

## BOROUGH OF KETTERING

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<b>Report Originator</b>	Strategic Management Team	<i>Fwd Plan Ref No:</i> A16/029	
<b>Wards Affected</b>	Directly, William Knibb and St Peters; indirectly all wards in the Borough	12 <sup>th</sup> April 2017	
<b>Title</b>	<b>TOWN CENTRE DELIVERY PLAN</b>		

**Portfolio Holder: Councillor Mark Dearing**

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To agree the process for developing and consulting upon a delivery plan for Kettering town centre.

### 2. INFORMATION

- 2.1. The Council's Area Action Plan for Kettering town centre sets out a strategic vision and overall planning policy and runs to 2025. However, continued economic changes, opportunities and challenges move at a fast pace and no strategic plan can survive sustained contact with the real world without being flexed and adapted to circumstances. For this reason, the Council has relied on having a live and fluid delivery plan to identify and executive improvements to keep the town centre vibrant and competitive.
- 2.2. The original delivery plan – the Suite 16 programme – ran from about 2008 to now. It has run its course and the time is right to replace it with a new one. Attached at **Appendix A** is a short summary of what happened to each of the projects that were originally included in the programme (although the programme itself changed during its life, so there are more than 16 projects mentioned).
- 2.3. In considering how to replace the Suite 16 programme with a new suite of activities, regard has been taken of the changing environment for town centres. Kettering remains a well-used and populated town centre compared to many – and has recently been identified by *Property Week* as 41<sup>st</sup> in the list of the top 100 town centre locations for investment returns (the only town in the county in the list at all). Nevertheless, it cannot stand still. The following issues continue to have an impact on the town centre. These issues will inform and partly shape the realisation of a new delivery plan which takes us to 2025 and the more formal policy adoption of a new Area Action Plan.
- Change in shopping patterns and habits
  - Opening of Rushden Lakes in 2017
  - Identifying how Kettering is distinct from Corby and Harborough and other competing centres

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- Slow pace of development in East Kettering but not elsewhere in the Borough
  - Growth of leisure and entertainment expectations
  - Growth of “town centre living” options
  - Austerity as it affects public services, and its effects
- 2.4. The purpose of a delivery plan is to identify priorities for the town centre. It will set out short (17-18), medium (18-20) and long term (20-25) actions. Town centres are complex by nature of the many interest groups, landowners, public and commercial interests. Delivery will require a common consensus of the direction being taken and, in a number of cases, shared delivery. The Council’s statutory role in planning and leadership of place is vital, but its planning and activities must be informed by all interested parties. Only in this way can the plan be successfully orchestrated to realise the shared vision for Kettering Town Centre. Businesses, landowners and other commercial and investment agencies, and the community sector need to be engaged and involved. The plan needs to be realistic in terms of timing, costs and responsibilities. The Council’s own role will need to be clarified within each project, to designate if it is leading, supporting or promoting delivery (*rowing, steering or cheering*).
- 2.5. In consultation, it is proposed to develop proposals around the following themes:-
- Planned and opportunity redevelopment sites – when, where and for what purpose?
  - Getting the right mix of uses in the town centre - residential, retail, leisure, commercial, open space
  - Road and junction improvements, parking and access
  - How the town is marketed and by whom
  - Continuing to improve the night time economy
  - Supporting and encouraging more events and attractions and making better use of existing assets
  - Its contribution to health improvement
  - Overall safety, ambience and appearance of the town centre
- 2.6. It should be noted that a separate review of charges in KBC car parks will be taking place in 2017 and this specific issue will therefore not be covered in this delivery plan.
- 2.7. The Council can develop ideas on all these themes, but, as detailed above, should not aim to do so in isolation. Therefore, it is proposed that stakeholder engagement take place, initially with a range of stakeholders to identify those who would be willing to work more closely in a partnership with the Council on the project identified. The appetite for a permanent partnership promoting and growing the town centre could be tested in this process. A list of stakeholders is attached as **Appendix B**. A community conference or similar event to bring as many interested parties together might be a good starting point.

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2.8. Having developed and considered a set of projects and interventions, the next stage would be to openly promote and communicate those which are new projects and those that are part of the existing area action plan. Good quality materials will be needed to engage a wider audience and focus on specific interest groups – retailers, publicans, young people, residents, for example, to ensure the widest possible testing of ideas and projects. It is hoped that this could take place over the autumn of 2017.

2.9. The learning from this approach can then be applied to developing individual town centre delivery plans for each of the A6 towns. In addition to the considerable experience and knowledge of how the A6 towns organise themselves, provide events and attractions and engage their catchment areas.

### **3. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

3.1. The delivery plan will shape policy and priorities as they affect the town centre up until 2025.

### **4. CONSULTATION AND CUSTOMER IMPACT**

4.1. This report describes in outline an extensive consultation process.

### **5. FINANCE, LEGAL and HR RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

5.1. Time and resource will need to be dedicated to the engagement and consultation process and some provision made for supplies and services. These can be accommodated within the Council's overall budget. Eventual projects will of course require identified and dedicated resources once they had been agreed.

### **6. RECOMMENDATION**

The Executive Committee is asked to endorse the proposals in this report and to embark upon an engagement and consultation programme for a new Kettering town centre delivery plan, centred around the themes set out in para 2.6 of the report, with frequent reports back to this committee on progress made.

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#### Background Papers:

Kettering Area Action Plan –

[https://secure.kettering.gov.uk/site/scripts/download\\_info.php?downloadID=2274&fileID=4723](https://secure.kettering.gov.uk/site/scripts/download_info.php?downloadID=2274&fileID=4723)