

**Title:** North East High Streets Commission – Early Evidence Base and Development of Priorities  
**Report of:** Rob Hamilton, Head of Strategy and Innovation  
**Portfolio:** Housing and Land

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### **Report Summary**

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the new North East High Streets Commission (The Commission) and its programme of early priorities, which were recommended for approval by the North East Combined Authority (North East CA) Cabinet on 28 January 2025. As well as agreeing that £150,000 of Trailblazer revenue resources be allocated to establish and launch the Commission this spring, Cabinet also agreed that £700,000 of Trailblazer revenue resources be allocated to build the initial local priorities and inform the development of a programme of intervention for our highstreets, with delegated authority to the Chief Executive to award this funding to the Local Authorities as delivery partners, in accordance with the North East CA financial regulations and Single Assurance Framework.

Since then, progress has been made regarding the delivery of these initial local priorities, which are the subject of this report. Whilst these interventions are not transformational in themselves, they will clearly assist these locations that our Local Authorities have identified and ‘pump prime’ these, so that they are ready to progress quickly once further funding opportunities become available.

It is also noted that an example of the type of transformational project sought by the Commission is to be considered at the forthcoming Cabinet Meeting on 18 March 2025, where ambitious plans will be presented about the relocation of South Tyneside College and its Marine School to a site in the heart of South Shields town centre. A further future example is the planned development of Newcastle College’s Energy Academy Campus in Wallsend town centre. By increasing footfall and day-to-day spending, these types of interventions can help stimulate the local economy and deliver the step-change in day-to-day activity that many of our town centres desperately need.

### **Recommendations**

The Chief Executive is recommended to approve:

- i. the use of up to £150,000 Trailblazer RDEL to establish The North East High Streets Commission, including its secretariat, who will convene meetings and capture findings, as well as commissioning work to assist the Commission in its development of a new model for High Streets intervention.
- ii. the award of £100,000 each to Durham County Council, Gateshead Council, Newcastle City Council, North Tyneside Council, Northumberland County Council, South Tyneside Council and Sunderland City Council to deliver their initial local High Street priorities.

## **A Summary of Investment Proposal (Context)**

### **1. Background**

The Commission is a is a Mayoral manifesto commitment and an important step to building a long term and multi-agency approach to addressing market failures and supporting the vibrancy of our high streets and town centres.

Our towns and high streets can support the foundational economy, with access to services, provision of local jobs, connectivity hubs, spaces to socialise, community infrastructure and centres for our neighbourhoods. However, many are failing, suffering from dis-investment and high vacancy rates. Changing retail habits means there is a real need to look at alternatives uses to support town centre living, repurpose underutilised spaces and buildings, and to support local business and community infrastructure.

Mayor McGuinness and an industry expert will co-chair The Commission which will engage with key partners and sector specialists, providing a focal point for multi-agency collaboration. The Commission will not only learn from targeted investments made across the region to date but will also consider what policy levers, investment and delivery mechanisms are needed to unlock opportunities for further investment and growth.

Ahead of the establishment of the Commission, each Local Authority has submitted proposals that could supplement investments made to date and help 'pump prime' priority locations, so that they are ready to progress quickly once further funding opportunities become available. As well as aligning with the Mayor's manifesto priority to launch a High Street Commission, these projects are consistent with the priorities of the Housing and Land Portfolio, which seek to improve the vitality of our city, town and village centres, so that we can all get the best out of them.

As part of this exercise, as well as providing the rationale behind their planned interventions, each Local Authority will share lessons learned to date, including feedback from their engagement with local communities. This will then assist the Commission in its shaping of an ambitious economic model for our high streets that is anticipated to identify a small number of high priority future strategic interventions, such as the proposed South Tyneside College relocation to South Shields town centre. This new college campus will bring 9,000 students and 300 staff into the town centre, delivering the footfall and associated day-to-day spending that town centres so desperately need.

This activity was included within the Housing and Land Strategic Portfolio Plan, agreed by Cabinet at its meeting on 30 July 2024. That report delegates authority to the Chief Executive to progress business cases and make investment decisions associated with activity described in the Strategic Portfolio Plans in consultation with the Mayor and relevant Portfolio Holder subject to the following thresholds adopted within the Single Assurance Framework:

- Investment approvals up to £500k are to be approved by the Chief Executive in consultation with the S73 Officer and Monitoring Officer, under Cabinet approved delegated authority.
- Investment approvals over £500k and up to £1m are to be approved by the Chief Executive in consultation with Technical Officers Group, the S73 Officer and Monitoring Officer, under the Cabinet approved delegated authority.
- Investment approvals over £1m and up to £5m are to be approved by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Finance and Investment Board, the S73 Officer and Monitoring Officer, under the Cabinet approved delegated authority.

