

**Newark-on-Trent New Growth Point Submission**

**Initial Outline Bid to the Department for Communities  
and Local Government for New Growth Point Status**

**By Newark and Sherwood District Council  
in partnership with The Catesby Property Group**



**NEWARK &  
SHERWOOD**  
DISTRICT COUNCIL



**THE CATESBY**  
**PROPERTY GROUP**

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## 1. Summary: Newark-on-Trent as a New Growth Point

- 1.1 This submission is made by Newark and Sherwood District Council in partnership with a consortium of landowners, who are able to deliver a sustainable urban extension to the south of Newark-on-Trent to complement other existing commitments and town centre brownfield redevelopment schemes within and adjoining the town.
- 1.2 The public-private sector partnership that has been established also enables the delivery of a Southern Relief Road for the town, which is recognised as a key strategic infrastructure objective that will improve Newark's accessibility with the rest of the Region and beyond, enhancing its ability to attract additional accelerated growth.
- 1.3 The Bid is supported by all political parties within the District Council, as demonstrated by the signatories to the covering letter. In addition, the bid is supported in principle by Nottinghamshire County Council, subject to accelerated growth being approved through the RSS and LDF processes (A copy of a letter of support from Nottinghamshire County Council included as **Appendix 1**).
- 1.4 The identification of Newark as a New Growth Point will achieve the following:
  - i) Strengthen and enhance the town's role as a Sub-Regional Centre, enabling the opportunity for sustainable urban growth at a location, which is a primary shopping and service centre with good market prospects and employment opportunities and good and improving transport connections;
  - ii) Delivery of a Southern Relief Road linking the A46 to the A1 at Newark, providing significant enhancement to the strategic road network at no cost to the public purse (see Section 7);
  - iii) Improvement and enhancement to the locational advantages of Newark as a focus for economic growth through improved accessibility (Southern Relief Road) and delivery of approximately 100 hectares of new employment land, helping to complement the existing land portfolio by providing much needed high quality sites (see Section 3);
  - iv) Provide wider economic, social and environmental benefits for the District as a whole from the 'ripple effect' of accelerated growth within the principal urban area of Newark;
  - v) Sustain and accelerate current high levels of housing growth within the town, as demonstrated by recent housing completion rates, providing the circumstances to deliver new housing in excess of 20% above current RSS (RPG) baseline figures (see Section 4);
  - vi) Address the significant shortfall in the provision of affordable housing, thereby contributing to more balanced communities within the District (see Section 5);
  - vii) Delivery of a sustainable urban community as an extension to the south of Newark, that is infrastructure-led and capable of accommodating a mixed use development including 100 hectares of employment land, at least 5,000 dwellings and community facilities including local centre(s), a Multi Sports Hub and a 40 hectare Country Park; and

- viii) The ability to deliver accelerated growth, benefiting from the timely review of the Regional Spatial Strategy for the East Midlands and the emerging Newark and Sherwood Local Development Framework (see Section 10).

