

## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The land south of the Black Country Route in Bilston represents the largest area of derelict and under used land in the Borough. It offers the opportunity to create a large mixed use development which will significantly raise the environmental quality of the area, go some way to meeting requirements for new housing, contribute to new employment opportunities and support the economic well being of the commercial and retail centre of Bilston.
- 1.2 Wolverhampton Council and English Partnerships (the partners) have entered into a joint venture to secure the redevelopment of the land and wish to appoint consultants to work up a detailed Masterplan based on the principles outlined in this brief.
- 1.3 A Masterplan based on the agreed principles is seen as an important means of both increasing market confidence in the area, which is acknowledged to be lacking, and of controlling subsequent development pressure.
- 1.4 Central to the masterplanning process will be an understanding of the constraints which currently exist across the site. The partners have already undertaken extensive research into the principal constraints and a number of reports on the subject will be made available to consultants.

## 2.0 Purpose of the Brief

- 2.1 The brief aims to procure a Masterplan which will help to realise the aspirations of the Council and English Partnerships in terms of the type and form of development. It is vital that the Masterplan should communicate a *vision* for the area. The partners wish to be innovative in the nature of the proposals and its delivery but the developments proposed must be realistic.
- 2.2 The principal objectives of the Masterplan will be to:
  - Deliver a form of development based on the principles of sustainability.
  - Provide a framework for a mixture of land uses, primarily for housing and employment but also including local retail, leisure and community facilities and open space.
  - Encourage quality throughout and suggest a means of achieving some degree of local distinctiveness.
  - Outline a strategy for public consultation in the masterplanning process.

- Suggest the most appropriate way to phase the development such that funding is focused on projects that give the development an early “critical mass” and that quality criteria are self-evident from the start.
- Identify development, infrastructure, environmental and transport projects where these are considered fundamental to achieving the wider objectives of the brief.
- Identify an appropriate range of employment and business support services which would be appropriate to ensure the economic and social viability of the Urban Village and the surrounding area. These may be derived through discussions with, for example, Wolverhampton Chamber Training & Enterprise Council, Bilston College and the Bilston Education Centre.

## **3.0 Planning Policies**

3.1 The current planning policies are derived from the Council’s existing Unitary Development Plan (UDP) adopted in 1993. The UDP is currently under review and the Masterplan and the consultation process that goes with it will inform the review process.

3.2 Both English Partnerships and the Council are major landowners in the area and most of the land, therefore, is in some form of public ownership. Two important areas of privately owned land are discussed below.

3.3 The consultants should be aware that the Council has resolved to make a Compulsory Purchase Order on the scrapyards off Brook Terrace and that the Masterplan should proceed on the basis that this site is available. However, the Order will not be confirmed during the course of the Masterplanning commission and consultants will therefore be expected to give some consideration to what options might be available should the CPO not be confirmed.

3.4 Further, the consultants should identify any additional sites which they consider may present real difficulties in securing appropriate development and to discuss whether these might be dealt with through a programme of physical improvements, such as landscaping, or by acquisition and relocation.

3.5 In addition, the site of the Metabrasives factory off Coseley Road should be included in the Masterplan. The company are in the process of relocating their operations to their new plant on the Springvale site which is due to be fully complete in about 18 months time. It is understood that the company may wish to retain on site the office block and car park. The consultants should liaise with the company to determine the company’s precise requirements and timescale.

3.6 The partners' land use priorities for the Masterplan are housing and employment uses. The existing pattern of land use allocations will not achieve the required outputs for each of these land uses nor will it provide a satisfactory disposition of land uses across the site as a whole.

3.7 The consultants are therefore invited to consider land uses across the study area without the constraint of UDP allocations. Other constraints, such as ground conditions, contamination and noise, will be relevant and these should be taken into account in the Masterplanning process and will inform the recommended remediation strategy.

3.8 In terms of land use the partners consider that the following factors will be important in informing the Masterplan process.

- In commercial terms the prime development site is that part of the site which fronts the Black Country Route. The partners consider that whilst development here should form part of the Urban Village fabric it may be appropriate for the development here to serve a wider catchment in, say, the leisure market. Major retail would not be acceptable.
- Midland Metro with its associated stops and the importance of developing a population base which is within reasonable walking distance of the facility.
- The existing areas of housing and their integration into the wider urban village.
- The existing areas of industrial activity, their viability, the potential for future expansion and their impact on existing and future land uses.
- The Bradley Arm of the Birmingham Canal.
- Access requirements.

