



EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION

REPORT OF:	Executive Member for Regeneration Executive Member for Resources
LEAD OFFICERS:	Director of Growth and Development
DATE:	14 December 2017

PORTFOLIO/S AFFECTED:	Regeneration	Resources
WARD/S AFFECTED:	Shear Brow	Wensley Fold
KEY DECISION:	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	

SUBJECT: Blackburn Town Centre Development Proposals

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Building on the Council's investment in both Blackburn and Darwen Town Centres over a number of years, this report outlines new proposals which complement the Council's existing programmed schemes to deliver a number of significant regeneration projects within Blackburn Town Centre, including the Northgate Quarter. Existing proposals were published within the Executive Board Reports of 13th April 2017 and include:

- **Cinema Project** on the former Waves Leisure Centre site with the Council leading the development for a new cinema and two small leisure units leased to Reel Cinemas Ltd.
- **Blakey Moor Townscape Heritage Project** within the Northgate Conservation Area, which includes proposals for renovation and repair of the Victorian Blakey Moor terrace, former Baroque public house, King George's Hall front elevation and around 20 other historic buildings on Northgate and Lord Street West over the next 5 years. The project also includes a public realm improvement scheme which adjoins the new cinema project.

Three new proposals are now proposed to complement the existing projects and include:

- **Fabric Borders:** A new £2.9m infrastructure project supported by the National Productivity Investment Fund (NPIF) to reconfigure vehicular and pedestrian routes in the Tontine Street, Sudell Cross, Victoria Street/Whalley Range and Northgate areas across the Town Centre to remove vehicular congestion and conflicts, improve pedestrian wayfinding and movements and develop new, under-utilised sites, some in poor condition, on either side of Barbara Castle Way.
- **Public Car Park and infrastructure:** A new £2.5m scheme including a public car park and associated infrastructure to be provided below the new cinema development on the former Waves Leisure Centre site. The new car park will be open to the public and accessed from Feilden Street and provide around 98 spaces and will include investment in provision for Electrical Charging points. The car park will also provide opportunities for nearby surface level car parks to be developed in the future.
- **Jubilee Square:** A new £1.0m high quality public realm and associated infrastructure scheme to link the College campus with the Blakey Moor heritage area and the new Cinema. Jubilee Square will bring the neighbouring investment areas together, enhancing the setting, providing attractive pedestrian links and support the ongoing investment in the evening economy by attracting end users to establish and open new business premises in the area.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the **Executive Board:**

- i. Note the three new project proposals and the NPIF funding award;
- ii. Note that the Final Business Case for the Cinema, and the proposed Car Park and Jubilee Square will be provided to the Executive Board in April 2018 as a key decision prior to commencement; and
- iii. Further updates on Fabric Borders and Blakey Moor will be provided to the Executive Board at key decision stages.

3. BACKGROUND

The Council has invested and supported regeneration and development schemes in both Blackburn and Darwen town centres over many years, with recent examples being the Cathedral Quarter development in Blackburn, The Mall shopping centre improvements and the current investment in Darwen Town Centre improved public realm and open space on the former 3 day market site. These are positive developments which improve the towns and bring other private investment and increased footfall for businesses.

The background to the Cinema and Blakey Moor schemes has previously been set out in Executive Board Reports in April 2017; both of these schemes are closely aligned to the strategic vision introduced by the Council's Core Strategy and Town Centre Strategy. The Northgate Quarter has been defined within the Local Plan Part 2 – adopted in 2015 – as a key area of Blackburn town centre where the objective is to protect and enhance the leisure offer, support the development of an evening economy and encourage specific uses such as cultural and entertainment facilities, art galleries and music venues.

The identification of the Northgate Quarter, in addition to the established Northgate Conservation Area, helped to attain the Blakey Moor Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) scheme, which has secured a £3.5m investment from Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council, Heritage Lottery Fund and the private sector; and will transform the historic heart of the Northgate Quarter over the next 5 years. The new Cinema and the three new project proposals presented in this report will further strengthen the delivery of the Council's town centres strategy.

4. KEY ISSUES & RISKS

4.1 Fabric Borders

The Council has been successful in securing funding via the Department for Transport (DfT) sponsored NPIF programme. The project objectives are to improve vehicular and pedestrian access between Blackburn town centre and development areas both North and South of Barbara Castle Way. It will provide improved access to new development sites, under-utilised employment sites and emerging retail and cultural opportunities and marks the next phase of Blackburn town centre's regeneration. The works will be delivered using the Council's in-house team and complemented by contractors procured from the new Contractor & Development Framework (subject to Exec Board Approval). The Fabric Borders scheme will link through to the Blakey Moor scheme and provide continuity of high quality public realm in the town centre. The scheme is expected to be completed by 2021.

