
PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE OF RAILWAY HERITAGE IN DARLINGTON

**Responsible Cabinet Members -
Councillor Nick Wallis, Leisure and Local Environment Portfolio
Councillor Chris McEwan, Economy and Regeneration Portfolio**

Responsible Director – Ian Williams, Director of Economic Growth

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. This report outlines the proposal to develop and deliver a vision for the future of railway heritage in Darlington. In addition, it seeks the approval of Members to undertake a comprehensive public engagement and consultation process that will underpin this vision.

Summary

2. The Town Centre Fringe Masterplan was adopted by the Council in April 2012 after an extensive public participation and consultation process. The Masterplan was underpinned by a number of technical reports including a comprehensive Conservation Management Plan – entitled ‘Cherish or Change’.
3. As a result of the profile of the Masterplan there was significant renewed public interest in the railway heritage assets that exist in the area and this has led to a call for greater emphasis of this in the regeneration of the area and the wider economic ambitions that the Council has for the Borough.
4. Since April 2012 the Council has facilitated a forum for railway heritage enthusiasts, the third sector, scholars, historians, industry partners and the heritage sector. This has stimulated a number of voluntary activities that are based around the railway and industrial heritage of Darlington. Whilst these actions are a valuable part of the bigger picture there is a need to marshal resources and activities together to both preserve and conserve the physical assets and also ensure that the two hundredth anniversary of the world’s first passenger railway in 2025 is a cultural and economic success for the town.
5. Budget pressures have resulted in the cutting of the continued subsidy of the Head of Steam Railway Museum. The current position is that the current subsidy of £265,000 per annum is not planned to continue beyond April 2016 in the Medium Term Financial Plan.

6. The A1 Trust, who built Tornado on the Head of Steam Site, has recently announced their intention to build a P2 locomotive in Darlington. This announcement has again raised the profile of Darlington as a globally significant heritage asset with both built and cultural heritage, that lives on through the activities of not only the A1 Trust but other partners too. This exciting development affords more opportunities to develop a collaborative approach to promoting a holistic heritage offer.
7. Recent and on-going stakeholder engagement has revealed the importance of Darlington's railway heritage as a key component in the unique offer of the town. The proud heritage of innovation, skills, engineering and world firsts that the town has is seen as a key economic selling point, driver and attractor.
8. Whilst budget pressures remain a challenge, there is a need to create a vision and action plan that secures a sustainable future for not only the Head of Steam Museum but the wider physical and cultural asset. Public engagement, the activities of partners and enthusiasts and the economic opportunities have led to the need to stimulate investment and heritage led regeneration.
9. Whilst this vision is being developed, the urgency of putting the railway heritage of the town on a global footing is recognised. For this reason the Inscription of World Heritage Status for the railway, Quaker and industrial heritage of Darlington is being evaluated. Pending any decision on this, and whilst the plans are being developed for the assets alongside working in partnership towards the 2025 celebrations there is a case to reconsider the funding of the Museum.
10. There is a significant opportunity for Darlington's railway heritage to be a catalyst for economic growth. There have been a number of development enquires in the area surrounding the Head of Steam Museum, and for uses within the site itself, that could contribute to the creation of an exciting destination that will develop the wider economy as a whole. Case studies are included in this report that illustrates how other facilities have developed elsewhere – see **Appendix I**.
11. In order to facilitate the development of the vision and action plan with the public there is a proposed programme of engagement and consultation throughout the summer with a view to a finalised plan by the end of 2014. This will also include stakeholder engagement with neighbouring authorities, the National Railway Museum and national heritage organisations.

Recommendation

12. It is recommended that :-
 - (a) Members reaffirm their commitment to the Head of Steam Museum including the continuance of subsidy post 2016/17 of £265,000.
 - (b) Members endorse the proposed application for World Heritage Site Status.

- (c) Members note the need to facilitate the public engagement and consultation process.

Reasons

13. To secure the sustainable future of Darlington's unique heritage assets supporting economic growth, the cultural life of the town and facilitate the celebration of the two hundredth anniversary of the birth of passenger railways.