## 2. Newark-on-Trent – Context for Growth

- 2.1 The District of Newark and Sherwood occupies a central location within the UK, with its principal settlement of Newark (population 35,000) situated some 26 kilometres to the north east of Nottingham and 24 kilometres to the south west of Lincoln (see Regional Context plan at **Appendix 2**). It has good road and rail connections with the rest of the Region and the Country, with the A1(T) running around the eastern side of Newark and the M1 within 10 miles of the District's western settlements. The A17 trunk road connects Newark to the east coast, whilst the A46 provides links to Leicester and the rest of the East and West Midlands. Recent work on dualling the A46 between Newark and Lincoln has been completed and the Highways Agency have advanced proposals for dualling the A46 south-westwards, which could start as early as 2008/9, subject to funding from the Regional Funding Allocation to be confirmed during Spring 2006. The eastern half of the District has good rail connections, with Newark town having railway stations on both the East Coast Main Line (Kings Cross, London is 100 minutes from Newark station) and the Nottingham to Lincoln line.
- 2.2 Newark and Sherwood has a relatively small economy by national standards, but has scored well in terms of its business and enterprise culture, ranking 126th out of 408 Districts nationally. Business density is very high with 39 businesses per 1000 population in 2003, and levels of entrepreneurship just above the national average. The knowledge economy in Newark and Sherwood has traditionally had a relatively low base, but between 1998 and 2002, employment in the knowledge economy increased by 38%, well above the national average of 10%. The District also has a sizeable resident stock of knowledge workers - 'higher end' occupations including management, professional and technical activities. In 2002-3, 35% of workers were engaged in knowledge intensive occupations, the 191st highest proportion of 408 Districts in the country. The proportion of people resident in the District in managerial, technical and professional occupations was on a par with the national average.
- 2.3 The District's employment prospects have recently been boosted by the decision of Dixons Store Group to locate its main national distribution centre at Newark reflecting the town's locational advantage and providing approximately 600 jobs for the town on a new 40 hectare complex. The Nottinghamshire County Structure Plan EiP Panel Report 2004 noted however, that Newark suffered from a shortage of economically priced medium sized incubator units, and that the office market needed further impetus. In the western part of the District, improving employment prospects are arising from the Sherwood Energy Village project, which will eventually employ around 1,500 people. The project was the recent winner of the 2005 'Enterprising Britain' competition for those towns and cities across the country that were successfully driving forward enterprise in their local areas, and was named as the "Most Enterprising Place in Britain" by Chancellor Gordon Brown. The development is being constructed on environmental, ethical and sustainable principles, with buildings complying with the highest environmental standards. The recent decision of Center Parcs to build a new head office at the village will increase local employment opportunities and raise the profile of the project.
- 2.4 The District's employment rate in 2004-5 was 79.6%, whilst the figure for Great Britain was 78.3%. Unemployment rates during this period were 2.5% for the District, well below the national figure of 4.8%.
- 2.5 Newark town, as the primary urban area within the District, is seen as the main focus for future growth with Policy 7 of RSS8 (March 2005) identifying it as a Sub-Regional Centre (SRC) within the Eastern Sub-area; which seeks to encourage economic development strategies to consolidate and strengthen its role. Paragraph 5.10 of the recently published

Newark and Sherwood Core Strategy Issues and Options Paper (October 2005) acknowledges this role by stating:

**“Regional and county policy dictates that Newark (and adjacent Balderton) will need to be the focus for new development within the district. It provides the greatest choice in terms of housing, shops, services, jobs and transport, which means that people have to travel less to each”.**

- 2.6 The Nottinghamshire County Structure Plan EIP Panel Report 2004 stated that Newark was a sustainable option for locating new development being a larger settlement, a primary shopping and service centre, with good market prospects and employment opportunities and good and improving transport connections (Paragraph 10.19 – copied as **Appendix 3**).
- 2.7 Whilst the proximity of the road and rail network to Newark enhances the accessibility credentials of this town, the position of the A1 (T) along the eastern and north-eastern sides of the town, the A46 Northern Relief Road to the west and north west, together with the washlands of the River Trent to the west and north limit the direction for future growth of the settlement (see enclosed Constraints Plan at **Appendix 4**). Indeed, the 1996 Local Plan Inspector’s Report acknowledged that land to the south of Newark was one of the few available options for future expansion within the District.
- 2.8 The District as a whole has seen significant growth over recent years, with housing completions having exceeded the Joint Structure Plan annual requirement of 280 dwellings for the last five years (2000: **635**; 2001: **678**; 2002: **570**; 2003: **628** and 2004: **699**). The majority of this housing growth has been delivered within and adjacent to the built-up area of Newark town and its immediate surroundings. It is demonstrated later in this bid document that the potential for housing growth within Newark over the next 20 years or so is likely to be in excess of 20% above the 2003 RPG baseline.
- 2.9 Approximately half of the housing growth within the District has been on brownfield windfall sites (40% of completions during 2001-2005), and whilst this has helped to meet Government objectives for the re-use of previously developed land, the delivery of affordable housing has suffered as a result, with an average annual delivery of only 62 dwellings, leaving a shortfall of **3,996** units in total over the next six years to 2011 (Source: David Coultie Associates Housing Needs Survey Update 2005).
- 2.10 An Urban Capacity Study is currently being prepared, but initial estimates for the District covering the period 2006-2026 indicate that approximately 300 units per annum may come forward, the majority of which are likely to come forward on small windfall sites and through conversions. Whilst this contribution will continue to help make best use of previously developed land and contribute towards the level of growth commensurate with a potential New Growth Point, the shortfall in affordable housing is likely to be exacerbated without additional growth on appropriate sites.
- 2.11 The take up of employment land within the District during the last four years has seen a marked acceleration with a total of 32.61 hectares being delivered from 2000-2004, again primarily within the urban area of Newark. Whilst detailed figures for 2005 are not yet available, a further 20 hectares of land have been developed since April 2005 at South Airfield Farm, the largest employment allocation in the District. EMDA have also recently approved a £2.9 million, alongside a £1 million commitment by the District and County Councils to develop a Business Innovation Centre at Newark, which will generate long-term and sustainable

