

Kidderminster Town Centre Strategy



Issues & Options Paper

January 2010

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... Introduction & Context

1 Introduction

1.1 Wyre Forest District Council is a major contributor to Kidderminster Town Centre Partnership and has invested significant resources into town centre management in Kidderminster over recent years, most recently funding a part time Town Centre Manager for a three year fixed term commencing in March 2008.

1.2 One of the primary objectives of the post is to deliver the Kidderminster Town Centre Partnership Business Plan of April 2007 which covers the period 2007-2010. As we approach the end of the Business Plan period it is timely to review progress and consider future options towards delivering a sustainable town centre management regime for Kidderminster.

1.3 The Business Plan of April 2007 sets out the following vision:
“To play a leading role in the development of Kidderminster as a regional retailing and business centre, through a partnership approach with the Council and other key stakeholder interests.”

1.4 The Plan explains that the “Kidderminster Town Centre Partnership brings together the people with an interest in the vitality and future of the town. Established in 1993 the group was formed to provide a focus group to address town centre issues and develop a co-ordinated and comprehensive response to challenges facing the town and its development.”

1.5 With the Town Centre Manager having been in post for about 18 months and in line with the Planning and Regulatory Services Business Plan a Town Centre Audit has been undertaken to explore the issues facing the town centre and the partnership and a Town Centre Strategy to address the issues and realise the opportunities.

1.6 During the last 12 months a number of events have sought to reinvigorate the Town Centre Partnership and extend the membership of the group with limited success. At the same time the ReWyre regeneration initiative has been launched with the support of key regional agencies, Worcestershire County Council and Wyre Forest District Council. This considers transport, jobs, housing and environmental quality across the town.

1.7 The ReWyre Initiative places a significant focus on the regeneration of sites and transport improvements within and around the town centre. In line with a Memorandum of Understanding signed by the lead agencies it is envisaged that a separate body will be established in early 2010. The effective management of the town centre will have a key role to play in delivering that wider regeneration agenda and it will be essential that the initiatives are appropriately linked together.

1.8 As we enter the final year of the Kidderminster Town Centre Partnership Business Plan (2007), the time has come to reflect on the future. This Issues and Options paper looks to review the current arrangements and set out a possible basis of a new town centre strategy that could reinvent partnership working in Kidderminster Town Centre with a more business based model that is embedded within the emerging structure of the town’s wider regeneration. Regeneration in the town is now being driven forward by the widely supported ReWyre Initiative which itself provides a delivery framework for the Local Development Framework (LDF). The LDF includes Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan Development Plan Document which will have particularly strong links to Town Centre Management.

1.9 Despite having a partnership structure and business plan in place for a number of years, Kidderminster has never had a comprehensive Town Centre Strategy document in place. This is a key tool for effective town centre management and partnership working i.e. a strategy that everyone can get behind and which the Town Centre Manager can deliver.

1.10 As one of the leading Town Centre Management partners, the District Council has prepared this Issues and Options Paper to stimulate a debate about the future of town centre management and the associated partnership working.

1.11 The Strategy will enable the creation of the overall vision for the town centre and provide an effective framework to deliver successful outcomes through partnership working. It will lead to the establishment of realistic and achievable goals and priorities and make the necessary connections to the ReWyre Initiative.

1.12 The Strategy will focus on delivering projects that make a real difference and provide much needed improvements. It will also provide a method of performance monitoring so that the Partnership is able to gauge whether it is achieving the desired outcomes.

1.13 The strategy will also look at the means of delivery and specifically the most effective means of partnership working in a Kidderminster context. It will lead to the re-establishment of a credible and influential partnership framework that is able to make hard decisions in key areas.

1.14 This paper sets out the key issues to be addressed in the strategy and identifies possible options to address those issues. It is not intended to be exhaustive and it is not a 'first draft' of a strategy. It is a consultation document.

CONTEXT

1.15 In 2009 the District Council prepared a Town Centre Audit to provide a baseline for developing a Town Centre Strategy. This pulls together the significant evidence base the District Council has gathered as part of preparations for the Local Development Framework, the ReWyre Initiative and other Town Centre Management initiatives. It includes both qualitative and quantitative data and provides a focus on the issues that matter i.e. those that are locally specific to Kidderminster.

1.16 The vitality and viability of Kidderminster town centre appears to benefit from the proximity of three major supermarkets with associated linked trips. The Development of Weavers Wharf, Crossley Retail Park and B&Q at the turn of the millennium introduced a new dimension to shopping in the town and enabled the town to claw back trade that was being lost to competing centre and in particular Merry Hill. Despite this, Kidderminster is facing many challenges including the gravitation of vitality westwards away from Worcester Street where there has been a growing empty shops issue. Large areas of the town centre are underutilised and consist of poor quality public realm. In addition, there are fragmentation and accessibility challenges.

1.17 Many of the physical development and transport issues will be brought forward through the regeneration programmes and development teams. However the co-ordination of associated services including streetscene, signage, public conveniences, car parking, parks and green spaces, markets, licensing, arts, events, community safety, highways and transportation are integral to success. Many of these services are provided by local authorities and West Mercia Constabulary and whilst these bodies are represented on the Town Centre Partnership involvement is relatively low level and sporadic. Experience from elsewhere suggests that the

effective co-ordination of service and the interest and support of all businesses (big and small) requires the highest level leadership and buy-in to the regeneration and town centre management initiatives.

1.18 Despite having a town centre partnership since 1993, Kidderminster is not yet in a position to embrace the latest thinking such as the recent decision by traders in the City of Worcester voted to approve Business Improvement District (BID) status which means the shopkeepers will be levied with an additional charge on their business rates to support town centre management in the city. This requires town centre management services to be embedded within the town and the associated infrastructure to be in place. As the town centre audit illustrates, with a part-time town centre manager and limited support from volunteers and businesses, Kidderminster town centre is not ready to make that step.

1.19 In preparing the Issues and Options Paper consideration has also been given to national, regional, sub-regional and local policies and guidance set out in Appendix 1.

1.20 The Communities and Local Government (CLG) Practitioners Guide states that without a strategy and performance management framework “the Town Centre Partnership runs the risk of delivering/ facilitating services that are not addressing the improvement priorities of the town centre. This may cause a partnership to lose relevance and credibility...”

1.21 The Kidderminster Town Centre Strategy will:

- Identify the complex challenges and opportunities facing the town centre;
- Provide a guide, prompt and control for the progression of the town and any associated partnership, outlining the priority of activities and allocating resources for their delivery;
- Help establish a credible and influential partnership body;
- Help that partnership to focus efforts, enhance results and develop stakeholder trust;
- Clarify partner contributions and benefits, provide a statement of cooperation and future achievements that politicians want to associate with;
- Represent ‘a vision for change’ and a source of stories for the media; and
- Provide the residents and the business community with information confirming what is being planned and delivered within their town centre.

1.22 In line with national guidance the strategy will set out a long-term plan of action outlining what will be achieved, how it will be delivered and when.

1.23 Despite attempts to provide a focussed business plan there remains a lack of co-ordinated purpose within Kidderminster Town Centre Partnership. In order to reinvigorate the partnership and provide a more stable and sustainable future the Issues and Options Paper seeks to get underneath the key challenges and opportunities.

1.24 This paper highlights a range of issues based on the Audit and presents a series of options. However, this is not a draft strategy and the suggestions are not exclusive. The purpose of this paper is to encourage other suggestions and options to be identified. The following sections highlight a number of key stages in the development of the Strategy.



2 Setting the Context

ISSUES

2.1 Advice from the DCLG suggests that the remit of a Partnership should be determined by asking two key questions:

1. What is the partnership's current sphere of activity? (ie what does the partnership undertake on an ongoing basis that adds value to the town centre?)
2. What is the impact of the partnership in each of these spheres? (this is usually linked to the scope of the partnership operations and the measures of impact that it uses).

