

Wellingborough 2020 Vision

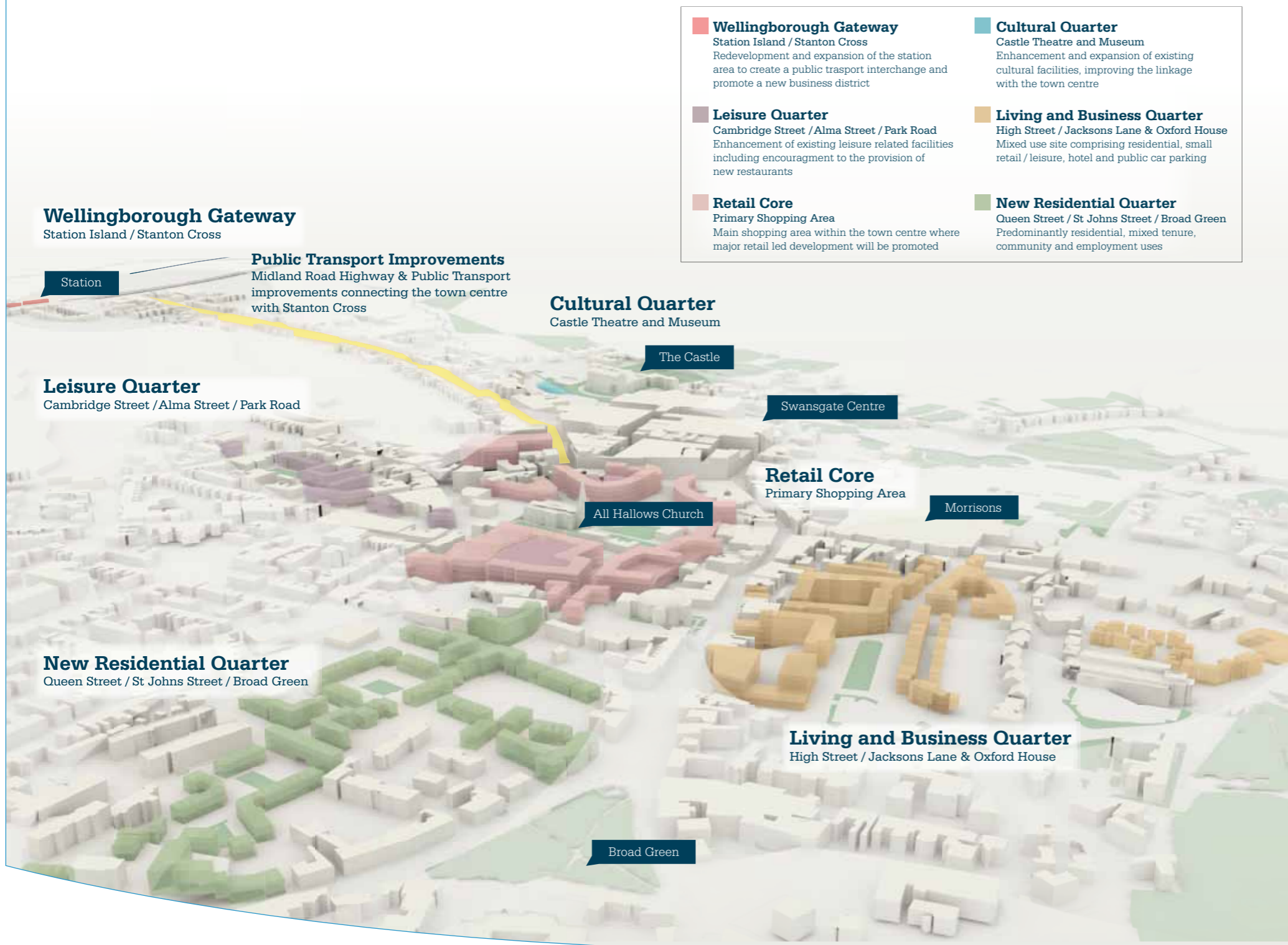
**A strategy for regeneration and
growth in Wellingborough**



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NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Wellingborough's 2020 Future Regeneration



Foreword

This Vision Document has been developed to promote the ambition of the Borough of Wellingborough up to and beyond the year 2020. The vision will help to influence plans with the Housing & Communities Agency, future funding applications etc. This is not a delivery plan but a document to highlight Councils vision for the Borough. It recognises that the town of Wellingborough and its surrounding area is set to grow significantly and much work has been accomplished over the last few years in planning for this development.

