



WNDC Board Report

Report by Director of Regeneration and Development

Paper Reference: 2011-01-07-01

Agenda Item: 7

1 February 2011

Subject: Regeneration Overview Report

Advice: That the Board note the progress that is 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.
- Moat Lane CPO inquiry took place on 18th January 2011.
- Sandy Lane Improvement North was officially opened on 20th January 2011 and is now open to traffic.
- Ransome Road London Road Junction Improvements has now started on site, which will enable a first phase of development at Ransome Road to start.
- Construction of the new Facilities Building at Becket's Park started on site in January.

1. Moat Lane, Towcester

- 1.1 The procurement exercise to appoint a development partner continues. On the 6th December all six bidders returned their Invitation to Submit Outline Proposals document and these were evaluated by the team during that week. A Bidders presentation day was also held on the 10th December where all six bidders presented to the evaluation team and various officers and Councillors from SNC, WNDC, Urban Delivery and Studio REAL.
- 1.2 On the 20th December three of the six shortlisted bidders received the Invitation to Submit Detailed Solutions (ISDS) document which has been followed by dialogue since the New Year. Call for final tenders are currently programmed for the end of March 2011, with a preferred bidder hopefully selected by the end of April 2011.
- 1.3 On the 17th January the project was granted outline planning permission by WNDC. The S106 for the project has also been agreed.
- 1.4 The CPO inquiry took place on the 18th January – the team are now awaiting the decision of the inquiry.

2. Becket's Park

- 2.1 The procurement for the marina's facilities building is now complete. PGR Construction have been appointed as the main contractor and they have been on site since the beginning of January 2011.
- 2.2 There was a slight delay in letting the contract due to a funding shortfall of £80,000. However this was resolved in late December 2010 which enabled the Environment Agency to let the contract in the first week of January. The project is now funded by the following partners:
 - West Northamptonshire Development Corporation - £1,831,000
 - Northampton Borough Council - £20,000
 - Northamptonshire Enterprise Limited via Northamptonshire County Council - £234,845
 - River Nene Regional Park - £10,000
 - Environment Agency - £300,000
- 2.3 The construction programme will take approximately 27 weeks starting from the 17th January and ending on the 22nd July; however boaters will be able to access the marina

after the 21st April. Work is due to commence this month on the electricity and water supply for the marina.

2.4 The Board will recall that in February 2010 the project was granted an additional £76,000 GAF 3 funding due to challenges around access issues. Funding was approved on condition that an interim audit was undertaken in September 2010. A financial audit has now been completed by WNDC.

3. London Road / Ransome Road Junction Improvements

3.1 Site works commenced on the 5th January 2011 as planned. The first stage of work involves establishing a site compound on land owned by the HCA off Ransome Road and carrying out enabling works to allow utilities diversions to proceed over the next 3 to 4 months.

3.2 The Netto land sale was completed on the 11th January 2011 along with the license between NCC and the HCA that allows NCC to undertake the required works on the Netto site. This removed the key constraint to progressing the works.

3.3 Detailed junction design work is ongoing. Completion of this will allow the requisite highways safety approvals to be completed and a target cost for the junction improvement works (excluding utilities diversions) to be agreed by NCC and MGWSP.

3.4 Completion of the works is forecast for the end of 2011.

4. Avon Nunn Mills

4.1 The Homes Communities Agency resolved to enter into the Collaboration Agreement at its December 2010 Board meeting. A revised draft of the Collaboration Agreement is in circulation with the landowners' solicitors following a round table meeting on the 30 November 2010. The agreement is ready for signing subject to clarification that all the relevant insurance and indemnity policies and agreements are in place.

4.2 In anticipation of the signing of the Collaboration Agreement, preparation for the Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) is ongoing. We are in a position to issue the requisitions for the land referencing procedure subject to confirmation that the relevant legal documents are in place. A draft "Statement of Reasons" along with accompanying plans for the CPO have been prepared. In terms of preparation for the

CPO there have been discussions with Northampton Borough Council, Central Networks and the Environment Agency on their requirements.

4.3 The plans for the access road linking Bedford Road and Ransome Road are being developed. Halcrow are working on behalf of the Corporation to develop these plans in partnership with Northampton Borough Council and Northamptonshire County Council. In addition to this they have been working with the utility companies and the Environment Agency to discuss their technical requirements.

5. Castle Station

5.1 GRIP Stage 4 outline designs for the station, footbridge and multi-storey car park were completed and issued to Network Rail for acceptance by end of December 2010. Sign-off is expected in mid February 2011.

5.2 All survey and ground investigation works are now complete and reports have been issued to Network Rail. The results of the Flood Risk Assessment and Transport Assessment were positive in that no flood risk or highways mitigation measures are needed as a result of the project.

5.3 Network Rail issued a 'prior approval' planning submission to Northampton Borough Council on the 6th December 2010. NBC are expected to take 8 weeks to respond to the submission.

5.4 The GRIP Stage 4 project cost estimate is currently being prepared based on the outline designs issued to Network Rail. The estimate is due to be complete by early February 2011.

