

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

PROFORMA

Cabinet Meeting10th January 2013

1. Title of Item/Report

Billingham Town Centre

2. Record of the Decision

Consideration was given to a report on the progress made on the proposals for the regeneration of Billingham Town Centre. The report focused upon refurbishment works and new paving in the town centre along with details of proposals for further investment in health facilities, extra care housing and customer service and library facilities.

A report was presented to Cabinet in July 2012 where detail of progress in bringing forward redevelopment proposals from the 2009 Billingham Town Centre Masterplan was reported. At that stage, a revised development agreement between the Council and owners of Billingham Town Centre, Stockland UK had recently been signed enabling meaningful redevelopment of the town centre to take place, building upon recent investment by Stockland and the £18.5million refurbishment of the Forum.

Since July 2012, officers had been working alongside Stockland to agree the detail of the £2.35million redevelopment works and on the detailed design of a high quality paving and public realm scheme throughout the town centre.

Redevelopment proposals and details of the paving and public realm were presented to the public for comment at a display in the Forum from 23rd July to 3rd August. The display was well attended and comments from the public were in the main positive, with many welcoming the opportunity to view proposals and the opportunity to discuss issues with officers.

One of the key issues raised by the public was the need for improved public toilets in the town centre. New public toilets in West Precinct opened on October 9th. This represented the first meaningful phase of the planned redevelopment works in the centre.

The main redevelopment works, including; new windows to upper floors,

new CCTV system, new stairways, handrail repairs, repainting, brickwork repairs and cleaning began on 1st October with a target completion date of 21st December 2012.

The removal of two, permanently closed walkways between the centre and Kingsway car park was also planned as part of redevelopment proposals, this work would take place alongside the main paving and public realm contract.

Paving and public realm works would begin in January 2013. The agreed scheme would see the existing paving removed from the town centre, unsightly sunken areas filled in and replaced with new high quality paving, seating, feature lighting and tree planting throughout the centre along with a reinforced section of town square to accommodate the regular market and a canopy over the existing bandstand to enable greater use for events.

The first phase of paving work involved the removal of asbestos from below ground ducting to enable the delivery of the new paving and public realm scheme to be delivered as efficiently as possible immediately after the asbestos removal had been complete.

It was anticipated that works to remove asbestos and deliver the new paving scheme would take approximately 12 months with a target completion date set for Christmas 2013.

With regard to further investment the delivery of £2.35million redevelopment works in the town centre and the high quality paving and public realm scheme would be complemented by a range of other significant, existing and new investments and developments in and around the town centre.

Detailed design of the £2.7million Customer Service Centre was progressing. The proposed scheme would see a high quality customer service centre, similar in design and function to the successful facilities already in operation in Stockton and Thornaby town centres in the heart of Billingham town centre. Demolition of existing buildings was planned for spring 2013 with a further update on design and programme to be brought to Cabinet at that time.

Cabinet were updated in November 2012 on proposals for the provision of a £6million Extra Care Housing facility to be delivered by north east housing group Vela. The proposed development was subject to a decision by Planning Committee on 16th January 2013. If approved, work would begin on site in March 2013.

Work was underway on the refurbishment of the existing Queensway Health Centre. Redevelopment works would provide modern medical facilities and enable a greater access to primary care services for residents of Billingham. Work on the refurbishment of the health centre would be complete in March 2013.

A further £260,000 would be invested in John Whitehead Park to deliver a new skate/BMX area, 4 improved tennis courts and a multi-use games area. Work would begin early in 2013 and would be complete by December 2013. The new leisure facilities in John Whitehead Park complement the high quality, state of the art sport and leisure facilities available as part of the £18.5million refurbishment of Billingham Forum, officially opened by the Countess of Wessex in November 2012.

This highlighted the circa £30million already invested or committed for spend in Billingham in the next 12 months. This investment would aid ongoing efforts by Stockland to secure a supermarket operator and new retailers in the town centre.

Discussions between Stockland and Wetherspoons on proposals to merge units in West Precinct to accommodate a large public house were progressing with planning permission granted in March 2012. The town centre remained over 90% let with a large Poundland store opened in early 2012 along with ongoing retailer interest.

RESOLVED that progress made to date on regeneration proposals and the proposals for further investment across Billingham Town Centre be noted.

3. Reasons for the Decision

To inform members of progress made on proposals for the regeneration of Billingham Town Centre and to provide details of further investment in health facilities, extra care housing and customer service and library facilities.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

none

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

none

6. Details of any Dispensations

none

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

Midnight on Friday, 18th January 2013

Proper Officer
14 January 2013