HIGH STREET SOUTH REGENERATION PROPOSAL
DROP IN EVENT
NOVEMBER 2019

Gateshead Council
Introduction

This event will provide information on the plans for the High Street South.

Council staff are on hand to talk about the plans and can help you access available support.

One-to-one appointments can be booked with Sanderson Weatherall to discuss property valuation and purchasing. Support is also available from the Business Gateshead Team.

Around the room you will see information boards and there is more information available in this leaflet.
Background

In 2017, in response to the continued deterioration of the southern end of the High Street, the Council began a process of an area review with the aim of finding options for sustainable and lasting regeneration.

Local Site Context

High Street South is situated south of the primary shopping area and is bounded by the A167, High West Street and Charles Street. The area totals 8.43 hectares, of which 2.1 hectares is currently available for development. The remaining area is predominately in private and other public ownership.

The Council owned residential blocks of Regent Court and Warwick Court are situated next to the development area.

Gateshead Probation Services, the Magistrates Courts, Police Station and Royal Mail sorting office are located within the High Street South boundary area.

The underground Metro line crosses the north east part of the site.
Why is the Council seeking to regenerate this area?

The UK retail sector is struggling across most of the country, and evidence shows that Gateshead Town Centre is experiencing economic distress with high vacancy rates of 28.1% (2018). This is one of the highest in the North East.

The main clusters of empty properties are along the southern end of the High Street with approximately 12 long term empty or underused properties (2018). Evidence from communication with the Council and the Town Centre Survey 2018 indicated that the perception of the area is; that it’s dangerous and unsafe and the Council is under pressure from residents and users to act. Some owners are experiencing difficulties with letting commercial premises and are looking to withdraw from the area, this indicates a surplus supply of retail accommodation for the needs of the town.

Discussions with property agents have identified that the condition of High Street South is presenting a threat to the sustainability of the town centre and to wider regeneration and job creation. This has left businesses, owners, residents and potential investors in limbo and a full assessment was required to take account of its current circumstances and what comes next.
History of the High Street South Area

Historic maps identify the development of the High Street with key routes and barriers already established by the train line, High Street and Sunderland Road (then ‘Turnpike’) as early as 1835.

In the mid-1860s there was a significant push in the construction of large housing estates, with the first version of the Chandless estate built between 1866 and 1869. This terraced housing – along with the Tyne Nail Works, tramway and theatres and other commercial enterprises - is identifiable in historic maps dated 1897.

In 1949 development land for housing was in short supply. In 1956 the ‘Dickensian district’ of Chandless was cleared, following the discovery that over 30% of families lived in overcrowded housing.

The new Chandless Estate was created in 1962 in multi-storey blocks. In recent years, structural problems and poor-quality accommodation led to an assessment on how to improve the Chandless Estate. Careful consideration of costs and benefits resulted in a decision to relocate tenants and demolish Chandless Estate.

The Gateshead Flyover was constructed in 1970. Removing the Gateshead Flyover, to make way for the city Boulevard is part of the long term vision for the area.
What is the Vision for High Street South?

The Council started to review High Street South in late 2017.

Initial workshops envisioned the High Street South area not as a traditional high street but as a vibrant area of mixed residential housing and leisure facilities with well-designed streets and green spaces to encourage walking and cycling and promote a healthy, active lifestyles.

A key priority is for the residential development to promote multi-generational living with mixed tenure to suit a range of housing needs.

The flyover would be removed or repurposed and the area connected to neighbouring facilities and residential areas, the new Exemplar Neighbourhood (as described later in this document).

Objectives:

The Council’s Vision for High Street South ultimately seeks to meet the following objectives:

• Attract more people of all ages to live in Central Gateshead in good quality homes.

• Provide new employment opportunities within Central Gateshead and increase the sustainability of the primary shopping area.

• Create high quality green streets and public open spaces, supporting health and wellbeing and encouraging active lifestyles; and

• Deliver a more accessible and well-connected Central Gateshead for pedestrians and cyclists, supporting the low carbon strategy.
The Council drew up a Delivery Plan to support the development of the vision and to help it scope out options and how these might be delivered.