2.2 *Figure 1* below shows in which 'sphere of influence' most Partnerships operate. The current Kidderminster Town Centre Partnership is much more focused towards service delivery, with the Christmas lights and switch on, events, and festivals being particular examples. It is much less successful at leading and influencing strategy.

2.3 Kidderminster Town Centre Partnership is operating at a relatively low level. The models contained in the DCLG Practitioners Guide highlight the characteristics of partnership operating at different stages in their lifecycle. Analysis in the Town Centre Audit would imply that the current Town Centre Partnership is at the 'developing' stage of its lifecycle rather than 'established' or 'advanced'. How partners work together in Kidderminster Town Centre needs to be reviewed and the arrangements clarified to ensure it has clear purpose, focus, credibility and influence.

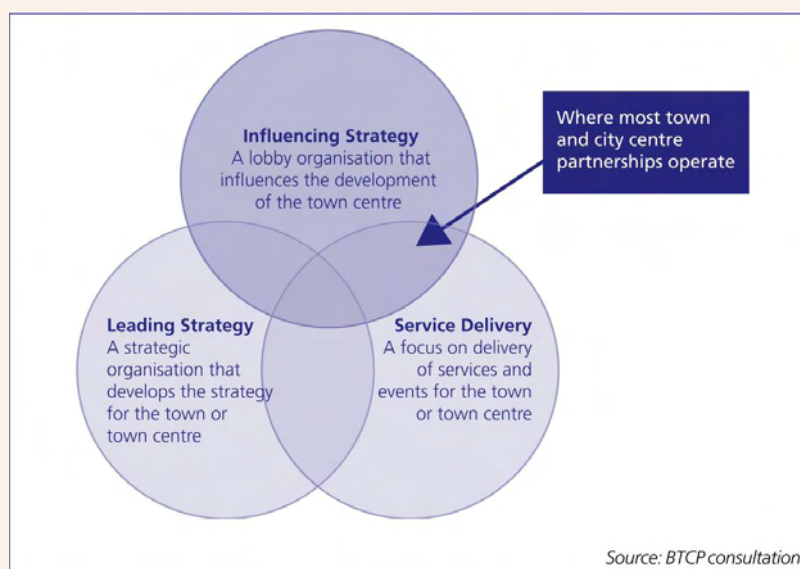


Figure 1: Sphere of Influence

MEMBERSHIP OF THE PARTNERSHIP

2.4 At the moment there is an imbalance within the membership of the town centre partnership with relatively poor representation from national retailers and low level involvement from the key public agencies. This is despite recruitment campaigns. Co-opting representation from a broad range of backgrounds can provide the experience necessary to deliver the Partnership's strategy and action plan.

FORMALITY OF THE PARTNERSHIP

2.5 The formality of the Partnership needs to be recognised and measures put in place to work towards increasing its formality need to be established. The more developed a Partnership, the more likely it is to mitigate risks and increase its impact on the management and development of the town centre. Advice from the DCLG states that a Partnership with a high degree of formality has:

- well-established stakeholder relations;
- a clear strategy and a framework to track performance;
- robust governance arrangements; and
- sustainable funding sources.

2.6 The ultimate goal for town centre partnerships is often the establishment of a formal partnership with a strong business leadership. This is potentially where Kidderminster Town Centre Partnership needs to be heading. As with all models the emphasis is on engaging local authority and private business stakeholders at the highest possible level.

2.7 During the course of the preparation of the Town Centre Strategy the emergence of priority projects will serve to determine who the most influential partners will be. As such this will help to determine the make up of the leadership within the Partnership and associated reporting arrangements.

2.8 The next sections of this paper discuss is how a partnership can increase its formality in each of the following areas of partnership development:

- Stakeholder Engagement
- Strategy & Performance Management
- Governing the Town Centre Partnership
- Funding & Financial Management

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

2.9 A strategy for engaging key stakeholders is needed to get the right people and organisations involved to build commitment and spread ownership within the Partnership.

2.10 Good and attentive stakeholder management is needed to keep records up to date and ensure the right people are getting involved. The Practitioners Guide suggests that having identified stakeholders, the most influential (those most capable of influencing and leading strategy) should be prioritised.

2.11 The DCLG advice recognises the significance of treating types of stakeholder differently depending on their influence and resources. They categorise stakeholders into four different groups:

- Highly supportive and influential partners should be closely involved with the work of the partnership;
- Highly influential partners who are not actively supportive need to be closely managed with the aim of increasing their level of support;
- Supportive partners who have little influence who could provide a distraction should be recognised and managed accordingly;

2 | Setting the Context

- Partners who are neither supportive nor influential should have their importance carefully managed.

2.12 The advice is to adopt an engagement model (see figure 2 below)

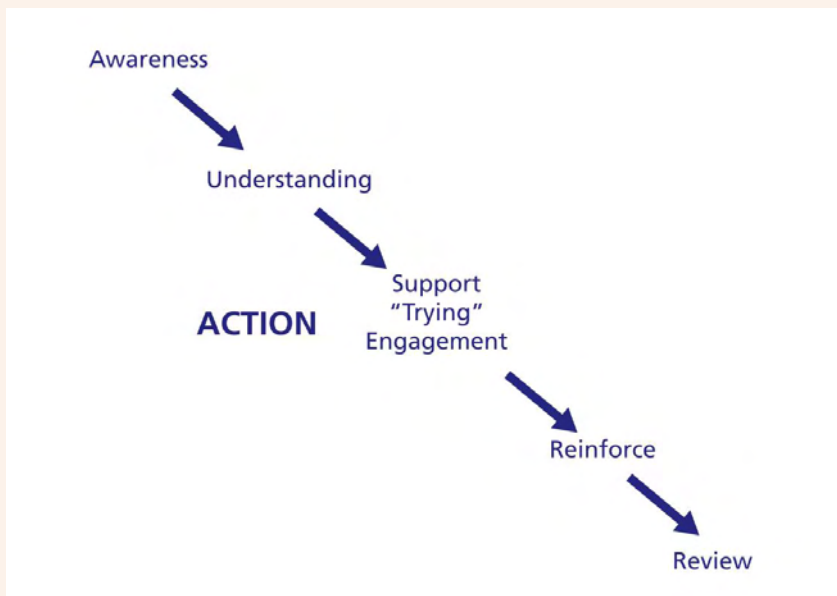
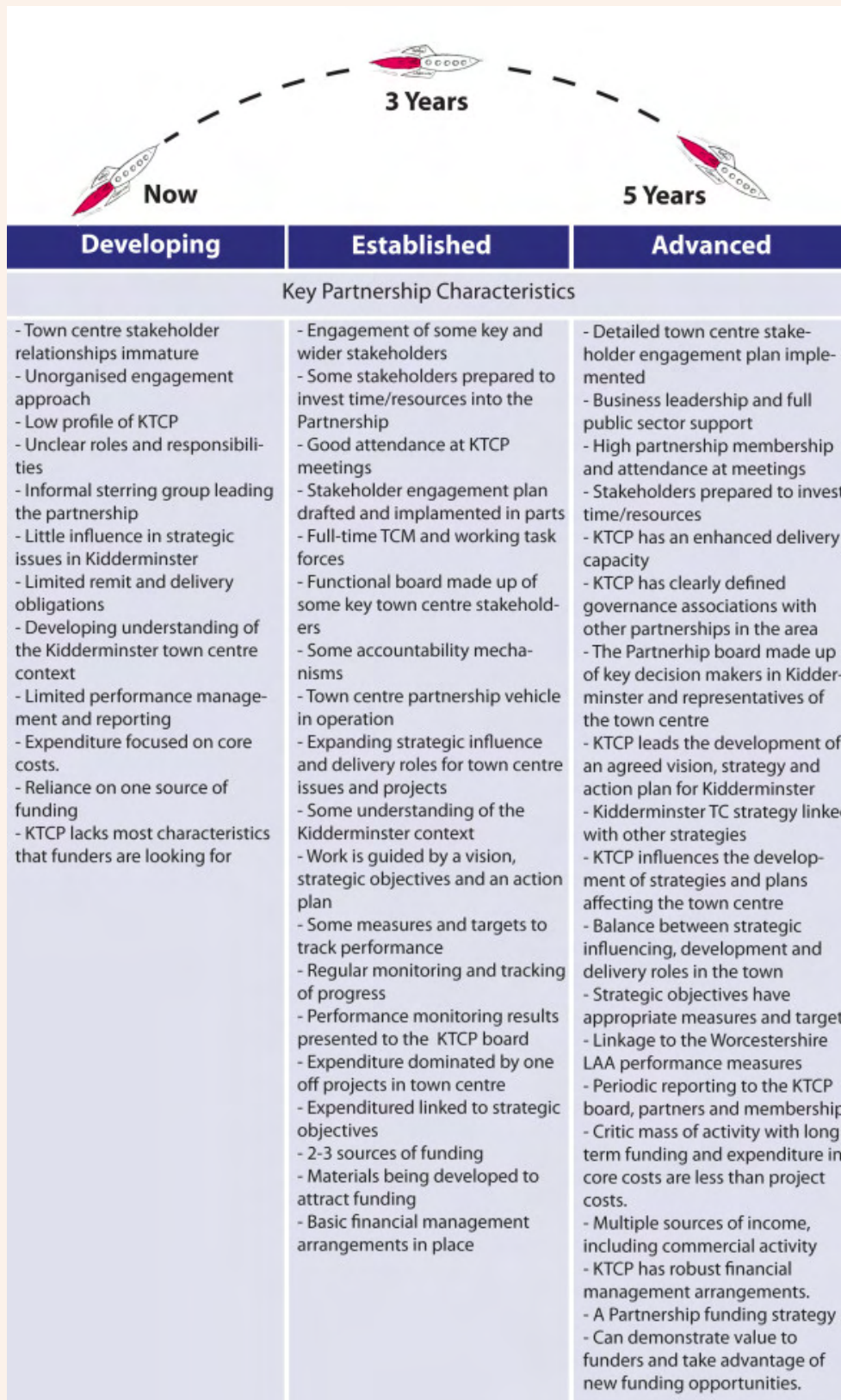


