

North Tyneside Council

Report to Cabinet

Date: 25 January 2021

Title: North Shields Town Centre and Fish Quay Master Plan

Portfolio: Regeneration

Cabinet Member: Councillor Bruce Pickard

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

Wards affected: All

PART 1

1.1 Executive Summary:

At its meeting on the 1st April 2019, the 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 agreed by Cabinet on the 26th 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 12th 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 Master Plan for the area. This provided £200k of funding and has enabled the

Authority to refine a draft Master Plan and supporting documents which will provide a strong foundation from which to develop individual projects identified in the plan.

In August 2020, Cabinet received the Draft North Shields Town Centre and Fish Quay Master Plan and agreed that it be used as a basis for consultation and engagement with residents, businesses and stakeholders over the Summer / Autumn 2020. The consultation and engagement concluded on the 21st October 2020.

Cabinet are now asked to agree a final version of the Master Plan which will be used as framework for the regeneration of North Shields Town Centre and Fish Quay.

1.2 Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- (1) Note the proposed changes to the North Shields Town Centre and Fish Quay Master Plan since August 2020, and;
- (2) Agree the final version of North Shields Town Centre and Fish Quay Master Plan as a framework for the regeneration of North Shields.
- (3) Subject to recommendations (1) and (2) being agreed, that delegated authority be granted to the Chief Executive, The Head of Resources and the Head of Regeneration in consultation with the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources to progress the delivery of the Master Plan including the acquisition of property interests, procurement of design and construction services for those projects identified within the masterplan and for which funding has been secured.

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 the 10th December 2020.

1.4 Council Plan and Policy Framework

This report relates to the following priorities in the 2020-24 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

- 1.5.2 At its meeting on the 1st April 2019, the 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 Cabinet on the 26th 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.

1.5.3 Following an award of funding for £200k from the North of Tyne Combined Authority (NoTCA) in March 2019, officers worked with the North Shields Project Group, comprising the Deputy Mayor, Chief Executive and Heads of Service to refine a draft Master Plan which reflected the Authority's policy objectives through a series of self-contained projects. that could be further developed and delivered as and when funding allowed.

1.5.4 The Master Plan enshrined the Cabinet's policy objectives to create a smaller, more vibrant and connected town centre which combines living, working and retail and is a destination in its own right and which is connected to an increasingly vibrant Fish Quay. These objectives would be underpinned by better transport flows, stronger infrastructure and a higher quality built environment.

In August 2020, the Cabinet agreed that the draft Master Plan be used as a basis for consultation with residents, businesses and other stakeholders in order to seek their views on the future of the town centre.

1.5.5 Having undertaken the consultation and engagement agreed by Cabinet in August 2020 and further refined elements of the Master Plan, approval is now sought from the Cabinet for the Master Plan to be used as a framework for the regeneration of North Shields Town Centre and Fish Quay.

1.5.6 **What we have achieved so far**

1.5.7 Although the Master Plan will provide a framework for future regeneration activities in the Town Centre and Fish Quay, the Authority has already been active in bringing forward numerous successful schemes which will complement the Authority's future proposals. These provide a strong foundation for future delivery.

1.5.8 The following three schemes listed below have been delivered by the Council's development company with no cost to the Council as all loans are repaid with interest and any associated profits are returned to the Council to support service delivery and future regeneration.

- **Northumberland Square Phase 1:** The Authority has completed the development of new housing at Northumberland Square to create 28 new homes (£5.6m) 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 and provides a benchmark in terms of design quality. The scheme is proving popular with buyers and sales rates and values have exceeded expectation. Moreover, it has provided proof of concept that the town centre is a destination of choice for living provided the product is right in terms of quality and price.
- **Northumberland Square Phase 2:** The Authority has recently purchased the adjacent vacant properties (11-12 Northumberland Square) from a private owner. Plans are currently being refined by the Authority's Trading Company to convert the building into luxury apartments to complement phase 1 of the scheme.
- **Unicorn House:** The former office building was purchased by the Authority in May 2020 at a cost of £795K. At the request of Cabinet, the Trading Company has been reviewing options for the site and to refine a deliverable scheme for consideration. A Final Business Case for the scheme has been completed and was presented to Cabinet in October 2020 which was approved. Work is now ongoing to refine a final

scheme and to progress demolition works. The scheme will deliver circa 28 new family homes and will be of a high quality in terms of design and appearance and will incorporate garden areas and allocated parking.

