

## BOROUGH OF KETTERING

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<b>Report Originator</b>	Kettering Borough Council	<i>Fwd Plan Ref No:</i>	
<b>Wards Affected</b>	All	20 <sup>th</sup> January 2017	
<b>Title</b>	<b>A TOWN CENTRE STRATEGY FOR KETTERING</b>		

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To set out the objective of refreshing the town centre strategy for Kettering and to seek views from the LSP executive on the component parts of that strategy.

### 2. INFORMATION

- 2.1 The vision for our Town centres remains unchanged we still are seeking for them to be vibrant places at the heart of each community that are characterful, distinctive and fun.
- 2.2 The economic conditions in delivering this vision have certainly and still remain volatile with the increasing pressure on public funding. However the growth agenda of our area and opportunities is recognised and offers a competitive return on investments that are made across our borough attractive to many to come into Kettering.
- 2.3 Land uses change and the opportunities are that town centre are still important shopping places but also places to live, work and enjoy leisure time in. This rich mixture of usage builds successful, safe, adaptable and resilient town centres. Our heritage and culture defines the overall character and distinctiveness and is another important dimension of our town centres to conserve and celebrate.
- 2.4 Kettering has attracted many independent as well as national high street names and through initiatives like the Yards creative enterprises and new business ventures have found a platform and grow to join the town in their own right.
- 2.5 The new market place is increasingly used to support the cultural area enriched by a growing calendar of events to attract different communities and visitors to Kettering.

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### 3. POLICY AND PLANS

- 3.1 The future wellbeing of Kettering town centre and the guide for investment in it has been governed in several ways over the last decade or so:-
- a) The Kettering Town Centre formal Area Action Plan (adopted July 2011), which is an adopted planning document, used to govern the determination of planning applications and to guide potential investors in their consideration. It is a masterplan for the town centre in terms of land use. It was adopted in July 2011, with an expiry in 2021
  - b) The NCC Kettering Town Transport Strategy, which was most recently revised in late 2014, which sets out the road and junction investment needs for the town centre, and how they might be addressed. This complements the Town Centre AAP.
  - c) The “Suite 16” investment programme. This was designed a decade ago to describe and programme manage a series of investments by Kettering Borough Council and its partners in the town centre.
- 3.2 In addition, there are separate plans around the night time economy, community safety and crime reduction, and events and markets, all of which impact on the health and profile of the town centre. Policies on car parking charges, street cleansing, and regulations on litter, nuisance and anti-social behaviour also apply.

### 4. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

- 4.1 Whilst many of the Suite 16 projects have been delivered, some of the more ambitious redevelopment schemes were knocked of course by the recession in 2009 onwards and by the changing retail environment, which has reduced the ability of multiples to expand their network of stores. A summary of the progress against the *Suite 16* projects is attached as **Appendix 1**.
- 4.2 The planning consent for the East Kettering sustainable urban extension (SUE) identified £20m for helping deliver public realm and redevelopment schemes, and over £18m for highway improvements in the town centre. The S106 has been reconfigured to enable the development to be viable, and the slower than projected build out of the SUE has lengthened the timescales for those investments taking effect. A number of the junction improvements, for example, have been delivered against the transport strategy, but using other monies than that secured from East Kettering SUE; other projects remain to be delivered.
- 4.3 Planning permission has also been granted by the Secretary of State, for the Rushden Lakes development, which will have an impact on the town centre,

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and which will further restrict the likelihood of major new retail investment in the town centre in the future.

- 4.4 A number of redevelopment sites remain or have emerged recently, especially with the closure of the magistrates and county courts, the planned closure of the police station at the end of 2017 and the reduction in office users in the town centre. Other sites, which have been derelict for some time, are looking more likely to be redeveloped soon. These present opportunities to revisit the role of the town centre and how these sites contribute to it.
- 4.5 There have been positive improvements in the night time offer of Kettering, including the successful new Restaurant Quarter around the Market Place, significant reductions in violence levels in the town, and a new Public Spaces Protection Order was introduced in 2016 to deal with specified nuisance and anti-social behaviours. Daytime and night time events, such as the Womens' Cycle Tour, Kettering by The Sea, Kettfest, and the Christmas Lights switch on have been introduced or expanded in recent years. Car parking charges were reduced in 2015 and a number of free days introduced to support events. The town centre earned a "Purple Flag" in 2014, the smallest town in the UK to do so, which reflected the positive work to improve safety, and widen the offer of the town centre, especially at night.
- 4.6 There have also been some other positive movements. The property magazine *Property Week*, identified Kettering as number 41 in the top 100 retail investment hotspots in the UK, higher than any other location in the county or within thirty miles. Local businesses are exploring the possibility of working more closely with each other and the Council to boost trade and visitor footfall, and the Council is developing a *Visit Kettering* website to encourage more visits from further afield.