Figure 2: Engagement Model

2.13 The outcomes of positive engagement include partners:

- Accepting and acknowledging the partnership;
- Funding support (money, time or resource towards projects);
- Supporting the partnership publicly;
- Assistance with planning, reviewing and refining activities based on their knowledge;
- Listen to the Town Centre Manager and others within the partnership;
- Agree to change and try something different;
- Feel that they, too, own what is happening.



Formailty Summary

3 Knowing the Town Centre's Needs

3.1 Before establishing a vision of what might be, it has already been established that there must be an in-depth understanding of what is needed. An extensive and robust evidence base has been established through other initiatives including the LDF Core Strategy and the ReWyre Initiative. This brings together information on the current social, economic and environmental issues/needs in the town centre and the strategic context in terms of the key policies and strategies already in place.

3.2 The range of indicators identified in the audit help to identify key issues, stakeholder needs, improvement areas and possible solutions and these will continue to be developed. Establishing a strong and reliable set of indicators will facilitate comparisons with past performance and also help to build the strategy itself.

3.3 Key findings arising from the Audit include:

Catchment

- It is estimated that **251,000 people live within a 20-minute drive time of Kidderminster** - with the area having a higher than average consumer catchment of affluent consumers.
- Kidderminster has a higher proportion of 'Settled Suburbia', 'Secure Families' and 'Wealthy Executives' groups than are typically seen in England.
- The proportion of Prosperous Professionals, Educated Urbanites and Aspiring Singles is below the national average.

Town Centre Offer

- According to CACI Retail Footprint data, **Kidderminster is ranked 23rd out of the 300 retail destinations in the West Midlands** terms of its "attractiveness" as a retail centre.
- The town centre **scores strongest in terms of quality of shops, range of services, the shopping environment and day time safety.**
- Kidderminster is classed as a major centre meaning it **has a mix of high quality and value retailers.** It is also a value centre meaning it has a high proportion of value retailers.
- Business make-up: 54% Comparison, 32% Service, 14% Convenience
- Commercial Yields have improved and are **now comparable with Wolverhampton**, showing that the town centre has grown in terms of retail viability.
- The main reason for people visiting the town is for shopping purposes, with the highest percentage attributed to food shopping.
- **Most people visit the town centre more than once a week** and 24% of people visit the town centre 'more' or 'much more' frequently for clothing and footwear shopping than 5 years ago.
- However, the Town Centre has **poor representation from the top 20 retailers** when compared to most competing centres and lacks a retail offer for the more expensive market.
- Issues such as the high pricing of car parks, the **lack of cultural facilities**, events (markets etc), and **poor public toilet provision** all impact negatively on the trading experience in the town centre.
- The majority people do not carry out leisure activities (i.e. sports /fitness /entertainment /music /cinema /pubs, bars and clubs), at all in town centre.
- Visits to **pubs, clubs and bars** are the most popular leisure activity, but are carried out relatively infrequently, with people stating that they are too distant from home or there are **better alternatives elsewhere.**

3.4 Transport

- Kidderminster is relatively **easy to access via private and public transport**. However, congestion is a problem at peak times.
- The **main method of access to the town is via a car**, but a significant proportion of people visit on foot.
- Car parking in the town is perceived to be good; however there is a demand for additional, less expensive parking.

4 The Vision - Knowing where to go...

ISSUES

4.1 The Strategy will start by establishing a vision of where partners would like to see the town centre going.

OPTIONS

1. Focus on a high level long term vision which might read as follows:

“Kidderminster is an accessible, clean, green, prosperous and vibrant town centre that is compact and well connected both to surrounding communities and with strong and effective pedestrian circuits within. There is a healthy balance of independent shopping and national chains. The town centre celebrates and fronts on to its river and canal watersides and is viewed as a great place to live, work, shop and visit. As such the centre caters for the needs of a growing tourism industry in the surrounding rural hinterland with a range of hotel accommodation and a strong evening economy. Actions within the centre are planned, co-ordinated and delivered through an advanced town centre partnership.”



A future vision for Kidderminster...

regeneration
inKidderminster



...Issues & Options

5 Strategic Objectives - Developing the Strategy

5.1 This stage is all about establishing the priorities. Key objectives should be high level and few in number and should link back to the vision. This will help identify the top 5-10 highest priorities. Setting the strategic objectives must be a participative and iterative process to enable stakeholders to bring into play their own opinions about what should be achieved.

5.2 Objectives should be specific, measurable, agreed, realistic and time bound (SMART). The objectives should aim to strike a balance between developing partnership working itself e.g. funding and growth and focusing on outcomes such as customer satisfaction and physical improvements. To ensure maximum relevance to partner organisations it will also be important to ensure that objectives are aligned with those of partner organisations.

5.3 This stage is broken down into two further sections:

1. Thematic Issues - covering aspects such as Transport and Housing
2. Gateways - which looks at specific areas of the town for focused improvement



Key Town Gateways



...Thematic Issues

6 Thematic Issues

6.1 To ensure that the process aligns with the ReWyre Initiative the following core themes and associated issues will provide a guide to possible projects:

- Transport & Accessibility
- Jobs - Vitality and viability
- Homes & Communities
- Design & Quality Environment

Within this section there are a number of ideas and options to consider - which do you think would be the most important? Are there other options we should be considering? Please let us know your views!

