

Public Document Pack

06 January 2009

Dear Councillor

A meeting of the Council will be held in the **Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Newcastle Road, Chester-le-Street, Co Durham, DH3 3UT on Thursday, 15th January, 2009 at 6.00 pm**

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Roy Templeman', is written over a faint rectangular stamp.

R TEMPLEMAN

Chief Executive

AGENDA:

1. Apologies for Absence
2. To Confirm the Minutes of the Meeting held 20 November 2008 (Pages 1 - 8)
3. Public Speaking
4. To receive declarations of interest from Members
5. Report from the Leader of the Council
6. Reports from Portfolio Holders
 - a) Neighbourhood Services
 - b) Community Engagement and Partnerships
 - c) Regeneration and Strategic Planning
 - d) Resources and Value for Money

7. Questions to Leader and Executive Members
8. Protocol for Appointment of Honorary Aldermen (Pages 9 - 16)
Report Of Head of Legal and Democratic Services
9. Town Centre Master Plan (Pages 17 - 28)
Report Of Regeneration and Planning Strategy Manager
10. Communities for Health Programme 2008-2009 (Pages 29 - 32)
Report Of Assistant Director of Development Services
11. Correspondence
12. Conferences
13. Common Seal

THE DISTRICT COUNCIL OF CHESTER-LE-STREET

Report of the meeting of Council held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Newcastle Road, Chester-le-Street, Co Durham, DH3 3UT on Thursday, 20 November 2008 at 6.00 pm

PRESENT:

Councillor D Thompson (Chairman)

Councillors

G Armstrong	A K Holden
L Armstrong	A Humes
S Barr	W Laverick
J W Barrett	M D May
L E W Brown	P B Nathan
R Court	J M Proud
G K Davidson	D L Robson
L Ebbatson	A Turner
M Gollan	S C L Westrip
R Harrison	F Wilkinson
S A Henig	A Willis

Officers: R Templeman (Chief Executive), I Herberon (Head of Corporate Finance), C Potter (Head of Legal and Democratic Services), N Tzamarias (Assistant Director of Development Services), A Stephenson (Senior Sustainability Officer) and C Turnbull (Democratic Services Officer)

There were three members of the public present.

70. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors DM Holding, C Jukes, PH May, M Sekowski, J Shiell and T Smith.

The Chairman announced that item numbered 6 on the agenda would be considered as the next item for discussion.

Prior to consideration of the following item Councillor L Ebbatson declared a personal but not prejudicial interest and remained in the meeting.

71. NHS COUNTY DURHAM, COUNTY DURHAM AND DARLINGTON NHS FOUNDATION TRUST - 'SEIZING THE FUTURE' - PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Consideration was given to the public consultation document issued by the NHS County Durham (County Durham Primary Care Trust) on County Durham and Darlington Foundation Trust proposals for service reconfiguration, 'Seizing the Future'.

The Chairman welcomed Diane Murphy, Project Manager for Seizing the Future, County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust; Rob Keown, Director of Operations, County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust and Pat Keane, Director of Strategy, Planning and Involvement, NHS County Durham who addressed Members on the consultation document.

'Seizing the Future' was a major review of County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust's hospitals to create and deliver a 'compelling clinical vision' for safe, sustainable, high quality services for the 21st century. The Trust provided hospital services from three main sites; -

- Bishop Auckland General Hospital
- Darlington Memorial Hospital
- University Hospital of North Durham

In addition, the Trust ran two community hospitals at Chester-le-Street and Shotley Bridge.

The consultation proposed options to address the challenges the Trust faced, and to provide a better quality of service to patients, and an exciting future for all sites, working closely with general practice and community based services to provide more seamless and integrated care. Two options were proposed in the consultation document and the Trust's preferred option was Option B that enhanced access at Bishop Auckland Hospital for medical patients and strengthened its role as a planned care centre, providing a new and important service that would significantly improve the care of patients needing rehabilitation following acute illness.

Following the presentations, questions were asked by Councillors JM Proud, SCL Westrip, R Harrison, P Nathan, JW Barrett, W Laverick, L Armstrong and L Ebbatson.

Councillor S Barr proposed, seconded by Councillor R Harrison, that the Council support Option B, the preferred option of the Trust.

The Council RESOLVED:

"That the Council's support be for Option B, the preferred option of the Trust."

72. TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 18 SEPTEMBER 2008

The minutes of the proceedings at the meeting of the District Council held on 18 September 2008 copies of which had previously been circulated, were submitted.

The Council RESOLVED:

“That the minutes be confirmed as a correct record.”

The Chairman proceeded to sign the minutes.

73. TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING HELD 30 SEPTEMBER 2008

The minutes of the proceedings at the Special Meeting of the District Council held 30 September 2008, copies of which had previously been circulated, were submitted.

The Council RESOLVED:

“That the minutes be confirmed as a correct record.”

The Chairman proceeded to sign the minutes.

74. PUBLIC SPEAKING

No requests had been received from members of the public to speak at the meeting in accordance with the Council’s agreed policy.

75. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS

Councillor L Ebbatson declared a personal interest as recorded prior to minute numbered 71.

76. REPORT FROM THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

The Leader, Councillor L Ebbatson, advised that the key decisions taken by the Executive on 3 November 2008 had been circulated to Members.

The Leader advised that the Council needed to adopt criteria for the appointment of Aldermen/women and this would be dealt with at the Council Meeting in January 2009 with appointments being made of Alderman/women at a Special Meeting of the Council in March 2009, prior to the ordinary meeting of the Council.

