

6 October 2014

**Masterplans for County Durham
Update**

**Joint Report of Lorraine O'Donnell, Assistant Chief Executive
and Ian Thompson, Corporate Director, Regeneration and
Economic Development**

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 within County Durham prior to the presentation.

Background

- 2 The Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee has previously received presentations providing information on the various masterplans for County Durham. The Committee at the meeting on the 23rd June agreed the work programme for 2014/15 which included an update on the development of the various masterplans for the principal towns within the County.
- 3 Arrangements have therefore been made for Chris Myers, Regeneration Projects Manager and Jackie Donnelly, Community Economic Development Team Leader to attend the meeting on the 6 October, 2014 and deliver a presentation focusing on current and planned regeneration activity across the County.

Masterplans - Development

- 4 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.
- 5 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.

- 6 All masterplans produced follow a similar format and are developed using a multi-disciplinary group of staff driven by the Regeneration and Economic Development (RED) 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.
- 7 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.

Current Position

- 8 Regeneration Masterplans have now been prepared for each of the County's principal Towns and a review of the Bishop Auckland document is currently underway. The revised Bishop Auckland Masterplan will be considered by Cabinet in January 2015.
- 9 During 2014, projects supported through the Council's Capital Programme and delivered by the Regeneration and Economic Development service have received national and regional recognition by professional bodies. These are:

Awards

- RIBA North East – Client of the Year (DCC); Project of the Year (Seaham Marina);
- RICS North East Renaissance – Regeneration Project (Seaham Marina); Tourism & Leisure Project (Seaham Marina); Building Conservation (The Witham Hall)

Shortlisted

- RIBA North East - Project of the Year (The Witham Hall) – won by Seaham Marina
 - National RICS Regeneration Project (Seaham Marina); Building Conservation (The Witham Hall)
 - National RTPI Awards for Planning Excellence – Planning for Natural and Built Heritage (The Witham Hall) – won by Stonehenge Environmental Improvement
 - RTPI NE Awards for Planning Excellence (Seaham Marina & The Witham Hall)
- 10 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. Officers will evaluate the implementation of the Masterplans and will update them where required.

Recommendations

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

Background Paper(s)

Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Report - Masterplans for County Durham – 27 January, 2014.

Contact:	Stephen Gwilym	Tel: 03000 268 140
		E-mail: Stephen.gwilym@durham.gov.uk
Author:	Diane Close	Tel: 03000 268 141
		E-mail: diane.close@durham.gov.uk

Appendix 1: Implications

Finance – Each masterplan contains a detailed delivery plan with identified costs across Council services.

Staffing – None.

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

Legal Implications – The masterplan documents will provide evidence to support the County Durham Plan but it will not have any statutory weight in the planning process.