

A Prospectus for Regenerating Kidderminster

Drawing
inspiration...



September 2009

Contents

Part One

- 02 Introducing the Prospectus
- 03 Why Kidderminster?
- 04 What is the Prospectus?
- 07 Action Areas
- 08 How will the Prospectus Help?
- 09 Implementation
- 10 Next Steps

Part Two

- 11 Lets take a closer look
- 15 Town Centre
- 19 Bromsgrove and Worcester Street
- 21 Weavers Wharf
- 23 Comberton Hill
- 25 Churchfields
- 27 'The Beet'
- 29 Employment
- 31 How can you help?

Part One: Introducing the Prospectus

Lighting the touchpaper...

In early 2008 Wyre Forest District Council launched proposals to develop a Prospectus for the regeneration of the town of Kidderminster.

Kidderminster (population 56,000) is one of three towns in Wyre Forest District. The others being Stourport-on-Severn and Bewdley which benefit from their status as part of the Market Towns Initiative.

With no more than 3 miles between each town there is a combined urban population of about 85,000 where Kidderminster is the main centre for jobs and services.

At the height of the town's factory output some 20,000 people were employed in the manufacture of carpets and today that figure is less than 2,000 which serves to highlight the scale of the challenge facing the town's economy.

With the support of Advantage West Midlands, Worcestershire County Council and British Waterways a major study and consultation process commenced involving Amion Consulting (Regeneration Consultants), Thomas Lister (Surveyors) and Taylor Young (Architects). The purpose of the consultant's work was to understand the scale of opportunities and to gauge public opinion on the future of Kidderminster.

The development of the prospectus has involved the early assessment of potential development sites. Following a partnership with the local newspaper, the Kidderminster Shuttle and consultation with other community and business groups which generated hundreds of comments, the preliminary site appraisals were completed;

Appraisals included artists impressions designed to provide high level concepts and to raise aspirations. They also included preliminary economic and market appraisals prepared by Amion and Thomas Lister.

Amion Consulting estimate that the project could lever £300million of private investment and deliver a £75million per annum contribution towards helping to close the regional output (GVA) gap.

Amion suggested the steps required to take the initiative forward include the creation of a delivery vehicle and business plan.

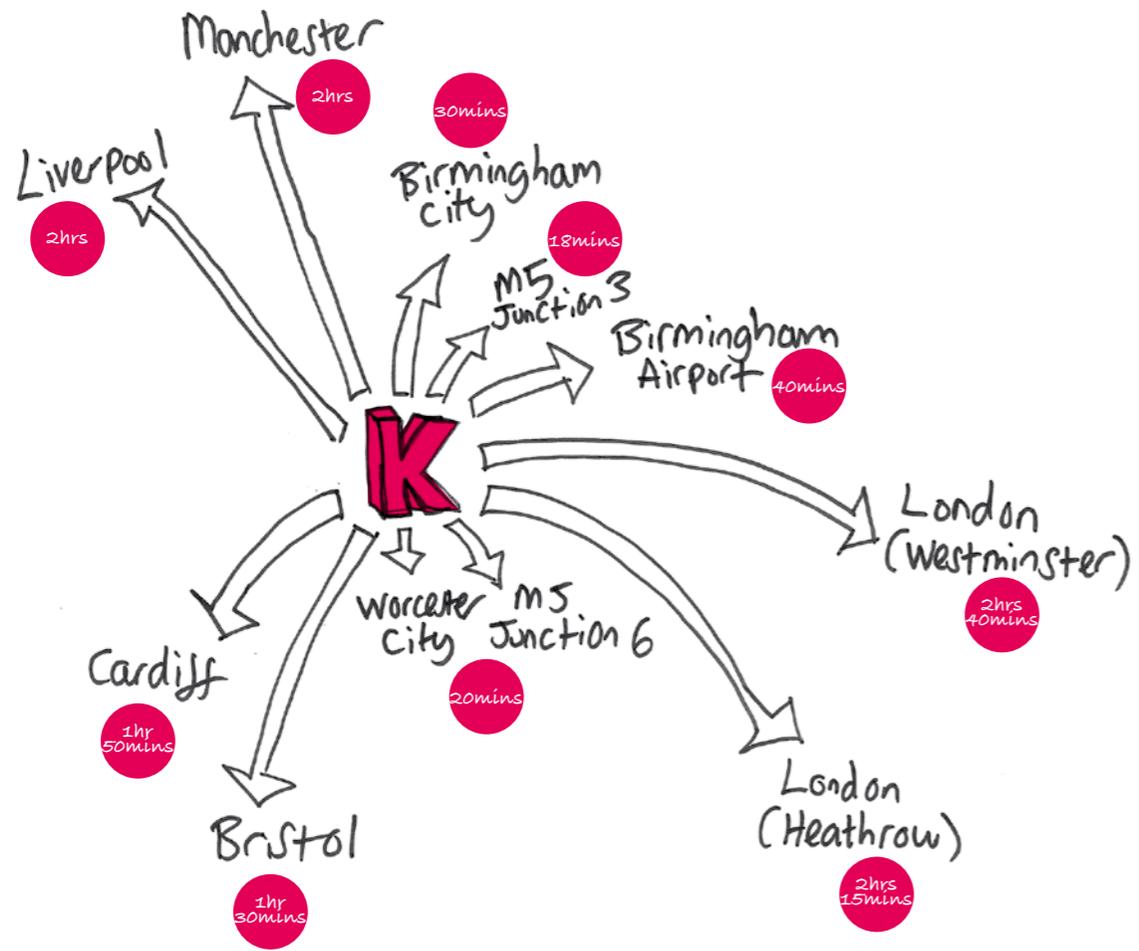
The Prospectus initiative continues to attract interest and support and most recently project Champions are emerging in support of the Prospectus from both the business and celebrity community.

