

# North Tyneside Council

## Report to Cabinet

Date: 11 June 2012

### ITEM 7(g)(ii)(c)

Title: Improving the Viability of Town and Local Shopping Centres- Progress Report

Portfolio(s): Elected Mayor

Cabinet Member(s): Mrs Linda Arkley

Report from Directorate: Chief Executive's Office

Report Author: Ken Wilson, Head of Regeneration, Development and Regulatory Services (Tel: ) 643 6091

Wards affected: All

## PART 1

### 1.1 Purpose:

To update Cabinet on progress to date with current initiatives to improve our retail centres across the borough; to seek authorisation to accept offers of external funding for new initiatives to improve our retail centres across the borough of North Tyneside; to expedite the production of the relevant Area Action Plans; and to approve the proposed financing arrangements to allow the North Shields Customer First Centre to proceed.

### 1.2 Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 1) Note the progress made as detailed in the report;
- 2) Authorise the Head of Regeneration, Development and Regulatory Services, in consultation with the Strategic Director of Finance and Resources and the Elected Mayor, to accept any offers of external funding to support initiatives to improve our retail centres across the borough of North Tyneside, subject to resource implications, including match funding, being confined within existing budgets;
- 3) Authorise the Head of Regeneration, Development and Regulatory Services, in consultation with the Head of Legal, Governance and Commercial Services and the Elected Mayor, to approve a programme for the Area Action Plans and progress the production of the Area Action Plans in accordance with it, in order to provide an updated policy framework for investing and regenerating the three town centres of Wallsend, North Shields and Whitley Bay; and
- 4) In relation to the North Shields Customer First Centre:

(i) Approve the proposal for funding the scheme, as detailed at paragraphs 1.5.3 and 2.1 of the report; and

(ii) Authorise the Head of Cultural and Customer Services, in consultation with the Strategic Director of Finance and Resources, the Head of Legal, Governance and Commercial Services, the Elected Mayor and the Cabinet Member for Finance to implement the North Shields Customer First Centre project in accordance with the scheme described in the report to Council dated 24 November 2011 (as cross referred to the Customer Services Centres Delivery Plan approved by Cabinet in November 2007, the Customer First Strategy agreed by Cabinet in December 2010, and the Cabinet report dated 16 April 2012), and take all necessary or appropriate steps associated with such implementation, in compliance with the Council's Constitution, Financial Regulations, Contract Standing Orders and any other applicable requirements.

### **1.3 Forward plan:**

This report appears on the Forward Plan for the period 1<sup>st</sup> June to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2012.

### **1.4 Council plan and policy framework**

**The Council Plan 2012/2015 relates to the improvement of our town centres in the following way:**

Priority 5: Work in Partnership to realise the Full Potential of the North Bank of the Tyne Regeneration

Objective 9: The Council will work collectively to improve the viability of all our Town and Local Shopping Centres, which will serve the additional users attracted by new and expanding companies and the Learning Village.

#### **North Tyneside Sustainable Community Strategy 2010/13**

North Tyneside Strategic Partnership has an ambitious vision for the Borough, which is that the Borough is a place of opportunity, prosperity and vibrancy; a place where people are happy, healthy, safe, able to participate in a flourishing economy and achieve their full potential.

The Partnership states it will work together to see that amongst other things:

- Our town centres are renewed, easily accessible and provide a wide range of shops and services;
- Neighbourhoods are friendly, inclusive, safe and connected, offering a range of quality housing options and local facilities; and

#### **Council's Policy Framework**

The Council's Policy Framework includes the statutory Development Plan for the borough. North Tyneside's current Unitary Development Plan provides a policy framework to encourage the viability and vitality of our existing local centres. This will be continued through the emerging Local Development Framework Core Strategy and Area Action Plans, which cover the three older town centres in the borough.

The Cabinet approved a Retail Centres Regeneration Strategy in 2010 for North Shields and Whitley Bay town centres as well as Forest Hall and Whitley Lodge local shopping centres. In July 2010 Cabinet also approved a Strategic Development Framework for the River Tyne North Bank that includes Wallsend town centre.

The main objective of the Retail Centres Regeneration Strategy is aimed at dealing with the need to reinvigorate the town centres of North Shields and Whitley Bay. The Retail Centres Regeneration Strategy does, however, also identify Forest Hall and Whitley Lodge shopping centres as areas that would benefit from some environmental and public realm improvements.

Proposals for the regeneration of Wallsend town centre are directly linked to the adjacent riverside zone and have therefore been included in the River Tyne North Bank Strategic Development Framework.