employment for the District and make a significant contribution towards improving the level of knowledge-intensive business in ICT and technology-based industries.

- 2.12 Newark has clearly become an increasingly attractive location to live and work, due to its strategic location and quality of life, and is therefore considered to be a suitable location to accommodate future sustained growth over the longer term. In order to accord with the objectives of a New Growth Point, a logical direction for additional growth will be on land to the south of Newark, where it is capable of delivering both a sustainable urban extension that is well-related to the built-up area, and a strategically attractive location for new businesses.
- 2.13 Alongside the continued need to regenerate the town centre and make best use of previously developed land, land to the south of the Newark is therefore seen as a logical direction for growth, as it avoids the constraints identified elsewhere around the town (see the Constraints Plan at **Appendix 4**). This location for growth also provides strategic benefits through the ability to lever private sector funding to deliver a Southern Relief Road for the town at no cost to the public purse, thereby improving the strategic road network of the Region and reducing the peripherality of less accessible parts to the east of the Region, a further objective of RSS8.

### **3. Strategic Case for Accelerated Growth**

- 3.1 Policy 7 of RSS8 (March 2005) already identifies Newark as a Sub-Regional Centre (SRC) within the Eastern Sub-Area and seeks to encourage economic development strategies to consolidate and strengthen this role. This role is maintained within the emerging RSS8 Review.
- 3.2 Paragraph 3.5.11 of RRS8 acknowledges Newark's position close to the A1/East Coast Main Line Corridor and consequently having good north/south strategic transport links that offer competitive economic advantages.
- 3.3 Policy 8 of RSS8 seeks to overcome the peripherality and lack of accessibility between the Eastern Sub-Area with the rest of the Region, particularly by improving east/west strategic transport links to help local communities and businesses in the central and eastern parts. It states that this is to be addressed by a programme of predominantly road-based infrastructure improvements.
- 3.4 Paragraph 4.2.2 of RSS8 confirms that generally, the urban areas within the East Midlands are failing to fulfil their potential as motors of economic growth and centres for innovation, skills and investment.
- 3.5 Paragraph 4.2.11 of RRS8 states that within the Eastern Sub-Area, whilst there is a limited supply of office space, there is also an apparent over-supply of allocated industrial land. This is due to low land values and severe local constraints requiring public intervention to ensure an adequate supply of serviced land that can be developed by the market.
- 3.6 A first draft version of the Draft RSS8 (September 2006) document was appended to the papers for the EMRA Housing, Planning and Transport Joint Board meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2006. Paragraph 2.3.9 confirms that SRCs (including Newark) have the capacity to support additional sustainable development objectives including the provision of opportunities for economic diversification.

