

North Tyneside Council

Report to Cabinet

Date: 1 April 2019

ITEM 6(b)

Title: Ambition for North Shields and the Fish Quay

Portfolio: Regeneration

Cabinet Member:

Councillor Bruce Pickard

Responsible Officer: Paul Hanson, Chief Executive

Tel: (0191) 643 7000

Wards affected: All

PART 1

1.1 Executive Summary:

At its meeting on 26th November 2018, Cabinet agreed its regeneration strategy “An Ambition for North Tyneside.” That strategy made clear that North Shields Town Centre and the Fish Quay were a specific priority.

Since then, an Officer team have been working with the Cabinet Member to understand the opportunities and challenges in North Shields and at the Fish Quay, look at the supporting data and begin to engage with partners to frame the Authority’s work to deliver this priority. This report seeks Cabinet agreement to the first stage of that work and a set of policy priorities to inform the next stage.

In addition, recognising the contribution North Shields and the Fish Quay make to the North of Tyne economy, the North of Tyne Combined Authority has agreed to fund business case development work to inform master planning and research on the economic opportunities in the area. In parallel, the Government has announced the Future High Streets Fund for which the Authority has expressed an interest focussed on North Shields and the Fish Quay.

Our local high streets are at the hub of our communities. However they continue to face massive social and structural change, particularly through the move to online shopping and a shift away from retail to leisure activity.

Our overall aim is to create a vision and a plan to implement it, that provides a smaller, more vibrant and connected town centre. It should combine living, working and retail with a place that becomes a family friendly destination in its own right, to relax and socialise. In turn it will be connected to an increasingly vibrant Fish Quay. Both of which will be supported by better transport flows, stronger infrastructure and better quality built environment.

The report provides background and a summary of the work done so far. It also suggests a set of policy priorities and next steps for Cabinet agreement.

1.2 Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- (1) notes the work done so far;
- (2) agrees the proposed policy priorities; and
- (3) agrees the next steps including wider engagement and to receiving further reports as required.

1.3 Forward Plan:

It was not practicable to give twenty eight days notice of this report because the Authority was waiting for final guidance on the Future High Streets Fund and confirmation of a decision to be made by the North of Tyne Combined Authority on 12th March 2019. Consideration of the report without twenty eight days notice is required in order to ensure policy direction is in place to inform the business case development work due to start immediately and to prepare for the next stage of the Future High Street Fund bidding process should the Expression of Interest prove successful.

1.4 Council Plan and Policy Framework

This report relates to the following priorities in the 2018-20 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:

Background

- 1.5.1 At its meeting on 26 November 2018, Cabinet agreed its regeneration strategy “An Ambition for North Tyneside.” That strategy made clear that North Shields Town Centre and the Fish Quay were a specific priority.
- 1.5.2 That report explained the Cabinet’s view of the South East of the Borough in which North Shields and the Fish Quay sit; its assets, its needs and what was happening immediately, what would happen next and into the future as resources become available.

What we are trying to achieve

- 1.5.3 Cabinet agreed in November that, for the South East of the Borough and its surrounding area we are working out how to raise the quality of the built environment, connecting a vibrant town centre and quayside. We want to tackle working poverty and poor quality private rented housing as part of the Authority’s work to close the gap. We want to work in partnership to develop a master plan for the town centre and the riverside.
- 1.5.4 Specifically for North Shields Town Centre and the Fish Quay our overall aim is to create a vision and a plan to implement it, that provides a smaller, more vibrant and connected town centre. It should combine living, working and retail with a place that becomes a family friendly destination in its own right, to relax and socialise. In turn it will be

connected to an increasingly vibrant Fish Quay. Both of which will be supported by better transport flows, stronger infrastructure and better quality built environment.