5.5 All other GRIP Stage 4 deliverables, including a Quantitative Risk Assessment that will feed into the project cost estimate, will be complete by the end of February. Network Rail's Stage Gate Review of the project will take place in March 2011.

5.6 WNDC will not be progressing a bid for Regional Growth Funding. This decision follows verbal confirmation from London Midland that they are not prepared to formally support or lead the bid as the private sector partner.

6. Waterside

- 6.1 There are ongoing discussions with National Grid to discuss the decommissioning of the gasholders which act as a major constraint across the site. The future phasing and programming of the development of the site is being considered in the light of these discussions. Topographic survey of the St Peter's Waterside site is being commissioned.
- 6.2 Discussions continue with King Sturge (the East Midlands Urban Development Fund (EMUDF) managers) on the business case for the proposed Northampton Innovation Centre currently being considered for the former United Social Club site. WNDC and its partners are developing plans for a circa 3,000sqm, environmentally exemplar building with space for approximately 50 new businesses. The Innovation Centre could make a significant contribution to the wider regeneration of Northampton's Waterside and help establish the area's credentials as a high quality employment location. Subject to a successful financial appraisal a full bid to the EMUDF will be submitted before the end of the financial year. A full report will be presented to the Board in advance of this.
- 6.2 Management arrangements are now in place for the residential units that have been acquired. These are now being let through Jackson Grundy with Chown Commercial acting as the management agent. To date two properties have been let on a six month tenancy arrangement.

7 Sandy Lane Improvement North

- 7.2 This project has reached a significant stage of delivery with the new stretch of highway infrastructure now open to traffic. The official opening of the road by County Councillor Heather Smith was held on 20th January, which received good coverage in the local media. Minor works to finish the project will be complete in the next few months.
- 7.3 Discussions continue with the 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 Sandy Land Relief Road, which is complete.

8 Construction Futures

- 8.2 As noted in previous Board reports, the project continues to promote the approach developed here in the West Northamptonshire as best practice, resulting in an increasing number of invitations to present to regeneration partnerships and local authorities up and down the country. In some instances such contacts are resulting in more detailed discussions on how Construction Futures could support such bodies in their own employment, training and economic regeneration activities.
- 8.3 Whilst the promotion of best practice has always been core to the project's objectives, WNDC and our partners in Construction Futures will need to be mindful of such activity, particularly where it takes place outside the East Midlands.
- 8.4 Consequently, Construction Futures is now exploring options for establishing itself as a standalone organisation, operating as a social enterprise or Community Interest Company perhaps. This could give the project more flexibility in entering into support and trading arrangements with other bodies and, critically, help secure Construction Futures as one of WNDC's legacy projects.
- 8.5 Discussions with suitable legal advisors to scope out the future options for the project are currently underway. A fuller report, detailing those options, will be presented to Board in the near future.

9 iCon Innovation Centre, Daventry

- 9.2 Following the successful topping out ceremony, held on 4th November, the prolonged and very cold weather has affected the progress on site but Winvic is making every effort to pull back the lost time and achieve the scheduled completion date in March 2011. The next agreed deliverable is the completion of two show incubator units, at the end of January 2011, which will be used by the marketing team to promote more interest and assist getting companies to sign up prior to PC.
- 9.3 During the last few months there have been protracted discussions with our partners, EMCBE, emda, the University of Northampton, the iNet and the iCon (EM) Board to look at the on-going operation and ownership of the iCon building. These are now being finalized and the Heads of Terms, for a transfer to the University of Northampton, are in the process of being signed by all the partners.

- 9.4 WNDC has been supporting iCon (EM), with the creation and delivery of an operational marketing plan. It focuses on two distinct markets – prospective tenants and conference centre users.
- 9.5 A brand identity has been created and an integrated marketing communications campaign is being delivered which includes sponsorship, events, direct marketing, public relations and personal selling. Marketing collateral has been produced to support this activity, including promotional literature and a new website, which will be launched at the beginning of February. In conjunction with this activity, a sales promotion is being conducted which offers a 10% reduction in rent for the first 6 months for any tenants that sign up before the building opens.
- 9.6 This activity has resulted in a significant amount of interest from prospective tenants. This includes Daventry based firms as well international organisations. A number of potential customers have been taken on tours of the building and are in discussions about taking lettings. Two show units will be opening in February, which will support the promotional activities. Looking ahead, a high profile launch event is being planned for the summer, which will involve a sustainability conference, featuring expert speakers related to the low carbon economy.

10 Working With West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit

- 10.2 WNDC has been working with the Joint Planning Unit (JPU) on specific pieces of work where information was required to support the Core Strategy for West Northamptonshire 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.
- 10.3 A final draft version of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan was issued to WNDC and WNJPU on the 5th January 2011. This has been jointly reviewed by WNDC and WNJPU and final comments have been submitted to the consultants. Submission of the final report will be made in good time to enable it to be published for the pre submission Joint Core Strategy consultation on the 17th February 2011.

10.4 With regard to the Water Cycle Study, the final report has been issued to stakeholders for review and sign-off ahead of issue for publication as evidence accompanying the pre submission Joint Core Strategy.