## **4.0 Development Principles**

4.1 The principles which govern the Masterplan should reflect the philosophy inherent in an Urban Village style of development. For the purposes of this brief the following principles are considered essential:

- A mix of well integrated uses which can bring amenities close together and which ensure the efficient use of scarce urban land.
- A range of tenures in both residential and commercial sectors.
- A level of residential density which is urban rather than suburban to enable an appropriate form of residential development to take place and to bring local amenities within walking distance.
- A high quality urban design code which will encourage the development of non-standard solutions to achieve the Masterplan principles. It will be expected that reference is made to English Partnerships publications including "Time for Design" and "Making Places" as well as other recently published material including relevant Supplementary Planning Guidance.
- A transport network which gives priority to pedestrians and cyclists and which does not dominate the new development; which caters for the car

but does not encourage its use; which is designed to achieve a maximum speed of 20 mph in residential areas and elsewhere with high pedestrian flows. The partners will look for innovation in the field of access and mobility and new forms of transport should be considered.

- A strong input from local stakeholders in the planning, design and management of the Urban Village.

## 5.0 Additional Considerations

5.1 The partners' vision for Bilston Urban Village is that it should become a model of good practice in the field of sustainable development. This means that considerations over and above the usual issues of mixed-use and good urban design should be incorporated into the Masterplan. Such considerations will include the following:

5.1.1 *Issues arising through high density development* High density housing is considered appropriate in the context of the Urban Village development because of the importance of achieving a critical mass in terms of residential population and because of the form and quality of urban design which becomes possible. Although perhaps a matter of detail the consultants should be aware that it is the partners' aspirations that sustainable lifestyles should not be "designed out" of the Urban Village. Essentially high density development should allow space for such things as convenient bicycle storage, space for consumer waste separation, rainwater and grey water collection and home composting.

5.1.2 *Energy* The development must be designed and built on sound energy conservation principles and consultants should address issues such as orientation of buildings, passive solar gain, and the potential for local power generation.

5.1.3 *Drainage* Although the existing drainage infrastructure has the capacity to deal with the projected level of development the Masterplan should follow the guidelines set out by the Environment Agency in their advice on "Best Management practice for the Control of Diffuse Pollution in Urban Areas". The feasibility of using the line of the Bilston Brook as a linear wetland feature through the Urban Village should be pursued.

5.1.4 *Accessibility* One of the key characteristics of an urban village is that local amenities are within walking distance. In the case of Bilston Urban Village it will be important to show how movement *within* the development is linked to movement into and out of the area. With established residential areas to the south and Bilston Town Centre to the north the Urban Village must not be seen as a barrier to movement between the two.

Public transport and pedestrian/cycle links will be important to key destinations including Bilston Town Centre, the bus station and the Metro stops at Loxdale Street and Bilston (Church Street).

*5.1.5 Landscape/Nature Conservation* The enhancement of the nature conservation value of the area will be a key consideration of the Masterplan. The main areas of current nature conservation interest are the designated SLINC, the line of poplars which follows the line of the Brook and which are subject to Tree Preservation Orders and areas of woodland which currently form part of the extensive open space to the west of the site. Areas of new nature conservation interest should be spread throughout the Urban Village with linkages between them to facilitate the movement of wildlife across the site and to maximise the benefit to those people who will live and work in the urban village. To assist the consultants a report on the existing habitats and landscape character of the area has been prepared and will be made available.

*5.1.6 Archaeology* A brief appraisal of the area indicates the potential for archaeological interest and a report has been commissioned on this subject which will be made available to consultants.

*5.1.7 Local Facilities* The essence of the Urban Village is that local facilities should be easily reached on foot. Whilst it is important not to undermine the viability of the retail provision in Bilston Town Centre some form of local shopping is desirable where individual units should not generally exceed 400m<sup>2</sup>. Large scale retail provision within the urban village area will be strongly resisted.

*5.1.8 Community/Social Facilities* Consultants will be required to examine the potential for the Bilston Education Centre (BEC) to become a focal point for community activity. This may involve new build to enable the centre to look inwards to the main urban village development. There will be a requirement to assess the need for new health, education and social facilities within the Urban Village development.

*5.1.9 Sport and Recreation* There is an identified shortfall of outdoor sports facilities in the Bilston area and the Council, the BEC and Bilston College all have aspirations to expand provision. Consultants will be required to consider how best sports provision could be accommodated within the Urban Village and the most appropriate delivery mechanism to achieve it. It is not intended that new sports facilities within the Urban Village should compete directly with existing facilities and the consultants should review current provision to ensure that any new facilities are additional to those currently on offer.

