

WALLSEND TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN



DRAFT

INTRODUCTION

Wallsend has a long and proud history dating back to the Roman conquest and occupation where its fort served as the eastern end for Hadrian's Wall. Its Roman past gives Wallsend an international profile with Segedunum Roman Fort being part of Hadrian's Wall UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Whilst the town's name is derived from its Roman origins, the town is perhaps best known for being a manufacturing powerhouse. It was at the centre of industrial growth on the River Tyne throughout the 19th Century and had a worldwide reputation for ship building and was also a pioneer in electrical power generation.

Whilst the fortunes of Wallsend have ebbed and flowed with changes in the national economy in the 1970s and 1980s, the River Tyne corridor has found a new role in recent years with the renaissance in advanced manufacturing driven by offshore energy opportunities. This was exemplified with the recent sale of the former Swan Hunter shipyard to Shepherd Offshore who intend to bring the site forward for manufacturing purposes in line with our shared ambition.

The modern town of Wallsend and its town centre grew in the 19th and early 20th century in parallel with its shipyards and mines. The shopping core was formed around the axis of Station Road and its High Streets which continued little changed until the development and opening of the Forum Shopping Centre in the 1960s.

The decline of the shipyards in the 1980s and 1990s and loss of employment and income contributed towards the decline in the town centre. The challenges for town centre retailing continued with the growth of out-of-town shopping and, more recently, online shopping and the cost-of-living crisis.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The Council has identified the regeneration of Wallsend Town Centre and its neighbourhoods as a key priority.

The Our North Tyneside Plan sets out our bold ambitions for making North Tyneside an even greater place to live, work and visit. The plan outlines a vision of building a better North Tyneside, looking to the future and listening to and working better for residents.

The Plan focuses on five key themes that will help create a North Tyneside that is thriving, family-friendly, caring, secure and green.

Under the **thriving** theme the Our North Tyneside Plan includes pledges to:

- Regenerate Wallsend high street, bring forward a Masterplan for Wallsend town centre and ensure regeneration delivers ambition, opportunity and benefits for all of our residents
- Bring more good quality jobs to North Tyneside – by helping local businesses to grow and making it attractive for new businesses to set up or relocate in the borough
- Invest in adult education and to support apprenticeships to make sure people have the right skills for the job
- Reduce the number of derelict properties across the borough

The regeneration of Wallsend is also a key priority in the Council's regeneration strategy, 'Ambition for North Tyneside'.

In March 2022, the Council's Cabinet resolved that, for Wallsend, there were three **policy priorities** for inclusion in the Masterplan. These are to:



- **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 and tackling some of the poor quality privately rented housing in the masterplan area;



- **Make the town centre and the nearby neighbourhoods great places to visit and live;** improving the street scene, public spaces and working with partners to make sure people feel safe; and



- **Make sure Wallsend residents are connected to good jobs;** using the full range of tools, including adult education, apprenticeships and the capabilities plus the transport infrastructure around the town to make sure people in the community, who need it, are supported to improve their life chances.

This Masterplan proposes **fourteen** interventions that will deliver the three policy priorities for Wallsend.

WHAT HAVE WE DONE SO FAR

Over the past fifteen years the Council has successfully worked with partners to create a multi-functional town centre developing new facilities and bringing vacant buildings back into use, this has included:

- Development of the Hadrian Health Centre which will open later this year
- Development of the Customer First Centre
- Development of the ALDI food store, Burger King and Wetherspoons
- Renovated and brought back into use eleven derelict homes in Charlotte Street
- Development of Hadrian Leisure Centre
- Refurbishment of Richardson Dees Park and the adjoining Wallsend parks

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 the 2021 surveys of town centre businesses and customers (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 to secure good quality employment by improving their skills through increased access to adult education and addressing barriers to employment with the creation of a “Working Well” employability hub in the Town Centre
- 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.

PARTNERSHIP AND DELIVERY

We have also started to talk with Partners about how we can work together to address the three Masterplan priorities.

This work has included:

- Securing over £1.5 million funding from the North of Tyne Combined Authority for events and festivals, business support, shop front grants and improving walking and cycle routes between the town centre and Segedunum
- Establishing a High Street Board with businesses, VODA, residents and the North Tyneside Business Forum to develop and oversee initiatives and improvements
- Securing support and advice from the Government’s High Street Task Force
- Working with the Academic Health Services Network to investigate how they can assist to ensure that regeneration brings about health improvements
- Making a bid for over £19 million of grant for town centre improvements from the Government’s Levelling Up Fund
- Developing a Stage 1 (Development Phase) bid for National Lottery Heritage Fund grant for the transformation of Segedunum

As projects are developed to address the Masterplan priorities we will investigate delivery and funding routes as outlined on the last page of this Masterplan.



