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Approach to  
Masterplanning

## SECTION 10 - APPROACH TO MASTERPLANNING

### 10.1 Identification of key sites that link with aspirations of MTI Action Plan

The study identifies a number of key sites that link with the aspirations of the MTI Action plan. These include:

- **Sites for gateway and improvement of entrance to town**

Land at Canal Head has been identified as being crucial to achieving this objective. The redevelopment of these sites, including the scrap yard, the Canal Tavern and land owned by the Auction Mart fronting onto the A590 will be vital to creating a more attractive entrance to Ulverston, as an amenity and as a Gateway entrance to the Furness Peninsula. The Study will consider the creation of a quality environment, including amenities and recreation within this area.

- **Employment sites**

A number of sites have been identified for a range of employment-related activities throughout the study area. These include:

- A large green field site behind the Glass Centre for a technology park
- Land fronting the canal to the north east for a craft/local produce village and heritage centre
- Land at Canal Head for an hotel, restaurant, bar and offices
- Land along North Lonsdale Road for workshops.
- The Elms, suitable for business relocation

- **Kennedy Street**

Kennedy Street, the SLDC depot site and adjoining land has been identified for social

housing, local facilities and a skatepark.

- **The Lock Keeper's Cottage**

The Lock Keeper's Cottage at Canal Foot has been identified as a potential interpretation/visitor centre with new car parking close by.

### 10.2 Identification of opportunities for relocation

- **Land owned by GSK/Auction Mart**

Land owned by GSK (west of railway and north of canal) together with adjoining land owned by the auction mart has been identified as additional car parking to serve the redevelopments at Canal Head and a technology park. The technology park will offer opportunities for local companies seeking expansion in a prestige situation to relocate within a high quality landscaped environment.

- **Land owned by Auction Mart to north of canal**

This land has been identified as a site which could build on the existing tourism attractions of Heron Glass and Cumbria Crystal and provide for other local produce/craft manufacturing and sales outlets. Part of the site could be used to relocate Harrison Coward's auction rooms from the town centre. In addition Furness Fish have indicated an interest in relocating their manufacture and sales operation and this site may be a suitable location.

- **Land at Canal Head**

This land will offer opportunities for the development of a hotel, bar and restaurant.

- **The Elms**

This site is owned by GSK. It is set in its own grounds with an attractive driveway and mature trees and could be suitable for a local company

wishing to relocate, subject to the relocation of Rathbones training organisation.

- **Kennedy Street /Steel Street**

Vacant land in the Kennedy Street area, the SLDC depot site and vacant land adjacent to Waites could be made available for a mixed development including garden extensions, social housing, an experimental eco housing project, and workshops. The workshops will provide relocation accommodation for the existing workshops along the canal.

- **Vacant abattoir site**

The vacant abattoir site could be utilised by the Auction Mart, so releasing land for redevelopment at Canal Head.

### 10.3 Identification of opportunities for creating new developments to encourage local businesses to stay in the area

The study identifies a range of opportunities to encourage local businesses to stay in the area and a number of businesses have been contacted regarding these opportunities and have shown very strong interest in these proposals.

- Technology park – to the north of the canal, to rear of Glass Centre
- Craft/local produce village – to north of canal, adjoining Booth's car park
- Workshops – fronting onto North Lonsdale Road adjacent to Waite's

### 10.4 Discussions with planners to address

**degree of flexibility and opportunity to include proposals that fit with current local plan**

An initial meeting took place with Peter Ridgeway, the chief planning officer at SLDC who set out his views of what will be required from this Study. He would be very keen to see employment opportunities provided and stressed that opportunities for housing developments would most likely have to be restricted to social housing.

Further discussions have taken place with Elizabeth Jackson, from the policy section and with Nick Hayhurst and Kate Lawson from the development control section, who are also on the Steering Group. There have therefore been opportunities, as the masterplan has evolved for them to comment on the overall strategy and on individual proposals. Nick Hayhurst and Kate Lawson have commented in writing on the draft proposals.

**10.5 Appraisal of the responses from landowners and businesses and their willingness to become involved in the proposals**

**GSK**

GSK have been represented on the Steering Group and in addition a number of meetings have taken place directly with the company during this study. The company would wish to be supportive of any initiative or development that could have positive socio-economic and environmental benefits for the community. GSK wish to concentrate on their core business and in order to realise the master plan developments, it is proposed that GSK hand over the canal to another body, possibly a trust, for recreational purposes, subject to safeguards protecting the security of the Ulverston manufacturing site.

The canal is classed as a reservoir because it is a closed expanse of water, and as such is

subject to regular inspections and maintenance. In principal, GSK could make support available to these costs if the responsibility for its maintenance is handed over to another body.

**Furness Fish**

Furness Fish, a speciality food producer, is seeking new premises and would consider a site close to Canal Head.

The business is currently located at the edge of Ulverston town centre, off Daltongate. It produces Morecambe Bay potted shrimps, other fresh fish, game, smoked fish and meats and homemade game pies. Customers are wholesale, catering and retail trades throughout the country. Much of the business is mail order. Retail is limited here because of the confined site, which is also restricting growth of the business. The firm is a member of 'Made in Cumbria' and 'North West Fine Foods'.