- 3.7 Whilst Sub-Area boundaries are proposed to be amended by the draft RSS8 so that Newark is to be transferred into the Northern Sub-area, Policy 7 of Draft RSS8 still acknowledges the need to improve the peripherality of the Eastern Sub-area. Newark is strategically well located to assist with this objective through the delivery of a Southern Relief Road. This provides an improved link between the A46 and A1, thereby enhancing the east/west strategic road network and extending the economic advantages of the Region.
- 3.8 Paragraph 2.5.12 and Policy 8 of Draft RSS8 highlight that the Northern Sub-area has experienced major industrial structural change and the development of a viable new economic base is seen as a crucial priority. As there is no Principal Urban Area within the Northern Sub-area, Draft RSS8 highlights that greatest and most sustainable opportunities for regeneration will therefore be in or on the edges of SRCs and medium sized towns (Paragraph 2.5.14).
- 3.9 The draft version of Draft RSS8 also includes reference to the Northern Sub-Regional Strategy, whose objectives are to include the significant strengthening of the SRCs of Mansfield, Chesterfield, Newark and Worksop by providing jobs, services and facilities in and around their urban areas.
- 3.10 Members of EMRA's Housing, Planning and Transport Joint Board recently agreed to a draft Preferred Option for Housing Provision at the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2006. The strategic approach agreed for the Newark/Ashfield/Mansfield (Nottingham Outer) Housing Market Area is to consist of:
- Strengthening the sub-regional roles of Newark and Mansfield;
  - Promoting the regeneration of smaller settlements; and
  - Improving the long term economic prospects of the HMA.
- 3.11 The Consultation Draft of the East Midlands Regional Economic Strategy (RES) 'A Flourishing Region' (January 2006) sets out the key challenges for each of the five Sub-areas at Section 10. It states that whilst recent growth rates in Gross Value Added (GVA) and employment for the Eastern Sub-area exceed the national average, it is starting from a lower base than elsewhere, with GVA per head in Lincolnshire only 74% of the national average. The Northern Sub-area has been heavily affected by the decline of traditional manufacturing and coalmining industries and has experienced some of the lowest GVA and employment growth rates in recent years. Newark, being strategically well placed to both Sub-areas, is capable of contributing towards their economic regeneration and complement other New Growth Point bids being made by Lincoln, Grantham and Mansfield/Ashfield.
- 3.12 The Nottinghamshire County Structure Plan EiP Panel Report 2004 stated that Newark suffered from a shortage of economically priced medium sized incubator units and that the office market needed further impetus (Paragraph 10.10). The Report also stated that Newark was a sustainable option for locating new development being a larger settlement, a primary shopping and service centre, with good market prospects and employment opportunities and good and improving transport connections (Paragraph 10.19).
- 3.13 The Council's Annual Monitoring Report (December 2005) confirms at paragraph 5.4 that to meet the Joint Structure Plan requirement for 2001-2021, it will be necessary for the District to de-allocate some 122.9 hectares of employment land, as at March 2005. However, a large proportion of the commitments already have planning permission, so it is unlikely that sufficient levels of de-allocation will be achieved. Whilst employment land requirements for

Newark will be reassessed following the review of RSS8, it is clear that there is already a good supply of employment land within the town and across the District generally. This current supply is available for development and capable of contributing towards accelerated economic growth in association with other related development proposals, all of which will benefit directly from the improved accessibility of Newark through the delivery of a Southern Relief Road.

- 3.14 Alongside the current supply of employment land, a sustainable urban extension to the south of Newark has the potential to deliver approximately 100 hectares of new employment related development (refer to strategic framework plan at **Appendix 5**), which is capable of improving the portfolio of sites and secure in the region of 6,000 additional new jobs over the next 20 years or so, depending on the mix of employment uses achieved.
- 3.15 Additional land to the west of the A1 to the south of the town lies within the control of British Gypsum, a member of the consortium of landowners. This provides longer term development opportunities beyond 2026, to allow the vision for accelerated growth at Newark to continue.
- 3.16 We envisage that whilst the focus for new employment growth will be directed to the town of Newark as the most sustainable location to accommodate such accelerated growth, it is anticipated that the 'ripple effect' of this growth will also benefit the economic prosperity of the entire District over the next 20 years and beyond.

