

**Exempt Information: Not for publication – Appendices 3 and 4 only**

- (1) *The content of Appendices 3 and 4 qualify as exempt information under Section 100(A)(4) and paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as it is “information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)” and*
- (2) *In relation to the “exempt” information, it has been determined that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information because disclosure would adversely affect the authority’s ability to manage its commercial financial and business affairs.*

*Accordingly, appendices 3 and 4 should remain exempt.*

Subject: Strategic Site Allocation, North Quay, Great Yarmouth

Report to: Council

11 July 2019

Report by: Director of Development

**SUBJECT MATTER**

**Implementation of a strategy to deliver the land assembly and redevelopment of North Quay in Great Yarmouth, a strategic allocation in the adopted Great Yarmouth Local Plan Core Strategy.**

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Council is recommended to:**

- 1) Endorse the ongoing engagement with North Quay property owners to facilitate redevelopment, as set out in the confidential North Quay Property Acquisition Strategy**
- 2) Commit a capital budget of £2.5 million to be financed by borrowing for the acquisition of the properties identified in this report**
- 3) Note the commissioning of technical studies in relation to: ground conditions and land quality; archaeology; utilities; flood risk and drainage; transport; topographical; air quality; ecology; and noise assessments**
- 4) Note the development of a Supplementary Planning Document/Planning Brief to further guide the redevelopment of the North Quay area**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 In the summer of 2018 Policy and Resources Committee received and endorsed a confidential report to explore the development of a strategy to deliver the land assembly and redevelopment of North Quay in Great Yarmouth, a strategic allocation in the adopted Great Yarmouth Local Plan Core Strategy. This report updates Members on progress and findings to date with a recommendation to approve the next stages in the project.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The adopted Great Yarmouth Local Plan 'Core Strategy' establishes the spatial vision and objectives for the future development of the borough from 2013 to 2030. It also sets out a series of strategic policies and site allocations or 'key sites' that aim to deliver significant regeneration and growth.
- 2.2 There are two key site allocation policies identified in the development plan:
- i. Policy CS17 Regenerating Great Yarmouth's Waterfront
  - ii. Policy CS18 Extending the Beacon Park development at land south of Bradwell
- 2.3 Policy CS18: Following delivery of the A47/A143 link road, the early phases of housing development on land south of Bradwell and west of the successful commercial development on Beacon Park Enterprise Zone is underway. This is in accordance with a clear masterplan that will deliver: over 1000 new homes, new employment land, a primary school and open space in a sustainable new development. This is a significant area of growth for the borough.
- 2.4 Policy CS17 (appendix 1): The regeneration of Great Yarmouth's central riverside areas in the heart of the town is more challenging, but remains a key ambition of the Council, especially the North Quay, which complements the Great Yarmouth Town Centre Masterplan, adopted in June 2017.
- 2.5 The comprehensive redevelopment of North Quay could transform this key riverside and gateway site to Great Yarmouth and maximise the potential by creating a vibrant waterfront development accessible by the public adjacent to the town centre.

### **3. NORTH QUAY SITE**

- 3.1 The North Quay site comprises 4.07 hectares of land west of North Quay, east of the River Yare and south of the River Bure. Fullers Hill roundabout is at the northern limit, with the site extending southwards to include 67 North Quay (see plan at appendix 2).
- 3.2 It comprises a mixture of light industrial and commercial buildings, yards and car parks, two areas of open or cleared land and a row of houses at 73-82 North Quay.
- 3.3 As set out in the Great Yarmouth Local Plan Core Strategy, the North Quay site is a fairly typical (in national terms) edge of town centre location in need of regeneration. It is traffic-dominated, turns its back on the rivers Bure and Yare (therefore not maximising the attractive longer views towards Breydon Water and the Broads), does not make the most of its proximity to the railway station, or indeed connect particularly well to the town centre. There is a mix of residential, commercial and industrial uses, with numerous underutilised tracts of land. It also has a number of other constraints (highlighted in section 4), including: low land values, potential contamination, archaeology, and areas of high flood risk.
- 3.4 However, comprehensive re-development could transform the area by: increasing land values; improving the architectural quality of the area (and, by extension, Great Yarmouth generally); improving connectivity (especially for walking and cycling) to and from the town centre and railway station; potentially providing some high-quality residential and/or retail and/or commercial and/or food & beverage offerings. In short, if undertaken appropriately, it offers the potential to be a “game-changer” for the town and borough, leading to further regeneration schemes (hopefully more market-led) elsewhere in the town through increased confidence in Great Yarmouth as a place to live, work, play and invest.
- 3.5 In order to comprehensively redevelop the site, for a variety of potential end uses (or mix of uses), any developer would need to assemble approximately 72 land interests, held by approximately 62 different owners. This is extremely unlikely to be deliverable through a private sector initiative alone, and so the Council (either alone or perhaps working with a joint venture partner), using

its powers of compulsory purchase where necessary, will need to assemble the land.