In May 2008 Midlands, Architecture and the Designed Environment (MADE*) offered the enabling services of Chris Morland to assist in taking forward the Amion recommendations.

And so here we are in September 2009 about to launch the exciting next stage of Kidderminster's transformation...

*throughout this prospectus there are references to 'transformation' which is as much about recognising and respecting the best of the present and the past as it is tackling the challenges and making the most of the future. This word more than any other best captures the dynamics, mood and scale of the ambition.





Why Kidderminster?

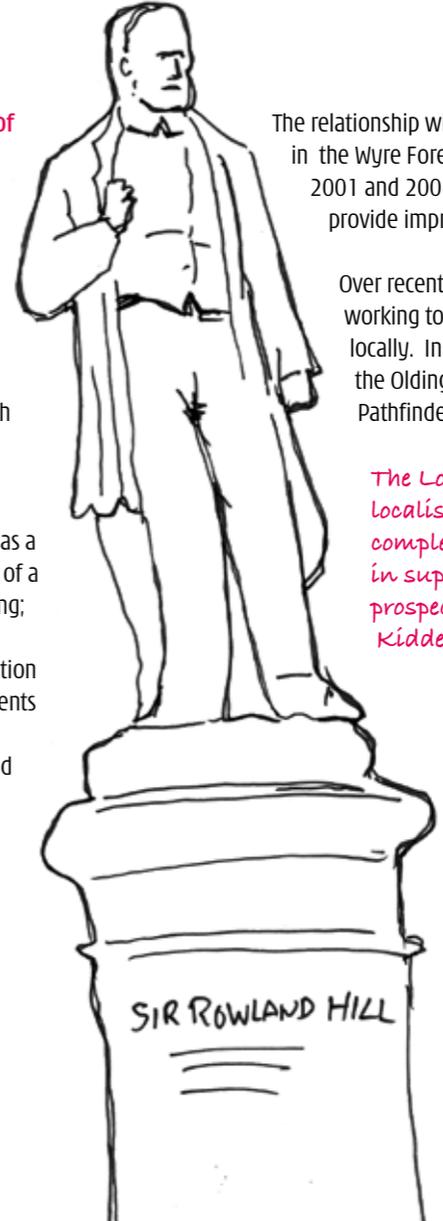
Some of the challenges we face... a public sector perspective.

The town of Kidderminster faces a number of acute economic, environmental and social challenges:-

Recognised by data published in June 2009 by the West Midlands Regional Observatory highlighting Wyre Forest District as one of the six most vulnerable districts in the West Midlands facing multiple risks alongside Sandwell, Birmingham; Stoke-on-Trent; Redditch and Bridgnorth;

The town is recognised in the Regional Spatial Strategy and West Midlands Economic Strategy as a Local Regeneration Area recognising the status of a town undergoing a major economic restructuring;

Whilst the town lies outside the Rural Regeneration Zone, large tracts of the zone including settlements within Wyre Forest District, Malvern Hills and Shropshire do look to Kidderminster for jobs and services including access to the West Midlands conurbation through Kidderminster Railway Station and the A456;



The relationship with the rural area west of Kidderminster is highlighted in the Wyre Forest District Retail and Commercial Leisure Studies 2001 and 2006. Investment in Kidderminster can be seen to provide improvements to the town's wider rural hinterland.

Over recent years the public sector partners have been working together to establish capacity to deliver projects locally. In Kidderminster this has included the emergence of the Oldington & Foley Park Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder.

The Local Strategic Partnerships and more localised neighbourhood partnerships provide complementary community infrastructure in support of the town's regeneration and any prospective delivery body to emerge through the Kidderminster Prospectus.

What is 'The Prospectus'?

The prospectus aims to highlight the town's challenges and opportunities to a wide audience from within and outside the area in order to attract support and investment to transform the fortunes of the town... to deliver a renaissance.

Key Words:

"Positioning"

... recognising the role of Kidderminster in terms of UK/West Midlands/Worcestershire and being 'green for go';

"Differentiating"

... a place and initiative with a clear identity that adds value;

"Engaging"

... 'Team Kidderminster' will involve public, private and the community sectors;

"Rethinking"

... changing perceptions

"Transforming"

...an initiative that will make Kidderminster open for business as a 21st Century town.