## **1.5 Information**

### **1.5.1 Background**

North Tyneside has a range of shopping provision across the borough including:

- a) four main retail centres centred on the towns of Wallsend, North Shields, Whitley Bay and Killingworth;
- b) eight smaller district/local shopping centres in Tynemouth, Battle Hill, Preston Grange (including a large Morrisons supermarket), Forest Hall, Longbenton, Whitley Lodge, Northumberland Park and Monkseaton;
- c) two large retail parks at the Silverlink and Royal Quays, which generally cater for car borne visitors and therefore have a catchment area that extends outside the borough boundaries;
- d) large out of centre supermarkets at Benton, Red House Farm and West Chirton; and,
- e) a number of small local shopping centres, such as Howdon and Wideopen, which cater for a smaller local need.

Wallsend, North Shields and Whitley Bay are older town centres that comprise a range of shopping facilities, including modern indoor shopping malls in all three shopping centres. The town centres of Wallsend and Whitley Bay are similar in layout, being generally linear in form whilst North Shields is more compact and based upon a grid iron layout. All three town centres are well served by public transport, with Metro Stations and extensive bus services, but car parking provision is generally perceived by traders as detrimental to business when compared to out of centre shopping destinations. The three older town centres have suffered from significant closures during the economic downturn, including national companies such as Woolworth, Peacocks and Ethel Austin as well as local companies. However, the overall effect of the downturn on the town centres has consistently remained below the national average for void units.

Killingworth town centre is a modern shopping centre anchored upon a large Morrisons supermarket, alongside a shopping mall and a Matalan store. The shopping mall is also owned by Morrisons and provides both indoor shop units and a parade of external shops. The centre has a large amount of free, surface level car parking and provides a high quality and modern shopping service for residents within the catchment area, however, it also currently has a number of vacant units in the shopping mall area.

All three older town centres have been identified as requiring Area Action Plans as part of the emerging Local Development Framework and have recently been the focus of a Preferred Options consultation programme to identify priorities for the community.

A more detailed summary for each older town centre and progress with regeneration initiatives within Wallsend, North Shields and Whitley Bay, as well as the two district centres of Forest Hall and Whitley Lodge, is set out below.

### **1.5.2 Wallsend**

The retail core remains fragile with falling footfall and retailers reporting difficult trading conditions. One of the main factors influencing the footfall into Wallsend town centre has been the closure of the Swan Hunter shipyards. However, High Street East remains fairly buoyant with steady void levels and a developing night time economy.

- Officers are working closely with the owners of The Forum shopping centre to bring forward its redevelopment proposals, including refurbishment of the former Co-op store and provision of a new supermarket on land currently owned by the Council in Hedley Place;
- The relocation of existing tenants from Hedley Place and York Drive to extend and enhance the retail core through the provision of a new supermarket and associated car parking is nearing completion;
- The former Borough Theatre and Fox garage have been demolished and new residential development is underway to provide 33 new affordable homes;
- The Customer Service Centre has been successfully relocated into The Forum shopping centre to provide a safe modern facility for staff and visitors and to increase footfall into the retail core. Options are now being explored to relocate the library into the centre, potentially as part of the redevelopment plans by the owners of The Forum;
- The construction of the new Boulevard along Atkinson Street is well underway. This provides a significantly improved pedestrian link between the Metro station and the town centre using high quality materials and softened landscaping through use of trees and large pedestrianised area;
- An officer group has been established to identify opportunities for residential development on upper floors of retail units to create activity and natural surveillance over the town centre environment in the evening;
- The sale of the former Alexandra Street refuge and Police Station for new residential development is progressing;
- The Council has been successful in its efforts to gain Enterprise Zone status for the former Swan Hunter site, which came into effect from April 2012, and is currently undertaking a procurement exercise to appoint a developer partner for this key site. OGN (Offshore group Newcastle) have announced plans and submitted a planning application for a major offshore wind turbine 'jacket' production plant on the Hadrian Yard site. It is anticipated that the forecast creation of around 1,000 jobs on the former Swan Hunter site and a further 1,000 jobs on the Hadrian Yard site will have a significant positive impact upon the town centre footfall figures.