## **6.0 Key Tasks**

6.1 The procurement of a detailed Masterplan for the Bilston Urban Village will involve the following stages:

- Stage 1: Assembly of baseline information/audits
- Stage 2: Preparation and presentation of strategy options including public consultation.
- Stage 3: Market testing of key development proposals.
- Stage 4: Preparation of draft Masterplan –
- Stage 5: Draft Masterplan out for consultation
- Stage 6: Adoption of the Masterplan

## **7.0 Stage 1 – Assembly of baseline information /audits**

7.1 The first stage will require an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses opportunities and threats of the Bilston Urban Village area and the surrounding areas including confirmation of the boundary of the Urban Village

7.2 The consultant must demonstrate that the analysis draws upon information gathered during interviews and discussions with local business and community interests.

7.3 The partners consider that the initial audit work should, as a minimum, include the following key activities:

### **7.4 Residential Audit**

7.4.1 A crucial component of the urban village involves a substantial increase in the amount of residential accommodation in the area. At the initial stage an assessment of existing accommodation in the area will be required and ways identified of drawing these areas into the fabric of the Urban Village.

## 7.5 Transportation and Movement Audit

7.5.1 This involves the audit of and recommendations for improvement to all forms of transportation linkages around and through the site.

7.5.2 Particular attention will need to be given to any identified improvements required to the pedestrian/cycle crossings of the Black Country Route

7.5.3 Early discussions are advised with major public transport operators in the area to determine improvements to the existing network and to ensure operators' requirements are well understood in advance of the Masterplan.

7.5.4 The consultants should consider the appropriateness of a park and ride facility linked to the Midland Metro as part of the Urban Village. This will need to be considered in the context of whether it can be achieved within an overall design framework and whether it fits in with the underlying Urban Village philosophy.

7.5.5 Attention should be given to the potential for the canal to form a corridor of movement and to the need to reinstate the bridge that took the former Dudley-Priestfield rail line over the canal.

## 7.6 *Design Audit*

7.6.1 The partners are fully committed to development of the highest urban design standards. It is recognised that there is a paucity of good design in the immediate environs of the Urban Village site. Consultants must demonstrate, however, that existing views, vistas and reference points visible from within the site are taken as the starting point for the production of a Building and design code for the Urban Village. It is intended that this will be refined to form a central part of the Masterplan proper.

## 7.7 Environmental Audit

7.7.1 The consultants will be required to review all existing information of environmental importance and make recommendations as to how this should inform the Masterplan process. The Council will make available to the consultant all environmental information that it holds.

## 7.8 *Commercial and Industrial Audit*

7.8.1 The consultant is required to undertake a full audit of business within and bordering the study area with a view to establishing their current status and identifying opportunities for, and obstacles to, future growth.

7.8.2 The audit should identify the potential for new employment generation; in particular the possibilities for managed workspace and innovative forms of live/work accommodation.

## 7.9 *Community/Social Audit*

7.9.1 The consultants should review existing community activity in and around the Urban Village area and build into the Masterplan process the active participation of the community. Consultants should explore what scope exists for the development of long term community involvement in the management of aspects of the Urban Village.

7.9.2 Existing health, education and social provision should be reviewed and, in conjunction with relevant agencies, a strategy for the development of new facilities, where they are required, should be devised.

## **8.0 Stage 2 – Preparation and Presentation of Strategy Options including Public Consultation.**

8.1 Based on the stage 1 analysis, the Consultant is to prepare recommendations, including a series of options, for consideration by the project Steering Group. There may also be a requirement to make a presentation to Members of the Council.

8.2 Once the overall approach has been agreed by the Steering Group, including the boundary of the Urban Village, the consultant is then required to prepare a detailed Masterplan.

## **9.0 Stage 3 – Market Testing**

9.1 It is important that once the broad strategy has been agreed it is exposed to the market to ensure that it is robust and achievable. Consideration should be given to phasing at this stage so that elements of the development which are perceived as having a higher risk do not come forward at the beginning of the development process.

9.2 In this context the preparation of recommendations for the ultimate disposal strategy of the site becomes critical. Consultants will be required to test the appropriateness of options which should be identified looking to examples of best practice elsewhere.

## **10.0 Stage 4 – Preparation of the draft Masterplan**

10.1 The Masterplan should take the form of an integrated development plan and programme addressing the issues of market demand for each proposed use, funding requirements and sources of finance, planning and urban design, project implementation and programming, disposal and long term management. It is an absolute requirement that the infrastructure/development projects identified in the Masterplan are ranked in priority order, so that those essential to the creation of the urban Village framework can be clearly identified as Priority projects. Consultants will be expected to identify and cost reclamation works which will be required based on proposals contained in the Masterplan together with clear recommendations to inform the subsequent disposal strategy.

10.2 The core of the Masterplan should contain a Building and Design Code which will guide development during project design, implementation and beyond. This will safeguard the quality and integrity of the built form by supplementing the statutory framework and acting as a guide to all developers involved in the project.

