

NewcastleGateshead New Growth Point

Strategic context for CIF proposals

Our proposals for CIF support the delivery of the strategic approach outlined in our Expression of Interest, and forming the basis of our emerging programme of development.

Complementing and adding to the housing market renewal programme, we focus on the urban core, and a series of interventions to restore the heart of Tyneside as a residential environment of choice. Central to this approach is a vision of creating a series of better-connected communities, where travel choices can be made using some of the existing, though outdated and substandard infrastructure that currently exists.

We aim to create a more integrated market, with effective cross-river links as well as those to connect new developments and currently isolated communities to each other, employment and leisure opportunities.

We have focussed on projects that are deliverable within the timeframe; there are other transport related projects for our places, eg Scotswood, which will be set out in the Programme of Development. We also want to make better use of our river – our biggest asset but so under-used at present. The work proposed, especially for sustainable links, will ensure that more people cycle/walk along the riversides as well as cross it, in an environmentally sustainable manner, for leisure and employment purposes.

Our proposals have been developed in two specific work packages and a separate, though connected, crucial improvement to an existing bus route; these form the basis of three bids for CIF funding.

We have developed our approach to ensure that we have identified those projects that both meet the CIF criteria, and which form an essential part of our early investment programme, including that to be put forward in our Programme of Development. Our three packages are:

- **Sustainable Links** – creating effective links between, and to, places which will benefit from significant housing growth in the next few years by investing in cycling and walking infrastructure.
- **Strategic Sites** – proposals specific to key housing sites in the urban core, which will help to ensure their development by sharing some of the risk and early work with developers.
- **Bus corridors** – improving the Q2 Quaylink Route

As well as information on costs and CIF requests set out in the project forms, more detailed spreadsheets setting out the costs of specific projects and an overarching spreadsheet have been submitted, for clarification. We have initially identified approximately £750,000 of direct match funding to the CIF; this is in addition to the £95m of Housing Market Renewal funding and £1bn of matched and complementary investment for the pathfinder area 2008-2011, that includes the housing sites that the CIF projects aim to accelerate. We will seek to clarify the source of this and other matched funding for the Business Cases.

Sustainable Links

Our objective is to support housing growth in the urban core by investing in more sustainable transport modes connecting communities along the River Tyne, one of our greatest but under-used assets. This will contribute to our longer term ambitions to improve links across the river, including a bridge crossing in due course.

Investment in the Keelman's and Hadrian's Way cycle routes offers a particular opportunity to promote sustainable transport choices as a realistic alternative to car use in the existing and emerging residential areas to the north and south of the River Tyne. They provide a potentially highly attractive, safe and segregated connection for cyclists creating strategic links between residential areas and major service and employment locations including Newcastle City Centre, the Metro Centre, Newburn Riverside and the Gateshead Quays area.

The vision is to reinforce their role as key routes for all kinds of journey – access to work, shops, services or leisure. This will support new and existing housing in the area:

- Providing safe and attractive cycle routes to and from key facilities;
- Helping to limit increases in traffic and congestion;
- Improving the local environment by the provision of an attractive, riverside leisure route.

In order to achieve this, the following improvements are necessary:

- New and improved links to the Keelman's and Hadrian's Way route themselves;
- Upgrading existing sections of the route, including the removal of blockages which currently require lengthy diversions and sections of on-road cycling;
- New and improved cross-river links.

Current improvement programmes to the route are based on limited LTP block funding, developer contributions and bids for major new infrastructure works through the Regional Funding Allocation.

The Community Infrastructure Fund provides an opportunity to bring forward a number of specific major improvements closely related to areas of existing or potential housing growth and renewal.

Strategic Sites

The second part of our programme is concerned with the bringing forward of a number of strategic sites for new housing development as a key component of our Growth Point vision.

We have identified a focus on three key locations for CIF investment to March 2011:

Heart of Walker

Walker Riverside is a priority in the North East Regional Housing Strategy. Heart of Walker is a major part of the regeneration programme forming a critical element of growth proposals in Newcastle. Significant housing market renewal work has already taken place but investment in infrastructure is desperately needed to underpin this, providing a high quality environment and connections as well as well designed new homes.

Loadman Street

Part of the Riverside West priority area in the North East Regional Housing Strategy, this site is key to our plans to develop new attractive housing in a location within walking distance of the centre of Newcastle, and closely linked to the wider Scotswood/Benwell regeneration programme.

East Gateshead

This package includes a series of measures designed to bring forward housing sites in a strategic corridor from the east of Gateshead Town Centre, close to Baltic Business Quarter, stretching to Felling. The sites coming forward are central to our ambitions to encourage more people to live in the urban core, closer to their work; both Gateshead Town Centre and Baltic Business Quarter are growth poles in the North East Regional Economic Strategy.

Bus Corridors – improving the Q2

Q2 serves to connect St Peters Basin to the city centre using a high frequency high quality bus transit system. Extending this system into the Heart of Walker and Walker Riverside to the north, where about 2,000 new homes will be developed, greatly increases the accessibility of the area to jobs, retail and health. In addition the service interchanges with other Q services on the quayside to offer destinations in Gateshead and potentially along the Tyne to Newburn Riverside. This section would integrate the western and eastern housing market renewal areas with Gateshead and large centres of employment.

The importance of CIF

Community Infrastructure Fund investment will serve to bring these sites forward for development more quickly, addressing key infrastructure requirements and creating new strategic links to existing road networks.

CIF investment, through the packages we have outlined, can make a significant contribution to our strategy to concentrate housing growth at the heart of the urban core, enable us to implement growth alongside renewal, and increase the attractiveness of sites to private developers and current and new residents.