

# North Tyneside Council

## Report to Cabinet

### Date: 3 August 2020

#### Title: North Shields Town Centre and Fish Quay Masterplan

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Portfolio:        Regeneration

Cabinet Member:    Councillor Bruce Pickard

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Responsible Officer:        John Sparkes, Head of Regeneration and Economic Development        Tel: 0191 643 7000

Wards affected:                All

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#### PART 1

##### 1.1 Executive Summary:

At its meeting on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019, Cabinet agreed a report which set out 'An Ambition for North Shields and the Fish Quay'. This built on the Authority's wider regeneration objectives that were agreed at its meeting on the 26<sup>th</sup> November 2018 where it agreed a regeneration strategy for the borough; An Ambition for North Tyneside which identified North Shields Town Centre and Fish Quay as a specific priority.

The policy objectives for North Shields were agreed by Cabinet in April 2019 and these included:

**A smaller but more vibrant and connected, high quality town centre;** create a smaller, more vibrant and connected town centre which combines living, working and retail with a place that becomes a destination in its own right;

**A connected and vibrant Fish Quay;** which supports a developing food and drink offer and a working quay but builds on the Fish Quay's increasing popularity as a destination exploring heritage, cycling, the connections to South Shields as well as the popular night time and weekend economy;

**Better transport flows and connectivity;** making sure traffic flows more effectively, that the Metro Station is connected to the rest of the town, that pedestrians and cyclists can move easily between the town centre and the Fish Quay with an opportunity for something eye-catching to make that possible; and

**A better quality built environment;** learning from recent projects, and setting high design and material standards for our work.

On 12<sup>th</sup> March 2019, the North of Tyne Combined Authority, recognising the contribution of North Shields and the Fish Quay to the North of Tyne economy, approved business case development funding for work to continue to develop a

masterplan for the area. This provided £0.200m of funding and has enabled the Authority to refine a draft masterplan and supporting documents which will provide a strong foundation from which to develop individual projects identified in the Masterplan.

Over the past 12 months, and working with the North Shields Project Group, which includes the Deputy Mayor and Chief Executive, a Draft Masterplan has been prepared which reflects the Authority's ambition for the town centre and delivers on the policy objectives which were agreed in April 2019.

The report provides background and a summary of the work done so far in developing a Draft Masterplan. Subject to the Masterplan being endorsed by Cabinet, it is proposed that it is used, over the coming months, as a basis for consultation and engagement with residents, businesses and other stakeholders with an interest in the regeneration of North Shields. Once a final Masterplan is agreed by Cabinet, it is proposed to adopt it as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

## **1.2 Recommendation(s):**

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- (1) note the progress made in delivering the North Shields Town Centre and Fish Quay Masterplan since April 2019;
- (2) agree the Draft North Shields Town Centre and Fish Quay Masterplan be used as a basis for consultation and engagement with residents, businesses and stakeholders over the Summer / Autumn 2020.

## **1.3 Forward Plan:**

Twenty-eight days' notice of this report has been given and it first appeared on the Forward Plan that was published on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020.

## **1.4 Council Plan and Policy Framework**

This report relates to the following priorities in the 2018-21 Our North Tyneside Plan: Our Places will be great places to live, offer a good choice of quality housing and be a thriving place of choice for visitors. Our Economy will continue to support investment in our business parks, units and town centres.

## **1.5 Information:**

### **1.5.1 Background**

As noted, at its meeting on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019, the Cabinet agreed a report which set out 'An Ambition for North Shields and the Fish Quay'. This built on the Council's wider regeneration objectives that were agreed at its meeting on the 26<sup>th</sup> November 2018 where it agreed a regeneration strategy for the borough; An Ambition for North Tyneside which identified North Shields Town Centre and Fish Quay as a specific priority.

Since receiving an award of funding for £0.200m from the North of Tyne Combined Authority in March 2019, officers have been working with the North Shields Project Group, comprising the Deputy Mayor, Chief Executive and Heads of Service to refine a Draft Masterplan which reflects the Authority's policy objectives and which contains a series of self-contained projects that can be further developed and delivered as and when funding allows.

