

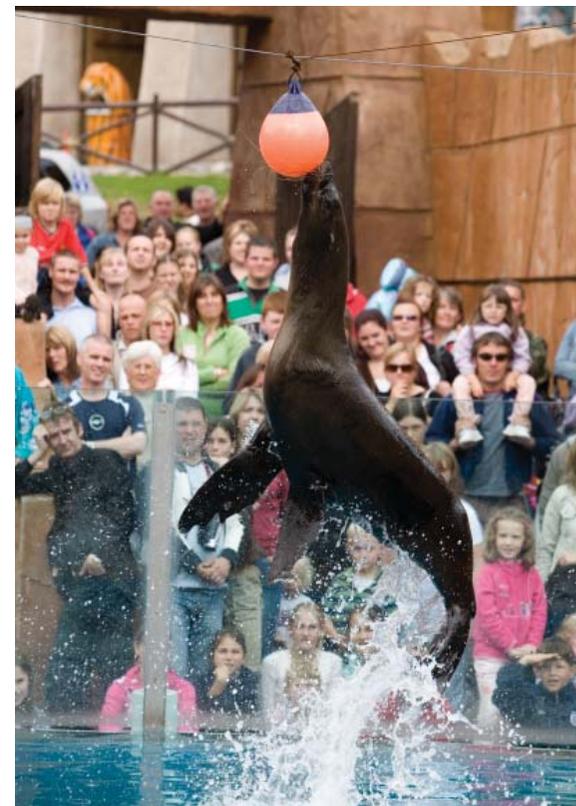
KIDDERMINSTER PROSPECTUS

'Connecting Kidderminster'

January 2008

SCOPING PAPER





in & around
Kidderminster



KIDDERMINSTER PROSPECTUS 2007

'Connecting Kidderminster' by working together

SCOPING PAPER

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1. BACKGROUND

'Connecting Kidderminster' is about aligning regeneration here with the West Midlands Regional Economic Strategy. Linking the town's potential with its opportunities in order to connect with the success of the wider region.

Kidderminster in context with Stourport & Bewdley: 'Three Towns Woven Together'

The Wyre Forest District consists of a complementary network of towns and service centres. The three core towns of Kidderminster, Stourport and Bewdley are roughly equidistant and no more than three miles apart. The District has a predominantly urban population with approximately 85% of its 98,000

residents living in of the three towns. With a population of more than 55,000, Kidderminster is recognised as a Strategic Centre and Local Regeneration Area in the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy. This underlines the crucial role that the town plays in the wider area.

In recent years Bewdley, Stourport-on-Severn and the rural west of the Wyre Forest District have benefited from regional support through the Market Towns and Rural Regeneration Zone. However, Kidderminster has had no strategic fit within the Regional Economic Strategy and as such, the Regional Development Agency has not been able to offer the same degree of support to the town.

Wyre Forest District Council adopted an Economic Development and Regeneration Strategy for Kidderminster in 2004. Supported by the Government Office for the West Midlands and Advantage West Midlands, the Strategy highlights a number of significant challenges facing the town including low household incomes and low skill levels and recognises the potential opportunities for economic, social and environmental regeneration within town.

The strategic case for Kidderminster is recognised in the revised West Midlands Economic Strategy (published by Advantage West Midlands in December 2007), with the town identified within the



spatial focus as a 'town going through an economic restructure'. Kidderminster contains acute pockets of deprivation that are amongst the 10% most deprived in the UK. The North Worcestershire town's manufacturing past is particularly associated with the manufacture of carpets and in some ways the town has much in common with the nearby Black Country. Neighbourhood programmes have evolved to address deprivation issues, namely the Horsefair, Broadwaters and Greenhill Partnership and Oldington and Foley Park Pathfinder.

Ultimately, the Prospectus will provide a community vision to regenerate Kidderminster. The programmes contained within the prospectus will then inform the Local Development Framework (LDF) Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan. It will inform and be informed by

the emerging LDF Core Strategy and reviews of the Local Transport Plan. It will also support the emerging Sustainable Community Strategy and Worcestershire Partnership's Local Area Agreement.

