



Infrastructure Development Projects



Project Development Progress Summary

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BACKGROUND TO SELECTED INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

Following a detailed review of Stratford District Council's Infrastructure Programme by Consultants ATI Projects Ltd, a number of projects were identified which fall within the level of control that SDC is able to exert and manage and would benefit from further development. It was agreed that the Consultants should give particular attention to those infrastructure projects where a strong partnership between SDC and the stakeholder groups already exists or has good potential to be cultivated. Projects selected are considered to have good prospects to 'tap into' current and likely funding streams from regional or national sources e.g. tourism; enterprise; regeneration. Together they will form a series of initiatives able to be submitted as 'shovel-ready' funding applications by Stratford District Council.

The five projects selected from the Infrastructure Programme Review (summarised in this Progress Report) are as follows:

- **Upper Avon Navigation** – a joint initiative between Stratford and Warwick District Councils working with the Avon Navigation Trust to open up the Upper Avon for navigation between Stratford upon Avon and Warwick and connect to the Grand Union canal forming the 'South Warwickshire Waterway'.
- **World Shakespeare Centre** – an ambitious plan to extend and expand the Shakespeare's Birthplace Centre in Henley Street and create an international centre of excellence with modern facilities designed to attract, inspire, teach and study. **Note:** due to internal priorities, SBT has requested that this initiative be placed 'on hold' (May 2017).
- **Studley Digital and Creative Hub** – the opportunity to boost business growth and jobs in the town through the redevelopment of a County Council owned building into a digital and creative enterprise centre and providing work experience and placement opportunities for local young people.
- **Wellesbourne Innovation Campus** – an exciting opportunity for SDC to build a strong partnership with Warwick University in developing facilities for a new high technology campus at Wellesbourne attracting inward investment and stimulating economic growth.
- **Priory Square Regeneration, Studley** – the next phase of development of this long-disused site in the centre of Studley, working with private developers to create an innovative live/work scheme on the former Co-op site and boosting employment opportunities in the town

Upon the request of the SDC Infrastructure Portfolio Holder, and subject to resource availability during this project development phase (May – July 2017), it was agreed that attention would also be given to developing prospects for the following low impact transport schemes:

- Improved **cycle routes** and bike rental scheme
- Improved **electric vehicle** infrastructure for Stratford upon Avon

PROGRAMME AREA ~ TOURISM

Project 12 ~ Stratford to Warwick Avon Navigation ~ the 'South Warwickshire Ring'

The Project Challenge

To extend and improve the navigation capacity of the River Avon between Stratford upon Avon and Warwick – linking up with the Grand Union canal in Warwick and South Stratford canal to create a new 'South Warwickshire Ring' leading to an increase in tourism, local enterprise and transport links.



Background

Holidays remain the main reason for international visits to the UK, accounting for 13.9 million visits, a rise of 2.1% compared with 2014¹. The impact on the UK economy is significant with earnings from overseas visitors reaching a record level of spending of £22.1 billion – an increase of £0.2 billion (1.0%) over 2014.



Documented evidence² shows that whilst a small number of visitors enjoy the canal holiday experience in England, this sector is not widely known as part of an international tourism offer. One canal boat hire company quoted by the Canal and River Trust (CRT) indicated that only 7% of their clients are from overseas. Of these just over half are from the EU, with a further 25% from the US and 10% from Australia and New Zealand. VisitBritain research indicates that major tourist markets such as Germany and the US do not associate waterways holidays with Britain – this is a strong 'niche' market to attract and capture.

The popular tourist towns of Stratford upon Avon and Warwick are both connected to the River Avon and the Midlands canal system and are well-placed to capitalise on the tourism and enterprise opportunities that waterways can offer. Many visitors and local people already undertake longer barge and boating holidays either from Stratford or Warwick, or from other wharves on the Warwickshire Ring which includes Birmingham, Stratford, Coventry and Grand Union Canals.