#### **4. Potential for Housing Growth**

- 4.1 In terms of RPG figures at 2003, those for Nottinghamshire/Nottingham (which were in RPG8, January 2002) are the same as those in the current RSS8 (March 2005). The Nottinghamshire/Nottingham requirement is 2,450 annually between 2001 and 2021 (49,000 in total). This has been apportioned to the County's districts in the Joint Structure Plan. For Newark and Sherwood, the strategic housing requirement is 5,600 dwellings for the period 2001-2021.
- 4.2 Table 1 below shows the performance of housing provision within Newark and Sherwood District as at April 2005, against the requirements of the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Joint Structure Plan 2002-2021:

**Table 1**

Joint Structure Plan Requirement 2001 – 2021 (20 years)	<b>5,600</b>
Completions 1/4/01 to 31/3/05 (4 years)	2,575
Residual requirement (16 years)	3,025
Annual average required	189.06
Annual average since 1991	497.71
No. of dwellings with outline planning permission	884
No. of dwellings with full planning permission or under construction	2,016

<b>Total dwellings with permission</b>	<b>2,900</b>
<b>Additional dwellings required to meet JSP Requirement to 2021</b>	<b>125</b>

- 4.3 Table 2 below shows the annual housing completion rates for Newark and Sherwood District, as well as for the Newark, Western and Southern Sub-area during the last five years for the period 2000-2005:

**Table 2**

	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
<b>District Total Annual Housing Completion Rate</b>	635	678	570	628	699
<b>Newark Sub-Area</b>	407	421	380	413	490
<b>Western Sub-area</b>	125	117	120	125	99
<b>Southern Sub-Area</b>	103	140	70	90	110

*(NB: the Sub-areas emanate from the Structure Plan which apportioned housing growth based on Travel to Work Areas)*

- 4.4 In terms of calculating whether growth within Newark is likely to exceed 20% above the RPG baseline, it is relevant to acknowledge that whilst the annual District requirement for the period to 2021 is 280 dwellings (5,600 divided by 20 years), the average annual completion rate for the District over the last 5 years has been 642 dwellings (3,210 divided by 5), which is **229%** above the RSS requirement rate.
- 4.5 In respect of longer term housing completions, the District is only 125 dwellings away (after completions and permissions are taken into account) from meeting the 5,600 strategic requirement, with 16 years still to go until the end of the plan period (assuming all extant permissions are developed). To then be 20% above the RSS requirement by the end of the RSS period, 6,720 dwellings would need to be completed in total across the District, requiring a further 1,245 dwellings during the period to 2021. This equates to an additional annual rate of 78 dwellings, which is more than likely to be secured through windfall development alone.
- 4.6 The figures within Table 2 also demonstrate that a significant proportion of the housing growth achieved over the last 5 years has been located within the Newark Sub-area (average annual rate of 422 dwellings per annum), of which the majority has been located within and adjacent to the urban area of Newark town.
- 4.7 Of the existing commitments for the District detailed at Table 1 above, **1,725** of the 2,900 dwellings which had planning permission as at April 2005 were within the Newark Sub-area. In addition, initial estimates from the Urban Capacity Study currently under preparation

suggest there is additional capacity within the Sub-area for a further **2,100** dwellings. Again, whilst these figures relate to Newark and its immediate environs, the majority of this capacity is located within and immediately adjacent to the town. There is therefore a potential existing capacity of **3,825** dwellings, a significant proportion of which is likely to come forward within the next 5 years, notwithstanding any future allocations that remain to be identified, such as on land to the south of Newark.

- 4.8 The proposals on land to the south of Newark, as identified on the Newark Strategic Framework Plan at **Appendix 5**, identifies potential capacity to accommodate at least a further 5,000 dwellings on land within the control of the consortium landowners.
- 4.9 The combination of existing capacity from current commitments and potential capacity within the urban area, alongside the development potential on land to the south of Newark therefore suggests that there is capacity to achieve at least 500 dwellings per annum over the longer term to 2026. As identified on the Strategic Framework Plan, there is also additional and significant capacity on land within the control of British Gypsum to the west of the A1 that provides longer term development potential beyond 2026.

