

Subject: **Town Centre Initiative**

Report to: **Economic Development Committee – 16 July 2018**

Report by: **Director of Development, Great Yarmouth Borough Council**

#### **SUBJECT MATTER/RECOMMENDATIONS**

This report updates Members on the latest Town Centre Initiative activity, as reported at the Great Yarmouth Town Centre Member Working Group meeting on 9 July 2018.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Members are asked to note the contents of the report.

### **1. INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND**

In February 2015 it was agreed that the Council would provide a £1,000,000 investment in the Town Centre to deliver a coordinated programme of physical improvements, business and innovation initiatives, events and visitor-economy activities focused on our historic town centre Market Place. The core aim is to transform the economy of the town and support regeneration and growth. A number of key objectives were set, these were;

- To deliver a package of environmental and presentation initiatives to improve visitor experience
- To work with Great Yarmouth's Town Centre Partnership, property owners and other stakeholders to identify the role of the town centre over the next 10 – 20 years
- To develop the Town Center Masterplan

### **2. Improving the Marketplace**

Great Yarmouth Borough Council's ambition, as laid out in the masterplan, is that 'by 2025 trade and custom in the 6- and 2-day markets is greatly improved, supported by new stalls and service facilities and by the newly-paved Market Place which has created a beautiful setting for an expanded programme of outdoor events and improved building frontages.'

As part of this ambition a Stage 1 bid has been submitted to the Coastal Communities Fund

for £2.3 million to transform the Market Place and two key Rows leading to and from the market. The project will transform the Market Place's retail, cultural heritage and tourism offers and, thereby, its economic impact through an integrated programme of capital works, business development and activity. If successful, the borough council will:

1. Design and deliver the public realm improvements to the Market Place to meet the ambitions of the 'Great Yarmouth Town Centre Regeneration Framework and Masterplan' (May 2017).
2. De-clutter and re-landscape the Market Place to flexibly accommodate the market, events, car-parking and public transport services.
3. Provide new 6-day purpose built market accommodation, a flexible area for 2-day market facilities and new and diverse stalls, create a flexible event space, install new lighting, signage and street furniture, improve the appearance of buildings fronting the Market Place and introduce sculptural elements to the public realm.
4. Repair, enhance and interpret four key historic Rows that lead from the river to the town.

In advance of the funding announcement in mid-July 2018 and to prepare a full business case, engagement with market traders is ongoing, with representatives from the market on the working group. A lead design consultant has been appointed and there was a recent public consultation and engagement exercise in the market place to show people concept designs.

If the bid is successful the Borough Council would like to start refurbishment in early 2019.

### **3. Wayfinding**

Wayfinding is a key part of the Great Yarmouth Town Centre Masterplan to help people navigate their way around the town centre. It is part of the framework that sets out the Council's ambition for the regeneration of the town centre over the coming decade. The plan was shaped collaboratively and adopted in 2017. Since then a robust delivery plan has been put in place.

The core objective directly relating to Wayfinding in the Town Centre Masterplan is that 'Wayfinding is improved across the town through key parts of the network of Rows, increasing footfall to make the town centre feel safe and stimulate commercial uses.'

As part of the overall Town Centre Masterplan Objectives the Council agreed to roll out a number of deliverable actions directly relating to Wayfinding:

- To develop and test a replicable approach to Wayfinding and public realm through the historic core of the town centre that enable people to discover and experience its unique character and structure.
- To engage with stakeholders and develop general concept, design and delivery approach
- Map the key community and tourism amenities across the town
- Identify useful shortcuts which link specific amenities
- Design signage solution and deliver on site
- Evaluate the impact

In partnership with Great Yarmouth Borough Council, Norfolk County Council appointed specialist Wayfinding experts FWT <http://www.fwt.co.uk> to plan and design a detailed proposal on Wayfinding in the town. This proposal and recommendations will be discussed in a separate paper to this committee.

#### **4. The Rows**

Really good progress is being made with signage and row improvements as pilot work started on a full restoration of two key rows in July 2018.

Improvements to the rows with the Preservation Trust have begun with community activity, initially including cleaning and litter picking. Work has started on the physical repairs to building fabric including masonry and joinery and pest control measures. Key elements of the pilot Row restoration include:

- Metal name plates that have been manufactured and installed on 62 of the Rows
- Collaboration with Colin Tooke (historian) to use his extensive collection of historic images of the rows is being incorporated into an artistic interpretation
- Selective texts from Yarmouth literary figures, and historic accounts of the rows will

- be used on paving in a number of rows
- Discussions are ongoing with Norfolk County Council on potential lighting improvements
- Working in partnership with East Norfolk College

## 5. **Creating a sense of arrival**

The Borough Council are committed to improving visitor's and resident's arrival experience as they arrive in the town. The Town Centre Masterplan states that by '2025 the setting of Fullers Hill, Acle New Road, the roundabout, train station and quayside creates a new sense of arrival at this key junction of road, rail and water, linking to the new development of the Conge.'

