

## Implementation Strategy

The development of the masterplan has taken account of the issues related to deliverability and viability. It is important to note that the masterplan for Wellingborough is expected to be delivered over the long term (up to 2021 and beyond) and that it will be critical to advance some key early stage projects that will 'kick start' the process of change. These 'early win' projects are likely to require significant pump priming activity by the public sector.

It will also be of key importance to actively promote the vision and sell the opportunity to the development industry as well as local stakeholders. This would be aided by the production of high quality marketing material that will effectively communicate the opportunities and locally develop support and a sense of pride in the vision.

The masterplan is concerned with the long-term structure and sustainability of Wellingborough and seeks to provide a sound basis for growth and development for the coming years.

### Critical Mass and Investment

In developing the masterplan it is important to focus redevelopment activities in order to create a critical mass of new development and activity. This is important as it will help create momentum and begin the process of changing perceptions in the transformation of Wellingborough. Early

redevelopment focussed around the town centre will encourage investment in existing buildings as well as attracting new development. Inevitably, proposals unforeseen today will come forward and so the masterplan provides for flexibility within development areas. It will also be important to continue to review and update the masterplan and the implementation strategy to ensure the vision is maintained and adapts to changing conditions.

### Sequence of Development

The process of developing the masterplan over a period of time is dependant upon achieving an early critical mass of development. Much of the development activity will be private sector led. However, if the transformation of Wellingborough is to fulfil the vision set out by the masterplan it will require considerable support from the Borough Council and its partners as well as key business interests such as the owners of the Swansgate Centre. The business case for the proposals will gather momentum as the growth area proposals come to fruition within WEAST and the other urban extensions.

The following broad sequence of redevelopment is recommended:

- High Street site
- Church Street area
- Market Square
- Swansgate Centre

Within the High Street and Church Street sites there is significant land held in the ownership of the Borough Council and the Tresham Institute. This provides scope for these organisations to instigate change. As a first step we would recommend that detailed feasibility and design studies are undertaken to define site specific proposals that can contribute significant added value to the town centre offer and quality of urban form. There would appear to be sufficient developer demand for mixed use development opportunities to give sufficient assurance of project delivery within the period to 2011.

The Market Square is considered to be a key area of change in the medium term. This area should be a focal point for the town in terms of its vitality and quality of public spaces. To achieve comprehensive redevelopment in this area an imaginative approach will need to be developed in order to gain the support of current businesses demonstrating how they can benefit from the proposals. A detailed feasibility study should be undertaken for this area also, at an early date, given its close relationship with the Church Street site and to a lesser extent the High Street proposals.

For the Swansgate Centre it is unlikely that this development will be economically viable until towards the end of the masterplan period i.e. 2015 – 2021 or even beyond this time. Much will depend upon

the actual rate of growth in population. A feasibility study is required to look at the economic viability and timing of development in detail as well as the practical difficulties of phasing the development whilst allowing sufficient trading floorspace to permit adequate business activity during the construction phases in addition to maintaining town centre viability and vitality. The masterplan includes some initial ideas how the redevelopment could be phased. This requires testing and development.

The masterplan suggests that Midland Road from Victoria Street to the Railway Station will require management rather than undergo any radical transformation through redevelopment. Development control is possibly an adequate tool for managing this change with a suitable policy framework to back it up (to be provided by the forthcoming Area Action Plan for the Town Centre). However, design solutions are required to resolve the potential conflicts between the inevitable increase in traffic arising from the WEAST development and other movement modes, businesses and residents on Midland Road. Midland Road will be an important gateway from the station and the east and therefore a design framework should be created alongside proposals for accommodating public transport on Midland Road or alternative routes. Allied to the design and movement strategy the study should incorporate the development of detailed proposals for the Green Link through Castle Fields and along

Swanspool Brook, which itself will be an important movement corridor and may provide an alternative to Midland Road for some movement modes.

The vision presented by the masterplan is positive. The growth area proposals over the coming years will provide an attractive environment for developers and investors.

### Implementation Characteristics

Although much of the development will be private sector led the public sector will have key roles throughout in promoting and enabling activity. The redevelopment proposals put forward by the masterplan share similar characteristics:-

- They are complex, involving phasing and funding issues
- Concentrate on physical and property-led regeneration
- Require intervention from enabling activity to direct development
- Require infrastructure restructuring and improvements
- Involve land assembly, “land-swaps” and potentially CPO’s
- Will require relocation of existing users and occupiers
- Involve co-ordination of existing and new investment programmes
- Need to be effectively managed to avoid disruption

to the town centre’s function as a major service provider for the area

Some of the main factors that will influence the phasing of development are anticipated to include:-

**Land Consolidation** - There will need to be a concerted effort by all parties to satisfactorily agree on bringing the various landholdings together. This position will be improved if the parties commit to a collaborative approach to development. It is likely that the Borough Council will need to offer its powers of compulsory purchase to enable some of the more complex sites.

