



# WNDC Board Report

## Report by Director of Regeneration and Development

Paper Reference: 2011-04-07-02

Agenda Item: 7

5 July 2011

**Subject:** Daventry Regeneration and Planning Overview

**Advice:** That the Board

1. **Note** the progress that is being made on regeneration and planning projects in Daventry
2. **Approve** a commitment of £300,000 towards the Daventry University Technical College

**Summary:**

- The investments made by WNDC and our public sector partners to help catalyse the growth and regeneration of Daventry have resulted in significant levels of successful activity
- The Daventry iCON is now open for business, a very successful programme of both community and business launch events took place in early June
- Planning applications for Sites 3 and 6 have been received by WNDC which seek to take forward DDC's vision to transform Daventry's town centre and commercial and retail offers along with Sites 1 and 5 and the Canal Arm

- Discussions are ongoing with developers seeking to build new homes and related infrastructure in and around Daventry
- A £300k commitment has been made to help bring a University Technical College to Daventry.

## 1. iCon Environmental Innovation Centre, Daventry

- 1.1 The iCon is now “open for business” and it has been a fantastic few months. The first tenants moved into the building in early May and interest from prospective tenants continues for both the lettable space and conferencing facilities.
- 1.2 In recognition of the prominence of the iCon on the Daventry skyline, a series of very successful launch events were arranged to encourage as many local people and businesses into the building as possible. An 8 day programme of community events commenced on the 21<sup>st</sup> May with a major concert by local orchestra Fiori Musicali. Other events throughout the week included photographic exhibitions, tours of the building for local school children, a martial arts display evening, a Sunday afternoon event by the Daventry Players and a final concert which was jointly organised by Daventry Choral Society, Daventry Brass and Daventry Music Centre. Many of the groups that performed have also been previously supported by WNDC’s Stronger Communities Fund which clearly demonstrates WNDC’s commitment to physical and social regeneration.
- 1.3 The formal business launch event took place on the June 30<sup>th</sup> - a major conference organised by the Northampton Institute for Urban Affairs on “From Challenge to Opportunity - New Business and the Low Carbon Economy”. Enquiries are continuing to be made by the business community to hire conferencing and meeting space.
- 1.4 The formal transfer of the building to the University of Northampton is now complete, with the iCon already figuring prominently in the University’s marketing and promotional materials. The iCon represents the second innovation centre (the Portfolio Centre was the first) delivered for West Northamptonshire through a WNDC – University of Northampton collaboration and with the financial support of local organisations such as NEL (NEP) and regional bodies such as emda. Evidence of the strength of that relationship, and the growing role of the University of Northampton

in the regeneration of West Northamptonshire's towns, can be seen in the proposals currently being developed for a Northampton Innovation Centre which, like the iCon, could be owned and managed by the University.

1.5 Although the iCon is now likely to exceed the environmental targets set for it at design stage, further enhancements are possible and are being actively pursued. The University is currently working to secure additional ERDF funding and a University capital contribution towards the fitting of a photo voltaic (PV) array on the roof the building. As a result of the Feed in Tariff scheme, PVs may well both reduce the carbon footprint of the iCon and generate a secure source of income over an extended period of time. The early signs on this proposal are positive and an outline bid is currently being prepared for both emda and the University's Estates and Finance Committee.

## **2. Town Centre Planning Applications – Forward Programme**

2.1 A number of planning applications have been or are due to be submitted to WNDC which seek to take forward Daventry District Council's vision to transform Daventry's town centre and commercial and retail offer. These include:

- Site 1 – Detailed Planning Application expected in January 2012
- Site 5 – Outline Planning Application expected in January 2012
- Sites 3 and 6 – Outline Planning Application received and validated by WNDC on the 13<sup>th</sup> May 2011
- Canal Arm – Detailed Planning Application expected early July 2011

2.2 Underpinning each of these applications is a shared commitment from both the public and private sectors towards the economic regeneration of Daventry Town Centre; the confirmation of Daventry as a sub-regional centre; encouraging people to work, visit and shop in the town centre; make effective and appropriate use of land; and deliver high quality and sustainable development.