## 5. **Affordability**

- 5.1 In addressing the provision of additional housing, there is an identified need within the District to tackle the issue of affordability in order to reduce the pressure on high demand areas. Indeed, the Council's Annual Monitoring Report (December 2005) confirms that the ability to pay for housing is poorest in Newark and Sherwood out of all Nottinghamshire Districts, and is even below the average score for all districts across England and Wales.
- 5.2 David Couttie Associates undertook an update survey to the 2003 Housing Needs Survey in 2005. During this two year period, the price of terraced houses (the entry level stock) has increased by 34.5% and entry to market housing has therefore become more difficult for new households than was the case in 2003, increasing the need for subsidised housing.
- 5.3 The 2005 survey confirms that the total annual affordable housing shortfall currently stands at 596 units. Based on the previous new supply of units, the level of need is nearly ten times new delivery.
- 5.4 The current shortfall of affordable housing units within the District will not achieve the objectives of the Sustainable Communities Plan and other Government guidance seeking to achieve more balanced and sustainable communities, and which acknowledge the need for social compatibility by securing a well-integrated mix of decent homes of different types and tenures.
- 5.5 Whilst the delivery of market housing over recent years has been high, the provision of affordable units coming forward has, to an extent, been stifled by the high proportion of small windfall sites, which have been below the threshold requiring the provision of an element of affordable housing. The outstanding annual affordable housing requirement also outstrips the Districts entire annualised strategic housing requirement for the period to 2021. The current identified shortfall in affordable housing within the District could only be fully addressed by a significant increase in housing supply on sites that are capable of delivering affordable housing units.

- 5.6 The proposals to the south of Newark are likely to deliver approximately 5,000 additional dwellings and The Guinness Trust has confirmed their interest with regard to the delivery of the affordable housing. A letter of confirmation from the Guinness Trust is enclosed as **Appendix 6**. It is likely that between 30% and 40% of these units will be affordable, thereby helping to contribute significantly towards meeting the District's identified need for subsidised housing.

## **6. Environment**

- 6.1 The District of Newark and Sherwood has no statutory designated landscape protection areas and only 9.6% of its total land area falls within the Nottinghamshire Green Belt to the western part of the District. None of the land around Newark is designated as Green Belt.
- 6.2 Flooding is a significant issue within the District and much of the land around Newark includes areas of flood risk. Land to the south of Newark is relatively unconstrained by the washlands of the River Trent, which are evident to the west and north of the town, but the River Dove to the south has implications for future development proposals. As part of any proposals for development to the south of the town, mitigation measures, including the remodelling of the floodplain, are proposed to be incorporated along the route of the proposed Southern Relief Road. Discussions with the Environment Agency are progressing to consider the extent of such mitigation measures.
- 6.3 The District Council are committed to preparing a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment as part of the Local Development Framework process to fully assess the issue of flood risk in the allocation of land for future development around Newark.

## **7. Transport**

- 7.1 RSS8 has identified the dualling of the A46 (Newark-Widmerpool) within its Regional Transport Investment Priorities as a committed project. The East Midlands Regional Assembly have long acknowledged that this is a key regional scheme and the Highways Agency is at an advanced stage in delivering this priority scheme, with a preferred route having been approved by SoS and a contractor appointed. Work is proposed to start in 2008/9, subject to the outcome of an Inquiry being held later in 2006. The road should then open in 2010/11 subject to funding from Government.
- 7.2 EMRA submitted its Regional Funding Allocation (RFA) advice to the Government in March 2006 detailing the Regions' priorities for transport, housing and employment development, in order to inform Government spending decisions. The advice acknowledges the strategic significance of the scheme as it would improve accessibility from the M1 to A1, which would assist in capturing opportunities for growth and diversification for the Eastern Sub-area.
- 7.3 EMRA's Housing, Planning and Transport Joint Board meeting, held on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2006, considered various transport infrastructure issues. Issue 8 related to the Government's Transport Innovation Fund (TIF), which is a further opportunity for the Region's Development Agencies to bid for funds to tackle congestion through public transport and demand management solutions. EMDA submitted a bid for funding on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2006, and one of the projects included is the A46 dualling, with the report stating that the inclusion of the A46 in the TIF bid potentially offers another avenue for the Region to address funding and programming difficulties identified by the RFA process.

