14
To present progress on the development of the Wallsend Masterplan (An Ambition for Wallsend) and the projects that relate to culture and leisure.	

Members of the public are entitled to attend this meeting and receive information about it. North Tyneside Council wants to make it easier for you to get hold of the information you need. We are able to provide our documents in alternative formats including Braille, audiotape, large print and alternative languages.

6. **Date and Time of Next Meeting**

6.00pm on Tuesday 7 March 2023.

Circulation overleaf ...

Members of the Culture and Leisure Sub Committee

Councillor Ken Barrie
Councillor Linda Bell
Councillor Davey Drummond
Councillor Joe Kirwin
Councillor Louise Marshall
Councillor Andy Newman

Councillor Gary Bell
Councillor Julie Cruddas (Chair)
Councillor Lisa Ferasin
Councillor Gary Madden
Councillor Pam McIntyre
Councillor Jane Shaw (Deputy Chair)

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Culture and Leisure Sub-Committee

2 November 2022

Present: Councillor J Cruddas (Chair)
Councillors G Bell, L Bell, D Drummond, L Ferasin,
J Kirwin, G Madden, L Marshall and J Shaw

C&L12/22 Substitute Members

There were no substitute members reported.

C&L13/22 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

There were no declarations of interest or dispensations reported.

C&L14/22 Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 13 October 2022 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

C&L15/22 Community Hubs in North Tyneside

Consideration was given to a report and presentation by the Head of Sport, Leisure and Libraries, and the Customer Service and Digital Strategy Manager, which provided an overview of proposals for a new Community Hubs Strategy.

Cabinet had agreed to the development of Community Hubs in May 2019 and again in February 2021 as part of the wider customer services programme. The idea of a hub was a one stop shop for the community offering not only advice and information, but services and activities that met the needs of locals.

The Authority had four Customer First buildings and two further large community centres across our borough. The pandemic had shifted the way people used these buildings and why they used them. The Authority needed to change and adapt to ensure these buildings were still relevant and still met local needs. In addition, in Our North Tyneside Plan, the Authority had made a commitment to be “value for money” and to ensure that the way it worked offered best value.

The presentation covered where the Authority was currently in the development of Community Hubs; the Authority’s vision of what a Community Hub should be; what the Authority had done so far, and what it planned to do next.

In terms of the planned framework for Community Hubs, there would be six main physical access points across the borough for connecting people with community assets and services (advice, information, and signposting), providing services, coordinating and connecting with other ‘spoke’ hubs.

The intention was to support the ambitions of the ‘Our North Tyneside Plan’ by increasing individual economic prosperity, improving digital skills and access, increasing reading and literacy, increasing social networks/community activity, increasing participation within the local community, promoting community cohesion, and being visible and consistent. The proposed Community Hubs were:

- North Shields Customer First Centre
- Whitley Bay Customer First Centre
- Wallsend Customer First Centre
- Killingworth Customer First Centre (White Swan Centre)
- John Willie Sams Centre
- Oxford Centre

The community hubs model and design principles were based on being Inclusive; A trusted, recognised offer, adding social value, strategically aligned, value for money, and collectively owned & produced.

In creating a new community hubs strategy, some key changes to consider included a dedicated team focussed on that hub and its community, looking at where and how people worked, integrated welcome and help points, increased access to key services at all 6 sites, making every contact count, visible and connected, considering a specialism for each hub, and an enhanced digital offer.

With regard to the timetable for engagement on the new Community Hubs Strategy, this was taking place during October and November 2022 with Elected Members, Trade Union colleagues, Library and Customer First Centre customer service teams, and Partners State of the Area Event (cost of Living). Development of the Strategy would continue between November 2022 and March 2023 thereafter, submitted to Cabinet for consideration and approval. Beyond that, work with teams and partners would continue to create and implement structures. Changes would take time and should be fluid at each Hub.

During discussions on the emerging plans for the proposed new Community Hub Strategy, Members made reference to the drop off in numbers during recent times, but were keen on the idea that Customer First Centres (CFC) were linked to libraries where possible, as a joined-up facility for promoting reading, digital use in employment searches and community use.

