

	AGENDA ITEM NO.	
<p align="center">Report Cover Sheet</p>		
Name of Meeting:	Executive	
Date of Meeting:	23rd July 2007	
Report Title:	Brief for Station Area, Leamington Spa	
Summary of report:	This report seeks the approval of the Executive to approach Advantage West Midlands for funding support to develop a planning brief for the wider station area.	
For Further Information Please Contact (report author):	Philip Clarke, Group Leader (Policy, Projects & Conservation), Planning & Engineering	
Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Policy Framework:	No	
Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budgetary framework:	No	
Wards of the District directly affected by this decision:	Leamington - Brunswick Leamington - Milverton	
Key Decision?	Yes/No	
Included within the Forward Plan?	No	
Is the report Private & Confidential	No	
Background Papers:		
Consultation Undertaken		
Below is a table of the Council's regular consultees. However not all have to be consulted on every matter and if there was no obligation to consult with a specific consultee they will be marked as n/a.		
Consultees	Yes/ No	Who
Other Committees	No	
Ward Councillors	No	
Portfolio Holders	No	
Other Councillors	No	
Warwick District Council recognised Trades Unions	N/A	
Other Warwick District Council Service Areas	N/A	
Project partners	N/A	
Parish/Town Council	No	
Highways Authority	No	
Residents	No	
Citizens Panel	N/A	
Other consultees	N/A	

Officer Approval

With regard to officer approval all reports must be approved by the report authors relevant director, Finance Services and Legal Services.

Officer Approval	Date	Name
Relevant Director(s)	26.6.07	Craig Anderson
Chief Executive	28.6.07	Chris Elliott
CMT	28.6.07	
Section 151 Officer	28.6.07	Mary Hawkins
Legal	26.6.07	Simon Best
Finance	26.6.07	Marcus Miskinis

Final Decision?	Yes

Suggested next steps (if not final decision please set out below)

--

1. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 1.1 That the Executive authorises the Council to approach Advantage West Midlands (AWM) for funding to carry out further planning work in the wider area around Leamington railway station covering the area of land shown in appendix A (which includes the Ford Foundry site).

2. REASON(S) FOR THE RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 Whilst there already exists a set of planning policies for this area (including those within the Local Plan), the closure of the Ford foundry has presented a considerable challenge to the Council as it seeks to maintain a thriving economy in this area and as it now needs to provide a proper framework for regenerating this site. AWM has indicated its willingness to support necessary planning work to help with this. There would be costs associated with this work for which there is no provision within either the Planning & Engineering service plan or within existing budgets.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S) CONSIDERED

- 3.1 The Council is not required to undertake this work, however if it does not do so, it will lose the opportunity to support the regeneration of the site and enable it to make its most positive contribution to the wider regeneration of this part of Leamington.

4. BUDGETARY FRAMEWORK

- 4.1 There are no budgetary implications arising from this report as we would be seeking external funding for the brief. Any time required from officers within the Planning & Engineering department to support consultants could be met within existing resources.

5. POLICY FRAMEWORK

- 5.1 Achieving a successful regeneration of this area of Leamington contributes towards the objectives in the Warwick District 2020 community plan for creating a prosperous community by continuing social and economic regeneration. There are also significant environmental benefits to be achieved by making best use of this land.

6. BACKGROUND

- 6.1 As councillors will be aware, the area around the railway station in Leamington has been subject to much discussion in recent years, and there have been a number of planning applications affecting this area. These have been on both land to the south and the north of the railway line.
- 6.2 It has long been recognised that this area would benefit from environmental enhancement, but also that it has considerable potential that has not been utilized. To this end, the Council has previously commissioned consultants to look at the area. In 1997, the Council worked with consultants to prepare a "Leamington Station Enhancement Study", and in 1999 it prepared a document "Development Principles of the Station Area" which it adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance.
- 6.3 When it prepared the First Deposit Version of the Local Plan in late 2003, it drew together this previous work and identified the land as an "opportunity site" within which a range of uses could be supported. It also identified land on the north side of the railway line as an employment allocation. Following subsequent public consultation on the Local Plan, it strengthened this approach by giving support to the creation of a northern pedestrian access to the railway station.
- 6.4 This planning framework has provided a basis upon which a number of planning applications have been considered in recent years. These have included the proposal for 166 apartments on the former Quicks garage site (refused and subsequently dismissed on appeal), additional car parking on land at the eastern end of Station Approach (refused) and 2.1 hectares of offices on the former station goods yard at the western end of Station Approach (application not yet determined).
- 6.5 On the basis of the planning policy work carried out to date, it was argued at the Local Plan inquiry that the Local Plan contains an appropriate broad framework of planning policy for this area. This position has been endorsed by the Inspector following the Local Plan inquiry in 2006. (There is an item on the Local Plan and the inspector's report elsewhere on the agenda of this meeting.)
- 6.6 It is still my view that the policy framework in the Local Plan is an appropriate one for considering this area, however since the end of the Inquiry, there has been a significant change in circumstances in this part of Leamington following the announcement of the closure of the Ford foundry. Clearly, the availability of this area of land presents a considerable challenge to the Council as it seeks to maintain a thriving economy in this area and as it now needs to provide a proper framework for regenerating this site. The Ford land totals approximately 7 hectares and when taken together with other land in the area creates a potential area around the railway station totalling 18.7 hectares. This land is identified on the plan attached as appendix A.
- 6.7 The issue for the Council as the local planning authority is to consider how we can best ensure that a proper framework exists to seek the successful redevelopment of the Ford site and to enable, where possible, that this site can contribute to the wider regeneration of the station area. Advantage West Midlands (AWM) has identified the Ford site as being "regionally significant" and has indicated its

willingness to support efforts by the Council to ensure that the issues raised by its closure are properly addressed. I consider that a necessary prerequisite for this is to commission a planning brief to consider the issues and opportunities raised by the closure of the Ford site, and the wider opportunities that this may create for looking afresh at the station area within the context of the established planning policies of the Local Plan. This brief will be able to consider the land use opportunities in the wider area and involve all major landowners in helping to see what new opportunities can be realised. It would also be able to consider the potentially major highways and transportation issues that would be generated by introducing new land uses into the area.

- 6.8 This is potentially a major piece of work for which there is no provision with the Planning & Engineering department's service plan. The planning policy team is already heavily committed with a work programme to adopt the Local Plan and continue preparation of the Council's Local Development Framework. Furthermore, the work would likely involve specialist knowledge which would need to be bought in, requiring additional resources. For all of these reasons, I would ask the Executive to support a direct approach being made to AWM for funding support for this piece of work.

John Archer
Head of Planning & Engineering