With new infrastructure commitment, partnership working and investment there is the potential to develop the 'South Warwickshire Ring' as a new circuit on the Midland river and canal network, enabling shorter 2-3 day circular canal trips between Warwick and Stratford as well as day adventures - and extending to longer barging holidays on the Warwickshire Ring. This project would promote both historic towns as a new hub for waterways tourism. It would ensure longer stays in South Warwickshire boosting visitor numbers and the local tourist economy.



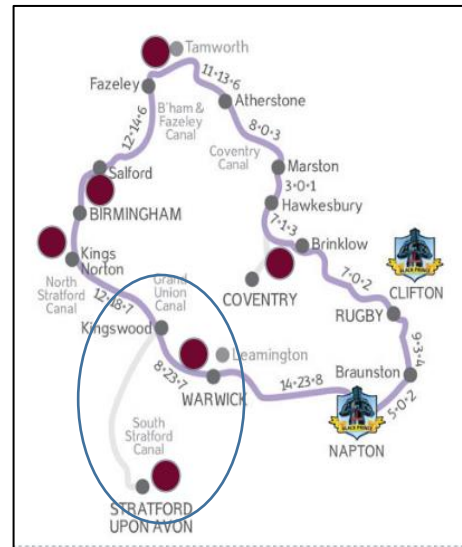
¹ Travel Trends 2015 ~ Office for National Statistics

² Canal and River Trust 2015

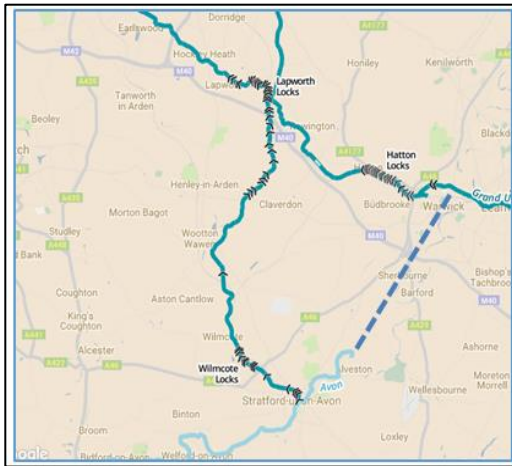
Current Situation

The Stratford Canal has a Northern and Southern section. The Northern runs from the Worcester and Birmingham Canal at Kings Norton to join the Grand Union at Kingswood. The Southern connects the Grand Union Canal at Kingswood to the River Avon at Stratford upon Avon via the Wilmcote flight and three unique iron aqueducts.

From the Stratford basin, canal boats and cruisers can navigate south down to the River Severn via Evesham, Pershore and Tewkesbury and eventually back into the Birmingham canal system (the 'Birmingham Ring'). However only a short distance of the Avon upstream of Stratford is currently navigable, meaning there is no passable river route from Stratford to Warwick to re-join the Grand Union Canal.



The Infrastructure Proposal



The Avon Navigation Trust (ANT) is seeking support from the local authority stakeholders (Warwickshire County Council, Warwick and Stratford District Councils) to open up the Upper Avon to navigation and create the 'South Warwickshire Waterway Ring'. Over 250 years ago, navigation was possible from Tewkesbury all the way to the outskirts of Warwick along the Avon³. The renovation of the 46 miles of the Lower Avon allowing navigation between Tewkesbury and Stratford was completed 43 years ago – considered by many as a great technical achievement. A feasibility study has been commissioned by the ANT to investigate the technical case for and environmental impact

of restoration of the 12 miles of the upstream section of the Avon from Stratford to Warwick. This stretch has been identified by the Association of Inland Navigation Authorities (AINA) as '**one of the few missing broad inland navigation links**' between the estuary of the Severn and other major English estuaries (Mersey, Humber, Thames, Wash).

The Opportunity

This project is timely. A new regional initiative⁴ is currently under way to promote the 'Warwickshire Ring' as a stronger tourist destination offer – encouraging extended stays and greater connection with the English countryside, its market towns, heritage and history.

