Executive Summary

This Masterplan and Design Code document has been prepared for the Forest of Dean District Council (FoDDC) as part of an Area Action Plan (AAP) for the Northern Quarter, Cinderford. This document is the design element of the AAP and has been prepared alongside an Area Action Plan Submission Report and a Sustainability Appraisal. All three documents should be read in conjunction with one another. Once adopted, the AAP will set the context for future outline and reserved matters planning applications.

At FoDDC, Full Council on 14th July 2011, the Masterplan and Design Code was adopted as interim planning guidance until the Cinderford AAP is approved and formally adopted. FoDDC intend to formally endorse the Masterplan and Design Code once the Cinderford AAP has been adopted. Proposals in the AAP will be expected to adhere to the Masterplan and Design Codes.

Background

This document builds upon the work of the Baseline Report completed in March 2009. The Baseline Report provided a comprehensive strategic, regional, town and site-wide analysis, which has been instrumental in informing both the Masterplan and the Design Code.

The baseline analysis found that Cinderford was a town that sprung-up very quickly in the mid 19th century as a result of coal mining. It is also the only town in the statutory boundary of the Forest of Dean. Today the town has a considerable amount of out-commuting and contains higher than national average levels of deprivation.

The Northern Quarter site is mainly a man-made natural environment, which was heavily mined in the 19th and early-mid 20th century, then re-landscaped post-mining in the late 20th century. The site’s key assets are proximity to the forest, a man-made lake and large mounds affording good views of the town and the surrounding forest. The principal opportunities are the potential to provide a mixed-use development anchored by a new Gloucestershire College Campus, while keeping the majority of the site undeveloped to preserve the landscape. In essence it is about creating a place in the forest.

Structure of document

This document is split into two main sections: Masterplan and Design Code, including a separate introductory chapter preceding the Masterplan, and a final delivery chapter following the Design Code. The Masterplan provides the broad spatial, urban design, movement and land use principles that cover the entire Northern Quarter site. The Design Code sets out specific design guidance on certain elements of the Masterplan, such as street widths, block types, building types and materials.

The first chapters of the document set out the overarching sustainability principles and design principles of the entire Masterplan, followed by the narrative that has led to the Masterplan: the vision; constraints and opportunities; design principles; and evolution of the Masterplan through options testing and public and stakeholder consultation.

The Masterplan

The Northern Quarter development will utilise approximately 25% of the total site area of 84 hectares; this means the majority of the site can be retained for publicly accessible open space, leaving the site’s assets of the forest, parkland and lake untouched. The allocated development area will be mixed use to serve the needs of local people: 55% of the land is employment space, 31% is residential (including affordable housing), 11% is educational shared with an eco-visitor centre and activity centre, and the remaining 4% encompasses a hotel and a health care facility.

Place making within the Masterplan is ensured through the use of character areas, giving key features to five different areas through different design criteria, for example a tight residential urban grain in a leafy setting is proposed in the Steam Mills West character area. The development will be served by a new spine road, which will provide an alternative to Steam Mills Road for accessing Cinderford. The spine road in the new development will be a mixed use pedestrian friendly urban boulevard, containing the Gloucestershire College Campus, hotel, eco-visitor centre and employment space; thereby creating a local amenity hub for surrounding communities in Steam Mills, Cinderford and further afield.

Design Code

The Design Code for the Northern Quarter provides detailed design guidance, building on the principles set-out in the Masterplan. Some elements of the Design Code set out mandatory design requirements, such as street widths or building heights. Other elements of the Design Code suggest indicative design solutions, such as street plans and sections for each of the character areas, or good practice, such as principles for structuring the public realm.

The Design Code describes in more detail the character areas in both prose and in a summary table. For example, the Code specifies that buildings in the Northern Quarter Centre must have front doors directly on to the spine road to ensure active frontage and must have regular street trees to create a boulevard. The movement framework of the Code specifies street types, hierarchies, design parameters and parking typologies for every street in the Northern Quarter. There are four street types proposed.

Furthermore, the Design Code outlines block and building types for the Northern Quarter, including sections through blocks and a table and indicative images illustrating building types. Block types include residential blocks, employment and education blocks. The section on building types in the Code specifies for each character area the key design principles, building heights, boundary treatments and a materials palette.

The Design Code also describes design principles for the public realm, with the aim of creating attractive and well used public spaces for those living and working in the Northern Quarter. Key principles include creating public spaces for activity, spaces for children, clutter free and accessible public spaces, public art and a lighting strategy.
1.0 Introduction to the Masterplan and Design Code

1.1 Introduction

The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), previously English Partnerships, have identified Cinderford as a priority for the south west of England under the National Coalfields Programme. To oversee the regeneration, the Cinderford Regeneration Board (CRB) was formed, and a Regeneration Manager was appointed within the Forest of Dean District Council to report to the CRB.

In December 2007 the CRB published the Cinderford Business Plan, a 10 year action plan for the regeneration of the town. The key project identified by this document is the development of the Northern Quarter site as a new mixed-use development. The Northern Quarter site brings together several sites identified in the Forest of Dean District Local Plan.

In Spring 2009 a Baseline Report was produced for the CRB, this was a detailed analysis of the strategic, local and site-wide issues. The Baseline Report informed 3 Masterplan options, which were consulted upon in May 2009 with the local community, general public, key stakeholders, members and officers at the FoDDC and Gloucestershire County Council, CRB and the HCA. The consultation responses informed a Preferred Option 2009, and subsequent revised Preferred Option which were consulted upon in October 2009 and January 2011. The Masterplan illustrated within this document has been informed by responses to the consultation to date and sits alongside the Submission Area Action Plan, July 2011. At FoDDC, Full Council on 14th July 2011, the Masterplan and Design Code was adopted as interim planning guidance until the Cinderford AAP is approved and formally adopted. FoDDC intend to formally endorse the Masterplan and Design Code once the AAP has been adopted. Proposals in the AAP will be expected to adhere to the Masterplan and Design Codes.

