

North Yorkshire Council

Skipton and Ripon Area Constituency Committee

7 March 2024

Bentham Masterplan

Report of the Corporate Director (Community Development)

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update Members on the process to develop a community led Masterplan for Bentham and present the final plan detailing its scope and approach.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 Through a wider North Yorkshire initiative, a group of individuals in Bentham have been working with North Yorkshire Council and Bentham Town Council to produce a masterplan for the town. This report introduces the plan, the four themes and the areas of activity proposed. The report recommends that the development of the plan and its community led approach is noted and that the plan is given due regard by this committee when considering future opportunities within the town.

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In 2021, promoted through the work of the Directors of Development, North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC), the District Councils and the York and North Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (YNY LEP) developed an initiative to produce masterplans for several towns across the County – the scope and level of detail in each would differ based on local circumstances.
- 3.2 As a result, the former Craven District Council (CDC) proposed Bentham for this initiative due to being Craven's second largest settlement, having a role as a service centre for the north of the district and its position at the western extremity of North Yorkshire.
- 3.3 Having sought quotations from the market to undertake the work, feedback from potential bidders was that the available budget did not reflect the level of work required in the procurement brief.
- 3.4 Not wanting to see the opportunity stall, a group of four residents from the Bentham area with senior management experience in the public, private and voluntary sector came forward with an offer to deliver a public consultation exercise and produce a masterplan on a voluntary basis, although their proposed schedule of work varied somewhat from the original procurement brief.
- 3.5 Following discussion between CDC, NYCC and Bentham Town Council (BTC) this offer was accepted.

4.0 DEVELOPMENT OF THE MASTERPLAN

- 4.1 During late 2022 the Masterplan Group sought public feedback through individual and group questionnaires in electronic and printed format. The opportunity to respond was promoted through local networks, printed and electronic publications, specialist groups and the primary school.
- 4.2 Approximately 400 responses to the questionnaire were received (a c.12% response rate based on the Bentham population). The output from this consultation is detailed in a summary report (February 2023) and was presented by the Masterplan Group for awareness and feedback at a formal meeting of BTC on the 3 March 2023 and made available on the BTC website.
- 4.3 Based on consultation feedback, development of the masterplan commenced in March 2023. Drafting followed an iterative process through group meetings and discussion with local groups and organisations that were involved in specific areas of activity.
- 4.4 The format of the final draft Plan, as at Appendix A, is presented as a medium to long term plan based around an overall vision for the town:
- “To ensure that Bentham retains its distinctive identity and strengthens its role as a sustainable and economically prosperous town with a vibrant and supportive community.”
- 4.5 Supporting the vision are a series of four themes each focusing on a key area identified during public consultation:
1. Connectivity – including physical and digital
 2. Natural and Built Environment
 3. Business and Employment
 4. Community and Facilities
- 4.6 Within each theme ‘areas of activity’ are identified that, rather than being fully developed projects, act as ‘hooks’ and give guidance on the scope of potential future projects. Should an organisation wish to commission or progress an initiative that meets their purpose and objectives the Masterplan provides them with the necessary context for the project, and outline of what is anticipated and how it aligns with other areas of activity in the theme. This arrangement is detailed on the ‘one page masterplan’ (Appendix A, page 14).
- 4.7 The extent of delivery within each area of activity varies from responding to consultation exercises and facilitating or enabling activity through to direct delivery of schemes. The appropriateness of the delivery body and level of intervention is dependent on the project at a specific point in time. As such the plan therefore stops short of determining delivery approaches or timescales.
- 4.8 It should also be noted that the Plan is not a statutory document, a spatial document, constrained by delivery timescales or a commitment to identify or deliver a funded programme of activity by any organisation.
- 4.9 As a result of the work by the volunteer group the draft plan was presented to an informal meeting of Bentham Town Councillors on the 17 July 2023 to seek their feedback on proposed scope, layout, and priorities of the plan. The Councillors present were informally supportive of the document and no significant issues or changes were identified. Like this Committee it is anticipated the plan will be considered by a future meeting of Bentham Town Council for them to note and confirm their approach to continued involvement.

- 4.10 Although North Yorkshire Council (formally NYCC and CDC) initiated the process for the Masterplan the final document will be distributed locally through electronic and printed means by the Masterplan Group to those organisations who contributed to its development.

