

AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Name of Committee Nuneaton and Bedworth Area Committee

Date of Committee 24th May 2006

Report Title Nuneaton and Bedworth Masterplan – Member Consideration of Implementation Strategy

Summary This report summarises progress made on the implementation strategy of the Nuneaton and Bedworth Masterplan. It asks Members to approve the earmarking of capital receipts towards delivery of the Masterplan. Also for Member support for the work to examine the impact of the possible relocation of North Warwickshire and Hinckley College and King Edward VI College to Nuneaton town centre.

For further information please contact Chris Simpson
Regeneration Projects
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Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework? Yes/No

Background Papers None.

CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN:- *Details to be specified*

Other Committees Nuneaton and Bedworth Area Committee
26th January 2005.

Local Member(s)
(With brief comments, if appropriate)

Other Elected Members

Cabinet Member Councillor A Farnell – for information
(Reports to The Cabinet, to be cleared with appropriate Cabinet Member) Councillor C Saint – for information

Chief Executive

Legal I Marriott – comments incorporated.

- Finance C Holden - comments incorporated
- Other Chief Officers S Cooper – Resources Directorate – agreed.
- District Councils
- Health Authority
- Police
- Other Bodies/Individuals

FINAL DECISION **YES/NO** *(If 'No' complete Suggested Next Steps)*

SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS :

Details to be specified

- Further consideration by this Committee
- To Council 27th June 2006
- To Cabinet 15th June 2006
- To an O & S Committee
- To an Area Committee
- Further Consultation

Nuneaton and Bedworth Area Committee - 24th May 2006

Nuneaton and Bedworth Masterplan - Member Consideration of Implementation Strategy

Report of the Strategic Director for Environment and Economy

Recommendation

That Members:-

1. Recommend that Cabinet agrees that all funds raised by the sale of Warwickshire County Council (WCC) land in Nuneaton town centre will be earmarked in order to help deliver the Masterplan and ensure WCC's influence on future development.
2. Support continued working with North Warwickshire and Hinckley College and King Edward VI College to examine the impact of their relocation into Nuneaton town centre, and subject to there being significant benefits to the town centre, support in principle their relocation.

1. Background

- 1.1 In 2003 Warwickshire County Council and Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council (NBBC) took the initiative to commission Arup and DTZ Peida Consultants to prepare a Masterplan for Nuneaton and Bedworth town centres. Its aims were to help promote, guide and maximise the medium to longer term future development and regeneration potential of the town centres, build upon existing initiatives and consider the best uses for the emerging sites.
- 1.2 The importance of the success of the Masterplan has been backed-up by recent research which has indicated that the viability of both Nuneaton and Bedworth town centres is still under threat even after the opening of the Ropewalk shopping centre in Nuneaton. The threats include the Coventry Arena development (particularly due to its proposed expansion from 24,000 m² to 35,600 m² i.e. almost the size of the Nuneaton town centre itself) and other towns and cities in the area that are also carrying out major regeneration projects.
- 1.3 The proposals in the Masterplan have been identified to improve and diversify the town centre offer and create a greater mix of uses. It suggests a number of

priority sites in the town centres to be taken forward in the short to medium term as NBBC and WCC have significant control over their deliverability as principal landowner(s).

- 1.4 The Masterplanning work has been developed with a cross-authority, multi disciplinary project team, comprising Officers from WCC and NBBC. This has allowed us to pool skills and resources and help lever external funding and new inward investment for the towns. It also builds upon some £4 million of investment to the public realm, funded by both Authorities, Advantage West Midlands and Europe over the past five years and complements the new 250,000 square foot Ropewalk Shopping Centre, the Warwickshire Justice Centre, the £5 million Nuneaton Development Plan improvements to the ring road and Town Centres Management Partnership Working arrangements. The Masterplan was adopted by Area Committee in Jan 2005.

