

North Tyneside Council

Report to Chief Executive, Director of Resources and the Director of Regeneration & Economic Development

Date: 19 July 2023

Title: An Ambition for Wallsend

Report from Service Area:

Regeneration and Economic Development

Responsible Officer:

Paul Graves, Regeneration Project Manager

Tel: 07976 957875

Wards affected:

Battle Hill, Howdon, Northumberland and Wallsend

PART 1

1.1 Executive Summary:

On 22 May 2023 Cabinet considered a report outlining the responses from residents, businesses and stakeholders to the draft Wallsend Town Centre masterplan. These responses were gathered via a digital and face-to-face engagement exercise between 19 January and 3 March 2023.

The draft Masterplan consisted of 14 projects largely based on a place or building with those covering Business Support, Employment Support and Events & Animation applying throughout the masterplan area.

Responses to the draft masterplan were largely positive with the exception of the proposal for 'Housing Streetscape Improvements' (Project 6) where residents of streets south of High Street West were concerned for various reasons including the loss of on street parking, that seating would attract anti-social behaviour (ASB) and that the focus should be on the back lanes and deprivation in this area.

Cabinet of 22 May 2023 resolved that:

- (1) the progress made in delivering the Wallsend Town Centre Masterplan since November 2022, be noted;

(2) the proposed amendments to Project 6: of the draft Wallsend Masterplan 'Housing Streetscape Improvements' set out in section 1.5.5 of the report, be agreed; and

(3) subject to (2) above, the Chief Executive, Director of Resources and Director of Regeneration and Economic Development, in consultation with the Elected Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources, be authorised to approve the final version of the Wallsend Town Centre Masterplan and to progress the delivery of the Masterplan.

The final version of the masterplan is attached to this report, the amended masterplan proposes changes to 'Housing Streetscape Improvements' under Project 6. It should be noted that should funding be found to develop this project it will be subject to engagement with residents before a scheme is finalised and implemented.

1.2 Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that:

The final version of the Wallsend Masterplan be approved, and the delivery of the Masterplan is progressed.

1.3 Forward Plan:

Twenty-eight days' notice of this report has been given and it first appeared on the Forward Plan that was published on 23 June 2023.

1.4 Council Plan and Policy Framework

This report relates to the following themes in the 2021-25 Our North Tyneside Plan:

- A thriving North Tyneside
- A secure North Tyneside
- A green North Tyneside

The Wallsend Masterplan also uses the Local Plan 2017 as a Framework, which sets the planning policies to guide the development and regeneration of Wallsend Town Centre and the adjoining areas.

1.5 Information:

1.5.1 Background

The draft Masterplan proposes fourteen interventions that will deliver the three policy priorities for Wallsend, as approved by Cabinet on 28 March 2022. The policy priorities are:

- **Improve the quality of the housing offer in Wallsend;** in particular making the area a focus of the Mayor and Cabinet's plans for 5,000 affordable homes and tackling some of the poor quality privately rented housing in the masterplan area;
- **Make the town centre and the nearby neighbourhoods great places to visit and live;** improving the street scene, public spaces and working with partners to make sure people feel safe; and
- **Make sure Wallsend residents are connected to good jobs;** using the full range of tools, including adult education, apprenticeships and the capabilities plus the transport infrastructure around the town to make sure people in the community, who need it, are supported to improve their life chances.

The scope of the Masterplan area was also agreed at Cabinet in March 2022. It covers High Street East and West, the Forum shopping centre and Station Road, with their surrounding catchment area of housing. It also includes the Segedunum Roman Fort & Museum and Wallsend riverside as far as Davy Bank. To the north it includes the Parks, Wallsend Hall, and the former Buddle School and arts centre.

In addition, since March 2022 the Authority has been working to better understand the issues, challenges and opportunities in Wallsend focussing in particular on the three policy priorities of housing, place and employment.

1.5.2 From this work 14 projects have been developed. These are largely focused on places and buildings, those covering Business Support, Employment Support and Events & Animation apply throughout the masterplan area:

- Project 1 – Wallsend Town Square
- Project 2 – High Street West, High Street East and Station Road
- Project 3 – Segedunum World Heritage Site Gateway
- Project 4 – The Forum
- Project 5 – Bus & Metro Station
- Project 6 – Housing Streetscape Improvements
- Project 7 – Housing Development (New Build & Refurbishment)
- Project 8 – Cycle Corridors
- Project 9 – Segedunum Transformation
- Project 10 – Segedunum Linkages
- Project 11 – Historic Buildings & Conservation
- Project 12 – Business Support
- Project 13 – Employment Support
- Project 14 – Events & Animation

1.5.3 The Cabinet report of 22 May described the responses to the engagement on the draft masterplan that took place between 19 January and 3 March. The engagement included eight drop-in sessions at Wallsend Customer First Centre and a session with the user participation group at Learning Disability NorthEast (LDNE). Formal responses could be made via the PlaceChangers digital tool, Microsoft forms, paper surveys and Email, 176 people responded in total.

