

BOROUGH OF KETTERING

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Report Originator	Alex Jelley Economic Regeneration Manager	<i>Fwd Plan Ref No:</i> A14/040	
Wards Affected	All	18th February 2015	
Title	DELIVERING OUR TOWN CENTRES		

Portfolio Holders: Cllr Derek Zanger and Cllr Mark Dearing

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- a) To provide an update on the Purple Flag Bid
- b) To highlight the delivery programme for the new rising bollards and Traffic Regulation order for Kettering as part of the Public Realm Phase 4 project
- c) To set out the work being done on the Women's Bike Tour

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.

3 PURPLE FLAG

- 3.1 Purple Flag is a specialist programme focusing on promoting, developing and managing town centres at night. At its heart is the Purple Flag Accreditation Scheme and Core Agenda – a set of standards and a rounded vision of what people want from their town centres at night. Centres that reach the standards can fly the flag. To date 31 centres have gained Purple Flags, and the number is growing. Kettering Borough Council, along with our partners, made a decision

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to go for Purple Flag for Kettering town centre, and have been working collaboratively to achieve it.

3.2 The first step was to agree on the area that the Purple Flag bid should cover – the following diagram details this:



3.3 An over-night 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. All of the comments and observations were then collected, assessed, and an Action Plan produced linking with Purple Flag’s core themes: Wellbeing, Movement, Appeal, Place and Policy Envelope.

3.4 This assessment 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.

3.5 The key areas of work were:

Lighting - We’re assessing the level of lighting on all public areas within the town centre- particularly those around the Church of St Peter and St Paul.

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Parking – Our colleagues in Northamptonshire Police have been working closely with us to identify problem areas of anti-social parking within the town centre, and to come up with enforcement solutions to them.

Trees/Shrubs – Linked to the reference to lighting, above, we've done 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.

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. A new website is also being worked on.

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.

- 3.6 Over the 6 months from May we ensured that each issue was dealt with, and looked for ways of improving the things we were already doing well. This has involved working with an array of partners, including:



- 3.7 On January 17th we undertook a second overnight assessment, to check progress against the agreed Action Plan. Feedback from the night was positive, and though there remained a small number of pending actions – these were on track to be delivered.

- 3.8 The Purple Flag Bid for Kettering was submitted on 30th January 2015, following sign off from the Purple Flag Taskforce on 20th January. The final assessment against the five core themes is shown below. You will note that we consider

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ourselves to be above the required standard on every theme – something that reflects the hard work of the last 6 months, but also the vision and approach adopted to regenerate the town centre over the last 5 years.

- 3.9 In terms of next steps, two assessors from Purple Flag will be visiting the town in March. They will then report to their board and we should find out whether we've been successful in June. The Purple Flag Taskforce, which has been an important vehicle in delivering the submission document, are meeting in April to agree an approach to ongoing management of the Flag.

Ref	Purple Flag Core Agenda	Significantly Below Standard	Below Standard	Standard Met	Above Standard	Excellent/ Outstanding
1	Wellbeing. Welcoming, Clean and Safe					●
2	Movement A Secure Pattern of Arrival, Circulation and Departure				●	
3	A Broad Appeal A Vibrant Choice and a Rich Mix			●		
4	Place A Stimulating Destination and a vital Place				●	
P	Policy Envelope. A Clear Aim and a Common Purpose				●	

4 PUBLIC REALM PHASE 4

- 4.1 In June 2012, the Executive approved a one-off capital budget of £190,000 to redesign the public realm on through the pedestrianized town centre. The project had the following aims:

- **Reduce traffic in the High Street and Gold Street area**
- **Improve the pedestrian and shopping environments**
- **Allow more events and markets to take place on the street**
- **Encourage more on-street dining (a café culture)**
- **Drive further private investment**

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4.2 The zone covered by the project is an extensive one – such that the project will play a key role in the future of Kettering town centre. The following diagram emphasises this point:



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4.3 The concept design was worked up and consulted on during 2013, and a preferred option arrived at. The new arrangements, as set out within the Traffic Regulation Order, are as follows:

- **20mph speed limit throughout the zone**
- **Four rising bollards – one at each gateway (access via swipe cards)**
- **Collapsible bollard at Meeting Lane**
- **Blue Badge parking is to be provided at Lower Street and Gold Street (as well as existing parking spaces)**
- **Loading/Deliveries are prohibited between 9am-5pm (Sun-Thurs) and 8am-5pm (Fri-Sat)**
- **Cycling is prohibited within the town centre**

4.4 The next phase of this project to be delivered will be the installation of the new rising bollards at High Street, Meadow Road, Lower Street and Gold Street; as well as the manual bollard at Meeting Lane. This will be accompanied by a new Traffic Regulation Order.

4.5 Northamptonshire County Council, as the Highways Authority, are undertaking some consultation on the proposed order. We have supplemented this by engaging with key stakeholders to seek information about swipe cards and explain the impact the project will have. The feedback has largely been very positive, though there have been some concerns raised by a small number of businesses.

4.6 The statutory consultation process NCC are currently undertaking on the TRO is scheduled to come to an end on the 16th February. The construction phase will then kick in from the first week of March. It is anticipated that works should take between 6-8 weeks to complete. We will keep people informed of progress and key dates so that as minimal an amount of disruption is caused as possible.

5 WOMEN'S TOUR

5.1 At the meeting in October 2014, the Executive decided to try and bring the Women's Tour to Kettering. It was considered that the potential economic and social benefits from the event outweighed the costs of doing so.

5.2 The Tour has now been finalised and Kettering has succeeded in securing the finish of the third stage – which will begin in Oundle. The event will take place on the 19th June 2015 and will be centred on the Market Place – with events flowing through the rest of the town centre.

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- 5.3 The team are working hard to ensure that the whole Borough has an opportunity to get involved – and are seeking participation from a whole host of different businesses, groups and individuals. We are aiming to create a carnival atmosphere, so if you're interested in being involved, please get in touch!

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6 POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND USE OF RESOURCES

6.1 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
- ◆ A better education and training offer
- ◆ A better employment offer – high grade, higher density jobs

7 RECOMMENDATION

That the Executive Committee:

- a) Endorses the Purple Flag Submission and recognises the good quality partnership working involved
- b) Welcomes the delivery of the first phase of Public Realm Phase 4 – the installation of rising bollards and a new Traffic Regulation Order
- c) Notes the work being done to bring the Women’s Tour to Kettering