



WNDC Board Report

Report by Director of Regeneration and Development

Paper Reference: 2011-05-07-02

Agenda Item: 7

20 September 2011

Subject: Daventry Programme

Advice: That the Board:

1. **Endorse** the progress that is being made on regeneration and planning projects in Daventry

Summary:

- Investments made by WNDC and our public sector partners to help support the growth and regeneration of Daventry have resulted in significant levels of activity
- After a successful programme of launch events in early June the Daventry iCON continues to grow from strength to strength
- Planning applications for Sites 3 and 6 (Waterspace) have been received by WNDC which seek to take forward Daventry District Council's vision to transform Daventry's town centre, commercial and retail offer
- A detailed planning application for the Canal Arm was received on the 16th August 2011
- Planning applications for Site 1 and Site 5 are expected in April 2012, with Daventry District Council now likely to lead on the pre-application process prior to submission

- Discussions are also continuing with developers seeking to build new homes and related infrastructure in and around Daventry

1. Regeneration and Daventry Town Centre

1.1 Daventry iCON Environmental Innovation Centre

- 1.1.1 The community and business launch events for the iCON took place during late May and early June and were very successful in raising the profile of the centre to the local community and business sector.
- 1.1.2 The first tenants moved into the building in early May and the occupancy rate continues to rise steadily each week for both lettable space and conferencing facilities. 12 units will be occupied as of the 1st of October.
- 1.1.3 The formal transfer of the building to the University of Northampton has now been completed with the iCON already figuring prominently in the University's marketing and promotional material. The iCON represents the second innovation centre delivered for West Northamptonshire through a WNDC and University of Northampton collaboration and with financial support of local organisations such as NEL (NEP) and regional bodies such as emda.
- 1.1.4 The iCon's environmental and design credentials were recently highlighted in a major article in Building Magazine, which included: *"Everyone knows buildings of the future will have to be more environmentally sensitive. The challenge is to achieve that whilst consistently delivering high quality design as well. The iCon sets a realistically achievable benchmark that others would do well to follow."* Building, 26th August 2011

1.2 Daventry Library

- 1.2.1 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) to bespoke offices in DDC's Lodge Road building has meant that the new library in Site 1 will be purpose built for the library and related cultural and community uses.

- 1.2.2 WNDC has set up a project team including private and public sector partners to look specifically at the library to ensure plans are taken forward positively and are timely in respect of the planning application for Site 1.

1.3 University Technical College

- 1.3.1 DDC is still waiting to hear if it has been shortlisted for interview by the Department for Education (DfE) to bring forward a 600 place University Technical College (UTC) specialising in Sustainable Technologies. The DfE was due to make the announcement in July 2011, however this has been delayed and the Department are now likely to inform successful candidates in Autumn 2011.
- 1.3.2 On the 5th July, WNDC Board approved investment up to £300,000 to support this new educational facility in Daventry. The investment is made against section 106 contributions received. Pre planning application discussions have also taken place with WNDC planners and again if funding is approved then a detailed application is expected soon after.
- 1.3.3 One issue to highlight is that an application to designate Site 3 & 6 as a Village Green (VG) has been submitted to Northamptonshire County Council and the prospective site for the UTC falls within that. The application will in all likelihood be subject to a Public Inquiry towards the end of this year. The inherent risk is that any monies made available, if used to prepare and submit a planning application prior to the outcome of the Public Inquiry, may be spent needlessly if the site was designated as a VG. In order to clarify this risk, legal advice has been sought as to the likelihood of a successful VG application.

2. Town Centre Planning Applications

2.1 Site 1

- 2.1.1 Henry Boot Developments Limited (DDC's appointed private sector development partner) is preparing to submit a detailed Planning Application for this site which is the town centre site north of the High Street and includes land at Primrose Hill and Chapel Lane car parks and Daventry Library.
- 2.1.2 The scheme incorporates approximately 10,000 sqm of new high quality development including retail space and NCC's new purpose built library.

2.1.3 The planning application is due to be submitted in April 2012. DDC is currently in discussions with Henry Boot and the initial view is that DDC will take forward the pre-application discussions in advance of the formal submission, with WNDC officers having minimal involvement. No formal confirmation has been received regarding this agreement. The delay in the submission of the planning application presents a risk to the timing of the delivery of the new library building.

2.2 Site 5

2.2.1 The development at Site 5 includes approximately 26,000 sqm of floor space delivering a range of retail outlets as well as a number of restaurants and cafes. A new surface car park will also be developed which will require the realignment of certain aspects of the existing highway in and around Eastern Way.

2.2.2 The outline planning application is due to be submitted to DDC in April 2012, seven months behind the original timetable. The 'in principle' agreement reached between DDC and Henry Boot regarding the pre-application process for Site 1 also applies for this application

2.3 Sites 3 and 6

2.3.1 Daventry District Council submitted an outline planning application for Sites 3 and 6 in May 2011. The proposed uses for the 11.3 ha site include a mixture of leisure, residential, employment, community and educational facilities as well as a mooring basin which will link into the proposed Daventry Canal Arm.

2.3.2 The application is currently being considered by WNDC and will be presented at Daventry Planning Committee in November/December of this year. This is likely to change following meetings with the applicant and the completion of key reports during the course of September which will necessitate revisions to the application and the Environmental Statement. It will be possible to advise a revised Daventry Area Planning Committee date following consideration of these assessments. -

- 2.3.3 It should be noted that the Corporation is yet to receive consultation responses from DDC departments, some of which are key to the consideration of the application.
- 2.3.4 It is worth noting that the Draft National Planning Policy Framework makes reference to a new Local Green Spaces Designation to protect green area that are of particular importance to local communities. The Government has also launched a consultation on the registration of new town and village greens.
- 2.3.5 The Government is seeking feedback on three options: do nothing, amend the current system, or integrate the process into the planning system. The Government's preference is to give designated spaces, in planning policy terms, a similar status to green belts. The outcome of the consultation and proposals for the way forward are expected early in 2012, with implementation anticipated in April 2012.

2.4 The Canal Arm

- 2.4.1 Daventry District Council submitted a Detailed Planning Application on the 16th August 2011 to create a new arm linking the Grand Union Canal (north east of Daventry Reservoir) to Daventry town centre. The 3.2km long arm will terminate in a series of three basins forming part of Site 3.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1 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, with 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.).
- 3.2 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 commercial office 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 for Education's decision on the location of its first round of University Technical Colleges, with Daventry continuing to be presented as a front runner.