TRANSPORT

Key Issues

- Addressing the barrier effect of the Ring Road
- Connecting Retail Quarters with enhanced pedestrian permeability
- Improving public transport infrastructure
- Town Centre surface level car parks dominate the urban environment and management regimes vary significantly
- Co-ordinated car parking (on-street and off-street)

Lead Partners: WFDC and WCC



Kidderminster Ring Road

Options: Transport

- Identifying new ways of reducing the impact of the ring road:
 - Surface level crossings
 - Introduction of bridges across the ring road
 - diversion of traffic through redevelopment schemes
 - improving existing subways to make them more user friendly
 - Introduction of speed reduction measures and environmental improvements to enhance the pedestrian experience
- Providing new and improved signage between all areas of the town in order to aid legibility and promote movement
- Improving the pedestrian environment through better design and ensuring places are pedestrian friendly
- Minimising the dominance of vehicles in the town centre through creating more 'shared space'
- Creating a focus for each area of the town so that people will want to visit different areas for alternative experiences
- Focus improvements to the existing Bus Station or consider alternative approaches to Bus infrastructure...Is the Bus Station in the right location?
- Provide an interchange at Kidderminster Railway Station to seamlessly link public transport provision
- Develop a Car Park Strategy to consider options for Car Parking Provision in the town. Ideas for the Strategy to consider might include:
 - Pay & Display vs Pay on Foot systems
 - Consider differentiating car parking charges depending on the location of spaces. This could include providing cheaper, shorter stay parking closer to the town to increase turn over
 - Improving current parking provision (spaces / environment etc) and the connections to the town from the car parks
 - Understanding the relationship between on and off-street parking and identifying deficiencies and areas for improvement
 - Consider re-introduction of multi-storey/ decked car parking
- Do you consider that a Car Parking Strategy for Kidderminster would be of use?



Considering examples from elsewhere...

JOBS – VITALITY & VIABILITY

Key Issues:

- Improve quality and range of shops & services
- The evening economy is currently under-developed
- Town marketing & promotion – regular events
- Hotel & tourism trade including the carpet museum
- New office developments
- Town Centre Loyalty – loyalty cards, keep trade local etc.

Lead Partners: Wealth Creators / Businesses / WFDC



Campion House, Green Street

Options: Jobs - Vitality and Viability

- Linking into design...improve the town centre environment to make it more attractive to potential new investors
- Seek to increase the offer for the evening economy through appropriate facilities and events within the town - this could include night time markets / improved evening entertainment and venues
- Improving Town Centre Loyalty by introducing Town Centre 'Currency' – loyalty cards, keep trade local etc.
- Promoting Tourism opportunities in the town - Carpet Museum / SVR / Safari Park. Providing a joined up strategy to link these strategic tourism assets together
- Provide for the construction of new offices throughout the town centre
- Address concerns over the shortage of long-stay parking for town centre employees
- Provide development opportunities for new retail, leisure and office businesses including up to 25,000sqm of shopping and up to 40,000sqm of offices
- Recognise the importance of Bromsgrove Street & Worcester Street as a major development opportunity for shopping, health and office based employment
- The delivery of town centre management services is an activity that will ultimately generate jobs



Picture 6.1 Retail 'Hot-spots'

HOMES & COMMUNITIES

Key Issues:

- The town centre currently has few homes and residents and there is little life in the town out of hours;
- Churchfields - Two former carpet factories currently in temporary use provide 10 hectares of redevelopment;
- Comberton Hill and Worcester Street - large areas of under-utilised floorspace and untapped potential
- Community facilities within the town centre including medical centres and youth services are generally dated.

Lead Partners: WFDC, WCC, PCT, Home Builders, HCA, RSLs, Community Groups & Service Providers

Considering new options...



Options: Homes and Communities

- Introducing a mix of tenures and types of housing within the town centre including some family homes may help to create more of a rooted community (i.e. less short term renting)
- Work with the WCC and PCT to redevelop the medical facilities on Bromsgrove Street to create a new focus/anchor for this side of the town.
- Introduce and incorporate housing within Worcester Street and Bromsgrove Street
- Promote Bromsgrove Street as a 'community facilities quarter' – health, leisure centre, community meeting space etc.
- Create an 'urban village' on Churchfields comprising of a mix of housing size and tenure with strong pedestrian links into the town centre.
- Create 'development team approach' with WFDC, WCC, RSLs and HCA to identify housing options and potential funding streams.
- Work with members of the public and community organisations to find out what facilities they want in their town.
- Develop more community space (including public open spaces) in the town to provide more focal points for local people.



Extending Canal-side Living...

DESIGN & QUALITY ENVIRONMENT

Key Issues:

- Poor sense of arrival at three distinct 'destination' levels:
 - the town boundary - '*welcome to Kidderminster*'
 - the town centre boundary - '*welcome to the town centre*'
 - arrival points - well designed & welcoming car parks & pedestrian access points
- A generally poor quality public realm that can often lack vibrancy and multi-functionality;
- High quality seasonal decorations, materials and finishes within the streetscape with a particular focus on Eastern Gateway and the Pedestrianised streets;
- Quality public spaces and green spaces that are clean and finished with high quality materials;
- Redefining the role of secondary shopping areas in transition;
- Way finding and signage that is seamless, co-ordinated and integrated with appropriate use of materials and finishes to reinforce;
- More cultural and physical landmark features are to be found throughout the town; and
- Funding is *ad hoc* and project based rather than reliable, planned and strategic in focus.

Lead Partners: WFDC, WCC, Private Businesses / Landlords and freeholders



Creating more public spaces...



Considering New Designs...



Using examples from elsewhere...

Options: Design & Quality Environment

- Public Art/Landmark/Lighting Strategy – create a strategy to effectively integrate art and landmarks within the town. Identifying appropriate locations and other considerations.
- Street Greening – Street trees and planting in the town centre to improve the public realm.
- Help to create a sustainable and strategic funding basis for environmental improvements and maintenance of the street scene, furniture, signage and seasonal decorations including through consideration of Business Improvement District status (see Page X).
- Street Signage Strategy/Audit – a coordinate approach to signage to ensure right signs are available in the right locations and that people are direct to/from the appropriate places.
- Temporary Events Spaces – using places like the areas outside the town hall, bull ring and Weavers Wharf for more live events and specialist markets. Street can be temporarily pedestrianised for the weekend.
- Permanent pedestrianisation – create new public open (possibly green) spaces in the town. Provide meeting and relaxing spaces.
- Promote more cafes, bars and restaurants in town to provide more relaxation space. Outdoor/on-street seating to create a more vibrant feel to the town. Would also help to improve the evening economy.
- Develop additional market days and events in the town with different themes that will effectively engage the different communities of Kidderminster in the life of the town centre.



Potential Public Space Enhancements in Worcester Street...



...the 4 Gateways

7 Gateways

7.1 The Town Centre Strategy will generally focus on activity within the town centre itself. However, it will have due consideration to the emerging LDF Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan which covers a wider area including Comberton Hill, Crossley Retail Park and Churchfields. This will be particularly important when considering accessibility and connections to surrounding communities and attractions including the SVR.

Linking in with the ReWyre Initiative

7.2 On the 30th September 2009 the ReWyre Initiative and the accompanying Prospectus document were officially launched with a signing of a memorandum of understanding by key public sector regeneration agencies.

7.3 At its core the ReWyre Initiative is all about partnership working and bringing together the public, private and voluntary sectors together with the wider community to improve Kidderminster. It aims to promote and develop the exciting prospects of the town and make it an attractive place to live, work, visit and invest.

7.4 The Prospectus document 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.

7.5 It is an ambitious 30 year vision for the future containing projects and initiatives that will be delivered in the short, medium, and long term timescales. It provides a bigger, strategic picture for the town's development and looks to bring the right people together to make projects happen.

7.6 The Prospectus centres around 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 with strong and well connected network of streets and spaces.
 - Delivering new housing opportunities.
 - Creating a more welcoming edge to the town through the remodelling of key gateways.
 -
- B - Comberton Hill Gateway:
 - Helping to develop the tourism and improving transport infrastructure - creating a gateway to the town centre.
- C - Churchfields:
 - A new mixed use 'urban village' adjacent to the town centre and Horsefair.
- D - The former British Sugar Factory ('The Beet'):
 - Establish SouthKidderminsterBusiness & NaturePark as a regionally significant development opportunity anchored by 'the Beet'.