**Land Preparation** - Investigations will need to be undertaken to identify the extent of potential land contamination and the appropriate remediation strategy if required. A thorough utilities search will be required to ascertain the location of existing services such as underground power lines, water mains, main sewers and gas pipes. In addition, it will be necessary to ascertain whether these services will be sufficient to serve the scale of new development and an assessment will be required to gauge what improvements will be required. There may be a need or case for the Borough Council and partners to seek public funding from the ODPM and other sources to enable key infrastructure to be provided that can otherwise be provided through development.

**Relocation of Existing Businesses and Residents** - Certain businesses and homes within the area may need to be relocated if the masterplan is to be implemented. This is likely to require assistance from the Borough Council in helping relocations either by locating and acquiring new premises or finding suitable alternative accommodation within their existing stock. Again, depending upon negotiations, there may be a requirement for Compulsory Purchase.

**Access and Site Servicing** - The town centre is vibrant and busy with a significant number of businesses operating. The masterplan will need to be aware that it is important to limit, as much as possible, the impact and inconvenience that major redevelopment can have on the existing businesses and the quality of town centre environment. A major factor in this will be the management of traffic that is attracted to the area. A Traffic Management Plan should be prepared that will show how all vehicles including buses, cars and delivery vehicles will access the site during the construction process. In addition, as this is a busy town centre which will have a large number of people moving around, it will be important that Health and Safety is monitored and that construction traffic routes and points of access are agreed to reduce pedestrian conflict.

**Community Involvement and Public Relations** – It is expected that the town will be the site of enormous transformation over a considerable period of time. This will inevitably lead to inconvenience for a number of user groups who use the town centre. This will require a significant investment in public relations to maintain the public and businesses support for the masterplan. The Borough Council will need to ensure that they keep people aware at all times as projects progress. This will involve maintaining a current database of all the businesses to keep them updated on progress. A website may be developed that will give the opportunity to keep people in touch with events and the overall programme. In addition, a Stakeholder Forum could be convened that meets at regular intervals for people to discuss the masterplan.

### **Managing Change**

Delivering the ambitious changes advocated by the masterplan will require a dedicated team to manage its progress. The scale of change is potentially massive and will require substantial effort in moving through the pre-development stages of marketing and pump priming activity. Dedicated staff are recommended to work with the Town Centre Manager to promote and push schemes forward. Delivery of the masterplan is largely dependant upon the Borough Council and other public sector bodies and agencies taking the initiative.

It will be important throughout the lifetime of the masterplan to maintain communication with the public on the changes that are happening to Wellingborough and harness their support.

### **Delivery**

There are a number of elements that need to be in place to ensure that the masterplan is effectively implemented:-

**Quality** - The masterplan needs to ensure long-term quality development is secured. The temptation to compromise quality for the sake of investment needs to be avoided. Early stage development needs to set the standard which in itself will inspire investment. Furthermore, as the market adjusts to the development potential and as confidence and values increase the quality of development will also improve. Development Briefs for individual sites and Design Competitions can assist in ensuring high quality and innovative schemes are implemented.

**Detailed Scheme Design** - The masterplan takes the design to an agreed stage that shows the vision and basic parameters. Further more detailed work will need to be commissioned to determine the exact buildings requirements, phasing and viability of development options to achieve the maximum impact.

**Delivery Vehicles** – The case for creating a dedicated delivery vehicle should be investigated or maximising the effectiveness of existing/emerging bodies. The vehicle could take a number of forms from informal public private partnerships aimed at primarily promotion and co-ordination of town centre activity, to companies limited by guarantee formed between the development industry and public agencies that have resources to offer the vehicle. The need for a delivery vehicle should be regularly reviewed. The existing infrastructure in the form of the Town Centre Partnership and Town Centre Manager provides a useful base position. Certainly, responsibility for the delivery of the vision needs to sit clearly with a single organisation which would have representation from the public and private sectors. The delivery vehicle will have to take into consideration the individual requirements of each partner organisation in respect of:-

- Legal status
- Governance
- Organisational capacity
- Tax position
- Accountability
- Objectives of the project

Underpinning this Delivery Vehicle will be a need for an agreement between all parties to cover:-

- Aims of parties
- Method of working together

- Client Group contributions
- Developer Obligations

**Detailed Planning Applications** - Once detailed design schemes have been prepared it will be necessary for the designs to be submitted as separate planning applications to the Local Planning Authority. This will give a further opportunity for the public to make comment on the design of the new facilities which are proposed. The planning process will be an opportunity to resolve access, design and architectural treatment of the buildings and the spaces around them.

