

## BOROUGH OF KETTERING

<b>Committee</b>	<b>EXECUTIVE</b>	Item 10	Page 1
<b>Report Originator</b>	Alex Jelley Economic Regeneration Manager	<i>Fwd Plan No:</i> A15/011	
<b>Wards Affected</b>	All	9 <sup>th</sup> September 2015	
<b>Title</b>	<b>DELIVERING OUR TOWN CENTRES</b>		

**Portfolio Holders: Cllr Derek Zanger and Cllr Mark Dearing**

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- To provide information on the opening of the 'The Yards' development
- To deliver an outline of the recent works to improve the Newland Street bus interchange

### 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. THE YARDS

- 3.1 Next month will see the grand opening of 'The Yards' – an exciting new retail destination in Kettering town centre. Work is nearing completion at the regeneration site off Market Street – with over 70% of the units already spoken for. A great deal of work has gone into ensuring the delivery of this key part of our adopted Town Centre Area Action Plan for Kettering, and it is worth taking

Committee	<b>EXECUTIVE</b>	Item 10	Page 2
-----------	------------------	------------	--------

stock of the various key decisions and actions the Council has taken to get to this stage.



### *Background*

- 3.2 Our vision for The Yards is to establish a recognisable hub for niche and independent retailers that will bring people into the area looking for something quirkier than they can find at an out of town retail park: one that brings together the heritage of the town with the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century shopper. It will form the link between the thriving Restaurant Quarter centred on the award winning Market Place development, and the more mainstream national retailers along High Street, Gold Street and within the Newlands Centre.
- 3.3 In January 2012, the Executive Committee endorsed the marketing of The Yards in line with the proposed method of disposal, which was that the site be marketed for redevelopment with the option to lease and take a build licence. It was considered that this provided the greatest flexibility for interested developers – which would achieve the best outcome for the Council in terms of ongoing revenue streams.

## BOROUGH OF KETTERING

Committee	<b>EXECUTIVE</b>	Item 10	Page 3
-----------	------------------	------------	--------

- 3.4 Following a formal tender process, the Executive Committee agreed to let the site to Kevin Jones in January 2013. The proposals were to develop the site for retail, restaurant and office use; with a focus on retaining and refurbishing as much of the historic existing building as possible.
- 3.5 During the course of 2013 and 2014 the developer has worked closely with the Council to gain planning permission for the proposals, while beginning to market the site. Commencement on site began in late 2014 with the demolition of some 1930s buildings to enable a better flow through the retained structures. Social media has been used to great effect in securing new tenants – reaching out to small and medium enterprises and start-ups who might have been put off by standard marketing approaches and agents' fees.



**The Yards**

24 July at 20:35 · 🌐

Womens & Menswear coming...Bringing you a bit of London!! #kettering  
#menswear #streetfashion

<http://ow.ly/Q1Zub>



Committee	<b>EXECUTIVE</b>	Item 10	Page 4
-----------	------------------	------------	--------

 **The Yards** shared **The Sofa Sessions's** photo. 4 August at 19:06 - 🌐

10 weeks, from start to finish...opening soon at The Yards our lovely bookstore "Not Just Words"



**The Sofa Sessions** at Not Just Words

10 weeks, from start to finish...opening soon at The Yards our lovely bookstore "Not Just Words"

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*The Grand Opening*

- 3.6 On October 10<sup>th</sup> The Yards will officially open its doors for the first time – and the developer is currently working with us to ensure that the event goes off with a bang! Keep an eye out for more information on what to expect through the usual channels - Facebook, Twitter, the radio and local newspapers.
- 3.7 Those of you that frequent The Yards Facebook page will know that the developer has already announced that the old ambulance station has been turned into the 'Yards Exchange' – which promises to work like a business incubator for retailers. Modelled on the successful approach taken by the Council with businesses at Chesham House, the Yards Exchange will be:
 

*“a space where businesses can sell their wares without the risk or cost of a store...a central till point...will work on a rota system, meaning you will have to do your allocated shifts but then be as flexible as you like.”*
- 3.8 The remaining buildings, along with some interesting new micro retail units created by the developer in innovative ways, will host a collective of wonderfully diverse and intriguing shops and businesses. The list of which includes:



## BOROUGH OF KETTERING

Committee	<b>EXECUTIVE</b>	Item 10	Page 5
-----------	------------------	------------	--------

- a second hand bookshop and music venue (Sofa Sessions – see image above)
- a hair and make-up studio
- handbags and accessories
- jewellery
- haberdashery and gifts
- collectables and toys
- The Yards Bar and Kitchen

3.9 The Yards Bar and Kitchen, based in the old MG Garage, promises to create a space unlike any other within the town centre – a fine addition to the evening economy that was recently awarded the prestigious Purple Flag in recognition of its vibrancy, diversity and safety.

3.10 There are still some units available, and anybody thinking about starting a retail business is urged to visit the site, talk to the developer or go online to see what can be done to help you realise your ambitions in Kettering.

#### **4. NEWLANDS BUS INTERCHANGE**

4.1 Works to remove the existing bus shelters on Newland Street and replace them with more modern, and less enclosed, bus stops began in July, and are due to be completed in September.

4.2 These will be of a more modern design, but one that fits well with the street furniture we have recently installed in other parts of the town centre. Most importantly, they are much less enclosed than the existing structure – which will result in a cleaner, less cluttered environment. I think everyone agrees that the previous state of affairs did not showcase Kettering at its best.

4.3 The works have already begun to improve the view of the Newlands Centre, and we're sure that, once complete, it'll bring in further private sector investment – into the Newlands Centre itself, but also in other parts of Newland Street.

4.4 These improvements are to be paid for utilising s106 contributions secured on the 'Westhill' housing development in Kettering – though forward funded by the owners of the Newlands Centre, Ellandi. It is worth noting that the improvements to Newland Street will happen before any houses are occupied on that site – further proof that growth in Kettering is improving the area for existing communities.

4.5 Though funded through s106 contributions in the medium term, the initial up-front costs for this project have been met by Ellandi, the owners of the Newlands Centre – we are very grateful for their support. Likewise, Northamptonshire County Council, who are undertaking the works, have played an essential role in bringing it forward.

## BOROUGH OF KETTERING

Committee	<b>EXECUTIVE</b>	Item 10	Page 6
-----------	------------------	------------	--------



The old shelters created a dark, smoke-filled passageway that blocked views of shops and was generally unwelcoming



Those shelters were removed over the summer – resulting in a much more open and appealing vista along Newland Street



The new shelters will be of the same design as this, though they will be painted black to better link with existing street furniture around the town

## BOROUGH OF KETTERING

Committee	<b>EXECUTIVE</b>	Item 10	Page 7
-----------	------------------	------------	--------

### 5. IMPACT ON POLICY

5.1 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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### 6. RECOMMENDATION

That the Executive Committee:

- (i) notes the update provided on The Yards, and supports efforts to ensure the continued success of the development; and
- (ii) welcomes the changes made on Newland Street, and recognises the importance of using growth to deliver improvements to the town centres.