### **5. FUTURE STRATEGY**

- 5.1 Whilst the adopted planning and highways plans are still only half way through their expected life, and remain relevant, the suite 16 programme has come to a natural end. Given the conditions and circumstances described above, and the continuing need to make the town centre relevant and prosperous in the future, it was considered timely to draw up a new town centre strategy to guide the Council's future investments and interventions and as a framework for partnership work with the business and public sectors.
- 5.2 Any strategy should express a vision for the town centre as a whole, and how the Council, the business sector, and other public agencies can work together to make it happen. The strategy will need to address:-
1. How planned and opportunity redevelopment sites are progressed , and for what purposes and by whom

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2. The mix of uses in the town centre, embracing retail, residential, commercial, leisure and open space, and the desired balance between them.
3. What road and junction improvements are required, and what modes of travel most need supporting, including parking and transport interchanges
4. How the town is marketed and promoted and by whom
5. The continuing need to improve the night time economy, and in what direction
6. How to improve the overall safety, ambience and appearance of the town centre.
7. How to support and encourage more events and attractions and to make better use of existing assets; enhancing historical assets and securing cultural improvements
8. The contribution the business sector wants to and ought to make

5.3 **The views of the LSP Executive on this set of overall objectives are invited.**

### **6. NEXT STEPS**

- 6.1 Officers will draw up outline plans, utilising what we already know about work in progress, the opportunities which exist and the interests which have been expressed. It will then be necessary to seek the views of various stakeholders on those ideas, with a view to take a report to the Council's own Executive Committee in the spring and to embed in the LSP strategy for the period 2017-2020.
- 6.2 It is hoped that this new plan can remain relevant for at least five years so that it can be refreshed at the same time as the new AAP is developed after 2020.
- 6.3 It is also recognised that parallel documents might usefully be produced for the three A6 town centres as well, but these will need a different approach relevant to each town and to local circumstances and opportunities. The Council's Site Specific Part 2 Local Plan is looking at these town centres, the LSP Executive may wish to input into this emerging document

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## APPENDIX ONE SUITE 16 PROJECTS

Category	The original Suite 16 projects	What happened
Town centre public realm	Public Realm Phase one (Market Place )	<b>Completed in 2009</b>
	Public Realm Phases Two and Three (Sheep St, Market Place and Horsemarket Bus interchange)	<b>Completed in 2012</b>
	Public Realm Phase Four (Gold St and High St)	Scheme designed in principle and consulted upon. Awaiting finance – negotiated sums from East Kettering SUE to be applied in due course.
	Newland St bus shelters removal (later addition to Suite 16)	Loan taken out with Ellandi to carry out removal and replacement works, about to be repaid through S106 contributions. <b>Completed in 2015</b>
Highways and movement	Junction Improvements a) Northampton Rd/Northfield Ave junction b) Rothwell Rd roundabout improvements c) Sheep St/Northampton Rd junction d) North-South Two-way link on Eskdail St; Victoria St and Queen St e) Bowling Green Rd/London Rd junction	<b>Completed in 2011</b>  <b>Completed in 2013</b> <b>Completed in 2016</b> Designs completed, awaiting finance Due for review in 2016
	Green links – design for cycling and pedestrian links on routes into town; and intelligent traffic management system	<b>Completed during 2009-11</b>
	Full pedestrianisation of town centre streets	<b>Completed in 2013</b>
Town Centre development schemes	Market Place Restaurants	<b>Completed in 2011</b>
	Chesham House refurbishment and conversion	<b>Completed in 2008</b>
	Soans Yard Development	<b>Completed in 2015</b>
	Wadroft redevelopment scheme	A number of properties purchased for land assembly. No further progress due to scheme costs and economic conditions– scheme on hold
	Newlands Phase One shops redevelopment scheme	No progress because of economic conditions – scheme on hold
	Hog's Head and London Fruiterers sites, Horsemarket - redevelopment schemes	No progress because of economic conditions – a new scheme has been proposed recently.
	Station Quarter scheme and new concourse and bus interchange, at railway station	No progress – scheme on hold awaiting Network Rail view on use of its landholdings.
	New Residential Quarter (Western Quarter)	No progress – Surface Water Management Plan affecting available land for development

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		expected by end 2016, design solutions for Slade Brook planned for 2017. Land in multiple ownership; may require some land assembly, infrastructure investment and market interest/joint venture
	Bowling Green Rd redevelopment scheme and associated office move.	Scheme did not proceed from a combination of land covenant and developer/investor interest levels.
Public service delivery	Creation of public service one stop shop	Original idea to build a new front office abandoned, but project <b>substantially completed</b> within Municipal Offices, with further opportunities to incorporate other partners being explored.

The Suite 16 projects were also, at various times, supplemented by projects embracing the Kettering Energy Park, the Roxhill Gateway business park at Junction 10, the project for a university campus in Kettering and the delivery of the East Kettering Sustainable Urban Extension