By opening up the Upper Avon to navigation and with further investment in the canal basins in Stratford upon Avon and Warwick, this would add value to the Warwickshire Ring.

³ Daniel Defoe and others reported navigation nearly to Warwick in the 1700s.

⁴ "Discovering the mighty rivers and majestic canals of England" ~ Visit England / Discover England Fund call for project bids 2016

It would extend South Warwickshire's existing tourism offer to UK and overseas visitors by encouraging less adventurous barge holidaymakers to make day trips or undertake the shorter South Warwickshire Ring as part of a longer stay in South Warwickshire.

Marketing Birmingham Ltd reports that Trip Advisor ratings show a high level of top quality visitor feedback for UK narrowboat holidays which is seen as a high quality holiday product - yet figures indicate that waterways-based holidays remain 'under-appreciated' by core overseas markets. This project presents a new opportunity to add to the existing international tourist reputation of the two world famous medieval market towns.

A new approach to waterway holidays could be adopted which would attract longer stays in Warwickshire and enhance the visitor experience beyond the popular tourist venues of Warwick Castle, Shakespeare's Birthplace and the RSC Theatre. This could include provision of a more flexible and 'tourist friendly' offer e.g. 'door-to-door' journey capability; fully serviced on board provision; language translation for basic boat hire familiarisation; integrated on-board/off-board packages to encourage wider contact with other tourist venues across the county.

The Benefits

Interest in the Upper Avon navigation project has been led by the Avon Navigation Trust (ANT) – the statutory navigational authority for the River Avon. The Trust, run by a like-minded and enthusiastic group of professionals and volunteers, is committed to achieving the extension of navigation on the Upper Avon and linking to the Grand Union Canal. The project would create a 'linear water park' with enhanced wildlife sites, better walking and cycling paths, integrated angling facilities and riverside camping. It would provide wider access to the public to travel through some of the finest landscape in England.



As a major infrastructure project it would maximise the existing canal basin venue in the centre of Stratford upon Avon, and would add a new interchange at Warwick between the Avon and the Grand Union Canal. The new navigation route would add value to the very successful River Festival held in Stratford upon Avon every summer which could be extended to Warwick. It would revitalise the waterways, have a significant impact upon the local and regional visitor economy, and create a wealth of new enterprises and local jobs. Indications are that the project could realise around £650m of local tourism benefit⁵.

Prospective Stakeholders

- Avon Navigation Trust
- Stratford District Council; Warwick District Council; Warwickshire County Council; town/parish councils
- Shakespeare's England and Visit Britain
- StratForward; Warwick Chamber of Trade
- Canal and River Trust (CRT); Inland Waterways
- Commercial boat operators; landowners

⁵ Shakespeare's England estimate ~ perscom

Initial actions

The Avon Navigation Trust has opened a series of high-level discussions with council officers to highlight challenges and opportunities related to the Upper Avon Navigation initiative. A Feasibility Study⁶ undertaken by Halcrow has identified the main technical, economic and environmental issues. The Canal and River Trust (CRT) has provided data to support the economic value of waterways⁷. An economic impact study is now required to provide evidence of demand and identify funding sources. The Trust welcomes support from Stratford and Warwick Districts Councils, Warwickshire County Council, CRT and other stakeholders to enable the project to be developed further.

Potential issues identified

- Infrastructure costs of project – new locks and Warwick connection to Grand Union Canal
- Possible resistance from landowners e.g. Charlecote Park (NT) and Warwick Castle
- Feasibility and cost of new canal link at Barford
- Environmental impact on Upper Avon
- Local reaction to increased water traffic



Proposed next steps

- Gain 'in principle support' from potential council stakeholders with approval to proceed further.
- Engage with a wider stakeholder group e.g. Shakespeare's England; CRT; community groups; riverboat operators; landowners to gather interest and understand main drivers, opportunities and challenges.
- Commission an 'Opportunities Review' in support of the Technical Feasibility Study for the Upper Avon (Halcrow) which would provide a funding plan, along with evidence of the added value to South Warwickshire, its businesses and communities of opening the Upper Avon to navigation and establishing the new 'South Warwickshire Ring' Project.