1.2 Family of Documents

This document forms part of a family of documents accompanying the Area Action Plan for the 84 ha Northern Quarter site north of Cinderford, which aims to shape its redevelopment. The documents have been prepared alongside the Area Action Plan to ensure that the development will be highly sustainable and based on sound environmental and technical evidence. This document should be read in conjunction with the other documents, as presented in this diagram. Other reports, which have been used to inform the documents above, are referenced at the back of this document.
1.3 Site Context

The Northern Quarter site lies in the Forest of Dean in Gloucestershire. It is located north of Cinderford, a town with a population of 8,000 people and which developed through the local mining industry in the 19th and early 20th century. Access to the Northern Quarter is from the north via the A4136 and from the east via Steam Mills Road. The site lies close to the existing villages of Steam Mills and New Town and close to the Forest Vale industrial park.

The key features of the 84ha site are the forest setting, the lake, and the disused mining buildings. The site is currently used for recreation, with an angling club and recreational walks. The other existing uses reflect the industrial legacy of the site, including a breaking yard and brick works. The forest, which takes up large areas of the site, will be retained, leaving only the grassed areas and brownfield land for the proposed development.

Within the Statutory Forest, land not suitable or used for tree production may be sold or exchanged for other land by the Forestry Commission on the principle that equivalent or better land is taken into the forest. This is provided for in the 1981 Forestry Act and is independent of any planning consideration.

Details of the protection of Statutory Forest is set out in Policy CSP 9 of the FoDDC Core Strategy.
1.0 Introduction

Alan Baxter

Cinderford Northern Quarter Masterplan and Design Code / July 2011

A. Northern United buildings
- Mining buildings dating from the mid 20th century
- Many of the surviving buildings now derelict

B. Gloucestershire Way
- Runs diagonally across the north of the site
- Right of way that connects Chepstow to Tewkesbury via Gloucester

C. Brickworks
- Uses clay from the lake in the east of the site to make bricks.

D. Steam Mills Lake
- Used for recreation, such as the local angling club
- Key asset of the site that will be retained in all future plans

E. Smaller lake and mounds
- Two lakes separated by wooden bridge
- Mounds offer good views across the area

F. Linear Park
- Important recreation space which leads to the centre of Cinderford
- Asset that will be protected and integrated in all future plans for the site

G. Newtown
- Small community to the east of the site
- Potential to link in with proposals for the site

H. Engine Brook
- Narrow brook which feeds Steam Mills Lake
- Brook will require vehicle and pedestrian crossings

I. Steam Mills
- Historic village along Steam Mills Road
- Includes Steam Mills primary school to north

J. Nailbridge Junction / A4136
- Complex junction
- A4136 runs east – west to the north of the site

K. Forest
- Defining feature of the area protected by the Forestry Act
1.4 Planning Policy

In parallel with the Masterplan and Design Code document, Forest of Dean District Council is preparing an Area Action Plan (AAP) for the Northern Quarter which will outline planning policy guidance and designations, replacing the guidance in the adopted Local Plan (2005). The AAP is being developed in parallel with the Masterplan and the Sustainability Appraisal which reflects the aspiration to prepare an integrated package of documents to promote deliverability, high quality design and exemplar sustainable development in the Northern Quarter.

The Pre-submission Draft AAP was published in April 2011 for examination and adoption in late 2011 / early 2012. Following comments and amendments the Submission AAP was produced in July 2011.

Both the Submission AAP and Masterplan and Design Code documents have been prepared in conformity with the hierarchy of national, regional and local planning policy guidance. The key policy issues and opportunities are summarised in outline below. The Submission AAP reviews this guidance in more detail.

The AAP and Masterplan has been prepared in accordance with the national planning advice, which exists principally in the form of Planning Policy Statements (PPS). These set out the government’s general policy and indicate which subjects should be considered by more locally based planning policies. They have largely replaced the former Planning Policy Guidance (PPGs). The statements cover issues from general sustainability, through specialist areas such as flood risk, housing and archaeology, to general themes such as the preparation of LDFs, and “rural areas”.

The central development document within the Forest of Dean District Council Local Development Framework is the Core Strategy, which sets out the vision and strategic objectives for the spatial development of the District. The Core Strategy includes the amount of and broad locations for future housing and employment use. Policies within this document apply to the whole of the local authority area and are not site-specific. Once adopted, all other Development Plan Documents including AAPs must be in conformity with the Core Strategy.

The Core Strategy proposes regeneration measures which could increase the range of employment in the town, raise the quality of development and make the most of Cinderford’s exceptional surrounding natural environment. The Strategy identifies the Northern Quarter as a suitable location for mixed use development, to be delivered through a masterplanning and AAP process. The Quarter could accommodate workspace, educational provision, community space and housing, and development should be located on previously developed land and sites containing underused buildings.

The Core Strategy Submission Document outlines the following targets for Cinderford on a town wide basis:

- 1050 dwellings over the period to 2026;
- 60% on previously developed land;
- 40% affordable housing on sites over 10 dwellings/0.3 ha;
- 26ha of employment land to be developed, including sites for educational use, recreation/tourism/leisure, a biomass plant, office and other uses centred on the Northern Quarter mixed development.
Masterplan
2.0 Sustainability Statement

2.1 Overview
A Sustainability Framework was prepared in May 2009 to establish key sustainability objectives. The objectives were categorised into the four strands of Environmental, Resource, Economic and Social sustainability. These have been used to inform the masterplanning process from its inception. The team has proactively sought to integrate and maximise the sustainable development potential of the Masterplan to deliver benefits to both Cinderford and the wider area. This section provides an overview of how the Masterplan and Design Code has responded to the objectives of the Sustainability Framework.