#### **4. PROGRESS TO DATE**

##### **4.1 Property Acquisition Strategy**

A confidential Property Acquisition Strategy for North Quay, Great Yarmouth was endorsed by Policy and Resources Committee and engagement with property owners is well underway, as per the structured and pro-active approach set out in the agreed strategy.

4.2 In February 2019 officers from the Property and Asset Management Service made contact with all property and land owners within the agreed North Quay area to ensure all occupiers were aware of considerations in relation to potential redevelopment of the area. These communications were primarily to begin to understand the aspirations of individual owners and formulate an early view of the potential availability of land parcels within the site.

4.3 The Council has undertaken a planned approach to communications and engagement to support conversations with individual property owners and occupiers, as part of exploring the potential of land assembly to facilitate redevelopment.

4.4 Dialogue in relation to the 11 larger sites and a number of individual residential and commercial buildings have been entered into (as per the confidential Property Acquisition Strategy). The discussions are exploring the willingness of owners and occupiers of the properties to discuss with the Council the possibility of future purchase. As anticipated, responses have been varied. However, it is clear that a number of opportunities could potentially be pursued through to purchase. The benefit of doing so would be to build momentum and demonstrate genuine intent for a wider redevelopment option as has been identified within the Local Plan. **The latest position regarding these properties is shown in appendices 3 and 4, which for reasons of commercial confidentiality are marked 'confidential'.**

4.5 Independent land valuation advice has also been completed for the North Quay area to ensure an accurate picture is gained from the outset.

- 4.6 As previously reported, the complete assembly of the site at North Quay will ultimately require deals to be agreed with around 60 different parties. There is a very significant likelihood that not all the necessary agreements will be able to be secured through negotiation alone (for example, due to unrealistic land value expectations or because it is not possible to trace particular landowners). As a matter of last resort, it would therefore be necessary for the Council to consider the use of compulsory purchase powers alongside the negotiation process, subject to the considerations set out below.
- 4.7 The confidential Property Acquisition Strategy employed by the Council has as its aims:
- a) Securing as much of the land as possible at a reasonable (fair, market) price through negotiation
  - b) Protecting, so far as is practicable, against inflated or 'ransom' prices being sought or paid, that may prevent or hinder the delivery of the project
  - c) Assisting (so far as is practicable and pragmatic) residents and businesses displaced from the North Quay to successfully relocate within the town or borough
  - d) As a last resort, it may be that the Council uses its compulsory purchase powers.
- 4.8 In summary, the confidential Property Acquisition Strategy is as follows:
- a) Engage all parties (landowners and leaseholders) initially to identify specific constraints and opportunities for agreements
  - b) Focus initial acquisition negotiations on options and conditional agreements, starting with freeholders of larger sites and investors, to secure sites and open up access to agreements with tenants
  - c) Engagement with smaller site owner-occupiers, especially residents, to provide reassurance over process and timeframes
  - d) Explore relocation criteria with occupiers and develop assistance for relocation including extended notice agreements keyed to main acquisition programme or other milestones. As a last resort, if the use of compulsory purchase orders is deemed necessary, engagement and negotiation with land owners and occupiers will conform with Government guidance and best practice.
- 4.9 In the event that a North Quay regeneration scheme does not proceed, the

Council could either retain such properties in its portfolio of land, or look to sell them back into the market (potentially losing only acquisition and disposal costs, and seeing a small profit if the market rises). As with any acquisition strategy, there are risks. These include land values both now and in the future and the expectations of the owners themselves in relation to development and value.

4.10 It is extremely important for Members to be aware that the project, if it progresses further, will be a multi-million pound and multi-year scheme and such projects cannot be risk-free. As with any longer-term and significant scheme, there will be inherent risks. This could include, for example, a downturn in the property market, or very extended negotiations for particular parcels of land which could delay the timescale (and therefore push up the overall costs).