- **The Wooden Dolly:** The statue has been returned to Northumberland Square following its restoration by Robert Thomson and Sons in Yorkshire who were the original sculptors. The renovated statue has been well received by residents and visitors and highlights that small schemes can often have a significant positive impact on perceptions and civic pride. Options for a replacement statue 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 £900k to this fund has been successful. The overall scheme has a value of circa £2m with the balance from the Authority as match funding together with private sector contribution. A HAZ Board has now been established and is considering applications for grant funding as well as refining a cultural programme to accompany the renovation and restoration works.
- **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 the Authority's objectives around Place, People and the Economy.

Funding is also being sought by the Port of Tyne and the Fish Quay Development Company for structural repairs to the Projection Jetty. The cost of this work is circa £3m. The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) has confirmed funding of £1.54m and an application to the North of Tyne Combined Authority Investment Panel for £1.5m grant funding for the balance of these works will be considered by the Panel in January 2021.

- **Tyne Brand Site:** In 2019 Lugano Group acquired the majority land holding in the Tyne Brand Site from the previous owner, Left Bank developments. The Authority is currently working with the new owners 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. We are also working with NoTCA and Homes England in identifying support for the site through the Brownfield Housing Fund.

1.5.9 The Master Plan and Supporting Information

The Master Plan was commissioned following the award of £200k funding from NoTCA in March 2019. The Master Plan reflects the regeneration and policy 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. 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. Cabinet will recall that there are nine projects identified within the Master Plan. These have been finessed down to eight and these are as follows:

1. Gateway improvements:
 - East Tynemouth Road and the Law Courts
 - South East Fish Quay/Brew House Bank
 - West Howdon Road/Coach Lane/Saville Street
2. Transport Hub and Interchange with new Town Square
3. Public realm improvements at Bedford St and Saville St
4. Northumberland Square redevelopment
5. Howard Street Cultural Quarter
6. Riverside Embankment walkway
7. Allocated housing sites:
 - a. Tyne Brand mixed use site
 - b. Unicorn House residential
8. Relocation of the Shields ferry landing

1.5.10 Response to Engagement and Consultation

As a listening Authority the views of residents, businesses and other interested parties on the draft Master Plan have been taken into consideration to help the Authority shape its thinking prior to producing a final version of the plan.

However, ahead of formal consultation taking place, there were a series of discussions with external partners and interests to test our thinking and understanding. This included discussions with NEXUS, the Port of Tyne and the Fish Quay Development Company to review the potential to move the Ferry Landing to the Western Quay which would bring visitors into the heart of the Fish Quay. We have also had an ongoing dialogue with the Fish Quay Development Company focussing on the long-term sustainability of the Fish Quay and how it might grow to be part of the wider heritage and food and drink offer which increasingly surrounds it.

In refining the Master Plan we had discussions with Nexus and the Bus Operators on how public transport could be better provided in the town centre through an integrated bus and Metro interchange with the objective of providing a better visitor experience. Similarly, we have had an ongoing dialogue with New River Retail, who own the Beacon Centre. These discussions have built upon their enthusiasm for being part of a renewed North Shields and have focussed on our shared ambition and opportunities for joint working. Early thinking was also tested with North Shields Chamber of Trade and Commerce.

With regards to the new housing at Northumberland Square, this was subject to consultation and engagement in advance of the scheme being brought forward and we have similarly undertaken consultation and engagement on the proposals to develop Unicorn House for housing which have been well received.

We also discussed our town centre plans and proposals through the State of the Area event in November as part of a wider discussion on town centres.

The Authority formally consulted on the masterplan between August and October 2020 with the closing date for comments on 16th October. The Authority ensured that every property and business within the Master Plan area received a brochure setting out the key objectives and projects contained in the Master Plan so that residents and businesses were fully aware of the proposals.

The Master Plan was published on the Authority's website along with a dedicated page (An Ambition for North Shields) and residents and businesses were able to make their

representations on-line through the Place Changer digital engagement tool. Throughout the consultation period the Authority continued to liaise with businesses in the town centre and presented the Master Plan to North Shields Chamber of Trade following a request from the chair of the group.