Project Lead – Mike Woollacott, ATI Projects Ltd mike@atiprojects.co.uk

⁶ 'Feasibility Study for Upper Avon Extension' Halcrow Ltd 2014

⁷ 'Water Adds Value' Report CRT and University of Northampton 2014

Project 4 ~ World Shakespeare Centre

Background

The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust is an independent charity that cares for Shakespeare's heritage including the five Shakespeare Houses in and around Stratford-upon-Avon. Shakespeare's Birthplace Trust has an international reputation as the foremost organisation dedicated to preserving the unique heritage sites in Stratford upon Avon. The wider work of the Trust extends to managing one of the largest Shakespeare libraries in the world along with a significant archive of local history. It also runs a department devoted to education in Shakespeare and Shakespeare's Works, both for the public and educational institutions, and provides a programme of activities to inform and entertain throughout the year.

The Opportunity

'Shakespeare' is a global phenomenon with Stratford upon Avon at its centre and the Birthplace as its origin. The World Shakespeare Centre is a concept that encompasses the assets of the whole town and the Region and would be delivered through partnerships and manifested physically in a new development adjacent to the Birthplace in Henley Street. This would include world class visitor, research, museum and study facilities using cutting edge design and technology for which the Midlands is renowned. The Centre would reach out to new global audiences. It would extend its purpose as the centre for a global fan base both on site and online – at the same time enhancing the West Midlands Region as a leader in the creative industries and innovation. This would be a key tourism & cultural industries infrastructure project for the Region delivering high quality jobs for young people and helping to transform perceptions of the West Midlands as an exciting place to work, live and visit. This unique initiative would trigger new business opportunities and bring economic and social benefits to our local community – and great pride to Stratford upon Avon!

The Challenge

The current facilities of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust are centred in the Shakespeare Centre next to the Birthplace in Henley Street and networked across the five sites in and around Stratford upon Avon. Whilst the Centre is already acknowledged as a global centre of excellence for study, knowledge and sheer enjoyment of Shakespeare's works, the Birthplace Trust is concerned that the outstanding repository of books, historical records, manuscripts and artefacts related to the great poet's works are not exhibited and used to their full potential due to lack of space, quality of environment and outdated dissemination technology. The Trust is also deeply aware of the need to conserve and provide a better setting for the internationally famous Birthplace itself and the sensitivity needed to enhance the world class visitor experience. It is time to re-examine how a modern, innovative and 'world class' facility can be created in Stratford upon Avon – for the benefits of Shakespeare lovers everywhere.



Current Situation



The Birthplace Trust is committed to ensuring that as much of the extensive collection is accessible to current and future generations of students, researchers and visitors. Trustees are examining ideas to extend the space available for exhibits, for research work and for education within the Henley Street curtilage. A collaborative stakeholder approach will ensure that the new World Shakespeare Centre is fit for purpose, does not harm or

detract from the medieval splendour of the town centre and the Birthplace itself, and creates a world class venue that the town can be proud of - further enhancing Stratford upon Avon as the most important cultural visitor centre in England.

Potential issues identified

- It is vitally important for the success of any new developments by the Trust in Henley Street that these are supported and enhanced by other key infrastructure projects in and around the town – transport links, hospitality and shared space in particular.
- Any property redevelopment in such an important and protected environment will raise planning, heritage and access issues, requiring time, care and consultation.
- Disruption during redevelopment will have an impact not only on the Trust's activities but also many small businesses in and around Henley Street.

Prospective Stakeholders

- Shakespeare's Birthplace Trust
- Stratford-on-Avon District Council
- Royal Shakespeare Company
- StratForward
- Shakespeare's England / Visit Britain

Proposed next steps

- Exploratory meetings to be held between SBT, SDC, STC and other stakeholders to identify the ambitions of the Trust, and the key issues and risk that might be expected. **Note:** These meetings are currently 'on hold' due to other internal priorities and will be re-opened upon SBT instigation.
- A feasibility study will be needed to outline the main benefits, challenges and opportunities that an International Shakespeare Centre would create.
- Funding plans should be developed to identify the likely sources of public and private funding that would be available and accessible for the project.