4.11 A vital part of the work to be undertaken is therefore to assess (as far as it is practicable, and on an ongoing basis) the main potential risks that the project faces and develop appropriate mitigation and “fall-back” strategies. For example, if costs escalated to such an extent that it was judged not financially prudent to continue with the project (at least for the foreseeable future), the Council should have at least one fall-back option. These would include: i) keeping any purchased land/properties within the Council’s asset portfolio for the longer-term (i.e. for rent), perhaps pending a potential second (later) attempt at a complete land assembly scheme; ii) considering a smaller-scale regeneration scheme on part of the site which the Council has secured ownership of; or iii) to sell some/all of the acquired land/properties back on the open market at a controlled rate.

#### 4.12 **Technical Studies**

Consultants have been commissioned to deliver technical studies in relation to: ground conditions and land quality; archaeology; utilities; flood risk and drainage; transport; topographical; air quality; ecology; and, noise assessments. This workstream also covers The Conge which is identified in the Great Yarmouth Town Centre Masterplan as an area of redevelopment potential. These studies include site investigations and are due to report in October 2019.

#### 4.13 **Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)**

The studies identified in section 4.12 of this report will help inform a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) / Planning Brief for the North Quay area, which Core Strategy Policy CS17 says will be prepared to set out additional planning and design guidance for the area. The production of this SPD has also been commissioned. The SPD will provide further details to help guide the redevelopment of North Quay, provide a better understanding of development costs and potential impact on viability. Production of the SPD/Design Brief will involve public consultation and is due to complete in late 2019.

#### **4.14 Public Realm investment**

The North Quay area forms a key gateway to the town when approaching by multiple modes of transport and has recently benefitted a from multi-million pound investment in public realm and wayfinding improvements identified through the Town Centre Initiative, supported by the Local Growth Fund (New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership). This includes:

- a) a strengthened pedestrian and cycle link between the railway station and the Market Place, inclusive of rail station forecourt improvements, new wayfinding signage and a toucan crossing over North Quay and an improved section along The Conge.
- b) added to this are the improved vehicular capacity and landscaping of Fullers Hill roundabout to deliver a more free-flowing and attractive point of arrival (helped by the new right turn out of the rail station onto Acle New Road).

#### **4.15 Marketing**

North Quay has also been pro-actively marketed at inward investment events such as REVO 2018 in Manchester and MIPIM 2018 in London, helped by the in-house production of an Inward Investment brochure for Great Yarmouth alongside the Great Yarmouth Town Centre Masterplan (2017).

- 4.16 Included within the project programme is the soft market testing of the area to ascertain developer interest in the site.

### **5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Policy and Resources Committee approved a budget of £250,000 in July 2018 to be funded from the Invest to Save earmarked reserve to fund the identified associated costs for the project to date, which include engagement

- with property owners and the commissioning of multiple technical studies and the commissioning of a Supplementary Planning Document, as highlighted in section 4 of this report. This work remains within budget.
- 5.2 A subsequent successful bid for £197,500 Norfolk Business Rate Pool match funding has also been secured for the project.
  - 5.3 As detailed within the report, if Members are supportive of the proactive approach to the development of a key site allocation policy within the Local Plan, the stages of work outlined above need to be completed to facilitate the delivery of the land assembly and resulting redevelopment.
  - 5.4 In order to progress the further stages of work it is recommended that a budget of £2.5 million is approved to be funded within the capital programme (to be financed from borrowing) to begin the process of pro-active acquisition of the properties identified in section 4.4 and detailed in appendices 3 and 4 of this report (marked confidential).
  - 5.5 There will be growth to the revenue account from the costs associated with the capital financing of the budget which will include interest payable and also the minimum revenue provision (MRP). The MRP represents the annual charge to the revenue account for the provision to repay debt incurred in respect of capital expenditure that is financed by borrowing. The MRP charge will not come into operation until the asset for which the borrowing has financed becomes operational.
  - 5.6 Depending on the use of the properties that are acquired as part of the pro-active acquisition, the timing of the MRP will not impact initially on the general fund revenue account. As costs are incurred the impact to the revenue account can be mitigated in the short term by the budget previously allocated to the project. This can be used to smooth the financial impact over a number of financial years until any revenue costs are offset by a return to the Council.
  - 5.7 There is, however, a risk that the timing of the return to the Council of the acquisitions will not fully offset the revenue impact of the borrowing costs. The overall project and aspirations of the project will be closely monitored, and actions taken as applicable to mitigate any ongoing revenue implications.

