

North Tyneside Council

Report to Cabinet

11 August 2014

ITEM 6(g)

Northumberland Square
Townscape Heritage
Initiative – Stage 1 bid

Portfolio(s): Elected Mayor

Cabinet Member(s): Mrs N Redfearn

Report from Service Area: Business and Economic Development

Responsible Officer: Paul Buie, Head of Business and Economic Development Tel: (0191) 643 6091

Wards affected: Tynemouth, Riverside, Preston

PART 1

1.1 Purpose:

The purpose of the report is to seek approval from Cabinet to authorise the submission of a Stage 1 bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for the Northumberland Square Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI).

1.2 Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that Cabinet:

1. approve the submission of the Stage 1 THI bid,
2. If Stage 1 is approved, authorise the Head of Business and Economic Development to prepare for a Stage 2 bid; and
3. note that a further report would be brought back to Cabinet prior to a Stage 2 bid being submitted setting out the full legal and financial implications.

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 7th July 2014.

1.4 Council Plan and Policy Framework

1.4.1 This report relates to the following themes/programmes/projects in the 2014-18 Council Plan (Our North Tyneside Plan).

1.4.2 The project will include key work with residents, communities and businesses to regenerate the borough.

1.4.3 The project will meet the specific aims of the Our North Tyneside Plan as follows:

1.4.3.1 Our People

- Be listened to by services that respond better and faster to their needs we have worked collaboratively with businesses in Northumberland Square and the community of Christ Church.

1.4.3.2 Our Places

- Be places that people like living in and will attract others to either visit or live
some properties of Northumberland Square have already been converted to residential accommodation
- Have more quality affordable homes
there is further scope for affordable housing through improvements to vacant buildings and gap sites where restoration can encourage inward investment
- Work with residents, communities and businesses to regenerate the borough
we have previously prepared a character appraisal for the Square which has been subject to extensive local consultation and officers have met the business community within the Square who have are committed to supporting the bid.

1.4.3.3 Our Economy

- Have local people that have the skills which businesses need
there is a strong cluster of local independent businesses, the funding would provide an opportunity to increase the number of this type of business and/or for existing businesses to expand.

1.4.3.4 Our Partners

- Our partners will include: local businesses; schools and colleges; voluntary and community sector inc Friends of Northumberland Square; English Heritage and Heritage Lottery Fund; and Tyne & Wear Joint Conservation Team; Capita.

1.5 **Current Position**

- 1.5.1 Northumberland Square conservation area was designated in 1975. A new Character Appraisal was adopted following approval by North Tyneside Council Cabinet in January 2014.
- 1.5.2 The conservation area is based on the best surviving elements of the Georgian "new town" that became North Shields town centre after its early riverside beginnings.
- 1.5.3 Northumberland Square's basic planned form is a classic example of a simple but highly effective urban space, rare in the region and the closest thing on Tyneside to the iconic Georgian squares of Edinburgh, Dublin, London and Bath.
- 1.5.4 The project boundary covers the entire Northumberland Square conservation area as well as Christ Church to the north, a grade II listed building, which is located within the Camp Terrace conservation area. The boundary wall of the church as well as a number of properties within the project area are under the ownership of the Authority.
- 1.5.5 An opportunity has arisen to bid for a Heritage Lottery Fund Townscape Heritage Initiative grant to provide a 'Common Fund' that can be used to support projects that enhance the character and appearance of Northumberland Square and part of Camp Terrace conservation areas. North Tyneside Council has had pre-application approval for over 18 months and the decision was taken to progress with the preparation of a Stage 1 bid earlier this year following consultation with the Elected Mayor.