Now is the time to implement these plans to ensure that the regeneration and economic vitality of Wellingborough keeps pace with other local centres and that sustainable communities are supported and nourished. We must ensure that the new developments generate sufficient infrastructure, jobs and neighbourhood facilities to provide opportunities for existing and new residents and businesses seeking to make Wellingborough their home.



Lyn Martin-Bennison
Chief Executive



Councillor Lora Lawman
The Mayor of the Borough of Wellingborough



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In proposing a programme of regeneration and development for Wellingborough, it is important to understand the context for its delivery.



With its central location and excellent communications, Wellingborough is an attractive market town full of historical character that is well poised for growth.

The area has a history of rapid economic growth, most recently in the 60s and 70s when as an overspill for London's growing population, it experienced significant job creation and commercial expansion.

The Borough's population grew from 44,000 to 60,000 during this period and today stands at a figure in excess of 75,000.

As part of the Milton Keynes/ South Midlands Growth Area, Wellingborough has a major opportunity to gain community benefits from population growth and take advantage of public sector funding.

The 2020 Vision sets out the aspirations that the town has and what it seeks to achieve through further growth over the next 10 years.

At its heart, this strategy seeks to build upon the economic success of Wellingborough over the past decades whilst recognising the need to improve the image, perception and profile of the town.

The overriding objectives of the Vision are:

To create the right environment to attract higher value jobs, broadening the employment base to open up a wide range of new opportunities

To provide more shops and higher quality public realm, civic and leisure facilities in the town centre to stem the leakage of spending to other towns

To set the scene for major private sector development and enhance the town's existing historic assets

To promote Wellingborough as a place where people are proud to live, work and play

The Wellingborough 2020 Vision focuses on a plan of physical regeneration projects that will bring forward the level of change required to meet the community's aspirations and improve the quality of life for all.

The plan will help to deliver inclusive and sustainable communities delivering a clear approach to urban design and high quality public realm in Wellingborough.

It will help to address the community's needs, improving the quality of life for all through wider opportunities, better facilities and an enhanced environment.

Above all, it will ensure the long-term economic viability and commercial future of the Borough.



New Economic Reality

The case for regeneration and development?

The recession has unquestionably increased the imperative for attracting new jobs and investment to the Borough.

There is no time to be wasted in bringing forward a co-ordinated programme of regeneration to bring about comprehensive and positive change



Fundamental improvements in Wellingborough that residents would like to see pre-date the added challenges presented by the current economic climate.

These are:

- Better employment prospects in particular an increase in higher skilled opportunities
- A better town centre with improved shopping and leisure facilities
- Better schools and colleges to boost levels of qualifications
- Better housing options for all

Such positive change cannot be achieved without a programme of regeneration and development, meaning Wellingborough faces a choice. It can adapt, diversify and develop to become a more balanced and modern economy or run the risk of a deteriorating town centre and economic decline.

There is therefore no time to be wasted in bringing forward a co-ordinated programme of regeneration to bring about comprehensive and positive change.



Opposite page:

1. Wellingborough Town Centre
2. Hardwater Crossing

This page:

