

BOROUGH OF KETTERING

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Report Originator	Strategic Management Team	<i>Fwd Plan Ref No:</i> A16/009	
Wards Affected	All	21 st September 2016	
Title	DELIVERING OUR TOWN CENTRES		

Portfolio Holders: Cllr Ian Jelley and Cllr Mark Dearing

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- a) To set out work underway to deliver a new tourism website for Kettering
- b) To note changes at Chesham House Business Centre
- c) To highlight how Kettering Markets are performing

2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 Kettering Borough lies within the South East Midlands, which is predominately 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 THIS IS KETTERING

- 3.1 Tourism is increasingly a key component to the area's economy – with visitors exploring the wonderful assets Northamptonshire has to offer. Whether it is family friendly trips to Wicksteed Park, the thrills and spills of race day at Silverstone, or the countless tranquil walks along meandering rivers; this area has plenty to sing about.

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- 3.2 The “This is Kettering” Facebook page has, for the last few years, been utilised by KBC as a means of advertising what the Kettering area is all about – and notifying people of key offers, events and new businesses. Visitor numbers have risen steadily – and coupled with the Council’s Twitter feed – are expected to continue to do so. Despite this success, it was felt that more could be done to deliver a comprehensive view of Kettering, and the surrounding area.
- 3.3 As such we have been working on a new tourism website, taking the “This is Kettering”, approach – but widening the focus so that it incorporates everything someone could realistically do if staying in the Kettering area (i.e. not restricted by the Borough boundary). We have spent time consulting with key businesses within the sector, as well as examining the way other successful tourism websites work – and have come up with the following design as a starting point:



- 3.4 As you can see, the approach has been to deliver something that looks fresh and not bureaucratic, that is strong in terms of image and style, and which makes the best use of social media platforms and other websites such as TripAdvisor where appropriate. We envisage the site being a starting point – somewhere to highlight and signpost to websites of attractions, rather than a repository of information that is cumbersome and resource intensive to maintain.

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3.5 All of the design work is being undertaken in-house, with colleagues from Corporate and Cultural Services working closely with Commercial Development. The next steps are to key tabs – ‘Discover’ and ‘Eat and Drink’ – before going live. This will enable us to understand how people use the website before continuing with other planned tabs that will explore the history of Kettering, shopping, transport, and places to stay.

4 **CHESHAM HOUSE**

4.1 It is very pleasing to report that as of 1st September, Chesham House will be 100% let. This is a great achievement in such a short period of time, and testament to the hard work of the team based there.

4.2 Further to this, we recently met with the tenants to outline our plans for the ongoing management and improvements of the facility as we work towards ensuring the facility is financially self-sustaining. This includes the provision of a