Project Lead – Mike Woollacott, ATI Projects Ltd mike@atiprojects.co.uk

PROGRAMME AREA ~ ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

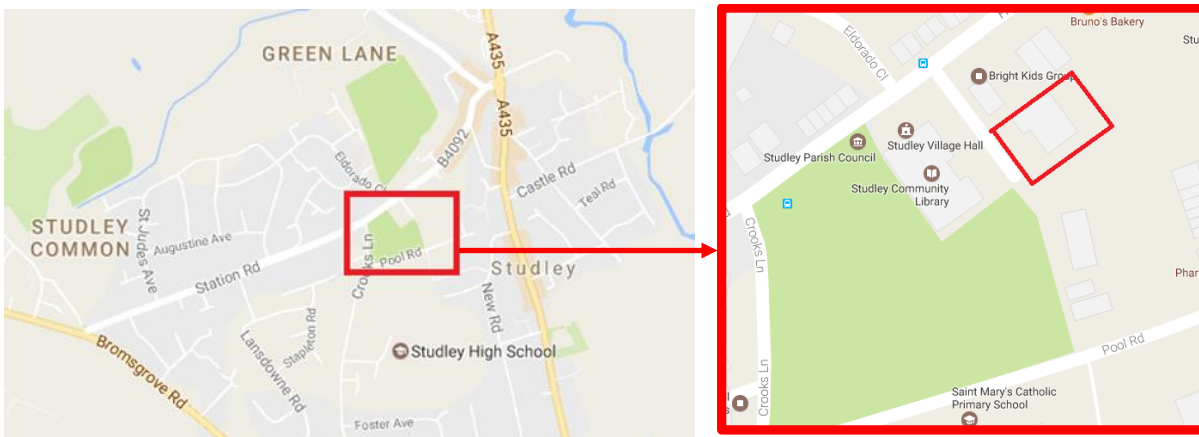
Project 1a ~ Studley Digital and Creative Hub

Background

Studley is home to a wide range of small businesses – located around the town with a number in the Birmingham Road / Studley Point area. However the town does not have ‘easy-in, easy-out’ facilities for new start-up businesses and entrepreneurs as found in Stratford and Alcester. Business start-ups must move into Redditch to access affordable and well-supported business incubation workspace.

The Opportunity

The ‘Studley Centre’ has been unoccupied for some time and is in the ownership of Warwickshire County Council. Formerly housing the youth club and other facilities, the building is on the County Council’s Asset of Community Value List – and it has been the intention to dispose of this asset. However due to the potential interest from community groups⁸ and for purposes that might benefit the community in general, this intention to dispose has been suspended pending further community development ideas.



SDC wishes to investigate the business case and local demand for an Enterprise Centre located within the Studley Centre building, providing specialist workspace for local entrepreneurs working or starting in the digital and creative sector. The Centre would also provide space for young local people to experience what it is like working in the digital sector which aligns with both SDC and WCC priorities.

It is proposed that the Hub would be managed in partnership with WCC and other business support organisations. As with Venture House in Stratford, this project could attract Local Growth funding and provide Studley town with a much needed boost to business and jobs. In addition, it would align with the live/work scheme being proposed at Priory Square (Project 21 - the former Coop site, Alcester Road) – creating in effect a ‘Studley Innovation Zone’.

⁸ <http://www.ardenmarches.co.uk/news/2016/04/press-release-studley-centre/>

Justification

Questions regarding the provision of incubation centres for start-up businesses were not included in the most recent SDC Citizens Panel and Business Sounding Board consultations. Due to the ongoing success of Venture House and the potential for attracting grant funding, this initiative would make a positive contribution to local enterprise and the regeneration of Studley creating new businesses and jobs in the digital and creative sector which is in line with the Industrial Strategy being developed for the West Midlands.