Ian Williams
Director of Economic Growth

Background Papers

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

Timothy Crawshaw : Extension 6327

S17 Crime and Disorder	The continued commitment to both the heritage assets and the wider area in terms of regeneration will secure environmental improvements, increase footfall and activity in the area and facilitate safer connections to the Town Centre and within the area as a whole. Planned interventions will be designed with reference to best practice guidance in terms of designing out crime.
Health and Well Being	The enjoyment and participation in heritage activities promotes wellbeing and social interactions for all generations. The regeneration of the area includes measures to promote sustainable transport, specifically walking and cycling and the creation of safe neighbourhoods where people can confidently use the public realm.
Carbon Impact	The securing of a sustainable business model might include the exploration of low and zero carbon technologies reducing costs and carbon emissions.
Diversity	Diversity A key component in any emerging vision for the assets and the wider area will be access for all. In specific terms a key outcome will be a DDA compliant access for North Road Station.
Wards Affected	Northgate Ward, All Wards
Groups Affected	None
Budget and Policy Framework	There are specific budgetary implications within this report relating to the ongoing subsidy of the Head of Steam Museum. The proposals in this budget increase the Council's budget by £265,000 wef

	2016/17.. Cabinet has the delegated powers to agree this change.
Key Decision	Yes
Urgent Decision	No
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	Certain decisions (such as any decision using the powers in s2 LGA 2000 (the wellbeing powers) must address the Community Strategy. All reports should detail the relevance of the proposed decision(s) to the strategy and what aspects of the strategy they seek to deliver.
Efficiency	This report outlines the route map to securing a sustainable future for the Head of Steam Museum site and associated assets. This may lead to efficiencies in the medium to long term.

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

Background

14. The Town Centre Fringe Masterplan was adopted by the Council in April 2012 after an extensive public participation and consultation process. The Masterplan was underpinned by a number of technical reports including a comprehensive Conservation Management Plan – entitled ‘Cherish or Change’.
15. The Conservation Management plan, in addition to being both an informative to the masterplan and providing guidance to assist in the determination of planning applications also makes a number of recommendations;
 - (a) Improvements to the visibility, amenity and access to the River Skerne revealing its built and natural heritage.
 - (b) The promotion of appropriate built forms both at street level and also protecting the distinctive skyline of the area.
 - (c) The restoration of features such as Pease’s garden at Garden Street.
 - (d) Community engagement and action to deal with antisocial behaviour, fly-tipping, litter and the amenity of back lanes.
 - (e) The creation one new conservation in Parkgate and the possible creation of another on Victoria Road.
 - (f) The production of a Statement of Significance for the buildings in the ownership and care of the Council.
 - (g) The nomination of the Town Centre Fringe heritage assets for World Heritage Status.
16. Whilst not exhaustive this summary outlines the main areas of recommended activity and intervention. Some of the recommendations are already being acted upon in the development of projects and, for example, a Statement of Significance has been completed for the Former Goods Shed at the Head of Steam Museum site.

17. The Town Centre Fringe Masterplan raised the profile of the area and also the value of the heritage assets to the community as a whole, in addition to the ongoing commitment and work of local enthusiasts. As a result of the publicity and debate that ensued there has been resurgence in interest in railway heritage in Darlington.
18. Since the April 2012 the Council has facilitated a forum for railway heritage enthusiasts, the third sector, scholars, historians, industry partners and the heritage sector. The Darlington Railway Heritage Enquiry Group, chaired by Chris Lloyd of the Northern Echo, has met regularly since then and a number of key actions and priorities have been identified;
 - (a) The need to make the most of the heritage assets and story of passenger railways in Darlington.
 - (b) Protection of the existing assets and records for the benefit of future generations.
 - (c) Promotion and marketing of the heritage offer of the town nationally and internationally.
 - (d) Engagement with schools and colleges to develop the next generation of visitors and custodians.
 - (e) The need to make the most of railway heritage as a catalyst for economic growth and to boost the visitor economy and spend in the town.
 - (f) The development of the necessary infrastructure and legacy to support the upcoming celebrations in 2025 of the birth of passenger railways.
 - (g) Development of a sustainable business model to secure the future of the Head of Steam Railway Museum site and associated assets in the wider area.
19. As a result of the meetings and also due to the resurgence in interest, a number of voluntary groups have undertaken actions and initiatives or have been formed around a specific theme. Two notable examples include the Westbrook Heritage Trail and the recent formation of the Friends of the Stockton and Darlington Railway.
20. The value of community action is recognised and this is a key component in the development of a sustainable, diverse and resilient future for the physical and cultural assets. However, there is a need to coordinate these actions to ensure that there is the minimum of duplication and the forthcoming 2025 celebrations area a cultural and economic success.