- 1.5.6 The Heritage Lottery Fund have already expressed in principle support to take an application forward to a Stage 1 bid based on site visits to the area.
- 1.5.7 The project will enhance the character and appearance of the Northumberland Square and Camp Terrace conservation areas, restoring their fine historic features, creating a place where people are proud and therefore want to live, work and visit. This will include the restoration of priority buildings architectural features within the project boundary, such as cast iron rainwater goods, natural roof slates, and traditional railings and windows, as well as the wider improvements to the public realm with particular reference to Christ Church and Northumberland Square itself. Christ Church will include replacement traditional railings around the boundary wall of the site and Northumberland Square will see the reconfiguration of the Square's footpaths and green spaces back to its traditional design with associated improvement works. This project would also complement the recently completed Townscape Heritage Initiative Scheme on North Shields Fish Quay and further investment currently underway in Northumberland Park creating a critical mass of heritage investment projects benefitting the Borough.
- 1.5.8 It is considered that the project will also create a catalyst for further investment and work in conjunction with the Authority's Local Plan: Consultation Draft (November 2013), which specifically references the importance of Northumberland Squares public realm and the preserving and enhancement of historic assets. North Shields town centre is beginning to see the benefits of the improving economy, with business accommodation in Saville Exchange and the Business Centre at the highest levels for some time. The refurbishment of the Central Library as a Customer First Centre has provided a significant positive impact on footfall and it is hoped that the recent acquisition of the Beacon Centre by New River Retail will result in similar refurbishment and enhancement works as are taking place in Wallsend Town Centre. However, vacancy rates in the North Shields town centre remain high and the benefits of a £1m Common Fund to bring forward projects to enhance Northumberland Square and Camp Terrace conservation areas will provide a welcome boost to local businesses.
- 1.5.9 The Authority is not committed to continue the bid if successful at Stage 1.

1.6 Funding Application Outcome

- 1.6.1 The bid will be subject to a project plan and exit strategy outlining preparation, implementation and ongoing monitoring. This will be drawn up as part of the Heritage Lottery submission due for submission at the end of August 2014. The expected project duration is over 5 years once approval is received from Heritage Lottery Fund. The total project Common Fund will be £1 million, which will include public realm improvements, conservation grants and drawing up potential gap site scheme. The Council would be required to provide 10% of the Common Fund and the Heritage Lottery Fund would provide the remaining 90%. The Council's contribution would therefore be £100,000 spread over a 5 year period.
- 1.6.2 North Tyneside Council proposes to work with Friends of Northumberland Square to promote the area, encourage visitors and inform people of the unique heritage of the area. Council properties that could directly benefit from the Common Fund include the Stag Line building, the former offices in Northumberland Square, the Business Centre, Saville Exchange and 105 Howard Street. It is likely that the Authority's contribution to the Common Fund will therefore be recovered.

- 1.6.3 £15,000 of funding from the feasibility fund has already been approved allowing further consultation with local businesses and residents, the appointment of an accredited architect and for professional fees for North Tyneside Council's technical partners to progress with investigating the improvement and enhancement works to property and the public realm within the projects boundary in order to inform the Stage One bid to Heritage Lottery Fund.
- 1.6.4 North Tyneside Council's technical partners and project architect have already started producing the plans and documents required for the Stage 1 bid, including technical drawings and detailed descriptions of what works will improve buildings and the public realm within the project boundary. The finalised version is expected by the start of August 2014 and will include associated estimated costs for each item.
- 1.6.5 If the Stage 1 bid is successful a further year is given to submit the Stage 2 bid. The Townscape Heritage Initiative programme only runs one deadline per year.

1.7 Project Outcomes - Heritage will be better managed

- 1.7.1 The project will preserve and enhance the character and appearance of both Northumberland Square and Camp Terrace conservation areas as well as numerous listed buildings within these areas. These improvements to both public realm and individual and groups of buildings will maintain the heritage of this unique and important part of the borough for years to come and will encourage inward investment into North Shields improving the area for residents, businesses and visitors to North Tyneside.