A full breakdown of the responses was provided to the North Shields Project Group on the 10th December 2020.

In terms of feedback via email or through the consultation form, a total of 119 residents and businesses supplied feedback and this can be broken down as follows:

- 27 objecting to all 9 proposals
- 51 supporting or supporting with further feedback on the proposals
- 25 partial support – unable to support all 9 proposals
- 16 submitted general feedback but did not specify if they supported or objected to the various proposals

In reviewing the responses, there was a general agreement that North Shields needs some revitalisation, to make the area a better place to live, work and visit. The proposed improvements to upgrade the link/improve access between North Shields to the Fish Quay were welcomed. Similarly, the proposals to create a transport hub received several agreeable responses.

North Tyneside Business Forum represents over 1,300 businesses with the majority being retail based and in North Shields were happy to support the Authority on regenerating North Shields as the proposals considered all the key matters affecting the town including the retail offering, culture offering, transport and housing.

The most common denominator for objections related to the creation of a New Town Square and the requirement to demolish Railway Street shops. Several objectors stated that the premises should be preserved. It was also noted that residents have concerns that the new Town Centre will compete with Northumberland Square as a location for seasonal and special events, such as markets, activities and festivals.

Some concerns were also raised regarding the proposed amendments to traffic flows and potential loss of parking bays were also noted.

Anti-social behaviour was noted as a concern and a number of responses indicated that the Town Square proposal may increase anti-social behaviour in that area.

Other queries were related to the proposed location of the ferry landing as well as the lack of public toilets in the town centre as well as the general day to day maintenance of the area.

Turning to the feedback received from social media, it was evident from the number of responses we received that our work has received a lot of positive attention from our residents, businesses and visitors. Our social media content to promote the Master Plan and work ongoing at Northumberland Square, the restoration of the Wooden Dolly, and plans for Unicorn House has reached an audience of almost a quarter of a million in 2020.

Information regarding the consultation process and how to access the information were posted on the Authority's Facebook site and Twitter feed. Moreover, on Facebook a dedicated page called An Ambition for North Shields was created to share updates about

the masterplan with residents. On the page there were 90 positive engagements recorded (likes, thumbs up, heart) and 3 negative engagements (angry face).

In respect of Northumberland Square, our social media content focussed on the expansion of the scheme following the acquisition of two corner properties in June 2020, and the completion of the first phase of the development comprising 28 new homes in September. This reached 45,938 recipients and resulted in 16,1723 engagements (Likes, thumbs up etc).

Between February and September, we shared four stories covering the restoration and return of the Wooden Dolly to Northumberland Square. These charted the initial removal of the figure, progress reports from the workshop in North Yorkshire, and finally her return to the square in September. This reached a total of 132,550 and garnered 12,773 engagements.

Finally, in respect of Unicorn House where we are proposing to develop 28 new family homes, our social media content reached 50,101 recipients and included a walkthrough and history of the existing site, a reveal of the plans, and new images showing how the site could look after being redeveloped for housing. This led to 5,890 engagements.

In addition to the above, and in order to maximise the reach of our consultation and engagement, another platform for residents to leave their comments was via the Place Changers website. There were 89 respondents with 719 comments spread over the 9 projects and 62 locations. Generally, all aspects of the Master Plan obtained positive responses.

Comments received via Place Changers echoed feedback via other means. Improving Town Centre Gateways raised the most comments noting that improvements were required. Comments regarding improved cycling routes and the need for more cycle storage areas were also received. Improvements to landscaping received positive comments along with requests for more seating.

Pedestrian prioritisation in the town centre received favourable comments and the issue over car parking was also raised. New housing on the Unicorn House site was also welcomed.

Overall, the consultation responses received across all platforms were broadly positive and generally gave support to the proposals contained in the Master Plan. Given the overall support for the proposals, its alignment with Authority and local and national planning policy in respect of town centres, should the Cabinet be minded to agree the final version of the Master Plan then it is not proposed to undertake any further consultation or engagement. However, where individual projects are subject to planning applications, these will be subject to their individual consultation where residents / businesses will have the opportunity to comment on the specific details of a scheme.