The Leader then reported that Pelton Community Centre had reached the final of Peoples Millions to develop a garden area at the Centre and there would be a phone-in competition on ITV Regional News at 6.00pm on Wednesday 26 November 2008.

In conclusion, the Leader wishes everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Councillor A Humes left the meeting at 7.10pm.

77. REPORTS FROM PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

a. Neighbourhood Services

Councillor SCL Westrip advised that he would include his report in the next issue of Members Update.

b. Community Engagement and Partnerships

There was no report from Councillor M Sekowski.

c. Regeneration and Strategic Planning

There was no report from Councillor CJ Jukes.

d. Resources and Value for Money

Councillor L Armstrong extended congratulations to members of the ICT Team on strengthening their national standing by getting additional recognition from the Customer Service Excellence Assessment Services. He advised that the Team was recognised as meeting all 63 standards set by the CSEAS. Overall the Charter Mark standard measured against excellence in areas such as planning, value for money, commitment to wider community, regularly raising standards, performing well compared to other organisations, consulting with customers and communications..

78. QUESTIONS TO LEADER AND EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

Councillor S Barr advised that Pelton Fell had been awarded £337,000 funding that was the final piece in the jigsaw. He expressed thanks to the Leader, the Portfolio Holder Councillor CJ Jukes, the Chief Executive and members of the Regeneration Team for their help and support.

79. TO ACCEPT THE REPORT OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE HELD 16 SEPTEMBER 2008

The Council RESOLVED:

“That the report of the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 16 September 2008 copies of which had previously been circulated, be accepted.”

80. TO ACCEPT THE REPORT OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE HELD 17 OCTOBER 2008

The report of the Special Meeting of the Audit Committee held on 17 October 2008, copies of which had previously been circulated, was submitted.

Councillor G Armstrong advised it was the first time that the Audit Committee had approved the Statement of Accounts and associated papers. He thanked all Officers for the immense amount of work over a long time to achieve the outcome.

The Council RESOLVED:

“That the report be accepted.”

81. AMENDMENTS TO THE SCHEDULE OF POLLING DISTRICTS, POLLING PLACES AND POLLING STATIONS

Consideration was given to a report from the Chief Executive on amendments to the schedule of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations, copies of which had previously been circulated.

The Democratic Services Officer advised that as a consequence of local government reorganisation, with effect from 1 April 2009 there would be one Electoral Register for the whole of the County Council area. In order to achieve this it was necessary to revise all of the Polling District letters to avoid duplication of the letters and this revision would be effective for the Electoral Register to be published on 1 December 2008. At its meeting on 29 November 2007 the Council agreed to a revised schedule of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations and it would be necessary to formally amend the schedule to reflect the new Polling Station letters.

A revised list of amended Polling District letters was circulated at the meeting.

Councillor L Ebbatson proposed, seconded by Councillor L Armstrong, that the recommendation included in the report be approved.

The Council RESOLVED:

“That the schedule of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations agreed at the Council Meeting on 29 November 2007 be amended to reflect the new Polling District letters detailed on the revised list circulated at the meeting.”

82. HOLIDAY ARRANGEMENTS - CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR 2008/2009

Consideration was given to a report from the Director of Corporate Services seeking approval to holiday arrangements for the Christmas and New Year period 2008/2009, copies of which had previously been circulated.

The Chief Executive introduced the report.

Councillor L Ebbatson proposed, seconded by Councillor R Harrison, that the recommendations detailed in the report be approved.

The Council RESOLVED:

“1. That the Christmas and New Year holiday arrangements for 2008/2009 be as follows: -

Wednesday 24 December 2008	Normal working morning/ Concessionary half day – afternoon
Thursday 25 December 2008	Christmas Day
Friday 26 December 2008	Boxing Day
Monday 29 December 2008	Extra Statutory Day
Tuesday 30 December 2008	Extra Statutory Day
Wednesday 31 December 2008	Concessionary Day
Thursday 1 January 2009	New Year’s Day
Friday 2 January 2009	Official return to work day

2. That employees who are required to work on extra statutory holidays/concessionary days be given time in lieu to be taken at a later date in consultation with the appropriate Service Team Manager.”

83. A CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY FOR CHESTER-LE-STREET

Consideration was given to a report from the Senior Sustainability Officer seeking approval of the climate change strategy for Chester-le-Street, copies of which had previously been circulated.

The Senior Sustainability Officer introduced the report and advised that the carbon emissions from domestic premises were a high percentage in Chester-le-Street because of the low volume of industry. He reported that the carbon neutral scheme proposed for Edmondsley had not been finalised because national funding had not been received. He confirmed that funding for insulation schemes would continue until 2010.

Councillor L Ebbatson proposed, seconded by Councillor SCL Westrip, that the recommendation included in the report be approved.

The Council RESOLVED:

“That the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan, appended to the report, be approved and adopted.”

Councillor P Nathan voted against the motion.

84. CORRESPONDENCE

There were no items of correspondence.

85. CONFERENCES

There were no invitations to attend conferences.

86. COMMON SEAL

The Council RESOLVED:

“That the action of the Officer in affixing the Common Seal of the Council to the following documents be confirmed:

Section 21 Order – Road Closure Annual Remembrance Parade 9 November 2008 – 10.00am to 10.45am

Section 21 Order – Road Closure Annual Remembrance Parade 9 November 2008 – 11.30am to 12.30pm

Transfer in relation to land east side of Merlin Drive, North Lodge, Chester-le-Street.”