- 7.4 The Consultation Draft of the East Midlands Regional Economic Strategy 'A Flourishing Region' identifies at Section 8, Strategic Priority 4: Transport and Logistics. This states that transport and accessibility issues link directly to objectives relating to increasing productivity, but also to sustainability and equality issues. It continues by stating that addressing the barrier of poor accessibility, transport schemes and investment can help create new employment opportunities, and provide improved economic conditions and stability in the Region.
- 7.5 There has been a long established need for a Southern Relief Road at Newark, the matter having been discussed at the 1996 Local Plan Inquiry, where the Inspector acknowledged that land south of Newark is one of the few available options for expansion of the town and that development led proposals to secure the Southern Relief Road should be examined through the next Local Plan Review. The Adopted Newark and Sherwood Local Plan 1999 includes reference to the need for a Southern Relief Road (p.10.36).
- 7.6 The Newark and Sherwood Issues Report (November 2003) confirmed continued local support for a Southern Relief Road (Paragraph 9.12) with over 70% of respondents supporting such a proposal, following concerns regarding congestion within the town and the bottlenecks being experienced at the single carriageway Newark Northern Relief Road from the A46. A similar level of local support for a Southern Relief Road was received in response to the recent Newark and Sherwood Core Strategy Issues and Options Paper (October 2005).
- 7.7 The 2004 Joint Structure Plan EIP Panel Report confirmed the potential of a Southern Relief Road for Newark, which could open up land for development on the southern side of the town. It concluded that such a project would have to be entirely developer funded (Paragraph 10.27). Funding through the leverage of private finance is identified as being particularly important as there is currently no reference to the Southern Relief Road within the Local Transport Plan 2006-2011.
- 7.8 In the Highways Agency's response (copy enclosed as **Appendix 7**) to the issue of the Southern Relief Road, posed by the Newark and Sherwood Core Strategy Issues and Options Paper (October 2005), they stated:
- "It is unlikely that any upgrade of the Newark Northern Relief Road to cater for growth within Newark would be good value for money. Therefore, the only solution would be a new Southern bypass linking the A46 at Farndon with the A1 at Balderton. Since the scheme is not listed as a regional transport investment priority either as a local or trunk road in RSS8, it is highly unlikely to gain funding within the next 20 years. Any such scheme would therefore have to be privately funded and adopted by the County Council as a principal road".**
- 7.9 The Catesby Property Group and its Consortium partners have put forward proposals for a sustainable urban extension to the south of Newark on non-Green Belt land, to incorporate a Southern Relief Road, which would be wholly funded by the private sector.

## **8. Sustainability**

- 8.1 The objectives of the Government's 'Sustainable Communities Plan' and 'Homes for All' involve raising the quality of life in our communities through increasing prosperity and reducing

inequalities. The key aspect of achieving these objectives within the District is to improve the economic performance of the area by attracting and retaining a high proportion of economically active people. This requires providing the right number of jobs and housing in the most sustainable locations.

- 8.2 As demonstrated above, Newark's status as a Sub Regional Centre with both current and emerging RSS8, indicates its ability to accommodate growth in a sustainable manner being recognised by the 2004 EiP Panel as a large settlement, a primary shopping and service centre, with good market prospects and employment opportunities and good and improving transport connections. Focussing accelerated growth in such a location therefore provides the right circumstances to deliver a sustainable urban extension to Newark, where it can be served by existing and enhanced pedestrian, cycle and public transport facilities.
- 8.3 Alongside the delivery of a mix of housing and employment opportunities adjacent to a primary urban area, proposals for the south of Newark have also recognised the need to improve the community infrastructure of the District. For example, Newark Sports Development Trust has indicated interest in the provision of a Multi Sports Hub on land to the south of Newark (copy of letter enclosed as **Appendix 8**), due to an identified need to improve the leisure facilities in the Newark area, which has steadily declined in both quantity and quality over recent years. The Multi Sports Hub would provide facilities for a range of sports which are currently underprovided for within the area, thereby assisting in improving the quality of life of the District's community. The proposals also include the provision of a 40 hectare Country Park to the south of the Southern Relief Road, providing further enhancements to the quality of life for the local community.
- 8.4 Another key element which is a high priority for partners of the bid proposal will be to achieve high quality, energy efficient and sustainable development. The District has a good track record of achieving such aims through the development of the Sherwood Energy Village for example. This involved the regeneration of a 36 hectare former colliery site to the west of the district with a mixed use scheme including industry, housing, recreation and education. The concept for the development has been based on energy efficiency, the promotion of renewable energy and biodiversity and won the accolade of Enterprising Britain 2005. Any proposals for growth to the south of Newark can therefore benefit from the knowledge and experience gained in terms of promoting more energy efficient housing and employment floorspace.
- 8.5 Another successful example is the Newark Riverside Project. In recent years, Newark town centre and riverside, and their surrounds have been the subject of a number of award winning regeneration and environmental initiatives, which have greatly improved the environmental character of central Newark and its riverside environment, with the leisure potential of the River Trent running through the town being greatly enhanced. However, tracts of underused land remain alongside the Trent, to the north of the town centre, and the enhanced growth opportunities offered by New Growth Point status would continue to support major regeneration initiatives in central Newark over the next decade, bringing a new dimension to the centre of Newark, linking physical regeneration of the riverside with the improvement of economic fortunes of the most deprived wards of the town. The project has received a number of awards including the English Partnerships 'Award for Partnership in Regeneration' in 2002 and BURAs 'Best Practice in Regeneration Award' and 'The Waterways Renaissance Award' in 2003.

