

**Economy and Enterprise
Overview and Scrutiny
Committee**



3 November 2016

**Masterplans and Masterplan
Updates for County Durham –
latest position**

**Joint Report of Lorraine O'Donnell, Director of Transformation
and Partnerships and Ian Thompson, Corporate Director,
Regeneration and Local Services**

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide Members of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an update on the development of masterplans and on the new proposal to, in addition, prepare shorter Masterplan Updates, prior to a presentation by officers from the Community Economic Development Team and Spatial Policy Team.

Background

- 2 The Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee has previously received presentations providing information on the development of the various masterplans for County Durham. As part of the committee's work programme for 2015/16 members received an update on the development of the masterplans together with detail of the delivery of projects across the County at the meeting held on 29 September, 2015.
- 3 The committee agreed at the meeting on 29 September 2015 that as part of the refresh of the work programme for 2016/17 a further update report would be provided which would also highlight to members further project.
- 4 Arrangements have been made for Chris Myers, Regeneration Projects Manager; Graeme Smith, Spatial Policy Team Leader, Jackie Donnelly and Julie Anson, Community Economic Development Team Leaders, to attend the meeting on the 3 November 2016 and deliver a presentation focusing on current and planned regeneration activity across the County.

Masterplans and Masterplan Update - Development

- 5 Masterplans (or Regeneration Frameworks – but referred to in this report as Masterplans) are prepared at a town centre or settlement level and are developed to provide detail on current or proposed activity. They are designed to supplement the information provided through the planning framework and can provide an opportunity to ensure the effective alignment of services or investment by the Council and its partners at a local level. This can include town centre improvement budgets, highways and local transport investment and alignment of the Council's accommodation and customer services approaches.

- 6 The development and adoption of masterplans provides an opportunity to challenge, prioritise and channel resources to the most appropriate locations and ensure that requirements and opportunities are resourced appropriately. This has become particularly relevant given the ongoing pressures on public finances and the relatively weak private development sector.
- 7 All masterplans produced follow a broadly similar format and are developed using a multi-disciplinary group of staff driven by the Regeneration and Local Services (formerly Regeneration and Economic Development) service grouping which typically included Planning, Economic Development, Housing and Transport colleagues and depending on the location other service areas or partner organisations may input throughout the process.
- 8 As part of the development of the masterplans detailed consultation has taken place with external individuals, groups and organisations that fed their thoughts into the document. A key element of this consultation relates to the relevant Area Action Partnerships, many of which have identified or retain task and finish groups looking at the main centres.
- 9 On the basis that the timescale to replace all of the masterplans is quite long-term, and that a number of projects and initiatives are underway across the County, it is considered prudent to prepare shorter Masterplan Update documents to provide a quicker update of what is happening in 12 of the main towns across the county for the benefit of the local communities.
- 10 The programme for the Masterplan Update documents will be carried out in three batches; with Bishop Auckland, Chester-le-Street, Newton Aycliffe and Stanley the first batch (going to Cabinet on 16-11-16); those for Barnard Castle, Consett, Crook, Durham City, in the second batch (going to Cabinet 14-12-16); and Peterlee, Seaham, Shildon and Spennymoor following (going to Cabinet on 18-01-17).

Current Position

- 11 Masterplans have been completed for 12 of the County's main towns and an ongoing schedule to review the documents was agreed by RED Management Team in 2015 for presentation of reviewed documents to Cabinet. A Draft Bishop Auckland document remains in preparation and, in association with key regeneration partners in the town we are planning to appoint consultants early in the New Year to support the completion of the document.
- 12 A refresh of the Chester-le-Street document has been completed in draft following various consultations and will be presented to Members shortly.
- 13 Officers will continue to seek resources through the Capital Programme to implement the various projects outlined in the Masterplan documents. All Masterplans are considered to be "live" documents but the Masterplan Update exercise provides the opportunity to assess progress on the actions set out in the original documents.

Recommendations

- 14 Members of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to note and comment upon the information provided during the presentation.
- 15 That the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee is kept updated on an annual basis on the development of the various masterplans and masterplan updates within County Durham.

Background Paper(s)

Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Report - Masterplans for County Durham – 29 March, 2015.

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Appendix 1: Implications

Finance – Each masterplan contains a detailed delivery plan with identified costs across Council services. The Masterplan Updates provide a quick update and other than staff resource have no financial implications.

Staffing – None other than commitment of existing staff in Real.

Risk – Detailed risk assessments will be undertaken for each development project.

Equality and Diversity – Each masterplan is subject to an Equality Impact Assessment. Further, more detailed work will be identified and addressed on an individual project basis.

Accommodation – Accommodation issues will be identified on an individual basis.

Crime and Disorder - None

Human Rights - None

Consultation – Appropriate consultation has taken place in relation to the various masterplans within the County, typically utilising Area Action Partnership structures.

Procurement - None

Disability Discrimination Act - None although projects coming out of the Masterplans will be assessed as appropriate.

Legal Implications – The masterplan documents will provide evidence to support planning decisions but it will have only very limited weight in the planning process.