The meeting terminated at 7.35 pm

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Chester-le-Street
District Council

Report to:	Council
Date of Meeting:	15 January 2009
Report from:	Head of Legal and Democratic Services
Title of Report:	Protocol for Appointment of 'Honorary Aldermen'
Agenda Item Number:	8

1. Purpose and Summary

1.1 The purpose of this report is to consider the need for and agree a protocol for the appointment by this Council of 'honorary aldermen' (informally referred to throughout this report as honorary aldermen and honorary alderwomen). It is not to make specific appointments at this Meeting as by law a Special Meeting of the Council is required to be convened should Members wish to do so.

1.2 Members are requested to consider this report and to agree a protocol.

2. Consultation

2.1 None

3. Transition Plan and People and Place Priority

3.1 The extended rights to appoint honorary aldermen and honorary alderwomen from among serving councillors of a council to be abolished has been specifically given by a statutory instrument dealing with transitional arrangements (described in that legislation as 'honorary aldermen'). It came into effect on 28 November 2008. The law has been enacted for a purpose and it provides for continuity in terms of local links to the locality albeit at a purely ceremonial level.

4. Implications

4.1 Financial Implications and Value for Money Statement

No allowances are payable to honorary aldermen and honorary alderwomen.

4.2 Local Government Reorganisation Issues

Any honorary aldermen or honorary alderwomen appointed by the Council will by operation of law become 'honorary aldermen' of Durham County Council on and from 1 April 2009.

4.3 Legal

The Council has power under Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by Regulation 32 of The Local Government (Structural Changes) (Transitional Arrangements) (No.2) Regulations 2008 to appoint 'honorary aldermen' (see para. 5.2 post) from past or serving members of the Council who in the opinion of the Council have rendered 'eminent services' to the Council.

4.4 Personnel

None

4.5 Other Services

None

4.6 Diversity

The suggested protocol ensures that the service contribution of individuals nominated is taken into account on merit in accordance with the sole legal criterion.

4.7 Risk

None

4.8 Crime and Disorder

None

4.9 Data Quality

Every care has been taken in the development of this report to ensure that the information and data used in its preparation are accurate, timely, consistent and comprehensive. The council's Data Quality Policy has been complied with in producing this report.

4.10 Other Implications

None

5. Background , Position Statement and Option Appraisal

5.1 Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 (with effect from May 1974) made it possible for past councillors to be appointed 'honorary aldermen'.

5.2 The legal term 'aldermen' or 'alderman' applies to men and women.

5.3 As stated earlier, I shall, however, informally refer to honorary aldermen and honorary alderwomen throughout this report as such terms are used in modern parlance by the Government, even if such descriptions are not reflected in the legislation itself.

5.4 Since 28 November 2008 the law has been amended to allow serving councillors as well to be appointed as 'honorary aldermen' to be known in practice as honorary aldermen or honorary alderwomen if they satisfy the sole legal criterion of having rendered 'eminent services to the council'.

5.5 There is therefore *no minimum number* and there is *no maximum number* of Aldermen and Alderwomen which is or can be laid down by the Council.

5.6 This Council has, to my knowledge and after researching the matter, never appointed any honorary alderman or honorary alderwoman and therefore no procedure for appointment exists beyond that which is contained in that Section as amended.

5.7 It is suggested that the Council should agree a protocol for appointment of honorary aldermen and honorary alderwomen in the event that any nominations are received and need to be processed.

6. Role of 'Honorary Aldermen'

6.1 Before proceeding to deal with the matter of a protocol for appointment of honorary aldermen, the role of an honorary alderman and an honorary alderwoman needs to be explained.

6.2 It is an honorary role only and involves no decision-making aspect. Legally 'honorary aldermen' are "just" members of the public (unless they are still serving District Councillors). They can have no part in the decision processes of the Council or its successor Council as 'honorary aldermen'. The last vestige of the time when "aldermen" did have such a role was swept away by the Local Government Act 1972. They cannot be appointed to any body because of their legal status as 'honorary aldermen'. (Appointment of such individuals to bodies can be made but in other capacities such as an expert in child care).

- 6.3 Honorary aldermen and honorary alderwomen merely have the right to attend civic ceremonies organized by the Council as and when they are held. It is for the Council (and then its successor Council from 1 April 2009) to decide what civic ceremonies are to be held from time to time.
- 6.4 Under Section 249 (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 an honorary alderman and an honorary alderwoman may attend and take part in such civic ceremonies, but does not have the right *in that capacity* to attend Council or committee meetings nor to receive any allowances. But if an honorary alderman or an honorary alderwoman is still a serving councillor or later becomes a councillor on Durham County Council, s/he is not entitled under Section 249(2) of the 1972 Act to be addressed as 'alderman' or 'alderwoman' nor is s/he entitled to attend or take part in any civic ceremonies of the Council **as an 'alderman' or an 'alderwoman'**.

7. The Basic Statutory Procedure

7.1 The statutory requirements are as follows:-

- (1) The holding of a meeting of the Council 'specifically convened for the purpose with notice of the object';
- (2) The forming of the opinion of the Council that a named past member of the Council or a named serving member of the Council has 'rendered eminent services to the council.'
- (3) The passing of a resolution to confer the title of 'honorary alderman' 'by not less than two-thirds of the members voting thereon' at the meeting.

7.2 Under paragraph 10(2) of The Local Authorities (Model Code of Conduct) Order 2007 it is made clear that Members do not have a prejudicial interest when exercising the functions in respect of 'any ceremonial honour given to members'. This means that Members may vote even if they have been nominated to receive the ceremonial honour.