### **1.5.3 North Shields**

Retail voids have risen steadily in recent months with High Street names such as Dorothy Perkins, M & Co. and Co-op Travel all having closed recently. The relocation of the Central Library and the closure of Unicorn House have moved significant numbers of jobs

and footfall to the south of the town which is also causing some local issues with regard to car parking. After discussion with Council officers the Chamber of Trade have made a number of proposals to ameliorate these problems. Plans by the owners of the Beacon Centre to reinvigorate the indoor shopping centre have been shelved for the time being due to the economic downturn. Plans to refurbish the Central Library and provide accommodation for Customer Services (creating a North Shields Customer First Centre) were due to commence in 2012/13 but the budget to undertake the works was deferred by a year by Council on 1 March 2012. This has removed a major generator of footfall through the Beacon Centre for an additional 12 months and will therefore undermine the continued efforts of the owners of the shopping centre to bring forward their reinvigoration scheme.

However, following on from the Cabinet meeting on 16 April 2012, officers have undertaken a review to identify financing arrangements that would allow the scheme to proceed. Cabinet can approve reprogramming where borrowing does not exceed £1.000m.

The 2012/13 budget was prepared on a prudent basis, ensuring that the Council remained within the criteria set out in the Reserves and Balances Policy. At the time of the budget preparations, the forecast outturn report for 2011/12 included financial pressures that would have required the use of the Strategic Reserve in 2011/12. In order to ensure the Strategic Reserve was maintained at the £5.000m level, the 2012/13 budget included a contribution to the Strategic Reserve of £1.436m.

The 2011/12 Financial outturn report presented to this Cabinet meeting confirms that the financial position has improved, with a small underspend being realised at the year end. This means that the £1.436m contribution from the Strategic Reserve is no longer required in 2011/12 to maintain the Reserve at the required level. It is proposed that £1.400m from the Strategic Reserve is applied to finance the scheme through the Reserves and Balances Policy process during 2012/13.

In addition, it is proposed to allocate £0.750m of New Homes Bonus to finance the scheme. This is an appropriate allocation of a non-ringfenced grant that is supporting investment in improved community facilities which are adjacent to housing development in Northumberland Square, and is expected to encourage further development and regeneration in the surrounding areas.

The remaining financing element would require Cabinet to approve additional borrowing of £0.950m to finance the overall scheme cost of £3.100m. This would allow Cabinet, under their delegated authority, to advance the scheme from its current approved implementation date of 2013/14 to the current financial year.

Current estimations suggest that should Cabinet approve the recommendations of this report at this meeting, due to the advanced level of planning already undertaken for the scheme, the new library would be completed in spring 2013. As well as providing a new and improved facility, it would alleviate some of the financial implications associated with remaining in temporary accommodation, as detailed in the Cabinet report dated 16 April 2012.

In addition to this proposal, the following works are underway in North Shields.

- Works continue on the construction of the new Metro station with a projected opening date of early September 2012. Discussions are underway with the

taxi/private hire operators in relation to the future use of the old goods yard as a facility for the trade;

- A 'Friends of Northumberland Square' group has been formed and has brought forward proposals for some improvements to the Square including fresh interpretation boards;
- Home Housing are in the process of converting a large section of the eastern side of Northumberland Square to new affordable residential accommodation;
- A scheme for refurbishment and conversion of the former local authority offices on the north side of Northumberland Square to residential use, and new build residential on the car park to the rear, is being prepared by a private housing developer;
- New seating and bins have recently been installed on Bedford Street and new street lights will be installed later this year;
- Potential linkages with the Fish Quay continue to be developed to maximise the benefits to the town centre;
- A revised planning application by Places for People has been submitted for Smiths Dock.

#### **1.5.4 Whitley Bay**

The retail core of Whitley Bay remains fairly healthy, although Whitley Road to the south of Victoria Terrace remains an area where void units are a greater problem.

- The former Co-op store, which has been a long term void, is now being brought back into use with the first tenant, the Splat centre ( a children's indoor play area) opening in May and plans for the UK's first World Snooker Accredited Centre on the first floor of the unit have been lodged;
- The former Select store, which has been the subject of the high profile 'Delicatessen' Shop Jacket treatment, has been granted planning permission for change of use to become a restaurant;
- Work on the new Joint Service Centre is progressing well and is on target for completion in the spring of 2013;
- £1m has been awarded from the Big Local Fund for the area to the south of the main town centre;
- A preferred developer has been appointed for Spanish City Island and they have now submitted an outline planning application for their proposals;
- New car parking has been provided along Marden Road South.