MATSTERPLAN FOCUS AREA



- Project 1** - Wallsend Town Square
- Project 2** - High Street East, High Street West & Station Road
- Project 3** - Segedunum World Heritage Site Gateway
- Project 4** - The Forum
- Project 5** - Bus and Metro Station
- Project 6** - Housing Streetscape Improvements
- Project 7** - Housing Development (New Build & Refurbishment)
- Project 8** - Cycle corridors (Park Road & C2C/ Hadrian's Cycleway/ NCN72/ National Trail)
- Project 9** - Segedunum Transformation
- Project 10** - Segedunum Linkages to Town Centre
- Project 11** - Historic Buildings and Conservation
- Project 12** - Wallsend Business Support
- Project 13** - Wallsend Employment Support
- Project 14** - Wallsend Events & Animation

Note : Projects 12, 13 and 14 are not location specific so do not appear on the plan



Project 3 - Segedunum World Heritage Site Gateway



Project 6 - Housing Streetscape Improvements



PROJECT I

Wallsend Town Square

The pedestrianised areas next to the Forum Shopping Centre, Customer First Centre (CFC) and Anson Public House are busy routes for shoppers and visitors to the CFC while also accommodating seating, bus stops and Hans Schwarz's Grade II listed 'Market Woman' statue. The paving, planting, seating, bins and bollards is looking tired and dated and does not provide the high-quality environment this key 'Gateway', crossroads and public space deserves.

An option is to **remodel the space through new paving , seating, bins, lighting and bollards** which will also enable it to become more useable space and accommodate more events such as fairs and markets. Where possible trees, planting and grass will be incorporated to increase biodiversity.

There is also scope to provide a better setting for the Grade II Listed 'Market Woman' statue which is currently partly hidden by dense planting.



WALSSEND TOWN SQUARE



PROJECT 2

High Street West, High Street East & Station Road

High Street West, the Forum and the Customer First Centre, generates the highest number of pedestrians in the town centre with shoppers attracted by its shops, cafes, public houses, bank and Post Office. It is also a busy route for vehicles and an important bus route.

There is scope however to significantly improve the look of High Street West and improve the experience for pedestrians, cyclists, wheelchair users and others. This could be achieved by:

- Reducing the width of the road and **widening the pavements**
- Introducing **street trees** creating year round interest and enhancing biodiversity
- Providing opportunities for **outdoor seating** for cafes
- New **streetlighting**
- **Decluttering** by removing unnecessary bollards and upgrading other bollards and street furniture.

If funding can be secured, further engagement will be required with shoppers, road users and businesses to ensure that a scheme is designed that reconciles the need to maintain servicing for shops and other businesses alongside improvements to the environment.

Streetscape improvements along these principles can also be developed for High Street East and Station Road.