2. Masterplan Projects in Nuneaton Town Centre

- 2.1 The overarching vision is for Nuneaton's town centre to be the main urban hub for the Borough, supporting and attracting greater numbers of people to live, work and visit the town centre.
- 2.2 A map showing the key sites identified in the Masterplan for Nuneaton is attached in **Appendix A**.
- 2.3 There is a potential to improve and diversify the town centre offer and to create a greater mix of uses (uses beyond just shopping) as well as to improve the physical environment, building upon recent public realm works, expand on the tourism, heritage and cultural offer.
- 2.4 A range of sites are incorporated within the Masterplan, mainly under public ownership (WCC/NBBC), thus putting us in a strong position to influence future development. In Nuneaton, five priority sites are identified for mixed-use development including:-
 - (i) Landmark civic and cultural centre (including Library).
 - (ii) Hotel.
 - (iii) Offices.
 - (iv) Residential.
 - (v) Retail and cafés.

The opportunity for a prestige library serving Nuneaton is regarded as a very important part of the Masterplan.

- 2.5 Recently, an alternative use for the Vicarage Street and Church Street sites (Priority Projects 1 and 2) has been discussed with North Warwickshire and Hinckley College and King Edward VI College. The two colleges are looking to co-locate and are considering moving some of the facilities to these town centre

sites as one of a number of possible options. The proposals include moving vocational education into the town centre site including motorsport, catering, hairdressing and horticulture. All of King Edward VI services would move to the town centre site as well. The discussions concerning the feasibility of these proposals are at an early stage but if realised it is considered that they would bring considerable benefits to Nuneaton town centre and would change the nature of the project from being commercially orientated to a partnership project delivering training outcomes and improved skills for the local employment market.

- 2.6 The land currently owned by WCC that would be affected by the implementation of the Masterplan or the colleges' proposals consists of the library and the site of the former Magistrates courts. A plan showing the site and the areas of the affected buildings is attached (see **Appendix C**). The existing library site is 0.848 acres and the site of the former Magistrates courts is 0.526 acres. This gives a total of 1.374 acres.

3. Masterplan Projects in Bedworth Town Centre

- 3.1 The broad principles that underpin the vision for Bedworth town centre aim to celebrate and draw upon its wealth of community assets as an essential function of the town centre:
- 3.2 There is a need to improve the linkages to open space and use of open space as part of the town centre activities, increase the mix of uses and retain the local service function.
- 3.3. The plan in **Appendix B** shows the priority sites in Bedworth. They are the redevelopment of the two supermarkets, the retail units on Mill Street and residential development at the back of the Civic Hall overlooking the Miner's Welfare Park. Bedworth Library would be adjacent to this project and the site of the former Anchor Inn may be affected by the redevelopment on Mill Street.

4. Current Situation

- 4.1 The current situation is that the project team is assessing the various options to take the Masterplan forward.
- 4.2 The general principle will be for the Councils to appoint a preferred developer through a development competition. The developer would then be granted a long leasehold on the land. This could either give a capital receipt or the value of the land could be used as the Local Authority contribution in a Public Private Partnership Joint Venture Company. Advantage West Midlands (AWM) are also likely to be partners in any development agreement that we make.
- 4.3 The actual details of the partnership arrangements have yet to be finalised but the project team is looking for an innovative and cost effective partnership which can deliver the Masterplan at best value to the Authorities for the civic and cultural centre and public realm works. It is likely that the key partnership will include WCC, NBBC, AWM, the colleges and/or a private investor/developer. The estimated cost of implementing the Masterplan as a whole is approximately

£70M the majority of which will come from the private sector. Local Authority contribution will be via land disposal and AWM as gap funders.

- 4.4 It is therefore essential that any funds realised through disposal of the land remain available to be used as part of the implementation of the Masterplan, in particular, the delivery of the civic and cultural centre. It would allow the County Council to retain its influence on the implementation of the Masterplan as a whole.
- 4.5 Members should note that Cabinet has already agreed that the corporate capital programme has a call of £137,600 on any future capital receipts on the land received in lieu of the land passed to the Warwickshire Justice Centre.
- 4.6 Members should note that Council regards capital assets as a corporate resource unless it is agreed otherwise. The impact of recommendation 1 is to earmark land in Nuneaton town centre specifically for the purpose of implementing the Masterplan. As a result, the land will not be sold so that proceeds can be used to support the capital programme allocated through the annual budget process. It also means that the proposals may not go through the same scrutiny and appraisal process and effectively compete against other capital investment priorities for the allocation of scarce resources. Members should note this reduction in flexibility in approving the recommendation.
- 4.7 In 2006/07 the development of a capital receipts strategy is planned in response to risks highlighted in the corporate strategic risk register and included in the 2006/07 Corporate Business Plan. The strategy will incorporate all aspects of a capital receipts policy including the identification, delivery and subsequent use of any resources generated, including proposals in respect of earmarking covering all types of capital receipt. Any proposals in respect of earmarking receipts will therefore be part of this wide ranging review to be reported later in the financial year.