## **6 RISK IMPLICATIONS**



- 6.1 Taking into account the multiple land ownership constraint to delivery, the following issues are also recognised: low land values, flood risk, financial viability, potential contamination, poor ground conditions, archaeological heritage, and future property/land market downturns.
- 6.2 Land Values: Strategies to help protect against inflated valuation of land is covered in the Property Acquisition Strategy. Land valuation advice has been received to ascertain the current market value of the whole site and will continue to be taken as the project progresses (if Council so agrees).
- 6.3 Flood Risk: North Quay is in an area of high flood risk, with most of the site falling within Zone 2 or Zone 3 (Zone 1 being at least flood risk) but following successful partnership working with the Environment Agency (EA) and the Great Yarmouth Tidal Defence Business Partnership, a compelling business case has secured £8.2million through the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership 'Local Growth Fund' to match significant Environment Agency funding to improve the flood defences along the extent of the river Yare in a £40 million package of works due to commence in summer 2019. This is a 5 year programme of works under 'epoch 2' and the Environment Agency are fully engaged regarding the redevelopment ambition along North Quay. Further work is required of the Environment Agency to ascertain precisely how much of the funding (referred to above) will be allocated to this water frontage (compartment G).
- 6.4 Land Assembly: Covered in sections 4 and 5 of this report. At this stage, Members are being asked to endorse the continued engagement with all property owners as per the structured approach set out in the adopted (confidential) North Quay Property Acquisition Strategy and to release the funds to begin the acquisition of the first tranche of properties as identified in appendices 3 and 4 to this report.
- 6.5 Contamination and ground investigations: A high level contamination report undertaken in 2008 covers the whole North Quay site. This Preliminary Environmental Risk Assessment (PERA) assessed the potential for ground contamination associated with the existing and historical uses of the land. Based on desk study information, a number of potentially contaminative sources / land uses have been identified, including a former factory, garage, coal yard, railway line, limekilns, iron foundry, boat building yard, car sales

forecourt, van rental premises, timber yard and electricity sub-station. A number of potentially active pollutant linkages have been identified. In order to fully assess any impacts to soil and groundwater, further investigation is required. The outcome of any intrusive environmental investigation and risk assessment will determine the need for future remedial action. In addition, new development of any significant height and weight will very likely need to be supported on piled foundations. In combination with the high anticipated groundwater table, this could cause construction problems and increased costs. Detailed site investigation will be required in order to facilitate foundation design. If the results of this work deem development to be cost-prohibitive, then this will be brought back to Members. This work has now been commissioned, as highlighted in paragraph 4.12.

- 6.6 Archaeology: An archaeological report has been commissioned (as mentioned above as part of the suite of evidence base studies) to highlight the presence of archaeology on the site which is within the confines of the Great Yarmouth town wall.
- 6.7 There is a financial risk that any investment by the Council would not be fully recovered (as highlighted in the report). Cost recovery could be through future asset disposal, delivery of new homes with the resulting revenue from Council Tax and New Homes Bonus and/or delivery of growth in business rates from the future use of the site.
- 6.8 Equally there is the risk that the site continues to be a key site allocation in the Local Plan Core Strategy with no proactive intervention or available opportunities being progressed to facilitate the development of the site. In this scenario, as the private sector is unlikely to be able to site assemble to any significant degree, serious consideration would need to be given to de-allocate this site from the adopted Local Plan Core Strategy in order to deliver the planned quantum of development elsewhere in the borough.
- 6.9 Depending on the future use of the site any upfront costs could be recovered through future development from capital receipts or income streams, although this would not be achievable in the short term and therefore at this stage the upfront costs are being funded from the Invest to Save earmarked reserve as a one off. Further allocations of budget would be subject to separate approval as part any wider proposals for the site.

- 6.10 A clear communications plan has been developed, is being implemented and will be kept under review.

