

Business and Property Committee

Item No.

Report title:	Regeneration of Yarmouth Riverside and Town Centre
Date of meeting:	15 May 2018
Responsible Chief Officer:	Tom McCabe – Executive Director, Community and Environmental Services
Strategic impact The Council has pledged to play a leading role in building communities, installing infrastructure and making the most of our heritage, culture and environment. Supporting the regeneration of Gt Yarmouth's Town Centre and Waterfront areas clearly supports this ambition.	

Executive summary

This report provides members with an overview of the development of Great Yarmouth Town Centre and Waterfront, and the County Council's role.

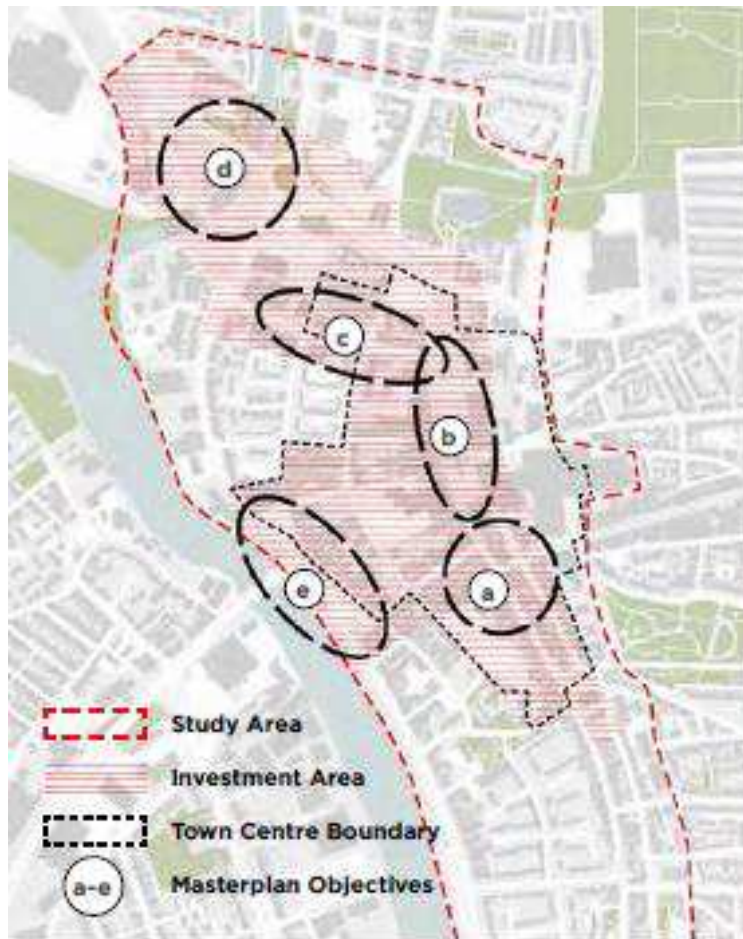
Recommendations:

Members are requested to note the contents of the report and identify any areas for further input

1. Background

- 1.1. In February 2015 Gt Yarmouth Borough Council approved a £1million investment in the Town Centre. This was in response to the Town Centre experiencing a steady decline in occupied shops and decreasing footfall figures, with residents, businesses and stakeholders all voicing concerns about the decline.
- 1.2. Alongside this short term investment it was felt a strategic plan was needed to guide longer term investment and future plans. A master planning study for the Town Centre was commissioned, which commenced in August 2015 undertaken by Carter Jonas. The County Council was a key partner in the management of that process.
- 1.3. The Great Yarmouth Local Plan Core Strategy development plan was adopted in December 2015. The wholesale regeneration of Great Yarmouth's Waterfront is enshrined as one of two strategic site allocations under policy CS17. It reflects the ambition of the Great Yarmouth Area Action Plan (draft December 2010) which was produced by the 1st East Urban Regeneration Company, which the County Council helped establish.
- 1.4. The other Great Yarmouth Local Plan Core Strategy strategic site allocation is the land at South Bradwell which is fast being developed by Persimmon Homes west of Beacon Park Enterprise Zone and either side of the recently completed A47/A143 link road (which was delivered thanks to a successful national Pinchpoint bid).
- 1.5. The masterplan covers the entire area enclosed by the historic town walls, extending east-west between St. George's Park and the Yare riverfront, and

north-south between the Minster and the Time & Tide Museum as shown below.



Its objectives are to:

- a. **Strengthen the heart of the town centre** - By 2025, the heart of the town centre – around the junction of King Street and Regent Road – has regained its vitality with a range of new occupiers and operators including a leisure-based anchor (for example a cinema), cafes, bars and restaurants.
 - b. **Improve the markets and Market Place** - By 2025, trade and custom in the 6-day and 2-day markets is greatly improved, supported by new stalls and service facilities and by the newly-paved Market Place. Together with the improved frontages this has created a beautiful setting for an expanded programme of events.
 - c. **Transform The Conge** - By 2025, The Conge is transformed, with new mixed-use development lining both sides of the lower half of the street, and the next phase ready for delivery connecting it to the renewed Market Place.
 - d. **Create a sense of arrival at the town centre** - 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, linked to the new development on The Conge.
 - e. **Unlock the potential of Hall Quay** - By 2025, the council has adopted guidance to ensure existing buildings are conserved and developed appropriately. With the 3rd river crossing near completion, there is significant commercial interest in refurbishment and new development.
- 1.6. The Great Yarmouth Town Centre Regeneration Framework and Masterplan was adopted by GYBC in June 2017 and sits within a timeframe up until 2025. The County Council's Director of Communities and Environmental Services sits on the Town Centre Delivery Board, which ensures strategic oversight of

the masterplan and enables dialogue with Highways England and Greater Anglia regarding the key gateways into the borough.