In all instances any regeneration blueprint will need to be developed in partnership with the wider community including the landowners, potential developers, major funders and delivery agencies such as Advantage West Midlands. This will ensure that the vision is grounded in reality.

Our Vision for Kidderminster is: -

“A town that recognises its role within the region; it has a strong and sustainable economy; household incomes are at the regional average and it enables people can fulfil their potential and develop throughout their lives in a safe, attractive and healthy environment.

This will be achieved through: -

- the physical regeneration of both the town centre and other identified areas;
- developing underused and vacant sites into high quality employment areas, attracting new companies;
- complementing surrounding

attractions by encouraging people to visit and stay in the town;

- improving educational attainment and skill levels to enable local people to take advantage of new employment opportunities; and
- connecting people to economic opportunity, accessibility, skills and training
- tackling health, education and housing inequalities”

In order for the District Council and its local partners to play a full role in delivering the revised Regional Economic Strategy it is essential that we are able to demonstrate the vision and capacity to deliver our Strategy for the town.

Partners, including WFDC, WCC, Wyre Forest Matters LSP, Horsefair, Broadwaters and Greenhill Partnership and Oldington and Foley Park Pathfinder, have agreed to publish a 'Regeneration Prospectus' for Kidderminster that will be about working together to:

- identify key challenges, opportunities and programmes to deliver real change on the ground;
- provide a clearer vision and framework for delivering regeneration;

- provide a focus for all partners and so ensure complementary programmes and assist in joining up partnership initiatives across the town and surrounding areas;



- provide a basis for attracting additional private and public sector investment and resources into the area

The Prospectus will be a promotional 'brochure', containing artists' impressions and graphics that will help bring the vision to life. Urban designers and architects will be brought in to help. However, the end product will be a live tool for delivering regeneration and will tackle some of the key challenges such as addressing any obstacles and barriers to regeneration and development.

2. PURPOSE OF SCOPING PAPER

Before embarking on the preparation of the Prospectus it is worth considering the meaning of 'Regeneration'. Taken literally, it is about re-organising and breathing new life into the town through a process that often has a physical manifestation. However, it covers a wide variety of issues and requires a co-ordinated approach. No one agency, person or body can deliver effective 'regeneration' in isolation... it is about facilitating joint working and bringing together the right people and resources. This applies to providing the framework and delivering improvements.

The Prospectus is a key opportunity to encourage partners both within the district and across the region within the private and public sectors to get behind Kidderminster

and recognise its potential.

It will be prepared in three parts:-

- i) to establish context and rationale for undertaking the prospectus;
- ii) to "scope" i.e. establish the role and function of the Prospectus including the various opportunities, sites, and challenges and consult on them with key stakeholders and partners (ie the purpose of this paper)
- iii) to undertake wider initial public consultation and facilitate wider discussion within the community.
- iv) to bring the ideas to life through the preparation of a 'glossy brochure' ('the Prospectus') that helps to promote the town and its vision.

Consideration will be given to other research undertaken locally, such as the anticipated consultation feedback on the revised LDF Core Strategy Issues and Options Paper and work being carried out on behalf of local partnerships.

It is envisaged that the proposed consultation stages for the Prospectus will coincide and be jointly undertaken as appropriate with future consultation in connection with the LDF Core Strategy.

