



# WNDC Board Report

## Report by Director of Regeneration and Development

Paper Reference: 2010-08-07-01

Agenda Item: 7

7 December 2010

**Subject:** Regeneration Overview Report

**Advice:** That the Board note the progress being made on key regeneration and development projects.

**Summary:**

- Good progress continues to be made across a range of regeneration and infrastructure projects in West Northamptonshire.
- Sandy Lane Improvement North is scheduled to open before Christmas;
- London Road/Ransome Road junction improvements and the new Becket's Park Marina Facilities Building are due to start on site in January;

## 1. Becket's Park

- 1.1 As reported in November's Board report the marina construction is now complete and the Environment Agency are now working through the procurement for the facilities building. It is hoped that a preferred supplier is agreed by the end of the year for works to commence in early January.
- 1.2 The Clamber Art installation in Becket's Park was completed on the 17<sup>th</sup> November and the official opening took place on the 25<sup>th</sup> November with all partners and some members of the Friends of Becket's Park.
- 1.3 The project continues to receive positive press coverage, including a radio interview on the 10<sup>th</sup> November with BBC Northampton.
- 1.4 The second Friends of Becket's Park meeting was held on the 24<sup>th</sup> November. The meeting was hosted by Avon Cosmetics Ltd.

## 2. Stronger Communities Fund

- 2.1 On the 16<sup>th</sup> November, Northamptonshire Community Foundation held their annual Foundation Awards ceremony at Northampton School for Boys.
- 2.2 The nominees within the Stronger Communities Fund category for 2009/10 were:

- **Bugbrooke Sports and Community Centre – South Northamptonshire**

WNDC awarded £10,000 to provide a multi use games area (MUGA) to encourage children and young people to engage in positive physical activity. This project, linked with a proposed youth shelter which will provide an off-street meeting place for youngsters, has filled a significant gap in provision for young people in a rural environment. The MUGA is the only recreational area in the village that is freely available all year round.

- **Inspiration FM - Northampton**

WNDC awarded £20,000 to provide funds to cover the capital costs of new radio broadcast studio equipment. In 2008 Inspiration FM was awarded a five year community radio broadcasting license. The award has helped them achieve the aims and objectives of the license by installing a "state of the art" modern radio broadcast studio suite to replace their ageing (13 year old) equipment. Inspiration FM has a diverse and large audience and provides volunteering opportunities for those wanting a step on the ladder in the broadcasting world.

- **Sikh Community Centre and Youth Club - Northampton**

WNDC awarded £7,600 to purchase equipment and resources to improve its youth and kids club. SCCYC has two very important clubs for children and young people attended by the

Sikh and local diverse communities. Kastle Klub is the youth club for young people aged 10 to 19 years of age that takes place on a Monday and Tuesday evening and is attended by on average 20 young people. The Kids Klub is a social club for children aged 1 to 9 years of age that takes place on Thursday and Friday evening and is also attended by on average 20 children. A host of games/sports and cultural activities take place within the clubs.

- **Friends of Castle Primary – Northampton**

WNDC awarded £10,000 to fit out a 'Qube', a small eco building in the school grounds. The Qube is used by numerous local community groups as a meeting space or venue for activities provided by these groups. The groups include: Sure Start, play advisors, Northampton Bangladeshi Association, The Polish Supplementary Group, The Sikh Association, Dostiyo residents Association, youth groups e.g. Scouts, Brownies, Boys Brigade. The local community is vastly diverse in terms of ethnicity. There are 36 languages spoken by the children at the school, and many of these parents may have very limited English language skills. We know that there is no other provision in this area for this multiplicity of groups and the school prides itself on being inclusive as possible.

- **Banbury Sailing Club – Daventry**

WNDC awarded £10,000 to purchase three training boats to increase the number of people racing. The project trains beginners and intermediate sailors, by following the RYA National Sailing Scheme. The new courses and races are organised and run by the volunteer instructors at the club. A small fee is charged to join the courses which cover the boat maintenance and club facility costs. This group has created opportunities and improved sporting facilities and works with a range of community groups to provide sailing opportunities.

- **Friends of Northampton Racecourse – Northampton**

WNDC awarded £17,339 to improve the facilities on The Racecourse by providing new adventure play spaces for children and young people. The Racecourse has a long tradition of being the major open space in Northampton for both regular formal sports and for major events. This open space of just over 118 acres is in the middle of the urban environment and is within easy reach on foot for over 18,000 people.

- **St David's Allotment Association – Northampton**

WNDC awarded £10,000 to develop an Orchard and a new Play and Sports area at the site. Both project areas will attract individuals from a variety of diverse backgrounds and cultures and enable people to socially interact and play football, basketball, rounders and netball. St David's Community is ethnically, socially and culturally diverse, nationalities include plot holders from Zimbabwe, Poland, Rumania and the Ukraine. They have encouraged

participation from a number of diverse groups including the Somali Health Foundation, Kingsthorpe Community College, Northamptonshire Probation and Northamptonshire Association for Accommodation for Single Homeless (NAASH).

