

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

DATE 12 September 2024

**REPORT OF CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

CABINET DECISION

Regeneration and Housing - Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor Nigel Cooke

CENTRAL STOCKTON AND NORTH THORNABY BLUEPRINT DELIVERY

SUMMARY

In July 2024 the Central Stockton and North Thornaby Blueprint, which sets out a vision and development framework for transformational change of this area over the next 25 years, was approved by Cabinet. This report provides an update on specific projects within the Stockton Central and North Thornaby Blueprint area which were referenced in the July 2024 report and seeks approval of funding to enable delivery and further progression of work as required.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)/DECISION(S)

The recommendations in this report seek approval for funding allocations and delegations enable progress on the delivery of projects within the Stockton Central and North Thornaby Blueprint area.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Cabinet approve the budget allocation as set out in table 1 to support delivery of Town Hall redevelopment, Splash refurbishment, Council Chamber, Stockton Waterfront and Community Diagnostic Centre and further feasibility works linked to the Central Stockton and North Thornaby Blueprint.
2. Cabinet delegate authority to the Director of Regeneration and Inclusive Growth in consultation with Director of Finance, Transformation and Performance and Director of Corporate Services to agree all contracts, agreements and any variations between the allocation set out in table 1 in consultation with the Leader of the Council, the Cabinet Member for or Regeneration and Housing and Cabinet Member for Health, Leisure and Culture following further formal engagement with, and procurement of contractors.

DETAIL

The Stockton Central and North Thornaby Blueprint outlines a vision for transformational change over the next 25 years by creating prosperous, vibrant places fit for future generations by delivering modern, mixed-use neighbourhoods and a stronger town centre helping to make sure it is a safe and welcoming place where people want to work, live and visit.

The report to Cabinet in July 2024, identified a number of interventions that are in development, setting out progress to date and emerging detail on recommended uses and specifications.

Splash and Town Hall

The report to Cabinet in July 2024 detailed progress made on assessing options for both the Town Hall and refurbishment of Splash along with recommendations on the scope and scale of redevelopment and refurbishment works

In line with the budget estimates set out in the report to Cabinet in July 2024, an allocation of £15million is required for fees to develop designs from RIBA stage 2, undertake procurement of construction contractor and ultimately enable and fund delivery of the redevelopment of these two key assets.

Municipal Quarter

Following approval, at Cabinet in July 2024, of funds to progress the next phase of development costs and approach to working in partnership with Tees Valley Combined Authority, work is underway on assessing appropriate delivery structures and partnerships for the Municipal Quarter with further detail to be reported a future Cabinet meeting.

Democratic Space & Council Chamber

The report to Cabinet in July 2024, that the previous principle to develop a new facility that would include a customer contact centre, library, register office and a flexible space for civic and public facing business meetings had moved on markedly due to alternative proposals for a number of those elements. That report also explained that it had been pertinent to undertake a review of options for the provision of a modern Council Chamber as a new build option for this single element would not be considered economical in the current climate of extremely high construction costs. An options appraisal was undertaken in consultation with Democratic Services to consider options for both a permanent location for the Chamber, and how sites across the borough could support a peripatetic (travelling) chamber. This appraisal concluded that, following the vacation of Job Centre Plus in Dunedin House has meant that a new modern Council Chamber can be established which will sit alongside a series of meeting rooms for elected members and the creation of a neighbourhood office space for Democratic Services including the Electoral teams and their bespoke storage needs. This will ensure that Dunedin House provides an efficient civic function which is close to other Council Services and will provide a dedicated space to support the democratic diary across the calendar year with a dedicated entry point for public access. The options appraisal and preferred option described above were recently presented to Members Advisory Panel (MAP) Group, a representative consultative body. The feedback from that group was extremely useful with the group providing their support for the preferred option. In line with the report to Cabinet in July 2024, an allocation of £750k is considered appropriate to develop designs and fund the delivery of this new area.