How we will achieve that

- 1.5.5 Right now: New homes are being built at Smiths Dock and in Northumberland Square. Major road improvements are being delivered along the North Bank of the Tyne.
- 1.5.6 Next: Subject to Government funding decisions, transport improvements are planned at Tanners Bank and into North Shields town centre. The area around Fiddlers Green will be made more accessible and public toilet facilities will be developed for North Shields town centre.
- 1.5.7 When funding and timing allows: We will develop infrastructure and licensing policies to support both the working quay and the Fish Quay as a food and drink destination. That will include exploring the feasibility of moving the Ferry Landing and connecting the Shields Ferry to Royal Quays. We will work with partners to light Collingwood's Monument and The Priory. We will develop a Master Plan for the centre of North Shields aimed at improving housing and bringing more people into the centre to live, connecting the different parts of the town and the town to other places as well as improving the built environment particularly around Saville Street, Bedford Street and Nile Street.
- 1.5.8 Much of the immediate work is underway. Work has focussed on understanding the data and establishing some policy priorities.

Developing policy priorities

- 1.5.9 Initial work in the last few months between the Officer team and the Cabinet Member has focussed on
- 1.5.10 **Property ownership**; the team has taken a detailed look at land ownership along the riverside from Royal Quays, through into North Shields Town Centre and on down to the Fish Quay. That has included recent developments and current issues, including work in the market on the Tyne Brand site. That work made it clear the Authority has significant and influential land holdings but there are also some complex patterns of ownership and little can happen without significant partnership.
- 1.5.11 **Planning**; the team also re-familiarised themselves with the North Shields elements of the Local Plan and the Character Statement agreed as a Supplementary Planning Document in 2013. The proposed policy objectives are aligned to the agreed Local Plan.
- 1.5.12 **Transport flows**; the team looked at current flows and emerging developments including the significant change of routing from Howdon Road approaching North Shields from the west, down via the new development at Smiths Dock onto the Fish Quay. That work also looked at potential network management plans and how best to achieve some goals to re-route transport and support pedestrians and cyclists.
- 1.5.13 **Housing**; finally, the team looked at the strategic housing picture considering the current stock, its condition and what housing need there was in the area. North Shields Town Centre and the Fish Quay have a very diverse housing offer but there is an opportunity to tackle poor quality rented homes and some significant developments to bring quality private sector developments forward, including the work of the Authority's Trading Company in Northumberland Square.

- 1.5.14 Alongside this the Officer team have been looking at national policy direction and the growing view of what works for town centres. This included The High Street Report published in December 2018.
- 1.5.15 **External conversations;** ahead of more widespread engagement, there have been a series of discussions with external partners and interests to test our thinking and understanding. Discussions with NEXUS, the Port of Tyne and the Fish Quay Development Company have confirmed the potential to move the Ferry Landing to the Western Quay. Discussions with the Port of Tyne have explored their ambitions for the Port and particularly the growing numbers of ferry landings including how to capture those visitors for North Tyneside. Conversations with the Fish Quay Development Company have focussed on the long term sustainability of the Quay and how it might grow to be part of the wider heritage and food and drink offer which increasingly surrounds it. Discussions with New River, who own the Beacon Centre, have focussed on their ambitions and their enthusiasm for being part of a renewed North Shields. Finally, the early thinking has been tested with North Shields Chamber of Trade and Commerce.
- 1.5.16 That work has identified a set of policy priorities which Cabinet are asked to agree in order that they might shape the next stages of the work. They are:

A smaller but more vibrant and connected, high quality town centre; create a smaller, more vibrant and connected town centre. It should combine living, working and retail with a place that becomes a family friendly destination in its own right, to relax and socialise. In turn it will be connected to an increasingly vibrant Fish Quay. Both of which will be supported by better transport flows, stronger infrastructure and better quality built environment. In practical terms a place that has higher quality public space, more of it and more covered which allows the town centre to host more events, more flexible retail opportunities and adopting some national best practice – for example Bolton’s Teenage Market

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.

Next steps

- 1.5.17 Some next steps have already been taken to support this work. Cabinet are asked to note the work done so far and agree the approach to the next stage.
- 1.5.18 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 will focus on transport flows, economic activity and what opportunities exist to grow economic activity in the area. The work will run from Spring to Autumn 2019 and the

Authority have committed to sharing the outputs with partners in NEXUS, Port of Tyne, the Fish Quay Development Company and New River as well as the members of the Business Forum and the North Shields Chamber of Trade and Commerce.