Consultants estimate that the redevelopment of key sites could bring in more than £300million of private sector investment in addition to public sector funding including the £130million Building Schools for the Future programme, new medical centres and public transport interchange facilities.

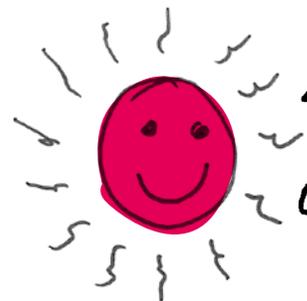
In short, Kidderminster could get significant investment and the Prospectus aims to highlight this and provide a pump priming framework to make sure that this major injection can be successfully realised in an integrated way.

The ultimate goal is to maximise the vitality and viability of Kidderminster as a place to live and a driver for the economy west of the main Birmingham and Black Country conurbation. It is about recognising the town's position outside but serving the Rural Regeneration Zone which includes the western parts of Wyre Forest District.

It is about maximising the overall sense of community well being in the town and achieving a sustainable and thriving community.



A number of challenges have been highlighted through public consultation and these generally fall within one of 4 key themes applying across the town. They are set out below and serve to physically, economically and socially connect 4 investment priority locations within the town where development opportunities are concentrated. These locations are defined as 'Action Areas' and they are described later in this document.



"It's good to see such a **positive** outlook for the town."

Theme 1

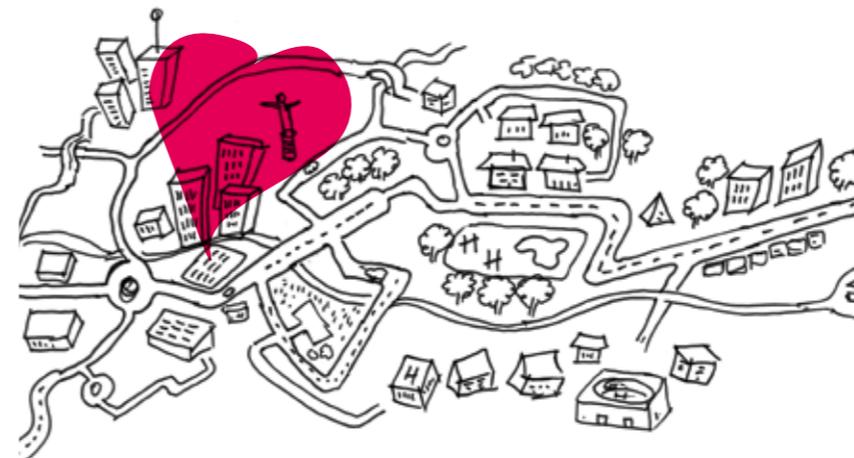
Transport

- Create 'a highly accessible town' and enhance accessibility within the District and connections to the wider region;
 - A multi-modal study for the area will help to understand possibilities particularly in respect of emerging strategic projects including;
 - Railway Station and interchange;
 - Hoo Brook Link Road connecting Stourport Road to Hoo Brook; and
 - The possible down-grading of Kidderminster Town Centre Ring Road.
 - Connecting the town with Churchfields;
 - Delivering sustainable transportation solutions;
 - Connecting the tourism attractions of Wyre Forest District with the town.

Theme 2

Jobs

- To create an environment and culture that helps to establish Kidderminster as an 'an entrepreneurial town' and a 'business friendly' location that is 'open for business';
- Create 'a dynamic business environment' by connecting business opportunity and education to provide a skilled and adaptable workforce and sustainable economic growth;
- Create 'a vibrant high quality mixed-use town centre' at the heart of the community maximising employment prospects through investment in new offices, tourism, leisure and shopping opportunities;
- Seamlessly link the town centre to new mixed use opportunities at Churchfields and Comberton Hill;
- 'South Kidderminster Business & Nature Park', focussing on Environmental Technology businesses to create a regionally significant business location which includes the former British Sugar site ('the Beet');
- An overall focus on helping local business realise their full potential through the construction of modern purpose-built premises; and
- Realise the full economic potential of the town's role as a gateway for tourists and establishing the town as a base for tourists;
- It has been calculated that the proposals emerging through the Prospectus could safeguard up to 9,000 jobs for the area (Amion);



“If all the ideas come to fruition I’m sure future generations will have a town to be **proud** of.”



Theme 3

Homes & Communities

- The regeneration of extensive brownfield sites delivering renewed housing choices including new affordable homes and stronger communities;
- A new mixed use community at Churchfields linking seamlessly with the town centre;
- It is estimated that the regeneration of Kidderminster will deliver more than 600 new homes and improved housing choices;
- Working with health and education providers to provide the best possible environment for learning and healthy living;



Theme 4

Design & Environmental Quality

- **'a town that capitalises on its natural and cultural assets';**
- Continuing the work which has seen salmon and otters return to the River Stour and Kidderminster Town Centre through cleaning up and realising the redevelopment potential of adjacent sites;
- Raising design quality to ensure that new development maximises the potential of the environmental and heritage setting and enhancing the quality of public streets, spaces, the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal and channels of the River Stour.
- Delivering the best possible community facilities and infrastructure.