#### **1.5.6 Forest Hall**

£100k was allocated in the 2011/12 Capital Plan for improvements to Forest Hall shopping centre. Following a number of local consultation events during 2011 and through information published on the Council's website, a list of projects was agreed with the local community. These projects have already been completed or are underway including:

- A new zebra crossing point near the pedestrian bridge over the east coast main line has been installed along with clarification of waiting times;
- A refresh of signage has been included with other highway improvement works that are underway (shopping centre entrance signs still to be erected);
- Nine high quality seats and seven bins have been installed. Nine new planters are to follow shortly;

- The existing public toilets have been remodelled to provide one modern unisex accessible public toilet (with baby change facilities);
- A shop front improvement grant scheme targeted at new shop frontages, signage and shuttering has had four applications approved;
- Printed vinyl window treatment has been applied to the entrance of Irving House;
- Improved signage to Springfield Park has been provided and a community notice board has been installed to provide information about the facilities available.

### **1.5.7 Whitley Lodge**

£25k was allocated for Whitley Lodge shopping centre in the 2011/12 budget. Following discussions with business representatives from the shops, this funding has been used to undertake a range of immediate works as detailed below:

- the car parking area has been resurfaced and white lined;
- a salt/grit box has been provided so that footways can be easily gritted during periods of extreme winter weather;
- directional signage from the adjacent highway network has been installed to encourage more users;
- an electricity supply has been provided to help facilitate events and a Christmas tree and decorations provided for the shopping centre;
- 2 new seats are to be installed.

Plans are also being prepared for other more substantial improvement works, including replacing the walls at the back of the parking bays, installing additional stairs and ramps and further environmental improvements should additional funding be made available.

### **1.5.8 North West**

Work is currently in progress in relation to the analysis of local centres in Wideopen, Seaton Burn, Dudley and Camperdown. This will be subject of a subsequent report to Cabinet later this year.

### **1.5.9 Area Action Plans (AAPs)**

In North Tyneside there are three separate AAPs. The AAPs provide policies and proposals within particular areas of North Tyneside identified as a priority, to guide and enable appropriate development, regeneration and investment, as well as conservation. The AAPs provide an approach that is targeted at the particular issues affecting each area.

The AAP Preferred Options were subject to a consultation exercise which concluded in March 2012. A report describing the outcome of this process will be published soon and eventually considered by the Council. The Draft AAPs will be prepared in light of the comments and representations made, and taking account of other changing circumstances such as new Government policy contained within the National Planning Policy Framework. The AAPs will be consulted upon and approved in accordance with the Council's Budget and Policy Framework Rules. Once the final proposals in respect of the AAPs have been approved by full Council, the AAPs will be submitted to the Secretary of State for approval. The AAPs and any formal objections will be reviewed through an Examination in Public by an independent Inspector.

### **1.5.10 Future initiatives**

The Council has recently made a submission to the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) for the recently announced 'Portas Pilots' to invest in our town centres. A decision on this bid is expected by the end of May/early June and will be reported verbally to Cabinet if received before this meeting.

The Council has already received £100K from CLG as part of the High Street Innovation Fund and potential options for the use of this funding are being considered.

### **1.6 Decision options:**

#### Option 1

Approve the recommendations set out in section 1.2 of this report.

#### Option 2

Not approve the recommendations set out in section 1.2 of this report.

#### Option 3

Approve some, but not all, of the recommendations set out in section 1.2 of this report.

### **1.7 Reasons for recommended option:**

Option 1 is the recommended option as this provides a clear commitment from the Council of the priority given our retail centres and a framework for further investment. This will allow officers to continue to deliver improvements to our retail centres within a robust planning framework.

### **1.8 Appendices:**

None.

### **1.9 Contact officers:**

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Kate Lovelock, Regeneration Project Manager. Tel: (0191) 643 6426  
Graham Sword, Principal Planning Officer . Tel: (0191) 643 6340  
Alison Campbell, Finance Business Manager. Tel: (0191) 643 7038  
Jon Ritchie, Head of Finance. Tel (0191) 643 5800  
Paul Gowans, Head of Cultural and Customer Services. Tel (0191) 643 7401

### **1.10 Background information:**

The following background papers and research reports have been used in the compilation of this report and are available at the offices of the author:

- Report to Cabinet 12 July 2010: River Tyne North Bank Regeneration;
- Report to Cabinet 11 October 2010: Retail Centres Regeneration Strategy;

