

BOROUGH OF KETTERING

PLANNING POLICY COMMITTEE

Meeting held: 25th January 2017

Present: Councillor Mike Tebbutt (Chair)
Councillors Linda Adams, Duncan Bain, Ash Davies,
Ruth Groome, Ian Jelley and Jan Smith

16.PP.26 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mark Rowley.

16.PP.27 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Ian Jelley declared an interest as a member of Rothwell Town Council, in item 5 (Local Development Scheme).

Councillor Ruth Groome declared an interest as a member of Burton Latimer Town Council, in item 5 (Local Development Scheme).

Councillor Mike Tebbutt declared an interest as a member of Desborough Town Council, in item 5 (Local Development Scheme).

16.PP.28 MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 23rd November 2016 be approved and signed as a correct record by the Chair subject to the following amendment:

Councillor Groome was listed as a County Councillor and this was amended to Town Councillor

16.PP.29 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

A report was submitted to agree an update to the Council's Local Development Scheme; and to recommend that the scheme is submitted to Full Council for adoption.

It was reported that a Local Development Scheme (LDS) was a project plan setting out the timetable for the preparation of documents that make up the Council's contribution towards the North Northamptonshire Development Plan.

Section 15(1) of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act required that the "local planning authority must prepare and maintain a scheme to be known as their local development scheme". Since the implementation of the Act, the North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit had co-ordinated the preparation of the shared LDS, based upon the submissions made by each of the partner authorities. There was also a requirement that the LDS was submitted to the Secretary of State. The introduction of the Localism Act in 2011, removed this requirement. The new legislation as a result now only required that the LDS was simply brought into effect and published.

The Council's constitution required that the Planning Policy Committee consider and recommend to Full Council for approval the Plans and alterations which together comprised the Development Plan. It was the responsibility of Full Council to approve the Plans and alterations which together comprised the Local Development Framework. The report circulated to members of the committee set out Kettering Borough Council's draft LDS, with a recommendation that it be agreed and presented to Full Council for approval. In the meantime, it was proposed that the draft LDS programme as attached was published on the Council's website.

The committee heard the next meeting of Full Council was scheduled for 1st March 2017. To allow a short period for the new LDS to filter into public awareness, it was considered best to delay publication of the Draft Plan for consultation to June/July 2017. The revised LDS for progressing the Site Specific Part 2 Local Plan was therefore proposed as follows:

- Draft Plan for publication – June/July 2017
- Pre-Submission Plan for consultation – October/November 2017
- Submission to Secretary of State – January 2018
- Examination – April 2018
- Receipt of Inspector's Report – July 2018
- Adoption – September 2018

The LDS also included additional plan-making documents, those being Proposals Map, the Rothwell and Desborough Urban Extension Area Action Plan (AAP), and a review of the Kettering Town Centre Area Action Plan.

The Rothwell and Desborough AAP was reported as being on hold, with its Submission to the Secretary of State having been delayed in 2010. Planning applications for both preferred sites had been submitted, the urban extension at Desborough was subsequently granted outline planning permission in April 2014; the Rothwell North Sustainable Urban Extension was now embedded in policy within the newly adopted Joint Core Strategy. There were however a number of policy principles/proposals outside of these application boundaries considered worth retaining, and potentially incorporating within the Site Specific Part 2 Local Plan. It was therefore proposed to keep these documents within the LDS, until these principles were either picked up or dropped, at the Submission stage in preparing the Part 2 Local Plan.

In addition, once the Site Specific Part 2 Local Plan had been adopted, it was proposed to review the Kettering Town Centre Area Action Plan. This was expected to be towards the end of 2018, at which point resources could be directed towards the review, and a clearer evidence base was likely to be available in assessing the impact of the major out-of-town retail development at Rushden Lakes, due to open in July 2017.

A draft copy of the LDS was provided at Appendix 1 of the report. Following any comments and subsequent amendments agreed by this committee, the document should be amended and forwarded to Full Council for adoption, with the recommendation that: Full Council resolve that the Local Development Scheme is to have effect from 1st March 2017.