Action Areas

Efforts to address the themes will focus on four main 'Action Areas' where the majority of strategic development opportunities exist as follows:

A Town Centre;

- Creating a vibrant high quality mixed use town centre
- Strengthening the shopping environment and pedestrian circuit by reviving Worcester Street;
- Remodelling the southern gateway by extending New Road and Green Street;
- Realising opportunities to deliver new homes;
- Maximising the potential for sites to create a stronger and more welcoming edge to the town centre;
- Recreating a stronger network of streets and spaces to improve vitality, legibility and movement choices.

B Comberton Hill Gateway;

- Helping to develop the tourism potential of the town and establishing Kidderminster as a base for tourists;
- Improving transport infrastructure and the gateway to the town centre and wider district.

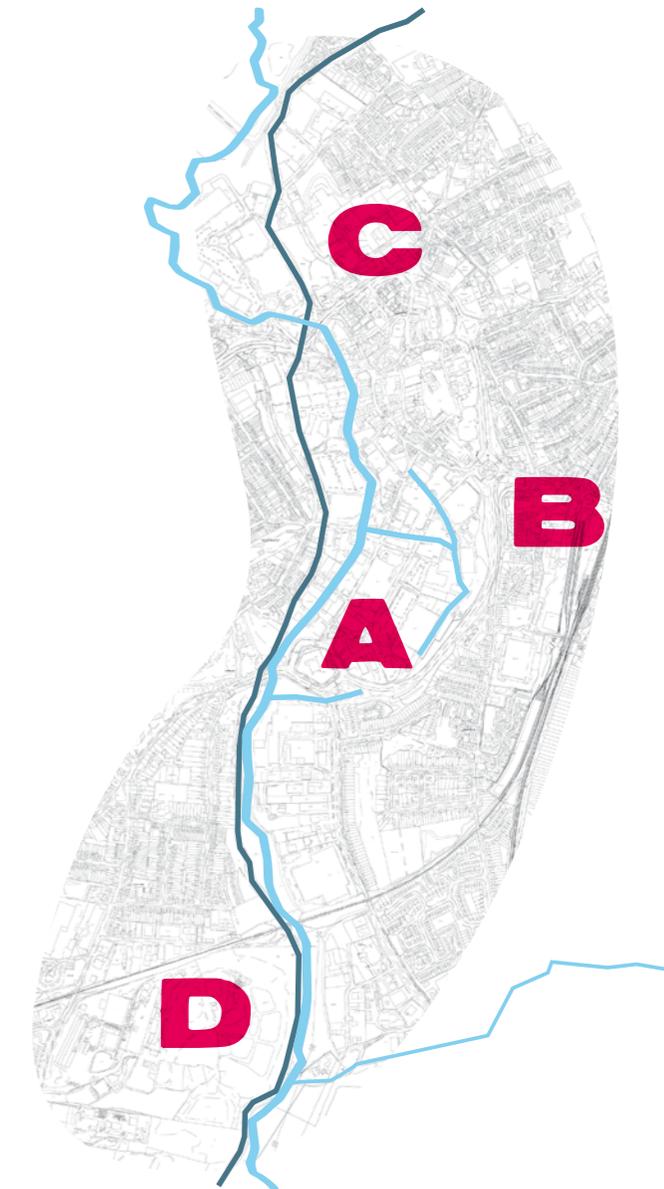
C Churchfields;

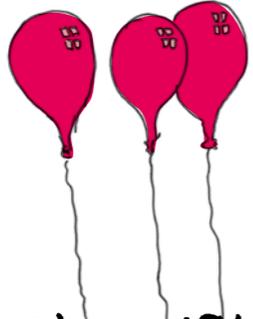
- A new mixed use 'urban village' adjacent to the town centre and Horsefair;
- A key role in delivering new homes

D The former British Sugar Factory ('The Beet').

- Establish South Kidderminster Business & Nature Park as a regionally significant development opportunity anchored by 'the Beet'

The Prospectus aims to achieve a comprehensive approach to delivering transformation in Kidderminster by ultimately providing a flexible framework based on sound principles and able to respond to changing circumstances.





“Here at last is the way to bring our lovely town back to **Life** again.”

How will the Prospectus help?

- Ultimately the Prospectus is about capturing the interest of stakeholders and prospective investors;
- It is about getting investors together to combine their energies and resources in order to deliver a bigger transformational picture;
- The initiative will lead to the establishment of a new body charged with making it all happen in a co-ordinated way;
- The process has already started with a meeting of directors from some of the key public sector agencies including Wyre Forest District Council, Worcestershire County Council, Advantage West Midlands, the Homes and Communities Agency and British Waterways;
- Business Leaders and representatives from the private sector are also engaging in the process;
- Local Strategic Partnerships at district and county levels will help engage the wider community in the process;
- All of the organisations involved will need to be represented at the highest possible level on any emerging delivery body.

