



# WNDC Board Report

## Report by Director of Regeneration and Development

Paper Reference: 2011-06-07-03

Agenda Item: 7

15 November 2011

**Subject:** Daventry Programme

**Advice:** That the Board:

1. **Welcome** the announcement that Daventry has been selected as a location for a new University Technical College.

**Summary:**

- This report sets out progress on a range of regeneration and development projects in Daventry.
- Daventry has been selected as the location for a new University Technical College.

## **1. Summary**

- 1.1 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.
- 1.2 After a successful programme of launch events in early June the Daventry iCON continues to grow from strength to strength.
- 1.3 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.
- 1.4 A detailed planning application for the Canal Arm was received on the 16th August 2011.
- 1.5 As a response to the anticipated transition of planning powers, planning applications for Site 1 and Site 5 are expected in April 2012, with Daventry District Council (DDC) also now likely to lead on the pre-application process prior to submission.
- 1.6 Discussions are also continuing with developers seeking to build new homes and related infrastructure in and around Daventry.

## **2. Regeneration and Daventry Town Centre**

### **Daventry iCON**

- 2.1 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 building to the local community and business sector.
- 2.2 The first tenants moved into the building in early May and the occupancy rate continues to rise steadily. There are currently 12 tenants.
- 2.3 The formal transfer of the building to the University of Northampton has now been completed with the iCon already figuring predominately in the University's marketing and promotional material.

### **Daventry Library**

- 2.4 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.

- 2.5 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.

### **Daventry University Technical College**

2.6 On the 10th October DDC received confirmation from the Department for Education that the UTC was approved to pre-opening stage to bring forward a 600 place University Technical College (UTC) specialising in environmental sustainability, sustainable construction and new technologies in engineering.

2.7 On the 5th July, WNDC Board approved investment up to £300,000 from S106 to support this new educational facility in Daventry. Pre planning application discussions have also taken place with WNDC planners and a planning application is expected to be submitted by DDC to WNDC.

2.8 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. There is an inherent risk to the expenditure of allocated monies prior to a decision on the VG issue being reached. In order to clarify this risk, legal advice has been sought as to the likelihood of a successful VG application.

## **3. Daventry Town Centre Planning Applications**

### **Site 1**

3.1 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.

3.2 The scheme incorporates approximately 10,000 m<sup>2</sup> of new high quality development including retail space and NCC's new purpose built library.

3.3 The Planning Application is now due to be submitted in April 2012. DDC are 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.

#### **Site 5**

3.4 The development at Site 5 includes approximately 26,000 m<sup>2</sup> 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.

3.5 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 also applies for this application.

#### **Site 3 and 6**

3.6 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.

3.7 The application is currently being considered by WNDC. Following an assessment of the application, additional information is required to progress the application, including revisions to the Environmental Statement. It will only be possible to advise a Daventry Area Planning Committee date following the submission and consideration of the additional information. A further period of public consultation will also be required on the submissions.

3.8 There is also an ongoing issue that the Corporation is yet to receive consultation responses from DDC departments, some of which are key to the consideration of the application. Officers are investigating alternative means to secure the required advice.

3.9 An application to designate the entire application site as a VG is currently being processed by Northamptonshire County Council. It will in all likelihood be subject to a Public Inquiry at the end of the year. If the application were successful, any planning permission for the site could not be implemented.

### **Canal Arm**

3.10 Daventry District Council submitted a detailed planning application on the 16th August 2011 (the original submission was due in April 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.

3.11 The application has generated a significant amount of interest locally with a number of objections made to the scheme, focusing on a range of issues. WNDC will write to DDC in the next few weeks summarising the issues raised during consultation.

3.12 A letter setting out the additional technical information needed to determine the application was sent to DDC on 18th October.

3.13 In addition, Halcrow have been appointed to carry out an independent assessment of the Environmental Statement accompanying the application. A draft report has been received which sets out that additional information/revision is needed to enable a robust assessment of the environmental impacts of the proposals. This information will be reviewed with WNDC providing feedback to DDC on its position during November. That said it is likely that revised Environmental Information will be required before WNDC can determine the application. Officers have already fed back to DDC that the Ecological reports are significantly out of date (as highlighted during the ES review and by Natural England) due to the time sensitive nature of having to carry out additional protected species studies.

3.14 Clearly with the level of additional information required, which will require further public consultation, there is an increasing risk that the application will not be determined by WNDC prior to the transfer of planning powers.