PROJECT 3

Segedunum World Heritage Site Gateway

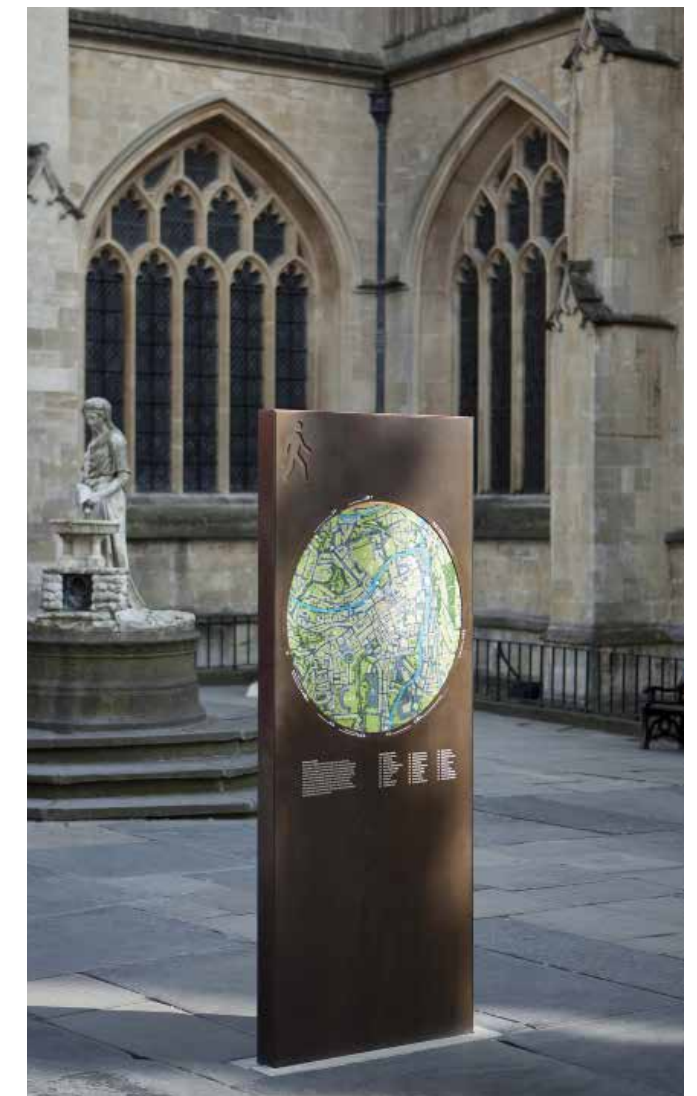
The open area between Buddle Street and the housing in Woolley Street was hard surfaced in the late 1990s in parallel with the development of the Segedunum Museum south of Buddle Street.

While it is possible to see from the museum viewing tower that this area formed the northernmost part of the Roman Fort (it housed the infantry barracks) it is somewhat featureless at ground level and provides an uninviting setting to both the housing that fronts onto it and the World Heritage Site opposite.

There is scope to reimagine what this space could look like and what it could be used for. This could include **planting and seating** for use by residents, visitors to Segedunum as well as cyclists and walkers on the C2C route/Hadrian's cycleway and the National Trail.

In Buddle Street itself there is scope through **coloured or textured road surfacing and Gateway Features** to identify that you are passing through a historic fort while maintaining its key role as a commercial riverside and abnormal load route.

These changes will complement the emerging plans to transform the museum and fort site itself and making sure the two sides of the road are visually linked.



SEGEDUNUM HERITAGE SITE GATEWAY

BEFORE



PROJECT 4

The Forum

The Forum Shopping Centre forms the retail core of the town centre accommodating national, regional and local retailers along with the Customer First Centre (CFC) providing a broad range of goods and services for the community. It is a key employment site offering opportunities in retail, hospitality and catering and other services.

The CFC includes the library and the newly opened Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector hub managed by VODA. Adequate town centre car parking is provided in the two storey Centre car park and on the Aldi surface car park.

Since their ownership in 2010 the Centre owners, NewRiver, have worked with the Council and other partners to develop the CFC, Aldi and Burger King offers and, very recently, the new Hadrian Health Centre which will open in November 2022.

NewRiver 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 attractive 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 and Metro Station

Wallsend Bus Station opened in 1982 in the same year as the Metro Station and the Tyne and Wear metro system was launched.

The bus station has been well served by local bus services as either a terminus or calling point, and as at October 2022 continued to be served by six main bus services, with just over 200 daily departures on weekdays. As part of wider revisions to bus services it has become more common for buses to omit the bus station from their route, while continuing to serve stops on Station Road, High Street West and/or High Street West.

These changes in use of the bus station has provided an opportunity to now consider remodelling, or even removing, the bus station which could include the following interventions:

- Retaining the bus station and introducing new **tree and shrub planting** to soften its appearance.
- Accommodating a **pedestrian and cycle link** between the Metro Station/ town centre and Segedunum and Hadrian's Cycleway and Hadrian's Wall National Trail
- Accommodating a **cycle hub** with secure cycle parking for Metro users
- Accommodating **some new build housing**
- Ensuring that changes support access to employment opportunities within Wallsend and across the wider Borough