As agreed by Cabinet, the overall aim for North Shields Town Centre and the Fish Quay is to create a smaller, more vibrant and connected town centre which combines living, working and retail and is a destination in its own right. In turn that will be connected to an increasingly vibrant Fish Quay. Both of which will be supported by better transport flows, stronger infrastructure and a higher quality built environment.

### 1.5.2 What we have achieved so far

- **Northumberland Square Phase 1:** Repurposing former office buildings and new housing at Northumberland Square to create 28 new homes (£5.6m) is a significant first step in redefining this part of the town centre. This flagship scheme has seen the refurbishment of the Grade II listed Georgian terrace properties as well as an element of new build homes. This scheme is of high quality in terms of design, materials and construction and will provide a benchmark for design quality within the Howard Street Conservation Area. We have also invested £0.161m in the public realm around Northumberland Square which has further improved its appearance. The scheme is scheduled for completion in Summer 2020.
- **Northumberland Square Phase 2:** the Authority has also recently acquired the adjacent vacant properties (11-12 Northumberland Square) from a private owner. They are currently in a very poor state of repair and, without their redevelopment, have the potential to impact upon the Authority-led scheme. Plans are currently being refined by the Authority to convert the building into luxury apartments.
- **Unicorn House:** Options are currently being prepared to bring forward a scheme for the Unicorn House site which was purchased in May 2020 at a cost of £0.795m. IDP Architect's have been commissioned to produce options for an innovative scheme which reflects the Authority's policy objectives around placemaking and design quality. Tenders have also been received for the demolition of the site (including asbestos removal) and clarifications are now being sought with the bidders.
- **The Wooden Dolly:** The statue has been removed from Northumberland Square and is currently being restored by Robert Thomson and Sons in Yorkshire who were the original sculptors. These works will be completed during the summer (having been delayed due to the Coronavirus) and the statue will be returned to the Square for a final 'shift' with a view to retiring it in due course to an indoor location in the longer terms. Options for a replacement to be located in Northumberland Square will be considered as part of the wider renovation works to the Square.
- **Heritage Action Zones (HAZ):** In 2019, the Authority was successful in getting through the first round of the Heritage Action Zone funding process and was invited to submit a full application. In March 2020, Historic England confirmed that the Authority's bid for £0.900m to this fund has been successful. Whilst this was initially embargoed, formal announcements of the successful award of funding have now been made in the press. The necessary delegated authority to accept the funding has now also been received.

The Authority's bid focuses on heritage and townscape improvements to Howard Street which is within a Conservation Areas and will build upon the ongoing Authority-led activities within Northumberland Square. The overall scheme has a value of circa £2m with the balance from the Authority as match funding together with private sector contribution.

- **North Shields Fish Quay (western Quay):** The Authority continues to work with the Port of Tyne and the Fish Quay Development Company to ensure that the longer-term economic objectives for the Fish Quay are achieved and that it remains a viable economic asset that contributes to our objectives around Place, People and the Economy.

Funding is also being sought by the Port of Tyne and the Fish Quay Development Company from the NoTCA for structural repairs to the Projection Jetty. The cost of this work is circa £3m and the application is for £1.5m with the balance being met by funding from the Marine Management Organisation. Funding applications are also being prepared by Nexus for the relocation of the Ferry Landing to Western Quay.

- **Tyne Brand Site:** In 2019 a new landowner / developer acquired the majority land holding in the Tyne Brand Site from the previous owner, Left Bank Developments. The ownership of the site is in splintered ownership with numerous small parcels of land being in private control with the Authority owning a small strip of land within the site. The new majority landowner has approached the Authority with a view to working collaboratively to refine a site assembly and delivery strategy for the site which would see it developed to a high standard in terms of design for residential purposes with some potential for ground floor commercial activities. Work is ongoing to enshrine our shared objectives for the delivery of the site within a Memorandum of Understanding.

### 1.5.3 The Masterplan and Supporting Information

The Masterplan has been commissioned following the award of £0.200m funding from the North of Tyne Combined Authority in March 2019. The Masterplan reflects the regeneration objectives set out by the Authority for North Shields Town Centre and Fish Quay and seeks to deliver on these objectives through a series of proposed interventions and activities.