Reference was also made to the importance of increasing footfall and efficient use of CFCs across the borough, by promoting the many and varied services available to people who may not be aware of these in their area. It was explained that work was underway on promoting the visibility and branding of the centres in liaison with the Authority's Communications Team.

Clarification was sought on the options for the unoccupied spaces in CFCs and libraries which could potentially be used for the arts, classes, community groups, jobs markets etc., also charging and funding policies for rented spaces. It was explained that individual teams would manage each centre, with a balance between usage, funding and charging policies to suit the needs at each of the centres, and community partnership-wise, 'A social contract'.

Members commented that if the six CFCs were heavily specialising then people would potentially still travel to other areas in the borough for specific facilities or information. It was explained that the centres would provide core offer services in each case and in order to provide a successful offer that a mapping exercise should address this.

The Chair thanked officers for the report and presentation.

It was **agreed** that the report and presentation on Community Hubs for North Tyneside be noted.

C&L16/22 Date and Time Next Meeting

6pm on Tuesday 17 January 2023.

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Meeting: Culture and Leisure Sub-Committee

Date: 31 January 2023

Title: An Ambition for Wallsend

Author: Paul Graves, Regeneration Project Manager

Tel: 07976 957875

Service: Regeneration and Economic Development

Wards affected: Battle Hill, Howdon, Northumberland, Wallsend

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to give the Culture and Leisure Sub-Committee an update on the progress on the development of the Wallsend Masterplan (An Ambition for Wallsend) and the projects that relate to culture and leisure.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Sub-Committee is recommended to note the report and comment on the culture and leisure elements of the developing Masterplan.

3. Background

Following the report to Cabinet of 26 November 2018, *An Ambition for North Tyneside*, a programme of masterplans was initiated to address issues of regeneration and redevelopment across North Tyneside.

At its meeting on 28th March 2022, Cabinet received a report which set out a set of policy priorities for Wallsend Town Centre. These policy priorities were developed with the Deputy Mayor and following engagement with the Ward Councillors for Battle Hill, Howdon, Northumberland and Wallsend and were to inform a Masterplan for Wallsend which is identified as a priority in Our North Tyneside Plan 2021-2025.

The policy priorities agreed by Cabinet were:

- **Improve the quality of the housing offer in Wallsend;** in particular making the area a focus of the Mayor and Cabinet's plans for 5,000 affordable homes along with tackling some of the poor quality privately rented housing in the masterplan area
- It is also about **making the town centre and the neighbourhoods around it great places to visit and live;** improving the street scene and public spaces and working with partners to make sure people feel safe;
- And finally it is **about making sure Wallsend residents are connected to good jobs** by using the full range of tools, including adult education services

and apprenticeships and the transport infrastructure around the town to make sure people in the community, who need it, are supported to improve their life chances.

Over the past 6 months, and working with the Deputy Mayor, Ward Members, the Chief Executive and other stakeholders we have prepared a draft Masterplan which reflects our ambition for the town centre and delivers on the policy objectives which were agreed in May 2022.

The draft Wallsend Masterplan (for consultation) was approved by Cabinet on 28 November 2022. Consultation will take place in January and February before an amended Masterplan is brought back to Cabinet in spring 2023.

4. The Draft Masterplan

The draft Masterplan proposes fourteen interventions that will deliver the three policy priorities for Wallsend, as identified by Cabinet.

The interventions build on the cultural and leisure investment in Wallsend over the last 15 years such as Hadrian Leisure Centre, the Wallsend Parks heritage lottery fund refurbishment and the improvements to the Customer First Centre and the library which has enabled a wider range of activities and exhibitions to be accommodated. Wallsend Parks, the town centre and Segedunum is also the focus for an established programme of events including the fireworks at Segedunum and the annual Wallsend festival.

There are two projects relating to Segedunum which provides Wallsend with a unique opportunity to develop a world class cultural attraction as part of the Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site.

