

## Appendix E

### Delivery progress at Weston-super-Mare including the Weston Villages and the employment-led strategy

1 This is a paper highlighting the progress which has been made to date in delivering the employment-led strategy and strategic new growth at Weston-super-Mare (the Weston Villages). This strategy relates to policies CS20, CS28, and CS30 of the Core Strategy.

2 The paper is structured into three sections:

- *Enabling actions and initiatives*
- *The Weston Villages development*
- *Wider town interventions and job creation*

#### ***Enabling actions and initiatives***

3 The following examples demonstrate the significant progress which is being made at Weston-super-Mare (WSM) to deliver the Core Strategy objectives. In many cases a hyperlink is included (underlined text) e.g. to a related website or another document providing further information.

- Promotion of [Junction 21 Enterprise Area](#) forming part of the wider West of England Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) vision for the sub-region. This will encourage greater take-up of employment land and with EA status can attract funding to deliver infrastructure that will support economic growth. As well as 'ready to go' sites, J21EA benefits from a highly skilled workforce (47% of residents in Weston work in management, associate professional and technical occupations), as well as excellent transport links including close proximity to the M5, mainline rail connectivity, 8 miles from Bristol Airport and access to Royal Portbury Docks.
- Production of a Local Development Order (LDO) and other simplified planning measures to facilitate development at the J21 EA. A [draft LDO](#) has been consulted upon and is being recommended for approval in April 2014. When adopted this will provide flexibility to business operating on specific business sites allowing them to carry out a range of development without the need to apply for planning permission.
- Intensive marketing and promotion for WSM, to attract businesses. A [dedicated website](#) has been set up to provide information, and support to business in North Somerset including Weston-super-Mare.
- Ongoing and active engagement of landowners at the Weston Villages (the Joint Delivery and Review Board) who are all signatories to the [Joint Position Statement \(ED/25\)](#) submitted to the examination in 2011.

*“This statement reflects the position agreed between the following parties and submitted to the Inspector in relation to the implementation of an ‘employment-led’ growth strategy for the Weston Villages and Policies CS20 and CS30 of the North Somerset Core Strategy:*

- i) North Somerset Council (as Local Planning Authority and landowner).*
- ii) St. Modwen Developments Limited.*
- iii) Homes & Communities Agency.*
- iv) Persimmon Homes Ltd.*
- v) Mead Realisations Ltd and the Manor Farm Landowners Consortium.” (Paragraphs 1.1-1.2).*

This active engagement has helped to shape the approach to the employment-led strategy and ensure required development can be achieved in the town whilst meeting the fundamental objectives of the Core Strategy. An example of this collaboration is in the creation of [the Weston Brochure](#). (Weston – thriving and growing) which serves as both a marketing tool and an overview of some of the business focussed activities in the town.

- Coordinated approach to infrastructure delivery through the Core Strategy Infrastructure Delivery Plan; collaboration between landowners, the Council and other delivery partners; and successful funding bids. The effect of these is to facilitate development and improve the functioning of the town for example addressing congestion. This creates an environment where businesses can invest with confidence and function effectively from a commercial perspective.
- Successful funding bids include:
  - Department for Transport funding for the Weston Package Major Transport Scheme.
  - Through the Regional Growth Fund, the creation of a West of England Revolving Infrastructure Fund (RIF) which forward funds the Weston Villages Strategic Flood Solution, Dolphin Square public realm works and Junction 21 outbound improvements.
  - Education Funding Agency funding for the North Somerset Enterprise & Technology College.
  - West of England City Deal enabling forward funding of enabling measures against future business rate retention in Enterprise Zones and Areas.
- Close working with West of England local authorities and the West of England Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) which recognises and supports the Weston Villages as a strategic growth location and which designated Junction 21 as an Enterprise Area.

- Measures to promote local employment and training including landowner commitments to apprenticeships and targets for use of local supply chains.
- The link between skills, the range of local jobs and attracting business is a fundamental part of the strategy. North Somerset Council engages closely with Weston College on promoting skills as a means of influencing future business growth and ensuring an effective labour supply in the town. £29.7m has been invested by the college across various sites in the town.