1.5.19 On 22nd March 2019, the Authority submitted an Expression of Interest to the Future High Streets Fund. Based on the national Plan for the High Street, the fund aims to develop the High Street experience and support places to develop that experience. The changes we have already seen in North Shields, and particularly on the Fish Quay, suggest the town is the right place to seek this funding and make a difference. However, competition is expected to be fierce.

1.5.20 In addition, work has begun on a North Shields Master Plan. Once sufficient thinking has been done to develop a policy narrative linked to potential practical steps to make it happen, the Master Plan is expected to be the basis of widening discussions with Ward Councillors, the Chamber of Commerce and the wider community.

1.5.21 While the technical study work will continue and the bid to Government continue, Cabinet is asked to agree the approach to the next stage of this work. Specifically

- Further and wider engagement, based on the policy objectives and an emerging Master Plan to test the thinking done to date and seek input from the community in and around North Shields
- Work to define specific projects and create a programme of activity based on the agreed regeneration strategy and the work already completed and coming next; and
- Broader work to approach some ambitious plans that might connect the Town Centre and the Fish Quay in a more imaginative way and, building on the master planning work, suggest how the town centre might be re-shaped for the long term.

1.6 Decision options:

The following decision options are available for consideration by Cabinet

Option 1

Agree the work done so far, agree the proposed policy priorities and agree the next steps including wider engagement and receiving further reports as required.

Option 2

Ask for further work to be done.

Option 1 is the recommended option.

1.7 Reasons for recommended option:

Option 1 is recommended for the following reasons:

It reflects the commitments made in the Our North Tyneside Plan and the agreed Ambition for North Tyneside.

1.8 Appendices:

None.

1.9 Contact officer:

Paul Hanson, Chief Executive, tel. (0191) 643 7000

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) The High Street Report

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-high-street-report>

PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING

2.1 Finance and other resources

The Officer group will ensure that costs of any business case development work and research into the economic opportunities will be met via the North of Tyne Combined Authority funding as described earlier in this report. All related expenditure to date has been met through existing budgets.

As the plan continues to develop, any new proposals that have a financial impact, will be approved through the normal process. Should the expression of interest to the Future High Streets fund be successful this funding will be used to the benefit and delivery of the Ambition for North Shields and the Fish Quay policy priority.

2.2 Legal

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. As specific actions are brought forward under the policy priorities set out above the legal implications (if any) for those actions will be identified and reported.

2.3 Consultation/community engagement

2.3.1 Internal Consultation

This report was based on work done with a broad officer team from Regeneration and Economic Development, Environment, Housing and Leisure, Commissioning and Asset Management and the Resources Team. It was worked up with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration in consultation with the Elected Mayor and other Cabinet Members.

The next stage will see consultation with the relevant Ward Councillors.

2.3.2 External Consultation/Engagement

Technical discussions have been held with NEXUS, Port of Tyne, Fish Quay Development Company and New River. Early thinking has been tested with North Shields Chamber of Trade and Commerce. The Our North Tyneside Plan and the Ambition for North Tyneside were based on cumulative residents' surveys and the Authority's engagement work. In addition, some specific engagement work was done in support of the Future High Streets Fund Expression of Interest. If Cabinet agree the next steps wider engagement on the policy priorities and an emerging Master Plan will be undertaken with North Shields Chamber of Commerce, local businesses and residents. As well as engagement on specific projects as and when required.

2.4 Human rights

There are no human rights implications arising from this report.

2.5 Equalities and diversity

There are no equality and diversity implications arising from this report.

2.6 Risk management

There are no risk management issues arising from this report.

2.7 Crime and disorder

The overall programme of work provides an opportunity to design safe spaces.

2.8 Environment and sustainability

The work aims at developing a sustainable Town Centre and Fish Quay.

PART 3 - SIGN OFF

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