**Developer Selection** - It is likely, given the number of projects that are proposed which are on different timelines and on different sites, that potentially a number of developers are involved rather than one preferred developer. Developer selection will be an important part of the process where public/private partnerships emerge. Expressions of Interest will need to be publicised advertising for developer partners and this may involve the OJEU. (Official Journal of the European Union)

**Legal Arrangements** - There will be a need to set up Partnership Arrangements between the Council/Local Delivery Vehicle and the selected developers. This would need to be in the form of a Development Agreement and would typically cover the following:-

- Aim of schemes
- Planning and other consents
- Property acquisition and disposals
- Risk
- Project Management
- Procurement
- Infrastructure

Potential Funding Sources:-

- Local Transport Plan (LTP)
- Capital Receipts from Land Sales
- Developer Contributions
- emda
- ODPM
- Sub-Regional Partnerships (Invest Northamptonshire/Northamptonshire Partnership)

**Planning Obligations** - In order for planning permissions to be granted, developments of this scale and importance will require developer contributions to be made under the provisions of Section 106 of The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (or where they relate to Highway Works, under Section 278 of the Highways Act 1980). Developers will be required to enter into legal agreements with the Local Planning Authority. The type of matters which may be addressed by Section 106 agreements in terms of provisions and timescale could include:-

- Off-site transport improvements
- Housing, namely the provision of affordable housing and contribution towards training and

construction skills

- Education, related to school transport, school places and nursery
- Leisure, including contributions towards improvements to public open space and play areas
- Community Facilities
- Employment, and skills development
- Natural environment conservation
- Energy Conservation and Resource Efficiency
- Management and Maintenance
- Public Art

Careful consideration will need to be given to the viability of projects and their ability to contribute to such matters without undermining their delivery and developer interest.

### Guidance and Quality

The masterplan sets out the new structure for the Town Centre in a basic form. The next step in delivering the masterplan vision is to ensure that development is of a high quality and adheres to the principles of good urban design.

To achieve this it is necessary to provide developers and their design consultants with guidance on what is expected. Design guidance and early consultation with the relevant authorities can minimise uncertainty, improve efficiency in the planning process and form a link between the aspirations of the local authority and those of the development industry.

Below are the main stages in progressing the development opportunities set out in the masterplan through the planning process:

### Development Briefs

A series of detailed briefs may be prepared by the Borough Council to help guide the development on particular sites if it is felt that more detailed guidance is required to ensure the best development.

### Pre-Application Discussions

Pre-application discussions are recommended for prospective developers as they can help expose potential conflicts with Borough Council policies and objectives at an early stage in the development process.

### Planning Application Requirements

Detailed planning applications will be required for each of the new developments and will need to be developed in accordance with the masterplan and Town Centre Area Action Plan. They should follow guidance set out in other Development Plan Documents such as relevant SPD's published by the Borough Council.

The detailed planning applications will need to be accompanied by the following information:-

1. A Concept Plan for the entire site together with a phasing plan if required.

2. A Transport Assessment as stated in PPG13 "where developments will have a significant transport implications, Transport Assessments should be prepared and submitted alongside the relevant planning applications" The level of detail required will vary according to the scale of the scheme. Developers are advised to enter into early discussions with the planning and highway authorities in order to consider the acceptability of development proposals in transport terms and the scope of Transport Assessment requirements.

3. A Design Statement. The applicant should provide a written statement setting out:

- An explanation of the design concept and principles.
- An outline of how these will be reflected in the development layout, density, scale, landscape and visual appearance.
- How the development corresponds with the master plan.
- An explanation of the proposed development and how the design relates to the site and wider area.
- An explanation of how the development will meet with Borough Council policy.
- How the development responds to any relevant Supplementary Planning Guidance produced by the Borough Council.
- Plans and drawings should be submitted to ensure that the design can be properly assessed

and include a location plan, plan of existing layout, floor plans, elevations and cross sections.

- Include an executive summary where this could be useful for public consultation.

There is also a range of guidance documents available that can guide good quality development as set out below:-

The RIBA can be contacted at:-  
Royal Institute of British Architects HQ  
66 Portland Place  
London  
W1B 1AD

### **CABE Development Guidance**

- By Design : DETR :Urban Design in the Planning System: Towards Better Practice
- The Value of Urban Design : CABE and DETR.
- Creating Excellent Buildings : A Guide for Clients; CBE (First Edition 2003).
- Creating Successful Masterplan : A Guide for Clients (2004).
- The Value of Housing Design and Layout.
- Making Places : Urban design at a Local Level.
- Paving the Way : How we achieve clean, safe and attractive streets.

### **Other Development Guidance**

- Full Day Care : Guidance to the National Standards (September 2001)
- Building for SureStart : Client and Design Guide; DfES & CABE (March 2004)
- Part M : Building Regulations : (Covers DDA Regulations) : HMSO 2004
- The Urban Design Compendium : EP & The Housing Corporation (August 2000)

### **Architectural Design Competitions**

In addition, to secure high quality building design the RIBA administer a competitions process that seeks to secure for clients the best possible design and suitably qualified architect for the job. The Royal Institute of British Architects Competitions Office organises bespoke architectural competitions that encourage excellence in design and offer value for money.