- 1.7. In addition, officers from the Transport Planning Team also provide support and represent the County Council on both the Gt Yarmouth Town Centre Officer and Member Groups and the Gt Yarmouth Transport and Infrastructure Officer and Steering Groups. These groups also contain politically balanced representation from both County and Borough Council Members. The county council is currently represented by Brian Iles, Graham Plant and Mick Castle. It should be noted that this is not a decision-making group, and decisions need to be ratified by the two councils' respective processes. In the County Council's case they are reported to EDT
- 1.8. There is a separate Area Action Plan for the Gt Yarmouth Waterfront, which seeks to develop up to 40 hectares of prime riverside frontage. The plan embraces Bure Harbour Quay and Ice House Quay on the west bank of the river as well as the North Quay which is also covered by the Town centre Masterplan. This initiative first emerged as part of the 1st East proposals in 2010, but were scaled back. However, it is still a significant opportunity that includes 4 hectares of brownfield land and could enable up to 1,000 new dwellings, over 14,000sqm of employment and commercial floor space and over 10,000sqm of new retail units.

2. Current and Recent Activity

- 2.1. There is a wide range of town centre Initiatives within the masterplan which we are working on with the Borough Council. These are summarised below.
- 2.2. The County Council has managed a series of transport related projects that are directly related to the Town Centre Initiative, including £2m for improvement of the rail station forecourt and onward links, via The Conge, to the town centre.
- 2.3. There is also a £9m for a package of measures to address congestion, tackle local issues and provide measures for walking, cycling and public transport, which clearly contributes to the enhancement of the town centre. The programme has been developed in close conjunction with local stakeholders to ensure that it delivers the aims of the town centre masterplan.
- 2.4. Several of these projects are either completed or underway, funded through the Local Growth Fund. All of these projects will contribute towards accelerating economic growth and development in the area.
- 2.5. More highway improvements are planned around Hall Quay as an advanced Planning Brief (Carter Jonas) will be consulted upon in the next few months. Many of these improvements will be enabled by the Third River Crossing.
- 2.6. A development brief produced by Carter Jonas is well advanced for The Conge which looks at significant development opportunities. This will be consulted upon in the near future. It has led to a recent bid to Homes England (Housing Infrastructure Fund, Marginal Viability Fund) which was unsuccessful, but has led to further talks with them around delivering homes in this area. Aligned with this, a significant Local Growth Fund bid has been submitted to NALF from the Borough Council and the Environment Agency, looking to match fund significant EA funding and release riverside sites in the heart of the town. This bid is underpinned by a strong business case, commissioned by the Gt Yarmouth Tidal Defence Business Partnership.

- 2.7. The Town Centre Masterplan and riverside development opportunities feature in a new 'Invest in GY' prospectus which was taken to both MIPIM 2017 in London and REVO 2017 in Liverpool. The new Conge development brief will feature at both events in 2018.
- 2.8. Development in areas such as North Quay, with multiple land owners and flood risk and potential contamination, leads to low land values and adds to the already complex issues that impact on the Councils' ability to intervene.. Generating Section 106 contributions towards flood defences is challenging, given the development viability of this area. We are working in close collaboration with the Environment Agency and others to seek the required funding. However, it should be noted that the work of 1st East prior to 2010, and more recently through Carter Jonas has done much to test the viability in and around this area.
- 2.9 Funding of up to £98m has been successfully secured from government towards delivery of the Third River Crossing, subject to a successful final business case and the statutory process. The project was recently adopted as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project, with significant input from County Council officers to achieve that status. Provided we pass each milestone the project is scheduled for approval by 2021 with construction complete by 2023.
- 2.10 Central Government has made a commitment to bring forward over £300m of improvements to the A47. This followed extensive lobbying by the A47 Alliance, led by Norfolk County Council. This investment includes a major improvement scheme at Vauxhall Junction, scheduled to be completed by 2022. Work is currently underway delivering a right turn from Great Yarmouth rail station / ASDA. This will allow traffic to travel directly from the rail station into the town without adding to congestion at Vauxhall Junction. This improvement forms part of Government's commitment to A47 works and is being undertaken by the county council on behalf of the Government
- 2.11 The Great Yarmouth Development Company (jointly owned by Great Yarmouth Borough Council and Norfolk County Council) oversaw a small development of 19 homes, various feasibility studies and created and led the development of what has become known as the Great Yarmouth Energy Park. The owners agree that the need for the development company has passed, and are actively considering its closure. Alternative governance arrangements for the Energy Park are being developed by the Borough Council on behalf of both partners.
- 2.12. When set alongside the locally funded and driven projects outlined it represents a considerable investment that will lead to a significant upgrade in the infrastructure within or serving the town

3. Finance implications

- 3.1. None for this report.

4. Issues, risks and innovation

- 4.1. None for this report.

5. Background Papers

5.1. None for this report.

Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained in this paper or want to see copies of any assessments, eg equality impact assessment, please get in touch with:

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