

BOROUGH OF KETTERING

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Report Originator	Alex Jelley Economic Regeneration Manager	<i>Fwd Plan Ref No:</i> A14/015	
Wards Affected	All	15th October 2014	
Title	DELIVERING OUR TOWN CENTRES		

Portfolio Holders: Cllr Derek Zanger and Cllr Mark Dearing

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- (i) To outline the work streams associated with the Purple Flag Action Plan;
- (ii) To publicise the awarding of 'Park Mark' to Kettering Borough Council;
- (iii) To run through the working draft of the Christmas Programme; and
- (iv) To consider if Kettering should host a stage finish for the Women's Cycle Tour of 2015.

2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 Kettering Borough lies within the South East Midlands, which is predominantly a growth area, and is expected to facilitate growth of some 13,100 homes and 16,200 new jobs by 2021.
- 2.2 Members have made their priorities for infrastructure and jobs-led growth clear – these are the prerequisites of growth. Members have indicated they wish to use the growth agenda to leverage three key and interrelated ambitions for the borough; namely:-
 - ◆ A better offer for our town centres
 - ◆ A better education and training offer
 - ◆ A better employment offer – high grade, higher density jobs
- 2.3 The mutually supportive role of these three aspirations cannot be over-stated. The town centres and the skills base will be persuasive to inward investors. Similarly, high grade employment supports vibrant town centres.
- 2.4 The Council has a vision to create town centres that are **Characterful, Distinctive, and Fun**. This vision has been externally validated by an independent planning inspector, and now sits firmly within our planning policy for Kettering Town Centre.
- 2.5 This report gives a run-through of what is happening with a number of key projects that each contribute towards the delivery of this vision. They showcase the diversity of our approach to the town centre, but also some commonalities in terms of partnership working and community engagement.

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3 PURPLE FLAG WORKSTREAMS

- 3.1 As previously discussed at Executive Committee, the Purple Flag project is now delivering some very real changes to the town centre. An overnight appraisal was carried out in May by a broad range of people from the organisations represented on the taskforce, who volunteered throughout different times of the night from 5pm to 5am.
- 3.2 All of the comments and observations were then collected, assessed, and an Action Plan produced linking with Purple Flag's core themes. This determined if we were meeting standards or if we were below or above the range purple flag sets out. The chart clearly showed us where we need to make improvements and raise expectations to meet purple flag standards. The key areas of work are:
- 3.3 *Lighting* – We are assessing the level of lighting on all public areas within the town centre- particularly those around the Church of St Peter and St Paul.
- 3.4 *Parking* – Our colleagues in Northamptonshire Police have been working closely with us to identify problems areas of anti-social parking within the town centre, and to come up with enforcement solutions to them.
- 3.5 *Trees/Shrubs* – Linked to the reference to lighting, above, we are doing a piece of work to ensure that none of the foliage from trees in the public realm causes any issues from a lighting/safety perspective.
- 3.6 *Communication* – Our partners within the private sector have asked us to help them better advertise their businesses. This project crosses over from the evening economy into the day economy, and involves work on a Borough-wide basis too. We're currently working on various initiatives, including the social media work previously discussed at Executive Committee that should enable us to attract people and businesses to Kettering.
- 3.7 *Signage* - We're undertaking an audit of our wayfarer signage throughout the town centre to ensure that we've taken account of developments over the last few years, and that they remain in a good condition.
- 3.8 We're confident that our approach will enable us to meet the objectives set out within the Action Plan over the next few months, so that we are in a strong position to submit a bid at the end of January 2015. We will, prior to that, be undertaking a further over-night assessment to ascertain whether the various action points have been met, and that we are where we need to be prior to that submission.

4 PARK MARK 10th ANNIVERSARY

- 4.1 The Council has been awarded a special 10 year Anniversary Certificate to honour its achievement and commitment to the Safer Parking Scheme. It has

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retained the Park Mark award every year over this period. The scheme recognises car parks that are well managed and meet specific quality and safety criteria including lighting levels, and signage.



4.2 This achievement, alongside the works identified above in relation to parking enforcement, lighting and signage, shows that parking in Kettering Borough Council's car parks is the safest, cheapest and most convenient way of being close to restaurants, shops and other facilities.

5 Christmas Programme

5.1 Following the excitement of the Summer Celebrations, the team at Community Services are now working hard on another fun programme of events on the Market Place in the run-up to Christmas.