5.0 FUTURE ACTIVITY

- 5.1 There has been a significant amount of work undertaken by the volunteer Masterplan Group during a time of change in local government structures and it is recommended that thanks are given to those who have given their time to author this document.
- 5.2 At the outset it was agreed that the Bentham Masterplan would not be a document owned or delivered by a single organisation, rather as detailed by the authors in the Preface, the Plan is designed to support Bentham and the many organisations active in the town. This community-based approach to the development and delivery of activities within the plan offers the continued ability for those organisations planning projects to evidence up-to-date local need, priorities and opportunities when bidding for funding or developing a business case.
- 5.3 The masterplan identifies themes and areas of activity that are wholly or in part delivered by NYC. As is currently the case, where existing or proposed activity involves NYC this will need to align with the wider decisions of the Council and / or policies of the respective service(s) e.g. prioritisation of highway schemes. With regard to NYC services the masterplan also identifies potential opportunities to add value to these activities whether through joint working, leveraging in additional funding or volunteer activity as appropriate.
- 5.4 With regard to the Economic Development, Regeneration, Tourism and Skills (EDRTS) Service, the North Yorkshire Council Economic Growth Strategy 2024 – 2029 has a clear priority for ‘Equipping our Towns for the 21st Century. Specifically, the Bentham Masterplan provides the basis of a future Local Economic Action Plan to ensure the town is considered in future delivery plans where relevant to the EDRTS Service.
- 5.5 In addition, the Masterplan provides the ACC itself with a guide for priorities in the Bentham area when considering requests related to Bentham or potential activity such as through locality grants, the ‘ACC £50k Fund’ or other funding programmes available to the Committee and its Members.
- 5.6 In relation to existing support for businesses, Bentham continues to be eligible to access a range of services from the York and North Yorkshire Growth Hub, now operated by the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority (YNYCA) – as per Theme 3 the business support offer and wider support programmes will continue to be advertised in the town.
- 5.7 Finally, North Yorkshire Council is delivering several initiatives that provide opportunity to support delivery of proposals within the masterplan whether by the Council or third parties. This includes the current community and business call for projects related to the Shared Prosperity and the Rural England Prosperity Fund which have been and will continue to be promoted locally.

6.0 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN AND RESPONSES

- 6.1 In addition to the early-stage public consultation and the review by Bentham town councillors, the Plan has been subject to written engagement and consultation with a series of key North Yorkshire Council service areas to ensure alignment with service priorities, identify opportunities to add value to upcoming activity and generally raise awareness of the document itself.

6.2 Feedback received from this NYC engagement confirmed the content of the Masterplan was well written and realistic in its aspirations. In addition, there was some minor suggestions that would improve the usability or detail of the document. Finally, there were several opportunities that added value to the themes and future activity.

7.0 CONTRIBUTION TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES

7.1 Due to the wide nature of the themes and actions within the Bentham Masterplan there is similarity to the Vision of the North Yorkshire Council 'Council Plan 2023 – 2027', the ambitions of the Council and the four pillars of locality working.

8.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

8.1 As the initial procurement did not appoint a consultant to deliver a Masterplan for Bentham the opportunity could have been readvertised for procurement with an amended scope.

9.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

11.1 An initial equality impact assessment screening form has been completed. As this report is for noting and awareness the initial screening identified there are no direct equality implications arising from the recommendations.

12.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

12.1 An initial climate change impact assessment has been completed. As this report is for noting and awareness the initial screening identified there are no direct climate change implications arising from the recommendations.

13.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

13.1 To recognise the significant work undertaken by the Bentham Masterplan Group in producing a comprehensive plan for the future of Bentham, to note the partnership nature of the Plan and to note the ability for the Committee to give due regard to the Plan when considering priorities for the Area Constituency.

14.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee,

- i) gives thanks to the volunteer Bentham Masterplan Group for their work in consulting, drafting and overseeing the development of the Plan;
- ii) notes the community-based nature of the masterplan including the vision, themes and areas of activity enabling all those active within Bentham to contribute;
- iii) gives due regard to the masterplan to help inform and evidence its consideration and recommendations on future activity within the Bentham area.

APPENDICES:

- Appendix A – Bentham Masterplan

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

- None

Nic Harne
Corporate Director – Community Development
County Hall
Northallerton
7 March 2024

Report Author – Andrew Laycock, Economic Development Officer
Presenter of Report – Andrew Laycock, Economic Development Officer

Note: Members are invited to contact the author in advance of the meeting with any detailed queries or questions.