5. North Warwickshire and Hinckley College and King Edward VI College Relocation

- 5.1 At its last meeting the Committee referred to an article in the Heartland Evening News about “A new town centre site to house Nuneaton’s two colleges”, and asked that the issue be investigated and reported back to Committee.
- 5.2 Discussions have since taken place with both colleges and NBBC regarding the feasibility of the relocation of some of the college(s) facilities on to the Vicarage Street site. The colleges are expected to make a decision on which direction they wish to take in June but they are seeking assurances from the Council that the town centre option is one that is likely to receive support.
- 5.3 These discussions have highlighted a number of issues concerning the college relocation which affect WCC and need to be considered before Members give their support for the town centre option.
- 5.4 At the time of writing the two colleges are still discussing the potential layouts with their architects and so no firm proposals have been presented. However,

during discussions with the colleges concerning the town centre relocation option the colleges have indicated that they wish to acquire the land at values applicable to educational use (approximately £350,000 per acre) rather than mixed use (possibly £1.5 million per acre). This could result in a potential loss of income of approx £1.58 million to WCC. We would seek to bridge this gap through bringing in external funding, notably AWM. Should the proposals seem likely to proceed it will be for Cabinet in due course to consider whether the benefits of the scheme as a whole are sufficient to justify the loss of receipts and whether any proposed disposal would satisfy the terms of the County Council's Protocol on the disposal of property at an undervalue which was agreed by Cabinet at its meeting on 16th September 2004.

- 5.5 The Vicarage Street site proposed for the relocation of the colleges includes the site of the existing library and so before these proposals go ahead a new site for the building which will house the library has to be found. The library service has indicated that they would be prepared to relocate into suitable temporary accommodation but would require some assurances that a new permanent location has been agreed. However, Members should note that no commitment has been made concerning the finance of the new library and that the reduction in capital receipts would also have an impact.
- 5.6 The colleges have also calculated that they would require 550 car parking spaces for the town centre option. Their consultants are currently investigating options on how to accommodate this parking including a green travel plan to minimise the requirement.
- 5.7 There will also be a requirement to replace existing car parking spaces on Justice Walk (110 spaces) which will be lost as a result of the development. In addition, the proposed location for the new civic and cultural centre (including the Library) is on the site of the existing Church Street car park and the replacement of these lost car parking spaces (101 spaces) also needs to be included in the car parking assessment. For example, if this car parking is accommodated within the existing town centre via the conversion of one of the surface car parks into a multi-story this could cost in the region of £3 million-£4 million. The colleges have stated that they would not be able to fund replacement car parking and so this cost would need to be met from the Masterplan budget. The main potential avenue for this would be via AWM within the context of transforming Nuneaton town centre drawing on their resource for the Regeneration Zone.
- 5.8 No actual assessment has yet been carried out of the economic benefits of the colleges relocating to the town centre. The colleges have been asked to provide details on these economic impacts and other work will be carried out in-house to assess the impacts as well.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 The Masterplan is an important factor in the economic regeneration of Nuneaton and Bedworth town centres and will help the medium to longer term future development and regeneration potential of the town centres.