2.2 Environmental and Resource Sustainability

Protecting and Enhancing the Physical and Built Environment

Integration within the Wider Area
Framework Objective:
• To ensure sensitive integration of the development within the wider Cinderford area to maximise sustainability for the town and its surrounding area

Central to the design of the Masterplan has been the integration of the redevelopment with the surrounding Forest of Dean, in terms of design and scale, restricting building density to range from between 20 to 40 dwellings per hectare across the site with reduced building densities closer to the natural assets of the lake and forest fringe. Key views including those of the lake will be protected in the development. The character of the Northern United site will be retained in the Masterplan as the land use will remain commercially focused with a mix of offices, light industry and industry and could potentially accommodate tourism or heritage related activities which create service-based jobs. This reflects the need to accommodate the commercial as well as residential needs in the area, responding not only to current requirements but also future aspirations for development. A series of green links helps to integrate the development with its forest surroundings.

Water Resources and Flood Risk
Framework Objectives:
• To ensure the development does not involve building in areas at risk of flooding or which contribute to flooding elsewhere
• To protect and enhance water resources within and surrounding Cinderford
• To improve the current low flow situation in Cinderford Brook and in doing so improve water quality and biodiversity
• To investigate opportunities to further reduce existing flood risk within Cinderford

Flood risk and water quality issues have been proactively considered during the development of the Masterplan, primarily through the Appraisal of Flood Risk. Refinements to the AAP and Masterplan have been made on the basis of this and mitigation included to protect against flood risk including the removal of the proposed car park from its previous location in the flood plain. Details of this are provided in the SA and Appraisal of Flood Risk. The sustainability of the Masterplan with respect to water resources quality and mitigation against flood risk has been a critical element of the drafting process. The Masterplan has therefore sought to reflect and respond to the experience and concerns of local people in this respect.

Sustainable Procurement
Framework Objective:
• To promote sustainable procurement of both materials and personnel through construction and operation of the development

Sustainable procurement will be promoted through the Masterplan. In particular, local materials will be encouraged (as detailed within the Design Code) and community involvement promoted through the utilisation of local labour and providing training and upskilling opportunities for local people through Masterplan delivery. The Masterplan has therefore sought to facilitate local employment where possible to contribute to local economic development.

Carbon Footprint
Framework Objective:
• To reduce the carbon footprint of the development, and its wider area, through design, delivery and operation

The carbon footprint of the Masterplan has been addressed through a two tiered approach, minimising energy demand through building certification schemes, and supplying heat and power to the site from the on-site renewable energy centre. By taking a combined approach, the Masterplan aims to achieve an overall reduction in demand for energy from the residential and commercial facilities on site and also supplies energy from a source of fuel that is renewable and less carbon intensive. The potential exists for the Masterplan to evolve and further contribute to the carbon constrained future which Cinderford aspires to.
Sustainable Waste Management

Framework Objective:
- To integrate sustainable waste management facilities and services within the development, to the benefit of it and Cinderford more broadly

Sustainable waste management has been an important consideration informing the evolution of the Masterplan, and will be delivered primarily through a waste management strategy adopting the principle of 'Designing out waste' where possible. Construction waste will be managed through the development of Site Waste Management Plans as well as through Code for Sustainable Homes and BREEAM criteria. In terms of operational waste management, there is potential for green waste from the Masterplan to be used in combination with other green waste, to generate biogas as a fuel for the energy centre through anaerobic digestion. The development of a waste management strategy offers the potential for continued sustainability benefits in the long-term, as well as reducing the environmental impact of resource use and waste production during the early stages of Masterplan delivery.

Designated & Non-Designated Ecological Sites: Biodiversity

Protecting Biodiversity

Framework Objectives:
- To protect and enhance designated and non-designated sites within and adjacent to the development, and across Cinderford
- To ensure that the development contributes to the protection of the wider wildlife interest of the district, especially strengthening of links between 'wild' areas to better enable adaptation to climate change

Conservation of biodiversity across the Masterplan area is a key issue, given the change in land use across much of the site and its location within statutory forest. Preservation and management of key habitats such as the forest, Linear Park Key Wildlife Site, the lake, the brook into and out of the lake, and the Old Engine Brook will provide a green setting and green corridors which permeate the development as ‘green fingers’. The green fingers will look to minimise interventions to existing riparian habitat and will encourage features such as reed beds, marginals and wet woodland scrub vegetation. Green corridors will also be created at a number of locations across the site (e.g. grass or hedgerow between residential blocks or watercourses and areas of floodplain), to promote green linkages between wildlife areas surrounding the site.

These habitats make up a valuable ecological asset in and around the site and support wildlife including common reptiles, Great Crested Newts and protected bat species including a Lesser Horseshoe Bat colony. It is very important that development under the Masterplan maximises the opportunities to protect and enhance biodiversity, through careful consideration of ecology issues and ongoing survey and mitigation.

Contaminated Land, Air Quality and Renewable Energy

Framework Objectives:
- To support the improvement of contaminated and derelict land and reduce the impact of unstable land
- To ensure contaminated and derelict land is restored and returned to beneficial use
- To reduce the potential of pollutant emissions impacting on land, through implementing and monitoring the use of best practice environmental management techniques
- To protect and enhance air quality
- To encourage the use of renewable energy where appropriate

The change in land use arising through the Masterplan is anticipated to result in lower levels of emissions to land, water and air during operation than previously occurred. Appropriate site investigation works will be carried out prior to Masterplan delivery to ensure that contaminated land issues are addressed. The requirement for developers to have Construction Environmental Management Plans (CEMP) in place, and new light industrial occupiers being encouraged to have ISO14001 Environmental Management Systems in place will ensure that best practice measures are undertaken to reduce the impact of construction and industrial activity on the environment.

Renewable energy use will be promoted through provision of the on-site energy centre. The location of this will enable a range of renewable technologies and distribution networks to be considered, and may provide opportunities for technology transfer between the energy centre and local industry. The energy centre will promote the use of renewable energy and therefore provide the opportunity for renewable energy educational benefits.
To Promote More Sustainable Forms of Transport Provision

Promoting Sustainable Transport

Framework Objectives:

- To promote sustainable access into and out of the area
- To promote more sustainable patterns of travel and modes of transport, such as the use of public transport, walking and cycling
- To enhance sustainable transport infrastructure

The Masterplan promotes public transport routes and facilities across the site to ensure access to key amenities such as the Gloucestershire College Campus. Also fundamental to the Masterplan is the creation of formal walking and cycling routes through the site, linking with more informal, traffic-free paths in the landscaped and forested areas. Safe, secure and sheltered cycle parking will be provided adjacent to residential units, employment sites and other community amenities. By promoting ‘active travel’ options and use of public transport, the Masterplan will contribute to progressing the sustainable transport agenda both on site and within the wider area.

