

(Note: These minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting of the Sub-Committee scheduled to be held on 16 November 2016.)

Economic Prosperity Sub-Committee

25 October 2016

Present: Councillor Janet Hunter (Chair)
Councillors J Cassidy, S L Cox, K Lee, P Earley,
P McIntyre, D McMeekan, A McMullen, J Walker
and F Weetman.

EP18/10/16 Apologies

There were no apologies for absence.

EP19/10/16 Substitute Members

There were no substitute members.

EP20/10/16 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

There were no Declarations of Interest or Dispensations reported.

EP21/10/16 Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the previous meeting held on the 6 September 2016 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

EP22/10/16 Coastal Regeneration

The sub-committee met with the Culture and Leisure Sub-Committee to receive an update on the progress made on the coastal regeneration, particularly in relation to the works included in the Whitley Bay Master Plan.

Graham Sword and Julie Bews from the Regeneration Team attended the meeting to give a presentation and they were accompanied by Paul Youlden, Sport and Leisure, and Pete Warne, Tourism and Events.

Coastal regeneration remained one of the key priorities for the Council with the aim of providing a range of improvements and new facilities along the coast maximising the potential of coastal assets for residents, businesses and visitors. Interest by the private and voluntary sectors in providing new and improved visitor facilities at the coast included private sector investment worth £1 million at The View, Longsands, Tynemouth, £0.2m Heritage Lottery Grant Funding towards restoration of the Tynemouth Life Brigade building and £0.75 million Coastal Communities Funding towards the restoration of the Old Low Light, North Shields. In Cullercoats an extensive range of initiatives had been completed including public realm improvements, traffic calming, young children's play area, new refreshment kiosk and improvements to the boat yard.

The main focus for improvements was now Whitley Bay seafront guided by the Master Plan approved by the Cabinet in March 2015. The Master Plan, which overlapped with the Whitley Bay Local Plan, would see £36 million of new investment in delivering both direct and indirect economic benefits for the local economy. The area covered by the Master Plan extended from the Southern Lower Promenade to St Mary's Lighthouse, with the main focus being around central and northern promenade. At the heart of the Master Plan was the comprehensive restoration of the Spanish City Dome which would see the building return, as far as possible, to its original 1910 layout with a preferred operator identified to run the complex on completion. The works had begun on site and it was anticipated that the Dome would be completed and open in Spring 2018. The construction of a hotel and restaurant adjacent to the Spanish City was progressing well and they were scheduled to be completed and open in Spring 2017.

In terms of economic impact, visitor figures to North Tyneside had remained consistent with around 500,000 overnight stays per year and 5 million day visitors. It was estimated that tourism was worth approximately £260m to the local economy and it supported over 3,700 jobs. It was anticipated that the new hotel and restaurant in Whitley Bay would create 70 new jobs and the Spanish City restoration, 100 jobs.

International visits to the North East continued to increase which was in part attributable to the increasing number of cruise ships visiting the Tyne. North Tyneside was well placed to benefit from international visitors with the close proximity to the airport and international ferry terminal in Royal Quays.

Following the presentation, members of both sub-committees asked a series of questions of officers. During questioning members examined:-

- a) the extent to which community safety had been taken into consideration as part of the regeneration plans;
- b) the pricing policy for the proposed land train service in Whitley Bay, which could be co-ordinated with the charging for other associated events and services;
- c) whether the regeneration of the seafront would have a positive impact on the Whitley Bay town centre economy. In this regard it was reported that the Council would work with community and business partners, such as the Park View Collective, Chamber of Trade and Big Local, and transport operators to improve the town centre offer and to connect the two areas;
- d) the sustainability of facilities supported by revenue grant funding, such as the Old Low Lights, who had appointed a Business Manager to generate additional income streams;
- e) how the Council promoted the Winter Festival through the distribution of 10,000 festival programmes, through social media, Our North Tyneside Magazine and the Council's website, and working with business organisations through the Council's Business Development Officers; and
- f) how the Council had worked in partnership with the Port of Tyne to promote destinations in North Tyneside to cruise ship passengers arriving at the passenger terminal in North Shields.

The Chair thanked officers for attending the meeting and welcomed to the ongoing development of the coastal regeneration plans and the potential economic benefits.