

Regeneration game

Big development projects have impacts far beyond their immediate plots.

We look at three schemes transforming their local skylines

NOTTINGHAM SOUTHSIDE

“CREATING A NOTTINGHAM FOR THE REST OF THE 21ST CENTURY.”

The largest urban regeneration master-plan in the East Midlands is Nottingham Southside, which includes the mixed-use Boots Island, a former Boots research and development site.

“This is about creating a Nottingham for the rest of the 21st century, which is robust to the challenge of the digital age,” says Chris Henning, development and growth director at Nottingham City Council.

“It’s about bringing the city to life.”

The area to the south of the Nottingham city centre, which has been neglected for many years, has been earmarked for £2bn of regeneration.

Schemes include the £150m redevelopment of Intu Broadmarsh shopping centre, the new HMRC regional office complex at Unity Square and Boots Island, where developers have plans to create a 40-acre mixed use site, including a five-star hotel.

The redevelopment will also include a new £58m college, library, bus station and multi-storey car park.

Meanwhile, the nearby medieval Nottingham Castle is undergoing a £30m revamp.

“This is Nottingham’s biggest regeneration scheme in decades and currently the largest in the East Midlands, perhaps the UK,” says Councillor Chris Gibson, chair of the city council planning committee.

A key part of the Southside scheme will be the revamp of Intu Broadmarsh, which will be turned into a leisure-led destination, complete with multiplex cinema and bowling alley.

The centre has already filled 70 per cent of the space before the refurbishment is completed.

Businesses moving in include the Light cinema chain and Hollywood Bowl.



“We’re working with a number of leisure and retail brands to highlight the flexibility of the space,” says Nigel Wheatley, general manager of Intu Broadmarsh.

Intu also owns the city centre’s other major shopping centre, Intu Victoria, with some claiming the lack of competition is one of the reasons development has been held back.

But owning the two has meant Intu could focus on ensuring one centre complements the other, says Wheatley. “If they were owned by two different businesses, one would always struggle.”

WATERSIDE CAMPUS, UNIVERSITY OF NORTHAMPTON

“PUTTING STUDENT EXPERIENCE AT THE FOREFRONT.”

Northampton entered a new era when 15,000 students moved into a new £350m university campus in the town last September. The Waterside scheme at the University of Northampton, built on the site of a former coal-fired power station, was about breaking down the barrier between the university and the town.

The key factors driving Midlands regeneration



The changing skyline shows the huge scale of new developments now underway in Birmingham and elsewhere in the Midlands.

The city region is setting new benchmarks in urban regeneration, with a pipeline of landmark developments that is getting noticed in the UK – and by business globally.

Civic leaders say we are witnessing a ‘golden decade’ of renewal coinciding with the Commonwealth Games in 2022. Birmingham Smithfield is leading the way – a £1.5 billion regeneration project that will transform 42 acres into new homes and leisure attractions by 2037.

Among the factors driving renewal and investment are:

- **Leadership** – combined authorities, local enterprise partnerships and business leaders have together created the vision and strategic thinking that have fast-tracked planning and economic development
- **Enterprise Zone** – tax concessions, infrastructure incentives, and reduced regulations continue attracting investment and private companies – while enabling authorities to retain higher levels of business rates
- **Location** – Birmingham is leveraging rapidly improving transport links to appeal to companies and skilled workers seeking alternatives to London
- **Diversity** – Birmingham is one of the youngest cities in Europe, where 140 languages are spoken. It is therefore attracting global industry sectors including market-leading fintech, financial/professional services, digital and mobile technology
- **Governance** – new flexible legal structures mean developments stay ‘dynamic’ – enabling owners to quickly adapt properties to leaseholders and tenants with requirements which fluctuate to reflect changes in their markets.

Despite uncertainty over our future relationship with Europe, investors still see the UK as a stable, secure place – and the Midlands’ thriving business environment continues to attract interest from all over the world.

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New sites

PROPERTY



It highlights the ambition of a university looking to attract more international students, says Jane Bunce, director of student and academic services.

“The town has got to be doing the activities the students want. If it doesn’t offer what they want in terms of leisure and food outlets then they won’t come here.”

No longer are young learners isolated in campuses three miles from the heart of the town. Now, only a sculpted wooden bridge and a short, lit walk separates students from shops, cafes, pubs and the market. The university is now more of a partner with the town, as opposed to something on the edge, says Bunce: “We want to attract new students. This will help.”

Among the new facilities is a learning hub, which is open 24 hours a day and has a library, teaching areas, specialist skills spaces, student administration, academic workspaces, as well as a café and restaurant.

“The hub has been designed to put student experience at the forefront,” says Bunce. “As our students and staff use the building, the hub has the ability to evolve to continue to meet their needs through our flexible and open plan design choices.”



SOUTH KESTEVEN, LINCOLNSHIRE

“GIVING THE PRIVATE SECTOR THE CONFIDENCE TO BRING SITES ONLINE.”

South Kesteven in south Lincolnshire has seen economic growth outstrip that of the region and the UK as a whole. There are plans to build 14,000 homes and create 10,000 jobs by 2036. It straddles some of the UK’s main north-south infrastructure; the A1 and East Coast Main Line. London is 70 minutes by train, and Nottingham, with a population of some 325,000, is just 35 minutes away.

The district, which contains the towns of Grantham, Stamford, Bourne and Market Deeping, has a proud industrial heritage, skilled workers and low unemployment. Manufacturing and agri-food are particularly strong, building on its traditions in agriculture and engineering.

The first running diesel engine and the UK’s first tractor were developed in Grantham, South Kesteven’s largest town, in the 1890s.

To address the area’s lack of profile, South Kesteven District Council has created an investment arm, InvestSK.

The area also lacks the infrastructure to attract and retain people, says Jon Hinde, InvestSK’s head of economy and skills. For example, 1,700 people travel to Grantham each day to get on a train and go down to London.

“It’s all about giving the private sector the confidence to bring sites online,” he adds.