3. CONTEXT BUILDING

a) *Sub-national Review of Economic Development & Regeneration*

The government has announced the preliminary findings of its review into the delivery of Economic Development and Regeneration. This will lead to the devolution of decision making to the regions and then to the sub-regions. A single Regional Strategy, for economy, housing, environment and transport, to be prepared by Advantage West Midlands, will influence the spending plans and project funding of national, regional and local organizations. This further highlights the need for the District Council and its partners to articulate needs and ambitions in the context of regional priorities.

b) *Worcestershire Partnership and Local Area Agreement (LAA)*

The Local Strategic Partnership covering the Worcestershire administrative boundary, the Worcestershire Partnership brings together a wide range of public and private sector stakeholders. The Local Area Agreement will be crucial to funding and delivering projects on the ground and together these will take on added significance following the implementation of the sub-national review (see above).

c)  *Wyre Forest Matters & the Sustainable Community Strategy*

The Local Strategic Partnership covering the Wyre Forest District administrative boundary, Wyre Forest Matters brings together stakeholders operating specifically within the District. The Sustainable Community Strategy for the District is currently under review and in articulating the communities needs and expectations will provide the top-level policy framework for all other plans and strategies that follow, including the Kidderminster Regeneration Prospectus.

d)  *Local Development Framework*

Wyre Forest District Council's Local Development Scheme outlines the programme for delivering the Council's Local Development Framework (LDF). In essence this will provide a spatial development blue print for the District and will address issues across the economic, environmental and social spectrum. It will provide a framework for delivering the Council's ambitious Regeneration agenda, including the Kidderminster Regeneration Prospectus. The first document in the LDF will be the Core Strategy which is currently being prepared and has been subject to initial 'Issues and Options' consultation. Work is about to commence on the

Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan and Site Allocations Development Plan Documents to follow closely behind the Core Strategy. The Prospectus will inform the preparation of these documents.

4. INITIAL SCOPE

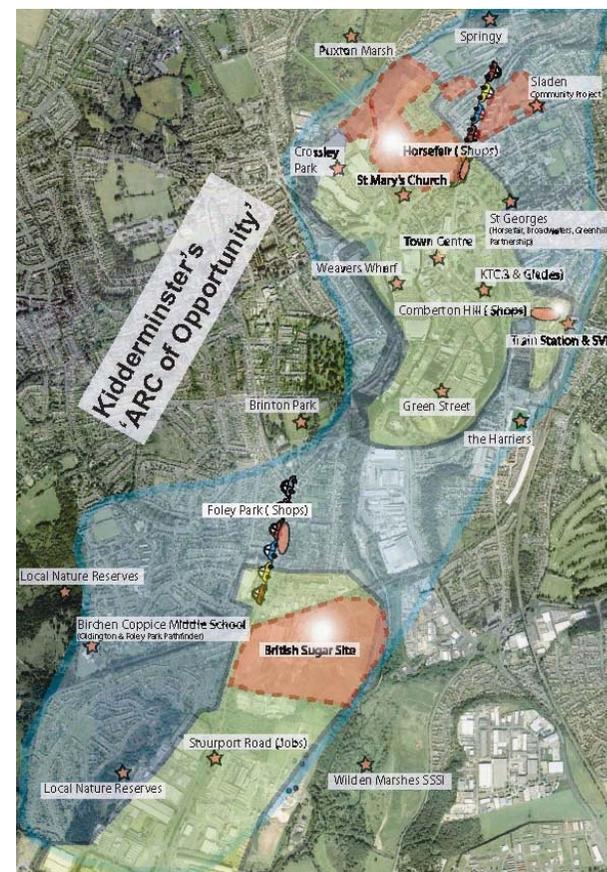
The overall aim of the Prospectus is:

"To support the delivery of the West Midlands Economic Strategy by establishing a set of deliverable action programmes for the regeneration of Kidderminster that complements on-going work in Stourport and Bewdley and ensures the town fulfils its economic potential whilst contributing towards the success of the region and meeting the needs and expectations of residents, business leaders and visitors within the town and surrounding communities."

In providing a suite of 'regeneration' programmes, the prospectus will look beyond the delivery of economic prosperity to issues concerning the environment and social context of the town. Issues including the identity, brand and image of Kidderminster will also need to be considered.