A relocation scheme would involve:

- Processing fish and game
- Viewing gallery for visitors to watch interesting processes, for example shrimp peeling (there could also be exhibits to interpret the heritage of Morecambe Bay and its traditional industries)
- Speciality retailing.

This would link with other heritage interpretation in the canal corridor and the craft and local produce theme.

**Ulverston Heritage Centre**

Ulverston Heritage Centre is interested in a site at Canal Head, and is pursuing the possibility of a joint venture with the Laurel & Hardy Museum. They anticipate that any relocation to Canal Head would involve construction of a new building.

They have been looking for suitable premises for three years. They would prefer an historic building nearer to the town centre, although nothing has so far been secured. They have funding to undertake an options appraisal and business planning exercise, to consider various

potential sites, during 2005.

**E.H. Booths**

Discussions have taken place with Booths and their professional advisors and they have indicated that they would be interested in being involved with the Auction Mart in the development of the Auction Mart's land adjoining their car park, for additional car parking and commercial development.

**Kirkland Developments**

This company has an interest in the scrap yard fronting the A590 and the adjoining Canal Tavern and is very keen to be part of the plans for redevelopment at Canal Head.

**Ulverston Auction Mart plc**

Ulverston Auction Mart has been represented on the Steering Group for this study and a number of meetings and discussions have taken place with the company. A joint visit with the Partnership, to a new Auction Mart and agricultural centre at Bakewell has taken place.

The company currently employs 47 people on site and has 11 separate business units which are all let. These range from building materials to a pet shop. There is also a café on site with waterside views, on site.

The company would not contemplate a move from its present location unless a new site was already in place and the board would need to be satisfied that such a move was in the best economic interest of the company and its shareholders. Should external finance be available. the company would prefer to see that invested in the current site.

The company would, however, be open to suggestions as to how some of their land at Canal Head could be redeveloped for the mutual benefit of the Auction Mart and the town. Should any redevelopment take place,

alternative arrangements would need to be made to accommodate businesses and service areas displaced. The logical location for this would be the adjoining, vacant abattoir site where the freehold is owned by SLDC.

Subject to safeguards being in place, regarding safety, security, maintenance and bio-security, the Auction Mart Company would be prepared to discuss better pedestrian links through land at Canal Head linking the Booth's/Glass Centre site to the town centre. They have also raised the possibility of an underpass under the A590 to improve pedestrian links with the town centre.

The company feels that following on from the Booth's/Glass Centre developments the development of their site, which fronts onto the canal, would be a logical step. They would like to see the auction rooms of Harrison Coward relocated from the town centre onto this site together with additional retail use of a type which would add to that presently found in the town and provide net gains in employment and new facilities.

### **South Lakes Caravans**

This company owns the leasehold interest in the abattoir site. Discussions have taken place with the director who wishes to co-operate in the redevelopment of this site. He would like to see housing or business use on the site and would be very supportive of plans for the regeneration of Canal Head.

### **Acrastyle**

A meeting and other discussions have taken place with the MD of Acrastyle. The company currently have 97 employees (47 production staff and 50 higher paid professional staff) on site and have the business to expand to 160 within the next 3 – 4 years. They desperately need to relocate in order to expand to accommodate this demand.

In order to finance a relocation they need to realise the full potential from their existing site

and are currently talking to SLDC planners with a proposal for residential development on their site.

There was strong support for the redevelopment of the land at Canal Head and in particular for a technology park and business hotel.

### **Neil Price Developments**

This local housing developer now owns Schooners Wharf and is considering a number of options for its development in liaison with SLDC planners, prior to submitting a planning application.

There are issues of contamination on site and details of the access onto North Lonsdale Road need to be resolved with the highway authorities.

### **G W Waite**

This is a long established company who employ 40 staff. They own premises and land fronting onto North Lonsdale Road. They have surplus land and would like to hold some land back for possible future expansion and look to developing the remaining for a mixed development of housing and small industrial units.

### **Fairoak Housing Association**

A meeting with Fairoak Housing Association confirmed that the association has plans to develop 2 bungalow units for people with learning difficulties within the "Kennedy Street scheme". They have discussed their proposals with SLDC housing officers who are supportive as the proposals meet the requirements set out in the Housing Pathways Survey.

### **Home Housing Association**

Home Housing is in discussions with Neil Price Developments with regard to a social housing development on land at Schooner's Wharf.

### **Eco Housing**

A local group are interested in developing about 10 eco houses, together with small workshops within the Study Area and are seeking a suitable site.

### **Hearts of Oak Boat Trust**

The Trust has two main proposals:

Firstly to restore the 34 foot Morecambe Bay prawner, 'Hearts of Oak', which is the last remaining traditional vessel built in Furness, and provide:

- Themed cruises on the canal and activities for local community and tourists
- An education service for local schools
- Occasional appearances of the boat at maritime events elsewhere

This would require moorings at Canal Foot (near the Lock Keeper's Cottage) and Canal Head and replacement of the GSK railway bridge with an opening footbridge, to accommodate the footpath from North Lonsdale Road.