- Report to Cabinet 16 January 2012: Area Action Plan Preferred Options;
- Report to Cabinet 16 April 2012: North Shields Customer First Centre;
- Report to Cabinet 28 March 2012: Council Strategic Plan and 2012/13 Budget Implementation Plan;
- Report to Council 25 October 2011: North Shields Customer First Centre;
- Report to Council 24 November 2011: North Shields Customer First Centre;
- The Council's Budget 2012/13 and Council Strategic Plan 2012/15;
- Report to Cabinet 14 November 2011 - Options Appraisal for an Alternative Delivery Model for Cultural and Customer Services;
- Report to Cabinet 8 February 2010: North Tyneside Local Development Scheme;
- Report to Cabinet 13 November 2007: North Tyneside Customer Service Centres Delivery Plan;
- Briefing Note to all Members – Local Authority Governance and Decision Making – 26 March 2012; and
- Addendum Note dated 16 April 2012 to the Briefing Note to all Members - Local Authority Governance and Decision Making – 26 March 2012.

## **PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING**

### **2.1 Finance and other resources**

Any offers of grant funding to assist in the regeneration of our retail centres and to help ensure their future viability, will be reported to Cabinet for approval before the grant is accepted if they require match funding that cannot be found from existing Council resources.

With regard to the North Shields Customer First Centre recommendation, the scheme would be financed as follows (as further described at paragraph 1.5.3 of the report):

- |                            |          |
|----------------------------|----------|
| • Use of Strategic Reserve | £1.400m  |
| • Use of New Homes Bonus   | £0.750m  |
| • Prudential Borrowing     | £0.950m. |

**The New Homes Bonus is an unringfenced grant, meaning there are no specific terms and conditions associated with its use.**

Previous reports have confirmed that the ongoing revenue costs associated with the operation of the building can be contained within existing resources, therefore the financial implications here relate solely to the financing of the capital expenditure.

For 2012/13, there would be interest costs relating to the prudential borrowing. Assuming that the payment is made, on average, in the last quarter of the year, interest costs are estimated to be in the region of £0.012m. This amount can be covered within existing revenue budgets within Cultural Services and within Corporate Accounting (interest payments).

From 2013/14 onwards, the full revenue cost of the prudential borrowing would be applicable, being interest costs and minimum revenue provision. As the North Shields Customer First scheme is included in the 2013/14 Capital Plan, the longer term revenue costs of the scheme, at a higher level of borrowing, are already taken into account in the

Council's Financial Plan. For ease of reference, the full revenue cost associated with this revised level of borrowing is estimated to be £0.085m. Subject to the approval of this financing proposal, the consequential impact for future years will be updated as part of the 2013/14 financial planning process.

## **2.2 Legal**

### North Shields Customer First Centre

At its meeting on 16 April 2012 Cabinet authorised the Head of Cultural and Customer Services (in consultation with others) to explore alternative funding options for the North Shields Customer First Centre project. The report noted that where authority was required for the level of borrowing originally considered necessary for the scheme (per the report to Council on 24 November 2011, being proposed prudential borrowing of £2.7 million) then full Council approval for such borrowing was necessary. The revised level of prudential borrowing proposed for the scheme, as outlined in this report, falls within the authority of Cabinet pursuant to the Council's Financial Regulations.

In relation to decision making to progress the scheme generally, it is relevant that the Council's budget is essentially a financial envelope which is not in itself prescriptive on a line by line basis, and is governed by the requirements of the law in relation to the respective powers of the Council and Cabinet. Accordingly decision making in relation to progressing the scheme itself is a matter for Cabinet. However Cabinet are bound to take Council's views (as expressed in the agreed Budget 2012/13 and Council Strategic Plan 2012/15) in relation to the matter into account as a relevant consideration in its decision making.

### Procurement

North Tyneside Council has an EU procurement process compliant agreement with Kier North Tyneside to carry out all capital works on behalf of the Council. This is however subject to any constraints which external funders may require the Council to comply with. With reference to recommendation 1.2 (2) (in relation to potential future offers of external funding to support other retail centre initiatives), should any future external funders require it, the Council would carry out an procurement process to secure a contractor to carry out the works in compliance with EU procurement regulations and Contract Standing Orders.

### Area Action Plans

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and accompanying regulations require the Council to keep under review matters affecting planning and development, and make any necessary changes to Local Development Documents. The emerging Local Development Framework, including the Area Action Plans currently being prepared, set out future planning policies for development and use of land in the older retail centres.

## **2.3 Consultation/community engagement**

There are/have been four stages of community engagement as part of the North Bank regeneration strategy, relevant to Wallsend town centre, as detailed below:

Stage 1: Advanced networking and dialogue December 2008 - February 2009

Stage 2: Issues and Vision session – February 2009

Stage 3: Option & Key Choices – March 2009

Stage 4: Exhibition of the Draft Strategic Development Framework Plan-September 2009.

