



Executive Summary

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Capita Symonds has been commissioned by the Ulverston and Low Furness Partnership to undertake a masterplanning exercise for the Ulverston Canal Head and Canal Corridor. The masterplan has provided a strategy for the ongoing regeneration of Ulverston. This has included options for the re-development of the Canal Head area as well as looking at the wider benefits of land-use re-allocation and associated landscaping to provide a gateway into the town and the Furness Peninsula.

This summary describes:

- The objectives of the study
- The process of consultation
- A summary of the masterplan
- A summary of the programme of implementation
- An overview of cost estimates
- Recommendations for the way forward

The objectives of the study

The Partnership identified a number of objectives which, taken as a whole, will consolidate the regeneration of the canal. The project team have addressed the following:

- To consult fully with landowners, businesses and the public
- To undertake an appraisal of the potential for new developments within the study site
- To undertake an appraisal of all landholding and Brownfield sites within the study area
- To explore mechanisms for the future maintenance of the canal
- To provide technical background information, which will include: existing services and drainage, transport and highways infrastructure, ecology, landscape and land quality.
- To recognise and understand the

potential value of land and any proposed developments

- To provide an overview of potential additional visitor numbers and new jobs as a result of the development of the canal area
- To present a masterplan which encapsulates a rolling programme of identified and achievable schemes supported by potential sources of funding

The process of consultation

The project team have carried out a series of one-to-one discussions with stakeholders, landowners and businesses as well as holding a two-day public engagement event.

The Partnership provided a list of primary consultees that were seen to be key players in investigating new opportunities. The project team arranged "fact-finding" meetings in order to explore what the aspirations of people were, both in terms of business development and also addressing the wider issues of the canal and its place in the landscape. The interim proposals, which developed from these meetings, were displayed at a two-day public consultation event. These were very well attended and people were asked to complete a questionnaire, which helped to further consolidate the decision-making process.

In general terms, 27% of the respondents strongly supported the proposals and 39.5% of people generally agreed with the strategy. Key issues included the desire to see some regeneration throughout the canal site, whilst retaining the integral character of the area. There was also a keenness to see that the tranquillity of the canal along with its wildlife should not be compromised.

The developing masterplan was also checked

against current tourism and marketing trends to ensure that the proposals would encourage an increase in the share of new visitors to the area.

The project team held technical consultations with statutory bodies including the Highways Agency, Environment Agency and other utilities providers. This enabled a technical constraints assessment to be prepared that then set the parameters for new developments. Key issues arising include the need to provide a full flood risk assessment for any new developments proposed north of the canal. In addition, there will be a requirement to undertake detailed traffic assessments at the Booth's supermarket roundabout and also the junction with North Lonsdale Road and the A590.

The project team recognised the value of detailed discussions with the Steering Group and the feedback at regular progress meetings was used as a guide to developing the overall strategy. Discussions were also held with GlaxoSmithKline in order to assess the requirements for the long-term, sustainable management of the canal and to explore the options for the creation of a Development Trust that would guide the management of the canal and also perhaps the wider redevelopment of the corridor.

A summary of the Masterplan strategy

The masterplan strategy reflects the results of the extensive consultation process. The strategy is also underpinned by its correlation to other documents including:

- South Lakeland Community Strategy, May 2004
- South Lakeland District Council's Economic Development Strategy, 2004
- South Lakeland Cultural and Arts Strategies

The strategy is based on a phased operation of re-allocation of land use, primarily focussing on the Canal head area, but also taking into account new opportunities through the whole length of the corridor. One of the main drivers for regeneration is the aim of safeguarding employment in the area and also creating opportunities for new jobs for local people. The aim of this exercise is to make a substantial difference to the canal area by enhancing the environment, making a significant improvement to the economy of the town and providing facilities for local people.

The proposals within the masterplan are a mixed-use development providing employment, tourism and recreation facilities and some housing within an enhanced environment. They respond to the points in the Vision within SLDC's Strategic Plan:

- Homes which meet need
- Opportunities for employment
- Quality jobs in a diverse economy
- Good transport facilities
- A high quality environment
- Healthy and safe communities

The proposals can be described in relation to specific geographical locations within the study area:

- Canal Head and land to the north of the canal – key strategic sites
- Mixed-use area – adjoining North Lonsdale Road to east of the railway bridge – local significance
- Steel Street and Kennedy Street areas – local significance
- The Elms – local employment opportunity
- Canal Foot – recreational potential
- Land to the north of the canal – informal recreation with some commercial opportunities at Rame Farm

A summary of the programme of implementation

A phased programme of implementation has been identified over a one to eight year period.

Phase I Canal Head and land to the north of the canal

Phase 1 requires little land assembly and could be implemented relatively quickly. Land to the rear of the glass centre is proposed as a new technology park. Access will be provided from the Booth's roundabout on the A590 and will be developed in a parkland setting to a very high standard of design. The technology park will provide relocation opportunities for expanding local businesses, which wish to remain in the area as well as attracting new similar businesses.

In addition, two sites that lie between Booth's supermarket and the Canal Head area would be the focus for recreational and leisure pursuits, including a landmark visitor centre, cycle provision, tourism-based businesses and public open space. These proposals are based on an assumption that the main Auction Mart operations are not able to relocate.

Phase II Canal Head and land to the north of the canal

Phase II requires a land assembly exercise involving sites at the immediate end of Canal Head as well as the Auction Mart Company acquiring land at the disused abattoir to enable them to reorganise their site and create land for development.

