

WHITEHAVEN REGENERATION – PUBLIC REALM PRIORITY PROJECTS

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Councillor Cath Geil/ Councillor George Clements
LEAD OFFICER: Mike Tichford/ Keith Parker
REPORT AUTHOR: Sherrie Lewthwaite/ Toni Magean

Summary and Recommendation:

The report provides details of proposed priority public realm works to be delivered as part of the Whitehaven Regeneration Programme.

Members are requested to:

- a) Accept the responsibility for maintenance of the improved public realm from within existing budgets.
- b) Delegate authority/decision making for implementation of the projects to the Corporate Directors, Terry Chilcott and Fergus McMorrow in consultation with the joint portfolio holders with Cllr Cath Giel and Cllr George Clements.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Whitehaven Regeneration Team, supported by Copeland Borough Council is leading on the delivery of the Whitehaven Implementation Programme Plan. The Public Realm projects were highlighted as one of the key high priority projects within Whitehaven Regeneration with the potential of strengthening previous private and private sector investment by attracting visitors, businesses and also raising confidence of the local residents.
- 1.2 The high priority public realm works will take place in the following areas: Civic Hall Frontage, Mount Pleasant and Whitehaven Town Centre
- 1.3 Whitehaven Civic Hall
The works will consist of a complete redesign of the frontage and side of Whitehaven Civic Hall and Library with the objective of simplifying the streetscape to remove clutter and create a permeable boundary between the pavement and the public space. The Whitehaven Civic Hall is situated at one of the main arrival points to the town centre. The project will make the Civic Hall frontage a much more attractive and better used location.

- 1.4 **Mount Pleasant**
The Mount Pleasant area is one of the key linkages between the Harbour and the Whitehaven Coast. The Harbour has received significant investment to create a high quality public realm. The Haig Area of the Whitehaven Coast Project is within English Partnerships Coalfields Programme and will be developed as a public open space. This project will develop this neglected area and create a high quality linkage to blend with the 2 areas of significant public investment.
- 1.5 **Whitehaven Town Centre Street Furniture/Visitor Signage**
The current streetscape of Whitehaven town centre is of a very mixed quality. There are many examples of poor quality or inconsistent design with the use of poor quality materials and/or inadequate maintenance both within and to the periphery of the town centre. Signage is also a vital part of a town's streetscape and can make a significant contribution to visitor and residents perceptions. The current range of signs in Whitehaven presents a cluttered image and confusion to visitors.
There are areas where high quality design principles have already been adopted or have been conserved from the past however. The aim of this project is to build upon work previously carried out to create and adopt a consistent set of high quality street furniture, which will complement and reinforce the architectural character of the town.
- 1.6 The priority public realm projects are valued at approximately one million pounds. It is anticipated that funding will be provided by West Lakes Renaissance, West Cumbria Development Fund, Coalfields Funding and Copeland Borough Council.
- 1.7 Copeland Borough Council will be the Client and the accountable body for these projects.

2. ARGUMENT

- 2.1 The Council currently carries out maintenance to the entire proposed public realm area. The new public realm will be designed to ensure, where possible, maintenance liabilities remain within existing budgets.
- 2.2 These areas are of significant importance in terms of the regeneration of Whitehaven. The new public realm will be of a consistent high quality design and will improve Whitehaven's distinctiveness whilst building on its unique historic core. It will improve the environment experienced by all town centre users and act as a catalyst for future investment.

3. OPTIONS TO BE CONSIDERED

- 3.1 Agree the scheme as outlined in this report. This will improve Whitehaven's public realm and distinctiveness and attract over one million pounds of direct investment in Whitehaven.
- 3.2 Do nothing, continue maintaining cluttered streets, leave areas neglected resulting in the loss of investor confidence.

4. CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The Council is best placed to ensure that the lasting legacy of the new public realm works by implementing the projects and then managing the areas as part of an overall programme of maintenance of open spaces in Whitehaven from within existing budgets.

5. FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING SOURCES OF FINANCE)

- 5.1 The Project Management function is to be carried out within the existing Whitehaven Delivery Team (Copeland Borough Council/ West Lakes Renaissance) with support from Copeland Borough Councils Leisure and Environmental Services.
- 5.2 The total project cost is estimated to be in the region of £1m. Funding will be sought from:
 - West Lakes Renaissance £600k
 - North West Community Coalfields Programme £120k
 - West Cumbria Development Fund £160k
- 5.3 Copeland Borough Council's contribution of £120k will be taken from the previously approved capital programme budgets for Whitehaven Regeneration £70k plus £50k from LABGI funding subject to agreement (see executive report on 27.11.07).
- 5.4 The initial establishment period for landscaping is to be tendered as part of the works contract to ensure that the works are carried out to a standard that as far as possible safeguarded the future success of the scheme.
- 5.5 The council as applicant for external funding is also entering into an agreement to act as the accountable body and support bankrolling of the scheme.

6. IMPACT ON CORPORATE PLAN

- 6.1 2.2.1 Regeneration: Action: Implementation of the Whitehaven Regeneration Programme. Regeneration of Whitehaven – environmental and infrastructure improvements, increased number of businesses, employment, crime prevention, visitor numbers and spend.
- 6.2 2.2.7 Regeneration: Action: maximise external funding, in the context of the achievement of corporate objectives, and within the resources of the Council and partners to deliver. Outcomes external funding secures.
- 6.3 3.3.2 Open Spaces: Parks and open spaces will build upon successes, working with the community, to improve the quality and access to our green spaces. Outcomes: in partnership with the community, to have developed and improved at least one green space in each major town to the green flag quality award criteria

List of Appendices

Appendix A – None

List of Background Documents:

SeaChange Study 2006
 Whitehaven Regeneration Implementation Plan
 Whitehaven Town Centre Task Group Minutes
 Whitehaven Regeneration Steering Group Minutes

List of Consultees: Corporate Team, Chris Lloyd, Clinton Boyce, Peter Meadows, Cllr Tim Knowles and Paul Crooks West Lakes Renaissance

CHECKLIST FOR DEALING WITH KEY ISSUES

Please confirm against the issue if the key issues below have been addressed. This can be by either a short narrative or quoting the paragraph number in the report in which it has been covered.

Impact on Crime and Disorder	None
Impact on Sustainability	None
Impact on Rural Proofing	None
Health and Safety Implications	None
Impact on Equality and Diversity Issues	None
Children and Young Persons Implications	None
Human Rights Act Implications	None
Section 151 Officer Comments	The estimates are robust and it is not anticipated that there will be any additional funding to be met from the

	Council's revenue budget for maintenance cost. The Council does not commit itself to sharing in the risk of any project overspends.
Monitoring Officer Comments	Follow procedure paragraph 15 of Part 4B of the constitution

Please say if this report will require the making of a key decision: YES
(procedure in paragraph 15 of Part 4B of the constitution)