7.3 There is nothing in the particular legislation which deals with how individuals are put forward for consideration and 'eminent services to the council' are not defined.

8. Protocol for Appointment of 'Honorary Aldermen'

8.1 It is proposed that the Council establishes a protocol to ensure consistency of approach to the conferment of the legal title of "Honorary Alderman of the District Council of Chester-le-Street" to be known in practice as appropriate as 'Honorary Alderman or Honorary Alderwoman of the District Council of Chester-le-Street' as follows:-

(1) Nomination – Nominations shall be in writing (with assistance being made available for anyone who has difficulty with making a written application), setting out the reasons why it is believed that the nominee has ‘rendered eminent services to the council’. Such nomination shall be addressed to the Chief Executive.

(2) Consultation – On receipt of such a nomination, the Chief Executive will consult with the Leader of the Council and the leaders of the other political groups in the Council.

(3) Convening Special Meeting – If, in the opinion of the Chief Executive (after consultation with the leaders of the political groups) there is a sufficient degree of support as to the conferment of the legal title, then the Chief Executive will call a Special Meeting of the Council to consider conferment of the legal title. (For the avoidance of doubt, late nominations can be considered at the Special Council Meeting itself).

(4) What constitutes ‘eminent services to the council’ – As the term is not defined in the Act and there is no statutory guidance or assistance to councils at a national level in determining what it might mean, it is for the Council to decide locally what constitutes ‘eminent services to the council’. **This is the sole legal criterion for appointment.**

‘Eminent’ has a dictionary meaning which includes ‘highly regarded’ and ‘distinguished’.

‘Eminent services’ connotes making a positive difference or impact over and above the carrying out of mere normal council duties to a basic or acceptable standard i.e. being ‘distinguished’ for proper reasons and in the service to the council.

The legislation therefore deliberately fails to give a national definition and leaves it for a local decision by councillors and an exercise of discretion at the time a decision is called for, based ‘on the opinion of the Council’, with such power being properly exercised. It is thus determined by ‘quality’, not necessarily ‘quantity’. Innovation and excellence, for example, can be recognised.

In reality’ the bestowal of the honorary legal title of ‘alderman’ is by way of a distinguished service award.

It is not a long-service award.

It is not a party political honour.

It is not an award for having *simply* held or holding senior Council positions.

The questions to be answered are:

‘What services did the person provide as a councillor to the Council, during whatever time they served?’

Were those services, in the opinion of the Council, ‘eminent services’?’

[NB. Past and current District Councillors are eligible for consideration].

Each application will therefore be determined on its merits, purely assessed against that sole criterion of having rendered ‘eminent services to the council’.

[NB. It is made clear under this protocol examples of what are not criteria such as:-

(a) *Length of service* - Whilst a number of Councils do in fact use ‘length of service’ (such as, for example, 12 years or 15 years) by itself as a good enough measure of the ‘eminent service’, this is patently wrong. It is self-evidently the case that there will be members who serve out their time in public service in a perfectly satisfactory manner without being ‘eminent’. The criterion is not “buggin’s turn”. Not only is this not the criterion in the Act but also it does nothing to enhance public confidence in local government and democracy. More fundamentally, a ‘length of service’ criterion of itself is unlawful as it fetters the Council’s discretion when determining ‘eminent services to the council’.

(b) *Service to a political party or group* - The criterion is not support for a particular political party or group. It is ‘eminent service to the council’ which means that any past political differences should be ignored in making an assessment of a past or present councillor’s service contribution to the council.

(c) *Senior positions* - The *mere* fact that a councillor held or holds a senior position or positions is not evidence of the provision of eminent services to the Council. This would be to confuse ‘appointment’ to a position with ‘outcome’. It is not a senior appointment reward. Special responsibility allowances in the members allowance scheme are designed to support those in senior positions. An assessment of service contribution to the Council is thus different].

(5) Resolution – For a person to be appointed, the Council must form the opinion that the nominated person has ‘rendered eminent services to the council’ and pass the resolution to appoint the named person by at least two-thirds of members present and voting at the Special Meeting.

9. Recommendations

- 9.1 Members are requested to formally approve the protocol for appointment of honorary aldermen and honorary alderwomen (collectively described in legislation as ‘honorary aldermen’) as set out in this report, namely ‘That the protocol set out in this report for appointment of honorary aldermen (such term including both men and women) under Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended be agreed’.

10. Background Papers/ Documents referred to

10.1 None.

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DESIGNATION	Head of Legal and Democratic Services
DATE OF REPORT	16 December 2008
VERSION NUMBER	4
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Chester-le-Street
District Council

Report to:	Council
Date of Meeting:	15 January 2009
Report from:	Regeneration & Strategic Planning Manager
Title of Report:	Town Centre Master Plan
Agenda Item Number:	9

1. Purpose and Summary

- 1.1 To seek Members agreement to adopt the final report of the Town Centre Master Plan.

2. Consultation

- 2.1 There has been extensive consultation with both key stakeholders and the wider public during the master planning process, as outlined in paragraphs 5.4 to 5.8 of this report.

3. Transition Plan and People and Place Priority

- 3.1 Investment in the town centre.

4. Implications

4.1 Financial Implications and Value for Money Statement

The consultants fees for the entire master planning process was £65,000.

4.2 Local Government Reorganisation Issues

The new Unitary Council will need to decide whether or not to assist with the implementation of the master plan proposals.

4.3 Legal

No direct legal implications.

4.4 Personnel

Regeneration Service.

4.5 Other Services

Some implications for buildings and land managed by Leisure Services.