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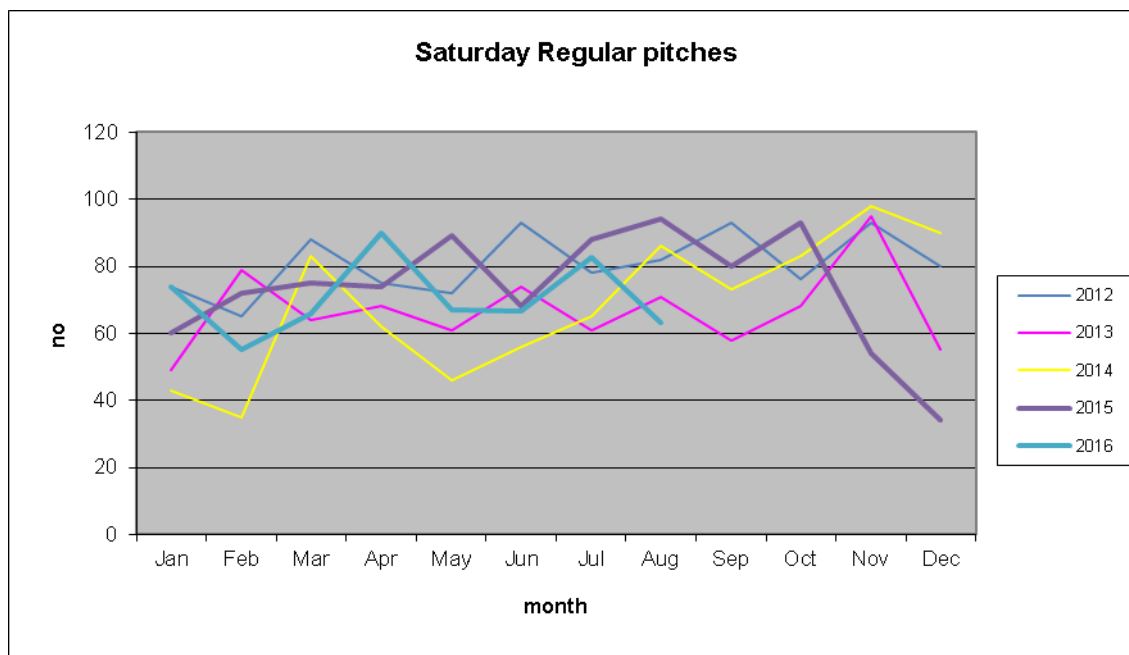
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communal reception and waiting area, improved tenant access, the release (potentially) of two new lettable offices and improved car parking management. To enable this, from early September the Economic Development staff in Chesham have joined the rest of the Commercial Development Service at Horsemarket where the operational support for Chesham House will continue to be provided.

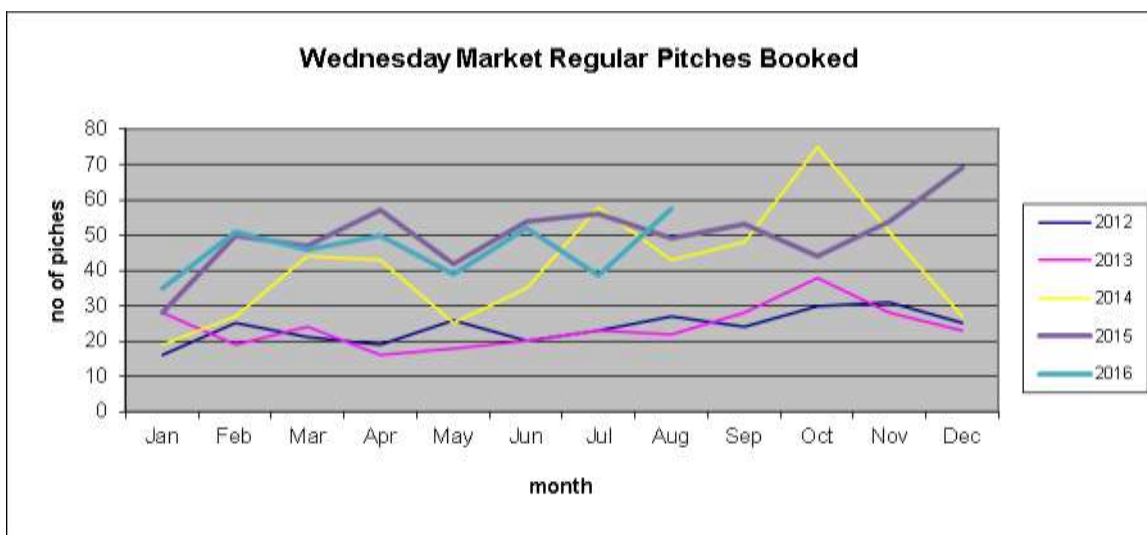
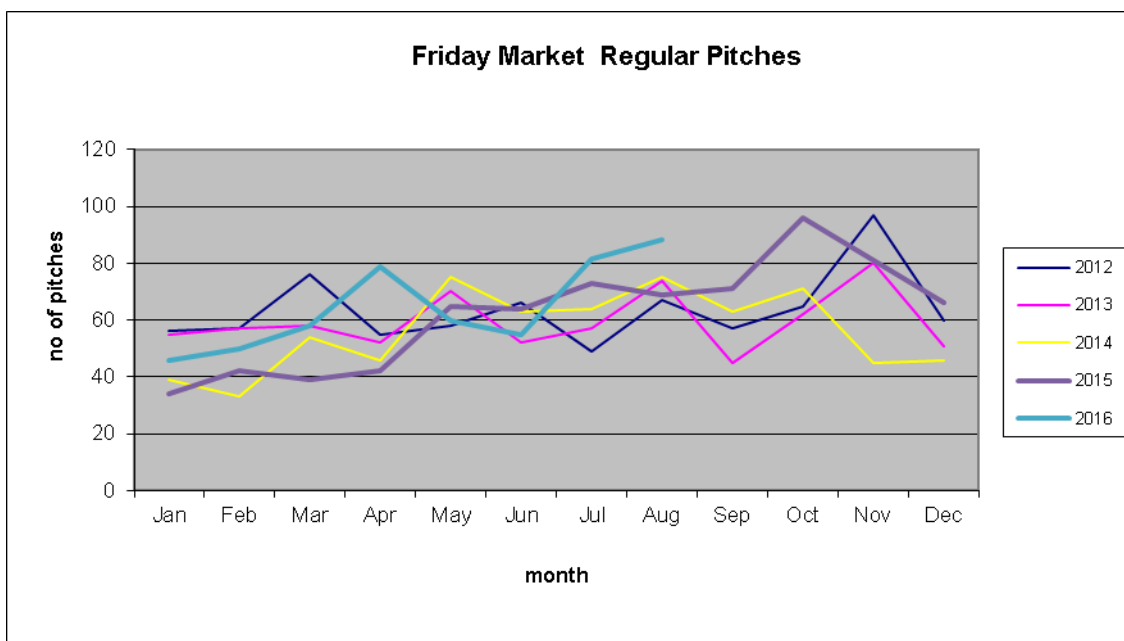
- 4.3 We consulted with tenants during August on the proposed changes. Broadly the improved access and reception area is welcomed but the need to continue a bookable room for meetings and training is still valued. We will respond to the tenants in September following the conclusion of the consultation period with final plans.