Reducing the Need to Travel

Framework Objectives:

- To help reduce the need to travel, such as by ensuring that people can live closer to their work and by improving local access to services
- To promote economic patterns that avoid unnecessary dependence on long-distance trade and travel
- To reduce the distance to, and/or increase ease of accessing, schools, shops, places of work and recreation

The Masterplan is intended to develop not only businesses and economic growth but also new services and an improved quality of life for residents. This in itself will reduce the need for residents to travel beyond the area. Improvements to local infrastructure in terms of walking and cycling routes, and improvement to local bus services will improve local access to these facilities. The nature of the proposed development within the Masterplan will have direct benefits in terms of helping to encourage sustainable travel within Cinderford and the surrounding area and reducing the need for longer distance journeys.

2.3 Economic Sustainability

Economic Growth

Framework Objectives:

- To promote/help facilitate economic sustainability within the area
- To enhance infrastructure and services, to support local businesses
- To promote sustainable business practice within Cinderford
- To enhance the attractiveness of Cinderford as a place for business investment

The Masterplan will attract inward investment to the area and create employment opportunities through providing both office space and light industrial space, in addition to key new facilities such as the Gloucestershire College Campus, eco/visitor centre and hotel. The office space will be the first comprehensive office development for Cinderford and as such will provide a step change in the provision of higher quality, low carbon employment space in prominent and accessible places along the main street.

The expansion of light industry in Northern United and development in Forest Vale North areas will continue the strong legacy of industrial activity, further attracting investment to the area while preserving this aspect of local identity.

Employment and Training

Framework Objectives:

- To diversify the range of employment opportunities within Cinderford
- To enhance access to employment and up-skilling opportunities
- To promote integration of educational and skills training in line with identified need

Employment opportunities will be provided through both construction and operational phases of the development. The Masterplan will provide a mix of facilities in an area which has historically been dominated by industrial businesses, and will therefore broaden the range of employment opportunities available within Cinderford. The Gloucestershire College Campus will potentially make a significant contribution to improving employment prospects for people in the local area, and locating this facility in close proximity to office areas, the hotel and eco/visitor centre will also provide the potential for strong vocational training linkages to be established.
### Sustainable Tourism

**Framework Objectives:**
- To help increase the number of people who stay/visit the area
- To promote sustainable tourism initiatives in the Forest of Dean (such as walking/cycling tourism)

As well as the provision of specific tourism facilities, such as the hotel, visitors are expected to be attracted to the area through the wider regeneration, improvements to facilities and enhancement of retail provision within Cinderford town centre which is likely to arise as an indirect benefit of the Masterplan. The potential to develop sustainable tourism within Cinderford is something which threads through the proposals within the Masterplan.

### 2.4 Social Sustainability

#### Promoting Sustainability Skills and Learning

**Framework Objectives:**
- To promote and facilitate awareness raising and understanding of sustainability
- To promote access to education and vocational skills training

The provision of the Gloucestershire College Campus will be the key way in which the Masterplan promotes access to education and training, and its close proximity to the hotel provides the potential for strong links to be made between these facilities, such as providing training support for hospitality and catering courses. The eco/visitor centre will also be a valuable source of information about the Forest of Dean, Cinderford and the Northern Quarter, including information on sustainable development in the area. The Masterplan has sought to promote sustainability skills and learning both directly and indirectly through the development of links between facilities.

#### To Promote Social Integration

**Improving Connectivity**

**Framework Objective:**
- To promote social connectivity and integration between and across communities in Cinderford and the area

The regeneration of the Northern Quarter area will support an improvement in facilities, both directly through the provision of the Gloucestershire College Campus hotel and eco-visitor centre, and indirectly by increasing the number of residents and visitors to the area and therefore supporting the retail offer within Cinderford town centre. While Cinderford residents will benefit from this, people in the wider area will also benefit and it is likely that the new facilities will attract people from neighbouring villages into Cinderford, leading to improved social connectivity and integration.

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**Stakeholder Engagement**

**Framework Objective:**
- To promote civic and wider stakeholder engagement amongst the population of Cinderford and surrounding area

The Masterplan has undergone statutory consultation as part of the AAP and Sustainability Appraisal process. In addition, a number of key stakeholder groups have also been involved in the consultation process. This has included biodiversity/nature conservation groups, local sports clubs, the local and area councils, local interest groups, educational facilities and the police. A number of public consultation events have been held over the course of the Masterplan, including a youth conference attended by children from a number of local schools. Promoting stakeholder engagement in this way has been very positive in engaging local people in the planning and decision-making process.
Health and Wellbeing

Framework Objectives:

• To enhance the health and wellbeing of residents and workers within Cinderford

• To enhance access to social, leisure and sporting facilities in and surrounding Cinderford, including the Forest, for all

The Masterplan makes provision for a new healthcare facility, which will provide specialist healthcare services for the residents of Cinderford and the surrounding area.

Physical health (and emotional wellbeing benefits associated with good physical health) will also be promoted amongst Cinderford residents and visitors through the provision of improved facilities for walking, cycling and the activity centre. Safety and security considerations will be addressed through a number of design and management measures, such as Secure by Design. It is anticipated that the Masterplan will in itself promote well being within the area as people recognise the potential of the investment within their area.

The Masterplan has therefore sought to promote good health and wellbeing in a number of ways, benefitting people in Cinderford itself and the wider area.