2.3 WNDC has worked closely with its public sector partners (particularly Daventry District Council) to pave the way for these developments, making use of our Growth Area Funding to secure key sites and buildings; improve road access and in doing so opening up retail development opportunities such as the Abbey Retail Park; relocate a

number of existing community buildings; and funding the plans and studies essential in such a large scale and ambitious programme of regeneration.

### **3. Site 1**

- 3.1 WNDC's innovative use of GAF funding to relocate Northamptonshire County Council's Children and Young People team (which had shared the existing library building previously) to bespoke offices in DDC's Lodge Road building has meant the new library which will be located in Site 1 can be planned specifically for library and related cultural and community uses and without the constraint of having to accommodate a service which, by definition, needs secure access.
- 3.2 WNDC has set up a project team to look specifically at the library to ensure that the plans are taken forward positively. The first meeting took place on the 7<sup>th</sup> June with all key partners, which was very successful.
- 3.3 Henry Boot Developments Limited (DDC's appointed private sector development partner) is preparing to submit a Detailed Planning Application for Site 1 – the town centre site north of High Street and which includes land at Primrose Hill Car Park, Daventry Library (as described above) and Chapel Lane Car Park.
- 3.4 The application is currently planned for submission in January 2012. This is a delay of some six months from the original timetable. Discussions are currently ongoing with Henry Boot and DDC to ensure that the pre-application process and processing of the application once submitted, is taken forward positively in the interests of all parties. This will ensure that there is a seamless transition of the application to DDC and continuity of service to the applicant is maintained.
- 3.5 The scheme incorporates some 10,000 sqm of new, high quality development including retail space and a new library (which is significantly larger and more efficient than the existing building).

### **4. Site 5**

- 4.1 Henry Boots Developments are expected to submit an Outline Planning Application in January 2012. The proposed development includes approximately 26,000 sqm of floorspace delivering a range of retail outlets (including food, non food, bulky goods and open retail). In addition a number of restaurant and café uses are proposed, including a drive through facility.

- 4.2 The development includes new surface level car parking and will require the realignment of some aspects of the existing highway in and around this end of Eastern Way.
- 4.3 The intended submission date is a delay of some four months from the original timetable. Discussions are currently ongoing with Henry Boot and DDC to ensure that the pre-application process and processing of the application once submitted, are taken forward positively in the interests of all parties.
- 4.4 The relationship between Site 1 and 5 and in particular Sites 3 and 6 is critical in regeneration and urban design terms and ensuring synergy between all the sites. Taken together the developments represent a significant increase in the commercial and retail floorspace of Daventry. Ensuring high quality, coherent urban design and sustainability standards throughout needs to be central to all these proposals. To help with that process WNDP's planning officers in agreement with Henry Boot have established a common set of aims and objectives to take us through these next few busy months which enshrine those aspirations.

## **5. Sites 3 and 6**

- 5.1 Daventry District Council submitted an Outline Planning Application for Sites 3 and 6 (which incorporate the area known as the Water Space located off Eastern Way and the area known as the Learning Quarter) in May 2011.
- 5.2 The proposed uses for the 11.3 ha site include a mixture of leisure, residential, employment, community and educational facilities as well as mooring basins which will link to the proposed Daventry Canal Arm. Some 360 new homes and 13,000 sqm of office space are planned, together with a family pub, restaurants, cafes, etc.
- 5.3 The application is currently being considered and the Environmental Statement that was submitted with the application will be reviewed.

## **6. The Canal Arm**

- 6.1 DDC are now expected to submit a Detailed Planning Application in early July (the original submission date was April 2011) to create a new arm linking the Grand Union Canal (north east of Daventry Reservoir) to Daventry town centre.
- 6.2 This 3.2km long arm will terminate in a series of three basins forming part of Site 3, mixed use development.

6.3 The proposed route of the canal arm follows the south and eastern sides of Daventry Reservoir and will have a towpath along its length, sections for boat mooring and planted margins to provide habitat for aquatic plants and animals.

6.4 It is likely that there will be 7 locks over the length of the arm to accommodate a level difference of 20.5 metres, although a flight of 4 of the locks may be replaced, at a later date, by a boatlift that would be an opportunity to create a tourist attraction of regional and perhaps national importance.