EASTERN GATEWAY

Key Issues:

- Comberton Hill – Railway Station & Interchange and improved streetscene
- Worcester Street/ Bromsgrove Street Development Area – including KTC.3
- Green Street (North)

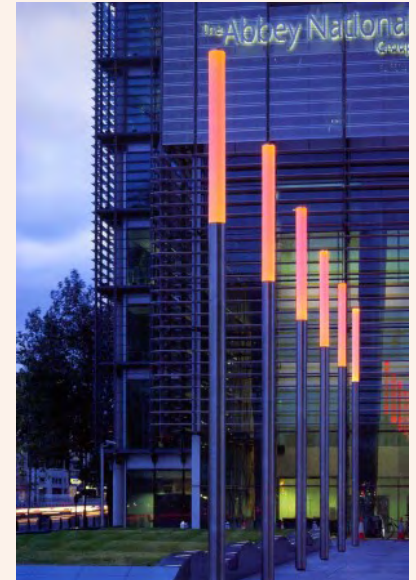
Lead Partners: WFDC, WCC, Private Businesses / Landlords and freeholders



Eastern Gateway 'Jigsaw'

Considering options for improvement...

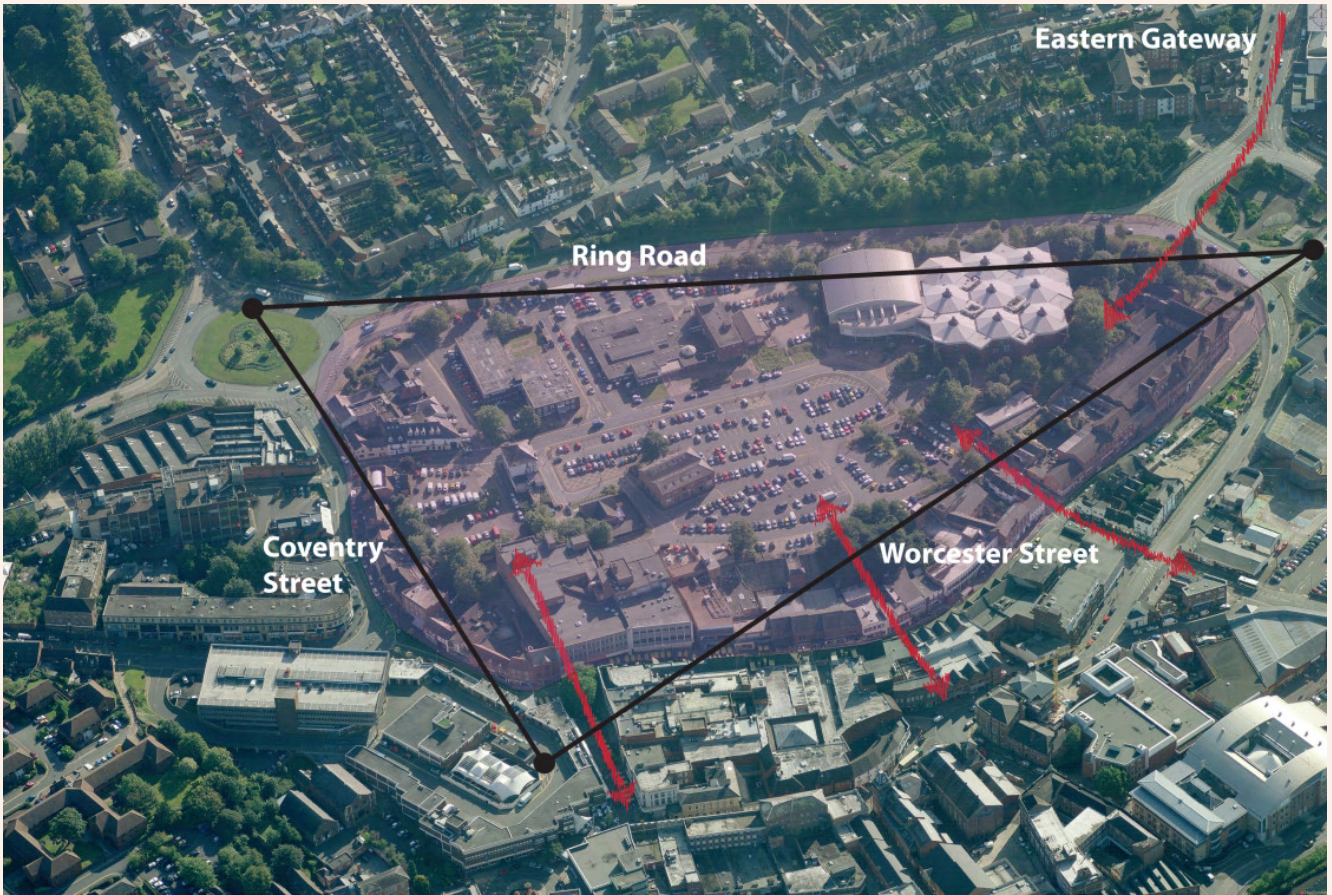




Taking examples from elsewhere...

Options: Eastern Gateway

- Creating a transport interchange at Kidderminster Station - linking into the commercial railway line, the SVR and public transport provision (buses).
- Improve links between the railway station and the town...
- New shopping opportunities - potential to explore options for increasing the retail offer in 'The Triangle' (See below). Is this the right place to target new development? The town may need to find space for 25,000sqm of retail floorspace over the next 15 years, could some of this be targeted here?
- Leisure / Helathcare / Youth Service opportunities - could the 'Triangle' also provide opportunities to provide modern 'fit for purpose' facilities
- Tourism possibilities - potential to improve linkages between the Severn Valley Railway, the Railway Museum and a new carpet museum. This will require improvements to the Comberton Road Island - what solution would be the best here?
- Introducing more activity into the areas through all times of the day - Mixed use opportunities - reintroducing homes into the town centre
- Improving linkages and permeability through and between these areas will be key - breaking the barrier of the ring road



Making connections...The 'Triangle'



Artists Impression of the 'Triangle'...



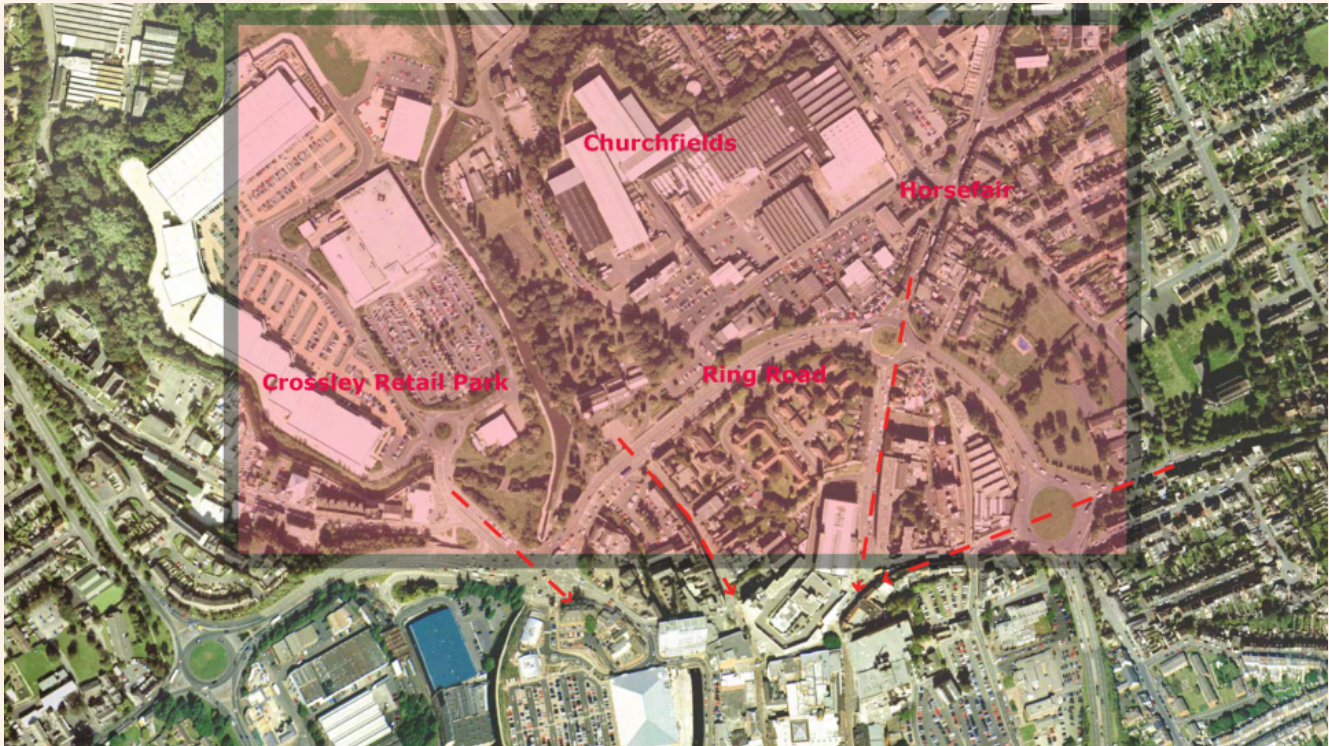
Could a 'Winter Garden' be developed in Kidderminster?