Initial equality impact assessment screening form This form records an equality screening process to determine the relevance of equality to a proposal, and a decision whether or not a full EIA would be appropriate or proportionate.	
Directorate	Community Development
Service area	Economic Development, Regeneration, Tourism and Skills
Proposal being screened	Bentham Masterplan
Officer(s) carrying out screening	Sharon Sunter, Andrew Laycock
What are you proposing to do?	Presentation of the community led Bentham Masterplan to the Skipton & Ripon Area Constituency Committee for awareness.
Why are you proposing this? What are the desired outcomes?	To ensure the Skipton & Ripon Area Constituency Committee has awareness of the community led Bentham Masterplan.
Does the proposal involve a significant commitment or removal of resources? Please give details.	No
Impact on people with any of the following protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010, or NYC's additional agreed characteristics As part of this assessment, please consider the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To what extent is this service used by particular groups of people with protected characteristics?• Does the proposal relate to functions that previous consultation has identified as important?• Do different groups have different needs or experiences in the area the proposal relates to? If for any characteristic it is considered that there is likely to be an adverse impact or you have ticked 'Don't know/no info available', then a full EIA should be carried out where this is proportionate. You are advised to speak to your directorate representative for advice if you are in any doubt.	

Protected characteristic	Potential for adverse impact		Don't know/No info available
	Yes	No	
Age		✓	
Disability		✓	
Sex		✓	
Race		✓	
Sexual orientation		✓	
Gender reassignment		✓	
Religion or belief		✓	
Pregnancy or maternity		✓	
Marriage or civil partnership		✓	
People in rural areas		✓	
People on a low income		✓	
Carer (unpaid family or friend)		✓	
Are from the Armed Forces Community		✓	
Does the proposal relate to an area where there are known inequalities/probable impacts (for example, disabled people's access to public transport)? Please give details.	No		
Will the proposal have a significant effect on how other organisations operate? (for example, partners, funding criteria, etc.). Do any of these organisations support people with protected characteristics? Please explain why you have reached this conclusion.	No		
Decision (Please tick one option)	EIA not relevant or proportionate:	✓	Continue to full EIA:
Reason for decision	<p>The purpose of the report to the Skipton & Ripon Area Constituency Committee is to increase awareness of and note the community led Bentham Masterplan</p> <p>As result of this report North Yorkshire Council is not making decisions that directly affects the delivery or operation of services within the area.</p>		
Signed (Assistant Director or equivalent)	Nic Harne		
Date	4 March 2024		

Initial Climate Change Impact Assessment (Form created August 2021)

The intention of this document is to help the council to gain an initial understanding of the impact of a project or decision on the environment. This document should be completed in consultation with the supporting guidance. Dependent on this initial assessment you may need to go on to complete a full Climate Change Impact Assessment. The final document will be published as part of the decision-making process.

If you have any additional queries, which are not covered by the guidance please email climatechange@northyorks.gov.uk

Title of proposal	Bentham Masterplan
Brief description of proposal	Presentation of the community developed Bentham Masterplan to the Skipton & Ripon Area Constituency Committee for awareness.
Directorate	Community Development
Service area	Economic Development, Regeneration, Tourism and Skills
Lead officer	David Caulfield
Names and roles of other people involved in carrying out the impact assessment	Sharon Sunter Andrew Laycock

The chart below contains the main environmental factors to consider in your initial assessment – choose the appropriate option from the drop-down list for each one.

Remember to think about the following;

- Travel
- Construction
- Data storage
- Use of buildings
- Change of land use
- Opportunities for recycling and reuse

Environmental factor to consider	For the council	For the county	Overall
Greenhouse gas emissions	No effect on emissions	No Effect on emissions	No effect on emissions
Waste	No effect on waste	No effect on waste	No effect on waste
Water use	No effect on water usage	No effect on water usage	No effect on water usage
Pollution (air, land, water, noise, light)	No effect on pollution	No effect on pollution	No effect on pollution
Resilience to adverse weather/climate events (flooding, drought etc)	No effect on resilience	No effect on resilience	No effect on resilience
Ecological effects (biodiversity, loss of habitat etc)	No effect on ecology	No effect on ecology	No effect on ecology
Heritage and landscape	No effect on heritage and landscape	No effect on heritage and landscape	No effect on heritage and landscape

If any of these factors are likely to result in a negative or positive environmental impact then a full climate change impact assessment will be required. It is important that we capture information about both positive and negative impacts to aid the council in calculating its carbon footprint and environmental impact.

Decision (Please tick one option)	Full CCIA not relevant or proportionate:	✓	Continue to full CCIA:	
Reason for decision	<p>The purpose of the report to the Skipton & Ripon Area Constituency Committee is to increase awareness of and note the community led Bentham Masterplan</p> <p>As result of this report North Yorkshire Council is not making decisions that directly affects the delivery or operation of services within the area.</p>			
Signed (Assistant Director or equivalent)	Nic Harne			
Date	4 March 2024			