Pat Scouse addressed the committee and raised concerns regarding the consultation and requested clarification regarding the inclusion of Gypsy and Traveller allocations.

Members heard that a significant amount of focussed consultation had taken place, the outcome of which helped to develop the Council's evidence base. Also, that it was intended that Gypsy and Traveller pitch allocations would be included in the consultation at the moment.

Discussion ensued and it was suggested that the contents page of the Draft LDS and any minor amendments be agreed by the Chair prior to the Plan being taken to Council. It was

RESOLVED

that Members agreed the draft LDS, including the discussed amendments to be approved by the Chair of the Committee prior to recommendation to Full Council that the revised LDS be adopted.

16.PP.30 **KETTERING TOWN CENTRE AREA ACTION PLAN –
MONITORING UPDATE**

A report was submitted to inform Members of the results of the fifth Monitoring Report of the Kettering Town Centre Area Action Plan.

This report had been written to evaluate the progress that had been made in delivering the plan's objectives. The first monitoring update was presented to Members of this Committee in September 2012, the second in November 2013, the third in November 2014 and the fourth in November 2015. This fifth monitoring update reviewed the progress made in delivering the plan in the last 12 months. Officers also updated the Kettering Town Centre Health Check provided at Appendix 1 of the report.

AAP Objective 1: Create a zoned, vibrant town centre which makes best use of available land and existing buildings and maximises potential for regeneration

In order to monitor the progress of the AAP, footfall counts were used to provide a health check on Kettering Town Centre after the adoption of the policy. In September 2016 the footfall survey showed that footfall has decreased on a non-market day. This year's figures showed an 18% increase in the figures on the market day compared to the previous year

The AAP had a target of 957 new dwellings in the plan area by 2021. In the last year 9 units had been completed, these were at 15-17 London Road and 17 Headlands, for 8 dwellings and 1 dwelling respectively. The Council had therefore already delivered a total of 204 (22%) of the minimum requirement in the 5 years since adoption.

In May 2016 a planning application was approved for a change of use from A1 to an A3 use with a boutique cinema on the first floor, at Mr Ray's, which had been located at 4 Market Place since 1983. This unit, when the permission is implemented, would be occupied by Wildwood, an established and highly regarded restaurant chain.

The award winning Market Place at the heart of the Restaurant Quarter was again the venue for the 'Kettering by the Sea' event during July and August. The event was again very popular and provided a 'distinctive and fun' family experience in accordance with the vision of the AAP. It was also the focus for Christmas events last year. The UK Women's Cycle Tour finished at the Market Place on 19th June, attracting a large number of visitors to enjoy a carnival atmosphere along the route and in the town,

and especially the town centre. The ITV4 televised event reflected upon the attractive countryside in the surrounding areas. It was confirmed that this event would be held in Kettering in 2017, therefore this would, continue to showcase Kettering town centre, profiling the area as a destination. The Council's Big Screen was also used on numerous occasions, providing film, television and information broadcasting for visitors.

AAP Objective 2: To implement a step change in quality retail offer incorporating 20,500sqm

The AAP had a target of at least 20,500sqm new retail floorspace by 2021. In the last year approximately 571sqm of net retail floorspace had been gained. It was noted that the town centre had gained H&M but lost WH Smith.

Overall vacancy rates in the Plan area were 9.37%, compared to the national average of 12.59%. Kettering continued to perform average in terms of vacancy levels.

Members heard that the opening date of the Rushden Lakes out of town retail development was delayed until July 2017 due to Highways works.

AAP Objective 3: To deliver a new residential community and utilise residential uses to support and complement the quarters

The plan had a target of 957 new dwellings on the allocated sites; 540 to be within the new residential quarter. The plan had delivered 16 units on allocated sites. This delivery rate was not a concern at this stage as the plan was new and the housing market was currently deflated. Elsewhere within the plan area 4 additional residential units had been completed this year. It should also be noted that the Council was able to demonstrate a 5 year supply of housing land, as required by national planning policy.

