

TITLE OF REPORT: **Review of Physical Regeneration Impact of the
Regeneration of Gateshead Quays and links to
Gateshead Town Centre – Final Report**

REPORT OF: **Roger Kelly, Chief Executive
Derek Quinn, Group Director, Development and
Enterprise**

SUMMARY

This report sets out the findings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the physical regeneration of Gateshead Quays and links to Gateshead Town Centre. It sets out a number of recommendations from the Committee on how the Council can focus its own actions, and also work with partners, to make the most of the developments of the Quays and improve the links to Gateshead Town Centre. These recommendations have been developed from evidence provided by officers both within Gateshead Council and from other local authorities, residents, local businesses and transport operators.

Report structure

1. This report sets out the findings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the impact of the regeneration of Gateshead Quays and links to the Town Centre.
2. The report includes details of:-
 - The aims of the review
 - How the review was carried out
 - Issues emerging from the review
 - Recommendations

The aims of the review

3. The Review focused around three key points:
 - The direct impact that the physical regeneration of Gateshead Quays has made on the borough - and the Town Centre in particular;
 - The effect any planned or proposed future Gateshead Quays developments may have on the borough – and the town centre in particular;
 - The physical links between Gateshead Quays and Gateshead Town Centre and how these can be improved.

How the review was carried out

4. This report is the result of three evidence gathering sessions of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee between September 2006 and February 2007, notes of the sessions are set out in Appendix 1
5. During these three sessions the Committee considered and analysed evidence from:
 - Officers from Development and Enterprise
 - The Sage Gateshead
 - Hull City Council
 - City and Northern Development Company
 - La Riviera Restaurant (Gateshead Quays)
 - Nexus (PTE)
 - Gateshead Community Network
 - Gateshead Youth Assembly
 - Manchester City Council
6. Members of the Committee also visited Manchester City Centre to assess the impact of successful regeneration and identify good practice that Gateshead could learn from. In addition members also visited the Gateshead and Scotswood Road riverside area to identify ways to make the most of future regeneration.

Summary and analysis of evidence

Impact of the Physical Regeneration of Gateshead Quays

7. The transformation of Gateshead Quays has had an enormous positive effect on Gateshead. More people are visiting Gateshead, more businesses are relocating to Gateshead, there has been more inward investment and both national and international recognition. The Sage Gateshead for example has made a significant impact in terms of numbers of visitors, cultural opportunities and the wide range of audiences it caters for from local communities to international visitors.
8. Gateshead has proven, with the Angel, the Gateshead Millennium Bridge, Baltic and The Sage Gateshead, that it can develop and deliver high profile projects of international significance. The Committee felt that it was important that the Council recognised the positive impact that the regeneration of the Quays has made and celebrated the achievements.
9. Evidence was presented estimating that The Sage Gateshead has created up to 564 jobs in the area and in total The Sage Gateshead has generated an impact of around £14m to the North East economy during its first year. This makes the Sage Gateshead the most significant arts venue in England in terms of its GVA impact outside London and in relative terms more important to the economy of Tyne and Wear than the London Philharmonic Orchestra,

Royal Opera House, English National Ballet, English National Opera, National Portrait Gallery and South Bank Centre combined are to London.

10. The economic impact of the regeneration of the Quays is one of the key drivers for Gateshead's future development. Unemployed residents in Gateshead have been supported through training opportunities to gain employment in high profile developments including Baltic and The Hilton Hotel. Many other local people have been able to find employment opportunities in a range of areas on Gateshead Quays itself from development work to maintenance and customer services. In total it is estimated that the regeneration of the Quays has helped to support around 38,000 jobs (4.4% of employment) in the area.
11. The physical regeneration of the Quays means more people are working and living in this part of Gateshead. The new developments including GQ2 will build on this aiming to ensure that the prosperity and economic impact will continue to improve. The Committee agreed that Gateshead should make the most of the potential impact by connecting Gateshead Quays to the Town Centre in a more effective way. The Committee also agreed that developments around the Quays should build on the excellent quality and design already at Gateshead Quays thereby setting a high standard for future development.
12. The regeneration has increased aspirations and expectations amongst residents, businesses and visitors about the potential Gateshead has. The Gateshead Community Network presented evidence that suggested that local people want a Town Centre for the future that matches the impressive look and feel and impact of Gateshead Quays.
13. Building on this the Committee identified a number of key issues and developed recommendations for consideration by the Council and partners.

Issues emerging from the review

Vision for the future role of Gateshead Town Centre

14. Evidence suggested that the Town Centre and Gateshead Quays are not currently connected or related in any way. This could mean that many of the people visiting the Quays do not also consider visiting the Town Centre at the same time. Evidence suggested that the two areas are separated not only by the traffic routes but separate in design, offer and experience.
15. The evidence presented during this Review reinforced the importance of regenerating the Town Centre to the Committee. A significant investment plan is a priority for Gateshead Council to address this. Built into this is the importance of an excellent neighbourhood offer for the people living around the Quays and Town Centre area. It is especially important in attracting the investment needed to ensure the sustainability of Gateshead. In addition evidence suggested that new and developing communities might need

infrastructure such as community centres, educational and health provision if population levels are to grow to a sustainable level.