5 KETTERING MARKET UPDATE

- 5.1 Kettering's markets continue to do well; with Wednesday's flea market particularly impressive at the moment. This has led to income for the 2016/17 year to date being at an all-time high – largely based on the improvements to commercial booking arrangements and increased trader numbers taking KBC rigs. The following graphs set out how things are looking:



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5.2 As you can see, Saturdays are performing roughly on a par with previous years (though there is always some differences due to weather conditions, etc), Fridays have begun to pick up (partly as a result of the monthly Foodie Friday offer, which is increasingly popular) and Wednesdays are showing very promising signs as we move towards the Christmas run-in.

5.3 We proactively market Kettering within trade papers, online and in social media – and this is delivering lots of interest in stalls. Unfortunately we are slightly held back by the lack of available power points within the town centre (which limits the number of food stalls) – but this is due to be rectified within the next financial year. Alongside the standard advertisements, we have also been looking at what speciality markets we might be able to offer. The Foodie Friday market is establishing itself, and once the power point shortage is resolved, should really step on.

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5.4 There are a number of markets-related events on the cards in the next few months:

- Christmas Lights Switch On (24th November)
 - o 11 stalls available
 - o 3 booked
 - o Awaiting Business in the Community meeting to go ahead for next planning meeting with Shannon
- Teenage Market and Small Business Saturday (3rd December)
 - o 10 stalls available
 - o 2 booked
 - o Further work on engaging with Tresham College and the Princes Trust underway

6 IMPACT ON POLICY

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

8 RECOMMENDATION

That the Executive Committee:

- a) Welcomes the progress made in delivering a new tourism website for Kettering
- b) Notes changes at Chesham House Business Centre
- c) Recognises the hard work being undertaken to improve Kettering Markets and the positive impact they are having on the town centre