1.5.4 Four of the projects received 100% levels of support:

- Project 9 – Segedunum Transformation (34 responses)
- Project 10 – Segedunum Routes to Town Centre (31 responses)
- Project 13 – Employment Support (19 responses)
- Project 14 – Events and Animation (20 responses)

Nine projects received between 55% and 95% levels of support:

- Project 1 – Town Square (73 responses, 79% supportive)
- Project 2 – High Street West, East & Station Road (59 responses, 58 % supportive)
- Project 3 – Segedunum WHS Gateway (44 responses, 60% supportive)
- Project 4 – The Forum (50 responses, 64% supportive)
- Project 5 – Bus & Metro Station (40 responses, 80% supportive)
- Project 7 – Housing Development [New Build & Refurbishment] (31 responses, 74% supportive)
- Project 8 – Cycle corridor (38 responses, 55 % supportive)
- Project 11 – Historic Buildings & Conservation (43 responses, 95% supportive)
- Project 12 – Business Support (23 responses, 87% supportive)

There was only one project that received less than a 50% level of support:

Project 6 – Housing Streetscape Improvements (49 responses, 29% supportive)

- 1.5.5 Cabinet was advised there were very high levels of support for heritage projects such as bringing historic buildings back into use and the transformation of Segedunum.
- 1.5.6 There were also very high levels of support for the three projects covering Business Support, Employment Support and Events & Animation.
- 1.5.7 There were high levels of support (at least 55%) for all the other projects apart from Project 6: Housing Streetscape Improvements where only 29% were supportive with 74% saying it needed improving.
- 1.5.8 The visualisation for Project 6 showed how some road space in the streets south of High Street West (using Vine Street as an example) could be repurposed as pedestrian friendly space with seating, tree and shrub planting. While there was some support for this there was a greater level of concern for various reasons including the loss of on street parking, that seating would attract anti-social behaviour (ASB) and that the focus should be on the back lanes and deprivation in this area.
- 1.5.9 Given the limited support for the solution identified in Project 6: Housing Streetscape Improvements the masterplan has been amended by removing the visualisation and replacing it with generic images of the improvements to the footways, carriageway and back lanes that are possible in terraced streets. In the event that funding is secured then any proposals for improvements will be subject to engagement with residents during the design process prior to any scheme being finalised and implemented.
- 1.5.10 For all the other 'public realm' projects proposing improvements to cycle routes, footpaths, roadways and open spaces there was general support. Concerns were raised however about issues such as vehicle access, location of cycle routes and impact on vehicle road space, maintenance, ASB, litter and dog fouling. Specific concern was raised that the tree planting on the paved area north of Buddle Street next to (and part of) Segedunum Roman Fort would not be possible given it forms part of the Scheduled Monument and such planting could damage the underlying archaeology. As such the detailed design will need to respect the archaeology and will be developed in consultation with Historic England. In the amended masterplan the visualisation for Project 3:

Segedunum WHS Gateway has been changed by removing the deep-rooted trees to reflect the comment received.

1.6 Decision options:

The following decision options are available for consideration:

Option 1

To approve the recommendation set out in paragraph 1.2 above

Option 2

To reject the recommendation set out in paragraph 1.2 above.

Option 1 is the recommended option.

1.7 Reasons for recommended option:

Option 1 is recommended for the following reasons:

The recommended option will enable the Authority to progress the regeneration of Wallsend Town Centre and the individual projects within it.

1.8 Appendices:

'Appendix: Wallsend Town Centre Masterplan, July 2023'

1.9 Contact officers:

John Sparkes, Director of Regeneration & Economic Development, 0191 643 1441

Paul Graves, Regeneration Project Manager, 07976 957875

Julie Dodds, Head of Inclusive Economy & Business Development, 07583 042186

Claire Emmerson, Head of Finance, 0191 643 8109

1.10 Background information:

The following background papers/information have been used in the compilation of this report:

- (1) Our North Tyneside Plan 2021-25
<https://my.northtyneside.gov.uk/category/1241/our-north-tyneside-plan>
- (2) An Ambition for North Tyneside – Update Report of the Director of Regeneration and Economic Development, Cabinet 21 February 2022:
<https://democracy.northtyneside.gov.uk/documents/s7901/An%20Ambition%20for%20North%20Tyneside%20-%20Update.pdf>
- (3) An Ambition for Wallsend – Report of the Director of Regeneration and Economic Development, Cabinet 28 March 2022
<https://democracy.northtyneside.gov.uk/documents/s8209/An%20Ambition%20for%20Wallsend.pdf>
- (4) An Ambition for Wallsend – Report of the Director of Regeneration and Economic Development, Cabinet 28 November 2022
<https://democracy.northtyneside.gov.uk/documents/s10465/An%20Ambition%20for%20Wallsend%20Report%20and%20Appendix%201%20Appendix%202.pdf>
- (5) Agenda and draft minutes (Item EP26/22 An Ambition for Wallsend) of Economic Prosperity Sub-Committee, 21 March 2023
<https://democracy.northtyneside.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=163&MIId=773&Ver=4>
- (6) An Ambition for Wallsend – Report of the Director of Regeneration and Economic Development, Cabinet 22 May 2023
<https://democracy.northtyneside.gov.uk/documents/s12730/An%20Ambition%20for%20Wallsend.pdf>
- (7) Minutes of Cabinet 22 May 2023 (Item CAB10/23) – An Ambition for Wallsend
<https://democracy.northtyneside.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=174&MIId=1053&Ver=4>
- (8) An Ambition for North Tyneside – Update Report of the Director of Regeneration and Economic Development, Cabinet 26 June 2023 (Item CAB8/23)
<https://democracy.northtyneside.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=174&MIId=1054&Ver=4>

PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING

2.1 Finance and other resources

The table below outlines the funding available to the Authority within the Investment Plan and existing approved budgets:

Fund/Project	External Funding	NTC Funding	Total Project Cost
NTCA Towns and High Streets Innovation Programme	£1.940m	£0	£1.940m
Arts Council England MEND – Segedunum	£0.499m	£0.256m	£0.755m
Wallsend Town Centre Conservation Area – Character Appraisal and boundary review	£0m	£0.003m <i>(Revenue budget, non-core work by Capita planning team)</i>	£0.003m

As projects are developed the direct financial implications will be considered as part of the Investment Plan and the Authority’s budget-setting process which will be the subject of future reports to Cabinet. The Authority will continue to actively pursue external funding opportunities to supplement the use of the Authority’s own resources.

2.2 Legal

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. As specific actions are brought forward under the policy priorities set out above the legal

implications (if any) for those actions will be fully considered at that time.

2.3 Consultation/community engagement

2.3.1 Internal Consultation

There was a briefing to all members about the draft Masterplan by the Director of Regeneration & Economic Development on 2 February 2023. The Ward members for Battle Hill, Howdon, Northumberland and Wallsend and the relevant Lead Cabinet Members were also briefed on 9 May 2023 prior to the 22 May Cabinet.

The Economic Prosperity Sub-Committee on 21 March 2023 discussed the draft Masterplan and the preliminary findings of the consultation and engagement activities. Members of this Committee expressed support for the ambition for Wallsend and the detailed projects contained within the Masterplan. The sub-committee made specific comments on the following:

- maintenance of improvements (e.g. to public realm) following completion and the need for materials that are easy and affordable to maintain
- scope for improved space for events and parking at Segedunum and a query whether there was the opportunity to cater for campervans and motorhomes
- potential scope for improved commercial bin storage
- whether the plan would benefit from a clear mission or vision statement

A Wallsend Masterplan officer group has been established to manage production and implementation of the Masterplan. In addition, the Engagement and Communications teams have worked closely with the Regeneration service to develop the Communications, Engagement and Marketing Plan.

2.3.2 External Consultation/Engagement

Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums, as operators of Segedunum, have been advised about the Wallsend Masterplan as have the Wallsend Chamber of Trade. The Authority also, as part of the Towns and High Streets Innovation Fund programme, established a Board that includes representatives of local businesses and VODA. In addition, the Authority has engaged with the Government's High Streets Task Force (HSTF), to gain support on further

engagement work during the Masterplan consultation period. Discussions have also been held with NewRiver Retail, who operate the Forum Shopping Centre, to get an understanding of their longer-term objectives for the centre which includes some proposals for further investment. More detail about the engagement process was included in the main body of the 22 May Cabinet report and in Appendix 3 of that report

2.4 Human rights

There are no Human Rights issues directly arising from this report. As projects are developed any potential human rights implications will be considered and kept under review.

2.5 Equalities and diversity

There are no equalities and diversity issues directly arising from this report. The engagement activities within the Communications, Engagement and Marketing Plan reflect differing needs, and the means of engagement were subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment. As individual projects within the Masterplan such as highways, active travel and public realm are developed they will be subject to individual Equalities Impact Assessments.

2.6 Risk management

A risk register will be developed for each of the projects and will be reviewed monthly by the project delivery teams.

2.7 Crime and disorder

There are no crime and disorder issues directly arising from this report. As the Masterplan and feasibility work progresses, consideration of crime, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour will be central to the development of the proposals.

2.8 Environment and sustainability

The feasibility work undertaken with this funding is informing the development of robust business cases that include full environmental and sustainability plans.

PART 3 – SIGN OFF

- Chief Executive X
- Director(s) of Service X
- Mayor/Cabinet Member(s) X
- Chief Finance Officer X
- Monitoring Officer X
- Assistant Chief Executive X