16. The Committee agreed that as the area developed it was important that good landscaping was considered and that any demolished areas should be cleared. In addition the Committee agreed that protected walk in areas such as covered markets would help to increase the numbers of people visiting the area.
17. Encouraging people to visit both Gateshead Quays and the Town Centre is vitally important. By enabling more people to visit the area it will help to ensure that both are sustainable in the long term. This will enhance Gateshead's standing both locally, nationally and internationally.

Separation and Connectivity

18. Evidence suggested that there are a number of barriers between the Quays and the Town Centre that make it difficult for people to travel between the two areas. These barriers include the topography, the rail viaduct, the trunk roads, the flyover and poor signage. The current traffic and pedestrian routes are not clear or attractive and discourage people from visiting both areas. Evidence was presented by businesses, the Community Network and Gateshead Youth Assembly that these issues should be considered and resolved in the Town Centre redevelopment.
19. The volume of traffic in the area separates the Quays from the rest of Gateshead. The viaduct and flyover also serve as a barrier between the Town Centre and the Quays. A number of ways of overcoming this problem, such as through the use of tunnelling, are being implemented elsewhere in Europe. The riverside route and access from the East of the borough could also be improved.
20. The Committee agreed that innovative connections would be a useful way to overcome separation problems although such solutions would need to be carefully considered. It was felt that something special was needed to match the impressive look and feel of Gateshead Quays.

Transport and Accessibility

21. Evidence was presented suggesting that some Gateshead residents find it difficult to visit the Quays area using public transport. Issues included public transport timetables and changing modes of transport. The Committee agreed that public transport could be better at linking up to some areas of the Borough.
22. The Committee also heard evidence from residents and young people about the cost of using public transport. This is perceived as a barrier that may prevent local people from using public transport. In particular people on low incomes and families may find the cost to be an issue.

23. The Committee heard evidence suggesting that improvements to street lighting and signage at the Quays area may be helpful to visitors.
24. Evidence was presented by The Sage Gateshead about congestion problems on the roads leading out of the Quays area following performances and events. The evidence suggested that the road layout could perhaps be improved to help to resolve this issue.

Engaging and connecting with local communities

25. There is a need to encourage responsible behaviour as a core value. The Council and its partners should investigate ways to adopt this core principle consistently across all areas of work.
26. Future developments would need to be accessible to everyone whilst creating opportunities and increasing the aspirations of local people. Local people need to feel ownership of the Quays and future regeneration work.
27. The Gateshead Youth Assembly presented evidence suggesting that conventional methods of communicating with young people do not always work. The Committee agreed that improvements in the ways in which we communicate with young people should be made.
28. The Community Network presented evidence suggesting that local people do not identify with developments at the Quayside. In order to enjoy the area and appreciate it people need to be able to understand it. Some local people need support e.g. transport, guidance to enable them to go to the Quays and to understand what is there.
29. Examples of what needs to be done in the future included:

Vision for the future role of Gateshead Town Centre

- Capitalise on opportunities to present and promote the successes of Gateshead Quays to partners. Involve partners and explore opportunities for private investment identifying common goals and objectives that could enhance Gateshead's standing further.
- Investigate how to improve high quality public spaces through the Town Centre Strategy that people can enjoy and make use of.
- Create a safe environment for children and young people at the Quays and within the Town Centre. There should be areas that attract children, young people and families. Suggestions included a cinema, play area, public square with green spaces and family friendly establishments.
- Develop a clear neighbourhood 'offer' with communities. There is a clear need to develop a mix of tenure in terms of housing provision to appeal to a wide range of people of all ages and background to improve sustainability of Gateshead. Following from this the Quays and Town Centre 'offer' should appeal to a wide range of groups and suit different tastes e.g. young people, families, couples, older people and people from different ethnic backgrounds.

- Investigate the benefits of developing a role for a Gateshead Town Centre Manager to oversee the development of the Town Centre and the links to Gateshead Quays as well as other areas of the borough.
- The Committee agreed that it was important that the Town Centre should retain and develop its own identity and make more of its past. A greater range of shops would attract more people to the area recognising the need to cater for a wide variety of groups of people and individuals.
- The Committee felt that the possibility of developing a market culture in the area could be investigated. Examples included attracting the French, German and other international markets.

Separation and Connectivity

- Different road design and access routes may help to encourage residents and visitors to move between the Town Centre and the Quayside.
- Promote the use of the bridges across the Tyne as a link for pedestrians between Newcastle and Gateshead.
- The Committee agreed that pedestrian routes around the Quays are important, as people need to be able to move freely around the area. Such routes play a large role in helping to improve connectivity and safety perception as well as increasing the sense of ownership. There are a range of ways that this could be achieved although they would need to be thoroughly investigated as part of a wider review into transport routes which would also look at making the routes between the Quays and Gateshead Town Centre easier to negotiate. Investigate possible solutions to the separation problems and identify funding for further detailed studies where appropriate.
- Open and green spaces and squares are important for communities and could form an important feature of regeneration. They can be used creatively and suit a range of functions such as markets, music and arts displays. Meeting areas where people can sit outside and have lunch. The Committee agreed that these could help to connect different areas together so that they have a common feel.
- Continue to work with the public and private sectors to set common objectives and identify funding for improvements.