- 4.6 Diversity
Access and disability considerations will be a statutory requirement for detailed proposal which emerge from the master plan.
- 4.7 Risk
The new Unitary Council do not support and implement the master plan proposals that require public intervention, or the private sector are not interested in implementing those schemes which require commercial investment.
- 4.8 Crime and Disorder
The master plan is proposing more residential development in the town centre which is generally considered to assist with the reduction of crime and disorder. All detailed proposals will need to be in general conformity with Government guidance entitled; "Safer Places; the planning system and crime reduction".
- 4.9 Data Quality
Every care has been taken in the development of this report to ensure that the information and data used in its preparation and the appendices attached are accurate, timely, consistent and comprehensive. The council's Data Quality Policy has been complied with in producing this report.
- 4.10 Other Implications
None

5. Background

- 5.1 The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) defines Chester-Le-Street as a 'regeneration town' where regeneration and development should be supported, provided that it is at a scale that is appropriate for its size, and would not have an adverse impact on other regeneration initiatives within the Tyne and Wear Conurbation.
- 5.2 Priority 2 of the Sustainable Community Strategy for Chester-Le-Street is to "develop Chester-Le-Street as a thriving commercial centre". Objective 2 of the Chester-Le-Street Regeneration Strategy is "to fulfil the potential of the Town Centre" and action point 10 was "to commission a masterplanning exercise for the town centre by May 2007".
- 5.3 In June 2007 the Council appointed the following team of consultants to undertake the master plan;
- Taylor Young – architects and urban design consultants
 - BE Group – economic development and regeneration consultants
 - Faber Maunsell – transport consultants

The Consultants produced a baseline report in August 2007 undertook four public consultation exercises and submitted the final version of their report in June 2008.

Position Statement and Option Appraisal – Master Plan Process & Report

Consultation & Engagement

5.4 A Stakeholder Workshop was held on August 30th 2007 to engage with the key stakeholders, organisations, Council officers and the business and residential community, attended by 20 people. The following is a summary of the key issues raised:

- Location of taxi ranks in relation to the town centre leisure i.e. nightclubs and venues.
- Improvement of access to the town centre from railway station.
- Front Street has poor signage for transport provision.
- Provision of Hackney licensed taxi rank at the railway station.
- Traffic congestion at North Burns with significant junction improvements.
- Concerns have been raised about the attractiveness of the entry to the town centre.
- Attractiveness and safety of the environment at the railway station.
- Dangerous bottlenecks at the Methodist Chapel Crossing.
- A want for an evening economy at South End of Chester-le-Street.
- The Town's history should be exploited for tourism – Roman Heritage, Lumley Castle, Beamish Museum, Lindisfarne Gospel connections
- Market Square is not seen locally as the heart, Middle Chapel is the heart.
- Former Kwiksave site is vital – Enterprise quarter
- Riverside totally separate, create linkage

5.5 A business survey was carried out to gather empirical evidence about the retail and commercial markets in Chester-le-Street, as well as to gain local traders' views of the town centre. 230 town centre businesses were

interviewed face-to-face. Those unable to participate, were left with a questionnaire and pre-paid return envelope, to complete and return when convenient. A 46 percent response rate was achieved, with 107 completed questionnaires.

- 5.6 Staffed public drop-in days were held on 14 and 15th September 2007 to consider issues and options. The focus of the exhibition was the initial opportunity sites, land use proposals and supporting transport and environmental improvement projects. Following the drop-in days the display in the Library and Civic Centre was left for 2 weeks, with further opportunity to return questionnaires. The exhibition (and questionnaire) was also available on the Council's website. Approximately 100 questionnaires were returned (with far more people visiting the exhibition). Responses generally provided significant positive feedback. The highest priorities for projects were:
- Station Approach
 - Front Street West
 - Market Place
 - Improved bus routing
 - Upgraded rail station.
- 5.7 A second staffed exhibition was held on 29-30 November. 2007 The purpose of this exhibition was to share the ideas contained within the four transformational projects; namely Chester Burn (East), Leisure Centre / Youth Centre, Station Approach and Front Street (West). The exhibition was also left on display for a further 2 weeks at the Civic Centre. The response was a generally positive consensus for the proposals, although the number of completed questionnaires was less than the 1st exhibition.
- 5.8 The proposals outlined in the consultants final report were presented to a meeting of Chester-le-Street Business Association in September 2008. Their response to the four transformational projects can be summarised as follows:
- The proposed leisure corridor would be an exciting development that would in time give a new much needed impetus to business in the North Burns area of the town.
 - Any regeneration of Front Street would be wholeheartedly appreciated.
 - The area around the town's Railway Station is one where relocation of existing business and innovative use of land could add an exciting change to the dynamics of this part of the town.
 - More reservations were felt regarding the proposals for the South end of Front Street, since this looks as though it would have more impact

on existing business requiring relocation, but once again members felt that anything that led to regeneration of the town as a whole was to be welcome. A full copy of the Business Association comments are attached as appendix 1.

Vision and Principles

- 5.9 The Master Plan contains the following vision for the town centre:

“Chester-le-Street Town Centre will become the primary destination to serve the needs of the town’s residents. People will be able to reach the Town Centre easily, either via attractive pedestrian routes, improved public transport access, or well located and co-ordinated car parking spaces.

The Town Centre will provide a comprehensive range of shops, services and leisure uses, with a strong independent sector and distinctive local identity. A series of distinct functional quarters will emerge in the Town Centre, each providing a different role and different character. The longstanding historical importance of the town will be realized by a series of heritage attractions to provide recreation opportunities for residents and attract new visitors to the town.