The part of Canal Head that lies immediately alongside the A590 is seen as the key site of re-development of the whole canal corridor. Importantly, it also enables the rationalisation of access to Canal Head to be completed. The poor junction between the Canal Tavern and the A590 will be removed entirely and improved pedestrian access between Canal Head and the

town centre can be formalised to create a safe and enjoyable link. The development proposals for this part of the site include a hotel and function rooms, a waterside restaurant, leisure facilities, café and bar and the relocation of part of the Auction Mart to the abattoir site.

Full development of the Canal Head area would mean that the aspiration for a "gateway" into Ulverston could finally be realised.

North Lonsdale Road – mixed use area

The overall strategy for this area is a mixed development of housing and new workshops whilst creating opportunities for existing businesses to grow. At present, businesses, workshops and industrial premises line the canal front. The strategy aims to encourage a gradual relocation of businesses to the North Lonsdale Road side, taking advantage of better vehicular access, and allowing housing to migrate to the pleasanter environment of the canal side.

Steel Street, Kennedy Street and The Elms

The strategy for the Steel Street area includes for land assembly to create a cluster of small workshops to satisfy local demand and to provide relocation opportunities for the many small business fronting the canal. The Kennedy Street area and The Elms have been the subject of development briefs for a number of years. The key to the redevelopment of this area will be the relocation of the SLDC depot. Uses proposed within this area include: social housing and eco-housing units, provision for public open space and gardens, particularly with the local community in mind, the possible location of a new skateboard park and a new footbridge over the canal to replace the sliding rail bridge.

Canal Foot

Canal foot is a destination for walkers and cyclists and it is proposed to improve facilities there. A small car park on land owned by GSK could be provided in order to alleviate

congestion adjacent to the pier and Canal Foot Cottages. In addition, a viewing platform with interpretation will be provided to make the most of the expansive views across the bay. Canal Foot also will be the focus for the Hearts of Oak; a restored Morecambe Bay Prawner that will be moored up against the Lock Keeper's Cottage. The boat will provide timetabled pleasure trips along the length of the canal, whilst maritime interpretation will be the theme within the cottage.

A sculpture trail, woodland walks and Greenways will form a broader network of leisure routes, connecting Canal Foot with Canal Head and the wider environs.

Rame Farm

Opportunities for walking and cycling can be extended north of the canal. This could also include for pony trekking, equestrian activities and holiday lets at Rame Farm as a means of diversification.

If fully implemented, the masterplan has the potential to create approximately 175 new jobs. This would escalate to almost 300 jobs if the Technology Park were to be fully occupied.

An overview of cost estimates

Cost estimates for the implementation of the masterplan have been prepared based on current rates and appropriate industry indices. They exclude costs for remediation of contaminated land and land purchase but include for new build, associated infrastructure and landscaping. In total, the estimated costs are £36,404,368.00. Some of this will be sourced from private investment; some will be through partnership agreements and the remainder through public funding. The estimated figure shown above reflects costs over a rolling programme of implementation over an eight-year programme.

Opportunities have already been identified that

would enable some schemes to be kick-started. ERDF funding could be available but requires that an application is made before the end of the year. Potential sources of funding have also been identified for the provision of a Project Manager and also for the preparation of a detailed feasibility study for the Auction Mart.

Recommendations

The masterplan strategy lists a number of recommendations in order to identify the next steps forward. A dynamic partnership has already begun to emerge as a result of the masterplan consultations. Positive dialogue with key stakeholders, landowners, businesses and the community has provided encouragement to develop a masterplan that is achievable and realistic. In order to maintain the momentum, a series of priority recommendations are proposed:

- Ensure that the masterplan is accepted as the framework for the delivery of regeneration in Ulverston
- Agree on the most appropriate arrangement for the creation of a Development Trust that will allow for a strong partnership to manage the canal and the masterplan in a sustainable manner
- Engage a high calibre Project Manager to coordinate the creation of the Trust and also drive the masterplan forward
- Continue discussions and maintain good relationships with other key stakeholders
- Pursue discussions with GSK to finalise terms for the hand-over of the canal
- Produce Development Briefs for the Technology Park and sites A and B at Canal Head
- Establish potential funding from NWDA and other major agencies for implementation of the masterplan strategy
- Undertake the Phase II Geo-environmental Site Assessments to determine the levels of contamination

and mitigation requirements

- Undertake traffic assessments at Booth's roundabout and the North Lonsdale Road/A590 junction
- Undertake a detailed feasibility study for the Auction Mart

The masterplan strategy provides a realistic framework that will generate enthusiasm from existing stakeholders and potential partners and will enable Ulverston to implement flagship projects as part of the Market Towns Initiative.

FOREWORD

In December 2004, Capita Symonds was commissioned by the Ulverston and Low Furness Partnership to prepare a masterplan for the Ulverston Canal Head and Canal Corridor.

The masterplan has focused on creating a broad vision throughout the corridor, which in turn will inform the Local Development Framework and

also act as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

The vision has built on documentation and previous studies whilst responding to stakeholder's aspirations, site analysis, consultation, development of design principles and the needs of Ulverston as a whole.

The Ulverston Canal Head and Canal Corridor masterplan provides guidance and recommendations for the re-assignment of land

use, landscaping and access opportunities, potential for employment and the sustainable management of the canal.

It is anticipated that the proposals set out in this document should be implemented through a rolling programme of phased activities over a 1 to 8 year period. The masterplan is the foundation for development through detailed design and subsequent execution.