Stockton Waterfront and Community Diagnostic Centre

Work is progressing at pace on Stockton Waterfront and the construction of the Community Diagnostic Centre (CDC), with completion of the Diagnostic Centre scheduled for late 2024 and the Waterfront still on track for completion in early 2026.

As part of the original allocation for funding to enable delivery of a new civic facility on the waterfront development site alongside NHS diagnostic facilities, provision was made for the

delivery of public spaces, car parking and access to the planned Council building and NHS facilities. The car parking and access elements of the scheme are still required to enable access and public parking at the CDC as well as to ensure access to the wider development site is put in place to support future development. The funding allocation sought will cover the cost of delivery and associated fees on site design. Upon completion these elements will be Council assets and managed accordingly.

Further Work

Several other development sites and opportunities were identified within the Blueprint. To progress these sites and gain a greater level of detail and understanding, further work in the form of feasibility, development briefs and detailed design will be required, therefore it is recommended that an allocation of funding to support this additional work is made, with further detail on site specific work to be reported to future Cabinet meetings.

Funding Allocation

Following previous approvals in July 2023 and July 2024, it is recommended that remaining unallocated funding from previously approved sums is allocated as set out in table 1 below with authority delegated to the Director of Regeneration and Inclusive Growth in consultation with Director of Finance, Transformation and Performance and Director of Corporate Services to agree all contracts, agreements and any variations between the allocation following further formal engagement with and procurement of contractors.

Table 1- Budget Allocation

<u>Project</u>	<u>Allocation</u> £'000
Splash and Town Hall	15,000
Stockton Waterfront and Community Diagnostic Centre	1,750
Dunedin House Democratic Space/Council Chamber	750
Future work	1,05
TOTAL	18.55

COMMUNITY IMPACT IMPLICATIONS

Throughout the lifetime of the projects the Council will give consideration to the potential impact on any protected characteristics and the needs of diverse groups when designing and delivering services so that people can access fairer opportunities and equal services.

The Council will seek to work with stakeholder groups to ensure that all communications and consultations are targeted at the appropriate groups, including anyone with a protected characteristic, so they are effective and use resources in the best possible way. Where proposals, events or services affect specific individuals or groups, these stakeholders will be kept fully informed and can give their input about issues that affect them.

Community engagement will be tailored to meet the needs and preferences of different groups of people across the Borough and we will also ensure information is accessible for those with additional needs.

Communication plans will be developed for projects being carefully considered to ensure no form of direct or indirect discrimination occurs.

CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS

This report and its recommendations do not have any corporate parenting implications.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The recommendations in this report allocate the balance of the £20m borrowing approved in July 2021 and subsequently retained to support future investment as set out in the report to Cabinet in July 2023. The MTFP report in December 2023 committed £1m, followed by approval of £450,000 in July 2024 to support work in municipal quarter. The £18.55m allocations recommended within this report reflect the balance of the previously approved £20m borrowing.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

As the projects described in this report develop and progress there will be a range of legal issues to consider and address including in relation to property rights and acquisitions, planning, environmental and other impact assessments, the potential for public consultation and engagement to be required and the need to ensure that sound contractual agreements are put in place to protect and secure the Council's interests.

RISK ASSESSMENT

The recommendations made in this report are at this stage are categorised as low to medium risk. Existing management systems and daily routine activities are sufficient to control and reduce risk. More specific risk assessment will be required as the detail of projects develop and progress

WARDS AFFECTED AND CONSULTATION WITH WARD/COUNCILLORS

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors: Stockton Town Centre / Mandale and Victoria

The Central Stockton and North Thornaby Blueprint was subject to an extensive engagement and consultation process, including workshops and public consultation which included involvement of ward councillors. Projects will be subject to consultation as appropriate.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Report to Cabinet July 2024 – Central Stockton and North Thornaby Blueprint
Report to Cabinet July 2023 – Vibrant and Thriving Town Centres – Regeneration Update
Report to Cabinet July 2022 – Town Centres Update
Report to Cabinet July 2021 – Stockton Town Centre Waterfront Development Masterplan

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