## 9. **9.0 Funding**

9.1 This bid does not include any request for initial project funding as the partnership established with the private sector will enable the leverage of private funding to address the primary barrier to development, the delivery of the Southern Relief Road. However, there may be a future need for funding over the period of growth.

9.2 Funding requirements over the period of growth may include the following:

- Scoping studies;
- Assistance with Flood Mitigation measures;
- Provision of local link roads.

## 10. **Delivery**

10.1 The delivery of accelerated growth at Newark clearly needs to be supported by the new planning regime to avoid any potential delays. There is also clear benefit for the bid proposal being progressed by a single Local Planning Authority, in partnership with relevant landowners and supported by Nottinghamshire County Council, thereby avoiding any potential conflict between decision makers. All parties will therefore benefit from a shared vision in achieving the objectives of the bid.

10.2 The delivery of accelerated growth is considered to be assisted by the timely review of the Regional Strategy for the East Midlands (RSS8), which is currently at a key stage, with the launch of a Draft Regional Plan due in September 2006. Both the District Council and members of the landowners' consortium for the south of Newark have been fully engaged in promoting Newark and Sherwood as a focus for growth at all stages in the review of RSS8 to date.

10.3 The next key stages in the review of RSS8 are as follows:

- Northern Sub Regional Strategy Workshop (to identify preferred housing options for the two Housing Market Areas) – 9<sup>th</sup> June 2006
- Draft Regional Plan – 28<sup>th</sup> September 2006
- Examination in Public – May 2007
- Publication of Panel Report – Mid 2007
- Issue of Final Regional Plan – Late 2007/Early 2008

10.4 The Newark and Sherwood Local Development Framework is closely tracking the review of RSS8. The preparation of a Core Strategy is well advanced with an Issues and Options Paper having been published in October 2005, which has ensured that key issues regarding growth within the District have been identified. A Preferred Options version is likely to be published in September 2007, following advancement of the review of RSS8, with adoption expected in March 2008. A Site Allocations DPD is likely to be progressed and adopted by August 2009.

10.5 The timetable for establishing a supportive planning framework for accelerated growth within the District will therefore be well advanced over the next couple of years allowing the submission of a planning application for the development south of Newark to be made during 2008/2009.

- 10.6 During the 2-3 year period required to confirm the planning policy framework for development to 2026, the growth identified for the District within the current RSS8 will to continue to be delivered. In terms of housing supply for instance, 2,900 dwellings currently have planning permission and, based on an annual completion rate of 642 dwellings, provides for a supply of at least 4.5 years, without making an allowance for future windfall sites.
- 10.7 Finally, the Consortium landowners control the land required to deliver the Southern Relief Road and this provides certainty in terms of delivering a key strategic infrastructure improvement that will benefit both the District and the wider Region.

## 11. Contacts

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