Culture and leisure is central to other projects too such as Project 8 – Cycle Corridors, Project 11 – Historic Buildings & Conservation and Project 14 – Events and Animation. There are opportunities in the public realm and built environment projects too for cultural intervention for example by appointing artists or creative practitioners to work alongside architects and engineers in the design teams.

The scope of the Masterplan area was agreed at Cabinet in March 2022. It covers the town centre core of High Street East and West, the Forum shopping centre and Station Road, with their surrounding catchment area of housing. It also includes the Segedunum Roman Fort and Museum and Wallsend riverside as far as Davy Bank and to the north it includes the Parks, Wallsend Hall, and the former Buddle School and arts centre building. This builds on the early engagement with ward members which has helped inform thinking and the direction of the Masterplan.

In addition since March 2022 we have been working to better understand the issues, challenges and opportunities in Wallsend focussing in particular on the three policy priorities of housing, place and employment. This work has included:

- A review of recent reports such as the surveys of town centre businesses and customers in 2021 (the “Understanding the Heart of our Town” report)
- An assessment of the town centre’s buildings, roads, streets, footpaths and public spaces and development of ideas for improving them

- A review of the local property market to better understand the supply of and demand for homes, shops and offices
- Identification of opportunities to support residents in securing employment and improving their skills e.g. adult education and a “Working Well” employability hub
- Creation of the River Tyne Task Force with the North of Tyne Combined Authority, Port of Tyne, businesses and other local authorities marketing the offshore energy opportunities under the ‘Tyne Powered’ brand and providing a collective voice to talk to Government.
- A review of traffic flows, transport usage and car parking.
- Working with the Academic Health Science Network (AHSN) and the One Public Estate initiative to understand the opportunities for the Masterplan to support public health initiatives and provision. The AHSN has recently appointed artists to explore how mental health and wellbeing, through the theme of ‘Places of Sanctuary’, can be considered and reflected in designing for the built environment.

The 14 proposed projects are mostly based on a specific place or building while those covering Business Support, Employment Support and Events & Animation will apply throughout the masterplan area:

Project 1 – Wallsend Town Square

Located at the heart of the town centre the existing square provides a natural focal point for visitors and town centre activities. Refurbishment of these pedestrianised areas next to the Forum Shopping Centre, Customer First Centre and Anson Public House is a key objective of the Masterplan. This will see the space remodelled through new planting, paving and street furniture and it will provide the high quality, multi-functional space at a key ‘Gateway’ into the town centre.

Project 2 – High Street West, High Street East and Station Road

Improve the appearance and experience on High Streets West, East and Station Road and improve the experience for pedestrians, cyclists, wheelchair users and other town centre visitors. This could be achieved through widening pavements, introducing street trees and seating while retaining access for vehicles and servicing. Providing some design continuity and developing a Wallsend suite of materials and street furniture will be an essential part of this approach.

Project 3 – Segedunum World Heritage Site Gateway

Reimagine Buddle Street and the featureless paved area between Buddle Street and Woolley Street creating a ‘pocket park’ and an environment that celebrates and recognises you are passing through a historic fort. A key issue will be to enhance the visual appeal and visitor experience whilst maintaining the road as a key riverside traffic route serving industry.

Project 4 – The Forum

NewRiver Retail are planning to further invest and improve the connectivity between Aldi, the Health Centre and the retail shops by removing the large atrium area and replacing it with public realm whilst consolidating the existing retail. The existing two storey car park is a potential development site for which various options are being considered.

Project 5 – Bus & Metro Station

The current Bus and Metro station is in a strategic location sited between the town centre and Segedunum. However, its visual appeal is limited, and the site currently contributes little to the townscape (other than its function as an interchange), and in some ways, creates a barrier between the town centre and Segedunum. The masterplan seeks to explore options to modify the existing interchange through new tree and shrub planting and improved pedestrian and cycle links to Segedunum. This could extend to removal of some or all bus stands enabling new development to progress such as a cycle hub and secure cycle parking or even new build housing.