The Masterplan sets out the policy context for the regeneration of North Shields and the Fish Quay based on Cabinet decisions and includes a set of priorities and objectives which include:

- To improve North Shields as a residential location of choice and an attractive family friendly destination;
- To create a smaller but more vibrant, high quality town centre;
- To create more flexible retail opportunities and to expand the evening and weekend economy;
- To improve public transport and the quality of walking and cycling connections across the town including better links to the Fish Quay; and
- To raise and improve the quality of the built environment and the quality of public space in North Shields with more of it suitable for hosting events and festivals.

Having set out the policy context and the Authority's vision for the town centre, the Masterplan then sets out a series of targeted interventions that can be delivered by the Authority. Importantly, these interventions are broadly self-contained and can therefore

be developed as detailed projects in their own right as and when funding becomes available. There are nine projects within the Masterplan and these are as follows:

**Project 1 – Gateway Improvements:** Improving the image and quality of public realm in key gateway sites into North Shields will enhance the experience for residents and businesses as well as those visiting the town. These and other gateway improvements will change perceptions engendering a sense of pride and create positive and lasting visitor experiences from the first impression.

Three significant gateways into the town centre have been identified, that need to be addressed, as they currently offer little sense of arrival both aesthetically and in terms of their layout and function. These include:

- East Tynemouth Road and the Magistrates' Courts
- South East Fish Quay / Brew House Bank
- West Howdon Road / Coach Lane/ Howard Street

**Project 2 - Transport Hub and Interchange:** The improvement of North Shield's public transport offer is a key foundation to the successful regeneration of the town centre. Located adjacent (south) of the existing Metro Station the proposals will provide customers with an improved quality of service giving access to a sustainable and high-quality public transport network, which is well used and connected to major centres.

The proposals will improve the image and quality of the public transport network and enhance the experience of visitors to the town with the bus facilities vastly improved leading to increased usage of bus and Metro. It will expand footfall around the recently refurbished Metro Station which is a key gateway into the town centre. It is also proposed to include a covered link to Bedford Street which will provide additional protection from the elements in inclement weather.

Subject to the provision of a satisfactory business case, the scheme has been successful in attracting external funding from the Transforming Cities Fund which is administered by Transport North East. Specifically, North Shields transport hub element has been awarded £19m funding with a match of £2.5m from the Authority. This funding also includes proposals for highway improvements in the town centre as well as the proposed link from the town centre to the Fish Quay. The schemes will need to be delivered by March 2023 and an initial drawdown of £0.100m has been approved by Investment Programme Board (on confirmation of the funding) to enable further design and development work to be undertaken and to refine and inform costs.

**Project 3 – New Town Square:** There is an aspiration to create a new town square at a key arrival point in the town adjacent to the Metro Station. A civic square would create the opportunity for events and markets and would be a flexible performance space with the potential of hosting a variety of town centre activities. This would also have the potential to improve connections with the Beacon Centre and give a clear line of sight to Bedford Street.

**Project 4 – Bedford Street and Saville Street Public Realm Improvements:** The proposals will improve the quality of the public realm, using a distinctive and high-quality design to soften the street scene and animate the public spaces. Creating an enhanced and well-designed public realm in the heart of the town centre will create an attractive shopping and leisure destination for visitors as well as creating a high-quality residential environment for those choosing to live in the town centre.

Defining spaces and celebrating key buildings and the built heritage of the town will be key in transforming the appearance of the centre and creating a new visitor offer which reflects a new chapter in the town's rich history. These two important streets and their adjoining spaces will be re-designed to form a well-connected pedestrian and cycling route across the town centre to Howard Street, with further public realm improvements envisaged to connect with the riverside embankment walkway (Project No.7) which links the town centre with the Fish Quay.

**Project 5 – Northumberland Square:** By continuing to invest in the restoration of Northumberland Square, the Authority will help revitalise the wider area using the stunning centrepiece of the Georgian square. This will support our existing investment in the properties surrounding Northumberland Square and will also create an attractive green space for residents of the new properties being developed here and on the Unicorn House site in due course. It will also complement other heritage led works associated with the Heritage Action Zone which will see improvements to properties and public realm within the Howard Street Conservation Area. By restoring the square in keeping with its surroundings, it will create a focal point which supports the further diversification of uses around it, including residential as well as commercial uses.