<b>Project Outline</b>	
<b>Funding Source</b>	Trailblazer Revenue Funding
<b>Proposal Names</b>	Reimagining our High Streets
<b>Lead Organisations</b>	Durham County Council, Gateshead Council, Newcastle City Council, North Tyneside Council, Northumberland County Council, South Tyneside Council, Sunderland City Council.

<b>Delivery Areas</b>	All Local Authority Areas – identified highstreets
<b>Start Date</b>	March 2025
<b>Financial End Date</b>	March 2026
<b>Practical completion date (date by which all outputs will be achieved)</b>	March 2026
<b>Total Project Value</b>	£850,000
<b>Grant Amounts Requested</b>	£700,000 - (£100,000 per Local Authority)
<b>Budget Implications</b>	Externally funded

## 2 (i) Establishment of The Commission

Following Cabinet's agreement to proceed with the Commission, it is proposed that high-profile co-chair and members are appointed, which will include local, regional and national experts, businesses and local communities. Working together, they will develop a long-term plan for our towns and high streets. The Commission will work with communities, stakeholders and placemaking experts to consider what incentives, initiatives and housing can be built around high streets and how a reliable public transport network can help them to thrive. By bringing together partners from the public and private sector, it is envisaged that the Commission will develop a funding model that uses initial funding to leverage in further investment from the private sector.

It has been agreed by Cabinet that £150,000 of the £850,000 Trailblazer Revenue Funding is to be allocated towards establishing the Commission. This will cover any operational costs incurred, including appointing a secretariat who will convene meetings and capture findings, as well as the commissioning of work to assist the Commission in its development of a new model for High Streets intervention.

The Commission will operate in an advisory manner and as such, will:

- meet in private to facilitate open and honest discussion
- meet online to support regular attendance with at least 1 in person meeting during the period of the Commission.
- ensure their work programme complements key decisions to be taken throughout the year

Once established, the Commission will agree a schedule of meetings and it is anticipated that following the first meeting, a mid-term meeting will be held within 6 months, followed by a final review and recommendation meeting after 12 months. A summary capturing findings and recommendations will then be produced by the Secretariat for publication.

## (ii) The Investment Proposals

Building upon their activities to date, each constituent Local Authority was invited to submit proposals for locations that they have identified as a priority for intervention. Submissions were required to provide a clear reasoning and rationale as to what the long-term ambitions are for the selected locations and to set out why these early interventions are considered necessary at this stage to help move towards this. Authorities were advised that consideration should be given to the following criteria when making their submissions:

- A focus on the foundational economy as key driver for success.
- Prioritisation of community-led solutions and purpose-driven businesses.
- Ensuring that strong community engagement is embedded in plans, recognising the strengths of our places.
- Coordinating residential opportunities within strategic plans for towns and high streets.
- Recognising the importance that heritage / culture can play in rejuvenating a place.
- Supporting redevelopment and reuse projects that bring empty properties back into use, consolidating/reconfiguring retail units and encouraging/supporting new uses.
- Improving active travel options that encourage people to walk/ cycle/ wheel.
- Integration of coherent public transport services that enable more people to arrive by public transport.
- Exploring electric bike/scooter schemes to provide affordable/safe and environmentally friendly alternatives to car use.

- Avoiding the creation of new car parking facilities.
- Considering the environmental impacts of schemes, looking to 'build-in' features to help mitigate increased rainfall/heatwaves.
- Considering biodiversity and including planting and green capital as standard when developing public realm improvements.
- Undertaking Equality Impact Assessments early in the process of designing a plan of works.

A summary of each LA's proposals are set out below:

### **Durham**

Building upon its Towns & Villages Programme, Durham Economic Partnership has developed an Inclusive Economy Strategy, from which the Council are developing a programme of Strategic Place Plans (SPP) with its local communities, businesses & stakeholders to establish shared visions for each of its 12 main centres. The Partnership has representation from the private sector, voluntary & social enterprise, statutory agencies & elected representatives that work together to drive a common purpose & ambition for economic development & regeneration activity in County.