NORTHERN GATEWAY INCLUDING CHURCHFIELDS

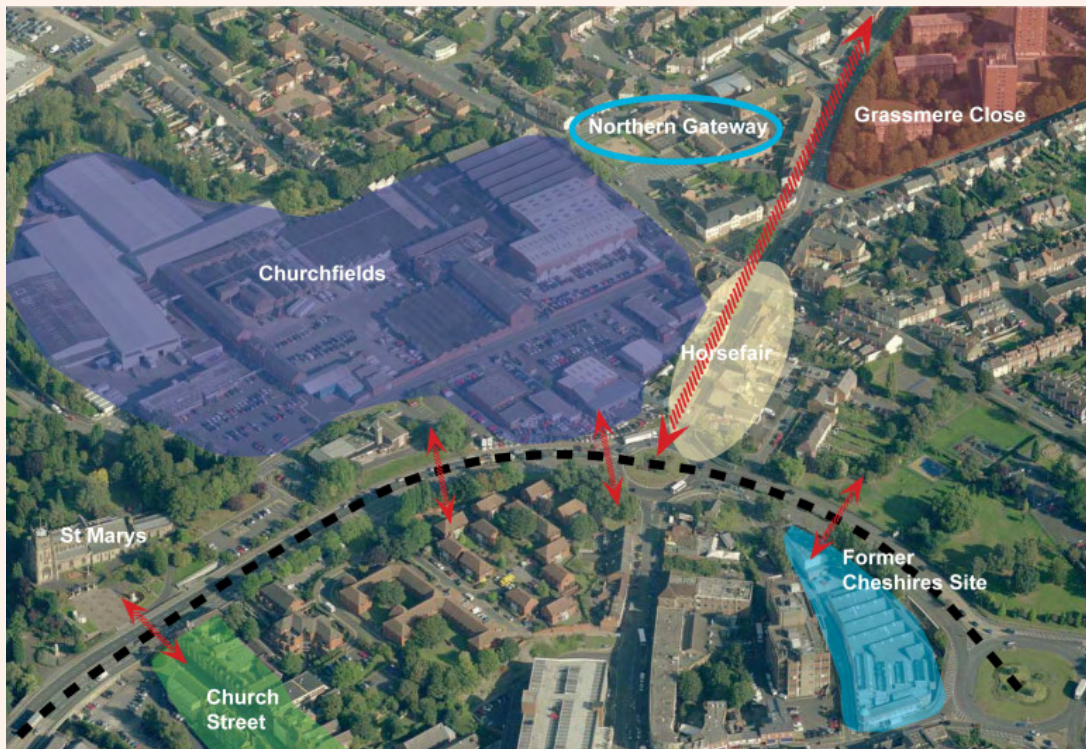
Key Issues:

- Churchfields & Clensmore Street - Two former carpet factories in temporary use provide 10 hectares of redevelopment land
- Horsefair - Environmental, economic and social deprivation issues
- CrossleyPark - A retail park that is poorly integrated in to the wider town environment
- Church Street - Historic street and legal quarter disconnected from St. Mary's Church and Churchfields
- Lower Mill Street - Poor urban environment in a particularly important connecting street (links Crossley Park with the Town Centre)

Lead Partners: WFDC, WCC, Private Businesses / Landlords and freeholders



Northern Gateway 'Square'



Northern Gateway

Options: Northern Gateway

- There are some large regeneration opportunities within this part of the town - what options should we be considering within this area?
- Churchfields - Is there potential to create a community close to the centre of town within the area currently known as 'Churchfields Business Park'? (See pictures below) Could there be options for new offices - to meet our regional targets? Should we be making the most of the opportunities of the canal with canal side moorings and restaurants?
- Horesfair - there are currently issues with Air Quality within this area - how should we look to try and solve this? Are there opportunities through redevelopment in nearby areas?
- Options for redevelopment of the former Cheshires site? This is a key vista when approaching the town from the Birmingham road - how can we make this gateway more attractive? Office led redevelopment could be appropriate here?
- Church Street - how can we look to re-connect St Mary's with the street named after it? Is the ring road too much of a barrier to this?
- What other options should we be considering within this area?
- Waterside regeneration next to the Canal - should we build on earlier work at Waterside Grange or should we strive for something different?



Potential new homes within the centre of Kidderminster...



...to complement new Residential Development in the Horsefair

WESTERN GATEWAY

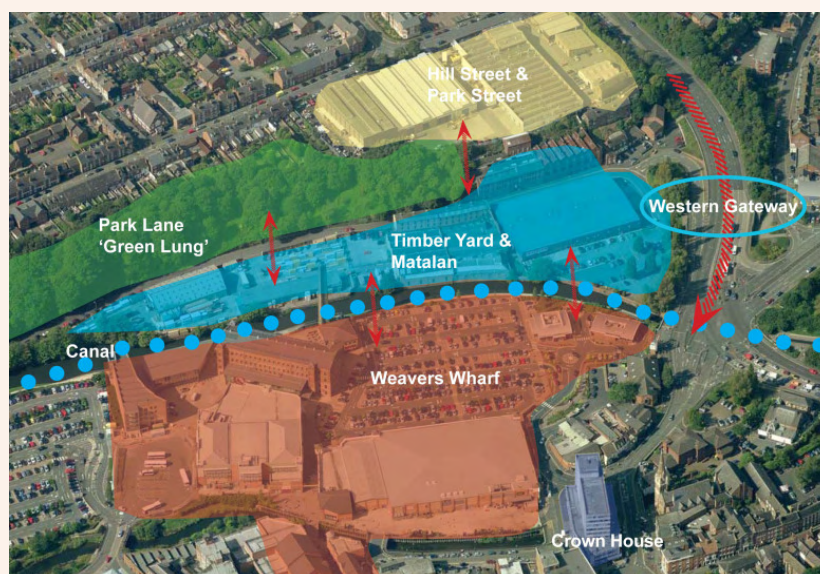
Key Issues:

- Weavers Wharf
- Park Lane
- Hill Street/ Park Street
- Canalside

Lead Partners: WFDC, WCC, Private Businesses / Landlords and freeholders



Western Gateway 'Triangle'



Western Gateway

Options: Western Gateway

- Improve accessibility and visibility of the canal from Weavers Wharf.
 - Improved signage
 - Planting and wall removal
- Improve lighting on the canal to make it a more attractive and safer environment.
- Reduce the visual impact of surface car parking on Weavers Wharf – i.e. greening the area
- Create new development fronting the canal side on the Weavers Wharf car park – including a multi-storey car park to compensate loss of spaces.
- Redevelop the timberyard to create a new canalside destination and provide an active frontage and natural surveillance
- Mixed use development - residential, retail, leisure, office. Hotel Multi-storey car park
- Create a new town park in the wooded area on Park Lane – provide much needed open space in the town.
- Create a new bridge over the canal to improve access to Park Lane
- Develop new marina facilities to increase the number of boaters staying in the town centre.
- Build on the tourism potential of the area:
 - Shopping
 - Canal – heritage, art
 - Boat trips – to Stourport?
 - Hotel facilities
 - Leisure – cinema, restaurants, bars etc
 - Town Park



What could the Western Gateway become...

