

29 September 2015

**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 prior to a presentation by the Regeneration Projects Manager and officers from the Community Economic Development 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 2014/15 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 6 October, 2014.
- 3 The committee agreed at the meeting on 6 October that as part of the refresh of the work programme for 2015/16 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; Jackie Donnelly and Julie Anson, Community Economic Development Team Leaders, to attend the meeting on the 29 September 2015 and deliver a presentation focusing on current and planned regeneration activity across the County.

Masterplans - Development

- 5 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 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.
- 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.

Current Position

- 9 Regeneration Masterplans have now been prepared for each of the County's principal Towns and an ongoing schedule to review the documents has just been agreed within RED. The Bishop Auckland document is currently underway and a refresh of Stanley and of Chester-le-Street are about to commence. The refresh programme has been tailored to bring forward Regeneration Masterplans in towns with priority issues to address, for example: addressing the Auckland Castle Trust and town centre matters in Bishop Auckland.
- 10 During 2015, the Seaham Marina project which has been supported through the Council's Capital Programme and delivered by the Regeneration and Economic Development service have received a national commendation by the Civic Trust in the category – 'Recognising excellence in the built environment since 1959'.
- 11 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

- 12 Members of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to note and comment upon the information provided during the presentation.

- 13 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 – 6 October, 2014.

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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.