New Opportunities

21. The A1 Trust has recently announced the construction of a new steam Locomotive in Darlington. Building on the success of the Tornado, constructed at the Head of Steam site on Hopetown Lane, the Trust is in the early stages of building a P2 Locomotive the “Prince of Wales”. This globally significant project, based in Darlington, will further add to the profile of the town and its railway heritage.
22. The establishment of Hitachi Trains close to Darlington at Newton Aycliffe is not only an economic regeneration success; it is also an opportunity to celebrate the proud industrial heritage of the town and the up-skilling of the population in the field of railway and advanced engineering.

23. Over the course of the last two years there have been a number of development and investment enquires in the immediate area within and around the Head of Steam Railway Museum site. These have ranged from training and apprenticeship providers to the retail led scheme adjacent to the new junction of John Street and North Road. As the economy of Darlington grows these opportunities are likely to increase. The Museum and the surrounding area offer a key opportunity for heritage led regeneration.
24. Improvements to the local transport infrastructure, both through the TVBNI funded junction and road to the north of the Museum and the proposed investment in North Road Station have presented new views into and increased the visibility of the site. This has highlighted the need for a comprehensive plan that responds to this opportunity and the role that the station could have in the economic well-being of the area, which includes some of the country's most deprived wards.
25. In terms of media coverage and documentary programme making there has been an increase in the profile of engineering and railway heritage and this is feeding an increase in public interest and engagement with this.
26. The recent Town Centre Conference held in March 2014 revealed a high degree of public and business support for Darlington's railway heritage and a call for this to be a cherished part of the economic well-being of the town, adding to its unique offer and stimulating the economy further.
27. Darlington lies at the fulcrum of two National Railway Museum sites at York and Shildon, and is well connected to both by road and rail. The opportunity to use Darlington as a base for regional railway heritage visits and tourism has been identified.
28. Recent research undertaken by the Economic Initiatives division has revealed the economic growth potential that could be realised through the greater use and prominence of heritage assets; two case studies are appended to this report in **Appendix I (another might be Edinburgh Quay – waterways / transport theme)**.
29. A key stand of any emerging visions for rail heritage is the need to be alive to new opportunities that could compliment the offer and these need to be explored.

The Current Budget Position

30. On 27 February 2014 as part of the Medium Term Financial Plan Report, Council considered the allocation of resources to the Head of Steam Museum. The proposal allowed for a two year period of engagement with interested parties to take over the operation of the Museum at nil cost to the Council, therefore no funding was allocated beyond March 2016.
31. The securing of a sustainable business model, that will form a part of the proposed vision and action plan, has taken longer than anticipated to develop and it is

evident that the Museum cannot operate on nil subsidy from April 2016 and most probably not even after this date.

32. What has become apparent through this work in recent months is that there is a significant opportunity to revitalise and regenerate this area of town through the Heritage Campus which is discussed in more detail in this Report. The Museum is a fundamental ingredient of the Vision and while in the short to medium term it is unlikely that a zero subsidy model is achievable, it is imperative that the Museum continues to operate and therefore supported financially.
33. The focus of the Museum in the context of the emerging Heritage Campus will need to be reviewed in partnership with key stakeholders on the site as well as the National Railway Museum and the Heritage Lottery Fund. It is hoped that significantly more can be achieved by the Museum within this broader Vision but the Council needs to continue to financially underpin the running of the Museum over the short to medium term.
34. The proposal to fund the Railway Museum at current budget levels preventing a further review will increase the Council's budget by £265,000 for 2016/17. Clearly it is anticipated this level may reduce in future years however at this stage it is prudent to project the full budget. The reintroduction of the budget will increase the level of spending reductions required for 2016/17 onwards.

The Need for a Vision

35. In order to recognise the importance of railway and industrial heritage in Darlington there is a need to develop a vision, strategy and action plan for the future of these important assets. This vision, allied to the heritage led regeneration of the area will add to the economic success story of Darlington. The Council recognises its pivotal role in the future of the both the assets in its ownership, and the wider heritage of the Borough.
36. In common with recent strategy development the importance of wide public engagement and participation is recognised. There is a proposed programme of activities throughout the summer and early autumn to work with the public and stakeholders to develop a vision, strategy and action plan that will;
 - (a) Guide development in the area, allowing the most appropriate response to enquiries and opportunities, including the best use of the assets.
 - (b) Form the basis of a revised business model and governance for the Head of Steam Museum site.
 - (c) Identify the necessary actions to facilitate the upcoming 2025 celebrations including the required infrastructure and legacy arrangements.
 - (d) Provide a suite of actions that will stimulate further engagement and participation, economic activity, increased visitor spend and community involvement.
 - (e) Identify funding streams and grants.
 - (f) Draw on national and international best practice.