SOUTHERN GATEWAY

Key Issues:

- Green Street (south of Dixon Street)
- New Road
- Tram Street / Pump Street
- Worcester Road Island & the depot site

Lead Partners: WFDC, WCC, Private Businesses / Landlords and freeholders



Southern Gateway



Southern Gateway

Options: Southern Gateway

- Tram Street/New Road area – create urban village centred around the canal and the river.
- Redevelop the existing Council Depot at Green Street
 - Hotel and leisure development
 - Offices
 - Residential
 - Business units
- Redevelop the Worcester Road island and bus depot to completely redesign the road layout and create a much larger development opportunity.
- Promote Green Street as a centre for digital and creative industries – housed in the converted heritage factory office space.
- Reduce the dominant impact of highway engineering
- Extend New Road and Green Street processional routes - what roles could these areas play in the future?
- Developing creative office based industries
- Promoting the unique opportunity of canalside living and exploring opportunities for canalside evening entertainment



Potential Re-modeling of the Gateway...



New Design Options...



New Design Options...



... Funding & Next Steps

8 How will we get there?

Developing a 'road map' to formalising a business based Partnership.

ISSUE – The Partnership

8.1 It has already been established that there is a need to review how partners work together in Kidderminster Town Centre. This will involve clarifying arrangements to ensure the partnership has clear purpose, focus, credibility and influence. A further objective of this strategy will be to deliver a better balance in the depth and breadth of membership from the most influential to small volunteer groups from large retailers to small, business engaged in the evening economy and others.

OPTIONS

Governance

- Partnership organisations and town centre membership;
- Review the partnership and its constitution; Facilitate an emerging leadership model and a Board that will adapt;
- Develop a high level strategy/ plan that everyone can get behind from the public and private sectors;
- Establish a professional Partnership Board including an embedded Town Centre Manager;
- Sub-groups (or tasks groups);
- Formalising the Town Centre Partnership as an employing body with a Town Centre Manager and support staff rather than one of the partners employing the town centre management team on behalf of the partnership;
- The practitioners guide highlights that the Chair of the Partnership Board shall be a key figure in presenting the 'face' of the partnership and also in 'leading its work'.
- The criteria for selecting the Chair is set out in the guide as follows:
 1. A leader;
 2. A figurehead;
 3. Politically aware;
 4. A communicator;
 5. A manager

Stakeholder Engagement

- Establishing a socially representative and diverse Partnership Board offering different life experiences;
- Focus on engaging all partner organisations at the highest possible level i.e. the most influential individuals who are of a sufficiently senior level to be able to agree to and act on decisions made by the board across service areas;
- Board members include key decision-makers from the public sector to be able to drive decisions affecting public services in the town centre;
- Ensuring private sector participation in decision making including different types of businesses;
- Allocate places on the board to people holding certain posts or offices;

- More effectively involve others including the press and community groups;
- Board membership will need to change over time and there should be an ongoing job to ensure that the board and wider membership remains vibrant and active;

Delivery

- Link the Town Centre Partnership to the Board of the ReWyre Initiative;
- Use existing initiatives such as ReWyre and the Community Safety Partnership to avoid capacity challenges and 'initiative fatigue';
- Community safety and security initiatives to attract the evening economy businesses;
- Going for Business Improvement District (BID) Status to fund town centre management;
- Implement a wider Town Centre Membership scheme with the benefits of a unified network of influence;
- Advocacy and influence between public and private sectors and other initiatives e.g. empty shops grants to attract private support;
- Offering training, research, and discounted marketing, promotion and other services to attract small traders;
- A more responsive and co-ordinated public services input including cleansing and safety/security to attract larger retailers;

Performance Management

- Develop Service Level Agreements (SLA's between the partnership and the local authorities)
- Public accountability, transparency and above board;

8.2 The practitioners guide states that "conversations with businesses should be initiated at the strategy development stage". This will be the first chance to identify businesses that might get involved.

ISSUE – The Town Centre Manager

8.3 The Association of Town Centre Management defines the role of a town centre manager as:

1. Developing the partnership
2. Realising projects and leading actions
3. Representing the partnership
4. Looking for investors
5. Understanding the centre
6. Managing the town centre structure day to day.

8.4 The role of the Manager in providing a secretariat for the partnership will be very important in establishing the partnership's credibility, especially with the private sector.

8.5 The current postholder is currently contracted on a part-time fixed term basis of 18.5 hours per week until March 2011.

OPTIONS:

1. **Seek to extend the Town Centre Manager post to include BID Management; and**
2. **Maintain the post at the existing level.**

9 Funding and Financial Management

ISSUES

9.1 One of the primary objectives of developing the Town Centre Strategy is to develop a sustainable business model and funding arrangement. Town Centre Management activity in Kidderminster currently relies on funding from a limited number of organisation(s) including the main shopping centres and the District Council. In general funding is *ad hoc* and project based rather than reliable, planned and strategic in focus. This type of arrangement greatly reduces the effectiveness of the Partnership.

9.2 At the recent AGM of the Kidderminster Town Centre Partnership there was some concern expressed over a year on year fall in the organisations financial reserves which are in any event very limited. The partnership organisation exists in name but in reality the organisation does not function as a business with core costs, activity and management. It has already been said the partnership is far too reliant on the part time Town Centre Manager. Good practice from elsewhere demonstrates that the infrastructure needs to be established in order to have the greatest effect.

9.3 Many town centres with a more advanced town centre management structure are now looking at introducing Business Improvement District (BID) status to their centres. This enables the authorities to levy an additional charge on the business rate of town centre businesses in order to fund Town Centre Management. Most recently such a scheme was introduced in the City of Worcester where the majority of businesses have voted in favour of the initiative. This demonstrates a significant level of support the Town Centre Management arrangement in Worcester. Similar levels of support will be required in Kidderminster if sustainable funding mechanisms are to be found.

OPTIONS

9.4 The following options may be considered to address the funding situation through the Strategy:

9.5 A separate funding strategy: a management tool designed to ensure that fundraising efforts are effective, aligned with the strategy and targeted at making a tangible difference in the town centre. This would establish a strategic approach, which ensures that fundraising activity is focused on delivering benefit to stakeholders