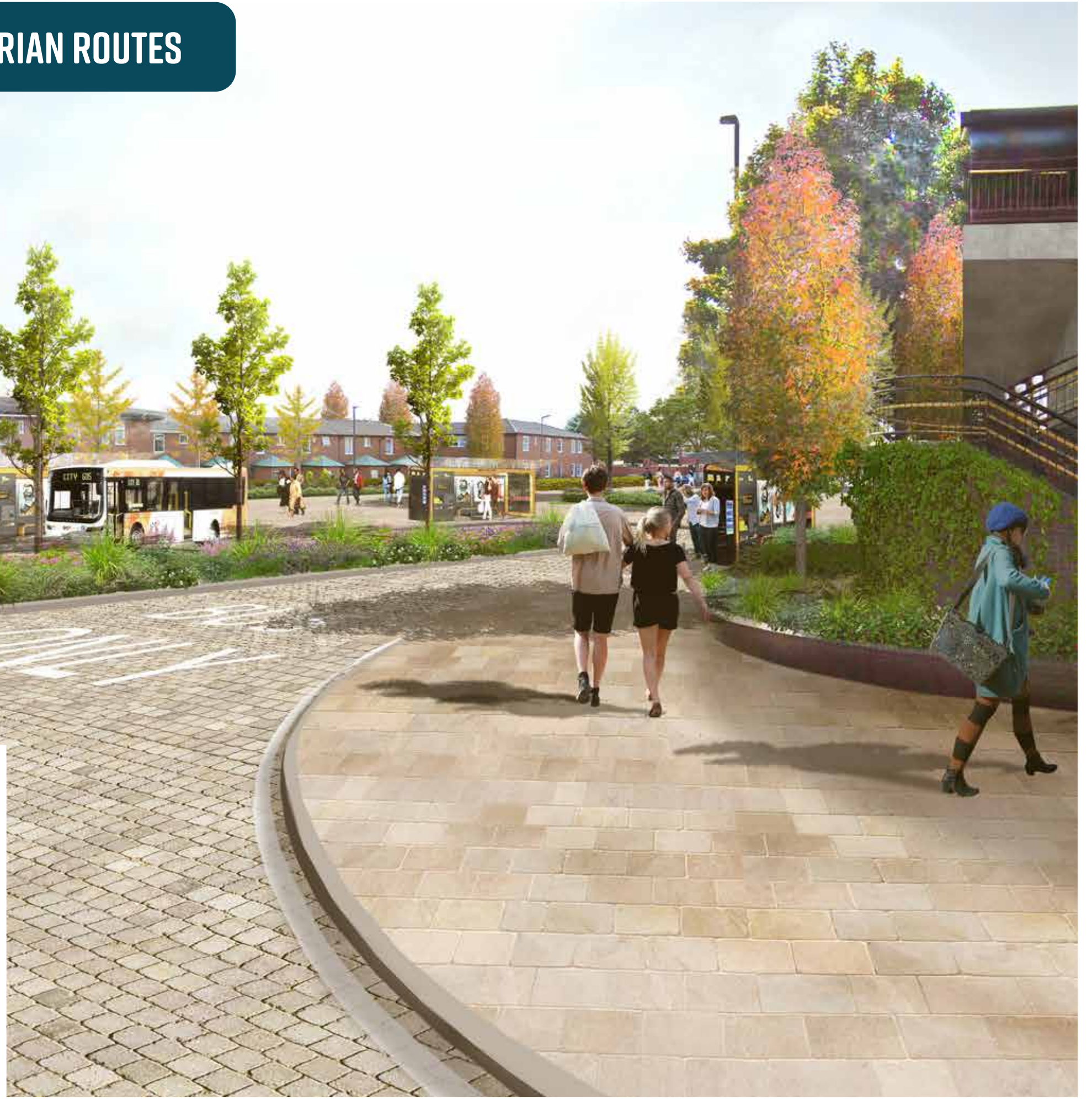
All of these options would need more detailed feasibility work and a funding plan but at this stage views are sought on the proposed ideas.



TRANSPORT HUB & IMPROVED PEDESTRIAN ROUTES



BEFORE



PROJECT 6

Housing Streetscape Improvements

The town centre benefits from a large amount of housing on it's doorstep with local residents supporting local shops and services but improvements are required in order to really capitalise on this relationship.

The terraced housing streets, in very broad terms, can be split into two distinct types. Type 1 is more generous in proportion and the properties, in general, have front gardens and period curtilage details. These streets are found north of High Street East and include Park Road and Laburnum Avenue. Type 2 are smaller properties and have less character due to the lack of front gardens or curtilage details. These streets are found south of High Street East and West and include Vine Street and Hugh Street.

Much of the housing immediately next to the High Street is private rented which, when unmodernised and poorly maintained and insulated, can lead to poor quality housing conditions for residents.