The Prospectus will take forward the Council's Economic Development and Regeneration Strategy for Kidderminster

adopted in 2005 to develop a more detailed delivery plan. It will complement the work of the three key partnerships in the town i.e. Horsefair, Broadwaters and Greenhill Partnership; Kidderminster Town Centre Partnership; and Oldington and Foley Park Neighbourhood Pathfinder. Rather than 'strategising', the Prospectus aims to focus on 'making it happen' and will be a live tool for delivering regeneration.



The principal focus on the three local partnerships highlights an 'Arc of Opportunity' aligned closely with the A451, Stourport to Stourbridge road which runs through the heart of Kidderminster. A number of the neighbourhoods in this corridor suffer from acute deprivation.

Spatial Foci:

- Kidderminster & its immediate hinterland
- Oldington & Foley Park
- Horsefair, Broadwaters and Greenhill Partnership
- Other Neighbourhoods
- Kidderminster Town Centre

Theme Foci:

- Visitor Economy: Safari Park (500k+ visitors pa); Severn Valley Railway [SVR] (250k+ pa)
- Retail & Leisure Economy
- Business, Jobs & Prospects
- Urban Design & Public Art
- Skills & Education
- People & Community
- Housing Opportunities
- Environment
- Transport

In line with the Regional Economic Strategy focus on place; business; people & powerful voice, to make the necessary step change in Kidderminster a particular emphasis might be placed on:

1) 'Place making' - *Urban Design and Public Art* to enhance the image of the town and create a better environment for residents, businesses and visitors e.g. the possibility of a 'gateways' public art project* (see Appendix A);

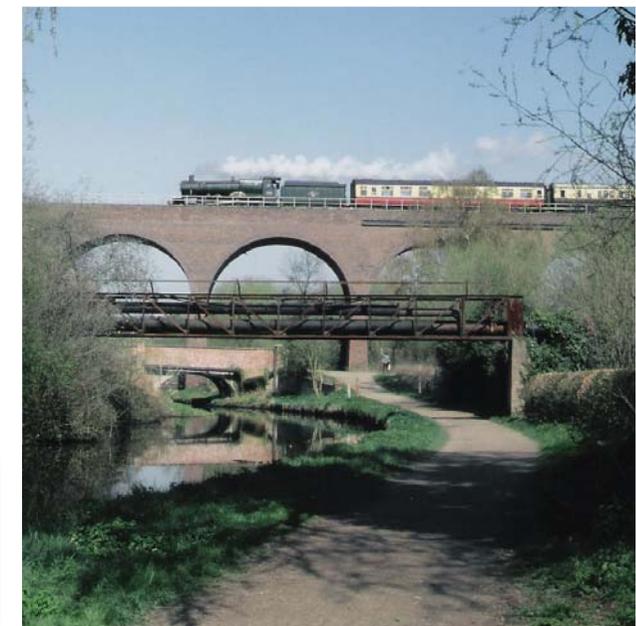
2) Transport including links into and out of the area; Stourport Road; town centre Ring Road; Comberton Hill & Blackwell Street; public transport & railway station;

3) 'A Place for Business' - providing for the modern day needs of existing employers whilst attracting new start-ups and developing an enterprise economy;

4) People - Learning & Skills development at the heart of the regeneration agenda by working closely with the schools and college to align future employment opportunities with people skills e.g. the 'Sladen Project'. Linking learning with creative industries and the arts.

5) Powerful Voice - by working together to raise the profile of Kidderminster and surrounding area and help establish the town's potential on a regional stage.

Gateway for thousands of visitors - home to the SVR terminus & museum and with West Midland Safari Park immediately adjacent to the urban area. Can Kidderminster tap in to the visitor economy?



*Could innovative public art help to draw attention to the town's regeneration opportunities? This will be symbolic of a new confidence in Kidderminster.

Opportunities will be taken to work with local partners including Kidderminster College to develop creative arts and industries in the town. A multi-media approach will be taken to promoting the town's potential where possible using the emerging skills and knowledge of the town's students.

