

CABINET MEETING – 17th April 2013
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART I

Title of Report:

City Centre Investment Corridor Programme

Author(s):

Deputy Chief Executive

Purpose of Report:

The report seeks the approval of the City Centre Investment Corridor Programme. The proposed programme will be funded from the Council's Capital Programme.

Description of Decision:

Cabinet is recommended to:

- a) Approve the proposed Investment Corridor programme for the city centre, to be funded by the £4 million capital programme allocation between 2013 and 2017.
- b) Authorise the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader and Cabinet Secretary, to approve detailed designs and budgets and to appoint contractors to deliver the programme

Is the decision consistent with the Budget/Policy Framework? ***Yes**

If not, Council approval is required to change the Budget/Policy Framework

Suggested reason(s) for Decision:

To deliver investment in the city centre to meet the aim 3 outcomes of the Economic Masterplan

Alternative options to be considered and recommended to be rejected:

The alternative option would be to not progress the works. However funding for the project has been secured and the delivery team is progressing the design stages of the project. In order to carry out the works contractors must be procured following a competitive tender process.

Impacts analysed:	
Equality <input type="checkbox" value="Y"/>	Privacy <input type="checkbox" value="N/A"/> Sustainability <input type="checkbox" value="Y"/> Crime and Disorder <input type="checkbox" value="N/A"/>
Is this a “Key Decision” as defined in the Constitution? Yes	Scrutiny Committee
Is it included in the 28 day Notice of Decisions? Yes	

City Centre Investment Corridor Programme

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The report seeks the approval of the City Centre Investment Corridor Programme. The proposed programme will be funded from the Council's Capital Programme.

2.0 Description of Decision

- 2.1 Cabinet is recommended to:

- a) Approve the proposed Investment Corridor programme for the city centre, to be funded by the £4 million capital programme allocation between 2012 and 2017.
- b) Authorise the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader and Cabinet Secretary, to approve detailed designs and budgets and to appoint contractors to deliver the programme

3.0 Background

- 3.1 Members will be aware that Aim 3 of the Economic Masterplan states that "Sunderland city centre can only be transformed by making it more attractive to private investment. We will concentrate on the handful of target locations with the greatest investment potential and the greatest opportunity to raise perceptions of the city. Public funding and effort will therefore be concentrated on specific investment corridors that will serve the following key functions: connecting both new and existing assets; integrating the 'city campus' with the city centre; promoting a place made for people; and, providing an investment focus".

4.0 Proposed Programme

- 4.1 As shown on the attached plan (appendix one) the proposed Investment Corridor programme focuses on the East West corridor that runs between the University (Chester Road campus) along High Street West to Sunnyside.
- 4.2 The Investment Corridor programme has been developed to align with existing and proposed investment/activity (both private and public) in the city centre, including: St Mary's Way, the new public Square, and the new Primark and Travel Lodge developments on High Street West to ensure that investment potential is maximised. The proposed investment will also support the future redevelopment of the Crowtree site.

Proposed Projects

- 4.3 The programme is made up of the following individual projects:
- 4.4 Sunnyside Gap Sites – this project will deliver short-term landscaping and temporary car parking on land at High Street West. The project will improve the appearance of these gap sites, pending redevelopment, which are immediately opposite the new Travel Lodge hotel. It will also encourage greater footfall in Sunnyside, thereby, supporting established businesses.
- 4.5 High Street West Improvements – Over two phases the project will deliver comprehensive street scene improvements to High Street West between Fawcett Street and St Michael's Way. The improvements will include new paving, street lighting, seating, litter bins and street trees.
- 4.6 The works will compliment the new Primark development, the new public square and St Mary's way improvements as well as enhancing the prime retail street which includes the likes of Marks and Spencer, BHS, Currys and Argos. In the Minster Quarter area the works will compliment the proposed old firestation redevelopment, as well as improving the area immediately adjacent to the Empire Theatre and the Minster (which forms part of the Bishop Wearmouth conservation area).
- 4.7 St Michael's Way – In addition to improvements to High Street West it is proposed to deliver improved crossing facilities on St Michael's way (at the end of High Street West) to provide an improved link between the city centre and the university campus making it easier for students and visitors to move between the city centre and the University campus.
- 4.8 Town Park – As with the improvements to the St Michael's Way crossing facility, to improve connections between the University Chester Road campus and the city centre, the Town Park provides an important gateway into the city centre, including the Bridges Shopping Centre, as well as being a historic part of the city centre and the setting to the Sunderland Minster. Improvements will seek to make it easier to access the park and city centre beyond.
- 4.9 Way Finding - To compliment the above projects it is proposed to deliver new way finding infrastructure. It is essential that proper signage is put in place so that visitors to the city centre can easily find their way to their desired destination as well as a way of promoting the city's assets such as the Minster, Empire Theatre and Museum and Winter Gardens.