The process so far has been all about working in partnership with public, private and community sectors engaged. This looks set to grow and evolve with the following objectives likely to provide a rationale. In addition 'specific actions' provide a list of initial intended outputs.



Objectives of the partnership

- An 'exemplar' project which will provide comprehensive coverage (business, housing, infrastructure and environment, retail and leisure, regeneration and community activities) through an innovative delivery mechanism(s);
- Delivering a transformational approach to making a step change in lifting the profile and prosperity of Kidderminster and the wider District;
- A High level partnership with buy-in from stakeholders who are prepared to make 'difficult' decisions for the common good of delivering the ambitions of the prospectus;
- An inclusive process encouraging diversity and local identity;
- An iterative, flexible and dynamic process which will mature over time and will be able to respond in a flexible way to a difficult and changing economy; and
- A process that leads to greater levels of integration in associated public and private services that in turn helps deliver sub-regional targets at a local level.

Specific Actions

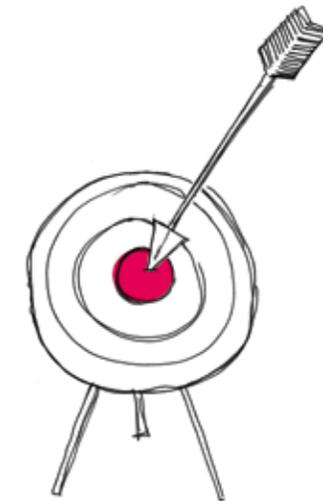
- Establishing an effective partnership and a mechanism to deliver the vision contained in the Prospectus;
- Developing a strategic regeneration framework and including a fully costed business plan;
- Developing a robust planning policy framework to support the Prospectus. This includes the Local Development Framework Core Strategy and Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan and site specific development briefs; and
- Identifying and implementing innovative ways of working between public and private sectors in order to unlock the development of strategic sites and opportunities.

Implementation

Clearly a lot has already been achieved and there is now a real momentum behind the initiative. However, it is very much in the early stages. Below we set out the priorities to take things forward:

- 1** To establish a strategic delivery body of the key stakeholders who will be responsible for driving the initiative forward. It will bring together the organisations with the necessary knowledge and resources to make it happen. This will provide confidence, concentrate related activities, create a co-ordinated approach to project delivery and make decisions to prioritise actions to maximise the benefits. It is also intended to invite senior executives from the private sector to be part of this process;
- 2** The delivery vehicle will be responsible for establishing the Strategic Regeneration Framework setting out projects, priorities and targets including;
 - a. Wyre Forest Multi-modal transportation study;
 - b. Action Area Development Briefs;
 - c. Programme costs;
 - d. Funding and business planning;
 - e. Programme management
- 3** Engaging key stakeholders in a series of workshops focussing on the four core themes;
 1. Transport;
 2. Jobs;
 3. Homes and Communities;
 4. Design and Environment.

- 4** On-going Work Programmes:
 - a. InKidderminster Magazine (Debenhams Opening);
 - b. Canal Clean-Up campaign;
 - c. Building Schools for the Future;
 - d. New Railway Station designs being prepared; and
 - e. Wyre Forest District Local Development Framework.
- 5** Complementary working arrangements with the delivery arm of the Wyre Forest Matters Local Strategic Partnership including the Areas of Highest Need proposal.





“I believe that a genuine desire to **change** this town for the better is something that we all have in common.”

Next Steps...

An indicative timetable for next steps reads as follows:

Feb-Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Jan	Feb	Mar
Finalise Launch Material	Meeting of Regional Public Sector Directors to sign Memorandum of Understanding	Meeting of Business Leaders	Inaugural Meeting of Shadow Board Workshop Sessions	Establish Board of Directors	Establish Parent Delivery Body	Establish formal working arrangements & relevant delivery groups for action areas.
Compilation of research in to Launch Material	Partner sign-up and promotion with public, private and community sector		Strategic Regeneration Framework Business Planning Process		Launch	

In the meantime a number of quick win projects will be undertaken within existing structures e.g. through the Local Planning Authority and Kidderminster Town Centre Partnership. These operational level actions will continue to be developed and delivered in the interim.

Other longer term projects running independently of the regeneration programme such as Building Schools for the Future and the Kidderminster Railway Station and Interchange are at an advanced developmental stage.

Part Two:

Lets take a closer look...

Site concepts and a town wide approach to regeneration have been worked up with the help of leading urban designers, Taylor Young. These concepts are intended to inspire, generate interest and create the momentum required to deliver this regeneration prospectus agenda for Kidderminster.

They have been developed through a process of participation involving local residents, young people and community groups, businesses, interest groups and other public sector bodies with the assistance of the local media.

This is a 30 year vision with a range of short, medium and long term opportunities requiring a collaborative approach to project delivery.



Lets look at context

The four Action Areas described in Part One are distinct parts of town that present strategic development opportunities for physical redevelopment and/or infrastructure. They are areas of major change.

Together they create Kidderminster's 'Arc of Opportunity'.