Linkages to the recreation facilities at Riverside, including the Cricket Ground, from the Town Centre will be enhanced, becoming attractive and convenient. As will links to the rail station, residential areas west of the viaduct and to an enhanced open space corridor around Chester Burn.”

- 5.10 The master plan also contains an imagined visitor’s experience of the town centre in 2020 which seeks to convey and illustrate the above broad vision in a more detailed and tangible way (attached as appendix 2).

Master Plan Proposals

- 5.11 The master plan divides the town centre into 50 “policy areas” (see the map attached as appendix 3). There is broad assessment of each of these areas as set out in the matrix attached as appendix 4. Some areas are suggested to be retained as existing, and other areas are proposed for intervention and enhancement (see the map attached as appendix 5 illustrating the location of these interventions).

- 5.12 The main focus of proposed intervention are the four transformation projects, which can be summarized as follows:

Chester Burn (East) - Chester Burn is an important east-west corridor, following the watercourse, relating to the heart and history of the town. The town developed from the crossing point of Front Street over the Burn.

The intention is to introduce activity and new buildings along the corridor in order to achieve a strong and attractive east-west pedestrian route, linking Market Place to the Riverside. The project comprises a mixed use development, including quality bars / restaurants, offices and residential uses which are sensitively integrated into the existing townscape buildings. This will provide vitality and overlooking to a new adjacent pedestrian route following the alignment of the Burn. The proposals allow for bus and coach drop-off. Displaced parking spaces will be provided elsewhere in the town centre. Delivery of this project will depend on landowners' wishes, financial viability and planning permission.

Leisure Centre/ Youth Centre: The existing Leisure Centre and Youth Centre buildings sit in an attractive green environment. A review of leisure services is currently underway. It may be that these uses could be provided elsewhere in new, higher quality buildings. Proposals for this site include a new Sports Centre and Arts Centre. The intention is to create high quality landmark buildings that maximise the green setting and historic importance of this site. A new Heritage Interpretation Centre is proposed as a major visitor attraction. This will be an iconic building which will be visible from the A167 and signpost the town centre to passers by. An archaeological dig is recommended in this area before development. This may result in the finding of historic relics that could be displayed in the Heritage Interpretation Centre. A key objective is to provide an attractive and safe pedestrian route from the town centre to the Riverside. This will form a green link which will pass these buildings and extend over a new landmark footbridge across the A167

Station Approach: The intention is to enhance the station approach, which forms a major gateway to the town centre, therefore creating a first impression to all visitors to the town. The proposals are to enhance the station forecourt and Station Road and upgrade public transport, with a new shuttle bus drop-off and taxi rank at the station. High quality new buildings are also envisaged to the north of Station Road. These buildings will raise the quality of the environment and provide activity to a new public square. The former Kwik Save site would be developed for a range of uses, making full use of the change of levels. A new retail unit and bus drop-off would be incorporated at the lower level, with new deck car parking provision at mid level for commuters, visitors and workers. At the upper level, adjacent to the station, will be high quality new offices and public space and a new taxi rank. The existing employment units south of Station Road could be replaced by new employment units.

Front Street (West): The aim of Front Street West site is to provide sites for high quality retail, leisure and hotel users in order to provide a

strong southern anchor to Front Street, to complement Market Place to the north. The proposals extend the retail circuit to include West Lane, where new buildings will accommodate new retail and bar/restaurant uses. Office space is proposed on the upper floors of these buildings. A new high quality public space will be formed on Front Street, at the junction of West Lane, opposite an attractive Victorian building. The taxi ranks are also relocated to West Lane to provide improved access. At the southern end of the site space is provided for new leisure uses, these could include a town centre cinema or a new hotel. A new plaza is also formed on the southern end of the site that would form a strong setting for the War Memorial.

5.13 Illustrative layouts of the four projects are attached as appendix 6. Collectively these illustrative layouts are proposing the following amounts and types of new development:

- 7,425 sqm of new retail space
- 7,100 sqm of B1 office space
- 6,150 sqm of flexible leisure/hotel/retail space
- 4,000 sqm of sports/leisure space
- 4,200 sqm of heritage/arts/community space
- 3,900 sqm of A2 office space
- 2,700 sqm of A3 café/bar/restaurant space
- 2,450 sqm of residential space
- 1,075 of employment incubator units
- **39,000 sqm total**

However, all four projects involve the demolition of existing buildings, therefore, the net increase is substantially less than the gross total above.

5.14 A transportation strategy is a key part of the master plan proposals, particularly in terms of being an integral element of the four transformational projects, together with proposals for further traffic management/enhancement of Front Street, and a coach parking area off North Burn. The transportation proposals are best illustrated by the plans attached as appendix 7.

Making It Happen

5.15 There are two main requirements to enable the Masterplan to be implemented:

- Ensure that the Masterplan is given sufficient weight and prominence in the LDF planning policy process
- Excite the market to attract appropriate developers interest, and establish an appropriate delivery mechanism based on some form of public/private sector partnership.