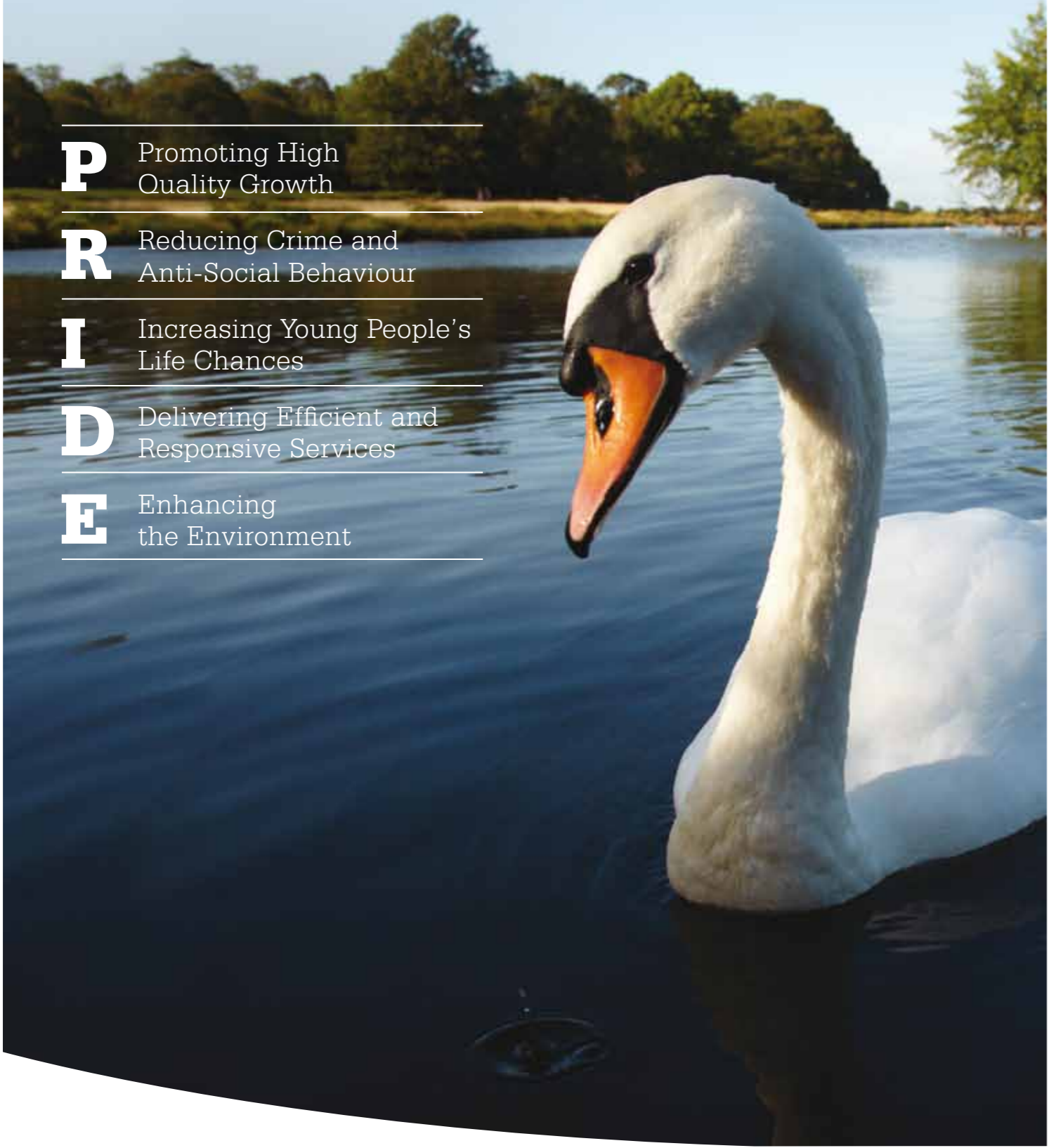
3. Improving schools
4. Redhill Farm Housing Development



A Shared Vision

Agreed with partners and produced in consultation with local residents and businesses, the Wellingborough 2020 Vision fully supports and shares the aims of the Wellingborough Partnership Sustainable Community Strategy as well as the Borough Council's strategic priorities encapsulated by its PRIDE objectives – Making Wellingborough a place to be proud of.

- P** Promoting High Quality Growth
- R** Reducing Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour
- I** Increasing Young People's Life Chances
- D** Delivering Efficient and Responsive Services
- E** Enhancing the Environment



Town Centre Challenge

Without a vibrant, busy and thriving town centre, it will be very difficult to achieve the other aspirations of the 2020 Vision.



Image:
High Street Regeneration Site Illustration – from Oxford Street

£2.7 million

of investment from the Government's Growth Fund, which supports the delivery of infrastructure in growth areas

In recent years, Wellingborough has slipped down the national ranking of shopping centres and it is not a destination of choice for retailing, entertainment or leisure.

Much work has already been completed on far reaching plans for the future of the town centre. Following extensive consultation with residents and businesses, Wellingborough's Town Centre Area Action Plan was assessed and duly approved by the Government in July 2009.



Town Centre Challenge Cont...



The Plan puts forward an ambitious strategy to deliver a major expansion of retail floorspace, together with high quality housing, cultural and community facilities. It balances this with the need to conserve the town's historic assets which shaped its character in the first place.

A Conservation Area Appraisal Supplementary Planning Document was adopted in March 2009 by the Borough Council and will assist with the protection and enhancement of the architectural character and historic fabric of the town centre in line with English Heritage guidance.

Key proposals and recommendations were made that included a substantial expansion of the existing Conservation Area boundary, which were subjected to rigorous consultation with local as well as statutory stakeholders.

