1 Summary Statement

1.1. Eastern Gateway is located on the eastern edge of West Bromwich High Street situated close to Junction 1 of the M5 and the A4031 (Trinity Way) and forms part of the Town Centre core area (Plan 1 – Site Location). The area currently provides an uninspiring, tired gateway to the town centre that generally feels separated from the existing Town Centre core.

1.2. Following a first year funding award of £20,000 under the 2009/10 Black Country Growth Points Programme (2\textsuperscript{nd} Round) in November 2009 the Council has been working in Partnership with Advantage West Midlands (AWM), Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) and Urban Living to develop regeneration proposals for Eastern Gateway.

1.3. Growth Point funds, over the last year, have supported the development of a formally agreed design-led Masterplan that will drive forward a comprehensive development solution for the Eastern Gateway area. The Masterplan will provide the planning evidence and design aspirations in which Accord Housing Association, the Council’s development partner, will deliver the scheme (Appendix 1 - Eastern Gateway Masterplan).

1.4. The Masterplan proposes a comprehensive approach to deliver, in phases, a residential-led mixed use development, incorporating up to 100 new homes, new office (up to a maximum of 15,000 sq ft) and retail.

1.5. The regeneration of the site, which totals an approximate area of 3.7Ha, is seen by the Council and its partners as a key priority. A high quality residential-led mixed use development forms the basis of the approach that has been established in the West Bromwich Area Action Plan – Preferred Options Report, published in June 2008. In addition the site has also been identified for transformational change from employment to residential use within the housing-led Regeneration Corridor 12 contained within the Joint Core Strategy for the Black Country.
1.6. The Eastern Gateway Masterplan has recently been subject to public consultation, and the delivery of the site still requires the continued support by funding partners to acquire key properties in the area. A full public consultation statement is detailed within headings 6.10 to 6.12.

Further details are attached for information.

2 Recommendations

That the Cabinet be recommended to approve the Eastern Gateway Masterplan dated June 2010, as now submitted.

In accordance with the authority delegated to the Cabinet Member for Jobs and Economy, the following course of action has been agreed, which will be set out in the formal record of the decisions taken by the Member:

(1) The recommendations above are approved.
(2) The recommendations above are approved as now amended.
(3) The recommendations are not approved.

Cabinet Member for Jobs and Economy

Date 12th July 2010

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3 Strategic Resource Implications

3.1 The Council, in collaboration with its Partners, have made significant progress in already assembling the Eastern Gateway site. The Council is now in ownership of approximately half of the site located between High Street and Overend Street (Plan 2 – Sandwell Ownership Plan).

3.2 Urban Living (Sandwell/Birmingham Housing Market Renewal Area Housing Pathfinder), so far, have supported and funded property acquisitions and required site reports in the area to an approximate total sum of £10.5 million.

3.3 It maybe likely that the Council will be required to use its Compulsory Powers to acquire outstanding interests. In the event that the Council will be required to use its CPO powers to acquire private interests an Indemnity Agreement, subject to future political approval, will be entered into and agreed between all partners.

3.4 The Corporate Risk Management Strategy (CRMS) has been completed in relation to the development of the Eastern Gateway Masterplan to identify and assess the significant risks associated with this project. This includes (but is not limited to) political, legislative, financial, environmental and reputational risks.

3.5 Based on the information provided, it is the officers' opinion that for the significant risks that have been identified, arrangements are in place to manage and mitigate these effectively.

3.6 This assessment has identified there are no current "red" risks that need to be reported.

3.7 The development of the Eastern Gateway Masterplan along with the associated public consultation events has been entirely funded externally by the Black Country Growth Point Programme. The mechanism in which Council land will be transferred in the future will be subject to a further detailed report.

4 Legal and Statutory Implications

4.1 The adopted Borough Unitary Development Plan allocates this area as being suitable for Town Centre uses and the subsequent West Bromwich Town Plan adopted in May 2004, as Supplementary Planning Guidance to the UDP, focussed specifically on the area for housing-led mixed use with a commercial element to the Western end of the site towards Bull Street.
4.2 **Section 2 of Local Government Act 2000** provides local authorities with a power to take any steps which they consider are likely to promote or improve the economic, social or environmental well-being of their local community.

4.3 The adoption of the Eastern Gateway Masterplan will help form the basis of obtaining planning permission for the site. A Section 106 Agreement will be negotiated with the preferred development partner to seek contributions towards public realm/open space improvements.

5 **Implications for Shared Partnership Priorities**

5.1 The site, when developed will enhance the environment of the local community. The background research will be able to help anticipate the opportunities for new or improved provision of community open space, walking and cycling routes and be able to assess the impact on education facilities.

5.2 The development site currently provides a poor quality entrance and gateway to the Town Centre containing many units that are either in need of redevelopment or refurbishment. The site is often interpreted as being distinctly separated from the Town Centre. The scheme will provide a high quality residential-led mixed use development that will form a strong connection to the existing Town Centre core. It will also provide opportunities for investment in new or existing community open space and facilities and new infrastructure. Together this investment would help lead to the delivery of high quality residential environments where people will want to live and work.

5.1 The construction of the new neighbourhood at Eastern Gateway will generate high levels of economic activity and will provide a significant boost to West Bromwich Town Centre. High quality office accommodation will also act as an attraction for businesses to locate to. In addition the Masterplan supports the retention of the vast majority of existing businesses to help build a stronger retail offer that will support the viability and vitality of the wider town centre.