Its about "Differentiating" Kidderminster, 'the place' with each identified Action Area having a unique role to play. This can be achieved through "rethinking" and "transforming", "engaging" and "positioning".



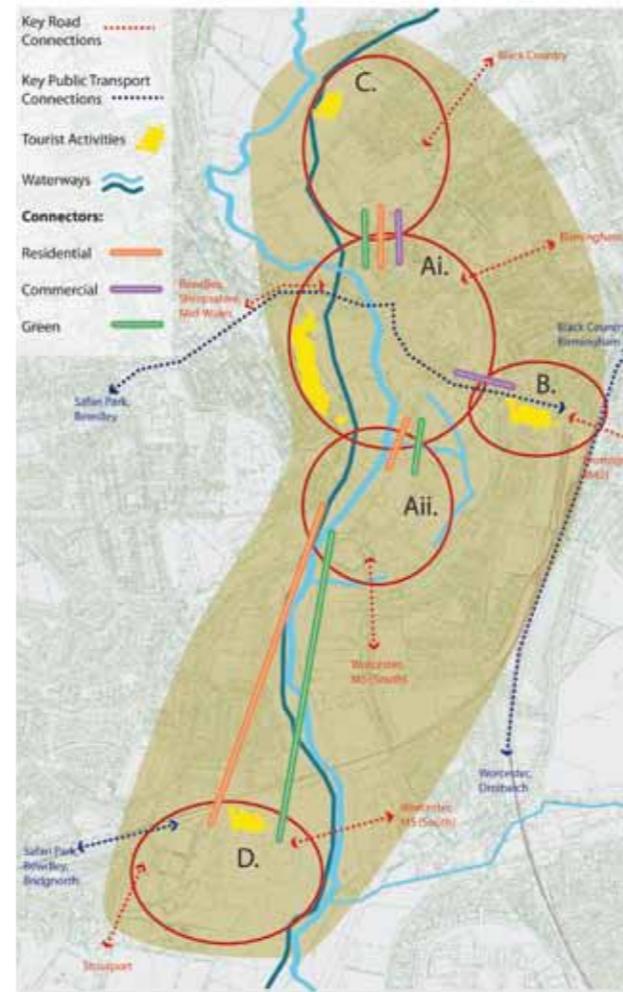
Kidderminster's 'Arc of Opportunity': Action Areas



- A.** Town Centre
- B.** Comberton Hill Gateway
- C.** Churchfields
- D.** 'The Beet' - former British Sugar Factory

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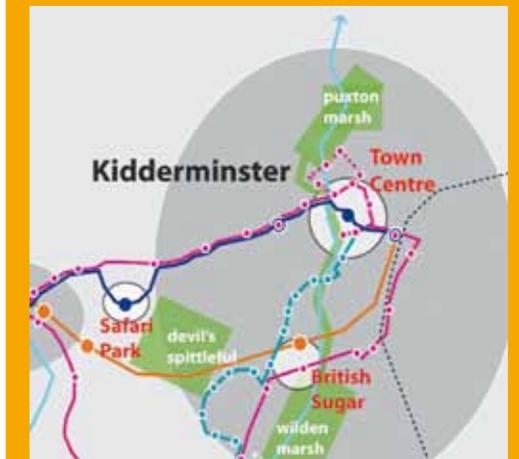
Kidderminster's 'Arc of Opportunity': Connecting Action Areas



- Ai.** Town Centre - Core
- Aii.** Town Centre - Green St/New Rd
- B.** Comberton Hill
- C.** Churchfields
- D.** British Sugar

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These action areas are not disparate but fundamentally interconnected. The vision is to strengthen the green infrastructure, transportation corridors, waterways, residential communities and commercial areas as the 'glue' that helps to seamlessly link the areas together.



Introducing the Town Centre...

Key Opportunities:

- Tackling the barrier effect of the Ring Road - reaching out to surrounding communities;
- Improving permeability through a 'place making' strategy with defining public spaces and connected Streets;
- Creating wealth through facilitating the development of new office based, hotel & leisure and retail businesses;
- Housing opportunities through mixed use development;
- Connecting the town with the canal and river channels;
- Maximising the tourism potential including hotel development;
- A Co-ordinated approach, assisted by effective Town Centre Management.



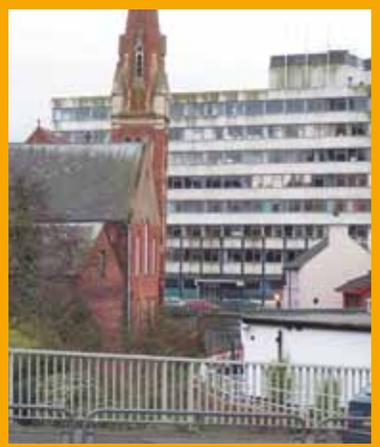
Before After



Town Centre

This bird's eye model view over Kidderminster Town Centre highlights three of the four 'action areas' i.e. the Town Centre (middle), Churchfields (bottom) and Comberton Hill (top left).