Wellingborough is now making significant steps from planning to implementation. Large, strategic sites have already been acquired to ensure comprehensive phased redevelopment can take place over the next decade to create a town centre residents can be proud of.

Major improvements to principal roads, footpaths and other public spaces in Wellingborough are the focus of more than £2.7m of investment from the Government's Growth Fund, which supports the delivery of infrastructure in growth areas.

In addition to the Public Realm Strategy, this funding will deliver the infrastructure necessary to bring forward the development of a High Street Development site. This site will form the first phase of the regeneration of the town by providing scope for a mixed use development of housing, office and retail units.

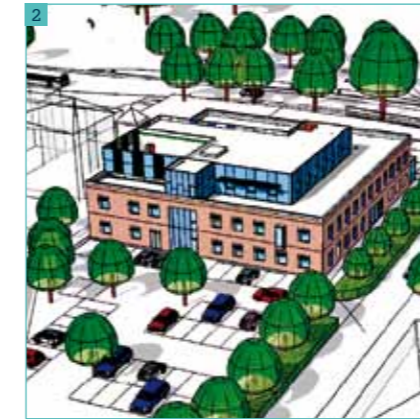
Future proposals exist for a second phase of redevelopment around the Market Square & Church Street (Retail Core) providing approximately 15-20,000 sq ft of additional retail floorspace including a landmark anchor store, a remodelled Market Square with Ideas Store (a combination of a new library with a wide range of other services including career support, training, meeting areas, a café and arts and leisure pursuits) and a pedestrianised environment along Church Street.

To improve the town's image and help conserve the feel of traditional shop frontages and listed buildings, a Heritage Shop Front Improvement programme will be actively developed to restore Wellingborough's Market Town appearance. The recent adoption of an extended Conservation Area and Shop Front Design Guide for the Town Centre will help to achieve this.

The creation of a Cultural Quarter within the town is being explored and will be centred on the Castle Theatre and Wellingborough Museum – another key goal of the Town Centre Area Action Plan.

Delivering New Infrastructure

The expansion of the town centre and corresponding growth in Wellingborough's population will not be sustainable without the timely provision of improvements to transport and community infrastructure.



The pressure of population growth on services and existing infrastructure such as roads, doctors, dentists and schools is a major concern for existing residents.

Over the next decade, a significant level of investment will focus on the delivery of major infrastructure improvements dedicated to increasing the quality of life for existing residents and increasing capacities to attract both new residents and new investors to the Borough.

Plans include the development of a Minor Injury Unit at the Isebrook Hospital to ensure local residents continue to receive the highest level of healthcare without the need to travel out of town.

Road improvements and traffic management measures are integral to the successful delivery of the 2020 Vision and the commencement of work on the Isham Bypass, as well as the Eastern Distributor Road to service the development of Stanton Cross, are of chief importance.

The Programme of Development (PoD) for North Northamptonshire sets the overarching case for infrastructure delivery in Wellingborough and the wider sub-region, identifying priority projects and interim solutions, where major financial impediments to delivery exist.

The basis of successful bids for Growth Fund, the PoD provides an integrated programme that will ensure infrastructure is delivered where it is needed and properly funded.

Opposite page:
1. Wellingborough Town Centre

This page:
2. Isebrook Hospital plan



Improving Skills and the Local Economy

Wellingborough has notable and specialised strengths across a range of sectors and is the location of choice for several major international companies including Bookers, Cummins, Hitachi Medical Systems, Krohne, Mahle, Ricoh, Scott Bader and TNT.



The town has historically depended on manufacturing, which has since been supplemented by significant investment from the logistics and financial services sectors attracted to Wellingborough's competitively priced accommodation and central location.

The time has come though for Wellingborough to diversify its economic base, to attract and create the sort of jobs that the young people of tomorrow will aspire to.

There are encouraging signs of a growing foothold in the creative and digital media industries with local companies at the forefront of internet technologies.

It is essential that new enterprise of this nature is supported through the development of a range of modern employment sites and premises as well as increased support for local people to learn the higher level skills required for better paid jobs.