The first of these SPPs is underway in Spennymoor & scoping work has commenced for a SPP in **Durham City**. A third pilot covering **Shildon / Newton Aycliffe** is now also in scope & is aligned to a National Lottery Heritage Places programme. As these initial pilots are now progressing, the next tranche of SPPs has been identified for **Seaham, Peterlee & Stanley**. These have been selected following an assessment of town centre vacancy, age of existing masterplan & the wider strategic impact that investment would have.

With the above in mind, Durham's proposal consists of four strands, summarised below:

- **Co-design support**  
Focussing on **Durham City & Shildon / Newton Aycliffe**, this co-design work will build upon work commissioned for Spennymoor in support of the Long-Term Plan for Towns programme.
- **Retail and Leisure Gaps and Capacity studies**  
These studies will form part of the finalised Strategic Place Plans for **Seaham, Stanley & Shildon**, which will sit alongside each area's co-designed priorities & spatial masterplan document.
- **Vibrancy Programme**  
This aims to encourage increased footfall to centres by commissioning events, attractions and expanding the existing festival programme.
- **Meanwhile use programme (Phase 2)**  
This will provide further support to new businesses wishing to launch in town centres. It will provide support for elements of basic fit out & operating costs over an initial period while businesses build their customer base. To date such support has supported diverse business opportunities including a pop-up museum, gym, bookshop & traditional green grocers but current funding is now fully committed having supported 10 new businesses through its initial Towns and Villages allocation.

The above interventions will bring about immediate benefits, such as increased footfall from the vibrancy programme & reduced vacancy rates through the delivery of the pop-up retail support programme, which is estimated to involve 5 properties. Longer term benefits will also be realised by improving the authorities understanding of the commercial position of targeted centres & enabling them to devise a targeted approach to operators that will reduce vacancies, create jobs & improve footfall.

### **Gateshead**

With assistance from the High Streets Task Force (HSTF), Gateshead have developed a regeneration strategy outlining their needs for the Town Centre under the HSTF's "4Rs" framework: 'Repositioning, Reinventing, Rebranding & Restructuring'. The HSTF found that: *'with retail vacancy at 29%....& a shrinking shopping offer not replaced by other uses, the prospect for visitors & residents alike continues to diminish, driving footfall to Newcastle. The threat of Gateshead becoming little more than a dormitory town centre & transport interchange is clear.'* The key recommendation from the HSTF's evaluation was

the need for a strategy of reinvention for the town centre, including shifting its geographic boundaries, redefining its role & function, rationalising its infrastructure and scale and mix of uses, and how it is managed & policed.

The Council is now following this advice and the town centre is transitioning, with the new boundary of the reimagined town centre shown below. This sees the focus of retail/leisure/services shifting north, expanding into the Railway Quarter, towards the river. The southern edges of the town centre, around the High Street and the Civic Centre will then, in time, be re-designated as an edge of centre residential zone.

To deliver this new vision for the town centre, a number of assessments are required:

- **Heritage assessment & condition survey of Old Town Hall & Swinburne House**
- **Retail Stock & Demand Assessment**
- **The delivery of pilot projects to improve perception, sustainability & adaptability to increase footfall etc** (based on outcome of Retail Stock & Demand Assessment)
- **A contribution to a joint options appraisal on Interchange transport hub & adjoining council owned land/buildings** (Match funding from Homes England & Nexus)
- **Work to refresh & re-align existing Masterplans & development frameworks**



Fig 1 - aerial image indicating the new town centre, moving towards the riverside.

- **Felling Master Plan**  
In addition to the works required for the Town Centre, Gateshead has also requested to use the remaining funding to accelerate its plans for one of its main neighbourhood / Local Centres, **Felling**. Whilst there are already plans in place, this additional work to develop a masterplan for the neighbourhood will coordinate residential opportunities via an exercise of community engagement, design concept development & public realm pilot interventions.



