

**REGENERATION, ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT AND SKILLS  
PORTFOLIO  
DECISION SCHEDULE**



**Monday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2012**

**at 9.00 am**

**in Committee Room C, Civic Centre, Hartlepool**

Councillor Jackson, Cabinet Member responsible for Regeneration, Economic Development and Skills will consider the following items.

**1. KEY DECISIONS**

No items

**2. OTHER ITEMS REQUIRING DECISION**

2.1 Grants for Key Vacant Buildings Update – *Assistant Director (Regeneration and Planning)*

2.2 Annual Self Assessment Report for SFA Funded Provision – *Director of Child and Adult Services*

**3. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

3.1 Maintenance of Church Square – *Assistant Director (Regeneration and Planning)*

**REGENERATION, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
AND SKILLS PORTFOLIO**

Report To Portfolio Holder  
16<sup>th</sup> January 2012



**Report of:** Assistant Director (Regeneration and Planning)

**Subject:** GRANTS FOR KEY VACANT BUILDINGS  
UPDATE

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## SUMMARY

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide an update on progress with the current grant scheme that is seeking to provide support for vacant, underused buildings and sites. The report also seeks Portfolio Holder approval to address other key empty buildings.

### 2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

The report explains the approach and progress to date, within the targeted areas of York road and Brenda Road. The report also provides information on properties that have been successfully supported. The report suggests other key vacant properties and sites that could be addressed with the remaining grant budget.

### 3. RELEVANCE TO PORTFOLIO MEMBER

The Portfolio Holder has responsibility for approving Key Vacant Building Grants.

### 4. TYPE OF DECISION

Non Key Decision.

### 5. DECISION MAKING ROUTE

Portfolio Holder only on the 16<sup>th</sup> January 2012.

**6. DECISION(S) REQUIRED**

Portfolio Holder is recommended to:

- i) note the progress made regarding the provision of grants to date;  
and
- ii) agree the approach regarding the remaining uncommitted grant  
funding

**Report of:** Assistant Director of Regeneration and Planning

**Subject:** GRANTS FOR KEY VACANT BUILDINGS  
UPDATE

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## **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To provide an update on progress with the current grant scheme that is providing support for vacant, underused buildings and sites. The report also seeks Portfolio Holder approval to address other key empty buildings.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 A grant project focused on the central area of York Road and the Brenda Road area of the Southern Business Zone has been running for approximately 18 months. This scheme was previously approved by Portfolio Holder (21/05/10). The purpose of this grant scheme is to focus resources on empty or underused buildings and sites. In order to achieve maximum impact it was agreed that there would be an initial focus on areas with a concentration of empty and disused properties. The initial focus therefore has been York Road between Victoria Road and Park Road and the Brenda Road area of the Southern Business Zone. The two current areas of focus were identified because as well as encouraging the re-use of empty properties, the properties are either in busy, prominent locations or are on key routes, therefore providing maximum impact, helping to ensure value for money and supporting wider Council objectives.
- 2.2 The Key Vacant Buildings Grant scheme has £200,000 allocated for improvements to business premises from the Councils capital fund. As well as focusing on vacant properties and sites the grant scheme aims to support business creation, job creation and job safeguarding opportunities. The grant fund can support various eligible works including external improvements: replacement shop fronts, windows and roofing works. Internal works linked to business expansion and job creation are also eligible. Currently 60% of costs up to a maximum of £15,000 have been available for eligible property owners, which reduces for multiple applications.

## **3. GRANT SCHEME PROGRESS**

- 3.1 To date nine grants have been approved. Two of these nine grants schemes have been completed resulting in the re-use of two empty

properties, and two further schemes are on site and are due to be completed shortly. Start dates are awaited for the remaining five properties that have had grant applications approved. Overall these grant approvals mean that £122,102 of the grant funding is currently committed.

- 3.2 In order to commit the remaining resources officers have been working with six owners of eligible properties for a considerable period of time to bring forward grant applications. Of these six interests it is anticipated that four may not progress, despite property owners showing an initial interest and agreeing to prepare detailed applications. Individual circumstances for some of the owners of these properties may have changed which means that they are no longer in a position to progress with applications at the current time.
- 3.3 In order to maximise the benefit of the grant fund, officers have reviewed the areas where the grants are currently targeted and approached any remaining eligible properties. Enquiries have also been made with owners that have been previously approached but had not registered any interest to see if their circumstances have changed. This may result in some further interest and grant take up in the existing York Road area, officers are awaiting the result of these enquiries. The review of the Brenda Road area however, has not resulted in any additional grant interests.