5. KEY ISSUES & QUESTIONS

As has been highlighted there are three key geographic foci for this Prospectus.

Parts of the **Horsefair, Broadwaters and Greenhill** area are amongst the 10% most deprived in the Country. Early successes for the Partnership include the appointment of a Community Safety Officer. Following a scrutiny of the Partnership in 2007 it was recommended that:-

"the District Council develop a clear position statement for the economic regeneration and neighbourhood renewal of the Horsefair area of Kidderminster, to ensure there is a strategic and co-ordinated approach between all partners thus maximising potential resources investment".

That is one of the principal aims of the Prospectus.

Unlike the Oldington & Foley Park Ward, there is perhaps a much clearer need for physical regeneration in Horsefair, Broadwaters and Greenhill in order to provide a better quality environment for residents and business.

There will need to be a strong relationship between the area and the wider town centre economy and environment. Better links will also need to be established with the Oldington & Foley Park Ward and specifically the Stourport Road Employment Corridor to provide access to jobs. Connecting the area into the public transport network and high frequency bus corridors may provide part of the solution.

There is a need for a joined-up multi-agency approach to regeneration in Horsefair, Broadwaters and Greenhill. This includes looking at urban design, public spaces, access to sport, leisure and recreation, traffic, housing, services, transport and highways in addition to crime and safety and health issues. Many issues cut across traditional professional disciplines such as health, air quality management and transport. The Prospectus will help to bring the community and relevant agencies together in an attempt to find workable solutions to address the key challenges.

Example Case Study 1: Churchfields Business Park:

The numerous properties in the former Tomkinsons and Georgian carpet factories, no longer meet modern industry requirements. Now known as 'Churchfields Business Park', the area is in temporary use on short-term tenancies and is of sufficient scale to deliver transformational change for the area. The redevelopment opportunity is identified in the emerging LDF Core Strategy. The Churchfields site may provide up to 10 hectares for new development

Q. Could this area provide a possible bypass for Blackwell Street linking the Ring Road and Stourbridge Roads via Churchfields? (see figure 1 below).

Q. Could we envisage a traffic free future for Blackwell Street?

This would create a more conducive shopping environment in the Horsefair whilst addressing the Air Quality Monitoring Area (AQMA). Further research will need to be undertaken with Worcestershire County Council and the land owners.

The business units at Churchfields have provided valuable temporary low cost workspace for new and existing businesses. Given the likelihood of major redevelopment, the prospectus will also

need to consider the role of the former British Sugar site and other business addresses that may accommodate displaced businesses.

Unlike the other two spatial foci, **Kidderminster Town Centre** does not currently have a significant residential population. However, with major proposals emerging within and on the edge of the centre this has the potential to change.

The Town Centre Partnership launched in 1994 is primarily focussed on supporting the town centre as a business location and shopping centre. The Partnership is itself going through a transformation with a new Business Plan, structure and a new Town Centre Manager. This Post will be delivered through an innovative joint venture with the owners of Weavers Wharf shopping centre.

In recent years Kidderminster Town Centre has experienced significant levels of development and this looks set to continue. The town centre will remain a key focus for the service sector including shopping, commerce, commercial leisure, education, learning and the arts, offices and potentially tourism.

Whilst retail and new homes may be expected to underpin many redevelopment schemes, education and commercial leisure development will also have an important role.

Q. Could redevelopment of the former Littlewoods store in Worcester Street lead to better links to Bromsgrove Street Car Park?

Big questions such as traffic circulation and public transport accessibility will need to be considered and a consultation event to specifically explore these issues will be undertaken during February.

In many ways, **the Oldington and Foley Park area** has a very different set of challenges. Perhaps this is best highlighted by the startling statistic that educational attainment in one part of the Ward has been ranked 16th most deprived out of more than 32,000 Super Output Areas in England & Wales.

