

JOINT FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE AND REGENERATION SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

23 NOVEMBER 2015

The meeting commenced at 1.00 pm in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

Present:

Councillor Kevin Cranney (In the Chair)

Councillors: Christopher Akers Belcher, Stephen Akers-Belcher, Allan Barclay, Marjorie James, Jim Lindridge, Brenda Loynes, Carl Richardson, Chris Simmons, Kayleigh Sirs, George Springer and Paul Thompson.

Officers: Gill Alexander, Chief Executive
Chris Little, Chief Finance Officer
Peter Devlin, Chief Solicitor
Louise Wallace, Director of Public Health
Denise Ogden, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
Damien Wilson, Assistant Director, Regeneration
Rob Smith, Principal Regeneration Officer
Alastair Rae, Public Relations Manager
David Cosgrove, Democratic Services Team

1. Apologies for Absence

Councillor Dr George Morris.

2. Declarations of Interest

None.

3. Hartlepool Regeneration Masterplan (*Assistant Director, Regeneration*)

Type of decision

Key decision (test (i)/(ii) – Forward Plan Reference No. RN13/14.

Purpose of report

The purpose of the report was to inform the Committee of the findings of the Hartlepool Regeneration Masterplan and to request that the Committee

adopt the Masterplan.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Assistant Director, Regeneration gave a presentation to the Joint Committee outlining the main aspects of the Hartlepool Regeneration Masterplan. The Hartlepool Regeneration Masterplan represented an in-depth piece of work looking in detail at what could be achieved on specific sites within the Marina, Hartlepool Waterfront and wider town centre. The Masterplan was developed through comprehensive public consultation and discussions and negotiations with the private sector and builds upon the Vision for Hartlepool launched in 2014.

Despite the challenges that the town is facing due to the current economic climate there are number of exciting opportunities and developments which set the context for the preparation of the Masterplan including:

- Multi-million pound investment in Middleton Grange Shopping Centre with new retailers opening including Pavers, Pep & Co, Select and TJ Hughes creating 110 new jobs.
- £2m investment in the Vision Retail Park creating 50 new jobs.
- The development of a new £11m campus for Cleveland College of Art and Design.
- Queens Meadow is currently the most successful Enterprise Zone in the Tees Valley with 12 projects having been secured with a total investment of around £5m creating around 200 jobs.
- 3.2 million people visited Hartlepool in 2014, with visitor expenditure now standing at £148m (which was a 1% increase since 2013).
- Hartlepool's youth unemployment rate had dropped from a high of 17.8% to 4.2%. This was the largest youth unemployment rate reduction of any Local Authority area in Great Britain.

The Masterplan identifies three main sub-areas to drive the regeneration of the town; the Waterfront/Marina, the Innovation and Skills Quarter at Church Street and the Town Centre. A key cross cutting theme was connectivity and ensuring that these areas were well connected to each other and beyond.

All of the projects within the Masterplan are designed to be implemented together as part of a cohesive Regeneration Programme for Hartlepool. The delivery would be an ongoing and sustained process over the next 15 years.

It was estimated that the direct and indirect economic and social benefits of the proposals within the Masterplan would result in:

- A total construction spend of approx. £101.5m
- 625-700 net additional jobs
- £25.6m-£28.6m additional value within the economy.

Masterplans were not rigid blueprints for development and design, rather

they set the context within which individual projects come forward. Further opportunities may emerge as the Masterplan was delivered and it was important that these were progressed if they align with the framework. The Council must continue to be pro-active and flexible in responding to any new investment opportunities.

The Masterplan sets the direction of travel for regeneration in Hartlepool. The projects and timescales within the Masterplan may evolve as new opportunities or challenges were identified. The strategic principles would stay the same and should be considered whenever making public policy or investment decisions.

The Masterplan is distinctive, opportunistic and needs to be underpinned by strong leadership and governance. The strong leadership and governance needs to be maintained regardless of political, business or real estate cycles. The nature of regeneration is long term and requires a co-ordinated and sustained programme of investment.

For the Masterplan to be successful the buy-in of stakeholders and the delivery of early win projects were required to improve confidence in Hartlepool as a place to invest. A number of stakeholders, landowners and funding agencies were vital to the delivery of the Masterplan.

The Masterplan was developed considering a number of strategic aims including:

- Increasing Hartlepool's profile as a major leisure and visitor destination
- Taking advantage of the Waterfront to appeal not only to local but sub-regional, regional and national audiences to realise high quality development.
- Creating a step change in the retail offer of the town to revive the sector and ensure that it meets modern needs and requirements.
- Kick starting the wider regeneration of the town
- Integrating the public realm and the connectivity of retail, leisure and tourism aspirations.

Within the Town Centre and Waterfront, which forms the majority of the Masterplan Area, there are a number of exciting opportunities for the regeneration of the area.

The economic benefits of these sites together with the advanced manufacturing sector are critically important to achieving a high value added economy that requires high levels of skills and consequently high levels of pay.

The Masterplan proposed a key mission statement:

“Hartlepool Town Centre and Waterfront will focus on becoming a national destination based upon a specific proposition striving to become best in class by combining its rich legacy of maritime and industrial heritage with a new focus on supporting high value engineering, creative industries and the significant expansion of its educational, retail and

leisure offer all well connected through a quality physical environment”.