Other initiatives (see Project 7) will be considered to address the problems associated with poorly maintained housing, these can include proactive inspections and enforcement, housing grants, landlord licensing, tenant referencing and addressing anti-social behaviour.

This specific project though addresses the streets themselves and the opportunity to transform the external environment by creating inclusive, pedestrian friendly streets that:

- Provide **space for tree and shrub planting**
- Create **opportunities for children to play**
- Reduce the dominance of the private car while future proofing to accommodate **electric vehicle** infrastructure
- Improves the **walking and cycling** experience and ensures that people feel safe
- Address the function and condition of the **back lanes** as well as the frontages

The image shows Vine Street as an indication of what could be achieved in any of the streets in and around the town centre.



PROJECT 7

Housing Development (New Build & Refurbishment)

Wallsend is a popular residential area with a range of available housing, excellent public transport, good schools, proximity to the Coast and Newcastle City Centre and high quality parks.

Over the past ten years the Council has successfully built and refurbished some attractive and popular affordable housing in Wallsend including:

- 12 homes built at Swan Close on the former Wallsend Boys' Club site
- 41 homes built in Alexandra Street
- 7 homes refurbished in Charlotte Street bringing derelict properties back into use

The Council has also worked in partnership with Registered Providers leading to the following homes being delivered:

- 6 Homes by Karbon at Park House
- 7 Homes by Home Housing at Wilson Street (Star House)
- 20 homes built by Home Housing in Carville Road (former Co-Op)
- 8 homes by Karbon at Church Bank

Housing will be a key driver of Wallsend's regeneration and one of the three policy priorities in the Masterplan is to:

- **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 and tackling some of the poor quality privately rented housing in the masterplan area;



PROJECT 7

Housing Development (New Build & Refurbishment)

The Borough wide Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) and other evidence highlights some key points to consider in developing and refurbishing housing in the Wallsend Masterplan area:

- There is a high proportion of 1 and 2 bed properties, especially private rented flats, these have a high turnover, and many are empty for long periods affecting community cohesion. A more sustainable community could be created **through providing larger, family homes either through new development or conversion of flats.** The Council has recently acquired and refurbished several long term empty homes in Charlotte Street and there is scope for more of this either by the Council, its trading company, Aurora, or other housing partners. Refurbishment opportunities could include conversion of vacant shops or their upper floors.
- There is a high proportion of private rented accommodation and a relatively low proportion of council housing. There was significant dissatisfaction from people in Wallsend about the quality of accommodation expressed in the SHMA household survey 2020. **There is an opportunity to work with the private landlords to improve the quality of the housing stock using measures such as a landlords' forum and a licensing system There is also scope to encourage owner occupancy, especially first time buyers, e.g. through discounted affordable homes.**
- Condition and quality – a significant proportion of housing is poor quality with a third of private housing failing to meet the Government's Decent Homes Standard. It is likely to be the poor quality of the housing stock that has meant that house and rent prices are low and little changed over the last few years compared to other areas, despite the area's excellent location and good transport links. **There is scope therefore to introduce a programme of housing retrofitting that targets insulation and reduces fuel poverty.**
- **New Build** – be proactive in bringing forward new development sites including the sites allocated in the Local Plan at Portugal Place and south of the RAOB Club, these have the potential to provide over 30 new homes.



PROJECT 7

Housing Development (New Build & Refurbishment)



PROJECT 8

Cycle corridors (Park Road & C2C/ Hadrian's Cycleway/ NCN72/ National Trail)

The UK's most popular long distance cycle route, the C2C, passes through the heart of Wallsend and, in one stretch, between its internationally famous sites of Segedunum and the former Swan Hunter shipyard.

Given the continuing growth in cycling for leisure and commuting there is potential to improve the route's look and feel and perception of safety. This also provides the opportunity to better connect residents to employment opportunities. This could include selective thinning of vegetation, improved lighting and providing new facilities such as a **cycle hub** providing safe and secure cycle parking, cycle hire and servicing. A logical site would be close to Segedunum Museum and its proposed new ground floor café.

The C2C (which incorporates Route 72/Hadrian's Cycleway) provides an east-west route through Wallsend but there is limited provision elsewhere including north-south connecting the town centre and riverside with the parks and beyond to the coast road and its links to the wagonways. Project 6 'Housing Streetscape Improvements' envisages a reduction in vehicles and their speeds within the streets around the high streets and allows for the creation of more, improved cycle links through the area.

