

WHITEHAVEN REGENERATION PROGRAMME

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Summary:

The Whitehaven Regeneration Programme has four strands. The master-planning phase is nearing completion on the Town Centre and Pow Beck strands and these are moving toward implementation. Delivery plans must be made, including achieving status in the town planning system. A Regeneration Team is proposed and the acquisition of strategic sites recommended to safeguard delivery of the Programme.

Recommendation:

1. That the reports produced by Broadway Maylan for Whitehaven Town Centre and White Young and Green for Pow Beck be noted and be approved as a basis for development as Action Area Plans within the Local Development Framework and as other guidance as appropriate and necessary to guide development in the Town.
2. That up to a maximum of £20,000 from the capital element of the Planning Delivery Grant, as identified in the report to Executive dated 14th June 2005, is used to fund the additional consultancy undertaken by consultants Broadway Maylan as part of the Whitehaven Development Framework.
3. That the principle of a Whitehaven Regeneration Delivery Team, supported by Copeland Borough Council, Cumbria County Council and West Lakes Renaissance (WLR), be supported.
4. Subject to agreement in principle on the delivery team that a further report is brought to the Executive with details.
5. That the Council acquire and hold key strategic sites which become available in order to safeguard the regeneration of the Town Centre and Pow Beck (details in Part 2 to this report).
6. That funding bids be submitted to West Lakes Renaissance to acquire the sites identified.
7. That the Council take on the client role in the procurement of construction contracts (details of a particular proposal are noted in the Part 2 to this report).

Impact on delivering the Corporate Plan:

The regeneration of Whitehaven is a key objective in achieving economic prosperity in the Town and in Copeland.

Impact on other statutory objectives (e.g. crime & disorder, LA21):

A better designed and functioning town will address a number of statutory objectives. Amongst these there are expected to be positive outcomes for community safety and the local environment through the investment to be brought into infrastructure and facilities.

Financial and human resource implications:

(Numbers relate to rec. numbers)

1. Developing Action Area Plans will require significant resource and result in a larger LDF programme than would otherwise have been considered. Considerable work has already been undertaken but a review of resourcing the LDF will be required

- and would have been necessary in any case.
3. Once the principle of a Delivery Team is established work will be required to establish the detail.
 5. Purchase costs to be funded by grant from WLR. Other costs identified in Appendix B
 6. Staff time.
 7. Although externally funded staff time will be required both in setting up the arrangement and safeguarding the Council's interests / providing a partner input and client responsibilities during the life of the project.

Project & Risk Management:

There is an element of risk, which will have to be quantified as work progresses. Normal Council procedures will otherwise be employed to reduce risk and to manage the projects.

Key Decision Status

- Financial: N/A
- Ward: N/A

Other Ward Implications: None

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Whitehaven Regeneration Programme has four strands of activity, supported by four working groups and an overall steering group:
 - Whitehaven Town Centre – mainly business development, infrastructure and environmental improvements
 - Pow Beck – business, leisure and housing development
 - Coastal Fringe – principally the Haig Pit area and linkages to the Harbour / Town Centre
 - South Whitehaven – social housing estates
- 1.2 Progress was reported on all four strands at a presentation on 21 July 2005 in Cleator Moor to which members were invited.
- 1.3 The Executive will be particularly aware of the extensive work carried out by consultants Broadway Maylan on the Town Centre through the numerous consultation sessions carried out and through press and publicity in the local media. White, Young and Green carried out the work on the Pow Beck and again members will be aware of the proposals through the consultation carried out during the exercise.
- 1.4 A suite of plans showing the final recommendations for the Town Centre and Pow Beck and work so far on the Coastal Fringe and South Whitehaven are available in the member's room. Although the work has been completed on Pow Beck two proposals exist because of the ongoing negotiation over the Miners Welfare facilities, which comprise a significant area within the site.
- 1.5 The consultancy work has largely been funded by WLR. WLR has also been the client for much of the work with the exception of the Town Centre for which the Council was client, drawing down funding from WLR.
- 1.6 The Coastal Fringe strand programme supported by English Partnerships has been through a process of detailed development, which included a public consultation exercise in November 2004. A detailed Economic Appraisal was subsequently undertaken in March 2005 (a copy of

is available to view in the members room) that concluded that Option 3 focusing on addressing the health and safety issues associated with the site as well as investment to improve the site for Tourism and Recreation was the most viable for English Partnerships Investment.

- 1.7 English Partnerships have identified an initial programme for investment totalling £4,088,500 that has initial key tasks of appointing a Project Manager in summer 2006 following which a detailed design team will be appointed who will develop proposals ultimately leading to implementation of a capital programme in Spring 2009.
- 1.8 Discussions regarding formation of a memorandum of agreement for the process of procurement and subsequent implementation of works are scheduled for November 2005.