The Stourport Road Employment Corridor (SREC) lies in the Oldington and Foley Park Ward. The delivery of major redevelopment schemes including the former British Sugar site; the development of skills; and alignment of these with the needs of local businesses may provide an important programme within the Prospectus.

One of the key challenges for the SREC will be addressing congestion. The suggestion of a 'Hoo Brook Link' may present a possible solution that needs to be explored further. Such a road link would provide a direct route between the A451 and A449 and so would provide better access to the



Worcester Street (KTC.3)... all set to change.



M5 (South), whilst by-passing the traffic congestion of the Stourport Road.

Q. Could the Hoo Brook Link increase the attractiveness of the SREC and the British Sugar site to local employers or inward investors who may be looking to expand or relocate to Kidderminster?

6. CAPACITY AUDITING

The Prospectus will highlight the resources and capacity of the various partner organisations and the wider community to help deliver the regeneration agenda. Where necessary it will address any capacity issues relating to regeneration and renewal. The co—ordination of this regeneration programme will be guided by the Regeneration and Economic Prosperity Section of the District Council working closely with partners including the Oldington and Foley Park Neighbourhood Pathfinder.

Engaging with the wider community to understand issues, needs and expectations will involve close working with Wyre Forest Matters Local Strategic Partnership, the Oldington & Foley Park Pathfinder and Kidderminster Town Centre Partnership. The precise nature of the participatory process for community groups has yet to be determined but will be worked up in agreement with the local partnership groups during January and

February with a view to engaging with the public during February and March 2008. The information gathered here will provide invaluable background to inform a subsequent consultation events (see below).

7. TIMETABLE

PART 1:	SCOPING
Feb - Apr 2008	Public Consultation on scoping paper
Apr - May 2008	Consultation responses considered
PART 2:	FINALISATION
June – Jul 2008	Draft Prospectus to Communities and Regeneration Committee and Cabinet
Sept - Oct 2008	Public Consultation on final draft prospectus and action plan
November 2008	Adoption of Kidderminster Regeneration Prospectus

8. PROPOSED CONSULTEES

Public/ Voluntary Sector

- WFDC Members
- WFDC Officers
- Worcestershire County Council (*Highways, Public Transport, Planning and Economic Development*)
- AWM
- GOWM
- Town and Parish Councils
- Kidderminster Town Centre Partnership
- Local Strategic Partnerships
- Businesses
- Oldington & Foley Park Pathfinder
- Horsefair, Broadwaters, Greenhill P'ship
- Kidderminster College
- West Mercia Constabulary
- North Worcestershire Primary Care Trust
- Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust

Private Sector

- Chamber of Commerce
- Businesses
- Land Owners
- Developers
- Transport Planners
- Architects
- Designers
- Ecologists
- Property, Planning and Regen Agents
- Transport Operators

9. PARTICIPATION

A major series of consultation events will be held during March & April 2008 that will bring together leading professionals with conferences and workshops on:

- Horsefair (Urban Design, Development Potential, Access & Movement)
- Town Centre (Urban Design, Development Potential)
- Town Centre – Movement (Traffic & Transport)
- Comberton Hill – (Urban Design, Development Potential, Links to Town Centre)
- Meeting the needs of Big Business (Site potential, Access & Movement)
 - Stourport Road Employment Corridor
 - Lea Castle & North Kidderminster
- Oldington&FoleyParkNeighbourhoods (Urban Design, Infill and remodelling, Access & Movement)
- Public Art – Urban Design and links to big impact developments
- ‘Nature at Heart’ – Urban Design, Biodiversity and Regeneration

- Transport – connections to the wider region and beyond



- Tourism... How can Kidderminster complement the surrounding tourism offer?
- Health Inequalities
- Education & Learning
- Cultural Development
- Crime & Safety

A series of roadshows to encourage the community to get involved will also be held during March 2008.

10. RESPONDING

The purpose of this leaflet is to stimulate debate within the community and amongst the business, development interests and designers from the private, public and third sectors.