2.3 This year's Stronger Communities Fund winner was Friends of Northampton Racecourse.

### **3. Business Excellence Awards**

3.1 WNDC on behalf of iCon have sponsored the Community Investment Award as part of Northamptonshire Newspapers Business Excellence Awards 2009/10. The following five organisations were shortlisted for the award:

- Brackmills Industrial Estate Limited – Northampton
- Think3e – Wellingborough
- T & K Home Improvements – Wellingborough
- Waitrose Food & Home – Rushden
- Wellingborough Homes – Wellingborough

3.2 The awards ceremony was held on the 18<sup>th</sup> November at which David Walker (Chairman iCon East Midlands) presented the winners award to Wellingborough Homes and the runner up award to Waitrose Food & Home.

### **4. iCon Innovation Centre, Daventry**

4.1 The construction of the iCon Innovation Centre has reached a significant milestone. The official topping out ceremony was held on 4<sup>th</sup> November. The event was attended by a wide range of project partners and was covered well by the local media. Construction continues and the programme is scheduled for completion in March 2011. Daventry based Catering Design Group, one of the UK's leading restaurant and commercial kitchen design companies, has been awarded the contract to design and fit the commercial kitchen and café area of the building.

### **5. Moat Lane and the Watermeadows**

5.1 The existing Watermeadows continue to be very well used by the public, with further enhancements to the site currently being undertaken by the Towcester Wildlife Trust. The partnership hope to increase the Watermeadow space by acquiring a further 11.28 Ha. of land. The cabinet of South Northants Council have agreed to commit 50% of funding towards the project subject to the remaining funding being sought.

- 5.2 A meeting with partners and English Heritage was held on the 17<sup>th</sup> November to discuss the positioning on the community building in relation to Bury Mount.
- 5.3 The traffic modelling and impact has been agreed with the Highways Agency. Work is now underway on the mitigation measures.
- 5.4 SNC have been informed that the Inquiry date for the Compulsory Purchase Order is the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> January 2011.
- 5.5 Following the evaluation of all the submitted PQQ's a shortlist of six bidders were issued with an Invitation to Submit Outline Proposals (ISOP) documentation on the 26<sup>th</sup> October 2010. On 6<sup>th</sup> December the bidders returned their ISOP documents, which are due to be evaluated this week by the partnership's evaluation team. Shortlisted bidders will receive the Invitation to Submit Detailed Solutions (ISDS) documentation on the 20<sup>th</sup> December which will be followed by dialogue. Call for final tenders are currently programmed for the end of February 2011, with a preferred bidder hopefully selected by the end of March 2011.
- 5.6 A bidders presentation day is to be held on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> December which will be attended by Peter Mawson and project staff.

## **6. Castle Station**

- 6.1 Outline designs for the station, multi-storey car park and associated works are nearing completion. Draft designs have been issued to Network Rail for review prior to submission as final designs at the end of December 2010. Formal NR approval of the designs, and completion of GRIP Stage 4, is forecast for the end of February 2011.
- 6.2 Ground investigations and surveys have all been completed and used to inform the outline designs produced. Reports are being finalised.
- 6.3 A revised project cost estimate, based on the outline designs referred to above, is currently being produced by Hyder and Network Rail and will be available in draft form in early December.
- 6.4 Network Rail are preparing to submit a 'prior approval' planning application to Northampton Borough Council (NBC) in December using their permitted development powers for the scheme. There has been ongoing liaison between Network Rail, WNDC and NBC regarding the extent of information required for this type of application.

6.5 Flood risk and transport assessments are due for completion by the end of November. These will inform what flood risk and highways works will be required to mitigate the impact of the project. It is expected that highway junction changes will be required due to the closure of the current access to the station via Black Lion Hill.

6.6 Funding to take the scheme forward to delivery remains the greatest challenge facing the project. WNDC are currently preparing a bid for funding from the Governments' Regional Growth Fund (a separate paper on this initiative is available for the Board).

## **7. London Road/Ransome Road Junction Improvements**

7.1 Funding Agreement for the delivery of the junction improvements signed-off between WNDC and NCC. The project will be delivered by MGWSP using NCC's Highways Service Contract.

7.2 Site works planned to start in early January 2011. This is subject to the successful completion, by the end of November, of the Netto land sale and HCA/NCC land access agreements. These are well progressed.

7.3 Detailed junction design is well underway and provisional arrangements are in place for utilities diversions to commence in January 2011 (subject to 6.2 above).

7.4 Completion of the junction improvements is forecast by the end of 2011.

## **8. Avon Nunn Mills**

8.1 Work has continued to resolve the remaining issues surrounding the Collaboration Agreement between WNDC, the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) and the private sector interests in this site that are nearing completion. As reported at the last meeting, the draft Collaboration Agreement was considered by HCA's Regional Board on 1 November and will be considered further by the HCA National Board on 2nd December 2010.