Using a partnership approach, the Wellingborough 2020 Vision will advance a series of projects and initiatives including:

- A high quality business park to help cluster environmental and service industries. This will provide accommodation for more Research and Development facilities and stimulate better links with higher education Institutions including the University of Northampton and Tresham College of Further and Higher Education
- The development of an office quarter around the Station – 'Main Street', where national and international companies can reduce their cost bases but still have fantastic access to London, Europe and the rest of the Country

- Establishing a Business Improvement District for the town centre to provide additional and improved services for local businesses
- Implementing a place making marketing and communications strategy to improve the reputation of the town and attract future residents, new companies and encourage greater numbers of people to shop in the town
- Bringing forward a new Higher Education Campus within the Town Centre and access to university learning for North Northamptonshire

Housing & Communities for all

The long-term and lasting regeneration of Wellingborough, including the transformation of its town centre, will be driven by the new housing development that is planned for major sites located on the periphery of the town, including the Stanton Cross urban extension.

£17.4 million
invested in affordable homes in the Borough since April 2008

Planning permission has been approved for the mixed use, urban extension at Stanton Cross which will increase the size of the town by some 30 per cent.

The schemes will incorporate open spaces, parks, shops, restaurants, schools and community centres and a percentage of each development will be affordable housing. They will create whole new communities that will function as neighbourhoods in their own right but also integrate with the rest of Wellingborough.

The Borough Council is working with the local delivery vehicle North Northants Development Company and land owners to ensure new roads, schools and other essential infrastructure are in place so that these expansion areas are brought forward to the benefit of all residents and businesses in Wellingborough.

To promote the development of high quality homes, the Borough Council is working with the Homes and Communities Agency to advance better energy efficiency ratings and meet national standards set by the Code for Sustainable Homes. The Council also offers a full range of services to developers to assess and certify homes for the Code.

There is also the potential to pilot Eco-Home units on developments such as Stanton Cross to demonstrate the benefits of eco-home construction.

The Borough Council is working with the Homes and Communities Agency and Housing Associations to provide 133 affordable homes in the borough per year. These are built to meet national standards set by the Code for Sustainable Homes, providing eco-measures that are environmentally friendly and with lower energy costs, more affordable to run.

In Rural villages the Borough Council has a rolling programme of Housing Needs Surveys planned to be completed in partnership with Northants Rural Housing Association and village Parish Councils. The surveys identify the housing need in each village and lead to the provision of affordable housing for local people. The rolling programme is to be repeated every 5 years.

The 2020 Vision works in conjunction with the Wellingborough Sustainable Community Strategy. This was designed and written by the Borough Council and Wellingborough Partnership

(made up of partners from the public and third sector, to bring together the needs, interests and aspirations of local people).

It sets out an overall framework for improving the social, economic and environmental conditions in the Borough of Wellingborough. This Strategy will help to make the Borough a better place in which to live, learn, work and play – the place to be.

It takes into account the delivery of the growth in the Borough and will work to manage the opportunities that growth brings. It will make sure we take full advantage of these, whilst protecting the rich heritage already here.

The main aims of the Community Strategy are to:

- Give local communities the opportunity to voice their expectations, needs and priorities
- Co-ordinate and focus the activity of all partnership organisations so that they meet community needs and aspirations where possible

The Borough of Wellingborough is a multi-cultural Town and Borough. The Partnership is proud of the cultural diversity and heritage of the Borough and accepts its responsibilities to tackle discrimination and to promote good relations between various communities to ensure equality for everyone.



Opposite page:
1. High quality business park
2. Higher education campus

A Safe and Accessible Wellingborough

The planned expansion of Wellingborough requires an integrated transport system that makes it easy for residents to travel by foot, car or public transport and acts as an extension of the town's excellent rail links to London.



Images:
1. Cycle routes
2. Wellingborough Railway Station

The role of Wellingborough Railway Station as the gateway to the town will be strengthened through redevelopment of this area to create a public transport interchange.

Expansion and upgrading of the station's facilities including proposals for a mixed-use development on the site are key to Wellingborough's economic viability and its accessibility to London and other regional centres.

Redevelopment of the bus terminus on Church Street will be the centrepiece of a range of improvements to Wellingborough's bus network and facilities that will ensure passengers are brought to the door of shops and other town centre attractions.

Improving access to the town will be achieved by changes that are proposed to the one-way traffic system, including the creation of a new Northern Inceptor Link Road, which will reduce congestion and provide access to new car parking.

The comprehensive programme of public realm projects in the pipeline will also look to incorporate improvements to the town's existing cycle network and pedestrian area, making it both easier and safer to walk and cycle in Wellingborough.