Promoting Equality of Opportunity

Housing and Access

Framework Objectives:

• To meet identified housing need, in particular, the provision of affordable housing

• To promote equality of opportunity and access for all within Cinderford

• To ensure physical and social access to infrastructure, services and opportunities

The Masterplan will provide up to 40% affordable housing across all residential areas. This helps to promote equalities and improve housing ownership levels, which have been identified as a particular need of the Cinderford ward. The Gloucestershire College Campus has an important role in providing opportunities for education for those who might otherwise struggle to find employment, including the long term unemployed and those with special educational needs. The Masterplan has therefore sought to address equalities and physical/social access issues through a number of measures, recognising that these are key considerations.

Protecting and Enhancing the Historic and Cultural Identity of the Area

Framework Objectives:

• To protect and enhance local identity and heritage within and across Cinderford

• To ensure that the social and cultural heritage of the area is maintained through development works

• To support the protection of culturally and historically significant assets and qualities. Not just designated sites and buildings, but also locally valued features and landmarks

The design layout within the Masterplan will lead to the establishment of a clear ‘centre’ for the community with the Gloucestershire College Campus as a focal point for the town, and use of local construction materials such as brick and blue pennant sandstone which are produced through traditional industries of the area will help to ensure that the new development fits with development in the wider area and makes use of local materials. The eco/visitor centre will also have a key role in raising awareness of the industrial heritage of the area, preserving and raising awareness of areas of cultural and historical significance. Therefore, the Masterplan recognises the need to preserve the local identity of Cinderford and to protect its cultural and historical assets, while enhancing services and facilities, in order to strengthen the prosperity and character of the area.
2.5 Further Mitigation and Enhancement Opportunities

A Sustainability Appraisal has been undertaken of the Area Action Plan within which this Masterplan sits, and of the Masterplan itself. The Sustainability Appraisal Report of the Area Action Plan is available for review as a separate document.

A number of recommendations were made by the Sustainability Appraisal, in order that the Masterplan can further enhance the sustainability benefits and minimise/mitigate against any potential negative impacts. Some of the key recommendations are summarised below:

**Deliverability**
- It is important that going forward there is ongoing review of what can be achieved as financial and other constraints may change. This may result in enhancement or refinement, but it is important to ensure that the ethos of a sustainable Northern Quarter is not lost.

**Community Engagement**
- It is recommended that ongoing engagement with the local community is undertaken to maintain the platform of dialogue which has characterised the development process to-date.

**Environmental Sustainability**
- **Environmental Management:** It is recommended that the AAP should support the development of ISO14001 Environmental Management Systems for new light industrial occupiers within the Masterplan area and that developers should employ registered Considerate Contractors who are required to have Construction Environmental Management Plans (CEMP), to reduce the impact of development on the environment.
- **Site Assessment:** Recognising the industrial legacy of the area, further site investigation is necessary to identify areas of contaminated or unstable land and groundwater contamination, remediation and reclamation of which will be essential to any future proposed development.
- **Protected Habitats and Species:** Appropriate Assessment is likely to be necessary at the detailed design stage to inform the design process and ensure no likely significant effect on the surrounding European Designated sites. Further assessment of landscape and visual impacts, and detailed landscape plans, mitigation measures and management plans will be required at the detailed design stage. These will provide the specific detail required to maximise the benefits and minimise any negative impacts arising from the development.
- **Reducing Flood Risk:** It is important to ensure that the Masterplan and detailed designs for the attenuation area take due account of the recommendations within the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. This will safeguard against the risk of flooding and potential disruption within the area, in particular ensuring that current and future residents are protected from the potential effects of flooding. Specific flooding mitigation measures are recommended, including designing all drainage systems in accordance with the application of the SUDS hierarchy and ensuring that sufficient storage capacity is provided (including provision for increases resulting from climate change). A site specific Flood Risk Assessment will be required and a maintenance plan will be developed for the site drainage systems and watercourses.
2.0 Sustainability Statement

Social Sustainability

- Education: It is critical that the Gloucestershire College Campus provides opportunities for education for those who might otherwise struggle to find employment, including the long-term unemployed and those with special educational needs. Training should be targeted at identified need, including vocational skills.

- Eco-visitor and activity centre: The eco-visitor and activity centre will have a key role in raising awareness of the industrial heritage of the area, preserving and raising awareness of areas of cultural and historical significance. It is recommended that the centre should provide a flexible space for clubs and organisations, tourist information, education on the forest, local heritage and the environment.

Economic Sustainability

- Integrated Strategic Delivery: The AAP and Masterplan has established a positive premise for regeneration but there is an opportunity through integrated delivery across Cinderford and Forest of Dean as a whole to achieve a greater cumulative benefit for the wider area.

- Assessment of the Property Market: The physical enhancement of the Northern Quarter and diversification of land uses will enhance the image and attractiveness of the area for potential residents/investors and bolster property value, but creating a strong local property market will remain challenging.

- Northern United Area: The nature of the industrial use of the Northern United area will need careful management, to ensure that the surrounding forest and biodiversity is not adversely affected, specifically in terms of industrial use, transportation and potential emissions to land, water and air.

- Careful consideration will also be necessary at the outline planning stage to protect and enhance both the safety of users and more broadly, the ecology of the area, with regard to access routes between the Northern United site and the eastern side of the development.

- Code for Sustainable Homes & Integrating Building Level Technologies: Opportunities exist to further CSH level attainment, and when technological developments facilitate this. More broadly, the integrating of progressive green technological developments within buildings of both a commercial and residential nature, afford the opportunity to reduce the resource and carbon footprint of the Quarter.

- Sustainable Travel and Transport: The frequency, reliability and routing of such public transport provision, in particular, bus services, is key to maximising access for residents to sustainable travel options, and should facilitate more sustainable inward and outward travel for those commuting into or visiting the area.

- Equalities: An Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) should be undertaken at the outline planning stage to proactively address and maximise benefits to target groups within Cinderford.