Current Situation

Discussion has taken place with Warwickshire County Council (Steve Smith, Head of Physical Assets), with regard to the potential use of 'The Studley Centre' as a Digital and Creative Hub – and using the SDC's business start up experience gained through the operation of Venture House. ATI are liaising with both SDC and WCC to move this potentially exciting project forward.

Proposed next steps

- Meetings with Tony Perks and other stakeholders in Studley to identify synergies in aligning the Digital and Creative Hub with the development of the former Co-op site and other opportunities into a coherent enterprise regeneration plan for Studley.
- Review concepts, once prepared by architects, to develop a business plan for the new digital hub to support future grant funding opportunities.

Prospective Stakeholders

- Stratford-on-Avon District Council
- Warwickshire County Council
- Studley Parish Council
- Developers
- Business support agencies e.g. C&W Chamber

Project Lead – Andy McDarmaid, ATI Projects Ltd andy@atiprojects.co.uk

Project 11 ~ Wellesbourne Innovation Campus, University of Warwick

Purpose

To develop a new Innovation Campus – ‘a space that will burst with innovative thinking’ in areas of agriculture, medicine, energy and technology – creating an inspirational environment that will forge and host influential business and industry collaboration and enable Warwick University’s outstanding intellectual capital to count in the real world.

The Challenge

The Innovation Campus will respond directly to the Midlands’ regional drive towards improved economic regeneration and resilience – providing an ideally located, ‘best of class’ centre for the incubation of ideas into practice, the exchange of intellectual investment with industry-leading companies, and the nurturing of skills and jobs to support the local and regional economy.

Background

The Wellesbourne Campus – owned by the University and formerly the home of Horticultural Research International (HRI) – is a 450 acre site with a long track record as an internationally recognised centre for translational research in sustainable agriculture, horticulture and food security. The site is home to the renowned School of Life Sciences⁹ and Warwick Crop Centre¹⁰, with a range of well-equipped buildings, laboratories and indoor/outdoor



field research facilities. The campus hosts a number of SMEs and large companies, and all of the research facilities are used for collaborative programmes with industry. Whilst located in beautiful rural surroundings, the campus benefits from great connectivity – and lies within a 5-mile range of Stratford-upon-Avon, the M40, Warwick Parkway and Leamington mainline rail stations and the popular residential areas of Leamington Spa and Warwick.

Current Situation

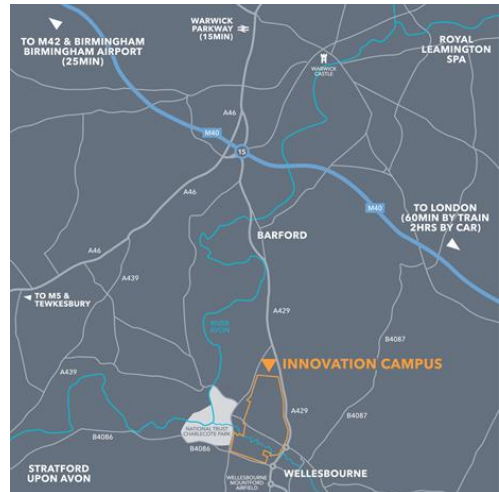
Wellesbourne Campus is identified within the Stratford-on-Avon District Council Core Strategy as providing ‘a significant opportunity to expand research and employment activities and jobs in the District in an accessible and attractive location’. Currently more than 400 people work at the campus. The site is not bound by Green Belt jurisdictions and currently provides 73,000 sq ft of offices, workshops, conference halls, laboratories, glasshouses and research units, ancillary welfare provision, a children’s nursery, some residential accommodation for staff and storage areas. The ambition for the site is to expand the facilities and workspace to attract innovative businesses, to extend the University’s collaboration potential with industry, to promote inspiration and investment and development in harmony with neighbouring communities.