## Newcastle

Through funding from the North of Tyne Combined Authority, the Council is partway through delivering its **Newcastle East High Streets Project**, an overarching objective of which is to develop a 10 year Spatial & Investment Plan for the inner east area of Newcastle. A key output of this Project is the development of a delivery strategy that identifies short, medium long-term projects & 'soft' and 'hard' changes across each of the 5 high streets initially identified as part of the project. As part of this work, it has already emerged (supported by a strong evidence base) that there are three potential locations that present further opportunities to improve connectivity, safety, land use along with a variety of spaces that could be the catalyst for positive change:

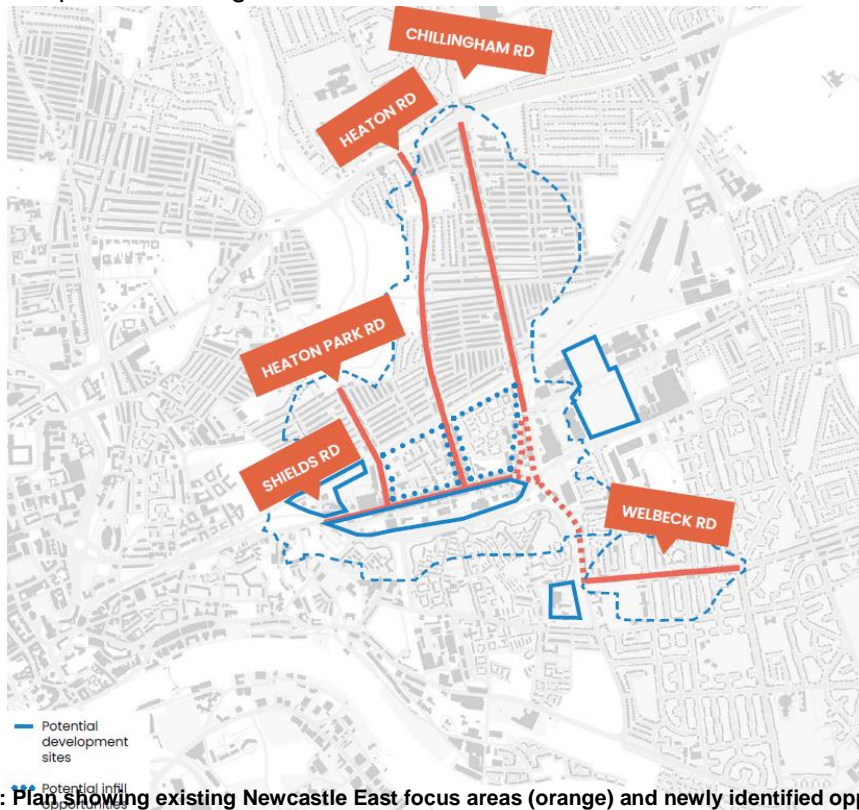


Fig 2: Plan showing existing Newcastle East focus areas (orange) and newly identified opportunities (blue).

Further feasibility work is required to bring forward these additional areas. This will enable the commission of a suite of studies, that will include constraints analysis, land ownership mapping, capacity studies, site investigations, & market / options analysis. Once complete, this work will then feed into the Newcastle East Spatial & Investment Plan. Undertaking more detailed work at an earlier stage than anticipated will ensure the Newcastle East area is fully prepared and ready for when future funding opportunities present themselves.

## Northumberland

In order to address the deterioration of Northumberland's towns & high streets, a series of Place Plans have been developed, which are based on extensive stakeholder engagement and assess the appetite for innovative approaches to their renewal. A number of technical studies are now required to support the development of a deliverable package of projects for three of the towns identified, **Alnwick, Bedlington & Newbiggin**. The studies will identify practical interventions such as improving pedestrian movements, removing physical barriers & creating attractive, green gateways & routes to key destinations that aim to boost the foundational economy. (for example better connectivity between Alnwick Gardens and Alnwick Town Centre).

## North Tyneside

In 2011, North Tyneside Council commissioned a retail and leisure study which was updated in 2014. This work has continued to inform the authority's strategy for town centres since then. However, as we all know, our high streets have since changed significantly.

The Council proposes to refresh this data, taking into account the current economic landscape and shift in consumer trends, and to produce detailed improvement plans & opportunities for our town centres. This will be delivered via a two-part commission:

- **Retail and Leisure Needs Assessment & Health Check.**

An assessment of the future retail & leisure needs of North Tyneside and the current health of the Borough's town centres.

- **Town Centres Opportunities & Improvement Plan.**

This will reflect upon the evidence collated from the needs assessment & health check & consider the next steps for the town centres, following recent & anticipated regeneration investments & masterplanning.

