

-
- **Author:** Peter Mawson, Chief Executive
 - **Board Meeting:** 15 May 2012
 - **Paper Reference:** 2012-04-05-01
 - **Advice:** That the Board endorse the progress WNDC is making in respect of the growth and regeneration of Northampton, Daventry and Towcester.
-

1. Supporting success

- 1.1 The Corporation continues to support the local authorities to deliver an agreed programme of town centre regeneration projects. Our specific role, which differs from project to project, ranges from providing technical advice to direct investment. Over recent weeks, there have been a number of very positive announcements in relation to this activity.
- 1.2 In April, plans for a new Bus Interchange in Northampton were submitted to Northampton Borough Council for approval. The development, which is being predominantly funded by WNDC, will be a key a key step in the regeneration of the town centre.
- 1.3 Another project we have invested in took a major step forward in March. South Northamptonshire Council, together with WNDC, announced that Morgan Sindall Investments Ltd has been confirmed as the development partner for Towcester's Moat Lane regeneration scheme. Having invested over £6.5m in the project, we are very pleased that the scheme is moving into full scale delivery. Collectively, the project partners are confident that the plans for new offices, shops and homes, will build upon the successful restoration of Bury Mount and the Watermeadows, which have already become an important part of the town centre.
- 1.4 Similarly, the Becket's Park Marina is an encouraging sign of improvements to come for Northampton town centre. In March, we were delighted to join our partners for the official launch of the £2.5m Marina, which is a crucial step in the long term renaissance of Northampton's waterside.

2. Using our specialist powers

2.1 In order to overcome barriers to the regeneration of Northampton town centre, WNDC is using the full extent of our statutory powers. In this respect, we are making strong progress on the Avon Nunn Mills Compulsory Purchase Order and have served notice to the affected parties. Alongside this activity, WNDC is inviting expressions of interest from prospective development partners, or consortia, for the site. Benefitting from a riverfront location, infrastructure links, and close proximity to Northampton town centre, Avon Nunn Mills is an ideal location for a major mixed-use development. We are actively marketing the development opportunity on this basis, and anticipate a strong response from the private sector.

2.2 In addition, preparations for a Compulsory Purchase Order for land at St Peter's Waterside are well underway, and will support our plans to breathe new life into under-used, brownfield land along the River Nene.

3. Engaging the community

3.1 Working alongside the local authorities, the Corporation has continued to raise awareness and encourage involvement in the regeneration of Northampton town centre. In April, a 'Northampton Alive' exhibition was staged in the Guildhall for a week and featured a wide range of exhibits, including a giant map of Northampton's future based on WNDC's 3D model of the town. Around 1,500 people visited the event, many of which took the opportunity to leave their comments and feedback. When combined with the visitors to the Bus Interchange planning application consultation, which ran in parallel during the week, over 2,000 local people took the opportunity to learn about improvements to their town.

4. Attracting recognition

4.1 One of Northamptonshire's most important new buildings has continued to attract praise and recognition from industry experts. The iCon Innovation Centre, which was delivered and part-funded by WNDC, has won a British Council for Offices Award. It was successful in the 'Best Commercial Workplace' category at the Midlands ceremony and will now go forward to the national final in October.

4.2 In addition, the iCon has been shortlisted for the East Midlands Royal Institute of British Architects Awards. Should the building be successful, it will be automatically entered into the high profile Stirling Prize, which is the UK's most prestigious architecture awards programme.