#### **4. PROPOSAL**

- 4.1 To help to commit the remaining resources and to continue to target vacant buildings and sites and to bring empty properties back into use, it is proposed that grants are offered to specific property owners outside the areas currently being targeted. Flexibility was built into the grant scheme when it was initially set up to enable the Council to respond to other eligible enquiries and target specific priority buildings and sites in the wider town centre once demand in the priority areas has been met. This will enable grants to be available to complement other town centre initiatives such as the Innovation and Skills Quarter. Queries have been recently received from property owners that would merit support through the grant scheme.
- 4.2 In addition to targeting buildings in the wider Town Centre area, consideration could also be given to targeting empty commercial properties in areas adjacent to housing regeneration sites. Targeting resources in these suggested areas would support the significant public sector investment that has already taken place in sites such as The Headway.

## **5. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- 5.1 Funding for these grants has already been confirmed and is available through the Council's 2010/11 capital budget allocation. The approval process for the grants will remain unchanged and applications will continue to be approved by the Assistant Director of Regeneration and Planning and the Regeneration, Economic Development and Skills Portfolio Holder.

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 Portfolio Holder is recommended to:
- i) note the progress made regarding the provision of grants to date; and
  - ii) agree the approach regarding the remaining uncommitted grant funding

## **7. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Portfolio Holder Reports – 21/05/10, 11/03/11 and 17/06/11

## **8. CONTACT OFFICER**

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**REGENERATION, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
AND SKILLS PORTFOLIO**  
Report to Portfolio Holder  
16<sup>th</sup> January 2012



**Report of:** Director of Child and Adult Services

**Subject:** ANNUAL SELF ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR  
SFA FUNDED PROVISION

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## SUMMARY

### 1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update the portfolio holder on the annual Self Assessment Report for Skills Funding Agency (SFA) funded provision for academic year 2010/11.

### 2.0 SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

The report sets out the background of the requirements for the production of an annual Self Assessment Report and summarises the content.

### 3.0 RELEVANCE TO PORTFOLIO MEMBER

The report relates directly to the delivery of SFA provision.

### 4.0 TYPE OF DECISION

Non key.

### 5.0 DECISION MAKING ROUTE

Regeneration, Economic Development and Skills portfolio holder.

### 6.0 DECISION(S) REQUIRED

To note the contents of the report and to approve the submission of the final Self Assessment Report.

**Report of:** Director of Child and Adult Services

**Subject:** ANNUAL SELF ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR  
SFA FUNDED PROVISION

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## **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To update the portfolio holder on the annual Self Assessment Report for Skills Funding Agency (SFA) funded provision for academic year 2010/11.

## **2.0 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 As part of the funding agreement with the Skills Funding Agency all providers are required to complete an annual Self Assessment Report (SAR). This needs to be submitted electronically to the SFA in December of each year.
- 2.2 The SAR is an in depth analysis of the funded activities during the preceding academic year. The judgements in the report are based on the criteria as defined in the Common Inspection Framework for the inspection of post 16 providers of education.
- 2.3 The SAR is also a key document used by Ofsted as the starting point for any inspection of the Council provision. During any inspection Ofsted will compare the judgements of the provider made in their SAR with their own inspection findings. The SAR may also be used by other potential funders as a way of gauging the quality of a provider.
- 2.4 The SAR process involves a wide range of stakeholders. All staff are consulted as are Community partners. The views of learners are also taken into account.
- 2.5 Evidence to enable the judgements to be made is collected throughout the year from a number of sources e.g. Satisfaction Surveys and Observation of Teaching and Learning. These are all reviewed when determining the judgements made
- 2.6 The SFA has in the past provided guidance as to the format of the report. The accepted format is that the report follows the format of an Ofsted inspection report. This gives an analysis against each of the sections in the Common Inspection Framework and includes a section on each area of Learning.