Enhancing our Natural Environment

In common with retaining and enhancing the features that contribute to Wellingborough's heritage and local distinctiveness, the 2020 Vision seeks to ensure that the Borough has a mix of high quality, publicly accessible green spaces that promote biodiversity, health and well-being.

This will not only improve the quality of life the town offers existing residents but make Wellingborough an increasingly attractive proposition for families looking to relocate from crowded and polluted cities.

Many of Wellingborough's open spaces are located alongside rivers or brooks that flow through or near to the Town Centre. Swanspool Brook, the Nene and Ise Rivers are natural assets which need to be fully utilised to tap their full ecological and biodiversity value. Irchester Country Park is just one of the Borough's beautiful parks with 83 hectares of mixed woodland and a wealth of wildlife. Summer Leys, a local wetland nature reserve on the flood plain of the River Nene is a great place to see a wide range of wetland wildlife – wild flowers, dragonflies, bats and birds.

As part of Northamptonshire's Environmental Character Strategy (ECS) and Green Infrastructure (GI) Strategy, Wellingborough benefits from two groundbreaking initiatives that place Northamptonshire at the forefront of environmental planning.

These are valuable tools for planners and developers to understand the character and ecology of local areas and the Borough Council continue to be an active partner in these projects which are lead by the River Nene Regional Park (RNRP).

Local projects promoted by the 2020 Vision include the development of the River Ise Town and Country park, using the floodplain between the existing town and railway and the new development of Stanton Cross to provide a new recreational asset for the whole town.

Refurbishment of Chester House Farm as a visitor attraction and educational centre is also envisaged, allowing for potential large scale excavation of the buried Roman Town.

Significant enhancements are planned to town centre parks, in particular Swanspool Gardens and Pavilion, where improvements will be made to meet the standard required by the Green Flag Award Scheme and set a benchmark for recreational areas across the Borough of Wellingborough.



The 2020 Vision

The 2020 Vision sets out a strategy for sustained regeneration of Wellingborough by proposing a number of projects to improve the physical environment.

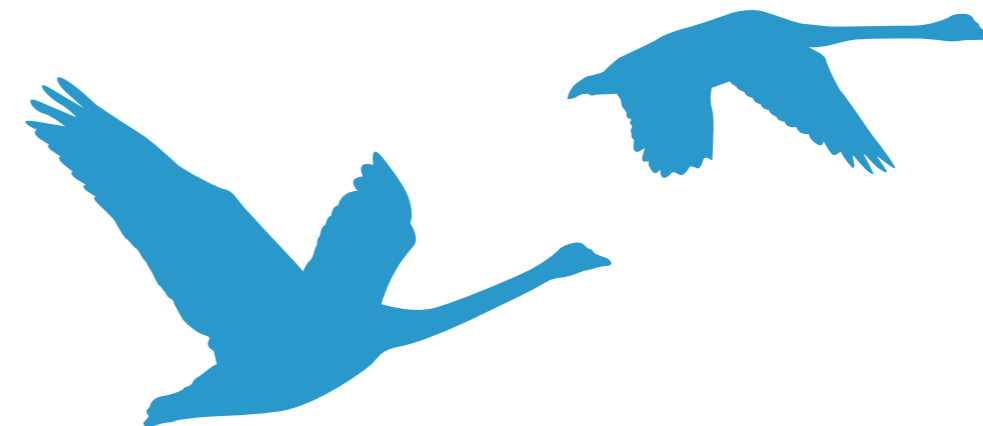
The following 20 projects, which will be delivered through a variety of partnerships, will evolve over time as funding permits. This is not a finite list and will be supplemented by other projects as further opportunities are created to attract increased private investment into the Borough.