4.2 Public Car Park

Following detailed surveys an opportunity to include an undercroft car park within the new cinema development has been assessed and found to be a cost effective solution in adding more parking spaces within the area by utilising the natural fall in site levels. Initial scheme drawings indicate that 98 parking spaces can be provided under the cinema building which would be operated by the Council as pay-and-display for all town centre visitors (not only for cinema patrons). Vehicular access would be provided via Feilden Street and pedestrian access via Nab lane and Barton Street. The Nab lane access would adjoin the existing Feilden Street access with improvements to this access planned as part of the scheme. Electric vehicle charging points are also proposed for the car park. The new car park would be delivered as part of the existing cinema scheme and procured using the Contractor & Development Framework (subject to Exec Board Approval) and expected to be open along with the Cinema by December 2019.

4.3 Jubilee Square

In order to maximise the impact of the committed investments and ensure that an attractive and inviting setting is provided in line with the Conservation Area status and adjacent listed building, the creation of an identifiable public square is proposed, to be named Jubilee Square. The public square would connect the College campus with the Blakey Moor heritage area and the new Cinema as shown on the attached plan attached as Appendix A. The square would incorporate the external cinema terrace and seating area for the new leisure units and would incorporate a central green space feature, with relaxing seating and paving contrasts. The high quality public realm scheme would be delivered in parallel with the new cinema and public car park and would be procured using the Contractor & Development Framework (subject to Exec Board Approval) and would be expected to be completed by December 2019.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The development of the Northgate area meets the objectives of the Council's adopted Core Strategy and Local Plan Part 2. It also accords with the 'Culture and Life' objective of the Blackburn Town Centre Strategy. Specifically, Policy 26 of the Local plan supports the delivery of the projects within the defined Northgate Quarter.

The projects also help to deliver the improvements set out in the Northgate Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, and the heritage priority and ambitions within the Council's 12 point Plan.

All of these projects are to be illustrated within the Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), a draft version of which is set to be published for public consultation in early 2018.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Fabric Borders

The £2.9m project will be delivered using £2m of NPIF external grant funding with a Council contribution of £0.9m which will be funded from the Council's LTP programme. The NPIF funding contribution will be expended during 2018-2020 with any subsequent construction years funded by the Council. Any subsequent site acquisition will be considered on a business case investment basis and will be funded from the Council's Development Investment Fund or other capital funds should the opportunity arise.

6.2 Public Car Park

The new £2.5m project would be delivered as part of the existing Cinema scheme on the former Waves Leisure Centre site. The scheme would be funded from Council borrowings to be included in the capital programme and will be subject to a Final Business Case assessment to ensure the scheme is financially viable prior to final approval.

6.3 Jubilee Square

Subject to approval, the new £1.0m project will be delivered as part of the existing Cinema scheme on the former Waves Leisure Centre site. The scheme will be funded from the Council's LTP programme and included in the capital programme with the funding profile included in the Cinema Final Business Case.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Procurement of the works will be via the Contractor & Development Framework (subject to Executive Board Approval).

Most of this report is for noting only so presently there are few specific legal implications until the Projects are more refined and approved. In general however procurement, property and highways legal requirements will be the main areas of pertinent law.

The extant Executive Decisions of 13 April 2017 have a number of legal actions which are currently ongoing.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Resource demands for the new projects in terms of officer time will be met by the existing Growth and Development team supported by Procurement, Legal and Property officers.

9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Please select one of the options below. Where appropriate please include the hyperlink to the EIA.

Option 1 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) not required – the EIA checklist has been completed.

Option 2 In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. (*insert EIA link here*)

Option 3 In determining this matter the Executive Board Members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. (*insert EIA attachment*)

10. CONSULTATIONS

All of the projects will be outlined within the Town Centre SPD which will be published for consultation in early 2018.

11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

The recommendations are made further to advice from the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer has confirmed that they do not incur unlawful expenditure. They are also compliant with equality legislation and an equality analysis and impact assessment has been considered. The recommendations reflect the core principles of good governance set out in the Council's Code of Corporate Governance.

12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

All Declarations of Interest of any Executive Member consulted and note of any dispensation granted by the Chief Executive will be recorded in the Summary of Decisions published on the day following the meeting.

VERSION:	2.0
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CONTACT OFFICER:	Simon Jones, Programme Director, Department of Growth & Development
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DATE:	24 th November 2017
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BACKGROUND PAPER:	Executive Board Reports for Blakey Moor and Cinema Development published in April 2017.
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