2. ARGUMENT

- 2.1 A traditional master planning approach was adopted for the development of the Regeneration Programme in that work is intended to be carried out on in separate design and delivery phases with the former over a short, discrete period of time. This is opposed to an approach where the implementation is integrated within the design and feasibility work.
- 2.2 The proposals for the Town Centre and Pow Beck are not presented here for approval because although there was widespread approval for the ideas there are some areas in which they conflict with the existing planning policy. An example is the uses for sites around the harbour, which would not accord with the policy as being pursued in the Local Plan. The reason for this is that the work has been running in parallel to the final stages of the Local Plan, which has just completed its enquiry stage. It is intended that the work undertaken for the Programme will be taken forward as Action Area Plans within the emerging Local Development Framework that will supersede the Local Plan.
- 2.3 It is only once the plans have been through formal planning processes that they will have clear status in terms of providing a basis for making planning decisions through the development control system. As there will be a delay before the development of the Action Area Plans due to the process involved officers will be pursuing status for the plans through intermediate designations.
- 2.4 Notwithstanding the situation outlined above it is essential that the objectives expressed in the regeneration proposals are pursued as delay will threaten the achievement of the vision expressed for the town and its future prosperity and lead to further piecemeal development, lacking attractiveness for investors. There are three aspects to maintaining momentum on the initiative that require immediate attention. The first as has been mentioned is to ensure that the work done so far is progressed within the planning system. The second is to establish the resources required, critically including leadership. The third is to safeguard key sites within the proposal areas.
- 2.5 Broadway Maylan undertook additional work as part of their commission but outside of the scope of the original contract. For instance, they provided outline plans presenting an alternative to the current Tesco's proposal in order to open discussion on a development that would more closely meet the objectives of the regeneration plans for that area of the town. They also carried out additional consultation and design work. Negotiation is being carried out with Broadway Maylan to agree what additional work has been carried out and the fee for it. As the main commission was funded through WLR, on which there was a limit, additional fees will have to be funded by the Council. No budget exists for the Town Centre consultancy therefore the suggestion is that up to £20,000 be made available from the capital element of the Planning Delivery Grant (PDG) for 2005/06. £39,810 was unidentified in the capital element of PDG although it was noted that the MVM project could usefully draw down a proportion of the funding. To date no expenditure or commitment has been made on this element of the funding.

3. OPTIONS TO BE CONSIDERED

- 3.1 The planning policy staff are currently engaged in moving the Local Plan to adoption. Once the Local Plan is complete time can be given to addressing the development of the Whitehaven Regeneration Programme within the Local Development Framework and producing suitable intermediate guidance for developers. Currently the Broadway Maylan 'Sea Change' report contains recommendations that are contrary to current planning policy. Whilst mainly a matter of poor timing this situation must be resolved as soon as possible to give developers and the community clarity as to what the objectives for the town are. The resignation of one of the two planners in the policy team has produced capacity problems that will need to be addressed.
- 3.2 The Council does not have the capacity to deliver against the full range of regeneration challenges facing Copeland. This is recognised as an issue for the whole of West Cumbria. Consultation with stakeholders has indicated that this is a widely held view and agreement that even with the additional resources through restructuring the problem remains. Discussions with partners have identified the need to establish a dedicated team to deliver the Programme and an initial proposal from WLR is attached as Appendix 1. This proposal fits within the context of a proposal for a joint West Cumbria delivery team to take forward regeneration across Copeland and Allerdale, built around Housing Market Renewal and broader based regeneration activity. This latter proposal is still under discussion between stakeholders.
- 3.3 WLR and Council officers have identified key sites within the Town Centre and Pow Beck that need to be secured to safeguard development and infrastructure improvement sites. As sites come onto the market it is recommended that they be purchased, avoiding having to later use Compulsory Purchase Orders. The Council and WLR have identified such a property that is currently being marketed and it is proposed to purchase the site. Details are contained within Appendix B. WLR have indicated that they will fund the purchase of the site subject to a funding bid. It is proposed that the bid should include all costs associated with purchase and any works required immediately but that ongoing costs of keeping the site secured should fall to the Council.
- 3.4 Should any buildings purchased require demolition by the Council WLR have indicated that a further bid for funding could be made. A condition of the funding from WLR would be that property purchased would have to be kept for the sole purpose of achieving the objectives of the Whitehaven Regeneration Programme. Any subsequent sale would require the reimbursement of the funding provided.
- 3.5 A request has been made that the Council act as the client for the purpose of construction projects that arise in the Regeneration Programme where the scale of the activity is beyond the resources of the organisation concerned. A proposal has been made for a particular development scheme and this is outlined in Appendix B.
- 3.6 It has not been usual practice for the Council to take out contracts on behalf of a third party. However, with project management bought in and safeguards in place it is recommended that the Council undertake this role, each request being judged individually. By so doing the Council can facilitate the achievement of key regeneration objectives, using its resources to best effect in partnership with the community.

4 CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The Whitehaven Regeneration Programme is at a critical phase, moving from design proposals to implementation. It is essential for the regeneration of the town that commitment is made to driving the initiatives forward and resourcing delivery. The recommendations in this report begin to address the way forward but this will become clearer once the implementation report is produced in early 2006.

List of Appendices

[Appendix A – Proposed Delivery Structure - Draft](#)

[Appendix B – Part 2 – Acquisitions](#)

[Appendix C – Part 2 – Constructions projects](#)

List of Background Documents: Whitehaven Regeneration Programme Reports

List of Consultees: Executive, Corporate Team