Project	Lead Organisation/Partnership
1 Public Realm Strategy (Phase 1 – 3 projects)	Borough Council of Wellingborough (BCW) and Northamptonshire County Council (NCC)
2 Swanspool Gardens Town Park enhancements	BCW
3 Eastfield Urban Quarter – Town Centre living	Private developers
4 Stanton Cross – Sustainable Urban Extension	BCW / Private developers
5 High Street Development Site – Town Centre mixed use	BCW / Private developers
6 New Higher Education facility	Tresham / BCW
7 Station Redevelopment / Transport Interchange	Network Rail / Private developers / BCW
8 Heritage shop front improvements project	BCW
9 Isebrook Hospital redevelopment – minor injury unit	Northants Primary Care Trust
10 High Quality Business Park	BCW / Private Sector Partner
11 Market Sq / Church St	BCW / Private Sector Partner
12 Public Transport / Town Centre Bus Terminus / Northern Interceptor Road / Pedestrianisation Church St	NCC
13 River Ise Town / Country Park	Private developers
14 Business Improvement District	Wellingborough Town Centre Partnership (WTCP) / BCW
15 Public Realm Strategy (Phase 2 – Further projects)	BCW / NCC / Private Sector Partners
16 Isham to Wellingborough Improvement Road	NCC / Private Sector developers
17 Eco Home demonstrators	BCW / Private developers
18 Chester House Farm Visitor Centre	NCC / BCW
19 Cultural Quarter	BCW / Private Sector developers
20 Station Approach & Main Street – Station Office Quarter	Private developers



Partners

- Northamptonshire County Council
- Northamptonshire Enterprise Limited
- Northamptonshire NHS
- North Northamptonshire Development Company
- North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit
- Tresham College of Further and Higher Education
- Wellingborough Town Centre Partnership
- Wellingborough Homes





For further information on the
Wellingborough 2020 Vision please contact:

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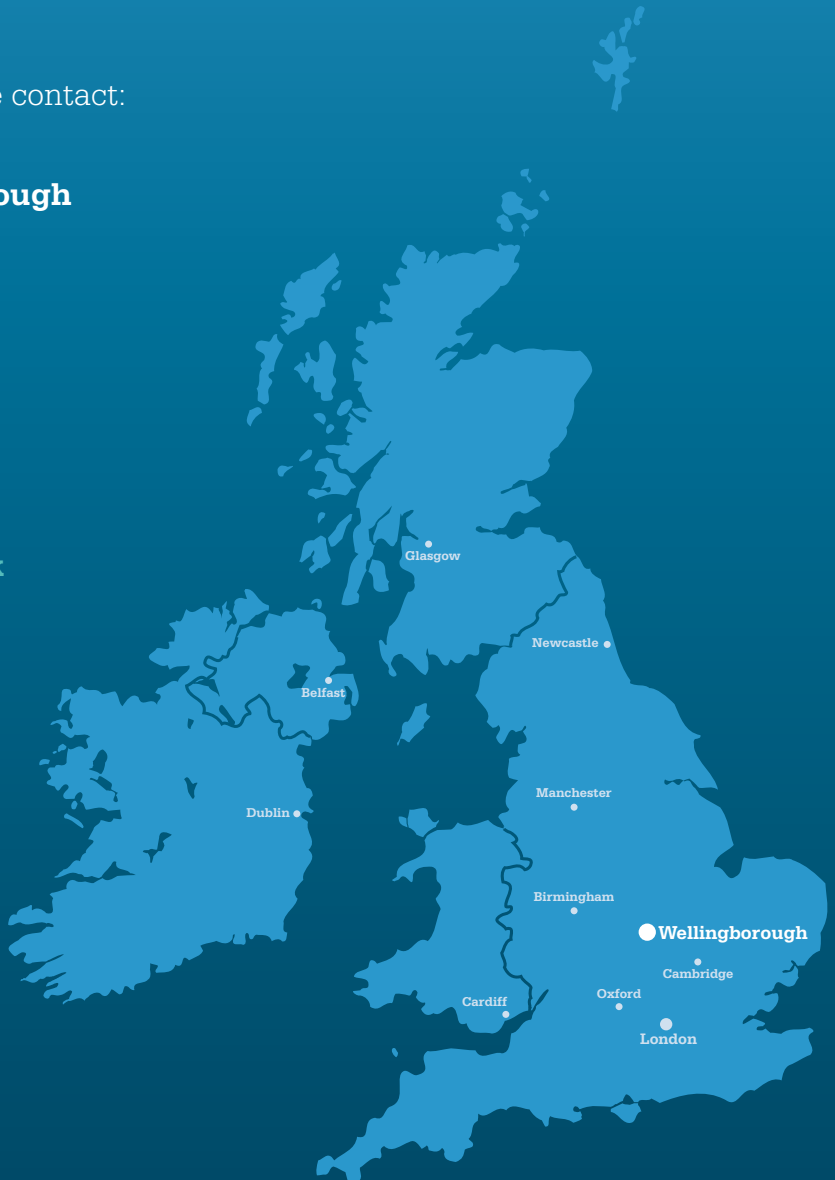
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Borough Council of
Wellingborough

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