



# WNDC Board Report

## Report by Chief Executive

Paper Reference: 2011-05-05-01

Agenda Item: 5

20 September 2011

**Subject:** Chief Executive's Report

**Advice:** That the Board **endorse** the progress WNDC is making in respect of the growth and regeneration of Northampton, Daventry and Towcester.

## **1. Representing the local community**

- 1.1 We are delighted to welcome Councillor Tim Hadland and Councillor Mary Clarke to their first WNDC Board meeting. They will represent Northampton Borough Council and South Northamptonshire Council respectively throughout the Corporation's final delivery phase.
- 1.2 As highly respected figures in local business, politics and community life, Tim and Mary will be major assets to WNDC over coming years. They succeed Tony Woods and Councillor Sandra Barnes, both of whom made an important contribution to the ongoing regeneration of West Northamptonshire. Amongst other achievements, Sandra Barnes played a pivotal role in establishing the Moat Lane regeneration scheme, while Tony Woods has provided strong leadership and great energy during the ongoing regeneration of Northampton town centre.

## **2. Working with government**

- 2.1 Last month, WNDC hosted a visit to Northampton by Sir Bob Kerslake, Permanent Secretary at the Department for Communities and Local Government. Sir Bob was eager to learn about the regeneration of Northampton town centre and the wide range of projects WNDC is delivering with its local authority partners. It was a valuable opportunity for us to strengthen and reinforce the case for public investment in the area. Following the visit, Sir Bob Kerslake expressed his support for the continued regeneration of West Northamptonshire and was impressed with the progress we have made to date.

## **3. Reviving Northampton's Waterside**

- 3.1 It has been an eventful period for Northampton's waterside, with a range of schemes along the River Nene being either approved, taken forward or completed.
- 3.2 In August, WNDC's planning committee approved an application for a vital new road in the area. The application, which was submitted by the Corporation itself, comprises a 1.6km route between the Bedford Road and Ransome Road near the

town centre. It will enable major commercial and residential development on the Avon, Nunn Mills and Ransome road sites, thus breathing new life into disused, industrial land.

3.3 Nearby, work on the Becket's Park Promenade has been completed. WNDC has invested £100,000 of developer contributions to infrastructure in the scheme, which has been delivered by Northampton Borough Council. Designed to complement Becket's Park Marina, the project includes improvements to footpaths, lighting and street furniture.

3.4 On the northern edge of the Waterside area, outline plans have been officially completed and approved for the redevelopment of Castle Railway Station. Funding opportunities are currently being explored for this iconic scheme, including a bid to the Government's Regional Growth Fund. We are expecting a decision on the funding application during the Autumn.

3.5 Crucially, all of these infrastructure schemes are within Northampton's Waterside Enterprise Zone and will help provide the foundations for long term economic growth in the town. Alongside those improvements, we are making strong progress with wider development plans for the Waterside area.

#### **4. Supporting new jobs and investment**

4.1 The Corporation has continued to use its planning powers to secure new jobs and investment in the area. Applications that have recently been approved by WNDC's planning committees include a new facility for St Andrew's Healthcare in Northampton. This development which is an investment of approximately £50million, will support the creation of around 260 jobs, and further extend the healthcare facilities of this internationally renowned organisation.

4.2 WNDC's ground breaking Construction Futures training scheme continues to use the planning system to secure jobs and training opportunities for local people on new developments. It has delivered over 100 short-term training placements to date, and in July it secured its first long-term apprentices, based at the Pearce Leatherworks housing development in Northampton.

## 5. Attracting recognition

- 5.1 Two innovative projects delivered by WNDC have been shortlisted for major regional awards. Construction Futures and the iCon Environmental Innovation Centre are both being considered for an East Midlands Constructing Business Excellence Award in the 'skills and training' and 'environmental sustainability' categories. The iCon has also been shortlisted for 'project of the year', recognising its outstanding design and potential impact on Daventry's local economy.