## **7 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The use of compulsory purchase powers is not within the scope of this report, but is contemplated by the proposed programme of regeneration. The information provided in this section is therefore provided to ensure that members are aware of some of the legal implications of the project should it progress beyond the exploratory stage.
- 7.2 The Council is empowered under section 226(1)(a) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 ("TCPA") as amended, to acquire any land in its area if it is satisfied that the proposed acquisition will facilitate the carrying out of development, redevelopment or improvement on or in relation to the land.
- 7.3 The Council may make a compulsory acquisition under section 226 of the TCPA (a) if it thinks the acquisition will facilitate the carrying out of development or redevelopment or improvement on or in relation to the land or (b) which is required for a purpose which it is necessary to achieve in the interests of the proper planning of an area in which the land is situated. In order to make an acquisition under (a), the Council must also consider that the development, redevelopment or improvement will contribute to the promotion or improvement of the economic social or environmental well-being of its area.
- 7.4 The Council may dispose of the land under section 233 of the TCPA for the purpose of bringing it forward for development or otherwise facilitating development. Any such disposal must be for the best consideration that can reasonably be obtained, unless the Secretary of State's consent is obtained. By a combination of sections 226 and 233 of the TCPA, it is open to the Council to compulsorily acquire land for planning purposes and then transfer it to a developer or Registered Provider partner.
- 7.5 As any compulsory acquisition would extinguish third party rights, the Council would need to take care that it did not contravene the rights of individuals under the European Convention on Human Rights ("ECHR"). Section 6 of the Human Rights Act 1998 makes it unlawful for the Council to act in any way which is incompatible with a right under the ECHR. Pursuant to Article 1 of the First Protocol to the ECHR, every person is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of his or her possessions and no one shall be deprived of those possessions

except in the public interest and subject to the conditions provided for by law and by the general principles of international law. In order to avoid contravening individual human rights by making a CPO, it must be demonstrated that the CPO is in the public interest and that it is necessary and proportionate to make the CPO. It is considered that, as the requirements of S226 (1) and (1a) have been fulfilled (i.e. the development, redevelopment or improvement will contribute to the promotion or improvement of the economic social or environmental well-being of its area), this will provide a very substantial basis upon which to make the case that the scheme is policy based and is consistent with statutory objectives.

## **8 CONCLUSIONS**

- 8.1 It is recognised that the land assembly and redevelopment of North Quay is a complex project with associated risks, but without the pro-active intervention highlighted in this report, the comprehensive transformation of North Quay will not be realised, and the significant social, economic, environmental and reputational gains to the Council and borough envisaged through the Great Yarmouth Local Plan Core Strategy will not be achieved.
- 8.2 As stated in the report, there is a significant amount of further work for officers (working with external consultancy and legal experts) to undertake to better understand the opportunities, risks, costs and options of the potential land assembly and re-development scheme. At this stage, the Committee is being asked to note the progress made to date as outlined in this report, and to agree the following recommendations.

## **9 RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Council is recommended to:**

- 1) Endorse the ongoing engagement with North Quay property owners to facilitate redevelopment, as set out in the confidential North Quay Property Acquisition Strategy**
- 2) Commit a capital budget of £2.5 million to be financed by borrowing for the acquisition of the properties identified in this report**
- 3) Note the commissioning of technical studies in relation to: ground conditions and land quality; archaeology; utilities; flood risk and drainage; transport; topographical; air quality; ecology; and noise assessments**
- 4) Note the development of a Supplementary Planning Document/Planning**

## Brief to further guide the redevelopment of the North Quay area

### 10 BACKGROUND PAPERS

#### 10.1 Great Yarmouth Local Plan Core Strategy (2015)

*Areas of consideration: e.g. does this report raise any of the following issues and if so how have these been considered/mitigated against?*

Area for consideration	Comment
Monitoring Officer Consultation:	Consulted and reflected in the report
Section 151 Officer Consultation:	Consulted and reflected in the report
Existing Council Policies:	Great Yarmouth Local Plan Core Strategy (2015)
Financial Implications (including VAT and tax):	Considered and reflected in the report
Legal Implications (including human rights):	Considered and reflected in the report
Risk Implications:	Considered and reflected in the report
Equality Issues/EQIA assessment:	Considered and reflected in the report
Crime & Disorder:	Considered and reflected in the report
Every Child Matters:	Considered and reflected in the report

## Appendix 1: Great Yarmouth Local Plan Core Strategy 2013-2030

### Policy CS17 - Regenerating Great Yarmouth's Waterfront

The Waterfront area in the heart of Great Yarmouth has the potential to become a vibrant urban quarter that utilises its rich heritage and prime urban riverside location to create a unique and high quality environment for housing, shopping and offices; attractive to investors and visitors as well as new and existing residents. Proposals for new development within the Waterfront Area should seek to:

- a) Transform Great Yarmouth's arrival experience by developing a network of attractive, vibrant and well-connected neighbourhoods to create a new gateway to the town
- b) Identify appropriate development sites within the Waterfront area for approximately:
  - 1,000 new dwellings of a mix of types (of which at least 300 are anticipated to be delivered within the plan period)
  - 16,500m<sup>2</sup> of employment floorspace (of which at least 7,700m<sup>2</sup> is anticipated to be delivered within the plan period)
  - 14,200m<sup>2</sup> of retail and leisure floorspace, promoting the mixed-use regeneration of disused and other under-used sites (of which at least 5,050m<sup>2</sup> is anticipated to be delivered within the plan period)
- c) Ensure that the quayside area identified on the Policies Map as port operational land is safeguarded as employment land to serve offshore energy related businesses for the first part of the plan period (2013-2025) unless it can be demonstrated that there is no need for this use. If the land is developed for offshore energy related employment uses during this period then Policy CS17 will no longer apply and Policy CS6 will apply.
- d) Maximise the provision of on-site affordable housing by submitting a site-specific viability assessment at the planning application stage
- e) Provide positive, safe and convenient connections for pedestrians and cyclists throughout the area and to neighbouring areas, served by high quality public transport services
- f) Improve links between the railway station and the market place in Great Yarmouth town centre and maximise public access to the Waterfront area through the use of walkways and open spaces, provided this does not conflict with port activity or safety requirements
- g) Capitalise on the area's prime riverside location by creating a strong urban form with distinctive high quality architecture of an appropriate scale, form and massing that complements the surrounding historic environment
- h) Utilise the heritage assets of the area, such as the historic townscape and important historic buildings, converting buildings to other uses where appropriate
- i) Promote high levels of sustainable construction and design in non-residential development, including energy and water efficiency, reduced waste production and where possible, the use of renewable energy in accordance with Policy CS12
- j) Enrich the quality of the public realm, ensuring that elements of the street scene contribute to the overall character and identity of each neighbourhood and that the choice of materials and quality of signage adds interest, and aids identity and legibility

- k) Protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity across the waterfront area and ensure that appropriate mitigation measures for protected species, biodiversity and geodiversity are undertaken in accordance with Policy CS11
- l) Ensure that the development is safe in terms of flood risk for its lifetime, design and location and does not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere, in accordance with Policy CS13
- m) Provide appropriate new community, education and health facilities to meet the day-to-day needs of new and existing residents and improve existing facilities in Great Yarmouth, where possible, in accordance with Policy CS14

The Council will produce a Supplementary Planning Document setting out additional planning and design guidance for the Waterfront Area to ensure that the objectives of this policy are fully realised. Proposals relating to the development of individual buildings and/or sites within the Waterfront Area submitted before the Supplementary Planning Document is adopted will need to demonstrate that they have appropriately responded to the points within Policy CS17 and that they will not prejudice the overall regeneration ambitions for the area.

### **Regenerating Great Yarmouth's Waterfront area**

5.1.1 Great Yarmouth is the borough's largest town and one of the main centres in Norfolk. However, it needs to reinvent itself as a modern coastal town and take better advantage of the opportunities provided by both its riverside and coastal location, whilst respecting its historic local distinctiveness and character. It needs to ensure that it is able to compete as a sustainable and accessible location for shopping, leisure and business and as a visitor destination, as well as being an attractive place to live with housing that meets people's needs and aspirations. The mixed-use regeneration of the Waterfront area provides a superb opportunity to improve this riverside location close to the town centre, attract investment and create wealth.

5.1.2 The overall approach to the future development and regeneration of the Waterfront area is to facilitate the comprehensive regeneration of Great Yarmouth's historic quaysides in the heart of the town and provide improved linkages



between the town centre and its riverfront, which for many years has been subject to industrial decline and under-utilisation. The overall development aspiration for the area is to create a series of vibrant, mixed-use urban neighbourhoods that meet the needs of existing and future residents, with easy access to jobs, community facilities and public transport services, thus reducing the need for the private car and creating a more sustainable environment.