**Project 6 – Howard Street Cultural Quarter:** North Shields has a rich heritage of culture, arts and performance. As town centres become less reliant on retailing as a lynchpin of the economy, it is important to grow a cultural and creative leisure offer which drives footfall and activity but also creates economic activities for existing and new businesses. Building on the activities associated with the Heritage Action Zone, the Cultural Quarter will be focussed around the crossroads of Howard Street and Saville Street and will utilise key buildings such as the Saville Exchange, Business Centre (former Reading Rooms), the former Globe Gallery Building as well as other key buildings. This will create a focus and critical mass of culture related uses which will be a key driver in the local economy, creating new jobs and business opportunities. The existing Business Factory is ideally located to support this transition by guiding and steering new initiatives and businesses to take up premises within this intersection.

**Project 7 – Riverside Embankment Walkway:** Linking the town centre with the Fish Quay is a key strand of the masterplan and is a long-held aspiration of the Authority. Connecting these two economic areas through attractive routes will generate footfall and will broaden the visitor experience and will bring economic benefits to both areas. It is proposed to provide a high-quality pedestrian link from the southern end of Howard Street to the Fish Quay. This has the potential to be a 'step free' route so will be accessible to all. Whilst the level difference does provide some challenges, it also provides opportunities for panoramic views of the river and beyond. Moreover, the potential relocation of the Ferry landing to Western Quay (Project 9) will further enhance connectivity by linking in with the proposed walkway. The proposed embankment walkway will be part of a wider improvement to pedestrian movement along the Fish Quay and beyond.

**Project 8 – New Housing Opportunities:** As the town centre repositions itself in terms of its visitor offer, there is the opportunity to further develop a more diverse and balanced housing offer which sees North Shields being promoted as an exciting place to live with all the benefits of a town centre couple with access to the riverside and coast. Building on the Authority's ongoing investment at Northumberland Square and the private sector investment at Smiths Dock, the masterplan identifies key housing interventions that will deliver high-quality family housing at key locations within the Town Centre and Fish Quay. Collectively these will broaden the housing offer and attract more residents into the town which will further support the local economy. Two key housing sites have been identified and include:

**8a Tyne Brand Site:** This is a key gateway site into the Fish Quay and is currently derelict and detracts from the overall visitor experience and appeal of the area. The site requires a high-quality design solution given its prominent location and has the potential to create a unique residential offer within the heart of the Fish Quay. In addition to residential, the site could also incorporate some commercial ground floor uses which will animate the ground floor frontages and will create opportunities for businesses wishing to locate at the Fish Quay.

**8b Unicorn House:** A former 1960's office development located on Suez Street, as noted earlier in the report, the site was acquired by the Authority in May of this year. It is proposed that the existing building is demolished and that the site is joined with the existing adjacent public car park to create a larger site which can be developed for family housing. Work is currently underway to refine layout and house designs which reflect the Authority's place-making aspirations.

**Project 9 – Relocation of North Shields Ferry Landing:** The masterplan proposes the relocation of the Ferry landing to Western Quay which is in the heart of the Fish Quay. The proposed location will also link in with the Riverside Embankment Walkway which in turn links with Howard Street Conservation Area and the wider town centre. Having a link into the heart of the Fish Quay will improve accessibility and drive footfall. The proposals will include bus turning facilities to ensure there is public transport connectivity with the town centre and beyond. Nexus are currently refining their plans and will be seeking funding from the NoTCA to deliver this.

#### **1.5.4 Approach to Engagement and Consultation**

We are a listening Council and will seek the views of our residents, businesses and other interested parties on the draft masterplan to help shape our thinking prior to producing a final version of the plan which is proposed to be adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

We are proposing to engage through a variety of methods. In addition to traditional face to face engagement through drop in sessions and direct discussions with affected parties (such as businesses and land owners) we are proposing to use innovative digital technology to enable consultees to make on line representations on the proposals and have commissioned specialist advice to assist on this.

Following the decision of Cabinet, the masterplan will be in the public domain. Working with the Council's Communications and Marketing Team we will refine a strategy for the formal launch of the masterplan and an associated communications strategy that will support our activities.