- Integrated Strategic Delivery: The AAP and Masterplan have established a positive framework for regeneration of the Northern Quarter. Beyond the boundaries of the Plan and its Masterplan, however, exists industrial land in the form of Forest Vale, which has the potential to be revitalised to stimulate wider regeneration and enhance the potential of the Northern Quarter itself. It is recommended going forward that engagement with landowners explores the potential for this land south of the Northern Quarter to be subject to its own Masterplan or framework for regeneration.

- Sustainable Procurement: It is recommended that a Sustainable Procurement Strategy is devised in order to oversee implementation of the Masterplan and ongoing development. This should integrate a strong local procurement component, to maximise the benefit to local businesses and the economy, providing another mechanism to facilitate regeneration at the local level.

2.6 Monitoring

A monitoring framework for the AAP and Masterplan will be developed, with clear delegation of responsibility for overseeing the delivery of progress. Through dialogue with key monitoring stakeholders at future design stages, detailed interventions will be listed and specific responsibility allocated to individual and collective stakeholders.

Summary

Through developing a clear Sustainability Framework and its constituent objectives, the key priority accorded to sustainability has been emphasised throughout the masterplanning and design process. The process has responded to the objectives set out in the Sustainability Framework in a robust and comprehensive manner, as demonstrated by the Sustainability Appraisal carried out using the Framework. A number of recommendations have been made with the aim of maximising the deliverable sustainability benefits of the Masterplan. A benchmark against which delivery performance will be monitored has also been established. Ongoing review of the performance of the Masterplan will be important in ensuring that sustainability continues to be embedded within the development process going forward.
2.7 Design Standards

The design standards for the development of the Northern Quarter will address the quality of the built environment, individual buildings, construction quality and delivery. The standards on construction quality and delivery are contained in the chapter ‘11.0 Delivery’. There is guidance on the delivery of high quality and sustainable landscape in section 4.6.

The design standards for this development are in accordance with the standards promoted by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA). These standards will progress over time and may have moved forward from the standards as set out in this document by the time development commences on site. It is envisaged that the design standards will be reviewed at each phase of the development, to ensure the development complies with the standards promoted by the HCA and the Council at that time.

The present guidance as defined by the HCA is set out in the table. The guidance is aspirational for this development and must be confirmed at the outline planning stage.

Planning and Design for Outdoor Sport and Play

This standard has been published by the Fields in Trust and provides guidance on play equipment, as well as the number, location and size of outdoor play spaces for children of different ages. The guidance does not differentiate between high density urban development and areas where most dwellings have access to private outdoor space. It is therefore recommended to apply the guidance in a flexible manner to ensure all residents have equal access to green spaces as defined in the publication.

Materials

All development must use FSC timber, in accordance with the guidance of the Forestry Commission. More guidance on materials is in the Design Code.

### Quality Places

The HCA provides advice on creating quality spaces using the following design, planning and assessment tools:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Design Statements</th>
<th>Building for Life</th>
<th>Inclusive design</th>
<th>Secure by Design</th>
<th>Integration of Tenure</th>
<th>Car parking</th>
<th>Code for Sustainable Homes</th>
<th>Standards at Reserved Matters Stage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Design statement adhering to the principles of the Urban Design Compendium (UDC) and UDC2</td>
<td>Building for Life Silver or Gold</td>
<td>Access statement, taking an inclusive approach to design and adhering to the principles of inclusive design guidance note</td>
<td>Developments designed according to Secure by Design principles and accredited by the local constabulary</td>
<td>Tenure-blind development (maximum of 6 social units together)</td>
<td>Maximum parking as set as the minimum parking provision of the local authority, Design in accordance with Manual for Streets and Car parking: what works where guide</td>
<td>Level 4 as a minimum and increasing with statutory change over time.</td>
<td>Standards at Reserved Matters Stage. Awarded post 1 year occupancy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidance through all design stages</td>
<td>Criteria at Outline Planning to Reserved Matters stage. Awarded after completion of 50% of the homes</td>
<td>Guidance for Outline Planning to Reserved Matters Stage</td>
<td>Consultation from Outline Planning to Reserved Matters Stage. Accreditation at Reserved Matters Stage</td>
<td>Standard through all design stages</td>
<td>Guidance and standard through all design stages</td>
<td>BREEAM</td>
<td>Reserved Matters Stage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lifetime Homes</td>
<td>Standards at Outline Planning and Reserved Matters stage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Building specification</td>
<td>BREEAM Green Guide to Specification between A-C</td>
<td>Standards at Reserved Matters and detailed design and construction stage</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Quality Homes and Buildings

The HCA guidance and standards on creating quality homes and buildings are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code for Sustainable Homes</th>
<th>Standards at Reserved Matters Stage. Awarded post 1 year occupancy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 4 as a minimum and increasing with statutory change over time.</td>
<td>Standards at Reserved Matters Stage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BREEAM Excellent for commercial or other building types</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifetime Homes</td>
<td>Standards at Outline Planning and Reserved Matters stage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All 16 standards for Lifetime Homes must be achieved</td>
<td>Standards at Reserved Matters and detailed design and construction stage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building specification</td>
<td>BREEAM Green Guide to Specification between A-C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRE</td>
<td>Standards at Reserved Matters and detailed design and construction stage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overheating Testing required on overheating – for living areas &lt; 1 % of occupied hours are over an operative temperature of 28°C. Bedrooms &lt; 1 % of occupied hours are over 26°C.</td>
<td>Reserved Matters stage and post construction stage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Space Standards</td>
<td>Outline Planning and Reserved Matters stage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Bed/2 person homes 51m² 2 Bed/2 person homes 66m² 2 Bed/2 person homes 77m² 3 Bed/2 person homes 93m² 4 Bed/2 person homes 106m². Also requirements for room dimensions and balconies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire Safety Statement of fire safety</td>
<td>Reserved Matters stage</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.0 Vision and Options

3.1 Vision

The vision for the Masterplan for the Northern Quarter aims to create a new destination in the Forest of Dean that will change the perception of what is achievable in terms of quality design and sustainability distinctive to the Forest. The vision has been defined as follows:

“The Northern Quarter will become an attractive destination for local people in Cinderford and surrounding communities. It will make the most of the beautiful landscape and will set high standards for design and sustainability. Set within a green campus environment, the Northern Quarter will feature a range of new facilities including an educational facility. The development will also bring wider benefits to the area including a new road that will reduce traffic impact on Steam Mills and Newtown.”