### **Defining the Great Yarmouth Waterfront area**

- 5.1.3 The Great Yarmouth Waterfront area consists of approximately 40 hectares of under-utilised, previously developed land in the heart of Great Yarmouth. The area includes North Quay, The Conge, Ice House Quay and Bure Harbour Quay, all of which front the rivers Yare and Bure.
- 5.1.4 It should be noted that the 2007 version of the emerging Great Yarmouth Waterfront Area Action Plan (AAP) covered a much larger geographical area, which included South Denes, much of Southtown and Gorleston river frontages and did not include The Conge or a small parcel of land in Cobholm. The reasoned justifications for revising the Area Action Plan boundary in May 2010 were principally because:
- In light of the challenging economic environment, it was deemed appropriate to focus delivery on a small number of priority sites
  - Limited support and considerable deliverability constraints were associated with the Runham Broad proposal
  - There was resistance to the scale of port land redevelopment
  - Completion of the first phase of Eastport UK (Great Yarmouth's Outer Harbour) was undertaken
  - A preferred route for the Third River Crossing had been identified
  - The inclusion of The Conge would help to promote better connectivity between the railway station, riverside and the market place in the town centre
- 5.1.5 By directing development to these locations it is intended to promote highly sustainable, healthy lifestyles and assist in overcoming high levels of deprivation and unemployment.

### **Ensuring high quality design**

- 5.1.6 High quality design will be essential to the regeneration of the Waterfront area. There is a need to secure a built environment and townscape of the highest possible quality, which reflects the town's distinctive identity, enhancing and conserving Great Yarmouth's heritage and improving the character and identity of the river frontage. In particular, there are opportunities to create eye-catching landmark buildings and structures on several key strategic gateway sites, such as Ice House Quay. In accordance with Policy CS9, all development proposals must incorporate principles of good design and create a high quality, safe, stimulating, attractive and accessible environment for everyone.
- 5.1.7 Public realm enhancements and planting within the Waterfront Area should seek to reinforce the character of the wider area by defining key spaces and vistas and softening the potential impact on residential amenity from existing/proposed employment areas within and adjacent to the Waterfront Area.



## **Delivery and implementation**

- 5.1.8 The emerging Great Yarmouth Waterfront Supplementary Planning Document will be a key instrument in delivering the ambitions of this policy. Since work began on the Core Strategy and the emerging Supplementary Planning Document, there has been a global economic downturn. This downturn has changed the housing market, in particular the funding available to developers to build housing and for mortgages. This has impacted on the ability of developers to both build and sell housing. There has also been a change to Government policy in relation to viability and planning, as well as changes in public sector finances. This has seen a reduction in regeneration funding, thereby impacting on the Council's ability to deliver its regeneration priorities in the timescales originally envisaged.
- 5.1.9 It is critical to the economic and social welfare of the borough that the Council meets its development needs and provides land for housing that is economically viable for development. An adequate supply of good quality houses is needed if the borough is to meet the economic challenges ahead. If these development needs are not met, the economy will suffer and residents seeking a new property may move elsewhere, adding to the trend of out migration.
- 5.1.10 Taking into account these factors and the various constraints to delivery, such as low land values, flood risk, financial viability, multiple land ownership, potential contamination, poor ground conditions and the archaeological heritage, it is unlikely that the regeneration of Great Yarmouth's Waterfront area will be fully realised within the plan period. However, the economy is likely to recover over time and it is important that plans are in place to ensure the redevelopment of Great Yarmouth's Waterfront area can commence as soon as market conditions allow. It is anticipated that the regeneration of the Waterfront area will start to take shape in areas such as Bure Harbour Quay, North Quay and Runham Vauxhall during the last six years of the plan period.
- 5.1.11 The Supplementary Planning Document will only be realised through a coordinated approach to implementation and strong partnership working to investigate potential funding sources and delivery mechanisms. The Norfolk Development Company has been established to aid this programme of delivery and close working relationships with organisations such as the Environment Agency are seen to be crucial to the future success of delivery. When adopted, the Supplementary Planning Document will ensure that development in the Waterfront area comes forward in a timely and co-ordinated manner by setting out detailed guidance to support the delivery of new housing, employment space, retail, leisure and tourism facilities, community facilities, open space, transport initiatives and environmental enhancements. In addition, Policies CS14 and CS16, along with the emerging Infrastructure Plan, will ensure that key infrastructure to support the development of this site is appropriately phased.

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