⁹ Warwick School of Life Sciences was ranked 2nd in the UK for Agriculture, Food and Veterinary Research in the Government’s Research Excellence 2014

¹⁰ <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/sci/lifesci/wcc>

Potential issues identified

- **Highways** – Wellesbourne campus lies on a fast stretch of the A429 Wellesbourne to Warwick road: further developments on the site will necessitate traffic calming measures such as a roundabout and pedestrian crossings.
- **Public transport** – moving employees and students away from individual car transport is good for the campus, the environment and the locality. Low emission bus services will be a key introduction – with the potential to work with WCC and SDC in developing a public transport hub at the Wellesbourne Campus.
- **Local acceptance** – Warwick University is already engaging with parish councils and community representatives to publicise the plans for the new Innovation Campus and to allay fears that there is no intention to turn the campus into residential or standard industrial use.
- **Sustainability and land use** – Warwick University is committed to encouraging infrastructure, technology, natural environment and behaviours that enhance sustainability across the campus.



Proposed next steps

- Warwick University held an exploratory meeting with SDC Infrastructure Portfolio Holder and Executive Director (5th January 2017) to introduce outline plans for the Wellesbourne Campus site.
- Subsequent meetings with Project Consultants ATI Projects on behalf of SDC are providing a continued dialogue and a conduit for the University and the District Council with particular regard to transport issues, business relocation and planning.

Prospective Stakeholders

- Warwick University
- Stratford-on-Avon District Council
- Warwickshire County Council
- Wellesbourne Parish Council
- Highways England
- Transport operators

Project Lead – Mike Woollacott, ATI Projects Ltd mike@atiprojects.co.uk

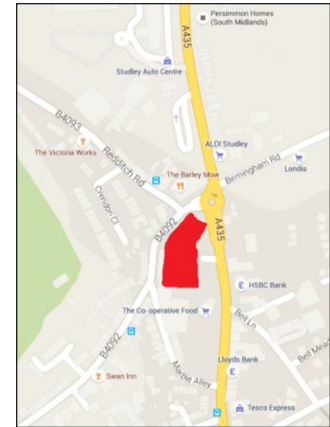
PROGRAMME AREA ~ REGENERATION

Project 21 ~ Priory Square Regeneration, Studley (former Co-operative site)

Background

Priory Square – a vacant site adjacent to the Co-operative Store in the heart of Studley - is a strategically important site in the heart of the village and has been derelict for over 10 years in spite of a number of residential proposals. SDC proposes to bring it back into use as a mixed enterprise and residential ('live/work') complex to bring business vitality and jobs, provide affordable homes and improve the village environment.

In 2016, a Growing Places grant of £200,000 was awarded by the Coventry & Warwickshire LEP (CWLEP). This was secured to undertake remedial works to the site bringing it up to a base condition which will be attractive for commercial development.



Current Situation



Discussions have commenced between SDC and the Co-operative as the owners of the site alongside meetings with local councillors. Local councillors also identified another unused building in the town, the Studley Centre (Project 1a above) – with both initiatives raising the potential for new businesses and jobs in Studley. ATI Projects is working with SDC officers to move the Priory Square project forward, thus securing the Growing Places grant. SDC have plans to meet with representatives of a consortium who have indicated their desire to develop the site and are in purchase negotiations with the Co-op.

Proposed Next Steps

SDC, supported by ATI Projects, will review the proposals tabled at the meeting with the proposed developer and also seek to obtain more robust estimates for the structural reinforcement work required for the roadway at the rear of the site.

Potential issues identified

During the bid to the Growing Places Fund a detailed risk register was produced. The key risks which would stop the redevelopment of the Priory Square are:

- Co-op do not sell land at market value limiting interest from developers.
- Private development partner cannot secure private sector funding.
- Development and occupation delayed through prolonged negotiations.

Prospective Stakeholders

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|
| • Stratford-on-Avon District Council | • Studley Parish Council | • Site Developers |
| • Warwickshire County Council | • Cooperative Society | |

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