## **7. University Technical College**

7.1 Moulton College are leading a partnership, including Cosworth, Prologis, Cummins, the University and the District and County Councils, bidding to the Department of Education (DfE) to bring a University Technical College (UTC) to Daventry. The Vision for the UTC is to provide excellence in education for 14-19 year olds, focusing particularly on sustainable communities (built, environmental and social) and sustainable technologies in advanced engineering.

7.2 The full bid for the UTC had to be submitted to DfE on 31 May. One week prior to this, the County Council received feedback from DfE that the costs of land acquisition and construction in the draft bid were likely to be around £1m too high to enable the bid to be successful. The District Council, the University and the County Council agreed to commit £700,000 towards the project. WNDC was asked to provide £300,000 which would only become payable if the bid was successful. This would come from the recycling of s106 money - previously invested in Daventry Library which is due for repayment from development - rather than CSR10 grant-funding from DCLG.

7.3 Given the short notice before the bid submission to DfE, there was insufficient time for WNDC to undertake its own full due diligence process on the proposal. However, as the project clearly meets the Corporation's strategic objectives and the DfE will be running a value for money assessment as part of the bid determination process, there is sufficient comfort in this area to proceed.

7.4 The short notice also prevented the Corporation from going through normal Board channels to get approval for the allocation. However, the Chairman was able to exercise his authority under Board standing orders (paragraph 4.2) to deal with urgent

matters and agree the funding contribution. This was reported at the Board Workshop on 8 June and now requires ratification by the full Board.

**7.5 Board members are invited to Approve a commitment of £300k towards the University Technical College.**

**8. Conclusion**

8.1 WNDC and its partners have worked together over the past few years to help deliver DDC's and local people's aspirations for Daventry. This investment of time and funding is already making a significant contribution to the future wellbeing of the town in terms of its retail and commercial offer, as a high quality employment location, improved community infrastructure and enhanced public realm. There are a number of initiatives already on the ground and operating in Daventry (e.g. the iCon Environmental Innovation Centre, Abbey Retail Park, new community buildings such as the Scout building, etc.).

8.2 However, it is clear that over the next few months a number of decisions critical to the continued delivery of those aspirations will need to be made. WNDC will be determining planning applications that have the potential to add thousands of square metres of new retail space to the town centre and generate hundreds of jobs, while DDC's plans for the Water Space will transform the built environment of Daventry Town Centre. Of particular importance is the Department of Education's decision on the location of its first round of University Technical Colleges, with Daventry continuing to be presented as a front runner.

**9. Milestones**

Site 1

<b>Milestone 1</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Forecast</b>
Submission of planning application	15/07/11	06/01/12
<b>Milestone 2</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Forecast</b>
Completion of Application Validation and Statutory Consultation Process	19/08/11	10/02/12

<b>Milestone 3</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Forecast</b>
Completion of Planning Application Assessment	09/09/11	03/03/12
<b>Milestone 4</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Forecast</b>
Committee Resolution Attained	13/09/11	TBC

Site 5

<b>Milestone 1</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Forecast</b>
Submission of planning application	15/07/11	06/01/12
<b>Milestone 2</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Forecast</b>
Completion of Application Validation and Statutory Consultation Process	19/08/11	10/02/12
<b>Milestone 3</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Forecast</b>
Completion of Planning Application Assessment	09/09/11	03/03/12
<b>Milestone 4</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Forecast</b>
Committee Resolution Attained	13/09/11	TBC

Site 3 & 6

<b>Milestone 1</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Submission of planning application	29/04/11	03/05/11
<b>Milestone 2</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Completion of Application Validation and Statutory Consultation Process	03/06/11	09/06/11
<b>Milestone 3</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Forecast</b>
Completion of Planning Application Assessment	01/07/11	22/07/11

<b>Milestone 4</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Forecast</b>
Committee Resolution Attained	13/09/11	08/11/11

Canal Arm

<b>Milestone 1</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Forecast</b>
Submission of planning application	31/05/11	01/07/11
<b>Milestone 2</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Forecast</b>
Completion of Application Validation and Statutory Consultation Process	05/07/11	05/08/11
<b>Milestone 3</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Forecast</b>
Completion of Planning Application Assessment	31/07/11	26/08/11
<b>Milestone 4</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Forecast</b>
Committee Resolution Attained	13/09/11	08/11/11