- 5.16 The Masterplan is essentially a regeneration rather than a formal planning policy document. When considering planning applications relating to the town centre, the Masterplan when adopted by the District Council would be a material planning consideration, but it would not have as much weight as the Local plan or the new LDF.
- 5.17 The emerging project plan for the Unitary Council LDF is indicating that the Chester-le-Street Town Centre Masterplan will be referred to in the Core Strategy, and that the if Core Strategy is not able to give sufficient detail and clarity, than a separate Chester-le-Street Town Centre Area Action Plan (APP)document would also be published. To help ensure that this happens it is important that the District Council formally adopts the Masterplan
- 5.18 Once the current recession is over it is anticipated that the location and character of the Chester-le-Street area will make it potentially attractive to town centre developers and retail/leisure providers. However, the Masterplan report considers the challenges involved in implementing the four transformational projects. The following is a risk analysis of each of the four transformational projects:

Chester Burn East Risk	Means of addressing the risks
Acquisition of Bridge End Motors land	Continuing discussion to agree terms for the release of land, and relocation of the business
New residential flats incompatible with the profile of town centre residents	Discussions with developers to identify areas of demand and desirable property sizes/designs
Possible lack of demand for new office space	Discussions with developers to identify areas of demand and desirable property sizes/designs
Possible lack of demand for new leisure space	Discussions with developers to identify areas of demand and desirable property sizes/designs

Leisure Centre/Youth Centre Risk	Means of addressing the risks
Lack of demand for Interpretation Centre, inability to compete with surrounding attractions	Work with Beamish and other County Durham attractions to develop a common plan for marketing development, avoiding competition where possible
Pedestrian links to Riverside not well used	Traffic and pedestrian flow surveys, improved signage of enhanced route
Possible lack of demand for new leisure space	Discussions with developers to identify areas of demand and desirable

	property sizes/designs
Acquisition of Durham County Council land	Continuing discussion to agree terms for the release of land after local government reorganisation

Station Approach Risk	Means of addressing the risks
Possible lack of demand for new office space	Discussions with developers to identify areas of demand and desirable property sizes/designs
Difficulty of negotiation with multiple landowners	Continuing discussion to agree terms for the release of land, and (where necessary) relocation of businesses
Station not an attraction for businesses owing to infrequent services	Negotiations with train providers regarding the possible expansion of services to Chester-le-Street

Front Street West Risk	Means of addressing the risks
Acquisition of large numbers of shops may make the project financially unviable	Working to maximise the value obtained from retail developments while minimising interventions in existing retail provision where possible
Difficulties in relocating several national retailers in the town centre	Phasing of development to ensure that sufficient new space is available before major retailers are relocated
Adjacent businesses not buying into the public square concept	Promotion of the overall benefits of footfall and greater patronage
Possible lack of demand for new leisure space	Discussions with developers to identify areas of demand and desirable property sizes/designs
Objections from adjacent residential neighbours.	Sensitive design, understanding the local context
Possible contamination from petrol station	Surveys and on-site investigations

5.19 The Masterplan report considers various types of “potential delivery vehicles” i.e. formal partnerships which could be created to implement the Masterplan proposals. The options outlined are:

- Charity, Company Limited by Guarantee
- Community Development Trust, Company Limited by Guarantee
- Community Interest Company

- Local Asset Backed Vehicle (LABV)
- Joint Venture between the Council and a single developer
- Site specific Joint Venture.

The report concludes that the most likely structure will be a joint venture with the private sector. Although it would be ideal for the Council to work with a single developer, the complexity of the projects makes it likely that several developers will be required.

Next Steps

5.20 In order to make it happen the Masterplan report recommends the following 12 next steps should be undertaken to ensure that the projects identified in the Masterplan are implemented:

1. A special partnership body should be formed to implement the Town Centre Masterplan. This should be comprised of private sector partners, business and residential community and key landowners and stakeholders. This group could be formed from the existing Strategic Partnership – their role is to drive the delivery strategy and ensure that the design principles and quality are upheld.
2. The proposals to be incorporated into the council's Local Development Framework (LDF) to ensure the effective implementation of the Masterplan. The general development principles should be reflected in the Core Strategy, Proposals Plan and any relevant Supplementary Planning Documents to ensure that the town centre is developed to the highest design quality and sustainability.
3. Review and potentially expand the shopfront design guidance included in Chester-le-Street Local Plan.
4. The aim for the Leisure Centre / Youth Centre Site is to encourage a high quality iconic development to the site. It is recommended that the development of the site is subject to a design competition, to ensure a landmark development. A strong design brief is required for these purposes.
5. Produce a clear and co-ordinated strategy and programme of works compiled by the key partners to ensure delivery. This should include phasing, responsibilities and budgets.
6. A phasing programme will highlight property market implications, potential disruption to the town centre businesses, access implications and continuity of ample parking provision.

7. Specific development briefs are required for the key development sites of Chester Burn East, Leisure Centre/ Youth Centre site, Station Approach and Front Street (West) providing greater detail on design principles and aspirations. These should be capable for use as a tool for seeking developer partner and marketing key sites.
8. Detailed design work is required for a public realm strategy that delivers the range of public realm schemes outlined in the Masterplan. This will generate a comprehensive set of proposals and realistic assessment of costs. This should be co-ordinated with the transport strategy and development of adjoining sites. The extent of work to be delivered by the council and the private sector needs to be carefully considered, and it is recommended that completed public realm works should be adopted by the highways authority and an effective management and maintenance programme be prepared.
9. The transport strategy will require a more detailed analysis and testing through traffic modelling, detailed design of roads and junctions and accurate costings. The phasing needs to be approved by the County Council and driven forward with the District Council. The parking strategy needs to be phased and implemented.
10. There are a number of sites in private ownership proposed for redevelopment or refurbishment. Landowners should be engaged early on in the process. The District Council should work with the partner for site assembly. CPO powers are available as a last resort.
11. An effective marketing and communication strategy should be developed to promote and communicate the Masterplan. This should include the marketing of sites, opportunities for potential developers, and communication with residents, and businesses and the wider community. This process should be managed carefully by a PR Consultant or consultation company.
12. The Masterplan is an important development control tool to ensure that new development meets the design principles and vision as set out in this document. This role will be strengthened if the Masterplan is adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document within the LDF. The appropriate section 106 funding should be clearly outlined in the Masterplan for its projects from relevant planning applications.