The Vision is supported by 8 themes, which are in accordance with the strategic aims for Cinderford as defined in the Business Plan.

Theme 1: Sustainable Place Making
The Northern Quarter will be a sustainable new development that respects and celebrates the area’s important landscape, habitats and cultural heritage. A Sustainable Development Framework accompanies the Masterplan to guide the design of the Masterplan at all levels.

Theme 2: Accessibility and Movement
A new link road through the site will play a vital role in providing access to the new development, but will also create a new and better link into Cinderford. Access for pedestrians, cyclists and buses will also be improved.

Theme 3: Education and Learning
The Gloucestershire College Campus will offer a large range of higher education opportunities and create a great place to study and learn. A potential occupant is Gloucestershire College, Royal Forest of Dean Campus, currently based near Coleford, which is considering moving to a new central location so that they can bring all their facilities together into one campus.

Theme 4: Landscape, Environment and Biodiversity
The Northern Quarter is in a beautiful environment including woodland, open space and water. The landscape also reflects the long history of mining in the area. The Masterplan will be designed to respond to the landscape setting and to take active measures to protect and enhance the biodiversity of the site.

Theme 5: Living and Working
The Northern Quarter will be a great place to live, work, study and relax. The Masterplan will provide a mix of residential, community and employment uses which will be carefully designed and located.

Theme 6: Healthy Living, Tourism and Leisure
A range of leisure activities such as walking and cycling will be encouraged, alongside a hotel, café and Eco-visitor centre to promote access to the forest for leisure, sustainable tourism and education.

Theme 7: Integration with Steam Mills and Cinderford Town Centre
The new development will be linked to the surrounding area, with connecting streets and good transport links promoting sustainable modes of travel. The new development will work with the existing communities by supporting existing facilities and by providing new ones which everyone can use.

Theme 8: Delivery and Partnership
Based on guidance in the new planning system it is important that the plan is deliverable. The Masterplan is designed working closely with stakeholders, developers and the public to create a plan which has broad support and is realistic.

These themes have been broken into eleven objectives which outline the key principles for the Masterplan:

Objective 1:
To promote high standards of sustainable design including climate change adaptation and mitigation and renewable energy provision

Objective 2:
To realise the site’s potential as a local amenity centre for surrounding communities

Objective 3:
To unlock the development potential of the site through the development of a new spine road which will enhance the accessibility of the Northern Quarter and Cinderford

Objective 4:
To achieve sustainable transport patterns through improved accessibility for pedestrians, cyclists and buses

Objective 5:
To facilitate the regeneration of the Northern Quarter through the development of the Gloucestershire College Campus.

Objective 6:
To ensure that development respects the area’s important landscape, habitats and cultural heritage

Objective 7:
To protect and enhance the biodiversity value of the Northern Quarter

Objective 8:
To deliver an appropriate balance of employment, residential, community and leisure uses across the site

Objective 9:
To promote a wide range of leisure activities in the Northern Quarter to promote access to the forest

Objective 10:
To ensure that the development is carefully integrated with Steam Mills, New Town and Cinderford Town Centre in terms of amenities and physical connections

Objective 11:
To ensure that the plan is deliverable and has a broad base of support
3.2 Constraints

A baseline report has been prepared which provides detailed information of the site’s context and conditions. The analysis of the site has informed the constraints and opportunities for the Masterplan and is represented in the Cinderford Northern Quarter Baseline Report. The baseline report identified site specific constraints and opportunities as well as strategic weaknesses and potential, which are summarised below:

Strategic weaknesses

- Disconnection from Cinderford because of the distance (2km) and the Forest Vale Industrial Park;
- Poor gateway at Nailbridge junction to Cinderford, which is complex and constrained in terms of traffic movement;
- Weak connections for pedestrians and cyclists between Cinderford and Drybrooks, Ruardean Hill, and the site; and
- Disparate built environment around the Northern Quarter site with no clear character.

Site constraints

- Large areas of the site are designated forest and cannot be developed;
- Constraints from the mining legacy, mainly mine shafts and the open-cast mining high wall;
- Ecological constraints including nature conservation designations (e.g. the Linear Park Key Wildlife Site), protected species (e.g. Lesser Horseshoe Bats) and recognised habitat areas (e.g. Natural England Grassland Inventory Sites);
- Open bodies of water and the flood plain;
- Existing land uses and buildings;
- The Integrated Pollution Prevention & Control (IPPC) designation relating to the brickworks; and
- The group of Northern United buildings.
3.3 Heritage and Archaeology Features

The Northern Quarter site contains buildings with heritage value and sites with potential archaeological value both on the site and on its edges. However, there are no nationally or locally listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments or designated conservation areas.

A heritage and archaeology report produced by Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) in September 2009 identifies buildings with heritage value and potential valuable archaeological sites; this report has been used in identifying the sites with heritage or potential archaeological importance on figure 3.5.

Steam Mills and Newtown buildings identified with heritage value and archaeological value

Steam Mills village and the small settlement of Newtown - on the eastern side of the Northern Quarter site - developed in the 1840s around a corn mill. Several of the older buildings in the settlements contain heritage value through contributing to a sense of local identity, distinctiveness and history of the area. These buildings are:

- The carpet warehouse on the corner of Steam Mills Road / Newtown Road is a substantial stone built property which forms a landmark on Steam Mills Road. Through an alternative community and/or commercial use it could become a focal point for the Steam Mills West neighbourhood.
- The house on the corner of Steam Mills Road / Newtown Road
- The group of 19 century cottages on the eastern side of Steam Mills Road to the north of the carpet warehouse
- Haywood Engine Works on Newtown Road
- Broadmoor Chemical Works
- Group of cottages in Newtown

It should be noted that in the current plans for the Northern Quarter no alterations are proposed for any of the above heritage buildings apart from the Haywood Engine Works, which are proposed for demolition.