Project 6 – Housing Streetscape Improvements

The Masterplan proposes to transform the streets in the terraced housing north and south of the High Street East and West creating inclusive, pedestrian and cycle friendly streets that provide space for planting, allow safe children's play and can accommodate future electric vehicle infrastructure. This will radically improve the appearance, liveability and appeal of Wallsend Town Centre as a destination of choice for new (and existing) residents.

Project 7 – Housing Development (New Build & Refurbishment)

Bring forward opportunities to refurbish existing homes and be proactive in bringing forward new build such as the Portugal Place/High Street West/Border Road site as well as windfall sites. This will be complemented by initiatives to raise housing standards especially in poor quality private rented homes. This will build on our success in North Shields where we have successfully delivered new housing opportunities and will broaden the Wallsend housing offer and will help attract new residents who are economically mobile and are able to support local shops and services.

Project 8 – Cycle Corridors

Wallsend is on the National Cycle Routes and therefore has a considerable reach into the local, national and international cycling communities. Improvements to the C2C/Route 72/Hadrian's Cycleway include a possible cycle hub and the creation of new routes north from the C2C via Holly Avenue to the town centre and via Park Road to Richardson Dees Park. These collectively will improve provision and the attractiveness of the routes to cyclists which will have spin off benefits for the town centre.

Project 9 – Segedunum Transformation

The existence of a World Heritage Site within the Town Centre provides a raft of opportunities to drive footfall and spend in the town centre. It also provides the opportunity for the museum to become an asset in the heart of the community which benefits both residents and businesses. The masterplan therefore proposes the transformation of Segedunum Roman Fort & Museum through new galleries, stories about the wider history of the town, together with Augmented Reality (AR) & Virtual Reality (VR) experiences. Works will also involve repairing and reopening the Bath House, relocating the café, creating an outdoor events space and frontage improvements that shouts we're a world-class World Heritage Site. Segedunum presents a unique opportunity to redefine the town centre offer and to improve links to the retail core which will be an essential component of any scheme.

Project 10 – Segedunum Linkages

As noted above, it is important to draw Segedunum into the town centre offer and to improve the linkages between the two. As such, the Masterplan considers

options for interventions to improve and enhance the routes between Segedunum and the Metro Station and town centre which could include additional signage, planting, waymarkers, banners and coloured paving and surfacing.

Project 11 – Historic Buildings & Conservation

Wallsend has some beautiful and well-appointed buildings which reflect the wealth and proud history of the town. The Masterplan proposes to initiate and support ways of restoring and finding new uses for much loved, historic buildings such as the Buddle, the Civic Hall and the former Coach and Horses Public House. We will also investigate the scope for declaring a town centre Conservation Area.

Project 12 – Business Support

Growing the local economy and securing inward investment will be a key ingredient of future success. The Masterplan seeks to deliver a programme of bespoke business support using the grant funding from the Towns and High Streets Innovation Programme. This includes support for start-ups and established SMEs, a town centre business adviser and shop front grants.

Project 13 – Employment Support

One of our key policy objectives for Wallsend is to ensure residents are connected to good jobs and are able to fulfil their potential. Development of the Working Well Employability Hub will provide employment and skills support in one place. Initiatives will also assist people not using mainstream services as well as improving adult education provision. Digital inclusion will be a key element given that many job adverts and interviews etc are held on-line.

Project 14 – Events & Animation

Town centres thrive on activity and a varied events programme can help drive footfall, increase visitor spend and, importantly, leads to repeat visits. Expanding the scope and reach of Wallsend's existing programme to drive footfall and increase participation will be a major contributing factor to the town's future success. This can be achieved through greater use of the Customer First Centre and Segedunum and exploring new initiatives through AR and VR, town trails and attractions such as drone based light shows.

Information used in the preparation of this report:-

Report to Cabinet 28 November 2022, An Ambition for Wallsend

<https://democracy.northtyneside.gov.uk/documents/s10465/An%20Ambition%20for%20Wallsend%20Report%20and%20Appendix%201%20Appendix%202.pdf>

An Ambition for Wallsend – Draft Masterplan

<https://democracy.northtyneside.gov.uk/documents/s10571/An%20Ambition%20for%20Wallsend%20-%20Masterplan.pdf>

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