

**APPENDIX 2(iv):
STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR REGENERATION**

**PROJECT: LOUGHBOROUGH'S INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE QUARTER
(GCR/CLARENCE STREET/WHARNCLIFFE ROAD/WINDMILL ROAD)**

Loughborough's Industrial Heritage Quarter (GCR/Clarence Street/Wharncliffe Road/Windmill Road)

Vision	To encourage and enable social environmental and economic regeneration within the East Loughborough Priority Neighbourhood through the redevelopment of derelict and vacant land and property and exploitation of the commercial advantages of local heritage assets including the Great Central Railway, Grand Union Canal and Taylor's Bell Foundry.
Description	Eastern Loughborough witnessed rapid growth in the second half of the 19 th Century with a range of mills and engineering works springing up around the Great Central Railway and alongside the Grand Union Canal. Many of those industrial buildings have fallen into disuse, unsuitable for contemporary efficient manufacturing processes. Several sites have been redeveloped for housing but three sites have been cleared in anticipation of redevelopment which appears to have been arrested due to the current financial situation. All possess considerable potential to support urban renewal and present opportunities to develop an integrated approach linked to the wider social and economic regeneration of the old industrial quarter of the town.
Deliverables	<p>The "package" comprises six distinct components, although others may emerge as the programme progresses. The key deliverables from this initial package might include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Clarence Street: 130 affordable homes. 2 Empress Road: 80 apartments and town houses (30% affordable) 3 Windmill Road: 150 homes in apartments, town houses and live/work units (30% affordable) with 3,000 sq metres of industrial buildings, workspace and skills/community centre allied to the delivery of enhanced facilities for mooring and public access to the canal corridor. 4 Wharncliffe Road: 100 homes in apartments and town houses (30% affordable) 5 Great Central Railway: Reconnection of the northern and southern arms of the heritage railway with the development of commercial operations, establishment of a skills academy and enhanced visitor facilities. 6 Allsopps Lane: 18 ha of landscaped publicly accessible woodland with enhanced biodiversity.
Planning Policy	The adopted Borough of Charnwood Local Plan acknowledges land at Clarence Street as a residential commitment while the site between Empress Road and the Grand Union Canal is the subject of a brown field housing allocation (policy H/1(b) applies).

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Land at Windmill Road and Wharncliffe Road is designated as being safeguarded for employment purpose (policy E/8) but subsequent planning decisions have acknowledged their suitability for mixed use development including significant elements of housing.

The former refuse tip at Allsopps Lane (18 ha) is promoted under policy RT/13 as a landscaped recreation and amenity area, providing a “green lung” for the dense pattern of Victorian terraced housing which characterises the adjacent built up area.

Policy RT/14 aims to encourage development delivering informal recreation and tourism uses along defined linear routes including the Great Central Railway and Grand Union Canal; the corridor for the reconnection of the northern and southern links of the Great Central Railway is specifically protected by the policy.

Policy RT/16 encourages development for, “.....*informal recreation and tourism development in association with the River Soar and Wreake, the Grand Union Canal and areas of open water where.....*”:

- i) The proposal is compatible with the countryside and nature conservation policies of the plan;*
- ii) Satisfactory access to the site can be provided;*
- iii) The design, scale and location of any development conserves and where possible enhances the visual qualities of the locality.*

The Borough Council has actively engaged with a broad range of partners in the preparation of the [River Soar and Grand Union Canal Strategy](#), the primary aim of which is to, “.....maximise the impact of the waterway for the economic benefit of Leicestershire.” Redevelopment is to be focused in seven areas along the canal corridor, including three hubs within Charnwood Borough at Barrow upon Soar, Watermead Park and Loughborough. Priorities for the Loughborough Hub include:

- Enhancement of key linkages from the Waterway to the town centre and to the university
- New Waterfront development at Windmill Road, subject to a satisfactory flood risk assessment
- Link towpath to its surroundings through improved signage
- Capitalise on the opportunities emerging from the 2012 Olympics.

Planning
History

Four of the six identified components have attracted specific planning proposals:

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1. The former Richard Roberts Fabrics site at Clarence Street (1.11 ha) has been cleared and has the benefit of a detailed planning consent ([P/10/1754/2](#)) for 113 one, two and three bedroom flats and 5 four bedroom 3 storey dwellings and 13 two bedroom 2 storey dwellings (131 affordable dwellings in all proposed by the Metropolitan Housing Trust) (consent expires 5/11/13).
2. A cleared site at Wharncliffe Road/Great Central Road (1.43 ha) has the benefit of a detailed planning consent ([P/09/0425/2](#)) for 74 apartments and 27 dwellings (30% affordable [75% for rent and 25% for shared ownership]) (Jelson Ltd.) (consent expires 17/7/12). The approved development may be non viable – the freehold of the site has been offered to the Great Central Railway which has an interest in the acquisition of the site for operational purposes.
3. A cleared site at Windmill Road (1.97 ha) was the subject of an outline planning application ([P/04/4134/2](#)) for a wider development capturing adjacent land and property extending over 4.86 ha for a mixed use development comprising apartments, town houses, live/work units, workshops, industrial units, community buildings and a public house with park and gardens. The indicative layout for the Windmill Road component included:
 - Approximately 117 apartments,
 - 30 Live/work units,
 - 14 Town Houses
 - 3,000 sq m B1 Industrial units
 - Canal side moorings and pedestrian access.
4. The same application included 0.56 ha of industrial buildings located between the Grand Union Canal and Empress Road, adjacent components of which have been redeveloped by Westleigh Homes to deliver affordable housing. The indicative layout proposed 70 apartments and 12 town houses.

The application was approved by the [Planning Committee on 20th April 2006](#) subject to a Section 106 Agreement to cover the delivery of the public elements of the scheme. Key public sector initiatives included the provision of Managed Workspace, a Skills Centre and a Community Building. In September 2008 Focus Consultants were appointed and took the three original components of the brief and developed them into a single innovative concept of the “Greenhouse – the East Midlands Innovation Centre.” The concept was costed at £9.8 million. [Cabinet on 26th March 2009](#) approved the submission of an expression of interest to the European Regional Development Fund to support the project. The bid was unsuccessful, but feedback indicated where it might be strengthened. Focus undertook a review of the scheme and its funding in the light of those comments and presented a revised proposal costed at £6 million. [Cabinet on 18th March 2010](#) received a report on the

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revised scheme and resolved to hold it as a reserve project for reconsideration should funds become available from either internal or external sources.

The original application remains undetermined pending the conclusion of the Section 106 Agreement, but that now seems unlikely to proceed in its approved form.

The Great Central Railway Company is committed to the "Bridging the Gap," project which aims to restore 500 metres of track at Loughborough including a bridge over the Midland Rail Line linking Leicester North (Birstall) with Ruddington (south of Nottingham) delivering a continuous 18 mile track. The project is intended to elevate the railway from a purely heritage business to a commercial operation with opportunities for freight transport, locomotive testing and enhanced tourism capability. Restoration of the link will necessitate the relocation of the engine sheds and the company has aspirations to develop an engineering skills academy and archive/visitor centre. The overall package of GCR based enhancements has the potential to engage neighbouring communities and facilitate an integrated approach towards the regeneration of the area with related social, educational and economic benefits.

Issues

Clarence Street: The developer has advised for the purposes of assessing the five year housing supply that completions are not anticipated until 2013/14.

Wharncliffe Road: The developer has advised for the purposes of assessing the five year housing supply that completions are anticipated in 2012/13. Accordingly construction should be underway but the freehold has been offered to GCR for £2 million – GCR are seeking funding support.

Windmill Road: The previous interest in the redevelopment of the site appears to have lapsed and may be overly ambitious in the current economic climate. Prospects for the delivery of the Greenhouse project seem uncertain but the prospect of exploring linkage with the GCR interest in establishing a skills academy might warrant a joint investigation. A successful development is likely to necessitate the relocation of the adjacent TDB Morris metal recycling business.

Empress Road: The site is part occupied by businesses with remaining units on the market.

GCR: The charity is actively pursuing attempts to acquire the Wharncliffe Road site for the purposes of car parking and longer term development of a skills academy, railway memorabilia shop, archive and museum. A separate company, Link 1 has been formed to raise the money required to fund the Bridging the Gap project and to oversee its delivery.

Allsops Lane: possesses the potential to provide a community woodland.

Interventions/ Actions

- 1 Clarify with Metropolitan Housing Trust the programme for the development of the Clarence Street site – establish whether there is any impediment to implementation which might be overcome by the Growing Places Fund.
- 2 Re-establish contact with the agents for Sowdens to determine the company's current intentions with respect to the Windmill Road site – explore prospects for resurrecting previous proposals for a mixed use re-development of the site.

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| 3 | Clarify with Jelsons their intentions with respect to the Wharncliffe Road site. |
| 4 | Maintain dialogue with GCR in connection with the progress towards the delivery of the Link 1 project and wider aspirations attached to the Greater Great Central Railway project and encourage the company to prepare a 20 year fully costed business plan and economic appraisal to demonstrate financial viability of the basket of projects and the wider social and economic benefits which can be delivered through investment in the CGR. |
| 5 | Explore with Leisure Services the prospects for the creation of a community woodland on the site of the former Allsopps Lane tip. |
| 6 | Engage with British Waterways and the River Soar and Grand Union Canal Partnership to identify any programme of works for the enhancement the canal which might complement/be assisted by the development of adjacent land and property to consolidate Loughborough's role as a strategic hub on the network. |