The Masterplan was developed from a series of public consultations and stakeholder events to help understand the ambitions for the town from people and organisations in Hartlepool. 407 responses had been received in response to the consultation on the draft Masterplan in addition to feedback from the stakeholder event on the 20th January which attracted approximately 100 businesses. The consultation feedback had helped shape the proposals in the Masterplan along with discussions with investors, developers and funders from both the public and private sectors.

The Assistant Director highlighted the key three areas of the Waterfront, Church Street and the Town Centre and outlined the potential developments in each of the three areas which included schemes such as the National Museum of the Royal Navy North, Jacksons Landing, Trincomalee Wharf, Cleveland College of Art and Design, the Innovation and Skills Quarter, and Mars Pension Fund (owners of Middleton Grange shopping centre) investment proposals and the potential of new leisure facilities. The Assistant Director stressed that one of the key issues that faced many of these potential schemes was connectivity between them and the town centre and public transport. The Masterplan looked at the potential changes around the main traffic and pedestrian routes that may be required to link the development areas together to avoid them being isolated from each other and the town centre.

The Masterplan recommended the establishment of a Masterplan governance structure that provided a long-standing platform of accountability and leadership, of championing Hartlepool and influencing a wider network of public and private sector interests. It was recommended that a high-level board be established between the Council, stakeholders and community representatives and terms of reference be worked up and agreed over the next six months.

Following the presentation Members raised questions on certain aspects of the Masterplan. The issue of governance was highlighted with Members stating that while the need for a high level board was accepted, there needed to be clear lines of accountability to the Council. The Assistant Director acknowledged Members concerns and indicated that there would be direct responsibility through the Regeneration Services Committee.

Members welcomed the proposals relating to cycling and the potential for improved cycling facilities. A Member commented that the potential for a cycle trail linking Hartlepool along the North East coast from Holy Island to Scarborough should be examined as a way of increasing the number of tourist visits.

A member of the public questioned how the various investment funds that the many of the developments cited within the Masterplan relied upon would be affected by Hartlepool joining the combined Tees Valley authority particularly as the combined authority would become responsible for

economic regeneration. The Assistant Director stated that it would have no detrimental effect and could only assist. Hartlepool had already shown when working with the other Tees Valley authorities through the LEP that it had the potential to deliver and deliver quickly; this was why 44% of the Enterprise Zones were in Hartlepool and the Queens Meadow site was the most successful in the Tees Valley. The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods stated that responsibility for regeneration would remain with Hartlepool; there was no transfer of powers up to the combined authority.

A Member referred to the connectivity highlighted in the presentation and the barrier that the A689 appeared to create through the town centre and questioned what solutions were being proposed to alleviate this and did they include the re-opening of the underpass. The Assistant Director commented that the underpass had many issues that resulted in its closure. The removal of the large central barrier could create more crossing points which as well as facilitating pedestrians could also act to slow down traffic. The junction with the A178 Church Street, which was currently traffic light controlled could potentially be changed to a roundabout; there were many options and much depended on the perception of connectivity and access.

Members commented on the potential of new leisure facilities adjacent to the Middleton Grange shopping centre on the car park next to the indoor market hall. Members saw this potential development as visionary as it would improve the town centre offer considerably and provide much enhanced public transport links over the current Mill House location. There was concern expressed at the removal of this car park as it was used by many elderly and disabled people as being the closest car park to the shopping centre and utilising the other car park areas for development was suggested as an alternative. A Member also commented on the access to the multi-storey car park which was difficult and the fact that there was only one useable lift.

The Chair of the Finance and Policy Committee commented that in addition to the recommendations as set out in the report, the process of any due diligence following the confirmation of indicative levels Local Growth Funding and Regional Growth Funding monies, to be confirmed as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review, should be delegated to the Director in consultation with the two committee Chairs to ensure that any bids for funding as part of the overall masterplan were expedited in a timely fashion.

The Chair of the Finance and Policy Committee also added that the 'high-level board' proposed as part of the governance arrangements could be formed from a review of the constitution of the Economic Forum to include Tourism to provide that high-level role including all appropriate partners. It was suggested that a report is submitted to the Regeneration Services Committee on moving this forward at the earliest opportunity.

Decision

1. That the Hartlepool Regeneration Masterplan be adopted.
2. That the establishment of a Masterplan Board, as detailed in paragraph 9.4 of the report, be approved and that the Board report to the Regeneration Services Committee.
3. That a future report outlining a delivery strategy/plan for the Hartlepool Regeneration Masterplan be submitted to both Committees.
4. That following appropriate Council approval the process of any due diligence following the confirmation of indicative levels Local Growth Funding and Regional Growth Funding monies, be delegated to the Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods in consultation with the Chairs of the Finance and Policy and Regeneration Services Committees.
5. That the 'high-level board' proposed as part of the governance arrangements be formed from a review of the constitution of the Economic Forum to include Tourism to provide the high-level role including all appropriate partners and that a report is submitted to the Regeneration Services Committee on such a proposal.

The meeting concluded at 2.05 pm

P J DEVLIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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