Secondly to turn the Lock Keeper's Cottage and garden at Canal Foot into an exciting visitor attraction for adults and children, featuring a heritage centre relating to the canal itself, Ulverston's ship building and maritime history, and the treacherous Morecambe Bay Sands.

Other proposals include:

- Restoring the lock gates at Canal Foot and replacing the road bridge with an opening bridge, perhaps of Dutch style (like the original bridge which was here);
- Potential for mooring or winter storage of up to 24 small craft (such as dinghies) at Canal Foot, using fixed or floating jetties

in the canal; they report a shortage of these facilities in the area; water supply and sewage disposal point would be required; and

- Potential for mooring and winter storage of small craft at Canal Head.

A Lottery application has been made for the restoration of the boat.

Other issues which need to be tackled in relation to the Trust's plans are repair to canal banks, which are falling in, and check that there is sufficient clearance underwater.

### **South Lakes Leisure Trust**

The South Lakes Leisure Trust aims to develop community participation in sport, as well as running centres (including Ulverston Leisure Centre). They concentrate mainly on formal sports such as tennis, rugby and hockey. They would consider involvement with the provision of leisure facilities in the canal area, for example a skate park, although they have no specific plans at present.

### **SLDC Depot**

It would be beneficial to the local community to locate the depot out of the residential area completely. Clearance of the site would also ensure that a comprehensive redevelopment of the Steel Street/Kennedy Street area could be undertaken. Discussions have taken place with SLDC management who have indicated that the depot could, from an operational point of view, be relocated within a mile of the town. Discussions are ongoing with regard to one possible site for relocation.

### **Rame Farm**

Rame Farm is owned by GSK and let to on an agricultural tenancy. The consultancy team have had discussions with the tenant, who operates a livery stable from the premises, as

well as farming the land. Suggestions of additional diversification to enhance recreational facilities were put to the tenant who was receptive. Further business advice and possible feasibility work is recommended.

## **10.6 Project Team workshop and resulting draft masterplan**

The Project Team have undertaken a series of consultations with stakeholders and other businesses in Ulverston and have obtained information from surveys and desk top studies and have undertaken technical studies covering tourism, ecology, drainage, landscape and highways and have determined information on the condition of the canal. They have also appraised the policy background from a number of relevant documents and have considered the requirements set out in the Study Brief and supplemented this through discussions with officers at SLDC and the County Council.

A series of workshops have been held with the Project Team to assimilate the above information and to develop a series of options for the regeneration of the study area, taking into account:

- Aspirations set out in the Brief
- Requirements of the Steering Group
- Opportunities that the site presents
- Creative thought processes of the team

The results of this process were brought together as a draft plan which was presented to the Steering Group for comments. These comments were taken on board and draft proposals were presented to a meeting of the Steering Group and councillors from the town council, SLDC and the county council at a meeting at the Lighthouse on 17 March. The draft proposals were then available on display to the general public and on the SLDC web site. Consultation questionnaires were made available and these have been analysed. The responses were generally very favourable towards the draft proposals. The Steering

Group were asked to confirm their views on the draft proposals and these comments were taken on board by the Project Team in a further workshop session to finalise the proposals.

## **10.7 Public consultation**

An important consideration in the development of the masterplan has been to engage the support of the residents of Ulverston. Capita Symonds hosted a two-day public consultation event in March 2005 in order to gauge the community view on the interim proposals. As well as providing an opportunity for members of the public to respond to the outline strategy, it also enabled the project team to discuss on a first-hand basis, those issues that the local residents felt were important to them.

The events were very well attended and a simple questionnaire was circulated over the two days, which allowed for documented responses to be considered for inclusion in the masterplan.

In total, a 119 responses were received, 95 of which were from Ulverston residents. The study site was split into three broad sections: Canal Head, Canal Foot and the central residential and commercial area. People were asked to identify their likes and dislikes in each area and make recommendations to the project team for further study.

In general terms, 27% of respondents strongly supported the proposals and 39.5% generally agreed with the strategy. Many people expressed the wish to see the Canal Head area redeveloped and to remove most of the unsightly operations in that location. There was a strong view however, that the character of the area and links with the town should not be lost. There was also a keen lobby for better and more affordable housing including the provision of sustainable or eco-housing. The environmental and ecological quality of the canal was something that people also valued and they expressed a need to retain the

tranquillity of the site through sensitive development.

Anecdotal information during the public events was also invaluable to the project team. A requirement for additional parking at Canal Foot has been taken on board and a potential site on GSK land identified.

Whilst it is important to engage the community in the development of the masterplan, it is equally important to manage their aspirations. The project team have evaluated the responses against what is practical and feasible and incorporated those ideas into the strategy. It should also be recognised that many of the interim proposals were validated by the strong support they received and have become fully-fledged within the masterplan. Appendix III gives details of all the written responses from the two-day public consultation.