

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 17 NOVEMBER 2009

MAJOR PROJECT REPORTING

Report of the Deputy Chief Executive

**STRATEGIC PRIORITIES: SP1: Prosperous City
SP5: Attractive and Inclusive City**

CORPORATE IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVES: CIO4: Partnership Working

1. WHY HAS THIS REPORT COME TO THE COMMITTEE?

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with details of the major projects currently being undertaken in Sunderland with a view to establishing quarterly reporting arrangements to the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee in respect of those projects that are of particular relevance.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Sunderland has been the scene of much development and regeneration activity for the last 20 years as the city has responded to the closure of its shipbuilding and coalmining industries. Major projects undertaken in the city during this period include the development of Hylton Riverside, Doxford International, Rainton Bridge and the Stadium of Light on the site of the former Wearmouth Colliery.

2.2 This activity is continuing despite the economic downturn and subsequent recession and will continue further as projects such as the regeneration of the Vaux site and the Holmeside Triangle are progressed towards realisation.

3. MAJOR PROJECTS DEFINITION

3.1 For the purpose of this report, major projects are defined as those development and regeneration projects that the city council has an interest in as the developer, promoter or development partner, and will result in significant construction activity and have a significant economic, social or environmental impact on the city.

4. MAJOR PROJECTS

4.1 Appendix A comprises an overview of major projects currently at various stages of development within Sunderland.

4.2 Projects identified in Section 1 of Appendix A are those which are expected to be reported to the Scrutiny Committee on a regular basis.

5. PROPOSED REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS

- 5.1 It is proposed that the Scrutiny Committee initially receives quarterly reports in respect of progress on the projects identified in Section 1 of Appendix A. These reports will comprise a briefing on progress and presentation of the report to the Scrutiny Committee.

6. RECOMMENDATION

Committee is recommended to note the contents of the report and approve the acceptance of quarterly reports in respect of the major projects identified in Section 1 of Appendix A.

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MAJOR PROJECTS

APPENDIX A

Section 1 - Key Projects

Farringdon Row - Her Majesty's Courts Service

Farringdon Row is set between the city centre and the south bank of the River Wear, adjoining the Vaux Site. The 5 ha (12.36 acre) site was originally intended as the location for new homes and office development comprising:

- Approximately 500 new jobs
- New homes
- New office space
- A new hotel
- Ancillary retail
- Public Boulevard

At its meeting of 12 July 2006 Cabinet agreed to enter into a Development Agreement with a developer for the development of a mixed use scheme on Site A at Farringdon Row. The scheme consisted of residential, hotel and office accommodation, and planning permission was obtained for the proposal in February 2008, with a view to the developer commencing works on site in the Summer of 2008.

However, due to the economic downturn, the developer was unable to fulfil its obligations under the terms of the Development Agreement and the arc partners were in a position where the agreement could be terminated for non performance.

A report seeking approval to the termination of the Development Agreement for the development of site A, Farringdon Row, and to the disposal of the freehold interest of land at sites A and B Farringdon Row to Her Majesty's Court Service (HMCS) for the construction of a new Justice Centre was approved Cabinet at its meeting on 9 September 2009.

Pre application meetings with HMCS's architects for the scheme are ongoing and a planning application is due to be submitted in March/April 2010, based on the current programme.

It is still unclear which facilities will be included in the Justice Centre, which will include Crown and Magistrates Courts and is estimated to cost £70 million.

Sunderland Strategic Transport Corridor

Over the next 10 years it is predicted that over 2,500 more vehicles per hour at peak times will be travelling into Sunderland city centre from across the region and beyond

Sunderland City Council and Sunderland arc are working in partnership to deliver the right transport route for the future success of the city. This new transport route will include dedicated footpaths, cycle routes and bus lanes, wherever possible. The SSTC project will provide a new means of access to development sites in central Sunderland, providing the infrastructure for their ongoing and continued role within the city.

Proposals include:

- New road and modifications to existing routes
- Improvements to A19 interchange and Wessington Way
- New iconic bridge over the River Wear

In December 2008, Cabinet instructed the Sunderland Strategic Transport Corridor project team to carry out further design work to determine whether the landmark bridge could be delivered within the existing funding parameters. There has since been significant progress in the development of the Project, which culminated in the decision to proceed with the landmark bridge design at the Cabinet meeting on 9 September 2009.

Following Cabinet's decision in September 2009, the project team is now implementing the next phase of the Project, which includes obtaining powers (consents, planning permission and CPO); completing the detailed design; and updating the major scheme business case for submission to DfT. It is the council's intention is to submit the Conditional Approval business case to DfT in September 2010.

DfT Conditional Approval is anticipated in January 2011, following which the project team will commence procurement of the main works contractor. In parallel, advance works will be undertaken as required to minimise the potential for delays to the main works. Land acquisition will also take place as required to facilitate the advance works and the main contract.

An application for Full Approval will be made to DfT following evaluation of the tenders for the main works, with approval to appoint the main contractor planned for December 2011. On this basis, construction of the main works will be completed by the end of 2014.

Section 2 - Other Major Projects

Stadium Village

Located on the north bank of the River Wear, Stadium Village will take advantage of the opportunity that surrounds the Stadium of Light.

Extending to a total of 25 ha (62 acres) including the Sheepfolds industrial area, Stadium Village will be home to world-class, state-of-the-art sports and leisure facilities as well as new homes and offices.

Proposals include:

- 14 Ha Brownfield land regenerated
- Approximately 1,200 new jobs
- Hotel & leisure

- New homes
- Ancillary retail, food & drink
- Office space

A report advising Cabinet of the responses received following consultation on the Stadium Village Development framework and to seek Cabinet's approval of an amended draft Stadium Village Development Framework for the purposes of further public consultation was presented to Cabinet on 4 November.

The draft Development Framework was the subject of consultation from 7 January to 17 February 2009. 117 responses were received from consultees.

Consultation responses centred on three issues:

Stadium Village parking

A lack of available car parking spaces and disabled car parking spaces at the Aquatic Centre, particular in relation to match days.

Massing and Scale in relation to surrounds

The potential scale of future development on sites C and D and the impact that any large scale developments may have on the Grade II* Listed Monkwearmouth Station. This issue is now particularly relevant given the proposal for an indoor Ski Slope at Site C.

Housing

Representations were made regarding the proposed housing on site E. Issues raised included whether the housing would be affordable and whether the housing is necessary, given the fact that vacant apartments exist in the city already. Questions were also raised over the suitability of the site for family housing.

An amended draft Development Framework has now been prepared to incorporate changes made as a result of the consultation and also to make provision for the opportunity to develop a regionally significant leisure use anchored by an indoor real snow ski slope.

In order to give the Stadium Village Development Framework the appropriate weight as a material consideration, the council will take forward the Framework as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

An adopted Development Framework for Stadium Village will strengthen the council's ability to ensure that individual developments do not take place in isolation and will facilitate a co-ordinated approach to development in the area.

Housing Developments

Hetton Downs Area Action Plan

Plans to regenerate Hetton Downs have been boosted by the Homes and Communities Agency's £7.15m funding pledge.

Castletown

Regeneration activity in Castletown is continuing including site clearances, Regeneration Masterplan consultation activity and the commencement of a scheme to improve existing residential properties. Planning permission for 145 new houses programmed to be issued November 2009.

General

Assisting Gentoo:

- Southwick Masterplan implemented
- Doxford Park Masterplan Phase 1 implemented
- Planning consent has been granted for Pennywell Phase 1 and the scheme is underway
- Doxford Park, Chilton Phase 3 and Racecourse Estate, Castletown, Southwick Phase 3 and Doxford Park Phase 3A schemes shortlisted for Kickstart programme funding and already have planning permission or are in the planning system to enable starts on site before 31 March 2010 as required by the HCA.

Local Housing Company Strategy developed and agreed with partners by end of year.