

## 2. Leicester City Council and Sainsbury's: development of a new site and reuse of the existing to promote employment

A strong and effective partnership between Leicester City Council and Sainsbury's has been fundamental to the success of two major interlinked regeneration schemes in the city, both of which are key gateway sites, in order to facilitate the relocation of a Sainsbury's store to a site just over a mile away. The City Mayor played a key leadership role during the early stage of the project in setting out his economic and transportation priorities for the area.

This has resulted in the regeneration of a former factory site in Leicester with a new, larger 80,000 ft<sup>2</sup> replacement Sainsbury's store, creating 300 jobs, which opened in November 2013. It is one of the most environmentally-friendly stores of its kind in the UK and includes a nine-pump petrol station, which gains its energy almost entirely from solar panels. Additionally, a third of the site has been reserved for business use and is currently being actively marketed for this purpose.

The old Sainsbury's site will be transformed into a mixed-use development with (non-food) retail units, food outlets and business use space. This will be accompanied by the removal of a flyover which will open up the site and surrounding sites as well as improvements to the highways and pedestrian links. This work will commence in February 2014.

A dedicated partnership project team negotiated and oversaw the evolution of the schemes for both sites – this included weekly pre-application meetings. The council provided clear direction on planning policy guidelines and development principles for each site, working closely with Sainsbury's to ensure commercial considerations were taken into account.

The council and Sainsbury's also worked together to design a consultation process for effective local engagement, with the council facilitating existing links with local business and community groups.

“The entire pre-application process worked extremely well. Having a dedicated officer team, coupled with ongoing consultation with key stakeholders, meant that we were able to evolve two schemes that integrate with their surroundings and have support of the local community”

Matthew Nicholson, Head of Convenience Town Planning, Sainsbury's

“This development scheme proves the value of establishing a development team early in the pre application phase to effectively consider all the relevant planning issues as part of a streamlined process. The close working relations that the council has with the local community has proved essential for Sainsbury's to engage locally on their proposals. The schemes will provide major regeneration benefits for this part of the City.”

Andrew Smith, Director of Planning, Leicester City Council