A key new route could connect the C2C/Route 72/Hadrian's Cycleway to the Metro and town centre core via Holly Avenue.

A new segregated cycle route could also be introduced through the area along **Park Road**. This route connects directly from Cycle Way 72 in the south and runs to Richardson Dees Park in the north of the Masterplan area.



PROJECT 9

Segedunum Transformation

Segedunum Roman Fort forms part of the Hadrian's Wall UNESCO World Heritage Site and brings a national and international profile to Wallsend. It is a key and unique asset that deserves a higher profile and needs to play a major part in the heart of the community.

The Fort lies immediately north of the former Swan Hunter shipyard, a name that is known around the world, as well as the Hadrian's Wall National Trail (walking) and the C2C cycle route linking the Cumbrian and north east coasts.

Segedunum Museum opened in 2000 and is a popular attraction especially with primary schools, trail walkers and history buffs. The museum is also a key local employer offering opportunities in the cultural sector. There is a need however to refresh the museum and fort through development of new facilities, comprehensive refurbishment and reimagining the visitor offer to attract new audiences. This work will ensure the museum is relevant and attractive to local, regional, national and international audiences.

This project will need significant investment and Arts Council England has approved £499,000 of grant towards repairs at the museum such as new air conditioning plant, roof repairs and a replacement tower lift. Alongside the repair works the National Lottery Heritage Fund has invited a development (first) phase grant bid and this will be submitted in 2023. This application will include:

- Introduction of **new gallery spaces** and **reimagining** of the existing displays
- Reopening the reconstructed Bath House with a new internal audio visual offer
- Relocating the car park and **creating an outdoor events space** in its place
- Relocating the café to ground floor enabling it to open independently and beyond the museum's opening hours
- **Improvements to the grounds** to incorporate play areas and garden areas targeting families
- **Improving links between all parts of the site** including the excavated Bath House site (Ship in the Hole site) and the stretch of wall north of Buddle Street



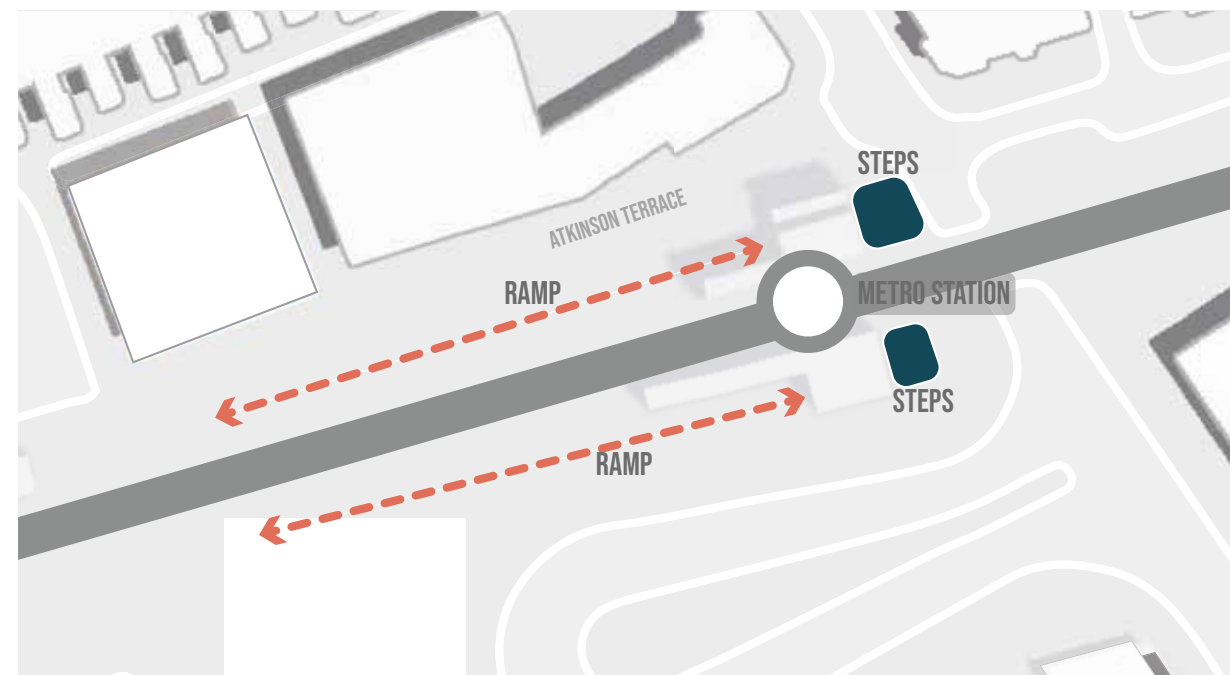
PROJECT 10

Segedunum Routes to Town Centre

Visitors to Segedunum arriving by Metro from Newcastle can currently use two ways of getting from the Metro Station to Segedunum:

- Flight of steps which leads down to Station Road at the Atkinson Terrace junction and then follows a narrow footway south along Station Road and under the Metro bridge towards the Buddle Street- Hadrian Road crossroads and Segedunum
- Ramp which runs parallel with Atkinson Terrace leading to the tunnel that passes under the railway (Metro) line and then emerges at the bus station from which there are four routes south that can be taken to reach Buddle Street/Segedunum:
 - Carville Road
 - Through Wooley Street housing
 - Back lane between Wooley Street and Station Road
 - Station Road

There is a need to consider the 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 II

Historic Buildings and Conservation

The Masterplan area includes several landmark buildings which are architecturally and historically important as well as being much loved by generations of Wallsend residents. These buildings include the Town Hall and the Memorial Hall (the MEM) which are both in use and cared for.

There are others however which need reinventing and put to new uses to enable them to continue to make a positive contribution towards both the immediate townscape and Wallsend's wider vitality.

The first is Wallsend Civic Hall, a Grade II listed building in the heart of the Green Conservation Area which, with its grounds, is a key part of the Wallsend public parks.

The Hall, which was rebuilt in 1812 has been owned by North Tyneside Council and its predecessors since 1916 and has most recently been leased out for use as a wedding venue and for other events.

The lease is now nearing its end and work is starting to survey the building to better understand its condition before options are developed to bring it back into a use that befits its character, setting and history.

The second is 'the Buddle' which was a school for over 100 years before being transformed into a community arts centre in the 1980s. The Council is now working with the developer of Wallsend Town Hall managed workspace facility,

Adavo, to bring the Buddle back into use as a business centre focusing on health, beauty and wellbeing.

The third is the privately owned Coach and Horses in High Street East which has been vacant for a number of years and the Council is investigating what it could do to assist in bringing this Grade II listed building back into use.

The Town Hall and the nearby Coach and Horses sit within a Victorian and Edwardian town centre which has largely retained its historic grid pattern of streets but has lost some of its visual appeal in the street surface and street furniture and many of its shopfronts.

The Local Plan includes policy AS8.8 which states "The Council will support positive measures to tackle heritage and townscape issues in a holistic way in Wallsend town centre, including through e) Preparation of a shop front design guide to assist in steering appropriate visual enhancements to shop fronts; and f) pursuing a conservation area in Wallsend town centre."

It is proposed to prepare a shopfront design guide alongside the shopfront grant scheme (funded by the North of Tyne Combined Authority until March 2024). It is also proposed to begin discussions with Historic England about the potential for pursuing and declaring a conservation area in the town centre



PROJECT 12

Wallsend Business Support

Businesses wishing to start up and grow within Wallsend can access support from an established business support network including the Business Factory which is based in the Town Hall. The Town Hall also provides managed office space along with the Swans Centre for Innovation while the Market Village in the Forum Shopping Centre has space that is ideal for retail start-ups.

All Wallsend businesses can also join the Wallsend Chamber and North Tyneside Business Forum providing access to events and networking opportunities.

The Council has secured grant funding from the North of Tyne Combined Authority's Towns and High Streets Innovation Programme to support small and medium sized businesses (SMEs) in the town centre. This will enable the Council to deliver the following:

- Bespoke Business Support for start-ups and established SMEs, this could include support for pop up shops, markets, incubators and advice on marketing, digital and HR
- Appointment of a Town Centre Business Advisor providing one to one advice and arranging bespoke support according to the needs of businesses
- A shop front grant scheme for improving shop fronts, windows, roller shutters and other features together with design advice and support to improve the look of the shopping streets
- Work to strengthen engagement with businesses in the development and implementation of the other regeneration projects via the Wallsend Chamber of Commerce, North Tyneside Business Forum, and Towns and High Streets Innovation Board

PROJECT 13

Wallsend Employment Support

Wallsend offers two key employment sites within the Masterplan area with opportunities in retail, hospitality and catering and other service industries and a manufacturing and engineering focus to the south of the Town Centre along the banks of the river. One of the three policy priorities in the Masterplan is to make sure Wallsend residents are connected to good jobs; using the full range of tools, including adult education, apprenticeships and the capabilities plus the transport infrastructure around the town to make sure people in the community, who need it, are supported to improve their life chances.