In addition to the above, North Tyneside Council has requested to use the remaining funding to support the redevelopment of some key empty properties that have been identified within the authority's town centres. By investing in feasibility work, including condition surveys, full costings, demand & options analysis & estimated operating costs the authority will be able to offer these buildings to new operators & bring them back into use more quickly & efficiently.

### **South Tyneside**

Via its 'Our South Tyneside Conversation' consultation campaign, the Council has developed a 10-year Master Plan Vision for **South Shields Town Centre**. This has identified five 'Sub Areas' which have the potential to contribute to the reinvigoration of the town, central to which is the relocation of South Tyneside College and its internationally respected Marine School.

Whilst plans are in place for some of these sub areas, a feasibility study and options analysis is still required for a key site within the **Mill Dam/Harton Quays** Sub Area. The land includes a range of historically significant buildings and presents underutilised links between the town centre/new college site and the banks of the River Tyne and a major new housing development on the edge of the town centre, Holborn Riverside.

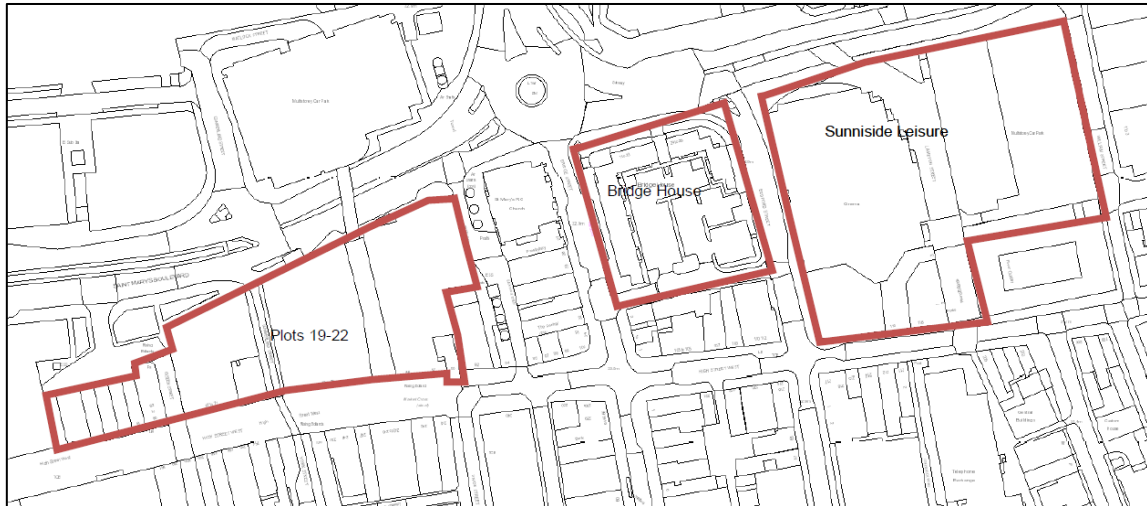
Once this work has been undertaken, the Authority will understand the most beneficial way in which this site will be able to be taken forward and will be in a position to progress when future funding opportunities present themselves.



### **Sunderland**

Whilst Sunderland City Centre has seen a number of changes in recent years, such as the development of Keel Square and a new central business district on the site of the former Vaux Brewery, decades of suburbanisation have resulted in Sunderland underperforming as a city centre. Currently, the residential population within the city centre is estimated at 2,250 which is lower than other growing cities. This lower level of population has contributed to the high proportion of retail vacancy rates – 11% higher than the national average and 8% above the North East average.

**High Street West**, which was once the main shopping street, is now very much in transition as major retail operators, such as Mothercare, Argos and Marks & Spencer have vacated in recent times. This has contributed to high vacancy rates / derelict units and low footfall and expenditure. It is proposed that the development of a Masterplan is accelerated, to establish the best way to improve the area, which provides the main linkage between the remaining retail core of the city and the new business district and wider Riverside Sunderland area beyond. It also connects to the Sunniside area of the City Centre, an attractive Conservation Area where there are plans to create a new city neighbourhood for creatives and entrepreneurs. By accelerating the Masterplanning exercise, the area will be able to be reimagined more quickly, so that it can respond to opportunities for local economic growth and activity along High Street West.