Meetings have been held with key businesses currently located along the riverfront within the North Bank area to ascertain their business aspirations for the future and their views on the emerging strategy for the River Tyne North Bank.

The development of the Retail Centres Strategy has involved extensive engagement with the community and business stakeholders in the borough. Consultation on the Strategy for Whitley Bay was effectively coordinated with consultation on the Coastal Area Action Plan in November 2009 and January 2010. In total the consultation for the Coastal AAP Issues and Options report generated over 740 written responses.

The consultancy team held a number of meetings with key stakeholders including the Town Centres Manager, North Shields and Whitley Bay Chambers of Trade, Beacon Centre Manager and Nexus during May and June 2009. The purpose of the meetings was to give these individuals an opportunity to outline to the consultant team the issues that they felt were important and needed to be considered as part of the development of the strategy.

The consultancy team also attended the Business Networking Event for local business and traders from across the Borough held on 20 May 2009 at Quadrant. A number of meetings were also held with Council Officers and members of the Retail Centres Project Board to review issues and past consultation work, and this culminated in a Baseline Workshop event held on 11 June 2009.

The consultancy team presented to the Retail Centres Task Group in October 2009 to give an overview of the Regeneration Strategy for both centres and how the strategies would inform detailed proposals for the regeneration of both centres. Members of the group were supportive of the outline proposals for both centres.

Public consultation events were held in North Shields town centre on Bedford Street on Thursday 10th and Friday 11th December 2009 and in Whitley Bay town centre in the Park View Shopping Centre on Friday 15th and Saturday 16th January 2010.

A number of member briefings and consultations have also been held. In relation to the proposals in respect of North Shields Customer First Centre, member briefings took place on 1st, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2011 (as described in further detail below).

Consultation on the preferred options for the Wallsend, North Shields and Coastal Area Action Plans was completed in March 2012. 423 responses were received the majority of which supported the aims and proposals contained within each AAP.

Regular consultation has taken place at North Shields Area Forum events regarding the plans for a new North Shields Customer First Centre. Consultation has also taken place as part of the preparation of the town centres regeneration strategy, which has seen significant support from the community. Further ongoing engagement with local ward Councillors and the wider community will be taken forward as part of the detailed operational plans for the new Customer First Centre. This will give all members of the community ownership of how the building will be taken forward and operated in the future.

Following the decision at the Council meeting held on 25 October 2011 to defer consideration of the Customer First Centre report to enable further consultation to take place, three organised drop in sessions for councillors were arranged. These were held on 1st, 2nd and 3rd of November 2011 and these dates were selected in order to maximise opportunities for attendance by Members to complement existing events in the Council calendar. Layout plans, furniture designs and initial artistic impressions were displayed and Council Officers from Regeneration, Highways and Cultural and Customer Services were in attendance to explain the project proposals and the financial business case. Three Council Members attended the events and noted that the proposals would provide an increase in service provision, enhanced building efficiency and capacity for community events and interaction.

Consultation with the Labour Group was held on Wednesday 16 November 2011 and further consultation with the Liberal Democrat Group was held on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> November 2011.

## **2.4 Human rights**

There are no human rights implications directly arising from this report.

## **2.5 Equalities and diversity**

All of the proposals which are considered and taken forward to delivery on site are designed to be fully accessible and inclusive, catering for all users as far as possible. Existing Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) will be taken into account and appropriate new EIA's undertaken where relevant in taking forward regeneration initiatives.

## **2.6 Risk management**

There are no risk management implications directly arising from this report. Risk assessments are undertaken where appropriate.

## **2.7 Crime and disorder**

There are no crime and disorder implications directly arising from this report. However, improving our town centres and increasing footfall both during the day and evening/night will have a positive effect upon levels of crime and disorder by increasing natural surveillance. All projects undertaken include steps to design out and reduce crime and disorder where relevant.

## **2.8 Environment and sustainability**

There are no direct environment and sustainability implications directly arising from this report. However, significant public and private sector investment has been made in the borough's older town centres and they are already a focus for public transport provision. Supporting these town centres therefore builds upon this investment and ensures they are sustainable into the future for all users.

### PART 3 - SIGN OFF

- Chief Executive  X
- Mayor/Cabinet Member(s)  X
- Chief Finance Officer  X
- Monitoring Officer  X
- Strategic Manager for Policy and Partnerships  X