- 4 The North Somerset [Annual Monitoring Report 2013](#) (OD/08) includes a detailed commentary on progress at Weston Villages (pp61-66). This relates to housing, jobs and infrastructure delivery as well as the other initiatives associated with the employment-led objective.
- 5 Taken together these and other actions are providing effective conditions for business growth backed by strong aspirations for growth in the town through the LEP. Prior to the Core Strategy the focus was primarily on providing land use allocations to deliver employment growth without these wider mechanisms to stimulate change. There is now therefore a more holistic and targeted approach to delivering business growth and the employment-led strategy in Weston-super-Mare.

### ***Weston Villages***

- 6 The Weston Villages development is progressing well after many years of planning and focuses growth on two primarily brownfield sites - the former Weston Airfield and former RAF Locking camp and surrounding agricultural land. Following the adoption of the Core Strategy in 2012 the Council finalised work and adopted the [Weston Villages Supplementary Planning Document \(SPD\)](#) in order to deliver Core Strategy policy CS30 - *Weston Villages*. The SPD provides a masterplanning framework, core principles and objectives to guide the delivery of the Weston Villages. The employment-led strategy is a central driver for this development in order to achieve a sustainable balance between jobs and homes (para 1.3, Weston Villages SPD). This requires the delivery of new homes in line with job creation.
- 7 The SPD has provided an overarching framework for the production of more detailed 'sub-area' masterplans for distinct areas of the development. These have been prepared by landowners to support their planning applications.
- 8 The following summarises progress at the Weston Villages:

#### **Winterstoke Village:**

- Outline consent for the Weston Park Business Quarter to deliver up to 4,850 jobs across a range of employment use classes. Reserved Matters consent for the creation of a public house and ['The Hive'](#) – a 20,000sqft managed workspace facility operated by the North Somerset Enterprise Agency offering flexible space for business start-

ups with on-site business support. Construction of both these consents is under way with The Hive expected to open in May 2014, creating around 100 jobs in its first year and 50 per year thereafter. The Hive addresses a recognised shortcoming in terms of lack of flexible workspace.

- Outline consent for 900 dwellings, with Reserved Matters consent for the first 270 houses which are under construction. The first residents are expected to move in summer 2014. A second phase Reserved Matters is at pre-application stage. This is demonstrating how the employment-led strategy is working in practice to deliver housing whilst meeting the objectives of the employment-led strategy.
- A live planning application (ref:12/P/1510/OT2) for the remainder of the site (including 1,650 dwellings) is due to be considered by committee in the next few months.
- Application for the [Enterprise Technical College](#) (ETC) is imminent, following months of negotiation and site selection. This facility will offer business focused education for around 700 14 – 19 year olds, with a focus on Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM). The College will open in an interim facility in September 2014 with a full opening in a new building at Winterstoke Village in September 2015. The facility will raise the profile of the town as a place to learn with potential to foster greater links between business and education. This is likely to attract businesses that we benefit from the skills generated.

### **Parklands Village:**

- Detailed consent for 250 dwellings, 68 of which are completed at Locking Parklands, alongside a 639sqm [office development at Locking Parklands](#). This office has been constructed to BREEAM 'Excellent' level and occupies a central site within the Parklands development area.
- The Locking Parklands was awarded third best development in the UK by What House in 2012 and first place in Best Design category in the 2013 Housebuilding awards.
- Resolution to approve subject to S106 (application ref:12/P/1266/OT2) for [1150 dwellings](#) at Parklands, coupled with proposals to deliver in excess of 1,926 jobs across a range of land use types,
- Resolution to approve subject to S106 (application ref:13/P/0997/OT2) for [1200 dwellings](#) also at Parklands, coupled with proposals to deliver in excess of 3,457 jobs across a range of land use types including a new mixed use local centre. This and the previous proposal includes a phasing strategy and employment schedule linking to masterplanned proposals for new business sites including a proposed 30,000sqft 'innovation centre'.
- Public consultation held on masterplanning of North Somerset Council landholding at Parklands Village.