- 2.7 The SAR is also used as the basis for preparing the Annual Quality Improvement Plan. This is another requirement for all SFA funded providers and gives the service a clear action plan for improving the quality of the provision over the next academic year.
- 2.8 The SAR which is prepared encompasses all the provision in the council which is funded by the SFA. At the present time this includes Adult Education and the European Social Fund (ESF) funded Going Forward Together project.

### **3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 There are no financial implications to this.

### **4.0 CONCLUSIONS**

- 4.1 The summary of the grades awarded are shown in **Appendix 1**. The full report is available

### **5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 5.1 It is recommended that the Portfolio Holder note this report and approve the submission of the SAR to the SFA.

Contact officer – Maggie Heaps, Learning and Skills Manager.

Background papers – none.

## Summary of Grades

Overall Effectiveness	2
Capacity to improve	2
Outcome for Learners	2
Quality of provision	2
Leadership and management	2
Health, Social Care and Public Services	2
Information and Communication Technology	3
Arts, Media and Publishing	2
Language, Literature and Culture	2
Education and Training	2
Preparation for Life and Work	3
Business Administration and Law	1
Family Learning	3
Community Skills	2
Going Forward Together Project	2

**REGENERATION, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT &  
SKILLS PORTFOLIO**

Report To Portfolio Holder  
16<sup>th</sup> January 2012



**Report of:** Assistant Director (Regeneration and Planning)

**Subject:** MAINTENANCE OF CHURCH SQUARE

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## SUMMARY

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of the report is to inform the Portfolio Holder of potential savings in maintenance budgets when comparing the new scheme that has been designed for Church Square against the existing maintenance requirements.

### 2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

The report details what maintenance has been undertaken in Church Square over the past few years and compares this with the anticipated maintenance requirements if the square is redeveloped at a future time.

### 3. RELEVANCE TO PORTFOLIO MEMBER

The Regeneration of the Central Area falls within the remit of the Portfolio Holder.

### 4. TYPE OF DECISION

Non-key

### 5. DECISION MAKING ROUTE

Regeneration, Economic Development and Skills Portfolio Holder meeting on the 16<sup>th</sup> December 2011.

**6. DECISION(S) REQUIRED**

The Regeneration, Economic Development and Skills Portfolio Holder is requested to note the contents of the report.

**Report of:** Assistant Director (Regeneration and Planning)

**Subject:** MAINTENANCE OF CHURCH SQUARE

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## **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to inform the Portfolio Holder of potential savings in maintenance budgets when comparing the new scheme that has been designed for Church Square against the current maintenance requirements.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Regeneration, Economic Development and Skills Portfolio Holder considered the results of the public consultation for the first phase of the Church Square Masterplan on the 14<sup>th</sup> October 2011. The Portfolio Holder deferred the scheme until a more economically suitable time and requested that a further report be presented for information on what potential savings on maintenance and compensation costs could be achieved if Church Square was to be redeveloped.

## **3. INFORMATION**

- 3.1 A significant amount of maintenance has been undertaken within Church Square since 1999 as a result of displaced or broken flagstones as the paving materials are not sufficiently robust to withstand the vehicle traffic within the Square. 389 individual repairs have been made since 1999, 150 of which have been made since 2006. The repairs either related to individual flagstones or to larger areas of damage.
- 3.2 It has not been possible to quantify the cost of each individual repair as many of these were carried out on a responsive basis (within 24 hours or 28 days), depending on the severity of the defect, by the Council's Highway Maintenance Team.
- 3.3 Taking an approximate cost of £200 for a repair to one or two square meters of the existing Church Square paving (representing a typical small repair), the total cost over the period from 1999 to the present time would have been approximately £77,800. This is a conservative estimate as many of the repairs would have been to larger areas of the Square or may have involved several small repairs during one visit.
- 3.4 It has been estimated that a comparable repair using natural stone material would be at a higher rate of £250 to allow for the additional

cost of the material, however only very limited maintenance would be required over the first 20 years. Even assuming that 5 repair visits per year would be made, this equates to a total estimated repair cost of £15,000 over an equivalent 12 year period. The natural stone materials would therefore have an estimated annual repair cost of £1,250 compared with the existing materials of £6,483.