**Fig 4: Plan of the High Street West study area in Sunderland**

## 2.2 Outputs and Outcomes

There are no definitive outputs from these LA led projects as these are setting the scene for the future role of the Commission, which will bring together key partners, investors and sector specialists to develop a long-term plan for our towns and high streets. At this stage, each LAs commission will help provide a better understanding of what locations have the potential to deliver purposeful and impactful change, including any barriers that may need to be removed in order to achieve this. These initial projects will deliver the following:

- Reports / Assessments / Appraisals completed, providing a better understanding of sites and their barriers to development;
- Land will be assembled/delivery strategies determined;
- Empty properties and their owners identified;
- Longer term project pipelines developed;
- An expanded Vibrancy Programme will be carried out in Durham to encourage more footfall.

Lessons learned from each Local Authority's interventions, including feedback from their engagement with local communities will then assist the Commission in its shaping of an ambitious economic model for our high streets that will leverage private sector investment to maximise opportunities to bring about transformational change. A small number of high priority future strategic interventions are likely to be identified, such as the proposed South Tyneside College relocation to South Shields town centre. This new college campus will bring 9,000 students and 300 staff into the town centre, delivering the footfall and associated day-to-day spending that town centres desperately need. A summary report capturing the Commission's findings and recommendations will then be produced by the Secretariat for publication.

## 2.3 Timetable for Implementation

The table overleaf provides an overview of all the activities expected to be undertaken as part of the High Streets Commission, along with indicative timeframes:



Milestone	Forecast Dates
<b>Initiation and 'Early Priorities Towns and Highstreets Programme'</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working with LA7 to understand local needs, development of local approaches and priorities.</li> <li>Establishment of an early priorities programme that will help to prepare identified sites and interventions for future investment.</li> </ul>	January 2025 – September 2025
<b>Creation of Highstreets Commission</b> A multi-agency Board to work with the Mayor: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Setting ambition, determining priorities and asks – understanding the scale of the challenge.</li> <li>Co-ordinating evidence of need and learning from delivery.</li> <li>Independent advice to inform local priority High Street Plans.</li> <li>Supporting community infrastructure, economic growth, business growth &amp; entrepreneurship.</li> <li>Considering pilots, innovative approaches, policy levers, powers, investment and delivery mechanisms.</li> </ul>	Spring 2025
<b>Strategic Review / Evidence Base:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment of the health of the highstreets and provide learning &amp; insight from current delivery programmes.</li> <li>Convene VONNE roundtables to consider community infrastructure and delivery requirements/mechanisms to support growth.</li> <li>explore policy levers and powers to support change and unlock barriers such as business rates, empty buildings, CPO, land assembly, retail consolidation, change of uses, delivery models, financial instruments and local leadership/plans.</li> </ul>	March 2025- September 2025
<b>Determining the Longer-Term Approach</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feedback &amp; evaluation of 'Early Priorities Programme'.</li> <li>Feedback from VONNE roundtables.</li> <li>Influencing policy and determining future investment asks.</li> </ul>	October 2025 – December 2025
<b>Conclusions</b> Summary Report and Evaluation of Findings produced.	January 2026- March 2026

## 2.3 Evaluation

At the 28 January 2025, North East CA Cabinet Meeting, it was agreed that £850,000 of Trailblazer revenue resources be allocated to help plan for delivering lasting transformational change on the high street. £150,000 of this sum would be used to establish the Commission and its secretariat and to take forward next steps. £700,000 would deliver early priority projects that would inform the Commission, once established. Each Local Authority has been invited to submit proposals that could supplement any investments made on their High Streets to date, helping to 'pump prime' these locations, which have been identified by each LA as a priority area. It is envisaged that once complete, these initial projects will then put these locations in a better position to be able to progress quickly, once further funding opportunities become available.

As well as providing the rationale behind their proposals, each LA will share their lessons learned to date, including feedback from their engagement with local communities. This will then assist the Commission in its shaping of an ambitious economic model for our high streets that is anticipated to identify a small number of high priority future strategic interventions, such as the proposed South Tyneside College relocation to South Shields town centre. This new college campus will bring 9,000 students and 300 staff into the town centre, delivering the footfall and associated day-to-day spending that town centres so desperately need.

## 2.4 Appraisal / RAG Assessment

The case set out in the 28 January Cabinet report clearly highlights that establishing the Commission will go a long way to securing the sustainability of the high streets and places. This will enable the North East to consider wider geographical areas beyond the immediate footprint of a single high street and consider the wider regeneration of places including different catalysts for regeneration such as the re-location of public estate, and the wider interventions needed beyond capital investment, for example, in business support and skills.