5.2 Although there is more work to be done on the programme, this report to the Executive can preview some of the upcoming highlights:

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	TIMING	ACTIVITY
27 th November	5pm – 7pm	Lights switch on Late night shopping Santa & sleigh in Market Place Market stalls in Market Place Big Screen
6 th December	9am – 4pm 12 – 2pm 9am – 4pm	Small Business Saturday Carols on the Catwalk Big Screen
11 th December		Big Screen movie – Frozen
13 th December	9am – 4pm 9am – 4pm	Market / Teenage Market Flash Mobs Big Screen
18 th December		Big Screen Movie – Polar Express
20 th December	9am – 4pm	Market Big Screen Movie: Miracle on 34 th Street Living Nativity (tbc)
Thursdays throughout December		Late night shopping

6 THE WOMEN'S TOUR

- 6.1 Last year, as many of you will remember, Northamptonshire hosted Stage 1 of the first ever Women's Tour cycling event, bringing world-class women's cycling to the UK in the country's first ever international 5-day stage-race – the world's top riders competing against Britain's Olympic heroines. It started in Oundle and finished in Northampton, and swept through Geddington and Desborough en-route.
- 6.2 The event was organised by SweetSpot Group Ltd in partnership with Northamptonshire County Council. SweetSpot Group Ltd is a sports event organisation company running major events such as the men's Tour of Britain, The Tour Series and the Prudential Ride London mass ride as part of their portfolio. They were also involved in the Halford's Tour Series that we successfully hosted a few years ago.

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- 6.3 The tour dates for 2015 are expected to be 17th-22nd June, with up to six stages in six counties – starting in Suffolk and, subject to confirmation, ending in Northamptonshire. Kettering Borough Council has been approached by NCC and SweetSpot to host the finish for the Northamptonshire stage, and subject to the whole itinerary being resolved, the final leg in the 2015 race. The provisional route would entail the tour coming into the Borough from the west, through Loddington, into Kettering on Gypsy Lane, down Northampton Road, round onto Sheep Street, and finishing at the Market Place.



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- 6.4 There are some obvious reasons why Kettering Borough Council would wish to support this sort of event – there are some impressive television viewing figures from the last event, meaning that we would be able to showcase our Borough to a wide audience – there are some strong links with businesses, and some potential links to be forged. Provisional data from the 2014 tour showed there was a net economic benefit to the area of hosting this event. At this point, then, we should consider the ‘ask’ and the risks associated with our involvement..



The Ask

- 6.5 NCC have asked for a £50,000 contribution to the £150,000 cost. The hope is that these costs could be met by sponsorship but it does not follow that this will be achieved (last year, Northampton Borough Council raised £30,000, mostly from Carlsberg and the University).
- 6.6 In addition, the Council will be expected to meet the following costs or undertake the following activities
- supplementary marshalling (to add to the 30 trained marshals provided by SweetSpot)
 - provision of facilities for the competitors (eg portaloos) and for the teams (eg parking for team buses, motorcycle escorts etc)

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- providing decorations for the town centre (bunting; flower displays, podium dressing)
- an associated series of community events, to make a full day of it. (e.g. farmers market, fun fair, participation events, community bike rides etc).

Without this commitment, we wouldn't be invited to be the stage finish.

The Risks

- 6.7 Works to the junction of Sheep Street, Northampton Road and Bowling Green Road – including the resurfacing of Northampton Road are planned for the first half of 2015 so we would need to be confident that they will be finished by then.
- 6.8 If insufficient sponsorship was raised, Kettering Borough Council would be liable for the full £50,000 cost. SweetSpot will help us to find sponsorship, but the job essentially would be the Borough Council's .
- 6.9 We would need to find the resources to put on a major event in mid-June in the town centre, with various mini-events in tandem – each with its own costs and staff resource implications. No estimate has been prepared for this yet, but a travelling assumption is that this will cost £10,000-£15,000.
- 6.10 There is no provision in the budget for this event, and a contingency allocation would have to be made; it is assumed that next year's contingency budget could meet any costs not met from other sources.

7 POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND USE OF RESOURCES

- 7.1 Members have made their priorities for infrastructure and jobs-led growth clear – these are the prerequisites of growth. Members have indicated they wish to use the growth agenda to leverage three key and interrelated ambitions for the borough; namely:-
- ◆ A better offer for our town centres
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8. **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Executive Committee:

- (i) endorses the work being done by the Purple Flag Taskforce, and looks forward to a successful submission in January 2015;
- (ii) celebrates the 10th successive Park Mark certificate – acknowledging the hard work and dedication that goes into this;
- (iii) welcomes the bumper Christmas Programme;
- (iv) agrees to accept the offer to host the stage finish for the Northamptonshire stage of the Womens Tour, on the basis that:-
 - a. That sponsorship can be raised to cover at least half of the cost falling on the Borough Council
 - b. That the total cost falling on the Borough, with or without sponsorship, does not exceed £45,000.
 - c. That any costs be met from the Council's contingency budget in 2015/16 or from unallocated reserves.