Transport and Accessibility

- The Committee agreed that an integrated public transport system is an important factor in enabling people to visit the Quays and the redeveloped Town Centre. There is a need to ensure that transport connections are carefully considered, are appropriately linked and that effective communication takes place with potential passengers as early as possible in development schemes.
- The Committee agreed that public transport to the Quays area is important. A number of new ideas were suggested to improve this. These include encouraging transport providers to set up family travel ticket schemes and schemes for people travelling to events. Investigate the scope of extending the concept of a free bus service to build on the free Quayslink service that has been used successfully in the past. It was also suggested that potential

public transport opportunities on the river Tyne could be explored. Funding would need to be identified by working with public and private partners.

- It was suggested that the Council, working with transport providers, explore the possibility of expanding the Quayslink bus route into other areas of Gateshead such as The Shipley Art Gallery and Saltwell Park or down the west of the Quays.
- Continue to work in partnership with neighbouring authorities where appropriate to develop solutions to common traffic problems.
- Evidence presented from businesses suggested that the Council could establish closer links with established and new local businesses and identify ways in which they can work together to overcome issues such as signage and lighting problems.

Engaging and connecting with local communities

- Work with Quayside businesses on how we can enable local communities to visit and experience the Quays.
- Explore opportunities to hold meetings of the Youth Assembly at the Quays or invite members of the Youth Assembly to meetings at venues such as Baltic or The Sage Gateshead.
- Make better use of communication forums with children and young people to publicise events at the Quays.
- Explore further opportunities for local people to exhibit their work in venues such as Baltic.
- Further promotion of the core principle of encouraging responsible behaviour in the Council and partner's work across Gateshead and linking this more closely to the RESPECT agenda. This principle is important for sustainability of neighbourhoods as well as wider public areas.
- The Committee agreed that a developed role for frontline employees to help visitors to the Quays would be a good way of addressing a range of accessibility issues. Concepts included Street Rangers, Ambassadors and Taxi Sergeants. These initiatives would aim to help more people to understand the Quays area and opportunities it offers as well as ensuring that visitors felt welcome and safer in the area.

Recommendations

30. This report aims to summarise the key findings arising from the OSC's review of the Physical Regeneration of Gateshead Quays and Links to the Town Centre. Some of these recommendations are short terms aims whilst some are longer term.
31. Specifically, the Committee recommends that the Council, with full involvement of the relevant partners, should:
 - i. Recognise how far Gateshead has come in the past 20 years and highlight the work that has transformed Gateshead including the successful major projects that have helped to regenerate the Quays.

- ii. Explore the opportunity to use innovative connections to overcome separation between Gateshead Quays and the Town Centre. Suggestions included a Cable Car, travelator and pedestrian tunnels.
 - iii. Commission a study to investigate ways to overcome the separation issues caused by road traffic around the Quays and the Town Centre including an audit of best practice, cost, funding and potential impact.
 - iv. Explore opportunities to maximise pedestrian areas in the Town Centre and surrounding vicinity and minimise vehicle access where appropriate.
 - v. Continue to develop partnership working and engagement with the public, private and voluntary sector and with residents to identify solutions to both short term and long term problems.
 - vi. Consider the possibility of introducing additional lighting improvements at the Quays that is artistic and is jointly funded by different sectors.
 - vii. Investigate the feasibility of developing a free bus service connecting people from community centre hubs to Gateshead Quays as part of the Community Centre Review.
 - viii. Establish a programme of engagement events between local community centres and Gateshead Quays.
 - ix. Increase capacity of frontline workers to support local people to visit, understand and enjoy Gateshead Quays.
 - x. Review communication channels with children and young people and identify opportunities to enable more people to visit attractions at the Quays by working with youth engagement forums and schools.
 - xi. Investigate feasibility of locating a railway station at Coulthards Lane to improve access to the Gateshead College site and Baltic Business Quarter.
 - xii. Identify ways to open up and improve the approach by road to the Quays from East Gateshead to improve accessibility and address traffic problems.
 - xiii. Improve the central highway route in the Quays area to encourage people to visit the Quays including investigating the feasibility and impact of removing the flyover.
 - xiv. The recommendations from this review will inform part of the ongoing development of the Town Centre Strategy.
32. These actions should be met within existing budgets however the Council will seek to maximise resources by looking to identify future funding from both the public and private sectors.
33. It is recommended that the Sustainable Communities (Place) Overview and Scrutiny Committee agree that the Chairman of this Committee present this report to Cabinet as representing the Committee's findings and recommendations of the review.

Contact: Lindsay Kirkley, Director of Policy and Improvement, **Ext 2794**
Sheila Johnston, Director, Development and Enterprise, **Ext 3880**