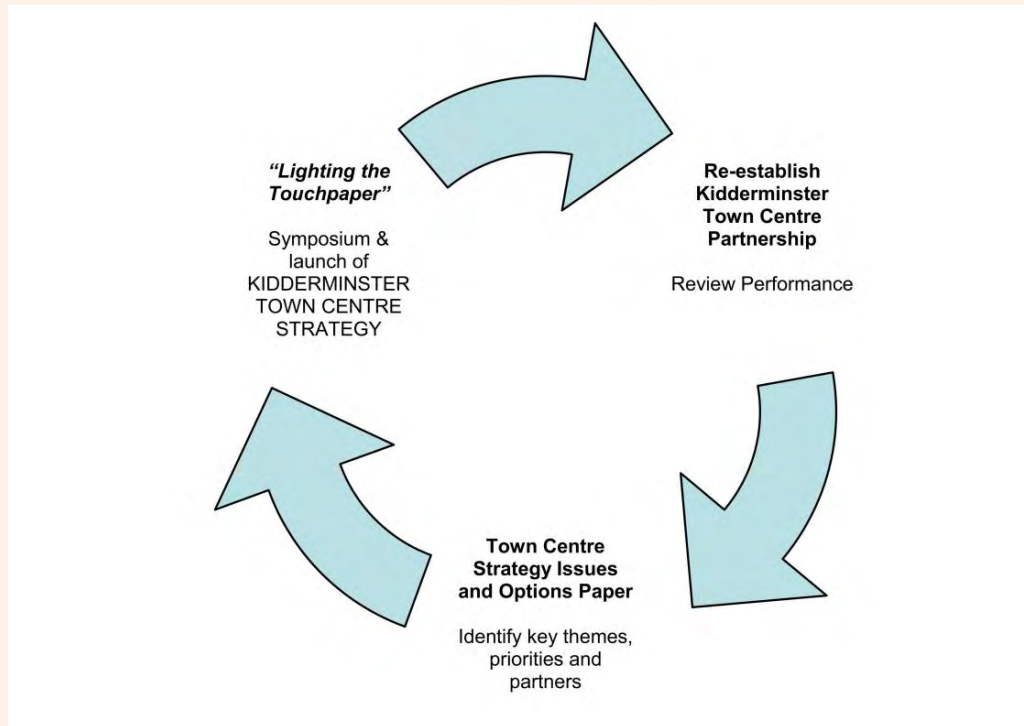
9.6 A managed portfolio of income: The Town Centre needs to have a plan to make sure that its current and future 'core costs' – management, staffing and other infrastructure costs are always supported by guaranteed funding otherwise the organisation is more likely to falter. The managed portfolio approach will develop and manage a mixed portfolio of funding as the needs and aspirations of a TCP change.

9.7 The characteristics of the overseeing body will determine the levels of investment. The Town Centre Partnership must be investor friendly and set up to attract potential funders. This involves being clear about how the value provided by the partnership differentiates it from other organisations seeking funding in the town or city centre, and ensuring that its offer is delivering the agreed town centre strategy. This future development of the partnership will help explore the reasons why it can be difficult to get public and private sector stakeholders to commit funds, as well as helping to differentiate the partnership body. Realising the above options may result in a more fundable partnership which may ultimately support a viable BID proposal.

10 Next Steps

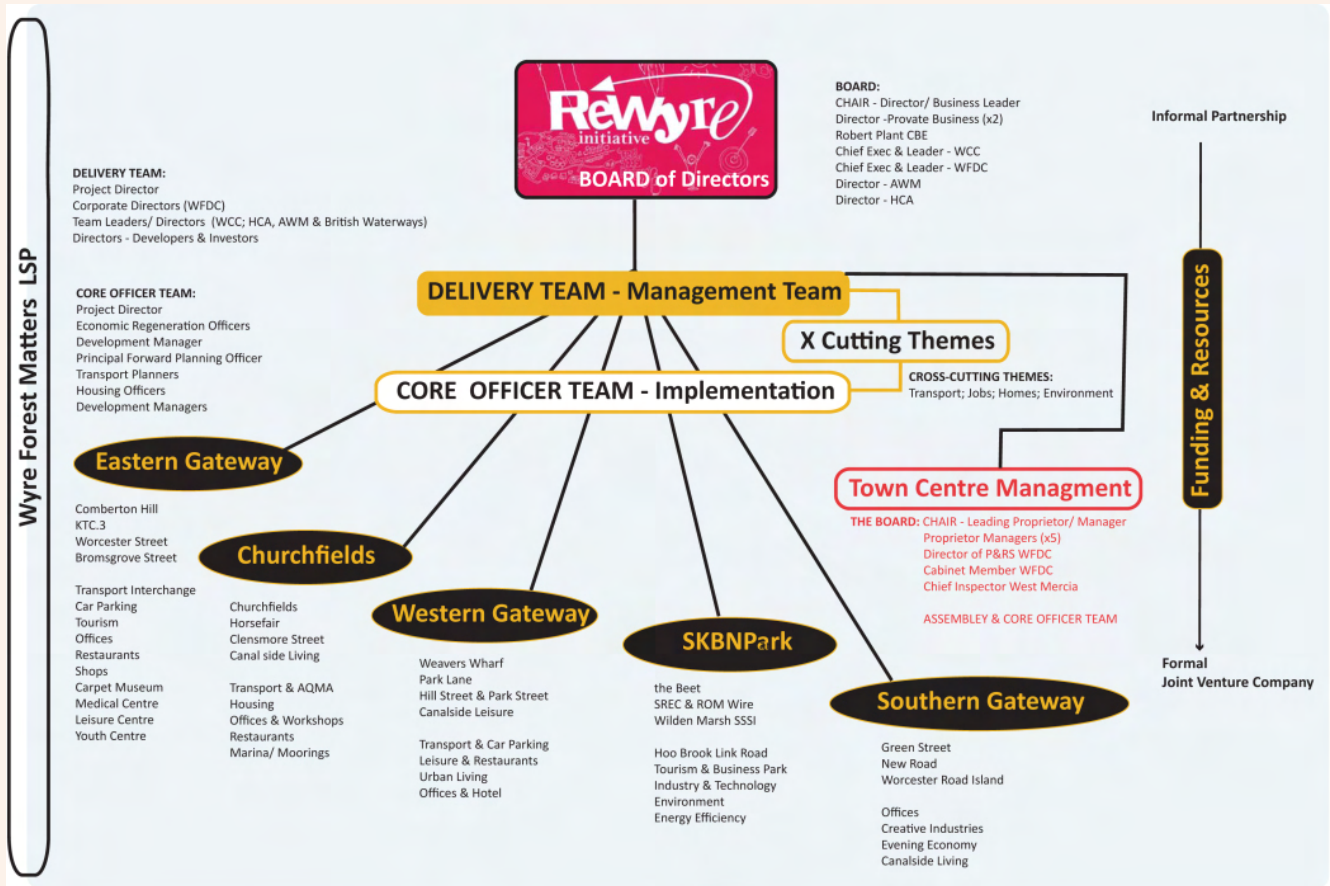
ISSUES

10.1 This Issues and Options Paper provides a basis for consultation. The resulting Strategy will be developed in partnership with key stakeholders.



NEXT STEPS

- The process could be linked to the Kidderminster ReWyre Regeneration Initiative with a possible reporting relationship with the anticipated Board and delivery body for that initiative. This could enable the development of the strategy to access additional support and funding from external groups and advisers.
- The development of the Strategy could be undertaken within the existing governing arrangements of the Kidderminster Town Centre Partnership.



Linking into ReWyre: A possible model

NEXT STEPS

January	Feb-Apr	May-June	July	Launch
Issues & Options Paper Approved	Consultation & Commissioning Period	Development Stage	Adoption of Kidderminster Town Centre Strategy	Symposium & action planning

11 Appendix 1: References

- *Planning Policy Statement 6 – Planning for Town Centres*
- *Planning Policy Statement 4 (Consultation Paper) – Planning for Sustainable Economic Development*
- *Managing Town Centre Partnerships: A Practitioners Guide*, Department for Communities and Local Government, October 2008
- *Looking after our town centres*, Department for Communities and Local Government, April 2009
- *West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy*
- *West Midlands Economic Strategy*
- *Worcestershire Local Area Agreement*
- *Worcestershire Economic Strategy*

11.1 The following existing local strategies, summarised at Appendix 1, have direct relevance to the future development of the town centre:

- *‘Making a Real Difference’ – Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS)*
- *The ReWyre Initiative*
- *Local Development Framework: Core Strategy*
- *Local Development Framework: Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan*
- *Wyre Forest Community Safety Partnership Strategy*



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Kidderminster



Town Centre Partnership

Bringing the Pieces Together