Modifications to the Master Plan since August 2020

Since August when the Authority commenced the consultation and engagement, the Authority has continued to refine the Master Plan to ensure it gives the best place making outcome in terms of its environmental, social and economic impact whilst providing value for money for the public purse.

Since commencing the consultation, the Co-op store, located on Bedford Street, has been placed on the market for sale as the business has decided to withdraw from the town centre. This includes the main Co-op store together with two smaller retail units

which face onto Railway Terrace. Given the layout of the store combined with current market conditions it is considered unlikely that the premises will be acquired and reoccupied for retail purposes. This has provided the Authority with an opportunity to review how it delivers the Transport Interchange and the Town Square.

It is now proposed that by acquiring and demolishing the Co-op and associated units together with two other property interests (owned by New River Retail) the Authority would be able to develop both a transport interchange serving buses in the town centre together with a public square.

This new approach would avoid the need for significant property acquisition and relocation costs for existing businesses as well as negating the need for a Compulsory Purchase Order. It would also remove cost and risk associated with the demolition of the properties around Railway Terrace, Nile Street and Bedford Street which are located above the metro tunnel and would also enable the developments to be brought forward sooner saving circa 18 months in delivery time.

As such this approach will deliver the same outcomes for the town centre but at significantly less cost to public purse in a shorter timescale than previously proposed. This approach to retain those properties at Railway Terrace coincidentally aligns with some of the comments we received to the consultation.

No other major changes are proposed to the Master Plan as all the other projects are supported and are policy compliant. It should be borne in mind that the masterplan is a strategic document which reflects the Authority's aspiration for the town centre. As individual projects are refined and progressed towards delivery, design details will be finalised and may be subject to minor changes to reflect on-site or technical constraints.

1.5.11 Next steps

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

- Refining a Delivery Plan for the masterplan which will set out the timings, and funding for the projects contained in the Master Plan.
- Progress the delivery of those schemes contained in the Master Plan for which funding has been secured.
- Securing external funding for those elements of the Master Plan for which funding is not currently in place.

1.6 Decision Options:

To agree to the recommendations set out in paragraph 1.2 or not to agree those recommendations.

1.7 Reasons for recommended option:

The recommended option will enable the Authority to progress the regeneration of North Shields Town Centre and the Fish Quay.

1.8 Appendices:

The proposed final version of the North Shields Town Centre and Fish Quay Master Plan is appended to the report.

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 26th November 2018 'An Ambition for North Tyneside'
- (3) Cabinet report 1st April 2019 'An Ambition for North Shields'
- (4) Cabinet Report 3rd August 2020 'North Shields Town Centre and Fish Quay Master Plan
- (5) Cabinet Report 21st September 2020 'An Ambition for North Tyneside'.

PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING

2.1 Finance and other resources

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 Authority'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 Master Plan but, crucially, will be available as matched funding to take advantage of emerging public and private finance opportunities.

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

In terms of external funding opportunities, as noted in the report the Authority has secured £900k from Historic England in respect of the Heritage Action Zone project which has an overall value of £2m with match funding coming from the Authority and the Private Sector.

Subject to Transport North East agreement of the Final Business Case, 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.

On 30 June, the Prime Minister announced a £900m national budget (Getting Building Fund) as part of a strategy to kick start building projects and create jobs to boost the economy with an allocation of £47m to the North East with a further contribution of £8m

from the Local Enterprise Partnership , who will administer the fund, giving a total of £55m. There are two schemes included in the list of regional projects which will directly contribute to the regeneration of North Shields. These include:

- North Shields town centre public realm improvements: £3.500m
- North Shields ferry landing relocation (Nexus): £5.690m

The Authority received confirmation from the Department of Transport of £3.600m funding for Tanners Bank Bridge in June 2020 and work is currently underway to refine a delivery strategy for this scheme. This includes a contribution of £0.300m from Nexus as well as match from the Authority of £0.103m from the Local Transport Plan.

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, a full consultation and engagement exercise was carried out between August and October to obtain the views of residents, businesses and stakeholders on the proposals contained in the Master Plan.

As proposals contained in the North Shields and Fish Quay Master Plan 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