To ensure that residents are supported to access the full range of opportunities three key projects have been identified to address this priority:

- **Working Well Employability Hub** – Building on the pilot project in North Shields it is proposed to develop a similar one stop-shop in Wallsend. This will provide easy access under one roof to employment and skills support including confidence building, guidance on job applications and courses in maths, English and ICT.
- **Employment Support** – Continuation of services to assist residents who, for whatever reasons, do not access mainstream services. Discussions are underway with the North of Tyne Combined Authority (NTCA) about future funding routes including the devolved UK Shared Prosperity Fund and funding has been secured to develop Employment Partnerships to better coordinate and maximise existing employment support.
- **Adult Education** – Adult & Community Learning is currently delivered from Segedunum Business Centre but options are being considered to improve the facilities available to residents to increase the range of course options and promote participation in lifelong learning including progression opportunities into Further and Higher Education. The revised offer will see more accessible provision being available both in the Town Centre and located adjacent to key employment sites.

PROJECT 14

Wallsend Events & Animation

Wallsend is home to some of North Tyneside's most popular events and there is considerable scope to develop the current programme and create new activities for residents and visitors.

We will develop initiatives that encourage movement of visitors between attractions and the high street, resulting in longer dwell times and higher spend. This will include capitalising on the presence of the World Heritage Site at Segedunum which is strategically important and can help to develop the town's USP in attracting new and repeat footfall.

Priorities

1- To sustain and develop existing events

Wallsend Festival has taken place in the heart of the town for over 20 years and brings the community out in force. It features a mix of stalls, entertainment and fairground rides and is much-anticipated each July. The annual fireworks display at Segedunum Roman Fort is another hugely popular event, drawing thousands of residents. It showcases the museum as playing an important role in the town.

Any enhancements, including stronger links with Segedunum, can further stimulate footfall and extend the benefits to a greater number of visitors. Sustaining a strong programme of events in and around the town centre, riverside and parks can help demonstrate vibrancy and animate public spaces.

2 - To develop new events and cultural opportunities that drive footfall Wallsend can benefit from some focussed activity that really bring the town to life and engage the community, borough residents and visitors. The opportunities include more use of the exhibition space at both Wallsend Customer First Centre (CFC) and Segedunum. The CFC hosted the world premiere of the Peter Rabbit Storytime exhibition, attracting thousands of visitors. There is potential to host more high profile events and exhibitions in both spaces.

3 - To explore new opportunities

We will explore new forms of contemporary entertainment and events, including the capacity for a drone-based night time light show.

We will work with local, regional and national artists to bring a greater number of outdoor arts performances to the town.

We will explore the use of technology, such as AR and VR, to introduce innovative town trails, encompassing the town's parks, attractions and public spaces.



DELIVERY

The projects that make up this draft Masterplan will be developed and delivered by the private, voluntary, community and public sectors. This is likely to be over a ten year period and will be subject to the availability of funding and future grant applications.

The Council will work with partners to identify who is best placed to develop and lead on the projects. Delivery strategies will be developed for each project that includes an identification of the resources needed. Budget estimates will be developed for each project identifying both capital and revenue requirements and potential funding sources.

The North of Tyne Combined Authority has already approved £1.94 million of grant under the Towns and High Streets Innovation Programme towards activity in Wallsend Town Centre. This will be targeted on business support for small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), events, shop front grants and environmental improvements.

The Council and its partners will continually look to identify other funding sources to implement the projects within it.

For the Towns and High Streets Innovation Programme an initial Board of representatives from businesses, the Wallsend Chamber, VODA, North Tyneside Business Forum and the Council was set up to decide on the programme of interventions. The membership of this Board will be broadened to ensure that it is inclusive and representative of the Wallsend Masterplan area.

NEXT STEPS

The next steps following consultation on this draft Masterplan will be for the Council and its partners to consider the comments received and then amend the plan for consideration by the Council's Cabinet and the High Street Transformation Board in Spring 2023.

