

**2 November 2017**

**Masterplans for County Durham  
– latest position**

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

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**Purpose of the Report**

- 1 To provide Members of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee with progress made on the development and delivery of masterplans, 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 and implementation of the various masterplans for County Durham. The committee agreed in September 2015 that as part of the refresh of the work programme process that on an annual basis the committee would receive detail of masterplan projects/schemes delivered and future proposed projects.
- 3 Arrangements have been made for Chris Myers, Regeneration Projects Manager; Graeme Smith, Spatial Policy Team Leader, Wendy Benson, Community Economic Development Manager, to attend the meeting on the 2 November 2017 and deliver a presentation focusing on current and planned regeneration activity across the County.

**Masterplans and Masterplan Update - Development**

- 4 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.

- 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 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.
- 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.
- 8 A full suite of the 'first round' of masterplans have been delivered for 12 of the Council's largest towns. These often had different titles, being known as masterplans, development frameworks or regeneration frameworks. The programme of the 'second round' of masterplans has commenced delivery, with the development of Chester le Street Masterplan currently under way.
- 9 Separate to the ongoing programme of development of 'full' masterplans, the Council developed a series of Masterplan Update documents for those towns benefitting from a masterplan. These documents were considered and approved by cabinet in two tranches in December 2016 and January 2017 and were subject to discussion with the AAPs. These Masterplan Update documents provided an overview of each settlement, current actions and future confirmed actions.

## **Current Position**

- 10 Through the Brighter Bishop Auckland Regeneration Partnership, Ryder Architecture have been appointed to prepare a town centre focused regeneration masterplan. This work is underway and it will be completed early in 2018.
- 11 The development of the Chester-le-Street masterplan document has commenced and has been subject to discussion with the AAP. The next step in the development of this masterplan is to further explore the evidence base in respect of the town centre with the AAP. This will provide an opportunity to understand for context, the mix of existing retail and other users in the town centre, vacancies and change over time.
- 12 Officers will continue to seek resources through the Capital Programme to implement the various projects outlined in the Masterplan documents.

## **Recommendations**

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

## **Background Paper(s)**

Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Report - Masterplans for County Durham – 3 November, 2016.

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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**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 subject to assessment 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.