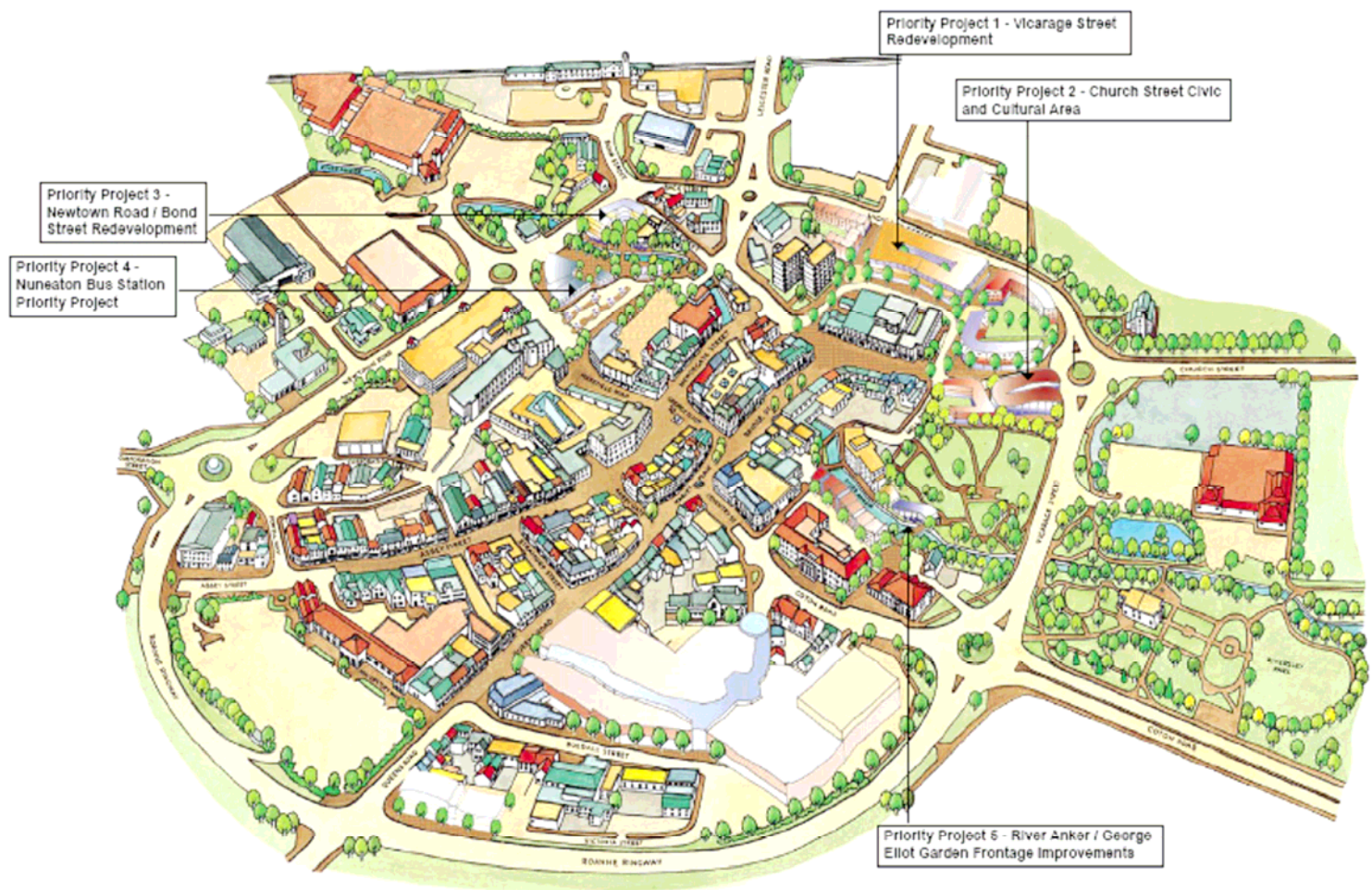
- 6.2 It is recommended that all funds raised by disposal of WCC land will be earmarked in order to help fund the Masterplan and enable the sites to be redeveloped with WCC as lead partner, working in partnership with NBBC, AWM and the private sector. This will contribute to the realisation of the Masterplan as a whole, demonstrate WCC commitment to the town centre and help influence and lead partnership working with the private sector.
- 6.3 North Warwickshire and Hinckley College and King Edward VI College are investigating a number of options for co-location, one of which is in the town centre on the Masterplan priority site at Vicarage Street. At the time of writing no firm details of the proposals have been put forward it is understood that they plan to make a decision on which option to pursue in June.
- 6.4 The town centre option could bring a number of environmental benefits to Nuneaton town centre but it could have a negative financial impact on the Masterplan in terms of capital receipts, financing the library and cost of replacement parking if the colleges maintain their current position.
- 6.5 Before the colleges make a decision on which option to choose they are seeking Council support on the town centre option. It is recommended that Members give their continued support to working with North Warwickshire and Hinckley College and King Edward VI College to examine the impact of their relocation into the town centre and, subject to there being significant benefits to the town centre, support in principle their relocation.

