

5: PRIORITIES, DELIVERY AND IMPLEMENTATION

This is a long term Strategic Development Framework for the renaissance of Halifax. Not all of these projects and programmes can be implemented immediately or in the next few years. But the purpose of the Strategic Development Framework is to provide a basis on which potential can be protected and decisions on smaller scale proposals made so that they make the greatest contribution to wider objectives.

Funding its recommendations is the key to implementation. Yorkshire Forward have made it clear that they will consider proposals for their investment if they are part of a comprehensive plan - fulfilled by this renaissance Strategic Development Framework - and if their investment can be balanced by funds from other sources.

This Strategic Development Framework is the first step in assessing where such contributions might come from and on what scale.

This is a comprehensive Strategic Development Framework that reveals the interdependence of sites, projects and proposals to achieve a wider range of objectives. In some cases the Strategic Development Framework reaches conclusions that are capable of implementation without further delay.

In other instances the Strategic Development Framework provides a brief for further, more detailed work. In all instances the Strategic Development Framework forms the basis for a bid to Yorkshire Forward for project related funding.

Early gains are a critical part of the Strategic Development Framework, decisions backed by action that demonstrate that the Strategic Development Framework is deliverable and will make a real difference to the future of the town. In this, there is an advantage that two of the key development sites are being promoted for development now, and one of them is already mainly in public ownership, allowing this Strategic Development Framework to be influential in the form, content and timing of development. This begins to frame project priorities:

SHORT TERM RESOLUTION

01 Broad Street Site

The proposals contained in this Strategic Development Framework do not constrain the development of the site nor the range of potential uses but they do demonstrate how the site, owned and promoted for development by the Council, can make a substantial contribution to the achievement of wider objectives, in particular:

- The improvement of Broad Street/Northgate reduction of road space in terms of facilities for pedestrian crossing and the creation of active building frontages to the road
- The creation of new connections that will better integrate Dean Clough
- The provision of new activities, particularly retail and leisure, not capable of being accommodated elsewhere in the town centre.

This is a high priority project and should be influenced by the Renaissance Strategic Development Framework.

02 Sites in the Valley Bottom

There are areas of vacant and derelict land in the Valley Bottom, centred on the former gasworks site owned by Transco, which are being promoted for development. The objectives set by the renaissance Strategic Development Framework are clear - that these sites should be used to form the nucleus of a new residential neighbourhood around the Parish Church and with the Hebble Brook as the centrepiece of a new linear park. Negotiations should be started with site owners to secure this future for the sites at the earliest opportunity, with the fallback position of public acquisition, funded by the Council or the Regional Development Agency.

This is a high priority project to be progressed as a matter of urgency, in accordance with the Strategic Development Framework.

MEDIUM TERM RESOLUTION

03 Piece Hall

The proposals in this Strategic Development Framework are at a very early stage of development. However they propose a set of radical development principles that should be explored further, as a matter of urgency, preferably with the involvement of developer interests. Their current ownership means that the future of the Piece Hall is in the Council's hands, but it is also clear that any development strategy for it will require financial, technical and political support and Yorkshire Forward and English Heritage have a critical role to play in partnership with the Council. Working together an early priority should be to identify a committed and innovative developer/investor who is willing to secure the best possible future for this unique building, not just as an object in isolation but for the benefit of the town as a whole.

A medium priority project requiring early discussion between prospective partners.

04 Somerset House and George Square

Yorkshire Forward have helped the Council acquire the freehold and leasehold interests in Somerset House to finally unify ownership. They are also promoting, through Public Arts, an initiative called "The Green" that has developed out of the turfing of the promenade at Scarborough during the summer of 2002. This is aimed at taking a public thoroughfare that has significant potential as a public space and transforming it for a limited period into a new public space. It will take time to develop and secure detailed proposals for Somerset House, proposals that do justice to its potential. But discussions have already commenced on the possibility of transforming George Square as part of "The Green" programme. It would be advantageous if the discussions about the future of Somerset House could reach the point of real commitment ready for announcement when the space immediately adjoining enjoys the start of its transformation.

A medium priority for action but with urgent need of detailed discussions.

05 Securing Pedestrian Priority

More work is required to make real the outlined changes to the town centre street network. A model for future traffic and public transport movements in the town centre is required to enable sensible decisions to be taken about shifting the priority towards pedestrians while maintaining the excellent accessibility enjoyed in the town centre. In some places these proposals will run in parallel with other projects (Broad Street, Winding Road to Square Road, George Square) while in others they will form part of a distinct project package.

A medium priority for action requiring early consideration of the potential and constraints.