5.2 The efficient delivery and development of new high quality neighbourhoods in places of marginal use or vacant sites will assist the transformation agenda. A main aim of the Black Country Joint Core Strategy is to provide housing and facilities which will retain families in, or attract families to, the Black Country.
6 Background Details

6.1 The regeneration of West Bromwich is seen by the Council and its partners as a key priority. A strategy for growth has been pursued over a number of years, which has proved successful in attracting significant levels of public and private sector investment. Many of the opportunities identified through this strategy, which are incorporated in the current Development Plan of the Council, have either been developed or are now subject to detailed proposals.

6.2 The Eastern Gateway project is regarded as a strategic proposal to help deliver the regeneration aspirations for West Bromwich Town Centre. The site is located within a Strategic Centre where current and future regeneration schemes have been targeted. The development site is located in a highly sustainable location, situated within close proximity to the bus, train and metro stations, the motorway network, and surrounding significant open green spaces (Dartmouth Park and Sandwell Valley).

6.3 The proposed development site is contained within Regeneration Corridor 12 (RC12) in the Black Country Joint Core Strategy (JCS). The Core Strategy was subject to a Sustainability Appraisal which appraised two alternative options based on two scenarios for spatial development of the Black Country, before moving to a Preferred Option. The sixteen Regeneration Corridors were assessed using Detailed Assessment Matrices to identify environmental impacts. The Sustainability Appraisal identifies the Regeneration Corridors as the key areas for development in the Black Country.

6.4 By virtue of its scale and location, the Eastern Gateway project is considered to be potentially transformational in establishing a step change in the perception of the eastern approach to West Bromwich Town Centre. This development opportunity has been supported by previously commissioned design and feasibility work and is the approach that has now been established in the West Bromwich Area Action Plan (AAP) Preferred Options to deliver approximately 100 new homes. This should include a negotiated element of affordable homes which will assist in addressing significant housing need in the area. The development site will be carried forward into the AAP Submission Document in 2010, having received no representations at the Preferred Options consultation stage. The inclusion of the site in the adopted AAP will provide the necessary statutory planning and policy support to deliver the scheme.

6.5 However, even set against the current statutory planning framework, it is considered that a proposal in line with the key objectives set out within the Masterplan would be sufficiently compliant with existing policy and the emerging strategy in the AAP to gain a planning consent.
6.6 Significant progress has already been made in assembling the site, with the Council now in ownership of approximately half of the site located between High Street and Overend Street. However, many of the properties fronting Bull Street and High Street remain in private ownership.

6.7 Development on land currently in public sector ownership alone will not achieve the key objectives highlighted within the masterplan, as it would be difficult to achieve a comprehensive development situated only in backland locations. Therefore it is essential for the delivery of the site that the land assembly process continues, either through agreement or through the use of the Council’s statutory Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) powers.

6.8 A CPO would be prosecuted under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) and needs to be underpinned by a development plan allocation or a scheme supported by a Planning Consent. In this case the inclusion of the site within the emerging AAP is a material consideration and one which will become stronger as the document moves through the formal adoption process. In addition a deliverable scheme with a planning consent in accordance with an approved masterplan may also strengthen any decision taken to progress CPO action.

6.9 In August 2009 Sandwell’s Registered Social Landlord Partner Panel, through a competitive process, selected Accord Housing Association as a Preferred Development Partner. A partner-led approach has now been established to align the masterplan objectives with the preferred developer’s scheme proposals.

6.10 Council officers have been working in partnership with the Homes and Communities Agency, Advantage West Midlands and Urban Living to bring forward the redevelopment of this site. In September 2007, the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Transport gave approval for the Council to enter into an Overarching Collaboration Agreement with Partners to support the delivery of the regeneration of the Eastern Gateway area.

6.11 On March 12\textsuperscript{th} 2010 a public consultation event was organised within the local area to seek residents and stakeholders opinions on the Masterplan and initial concept drawings. Since this date correspondence with key trader representatives, local businesses and the immediate residential community has been maintained.

6.12 Where appropriate the Masterplan has been amended to reflect public opinions and suggested amendments. The main outcomes from this were
related to the need to invest in business property improvement work and introduce new or revised traffic and parking measures.

6.13 It is expected that once detailed plans for the scheme have been finalised by Accord Housing Association a further series of consultation events and public participation opportunities will be scheduled to assist the efficient delivery of the site.

6.14 It is anticipated that in order to meet the key milestones the submission of a planning application will be finalised and expected to be submitted by October 2010. Approved funding from Urban Living will help support this process.

6.15 The Black Country Growth Point Programme (2nd Round) is primarily directed at accelerating housing delivery by 2016/17 of at least an additional 5,000 net dwellings across the Black Country. In addition the JCS Preferred Option proposes housing growth of 63,000 dwellings (net) between 2007 and 2026. This radical land use restructuring lies at the heart of the Black Country’s growth proposals. It will be significant in helping to achieve the targets set out in the JCS and will also provide a strong platform for further housing growth over the West Midlands RSS period to 2026.

Source Documents

Sandwell Unitary Development Plan, April 2004;
Decisions taken by the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Transport on 19th September, 2007;
Decisions taken by the Cabinet Member for Strategic Resources on 27th September, 2007;