Really good progress is being made to co-ordinate and deliver a number of key projects that will enhance the sense of arrival and ease of navigation around the town.

A number of key projects have been delivered including:

- Significant investment in Great Yarmouth's bus station: new shelters with seating, real time information, lighting, cycle parking, railings and poster space.
- Improvements to the underpass at Fullers Hill, this will form a co-ordinated programme of culturally led improvements through art
- A redesigned Fullers Hill Roundabout has improved capacity and traffic flow with further planting and remedial works planned
- Right hand turn out of Asda has been completed
- The Rail Station to Market Place link has been strengthened with improvements for both walkers and cyclists along the Conge and North Quay.
- The Rail Station forecourt is currently undergoing a significant re-design.
- Transport Strategy for Great Yarmouth has been commissioned by Norfolk County Council working in close partnership with Great Yarmouth Borough Council

The projects to be delivered and currently in planning stages include:

- Howard Street surfacing, plans to implement a more comprehensive scheme in Autumn 2018, currently surfacing is undertake to the Police Station

- Wherry Community Garden concept design being drafted for near Vauxhall Bridge. Discussions have been held with Wherry Lines representatives, match funding is possible, voluntary organisation is necessary to undertake the planting scheme. An application is being drafted for this stand-alone project (NCC).
- Vauxhall Gardens (footway between Vauxhall Bridge and North Quay) is a project for 2019-20 replicating the old rail tracks, planting a community space and use of recycled materials from the site. Proposing voluntary organisation involvement, possibly the same volunteers to assist the planting.
- Norfolk County Council have confirmed that timescales for upgrading car park signs had been identified along with funding
- Meetings are taking place with Sustrans and the Preservation Trust to consider options to refurbish the Bridge. Match funding has been secured for 50k through the Local Growth Fund.

## 6. **Major Infrastructure Update**

### 1) Third River Crossing

Major investment is ongoing around infrastructure needed to support the growth in the energy sector with £120million being invested in the Third River Crossing.

A third river crossing supports the town's role as part of the East of England Energy Zone, as a centre for Offshore Renewable Engineering and provides the capacity for regeneration, economic growth and act as a catalyst for investment. It will provide much needed connections between the strategic road network and the fast growing energy related Enterprise Zone and is crucial in providing linkages across the River Yare to the economic growth hub in the South Denes peninsula.

A third river crossing will deliver numerous benefits to the area and will solve a number of existing problems, including the current lack of connectivity, which severely restricts movement in Great Yarmouth. This results in congestion and ultimately limits the economic potential of the Enterprise Zone, Energy Park, South Denes Business Park and the deep water outer harbour.

Government successfully awarded Norfolk County Council £98 million in the 2017 autumn

statement to take the bridge to the next stage of design and planning, with construction being planned for 2023.

## 2) Improvements to the A47

Highways England are progressing their programme of Road Investment Strategy projects. As part of their current phase 1 funding, the projects being progressed in Norfolk are:

- Easton to North Tuddenham dual carriageway
- Thickthorn major junction improvement
- Blofield to Burlingham dual carriageway
- Vauxhall roundabout junction improvement at Great Yarmouth
- Gapton Hall roundabout junction improvement at Great Yarmouth

## 3) Tidal Defences

It was announced on 23<sup>rd</sup> May that Great Yarmouth Borough Council has successfully bid for £8.2 million of New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership Growth Deal Funding to match £30 million of investment from the Environment Agency to improve the flood defenses along the River Yare. This bid was supported by the Great Yarmouth Tidal Defence Business Partnership and will support the economic growth programme of activity.

## 7. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

At June 2018 there is £95,000 remaining of the original £1 million budget.

## 8. **RISK IMPLICATIONS**

None for this report

## 9. **CONCLUSIONS**

There is an ambitious programme of delivery within the Town Centre Initiative. Progress is being made in several areas with funding up to £9 million secured for congestion relief and promoting sustainable transport options.

## 10. RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are asked to note the contents of this report.

## 11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Town Centre Masterplan (2017)

*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:	Considered
Section 151 Officer Consultation:	Considered
Existing Council Policies:	Considered
Financial Implications (including VAT and tax):	Considered
Legal Implications (including human rights):	Considered
Risk Implications:	Considered
Equality Issues/EQIA assessment:	Considered
Crime & Disorder:	Considered
Every Child Matters:	Considered