The orange buildings represent opportunity sites for the 30 year vision. Compare this image with the previous aerial photograph of the town centre to see how together these sites offer the opportunity to repair and connect the town together again.



Key Development Projects...

...starting with Bromsgrove Street and Worcester Street

Key Opportunities:

- Repairing the fabric and rebalancing the shopping circuit;
- New transport opportunities - decked car parking & public transport?;
- Connecting streets and overcoming topography whilst respecting Heritage streetscape;
- Prominent areas of poor quality outdated architecture;
- Creating modern, fit for purpose shopping, leisure, healthcare and offices;
- Delivering two major developments to anchor Worcester Street at;
- Making the most of existing assets including Health Centre and the Glades Leisure Centre;
- KTC.3/ the former Magistrates court (mixed use); and
- Former Littlewoods and Woolworths stores (shopping).



Lets "rethink" this area... a vibrant mixed use area with modern retail, state of the art medical facilities and offices stretching down to KTC.3. Barriers to movement will be overcome with new integrated and multi-user accessibility linking streets together.

left: Let's remind ourselves how well connected the streets of Kidderminster used to be... Let's reconnect to the past



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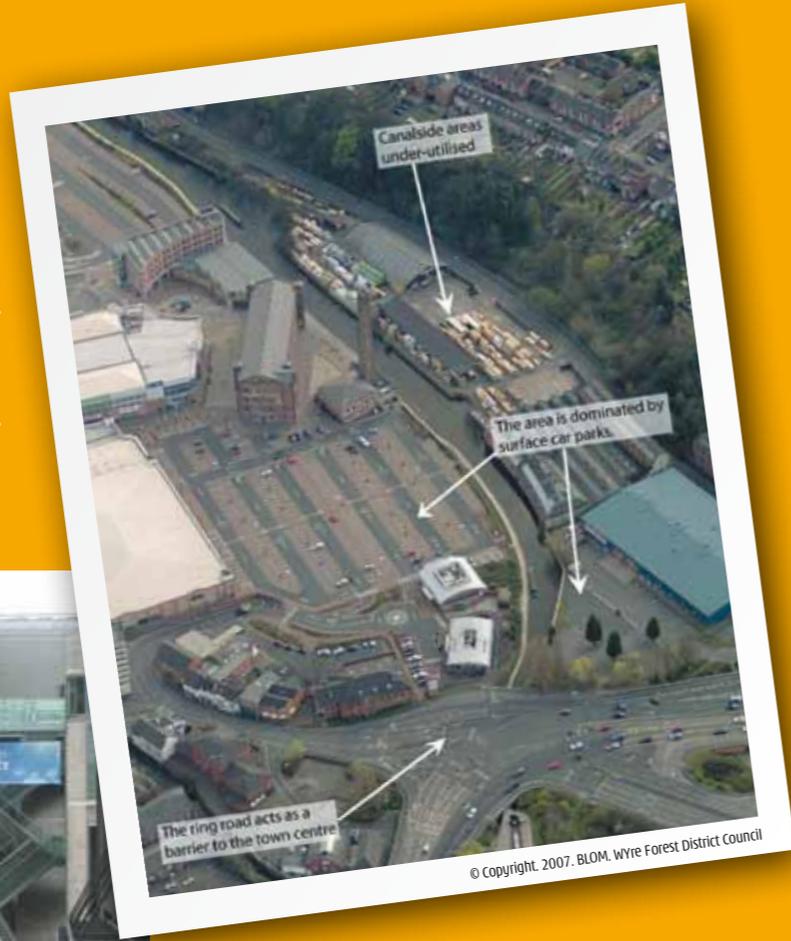
Weavers Wharf

Key Opportunities:

- Improving accessibility;
- Making the most of the canal;
- Reducing the visual impact of surface car parking;
- Delivering mixed uses including new homes and leisure opportunities;
- Creating a friendly, safer, greener and cleaner canalside.

"Differentiating" the offer with leisure and tourism;

Adding value and wealth creation opportunities through active waterside renaissance.



Comberton Hill...

"Positioning" the area as gateway to the District and beyond

Key Themes:

- Strengthening the Street and sense of arrival;
- Transport interchange and gateway;
- Improving connectivity, permeability and legibility;
- Rationalising car parking, streets, sites and spaces;
- Improving access for tourists.