- Planning permission granted, subject to S106, for a regional leisure facility with significant employment potential.

**Infrastructure:**

- Cross Airfield Link at Winterstoke Village is under construction and is well progressed. This creates a key link between Winterstoke Road and the A370 achieving improved access across the town. The first phase including a new roundabout has been constructed in advance of housing development, with further phases to be delivered inline with further development phases.
- Outline applications at Parklands Village included full details of access (North-South link). The Council are working with landowners to agree collaborative accelerated delivery, potentially using West of England funding through SEP, City Deal or RIF.
- Winterstoke Village Strategic Flood Solution nearing completion. The Council has awarded tender for delivery of remaining Strategic Flood Solution elements with work on site starting April 2014.

9 These items summarise the progress to date at the Weston Villages to deliver a significant proportion of the planned jobs in the town. Mixed use proposals are being successfully implemented and further large-scale consents are in place, co-ordinated with the delivery of strategic infrastructure provision.

***Town-wide interventions and job creation***

10 In addition to developments specific to the Weston Villages, the following elements in the wider town have been achieved:

- Improvements to Junction 21 of the M5. The scheme was jointly funded by the Department for Transport (DfT) and North Somerset Council in order to reduce queuing on the sliproads off the motorway and to reduce peak time congestion going out of town on the A370 Somerset Avenue dual carriageway. This will further enhance the commercial attractiveness of the town particularly where efficient access to the motorway is a key operational requirement. This addresses a long-standing negative perception of congestion that has in the past discouraged business investment.
- Highway infrastructure improvements within the town as part of the 'Weston Package'. This is a £15m investment scheme of transport improvements to benefit car and motorcycle drivers, bus passengers, cyclist and pedestrians in Weston-super-Mare and Worle. This includes some significant interventions including creation of a new dual carriageway in order to improve the highway layout and provide a more direct vehicular link into the town.

- A large [headquarters office building](#) housing 300 employees relocated from offices across the South West, public house and other employment provision linked to the delivery of 218 dwellings as part of a mixed use development under the employment-led strategy. This development signals a fundamental shift in the office development potential in the town as a bespoke new build development.
- Planning approval for the redevelopment of [Dolphin Square](#) following the demolition of the former retail precinct and completion of the Phases 1 and 2 hotel, car park and public realm improvements. Phases 3 and 4 will include a range of retail and leisure uses providing an 'anchor' to the southern end of the High Street and is expected to commence in the Spring 2014. This equates to a £45m investment in this important town centre location. Other recent town centre developments include the £39m rebuilding of the Grand Pier, the £9.7m refurbishment of the award winning Town Hall, and the £20m redevelopment of Knightstone Island.

11 These examples illustrate the wider developments taking place providing delivered examples of the employment-led strategy and the potential for WSM to attract large-scale investment and to attract businesses.

### **Summary**

12 There is significant progress being made in Weston to deliver the Core Strategy policies and the employment-led strategy. The applications referenced above equate to some 9,000+ jobs growth and is supported by a holistic strategy including extensive investment in infrastructure, marketing and promotion. North Somerset Council, landowners and other partners remain committed to the strategy and improvement of the balance between jobs and homes and desire for greater self-containment. The high profile developments that have been built or are planned demonstrate a renewed commercial interest in the town, particularly linked to activity at the Junction 21 Enterprise Area.

13 There has been and will be further significant investment in the town to facilitate the strategy including various major highway schemes. This demonstrates a clear intention to deliver the strategy and provides a more conducive environment for business growth.

14 Even in challenging economic circumstances the strategy is being implemented with the release of residential development linked to employment provision. Going forward, there should be even more impetus as the wider economy recovers and the development within Weston create a 'critical mass' of positive activity and interest.