The Delivery Plan assessed the following factors:

- The constraints and opportunities of the site to understand what type of development is possible
- Market context and interest from investors and developers
- Range of intervention options
- Economic benefits of different intervention options
- Wider benefits to Gateshead
- Funding and finance plan
- Delivery Options
- Review of risks
- The planning context

To ensure confidence in the report’s findings, the Council further investigated the recommendations.
Ownership & Constraints

Ownership
The Council has already acquired several properties to the western side of the High Street (utilising Homes and Communities Agency grant funding), with some selective demolitions having already taken place.

Site Constraints
There are several constraints within the High Street South area that are identified on the plan above and have been reflected within the review of development options and the proposals for regeneration.
Planning Policy

Core Strategy and Urban Core Plan for Gateshead and Newcastle upon Tyne 2010-2030 (CSUCP) (2015)

The CSUCP guides development in Newcastle and Gateshead until 2030, based on a comprehensive evidence base of need and demand.

Regarding the town centre, the CSUCP:

• Reduced the size of the primary shopping area, recognising that the southern end of the High Street was no longer part of the primary shopping offer.

• Clarified that “big box” retail should be located in the southern end of the High Street where this could not be accommodated in the primary shopping area.

It also includes policies specific to the whole Exemplar Neighbourhood, including the need to bring forward the site in accordance with approved masterplans to demonstrate a comprehensive and coordinated approach to site development and infrastructure provision.

Exemplar Neighbourhood Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (2013)

The Exemplar Neighbourhood Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) was adopted in July 2013. The SPD provides design guidance and development aspirations, and should be read in conjunction with the CSUCP.

For the High Street area, the SPD states that the Council will support the area and its businesses whilst continuing to examine the potential for further property acquisitions (taking into account the condition and heritage of property) and working towards assembly of viable development sites.

Since the SPD was adopted in 2013, there has been significant change in legislation, the retail and housing markets, public sector budgets and Council objectives. The evidence gathered for the 2018 High St South Delivery Plan reinforces these fundamental changes, concluding that a more proactive approach is needed to attract investment to deliver change in the area and support job creation.
Development Options

The Delivery Plan process involved a detailed review of different development options and scales of intervention and assessed the costs, viability and impact against the Council’s vision and objectives.

Three main categories were considered:
• Do nothing- (no intervention in the area).
• Minimal or piecemeal intervention; including retention, refurbishment, infill development, finance packages, value for money, previous experience of similar schemes and sustainability.
• Comprehensive development intervention.

The assessment outcome was conclusive. The following key themes emerged;
• Only comprehensive development will achieve the vision and objectives and will provide sustainable development in the long term.
• Only comprehensive development will attract investment to unlock all the development opportunities.
• The Town Centre needs to contract by up to 15-20%.
• Retail and leisure should be in the primary shopping area (as identified in the 2015 Core Strategy and Urban Core Plan).
• The condition of most of the available property is either too expensive to bring back into use and the range of finance and funding options explored concluded that it would not be cost effective to pursue this strategy and at best would only result in short term piecemeal improvements.

Why hasn’t the Council actively advertised existing land and property in recent years:
• The Council has previously put vacant property on the market and found demand was very low and the costs of investment to bring property up to a habitable standard or to meet needs of enquiries was prohibitive.
• The Council does not advertise land for sale before a full assessment of development options and a resolution on what form regeneration could take.
• However, we have undertaken market soundings from the investment community, and they have been clear that they have no investment interest to bringing forward development in the area in the current conditions and would not consider developing around all, or parts of the exiting southern end of the High Street.
The proposals for the area are ambitious and will transform this important part of Gateshead and its economy over the short, medium and long-term. This is a town centre location and the concept designs and proposals are embedded in the opportunities of a large site in single ownership and the need to sustain and improve the performance of the Town Centre.

The Council recognises the challenges of bringing forward this regeneration and the essential requirement to bring forward a vision of:

- 700 homes
- 12 mixed use spaces – could be commercial, community or service units, an urban park and a new public square
- mixture of apartments and housing with both private and shared gardens to help address the deficiency in open space
- much needed greenery and improved public spaces

The entire development cost is approximately £90m and will be bought forward in phases over a 20 year timeframe.
Four Opportunity Areas have been identified for the ultimate transformation of the wider High Street South area and help with a phased approach to the regeneration.

The Nail Works • 4.1 acres (1.66 Ha)
A new contemporary public square would incorporate the new Sunderland Road bus and cycle connection; fronted by opportunities for mixed commercial uses. Market soundings suggest that co-working and other neighbourhood services aligned with the vision could be deliverable.