- 3.5 The benefit of using natural stone paving has been highlighted in the Stranton Conservation Area where the footpath was regularly repaired due to failure of the concrete paving. This area was repaved in early 2008 using natural stone and to date there have been no recorded repair works undertaken.
- 3.6 Church Square has required significantly more maintenance than other areas of the town due to the inappropriate materials that could not withstand the vehicle use, which is generally the case when small element paving units and vehicular traffic are mixed.
- 3.7 The level of remedial work required to replace the broken flagstones was a constant drain on time and resources so a temporary solution was implemented in the form of a tarmac surface at a cost of £77,689 which now covers a large proportion of the vehicle areas within the Square. This has reduced the maintenance requirements significantly, however the nature and quality of the tarmac surface is not considered to be an appropriate long term solution for such a prominent and important public space. The Square lies within the Church Street Conservation Area and is a main access hub between the town centre, transport interchange and Marina. The tarmac surface was always intended to be a temporary solution as more substantial improvements in the area were always planned in line with the recommendations of the Hartlepool Central Area Investment Framework.
- 3.8 The Council has a duty to preserve and enhance the quality, character and setting of conservation areas and listed buildings. These requirements are set out in the Hartlepool Local Plan 2006, Church Street Conservation Area Management Plan and English Heritage guidance. Securing a more sympathetic solution to reducing maintenance requirements within the Square, that complements the listed Municipal, Leadbitter and Christ Church buildings is therefore important, in order to enhance the environment of the Square, with the associated benefits that this will bring to residents and tourists.
- 3.9 Areas remain within Church Square that have not been resurfaced with tarmac and could potentially still incur maintenance costs in the future. These areas include the space in front of the Municipal Buildings and the adjacent pedestrian areas throughout the Square, where there has been a noticeable increase in the amount of cars parking since the expansion of Cleveland College of Art and Design and the change to the tarmac road surface. These areas have not been designed for the level of vehicle useage that they receive. There are a number of

examples where tarmac patches have been used as temporary repairs, which further detracts from the quality of the environment that should be achieved within the area.

- 3.10 The proposed new scheme would reduce and restrict the number of areas that vehicles can use ensuring that they utilise nearby formalised car parks. These areas will be designed to a sufficiently high standard and would use suitably robust materials to ensure that only minimal maintenance will be required. The pedestrian areas will be designed to withstand the occasional use by service vehicles.
- 3.11 The proposed paving consists of natural stone, either granite or sandstone, which would be laid onto a high specification Instemac mortar bedding and grouting system. A concrete base has also been allowed for in the costings, with the intention collectively, to provide a highly durable and long lasting surface. It is anticipated that only limited maintenance would be required within the first 20 years of the scheme. The vehicular areas would be paved with 100x200x100 thick granite setts. The proposed specification and construction methods mean that the road surface would have an estimated lifespan of 40 years according to evidence outlined within the Natural Stone Surfacing Good Practice Guide 2004, produced by the society of Chief Officers of Transportation in Scotland.
- 3.12 There have been two public liability claims since 2000 within Church Square. Both of these related to tripping accidents in front of the Municipal Buildings. Both claims were successfully defended and therefore no compensation payments were made.
- 3.13 In summary the significant repair costs associated with the current design of the Square are the result of the use of materials that are unsuitable for their current function. The materials that would be used in the proposed scheme would be more robust and consequently would have comparatively lower costs over a similar timescale. It should be recognised that the repair costs detailed in the report and the anticipated lifespan and maintenance requirements of the proposed new scheme are estimates, and additional maintenance over and above this may still be required. The capital outlay on the proposed scheme could not be justified on repair costs alone as the maintenance costs will not be cheaper than the current tarmac surface. The tarmac surface was not, however, intended to be a suitable long term solution given the importance of its location within the town centre and particularly the Church Street Conservation area. Leaving the Square in its current state would not help achieve the broader regeneration benefits of the proposed scheme, of helping to attract businesses, improving image and amenities and supporting investment in the local colleges.

**4. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND RISK**

- 4.1 This report is for information only and therefore there are no financial implications or risk to the Council.

**5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 5.1 The Regeneration, Economic Development and Skills Portfolio Holder is requested to note the contents of the report.

**6. CONTACT OFFICER**

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