10.3 The consultant is expected to produce a quality draft masterplan to include plans on Ordnance Survey base, sketches and illustrations and clear explanatory text. It is the Consultant's responsibility to ensure that sufficient copies of the Masterplan are made available for public consultation. Summaries may be appropriate for certain aspects of the consultation process.

10.4 The Masterplan should include the following information, together with a detailed justification for each proposal:

- Identification of the proposed extent of the Urban Village
- Identification of the proposed centre(s) and other public spaces within the Urban Village.
- The proposed mix and location of housing, industrial, commercial, leisure, retail, community, educational and other activities. The consultant is reminded that the Masterplan should facilitate the mix of uses not only on neighbouring sites and in adjacent properties, but should identify opportunities for a mix of uses within the same building – fine grain mixed use.

10.5 A detailed Building and Design Code should be prepared to form the core of the Masterplan. This should take the form of an Urban Design Framework with appropriate illustrative material and address:

- Building orientation; height and scale; elevational treatments including those features required to enhance key intersections and the canalside; landscaping; boundary treatment; the maintenance and creation of views within and beyond the study area.

- Transportation and car parking arrangements, including road hierarchies, public transport provision, permeability, pedestrian links and cycleways.
- The arrangement of any proposed public areas, including hard and soft landscaping and street furniture.
- Measures to promote energy efficiency and environmental sustainability.

## 10.6 Outputs

The disposition of land uses across the site is a key consideration in the masterplanning process. There will be a requirement to establish appropriate outputs for each of the main land uses proposed:

### *Housing*

Residential development represents the most important component in the creation of the Urban Village. Consultants should present clear conclusions as to the potential supply and demand for all tenures in the Urban Village area. The consultant should consider:

- *All forms of open market sale property*
- *Social housing, both for rent and shared ownership*
- *Private rented housing*
- *Special needs housing*

Opportunities for introducing mixed use vertically should be examined, where residential accommodation can be provided above commercial, retail and other uses.

**Identify number of units to be provided by type/tenure.  
Identify indicative housing densities.**

### *Commercial and Industrial*

The Urban Village development and the industrial activity immediately surrounding it should aim for a theoretical ratio of 1:1 residents:jobs. A review of business opportunities for the area will be required which identifies obstacles for future employment growth. This will include a review of existing industrial activity with recommendations for its improvement. The partners are keen to see the possibility of providing managed workspace and innovative forms of live/work accommodation.

**Identify number of jobs & floorspace to be improved/provided.**

### *Community/Civic Buildings*

The Consultants should examine the appropriateness of providing or adapting buildings for community use, including education use, bearing in mind the projected increase in the residential population in the area and the facilities already provided within the area at the BEC and in adjacent neighbourhoods such as Bradley and Bilston. This will also involve the provision of health and other social facilities.

### **Identify new build/upgraded floorspace.**

#### *Open Space*

Open space needs to be provided within the Urban Village for a variety of purposes including urban squares, formal and informal green space, sports facilities and areas specifically devoted to wildlife habitats.

### **Identify sports facilities and areas of different types of open space.**

#### *Retail*

This should focus on the provision of retail facilities to serve local needs.

### **Identify number, size and type of units.**

## **11.0 Stage 5: Draft masterplan**

11.1 The draft Masterplan will need to be presented in the first instance to the Project Steering Group. There will be a further specific requirement to make a presentation to Members of the Council and the draft Masterplan will also need to be the subject of wide public consultation. The consultant will be expected to show that adequate time has been allowed for this process and that all costs associated with the consultation process have been allowed for.

## **12.0 Timescale**

12.1 The partners would wish to see the Masterplan in place by December 31 1998. Consultants should comment on the appropriateness of this timetable assuming an appointment during August 1998.

## **13.0 Selection of Consultants**

13.1 Consultants are invited to submit a fixed price tender including all expenses for undertaking the commission as described.

13.2 initial submissions for selection should include:

- Details of experience relating to similar commissions; details of the consultant's project teams including curriculum vitae for team members. It is expected that the consultant will bring to the project a multi-disciplinary team and the submission should make this clear.

- Details of the methodology proposed for undertaking the Masterplan including market testing and public consultation.
- Details on how the consultant intends to promote mixed use. This should include commentary on the potential for achieving mixed use within individual buildings focused on the commercial attractiveness to private sector property investors, as well as mixed use on a wider scale.
- Proposals for public participation and consultation.
- Proposed timetable clearly indicating key milestone dates bearing in mind a completion date by December 31 1998.

13.3 Submissions will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Previous experience of complex multi-disciplinary studies.
- Knowledge of Urban Village developments and general understanding of the requirements of the brief.
- Suitability of the project team members.
- Robustness of the proposed methodology for preparing the Masterplan.
- Tender price.