6. Recommendations

6.1 Most of 12 next steps can only be implemented by the new Unitary Council; e.g. promoting the Masterplan as part of the LDF or developing the transportation strategy. However, there is no guarantee that the Unitary Council will decide to do this. The District Council should consider whether it is feasible to start to initiate any of the 12 steps between now and April; e.g.

- Set up a partnership body as part of the existing Local Strategic Partnership which could then be transferred to the Unitary Area Action Partnership for Chester-Le-Street (step 1)
- Clarify our preference for future Leisure Centre provision (step 4)
- Commence work on development briefs or feasibility studies (step 7)
- set up a marketing and communication strategy (step 11).

Or if more of a steer should be given to the Unitary Council on any of the 12 next steps in the 'handing over the baton' report

6.2 **It is recommended that Members;**

1. **Agree to adopt the Master Plan Report, June 2008.**
2. **Consider whether any of the 12 next steps outlined in the Master Plan Report should be emphasised or clarified in more detail in the 'handing over the baton' report.**

7. Background Papers/ Documents referred to

7.1 Chester-le-Street Town Centre Final Masterplan Report, June 2008.

AUTHOR NAME; John Smerdon

DESIGNATION; Regeneration & Strategic Planning Manager

DATE OF REPORT; 27th November 2008

VERSION NUMBER;1

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Chester-le-Street
District Council

Report to:	Full Council
Date of Meeting:	15 January 2009
Report from:	Assistant Director of Development Services
Title of Report:	Communities for Health Programme 2008-2009
Agenda Item Number:	10

1. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

To provide members with details of additional funding from the Department of Health as part of the Communities for Health programme.

2. CONSULTATION

- 2.1 The CMT, the Leader, the Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services and members of the Communities for Health sub group have been consulted on this matter and the proposed way forward.

3. Transition Plan and People and Place Priority

- 3.1 The Communities for Health funding supports the Transition plan and People and Place priority, particularly strengthening partnerships and partnerships for the future, as it aims to meet the needs of the community by working towards reducing health inequalities and improving the health and the wellbeing of the District.

4. IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Financial Implications and Value for Money Statement

The Communities for Health grant brings additional resources into the Council, allowing projects to be delivered at no cost to the Council.

4.2 Legal

There are no legal implications arising from this report

4.3 Personnel

There are no personnel implications arising from this report.

4.4 Other Services

There are no implications for other services arising from this report

4.5 Diversity

“Communities for Health” aims to improve health and reduce health inequalities by engaging with the community and developing community leadership. This approach will enable all members of the community to become actively involved in challenging behaviours that adversely impact on the health of the local community and in doing so will work towards improving social inclusion and community cohesion.

4.6 Risk

The Communities for Health programme has now been well established and we do not foresee any risks attached to spending the additional finance provided by the Department of Health. The programme is considered as part of the LGR Health workstream and the Durham re-organisation should not result in any risks in delivering the programme following vesting day.

4.7 Crime and Disorder

As the Communities for Health grant works towards reducing health inequalities through community involvement, there is a possibility that projects will impact on matters of Crime and Disorder.

4.8 Other Implications

There are no other implications from this report.

5. BACKGROUND, POSITION STATEMENT AND OPTION APPRAISAL

- 5.1 “Communities for Health” was launched in 2005, shortly after the publication of the Choosing Health White Paper. The aim of the programme is to support local authorities in spearhead areas and their partners to encourage the involvement of the local community to take action against reducing health inequalities and improving the health of the District.

5.2 Chester-le-Street is a health inequality spearhead area and in 2007 the District Council were invited to take part in the programme, receiving £100,000 of funding for the delivery of projects to tackle public health priorities. An additional sum of £50,000 was granted for use in 2008/2009.

5.3 The initial sum of money (£100,000) was used largely to support 2 projects,

- The health trainer programme
- The Communities for Health, Mental Health Awareness project, delivered by Chester-le-street MIND

whilst the additional £50,000 grant was used to continue to support both of the above projects.

5.4 Shortly before Christmas, the Department of Health offered spearhead areas another £120,000 for 2008-2009. As before, these funds are to be spent towards the Communities for Health objectives to tackle local health inequalities through working with partners and the community.

5.5 In previous rounds of this grant, members delegated authority to the Communities for Health sub-group of the Health Improvement Group to co-ordinate proposals and commission projects/services to tackle health inequalities locally. The group consists of: the Director/Assistant Director of Development Services, the Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services, the Council's Community and Health Worker, the PCT's Partnerships and Performance manager and the LSP Manager.

5.6 The above mechanism has worked successfully and it is proposed that the same group is used to allocate this new £120,000 Communities for Health grant. Given the short timescales until vesting day, and in the interest of subsidiarity, it is very important to ensure that this commissioning exercise is undertaken at our local level. Equally, to ensure continuity at strategic level following vesting day, a County Council officer involved in the health inequalities agenda will join our local group as an observer, since any resultant projects/services approved by the group will be monitored (or perhaps delivered) locally by the new authority.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Members delegate authority to the Communities for Health Sub-Group to develop/commission proposals and approve expenditure for the latest round of £120,000 of Communities for Health funding in 2008-2009.

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