Comments, suggestions and ideas should be forwarded to:

Regeneration & Economic Prosperity Manager
 Wyre Forest District Council
 Duke House
 Clensmore Street
 Kidderminster
 DY10 2JX

Tel. 01562 732
 email:regeneration@wyreforestdc.gov.uk

Closing date for responses is:

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APPENDIX A Kidderminster Regeneration Prospectus

Possible Public Art Programme: Project (K1) Digital Gateways

1) *Project Aim:*

Focus on a number of key gateways into Kidderminster and incorporate contemporary public art involving lighting and/ or relevant projected images to secure public art as an integral part of a new aesthetic for the town.

Key messages 'welcome to Kidderminster' and 'looking to the future'.

The project could provide a high publicity launch of a radically new regeneration programme for Kidderminster.

2) *Background:*

The Kidderminster Economic Regeneration Strategy was adopted by the District Council in 2004. This document highlights, amongst many things, the need to improve the key gateways into Kidderminster town centre.

During 2008, the District Council and its partners including Worcestershire County Council, Advantage West Midlands and local partnerships including Wyre Forest Matters Local Strategic Partnership will be working together to prepare Kidderminster

Regeneration Prospectus. This will focus specifically on the three core opportunity areas which are amongst the 10% most deprived in the UK and subject to the following neighbourhood programmes:

- Oldington & Foley Park Pathfinder;
- Kidderminster Town Centre Partnership; and
- Horsefair, Broadwaters and Greenhill Partnership

The above areas also contain the main approaches into Kidderminster Town Centre from the north, south and east and also via rail. The 'gateways' project will be particularly relevant to the 'prospectus'.

The Regional Economic Strategy was revised by AWM during 2007 and this highlighted the case for Kidderminster as part of a new spatial focus that recognised 'towns undergoing economic restructure'.

3) *Gateways:*

Three key opportunity sites have been identified at important approaches to Kidderminster Town Centre:

- a) Horsefair – the A451 Stourbridge Road – key entrance from the Black Country where the 'Horsefair Triangle' site is subject to a £12k s.106 contribution secured through a neighbouring redevelopment.

- b) Comberton Hill (otherwise known as Station Hill) – the A448 from Bromsgrove, Severn Valley Railway and main station where a recent contemporary building and adjacent modern building provide areas of 'blank canvas' in their built form.; and



- c) Stourport Road – British Sugar Factory site is an important 24ha regeneration site where two former silos provide one of the town's most recognisable landmarks and large areas of blank canvas.



With funding secured for a small project in the Horsefair, informal discussions have commenced with building owners in Comberton Hill and the former British Sugar to consider the possible use of their buildings for public art purposes.

Whilst lighting and/ projected images can prove highly visual... thought will also need to be given to sound and touch to deliver a truly interactive set of pieces.

4) **Funding Partners:**

The District Council has successfully negotiated a s.106 contribution from developers in the Horsefair. The intention will be to secure public art works at the above sites through a combination of sources, possibly including further s.106 contributions in the case of town centre sites. In the spirit of the 'regeneration prospectus' this will be a partnership project.

Possible partners may include:

- Advantage West Midlands
- West Midlands Arts Council
- Worcestershire County Council
- Oldington & Foley Park Neighbourhood Pathfinder
- Job Centre Plus & Connexions

- Kidderminster College/ Learning & Skills Council
- Severn Valley Railway
- West Midlands Safari Park
- Henderson Global Investors (owners of Weavers Wharf).

5) **Related Projects**

- Kidderminster Economic Regeneration Strategy
- Kidderminster Regeneration Prospectus
- Kidderminster Arts Festival
- Wyre Forest District Sustainable Community Strategy
- Worcestershire Local Area Agreement
- West Midlands Economic Strategy
- Horsefair, Broadwater and Greenhill Partnership Action Plan

- d) Town Centre... opportunities may exist to illuminate key town centre landmarks e.g. the former factory chimney associated with the Weavers Wharf development.