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Churchfields

Key Opportunities:

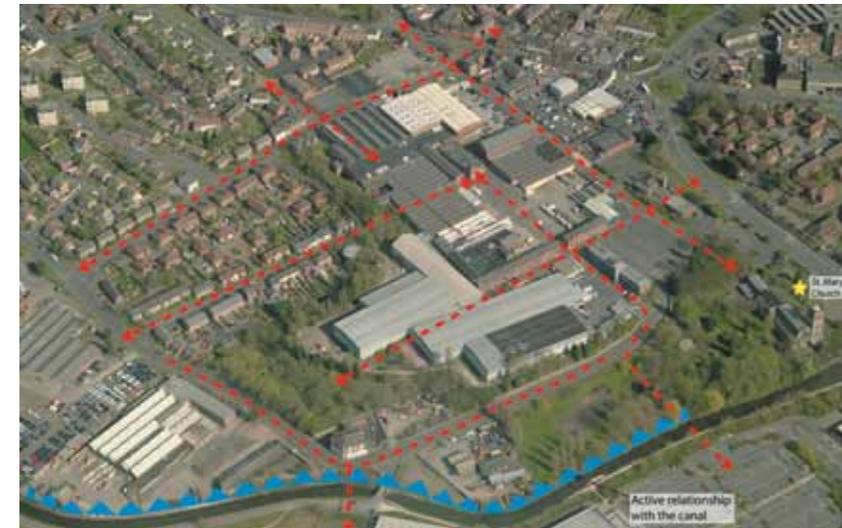
- Capitalising on a quality environmental setting including waterside and strong relationship with the adjacent Puxton Marsh SSSI;
- Creating a stronger relationship with a cleaner, green, safer waterfront with public access;
- Delivering new homes and housing choices;
- Connecting the area to surrounding communities and opportunities including the town centre and Horsefair;
- Delivering mixed uses including craft workshops and studios and small-scale leisure uses;
- Improved accessibility and Air Quality improvements in Blackwell Street



Future Housing Opportunities

>>> Pump-priming the Horsefair & Churchfields Regeneration. This area will be by far and away the biggest single housing led regeneration in Kidderminster where in excess of 300 homes will be provided within one of the 10% most deprived Wards.

Elsewhere in the local Horsefair community, proposals are advancing to redevelop Grasmere Close involving the demolition of maisonette blocks to create a traditional street pattern and living spaces to provide high quality and affordable new homes.



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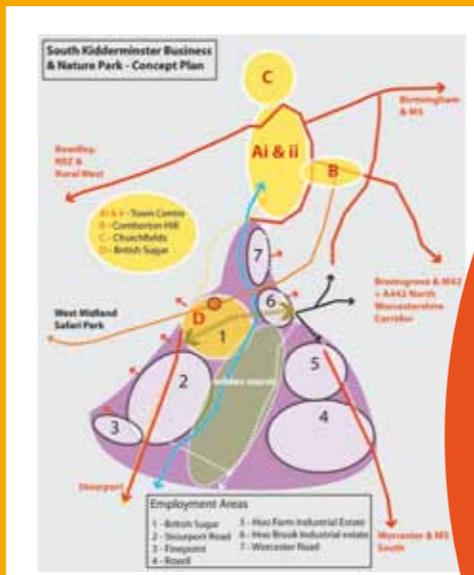
canalside
 family
 green
 transport hub
 community
 connected
 sustainable
 marina
 home

'The Beet'

- the former British Sugar site & South Kidderminster Business & Nature Park

Key Opportunities:

- Transport opportunities including;
 - Hoo Brook Link Road;
 - SVR Halt Station;
 - Reduced congestion on the Stourport Road;
 - improvements in public transport;
- Possibility of up to 2,000 jobs in industry and commerce;
- One of the largest employment sites west of Birmingham;
- Mixed use including business hotel & conferences; education; and car showrooms
- Environmental quality including waterside and a strong relationship with the adjacent Wilden Marsh SSSI and Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal.



technology

industry

technology

creativity

efficiency

innovation

education

nature park



"Differentiating" Jobs...

We are starting from a strong position!



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Tourism

3 regionally significant attractions draw more 3/4 million visitors a year to the area:

- West Midlands Safari Park
- Severn Valley Railway
- Wyre Forest

Complemented by the historic market towns of Stourport & Bewdley and surrounding rural attractions and soon to be joined by the £1.75m Kidderminster carpet museum.

BUT what else will the people of Kidderminster and Wyre Forest District be doing? This will be one of the first questions to be considered in a forthcoming series of workshops with regional experts.

Made in Kidderminster

Innovative design and manufacture



Bentley Chemicals, Klark Teknik, Midas, Sealine, Ocean Design

"Die Another Day" ©2002 Danjaq LLC and United Artists Corporation. All rights reserved.

How can you help?

Lets continue to work together to involve communities as the initiative develops.

Lets work together to "position" Kidderminster to attract investment and get ready to play a part in the economic recovery of the County and wider region.

Lets work together to "differentiate" the town by playing to strengths when defining the economic, environmental and social outlook.

Lets work together to "engage" people in the debate by developing a 'Team Kidderminster' approach bringing together leaders from the public, private and community sectors.

Lets work together to "rethink" Kidderminster - the prospectus looks to change perceptions and encourage creative thinking.

and finally...

In the years ahead lets work together to rewyre Kidderminster and ensure it is open for business as a 21st Century town providing an excellent place to live and work.



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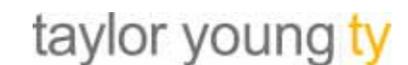
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Issues and Options Papers

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All quotes provided by local residents in response to consultation.

The content of this document has been put together with the assistance of the following:





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