

# Ambitious plans for new town centre community



(left) The Market Quarter development is seen as an ideal way to bridge the gap between the train station and the town centre (s)

(right) The draft regeneration plan for the former Rugby Cattle Market site (s)



THIS is the first glimpse of an ambitious £30 million plan to transform the old cattle market into a new town centre community.

The masterplan for the ten-acre site which features residential, office and community developments has been unveiled by developers Bartreak Developments and PLK Properties ahead of a planning application being lodged with the borough council next month.

If the Market Quarter scheme, which the firms devised in conjunction with town hall officers, is given the go-ahead as expected work will start as early as January. It will bring with it hundreds of jobs as well as sought-after regeneration bosses who believe it will also generate millions of pounds of investment for the town centre.

Housing for first-time buyers will be provided with 40 per cent of the 185 houses and flats falling into the affordable category, some of which will be sold on a shared equity scheme.

It is anticipated that one-bedroom flats will start from about £110,000.

The developers say they are keen to make the Market Quarter pedestrian-friendly with landscaped open spaces and footpaths to the adjacent train station.

A home zone around the residential area would impose a 15 mph speed limit on any vehicles travelling through.

It is estimated about 500 jobs would be created by the development with plans for a 67-bedroom four-storey hotel, an 80-bed nursing home and a convenience store in addition to 40,000

sq ft of office space.

Philip King of PLK Properties said the council-owned site offered the perfect location for the development which would be opened in phases and completed by 2012.

"Our proposal for what will not only be known as Market Quarter will enable a new community to flourish, but by creating a small urban park will also cater for the needs of the existing local community," he added. "This will pave the way for more inward investment into the area."

If approved by councillors the Market Quarter will bring the following to the town centre:

- 26 houses and 129 apartments as well as 30 sheltered housing housing apartments for pensioners.
- A 67-bedroom four-storey hotel. Advanced talks are being held with a firm interested in running it.
- An 80 bed nursing home which will employ 130 full and part-time staff.
- A large community facility.
- A 4,000 sq ft convenience store.
- 40,000 sq ft of office space.
- A small park to be used by the community which will be used by pupils from the two neighbouring primary schools.
- A further community facility on a half acre open space which the public will help to choose.

Borough economy, development and culture spokesman Coun Neil Campbell said it had been a long-term aim of the council to see the site developed to contribute to the regeneration of the town centre and provide a more attractive gateway for visitors to Rugby.

"The former cattle market occupies a key strategic location, being close to both the town centre and the railway station," he added.

"They (Bartreak and PLK Properties) have come forward, in response to the council's brief, with draft proposals which show an imaginative scheme that will deliver well integrated housing, employment and leisure uses and a new pedestrian route to and from the train station."

One aspect of the regeneration plan still left blank is a half-acre site earmarked for a community building. If the Market Quarter scheme gets the green-light Rugbybeians will be given the chance to decide what sort of facility it should be.

● A two-day public consultation is being held at the Benn Partnership Centre on Railway Terrace tomorrow (Friday) and Saturday with residents invited to look over the plans and quiz the developers.

The open days will run from 10am to 3.30pm and 5.30pm to 8pm on Friday and 10am to 3pm on Saturday.