1.8 Financial Breakdown

- 1.8.1 A breakdown of the proposed financing of the capital project can be summarised as follows:-

Heritage Lottery Fund grant	£900,000
North Tyneside Council capital	£100,000
Total	£1,000,000

1.9 Timescales

- 1.9.1 Should Cabinet give approval to proceed with this stage 1 bid submission it is expected that plans, surveys and costs will be received from the appointed architect and Kier by the beginning of August 2014 to allow time for the completion of the stage 1 submission to the Heritage Lottery Fund by the end of August 2014.
- 1.9.2 The project, if successful, will be completed over 5 years from 2016.
- 1.9.3 The bid and project will be subject to a project plan and exit strategy outlining preparation, implementation and ongoing monitoring. This will be drawn up as part of the Stage 2 Heritage Lottery submission.

1.10 Decision options:

The following decision options are available for consideration by Cabinet:

Option 1 – Cabinet may approve the recommendations as set out in paragraph 1.2

This will ensure that the Authority submits the relevant documents to the Heritage Lottery Fund by the deadline of the end of August 2014 and therefore potentially move on to Stage 2 if successful. A successful bid will provide significant benefits for businesses and residents through building improvements and restoration attract further inward investment through environmental improvements and preserve and secure historic assets, some of which are the responsibility of the Authority, for many years to come.

Option 2 – Cabinet may not approve all of the recommendations as set out in paragraph 1.2

This will confirm that the submission of the stage 1 THI bid is rejected and the Authority does not wish to take the opportunity to invest in the restoration and enhancement of the Northumberland Square and Camp Terrace conservation areas. This could result in the further severe deterioration of a number of heritage buildings within the area, including many listed buildings, some of which the Authority is responsible for in terms of maintenance and repair. This may result in a reduction of inward investment into North Shields town centre. Heritage assets may also be lost forever if left to deteriorate.

If the submission of the Stage 1 THI bid is rejected by the Authority this will also result in a potential loss of funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund up to the amount of £900,000. An opportunity will be missed to invest in the restoration and enhancement of the Northumberland Square and Camp Terrace conservation areas, including Northumberland Square itself and Christ Church. The Authority will need to fund essential works to buildings, such as the former Council offices to the North of the Square (No.'s 13-16 Northumberland Square) from existing budgets.

1.11 Reasons for recommended option:

Option 1 is recommended for the following reasons:

Authorising the submission of the Stage 1 THI bid will allow the Authority to move forward to the stage 2 process and if successful. The project will provide the considerable resources needed to deliver significant restoration improvements to enhance and preserve Northumberland Square and Camp Terrace conservation areas. It will help preserve the unique Georgian square and surrounding heritage buildings. It will ensure the Authority meets its obligations as owners of listed buildings and public spaces within the borough. It will provide a significant economic boost to the town centre and enable businesses and the Authority to invest in its future.

1.12 Appendices:

Appendix: Northumberland Square Townscape Heritage Initiative project boundary including boundaries of Northumberland Square, Camp Terrace and North Shields Fish Quay conservation areas.

1.13 Contact officers:

Daniel Wise - Regeneration Officer, Business and Economic Development Team,
tel. (0191) 643 6427
Sarah Owen - Assistant Strategic Funding and Policy Advisor,
Business and Economic Development, tel: (0191) 643 6414
Alison Campbell - Finance Business Manager, tel: (0191) 643 7038
Sarah Heslop – Manager, Legal Services, tel: (0191) 643 5456

1.14 Background information:

The following background papers/information have been used in the compilation of this report and are available at the office of the author:

1. Heritage Lottery Fund Townscape Heritage (Grants from £100,000 to £2 million) Application Guidance (December 2013)

PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING

2.1 Finance and other resources

The capital element of this project is included in the reserve list of the Council's 2014—2018 Investment Plan as approved by Council on 20th February 2014.