- (g) Articulate the key messages and vision that has been developed with partners, stakeholders and the public to reinforce the message, stimulate investment and promote joint working.
- (h) Develop and deepen the relationship with key stakeholders such as the NRM, neighbouring authorities and national heritage rail organisation.

37. The timetable for this engagement is outlined below;

Activity	Dates
Public Engagement	July – September 2014
Strategy Development	September – December 2014
Consultation	December 2014 - February 2015
Cabinet Approval	June 2015

World Heritage Status

38. The urgency of putting the railway heritage of the town on a global footing is recognised. For this reason the Inscription of World Heritage Status for the railway, Quaker and industrial heritage of Darlington is being pursued. Pending any decision on this, and whilst the plans are being developed for the assets alongside working in partnership towards the 2025 celebrations, there is a case to reconsider the funding of the Museum.
39. Whilst it is uncertain that inscription to World Heritage Status will be achieved, the process of researching and developing the evidence base, working with partners, scholars and academics will assist in;
- (a) Raising the profile of the assets within Darlington, the UK and the world.
 - (b) An increased understanding of the significance of the assets.
 - (c) Increasing the chances of making successful funding bids.
 - (d) Providing a common understanding of the assets, their significance and cultural value.
 - (e) Developing a business case based on best international practice to drive up visitor numbers.
40. The first stage in gaining World Heritage Site Status is the nomination of the sites and assets onto the national Tentative List which is currently being updated.
41. Inscription to World Heritage Site Status would confer a number of benefits onto the assets and also a number of responsibilities, as well as planning implications. These can be summarised as;
- (a) Increased protection and recognition for the sites and assets.
 - (b) The care of the assets would fall to national government in partnership with the Council and stakeholders.
 - (c) The need to consider World Heritage Sites as a material consideration in planning applications.
 - (d) The need to secure a sustainable future for the assets.
 - (e) The creation of a management plan that would be drawn up in line with best international practice and in partnership with UNESCO members.

- (f) An increased ability to gain funding either from UNESCO directly or from other sources such as the HLF.

Financial Implications

- 42. The consideration of the ongoing budget and funding position for the Head of Steam Museum is outside the scope of this report.
- 43. The public engagement process proposed will be resourced out of existing budgets,
- 44. Additional funding requirements to develop the bid for World Heritage Status will be sought from external sources and the bid has guidance and support from English Heritage.

Consultation

- 45. The Town Centre Fringe Masterplan, the Conservation Management Plan and the ideas developed by the Railway Heritage Enquiry Group were all developed through participation and consultation, and the proposed next steps in terms of further visioning and World Heritage Status are in line with these.

Ironbridge Case Study.

10 Ironbridge Gorge Museums receive over 545,000 visitors per annum with around 70,000 of these being visits from schools.

Income:

Ironbridge is an independent charitable trust and is reliant on earned income to fulfil its charitable aims of education and conservation. More than half of the Trust's revenue income comes directly from visitor admissions including Gift Aid and the remaining balance comes from revenue generated from its retail operation, conference & banqueting, tenanted properties and income from grant making trusts and individuals.

Capital Spending:

Over the last 15 years, the Trust has invested more than £30m in the development and conservation of the historic assets in its care. In meeting its charitable aims, the Trust has enjoyed substantial support from the Heritage Lottery Fund, European Regional Development Fund, the Regional Development Agency, trusts and foundations, commercial sponsorship, covenants and private donors.

Visitor Profile:

Visitors to the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site come from the all parts of the world and all areas of the UK. On average, more than 50% of our UK visitors come from the West Midlands region whilst around 7% of our total visitors come from abroad.

Employment:

The Trust supports around 160 full-time equivalent jobs directly and many hundreds indirectly in terms of its tenanted properties and the wider creative and visitor economies. As well as employing around 200 staff the Trust enjoys the support of over 400 regular volunteers.

Tourism Earnings:

Independent economic assessments estimate that the Trust generates around £20m of income per annum to the visitor economy of Telford & Wrekin and the wider Shropshire area.