### 1.5.5 Next steps

Subject to the Cabinet agreeing the Draft North Shields Town Centre and Fish Quay Masterplan the proposed next steps include:

- Programme of engagement and consultation over the Summer / Autumn with residents, businesses and other interested parties to seek their views and suggestions on the draft masterplan.
- Following the engagement and consultation a final version of the masterplan will be produced which is proposed to be adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

### 1.6 Decision options:

Agree the Draft North Shields Town Centre and Fish Quay Masterplan as a basis for consultation and engagement.

Do not agree the Draft North Shields Town Centre and Fish Quay Masterplan as a basis for consultation and engagement.

### 1.7 Reasons for recommended option:

The recommended option will enable the Council to progress the delivery of the North Shields and Fish Quay Masterplan.

### 1.8 Appendix:

There is no Appendix to the report although a presentation of the Masterplan will be made at the meeting of the Cabinet on the 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2020.

### 1.9 Contact officers:

John Sparkes, Head of Regeneration and Economic Development, tel. (0191) 643 6091

### 1.10 Background Information:

The following background papers/information have been used in the compilation of this report and are available at the office of the author:

- (1) Our North Tyneside Plan 2018-2021
- (2) Cabinet report 26<sup>th</sup> November 2018 'An Ambition for North Tyneside'
- (3) Cabinet report 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 'An Ambition for North Shields'

## **PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING**

### **2.1 Finance and other resources**

There are no financial implications arising from the decision.

The capital and revenue implications relating to those projects contained within the masterplan will be further refined as schemes are progressed and will be considered



through the Council's Investment programme Board as and when funding becomes available.

In order to support the Council's borough wide regeneration objectives, a £10m capital investment sum to be defrayed over a five-year period was agreed as part of the Budget Proposals. This will support specific projects identified in the masterplan but, crucially, will be available as matched funding to take advantage of emerging public and private finance opportunities.

The Council has an ongoing financial commitment to the regeneration of North Shields and has already committed significant funding to the town centre. This has included:

- £5.9m Northumberland Square Housing
- £0.161m Northumberland Square public realm
- £0.795m Acquisition of Unicorn House

In terms of external funding opportunities, as noted in the report we have secured £0.900m from Historic England in respect of the Heritage Action Zone project which has an overall value of £2m with match funding coming from the Council and the private sector.

As noted earlier in the report and subject to Transport North East agreement of the business case by, the proposed Transport Interchange scheme has been successful in attracting external funding from the Transforming Cities Fund which is administered by Transport North East. Specifically, North Shields transport hub element has been awarded £19m funding with a match of £2.5m from the Council.

## **2.2 Legal**

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. As projects and plans come forward individual consideration of the legal implications of these plans and projects will be required.

## **2.3 Consultation/community engagement**

### **2.3.1 Internal Consultation**

The report is based on discussions with the Elected Mayor and Cabinet Members as well as detailed technical discussions across the Senior Leadership Team.

### **2.3.2 External Consultation/Engagement**

As set out in the report and subject to Cabinet Approval, it is proposed to commence external engagement and consultation with residents, businesses and other interested parties on the content of the masterplan. This will include engaging with the Chamber of Trade and other key stakeholders as well as targeted engagement with this who may be directly affected by the proposals.

As proposals contained in the North Shields and Fish Quay Masterplan move towards delivery and where statutory processes are involved, for example Planning Applications, formal consultation will take place.

## **2.4 Human rights**

There are no human rights implications arising from this report.

## 2.5 Equalities and diversity

Equality Impact Assessments will be carried out for each project where appropriate. This is a key part of project planning as it assesses the potential impact a project may have on people with protected characteristics.

## 2.6 Risk management

Specific projects will have their own risk management arrangements in line with the agreed corporate approach.

## 2.7 Crime and disorder

There are no crime and disorder issues directly arising from this report.

## 2.8 Environment and sustainability

The contents of the plan aim to support sustainable development and contribute to reducing carbon emissions and responding to our climate change emergency.

### PART 3 - SIGN OFF

- Chief Executive  X
- Head(s) of Service  X
- Mayor/Cabinet Member(s)  X
- Chief Finance Officer  X
- Monitoring Officer  X
- Head of Corporate Strategy and Customer Service  X