JOHN DEEGAN
Strategic Director for Environment and Economy
Shire Hall
Warwick

17th May 2006

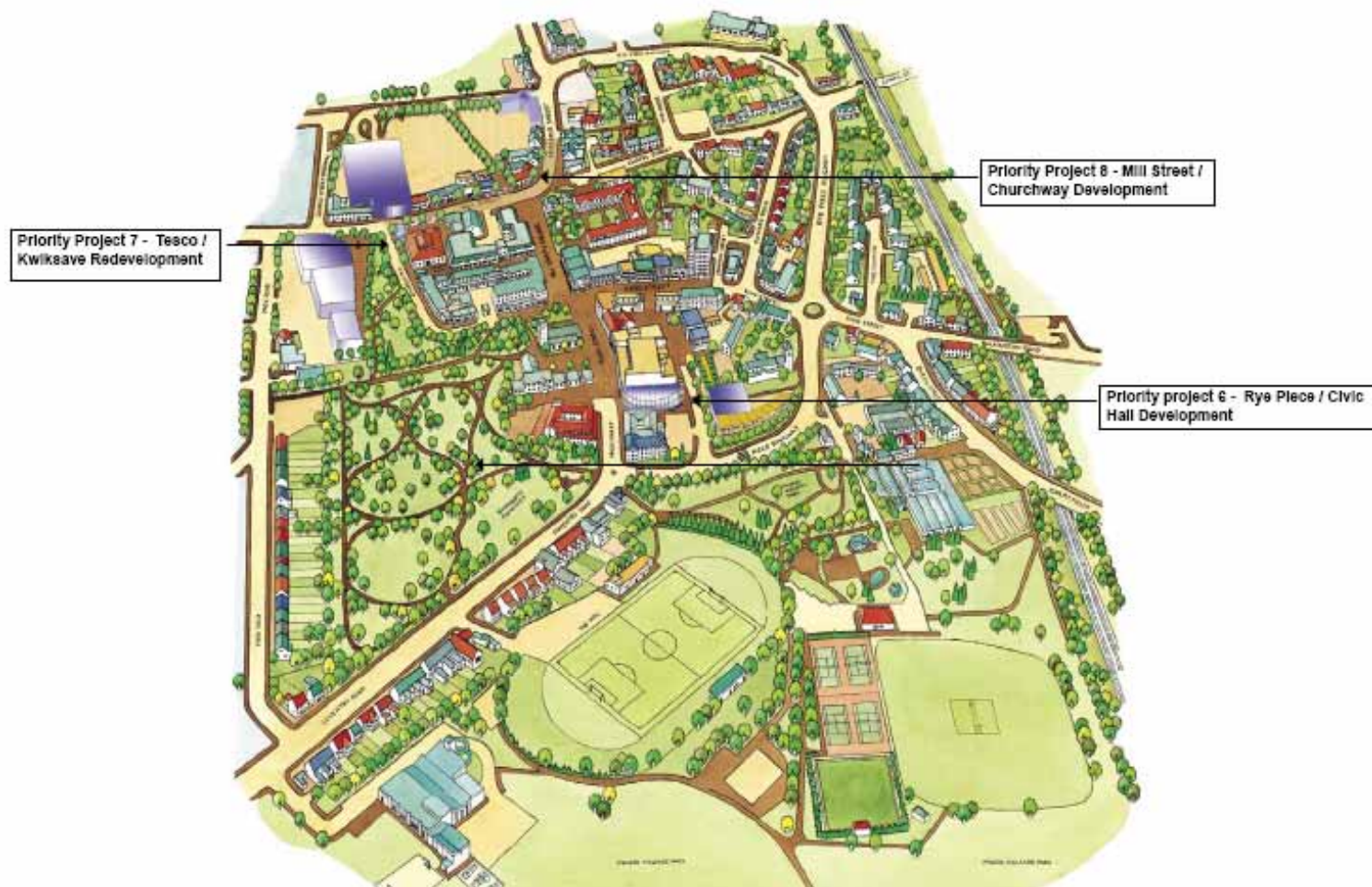
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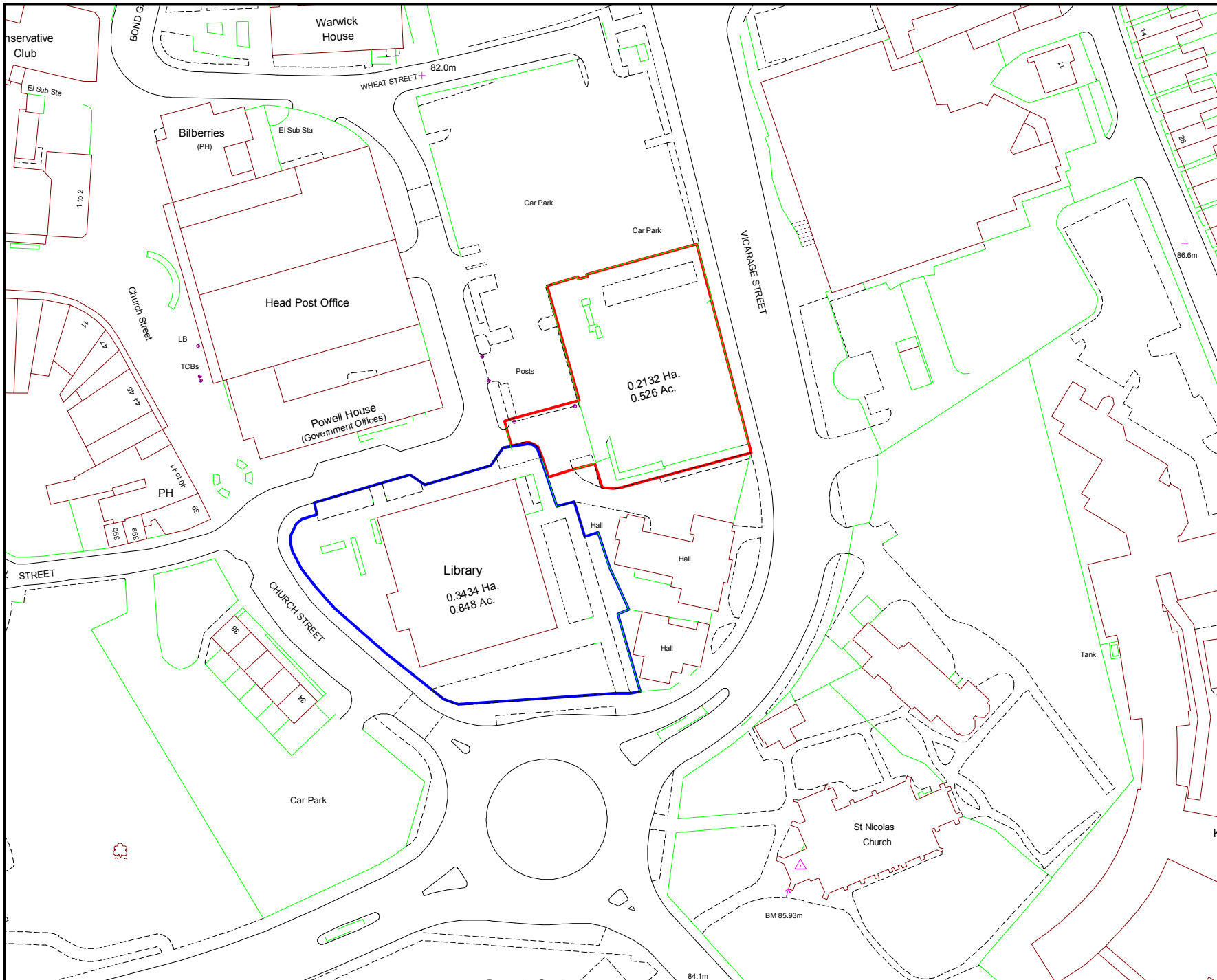
Priority Projects for Nuneaton Town Centre



**Nuneaton and Bedworth Masterplan
Member Consideration of Implementation Strategy**

Priority Projects for Bedworth Town Centre





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Title:
Nuneaton Land at
Former Mag. Courts

Scale: 1:1250
Grid Ref: 436497,291735
Operator: DHAR
Date: 18/01/2006