Northern United Colliery buildings

The Northern United Colliery was opened in 1933 and closed in 1965, the last deep mine to close in the forest. Many of the key colliery buildings survive today, such as the pithead baths, canteen, offices, chain store, iron store, carpenters’ shop, blacksmiths’ shop, electricians shop, stables and the explosive store. Some of the surviving buildings are in use as a recycling and waste facility, but most are vacant and in poor repair. The large shed in the centre of the buildings is not a historic colliery building.

In February 2011, the Minister for Tourism and Heritage confirmed that the Northern United Colliery buildings are not suitable for listing following consultation with English Heritage.

The entire colliery site has been identified by GCC as having potential archaeological value. The colliery buildings and potential archaeological value are identified on the plan opposite.

Archaeology

The site contains the potential for below ground remains of archaeological significance. These areas are:

- Hawkwell Brickworks
- All of the mine shafts, shallow coal workings and open cast mining areas in the site boundary

The areas for potential below ground archaeological value are identified on the plan opposite.

Areas of open cast mining and recent clay workings are assumed to have very low archaeological potential.
3.4 Opportunities

Strategic potential

- Enhance the relationship of the site with the Forest in terms of setting, character and ecological value;
- Improve the connections to Cinderford, Ruardean Hill and Drybrook, potentially acting as a stepping stone between them;
- Provide housing, education, tourism and employment space for Cinderford; and
- Provide a new access road to Cinderford and improve public transport.

Opportunities

- Link the new development to Steam Mills and Newtown;
- Integrate existing facilities and assets, such as the school and sport pitches;
- Improve the links from the site to its surroundings through clear gateways, new streets and cycle and pedestrian links;
- Help to facilitate environmental improvements to Steam Mills Road and highway improvements in conjunction with new access;
- Draw from the cultural assets of the Northern United buildings, Steam Mills and New Town in terms of identity and character if possible;
- Integrate and enhance the high quality landscape setting, in particular the lake;
- Design buildings which respect traditional local styles and materials;
- Protect existing businesses in the area;
- Protect and enhance key areas of nature conservation interest including the local wildlife sites such as species-rich grassland, wetland and woodland habitats;
- Develop a biodiversity checklist for habitats improvements such as bird nesting, nectar rich planting or use of green roofs, to measure how effective the plan is; and
- Encourage use of renewable energy and low carbon development.
3.5 Design Principles

The design principles for the Northern Quarter have been developed to provide a set of criteria for the evolving design of the Masterplan. The principles have been informed by the unique context of the site, the vision and its supporting themes, and the design criteria for creating sustainable places.

The design principles are as follows:

**A Sustainable Place in the Forest**
A development that is well balanced in terms of economic, environmental and social sustainability. Strengthening the connections to the forest via physical links, strategic views and a source for construction, energy, education and well-being. Keeping alive the culture of the forest through protecting the mining legacy and bringing it into new uses.

**Access and Movement**
Creating a new spine road which provides access to and through the site and is an alternative to Steam Mills Road for accessing Cinderford. The new road will improve public transport connections, which will have a larger catchment area. The movement network is designed to create permeable connections which link into the existing network, most notably to Cinderford, Steam Mills, Northern United, Drybrook and Ruardean. The movement network is also designed to encourage walking and cycling, as well as low traffic speeds.

**Education and Learning**
Facilitating the Gloucestershire College Campus at the heart of the development in a well connected location. A low carbon development of exemplar design quality that will be a source of local pride.

**Living and Working**
Creating an attractive area - an ‘amenity hub’ with a wide catchment to Cinderford, Ruardean, Steam Mills and Drybrook for businesses, with good access, an attractive landscape setting, strong urban form and links to the Gloucestershire College Campus. Promoting fine grain and mixed-use residential and low carbon development which is affordable, well connected and suitable for all ages and a sustainable lifestyle.

**Integration with Steam Mills and Cinderford**
Adding variety to the existing types of residential, business and education space through new development, which is well connected through good transport links. Sharing new and existing communal facilities and creating new residential development as a natural growth from Steam Mills.

**A Place of Character**
Drawing on the design characteristics typical of Cinderford, such as informal street layouts, simplicity of dwellings, local materials and an interface with the forest and lake; and utilising this key asset for the character in the Northern Quarter. There should also be a clear distinction between public and private realm, a legible street hierarchy with strategic views and vistas.
3.4 Evolution of the Masterplan

The Masterplan is the culmination of a process involving technical work and options testing in consultation with stakeholders and the local community. Details of all the consultation to date can be found in the Consultation Statement which accompanies this document and the AAP. This section provides a summary of the process.

Options Consultation, May 2009

In May 2009 a series of consultation events in Cinderford were undertaken by the consultant team. The events were designed to engage key stakeholders and members of the local community in order to inform the development of a Masterplan which would, in turn, provide the basis for the Area Action Plan Preferred Option. In the consultation, stakeholders were asked their views of the Masterplan vision, design principles and 3 alternative Masterplan options for what mixed-use development could comprise. The three options considered are shown below.

All options used the Preferred Option from the Business Plan as their premise and took into account the constraints and opportunities of the Baseline Report. The options explore different approaches to the location of the education facility and the setting of the lake, as well as varying emphasis between the amount of business and residential development.

From the consultation, a strong preference for option 2, 'College at the Centre of Employment and Housing' emerged. There was also a strong support for the vision, tourism, employment and recreation uses for the site. In terms of design principles, respect for the forest and wildlife, high standards for green buildings and energy generation and improved access rated highest. The main concerns were the protection of green space, habitats and the lake settings.

Fig 3.7 Option 1: A New Civic Spine
Fig 3.8 Option 2: College at the Centre of Employment and Housing
Fig 3.9 Option 3: A Distinctive Local Community

Key for all options:
- Residential
- Education
- Light Industrial
- Office
- Hotel
- Car Parking
- Activity Centre