AAP Objective 4: To create a town centre characterised by the high quality of urban design, architecture and public realm and respect for heritage

The Council had agreed a delivery programme with Northamptonshire Highways to bring forward the next phase of public realm improvements in the town centre.

AAP Objective 5: To create a significant increase in office employment space, along with further regeneration opportunities

In the past year there had been a gain of 24sqm. However, the Council was working with its Station Quarter partners, Network Rail and East Midlands Trains, to establish the feasibility of bringing forward an office development in that area. East

Midlands Trains franchise would come to an end in 2018 and a new franchise would be offered, it would be important to investment and growth of the town that the new franchise continued to support access to and from Kettering town and the town centre.

AAP Objective 6: To make a safe, welcoming, walkable and well connected town centre

The Purple Flag was awarded in 2015; Kettering held this accreditation since then, however in January 2017 this was due for renewal. This award recognises the creation of a safe, clean and inviting environment in the town centre after 5pm. There it was important that the standards set since 2015 were maintained to ensure that Kettering sustains its Purple Flag status as it is vital for economic growth and improving the public profile of the town.

A number of improvements to the town centre which had helped maintain this accreditation through 2016 include:

- Opening of new restaurants and bars including a new Turkish restaurant and a new Italian restaurant.
- £700,000 refurbishment, rebranding and reopening of a vacant town centre Public House – The Stitching Pony.
- Training held for Licensees to look at different business models and options for diversifying, which was funded by the Police and Crime Commissioner.
- Increased amount of bars offer a range of entertainment/activity such as comedy evenings, singles nights and open mic events.
- A perception survey showed that 46% of people thought there had been improvements within the centre in 2016 and more people are now visiting the town centre on a regular basis.
- Increased public awareness of partnership working by Police, street pastors, door staff and taxi drivers.
- Introduction of PSPO proved to be a useful tool in tackling underage drinking and protecting vulnerable people.
- A reduction in violence against person crime of between 8-13%.

AAP Objective 7: To deliver a green town centre with an emphasis on provision of green infrastructure, renewable energy initiatives and environmentally efficient buildings to encourage green living

Several of the allocated sites in the New Residential Quarter were likely to be affected by surface water flooding. To ensure flooding issues, the provision of urban green space and the enhancement of the Slade Brook corridor were being considered in advance of the proposed developments in this area. The AAP

committed the Council to the production of a Surface Water Management Plan (SWMP) and Green Infrastructure Strategy (GIS). Kettering Borough Council would shortly be issuing a tender brief to seek consultant input into preparing a Green Infrastructure Strategy and Delivery Plan, which would include designing a scheme to improve the Slade Brook river corridor as a piece of green infrastructure.

The Implications of the amendments to the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended), were outlined in the report.

Members discussed the report and added a number of comments including:

- the appearance of the Cultural Quarter needs improving
- how can the night time economy be measured
- increase in residential properties has improved the sense of safety
- the addition of the H&M store has been positive
- few retail units remain empty for long
- good to see Kettering town centre continuing to improve in so many different ways

It was

RESOLVED that Members noted

- i. The opening of the Yards site has introduced a new focus for independent retail and has increased the number of visitors to the town (increase in retail floorspace);
- ii. Improvements to public realm, including rising bollards, have made the town centre a more pedestrian friendly area, which continues to be effective in creating a safer town centre;
- iii. Improvements within the town centre continue to create the right environment for the town centre's Purple Flag status to be maintained;
- iv. The town centre has been recognised as one of the best town centres nationally, in terms of potential for growth and investment;

- v. Progress is being made at the design stage to improve junctions in and around the town centre;
- vi. Overall vacancy rates have increased to 11.7% which is less than the national average (12.4%);
- vii. An increase of footfall on market day in December 2016, despite decreases in September and on a non-market day in the same month; and
- viii. The closure of the Royal Hotel and subsequent increase in vacancy rates.

(The meeting started at 6.30 pm and finished at 7.45 pm)

Signed
Chair

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