	Description	Total Value (cash or in kind)	Funded by	
			Council	Heritage Lottery Fund
Capital works	All capital and activity works for the project	£1,000,000	£100,000	£900,000
Total Costs		£1,000,000	£100,000	£900,000

The Stage 1 bid has no financial implications and if successful the Authority is not committed to submitting a Stage 2 bid. The full financial implications including how the Authority can fund the £100k match funding will be accessed during the more detailed Stage 2 process and reported to Cabinet before proceeding. Feasibility costs will be funded from the revenue feasibility budget held centrally.

2.2 Legal

If any offer of a grant is made, the terms of such offer will require evaluation prior to acceptance. The Authority will need to ensure that any obligations it accepts are properly monitored and compliance is managed. Where relevant the Authority must ensure compliance with any requirements as to the engagement of contractors and the benchmarking of pricing, and that any relevant obligations are appropriately passed down to contractors.

2.3 Consultation/community engagement

Internal Consultation

Consultations have been undertaken with the Elected Mayor and Cabinet Member for Economic Development, as well as the Chief Executive. The project has been considered at regular internal joint officer and member group meetings such as the Investment Programme Board. This project is included in the reserve list of the Authority's 2014—2018 Investment Plan as approved by Council on 20th February 2014. There has been a cross service officer working group working on this project from Regeneration, Planning and Business and Enterprise as the Heritage Lottery Fund bid progressed.

External Consultation/Engagement

Two letter drops were carried out in May 2014 to all residents and businesses within the Northumberland Square Townscape Heritage (THI) boundary regarding the THI scheme and the proposed public consultation events which would allow for face to face discussions and the collection of information to guide the stage 1 bid.

Two public consultation events held at North Shields Customer First Centre on the 14th May AM and the 15th May PM inviting residents, businesses and visitors to learn more about the project and give their views through questionnaires and comments cards. A significant amount of feedback was received from these events which have assisted in the development of the stage 1 bid.

Mouth of the Tyne Festival stall open day on Saturday 12th July from 10am to 2pm within Tynemouth Station.

This presented a number of Regeneration and the Heritage Lottery Fund projects the Authority is currently involved with, including the Northumberland Square THI project.

Working with Friends of Northumberland Square to promote the area, encourage visitors and inform people of the unique heritage of the area.

The results from the consultation events all ready carried out have all been collated and have been used to prioritise buildings, public realm and other restoration work for the Stage 1 bid.

2.4 Human rights

There are no human rights implications arising from this report.

2.5 Equalities and diversity

There are no direct equality and diversity implications arising from this report. The Authority has an obligation to undertake, and implement the findings, as far as possible within the constraints of the listed building status, an Equality Impact Assessment as part of the project delivery plan. This will allow the Authority to evidence that it has considered the potential impact on those with characteristics protected under the Equality Act 2010.

2.6 Risk management

No risk assessment has been prepared at this stage as it is not a requirement of the Stage 1 submission to the Heritage Lottery Fund. Risks associated with carrying out work within both Northumberland Square and Camp Terrace conservation areas and on the heritage and listed buildings within them will be mitigated against during the development phase in preparing for the Stage 2 application to Heritage Lottery Fund if the project is successful at stage 1. Several surveys are underway by the appointed heritage architect, which will inform the final chosen capital works required for the project and in turn Kier will be providing costs of the works, including a risk pot. This is expected to be provided in full at the beginning of August 2014.

2.7 Crime and disorder

There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

2.8 Environment and sustainability

There are no environment and sustainability implications arising from this report. However, the preservation and enhancement of Northumberland Square and Camp Terrace conservation areas and the numerous heritage and listed buildings included within them is a significantly important contribution to maintaining the special character of this part of the borough. It also contributes towards the sustainability of North Shields town centre and the businesses, residents and visitors to the area, benefitting the wider borough. The restoration and improvement works will ensure unique public realm areas and buildings targeted by the project have a sustainable long term future.

PART 3 - SIGN OFF

- Deputy Chief Executive X
- Head of Service X
- Mayor/Cabinet Member(s) X
- Chief Finance Officer X
- Monitoring Officer X
- Strategic Manager–
Strategic Services X