

# The Broadway Area – Development and Design Brief

Draft executive Summary, 20 March 2008

## Introduction

Urban Practitioners has been appointed by Epping Forest District Council to prepare a Vision and Development Brief for the Debden Broadway Area, leading a team including property consultants CB Richard Ellis and transport and movement consultants Colin Buchanan. The following executive summary provides an overview of the key issues in the Broadway area, the proposed vision and the key development and infrastructure projects identified within the development brief.

## Baseline study

The baseline work and stakeholder consultation has identified the following key issues for the Broadway area:

### Urban design

- The Broadway is a strong and well defined street with robust buildings.
- There are several areas around The Broadway where the urban form is very fragmented and there is a clear opportunity for infill development.
- The western gateway sites to The Broadway are weak from an urban design point of view – the petrol filling station in particular creates a poor first impression.

### Commercial

- The Broadway current performs well as a local shopping centre.
- There is a very limited evening economy and leisure offer.
- There are few quality national retailers.
- The existing nature of the buildings along the Broadway restrict the type and size of retailer which can easily be accommodated.
- The existing Sainsburys supermarket building is particularly poor and the store itself is a weak anchor for the main shopping centre.

### Transport and movement

- Pedestrian connections from the Broadway to the station are very weak.

- The station has a generally poor appearance and has an unappealing approach from Chigwell Lane.
- Parking needs to be carefully managed to best meet the needs of residents, retailers, shoppers and commuters.
- The station lacks any form of bus interchange, limiting the attraction of using the bus as a viable means of travelling to and from the station.
- The lack of proper bus facilities means that the existing arrangements for bus stops and lay-overs are necessarily ad-hoc and have a significant impact on the surrounding streets, including Vere Road and Burton Road.

## Vision for the Broadway

A number of priorities have been identified for the Broadway area. These are set out below and together they define the vision for the area.

**Celebrating Debden** - Debden has a busy local centre with a range of good shops. This is a key strength that any development should seek to compliment and reinforce. Any new retail development should be conceived to facilitate incremental growth.

**Connect to the Station** - Debden tube station is one of the town's best assets but is poorly connected to the shopping area and hidden from view. Any new developments should aim to provide better pedestrian and vehicular access to the station and integrate it with The Broadway. Also, the profile of the station should be raised through clearer way-finding and possibly through development that acts as a gateway.

**New Transport Interchange** - While there are regular bus routes which service Debden, the stops are spread out and of a relatively outdated design. Integrating improved bus facilities with the underground station will promote the use of public transport and increase visitor legibility of the town centre.

**Landmarks and Gateways** - While The Broadway has a distinct architectural form it suffers from a lack of a gateway to Chigwell Lane. High quality development of a larger scale on the two corner sites of The Broadway and Chigwell Lane, could better link the two roads and provide key landmarks. Further landmark sites could take advantage of the areas urban grain to provide a more interesting streetscape and gateway to the station.

**Public Realm Improvements** - Debden Broadway is currently the focus of a public realm enhancement strategy which proposes new paving and street furniture. It is important that this approach is well integrated into the surrounding area and also extended to include key approaches such as the link to the station.

**Rationalise Parking** - Debden town centre contains a large amount of surface car parking and freestanding garages to the rear of buildings. An improved layout, with car parking provision set to current standards could allow for further development. Mews developments could integrate car parking need with further homes, providing more attractive spaces which feel safer and more welcoming.

**Completing the Blocks** - A strategy of providing active frontage to the streets at the rear of The Broadway, through mews, town houses and/or flats, would extend the area of active frontages. Where possible, service areas and parking should be hidden within urban blocks rather than exposed to the street.

**Town Centre Living** - There is already a relatively high number of town centre flats due to those over the shops. There are opportunities to develop additional town centre flats and town houses providing a better critical mass of people within walking distance of both the shops and tube station.

**Better links to green space** - There are large areas of green space within relatively easy reach of the town centre. It would benefit both existing and new residents if the links to those green spaces were to be enhanced.

**Improved connection to industry and business** - Langston Road Industrial and Business Park is a major employment centre but suffers from poor pedestrian access to The Broadway and Debden Station. Reconfiguring the pedestrian route from the Station could integrate this area with Debden, increasing use of The Broadway and promoting travel by public transport.

**Village Hub** - Maintaining and increasing a mix of uses in Debden town centre would enhance its feel as a village hub, providing all the services the local community needs. An important part of this would be to extend leisure and recreation provision, with the potential for new restaurants or bars, as well as improved retail. The proposals also include provision for a new combined District and County one-stop-shop building which could also include youth and community facilities.

## Broadway Development Brief – key opportunity sites

The development brief for the Broadway sets out the following opportunities, each supported by design guidance and a commentary on the commercial viability and phasing and implementation issues:

**Area 1: Sir Winston Churchill public house** - Long term opportunity site for new development including leisure/retail space at the ground floor with residential development above.

**Area 2: Existing BP garage and Sainsbury site** – Short to medium term development opportunity to create a new anchor foodstore development plus further new retail units and a health and fitness club. The site would be suitable for a significant amount of new residential development at upper levels and an element of undercroft parking which takes advantage of the natural gradient within the site.

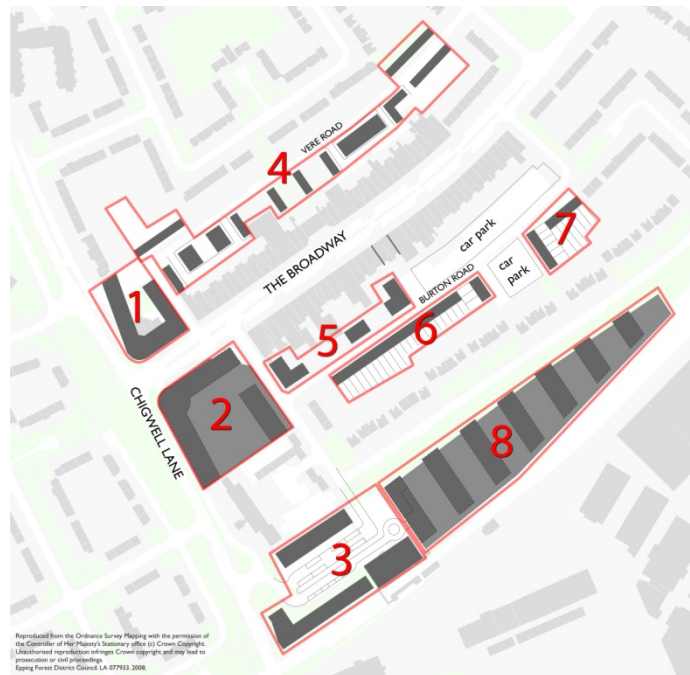
**Area 3: Debden Station** – Medium term opportunity to create a new transport interchange at the station framed by new development incorporating business and dwellings. The new bus facilities would include pic-up and set-down spaces and new lay-over arrangements.

**Area 4: Vere Road** – Medium to long term opportunity to remodel the existing parking and garage court area as a mews, combining the existing servicing role with more active uses to improve the environmental quality and safety.

**Area 5: Burton Road north** – Infill development opportunities, including a key site at the western end of Burton Road. The site to the eastern end of this grouping is considered well suited to a new Council and County Council one-stop-shop facility which would act as a new active presence on the car-park and could also provide other youth and community facilities

**Area 6: Burton Road south** – Opportunity for new town house development to create additional family accommodation and create new active frontage onto Burton Road.

**Area 7: Burton Road east** – Further opportunity for new town house development to create additional family accommodation and create new active frontage onto Burton Road.



**Area 8: Station car park** – Opportunity to develop the existing station car park as a new housing site whilst retaining commuter and residential parking below a podium deck.

## Broadway Development Brief – key public realm projects

The existing plans for the Broadway will bring about significant public realm improvements for the town centre. In addition to this work, the following projects would further enhance the town centre:

**The Broadway western end** – At present the Broadway scheme does not extend all the way to the junction with Chigwell Lane. It is considered that an extension of the scheme is necessary to maximise the benefits and to demonstrate a clear change at the key threshold to the centre.

**The Broadway / Chigwell Lane junction improvements** – the junction of the Broadway with Chigwell Lane is unnecessarily complicated and creates a poor environment for pedestrians. This is in large part caused by the presence of the existing service roads which run parallel to Chigwell lane, but which might be closed off, creating a simpler and safer junction for pedestrians and vehicles. It may be appropriate to consider whether this junction should be re-designed as a signalised junction, phased with the other signals further down Chigwell Lane to best manage the flow of traffic.

**Station interchange** – A new bus facility at the station would create significant transport benefits for the town centre. A single location catering for most of the bus routes serving the town would allow better interchange between services which the presence of services at the tube station would promote the use of bus transport over private cars for commuters. Creation of the new scheme would require infrastructure investment to the station forecourt area, as well as possible changes to the access road from Chigwell Lane. The cost of implementing this project might be wholly or partly borne by the developments which are proposed for sites three and eight (see above).

**Station link road** – A new pedestrian and bus-only link route from the station towards the Broadway would create a significantly clearer and safer walking route and offer the potential to improve public transport connections. This project would need to be part of the overall project to deliver the new station interchange scheme (see above).

## Key conclusions

There are two key projects which have emerged from this study, both of which have the potential to substantially improve the area.

Firstly, the proposals for a new food store and other development on the existing Sainsbury and BP site are a timely opportunity, given the active developer interest in the Sainsbury site and the very short lease on the garage which would permit the Council to regain ownership of the site in the short term. This is a key gateway to the Broadway and could be used to create a striking new approach to the area which would work in tandem with the new college development to significantly improve perceptions of Debden.

Secondly, the proposals for the station interchange and bus re-routing are regarded as a significant opportunity to improve the public transport provision and integration. It is recommended that this scheme should be actively pursued with TfL in their role as both the land owner and bus operator, and with local bus operators and the County Council.