8.2 Some minor amendments have been made to the draft Collaboration Agreement by the HCA. The private sector partners are currently considering these changes, but in the meantime most of their own substantive points have been resolved. A meeting was held with solicitors and the private sector interests on the 30 November 2010 finalise the Collaboration Agreement.

8.3 In preparation for the planned Compulsory Purchase Order the work to identify land and other interests negotiations have continued in the past few weeks with Northampton Borough Council, Central Networks and the Environment Agency.

8.4 Halcrow are working on behalf of WNDC to consider the road alignment issues that need to be clarified and resolved ahead of the CPO action. They are in the process of preparing draft plans that are to be shared with the parties to the Collaboration Agreement following signing. Liaison has occurred in the development of these plans with the local authorities, utility companies and the Environment Agency.

## **9. Waterside**

9.1 A recent Board workshop on the Waterside project confirmed the approach being taken by WNDC and its partners, including the ongoing acquisition strategy which has seen WNDC purchase a number of key sites and buildings in recent months as part of the process of “de-risking” the site ahead of wider regeneration. The Corporation is currently assessing tenders received for undertaking land referencing across St Peter’s Waterside.

9.2 The government has recently announced proposals for a new mechanism for funding projects. Tax Incremental Funding (TIF) is a mechanism that has been used in America and more recently in Scotland to raise finance to enable the delivery of regeneration projects. The TIF model looks to capture additional future income generated by Business Rates from new development to finance the up-front investment required by the project. Work is being undertaken by WNDC involving Northampton Borough Council and CB Richard Ellis to explore the use of TIF for the Waterside and Grosvenor Centre projects.

9.3 Management arrangements have been put in place for the residential units acquired. During the last three months WNDC has worked with the University of Northampton to explore whether these properties could be used as student accommodation to satisfy the University's needs. However, following initial costings to bring the properties up to the required specification for University properties it has been accepted by both the Corporation and the University that this is not a financially viable option.

Arrangements have therefore been put in place with a Northampton based local agent to ensure that the units are properly managed until they are required for development.

## **10. Sandy Lane Improvement North**

10.1 Construction work for this new piece of road infrastructure is now nearing completion. The new road is being delivered by Northamptonshire County Council with funding support from WNDC and the Homes and Communities Agency. It is anticipated that the road will be complete before Christmas and NCC are making arrangements for its official opening.

10.2 Discussions continue with HCA and Redrow Homes regarding the delivery of the final phase of road that will connect Sandy Lane Improvement North to the first phase of the Sandy Lane Relief Road, which is complete.

## **11. Construction Futures**

11.1 The “promotion of best practice” aspect of the project’s work continues to grow. In recent weeks a presentation to Leicester City Council’s Director of Regeneration and Development and the Economic Development team was very well received, and may now result in the establishment of a pilot project in Leicester itself (discussions with William Davis Ltd, the Loughborough-based house builder, have identified a suitable site in the North of the city).

11.2 At the same time the Construction Futures team have been meeting with a number of London-based partners with a view to establishing a not-for-profit construction training and recruitment consortium. The consortium’s first “pitch” for work takes place on December 7<sup>th</sup> in Birmingham where Bourneville College and Birmingham City Council are partners in the redevelopment of the former Longbridge factory site.

11.3 These developments, building on the recently submitted European Social Fund bid noted in the Construction Futures business plan paper, confirm WNDC’s and our partners’ commitment to growing Construction Futures as both a successful business and as a promoter of innovation in social and economic added value.

## **12. Working with West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit**

12.1 The West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit (JPU) was established by the local authorities in West Northamptonshire to prepare the Core Strategy for the area. WNDC has worked, as appropriate, with the JPU on specific pieces of work where

- information was required for evidence to support the Core Strategy and to inform infrastructure requirements for development. This has included work on the production of a Water Cycle Strategy and a refresh of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.
- 12.2 WNDC and the JPU jointly funded the refresh of Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) for the whole of West Northamptonshire and this work is now nearing completion. The latest draft was issued by the consultants on the 19<sup>th</sup> November 2010 and is being reviewed by WNDC and the JPU. The IDP Schedule of Infrastructure, forming a key part of the IDP, will be issued to Infrastructure Providers and other key Stakeholders for final review and comment.
- 12.3 The final version of the IDP will be issued in December as evidence for inclusion with the Pre-Submission Joint Core Strategy being prepared by the JPU.
- 12.4 The WNDC/JPU jointly funded Water Cycle Study (Phase 2) is also approaching completion having been delayed whilst the consultants assess the impact of the revised housing targets on its recommendations.
- 12.5 The final version, signed-off by the stakeholders, will be issued in January 2011 with the intention that it is complete for inclusion in the Joint Core Strategy.