- 4.10 Complimentary projects – Within the programme smaller projects will be considered which directly compliment the above identified projects. These will be considered on their individual merits and will be funded from the overall £4m budget.

Outcomes

- 4.11 The programme is seeking to deliver the following specific outcomes:

- 4.12 Outcome One – a better connected city centre and university campus

- Improved links between the city campus, city centre and riverside campus
- Increased footfall from more students entering the city centre
- Improved links between the theatre quarter and Sunnyside
- Improved connections into the new public square and to Vaux site
- Improved gateways to city centre and to Bridges shopping

- 4.13 Outcome Two – a better place for people

- Improvements will provide greater satisfaction for those visiting this part of the city centre for retail and leisure, including visitors to the Empire Theatre, festivals and events.
- Improvements will attract more people to live in the city centre, e.g. in Sunnyside
- Greater satisfaction from students living and studying at Sunderland University
- Increased business satisfaction resulting from increased footfall and confidence
- Improvements will provide increased opportunities for events and festivals that support the daytime and evening economies

- 4.14 Outcome Three – a better place to do business

- Improvement in city centre ranking (e.g. Management Horizons Europe UK shopping index)
- Investment will open up new development plots for retail/leisure development and increase the attractiveness and viability of existing plots such as Crowtree.

- To support the wider regeneration of the area strategic acquisitions will seek to create new development plots, or allow for the refurbishment of existing units, to provide plots and units that are suitable for modern retailing needs.
- Current vacancy rates will be reduced.
- Business support will assist existing and new businesses ensuring that private investment is maximized.

5.0 Stakeholder Engagement

- 5.1 In March 2013 officers of the Council presented the draft Investment Corridor programme to the committee of the Sunderland City Centre Traders Association. The Association subsequently sent a letter to the Council providing feedback on the proposals. In general the Association is supportive of the proposed investment. In summary the Association made the following key points:
- a) Early engagement on proposals for the city centre should continue.
 - b) Consideration should be given to preparing a programme of potential restructuring work that matches both the Economic Master Plan and the larger city centre developments.
 - c) Consideration should be given to highway and traffic management issues to ensure greater pedestrian priority and remove the barriers of roads cutting pedestrian flow.
 - d) Proposals should achieve the following objectives: to eliminate the negative effect of live traffic on the city centre and ensure that all quarters are linked; ensure that the business community, no matter it's size, is considered; and, any investment considers the long term plans and objectives.
- 5.2 It is envisaged that further engagement will be undertaken with the traders, and other stakeholders, as part of the detailed design stage.

6.0 Reason for Decision

- 6.1 To deliver investment in the city centre as set out against the aim 3 outcomes of the Economic Masterplan

7.0 Relevant Considerations

- a) Financial Implications – The works will be funded from the £4m allocation in the capital programme.

- b) Legal Implications – Clause 9.0 Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 provides local authorities with a power for the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental well being of their area.
- c) Policy Implications – The projects forms part of the delivery of the Economic Masterplan and will compliment other capital projects, for example St Mary’s Way and the new public square.
- d) Project Management Methodology – the delivery of the project is via the Council’s standard Prince2 methodology.
- e) Sustainability Impact Appraisal – An impact appraisal has been undertaken and is attached in appendix one.

8.0 Background Papers

- Economic Masterplan

<http://www.sunderland.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=4687>