Park Lane Terraces • 4.0 acres (1.60 Ha)
The residential heart of the Framework: a strong landscape buffer is proposed along the eastern boundary of the area to the Gateshead Highway Flyover, with pedestrian and cycle routes proposed to connect into the areas of new housing. A new gateway landscape on the corner of Charles Street and Gateshead highway is proposed to enhance the arrival experience and quality of the area.

Quarry Park 6.6 acres (2.66 Ha)
Quarry Park sits between the core development area of High Street South, and the town centre and transport interchange to the north. It plays a vital role in ensuring the regenerative benefits of the High Street South masterplan are shared between the new development and existing town centre.

Southern Gateway and Civic Quarter • 6.2 acres (2.51 Ha)
The Southern Gateway is characterised by the Police Station and Magistrates Court which cascade down the hill towards the new Nail Works Square. Three proposed buildings provide an opportunity to landmark this approach into the area from the south. The location of the buildings can be arranged to create improved pedestrian movement through the site to connect to High Street North.
Inspirations

Concept image showing courtyard setting between homes

Truitt Bark Park - Sacramento

Contemporary Terraced Housing, Drøbak, Norway
Phasing Plans

When will this affect me?

PHASE 1 ACQUISITION - CELL 1-3 (2019-2023)

The Council has announced a phase 1 voluntary acquisition area (265-249 High Street) and is in the process of contacting all owners, tenants and leaseholders in the area.

The Council would like to acquire all the interests in the first phase acquisition area by agreement and resources have been committed by the Council for this purpose.

Owners of property are invited to contact the Council’s agent Sanderson Weatherall to arrange an inspection and valuation. Please contact the Council for further information using the email: highstreetsouth@gateshead.gov.uk

If agreement cannot be reached the Council may seek to make a compulsory purchase order and will start the process by the end of 2020.

During the process of applying to use compulsory powers the Council will continue to use all efforts to acquire by agreement.

PHASE 2 ACQUISITION - CELL 4 (2023-2027)

The Council will be seeking to acquire the interests in Cell 4 in the attached map from 2023 onwards. If you are an owner, tenant or leaseholder in this area and would like to speak to the Council about this timeframe please contact the Council.

How will this affect me?

This will depend on your circumstances and whether you own or lease property in the area and whether you are a commercial or residential tenant or owner. The Council has produced further information on the options for support and compensation. This information is available on the Council’s website, a paper format and can be produced in other formats as required.

How has the initial area for acquisition been selected?

In order to achieve the vision, the Council will need to assemble a development area of enough scale and size for new development to take place.
Next Steps

1. The Council is inviting representations on the Council’s decision to seek development of High Street South.
2. You can make representations from now until the 16 January 2020.
3. You can submit your representation in person, by e-mail highstreetsouth@gateshead.gov.uk or through our consultation portal www.gateshead.gov.uk/highstreetsouth.
4. A response will be provided on the Council’s website and in other formats if required.
5. If you have submitted comments already this has been noted and will be included in the response.
6. There will be a second drop in event on 28 November 2019 here at the Civic Centre 3.30-7pm.
7. The Council will continue to acquire land and building interests through negotiation in the identified first phase of acquisition and will offer support to assist with commercial relocation and housing options advice.
8. The demolition of 332-354 High Street is proposed to commence early in 2020.
9. The Council will commence the process of making a Compulsory Purchase Order by the end of 2020.
10. An area wide masterplan or development framework will be developed and submitted by the end of 2020.

Developing the town centre

Gateshead is one of four national future places and is currently in receipt of a package of support to produce a concept masterplan with a focus on the town centre and primary shopping area.

The aim of this piece of work is to assess a range of measures that could improve the performance of the town centre and build on the economic and social benefits of the University accommodation, Trinity Square, Gateshead College campus, developments on Baltic Quarter and the future regeneration of Gateshead Quays which includes arena, conference and exhibition centre.

The outcome of this work is expected in early January.

Town Centre Governance
The Council is applying for funding to achieve these objectives and is in the process of establishing a working group made up of private, public and community partners to drive through this change.

Community Engagement
We will be welcoming your views on the future development and regeneration of the town centre and the High Street South area.

Please join the mailing list at: highstreetsouth@gateshead.gov.uk if you wish to be kept informed and consulted.