Each Local Authority submission has been appraised by the Combined Authority's Programme Assurance Team, who have carried out a "small-scale" appraisal. Whilst this follows the HM Treasury Five Case model, a small-scale appraisal considers (i) The Strategic Economic and Commercial Case and (ii) The Financial and Management Case. A summary is set out below:

<b>RAG assessment</b>	
<p><b>The Strategic Economic and Commercial Case</b> The activity proposed has strong alignment to the North East Devolution Deal, the Mayor's Manifesto and North East CA's Corporate Plan.</p> <p>The projects match the external economic environment by responding to the ongoing challenges faced by our high streets and wider place regeneration, from disinvestment to high vacancy rates and anti-social behaviour.</p> <p>The funding will be used to establish the Commission (£150,000); to develop initial priorities and to co-develop with investors new funding models that could unlock further resources for transformational change. £700,000 funding (£100,000 to each LA) would also help deliver initial early local priorities that have been demonstrated as aligning to key regional and local priorities.</p>	<b>G</b>
<p><b>The Financial and Management Case</b> The financial cases for the Local Authority submissions are supported by finance tables, provides an overview of spend across the projects. All LA's have advised that their projects will all be procured and delivered within the required timescales. As the proposed activities are revenue based, they should therefore present a low risk. All applicants have proven track records for delivering similar projects and have robust financial and monitoring systems in place.</p>	<b>G</b>
<b>Overall RAG Rating</b>	<b>G</b>

Overall, these projects have been demonstrated as aligning to key regional and local priorities. All cases have been rated as green. Therefore, it is recommended that the funding should be awarded. In terms of subsidy, only Durham will be issuing small grants to SME's as part of their project. These will be granted under MFA and suitable records will be kept by Durham County Council.

## 2.7 Recommended Conditions of Funding

The award of funding to Durham County Council would be **subject to the following proposed funding condition**:

<b>No.</b>	<b>Condition</b>
<b>1</b>	Durham County Council GFA to include standard subsidy control clauses relating to the ongoing awarding of grants through minimal financial assistance (MFA).

## B. Potential Impact on North East Combined Authority Objectives

All funded activity will contribute to progressing the Mayor's and Cabinet's priorities to support integrated place-based growth which have been set out in the Mayoral Manifesto and the North East CA Corporate Plan and devolution deals.

### C. Key risks

Risk has not been addressed at this stage, but sums are relatively small amounts, to commission a number of small studies. A full risk assessment will be completed as part of the North East CA Single Assurance Process as detailed funding proposals are developed.

### D. Financial and other resources implications

The financial profile for these projects is set out overleaf:

Funding source	2024/25	2025/26	Total
Trailblazer revenue funding	100,000	750,000	850,000
<b>Total (£)</b>	100,000	750,000	850,000

Funding availability:

Trailblazer revenue funding (£850,000) proposed to support the high street commission was secured from Government in 2024 following the Trailblazer devolution deal process.

### E. Legal implications

The comments of the Monitoring Officer have been included in this report.

### F. Equalities implications

The North East CA follows the Public Sector Equality duty and this report has due regard to the need to achieve the objectives set out under s149 of the Equality Act 2010.

Equality implications will be considered as part of the Assurance Process, with impact assessments undertaken as part of specific policy and project areas or as individual business cases come forward.

### G. Consultation and engagement

Ongoing engagement and consultation has taken place with all constituent Local Authorities throughout the development of the early interventions of the High Streets Commission. A programme of roundtables across the region is also to be convened by Voluntary Organisations Network North East (VONNE). Delivered via additional funding via a Strategic Partnership between the North East CA and Power to Change, these will be held in established community spaces and will gather further views of community businesses and socially trading organisations as to how they could play a key role in high street invigoration. A report capturing the findings will then be produced and presented to the Commission.

### H. Appendices

None

### I. Background papers

[30 July 2024 Cabinet Papers \(Item 6-Strategic Portfolio Plans P15-\)](#)  
[28 January 2025 Cabinet Papers - Item 8 - P31-](#)

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## K. Glossary

‘The Commission’: The North East High Streets Commission.

VONNE: Voluntary Organisations Network North East.

HSTF: High Streets Task Force

## L. Consultee

Cabinet Member:	Director/Head of Service:	Director of Finance and Investment:	Monitoring Officer:
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes