

BOROUGH OF KETTERING

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| Report Originator | Head of Development Services | Fwd Plan Ref No: - | |
| Wards Affected | All | 22 nd November 2017 | |
| Title | SITE SPECIFIC PART 2 LOCAL PLAN – TOWN CENTRES (MARKET TOWNS) | | |

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update Members on Retail and Town Centres issues within the Market Towns, and to agree a way for taking these issues forward in the emerging Site Specific Part 2 Local Plan.

2. INFORMATION

- 2.1 The Site Specific Part 2 Local Plan (SSP2) will form part of the statutory North Northamptonshire Development Plan. The Development Plan, as it relates to Kettering Borough, will consist of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (Part 1 Local Plan) adopted July 2016; the emerging Kettering Borough Site Specific Part 2 Local Plan; the Kettering Town Centre Area Action Plan adopted July 2011; the Northamptonshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan Update; and any made Neighbourhood Plans. The Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations policy is planned to be added as a standalone document in the future as agreed by Members on 5th July 2017.
- 2.2 The Joint Core Strategy (JCS) provides a set of strategic planning policies for Corby, Kettering and Wellingborough Borough Councils, and East Northamptonshire District Council. The emerging Site Specific Part 2 Local Plan (SSP2) will provide local planning policies to cover Kettering Borough, and will include the identification of sites for housing, employment, recreation and other land uses, as well as policies guiding town centres, and replace saved policies contained within the current Local Plan for Kettering Borough.
- 2.3 To date, Members have endorsed (with amendments) initial draft chapters of the emerging SSP2 Local Plan chapters relating to the Draft Vision and Objectives, Burton Latimer, Kettering and Villages within the borough (with the exception of Cranford, Stoke Albany, Newton, Broughton). Designated housing site allocations within the Rural Areas, Kettering, and Burton Latimer, have also been endorsed. These endorsed chapters and allocations will be included within the draft SSP2 Local Plan for public consultation.
- 2.4 The emerging SSP2 Local Plan will also include a standalone section on Town Centres, Retail and Community Facilities, in addition to the separate town centre sections included within each of the Market Town Chapters. This area of work was last considered through the Site Specific Proposals Local Development Document – Options Paper Consultation (March 2012) and needs to be taken forwards through the emerging SSP2 Local Plan. Members may recall that some

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decisions/discussions have already taken place on matters relating to town centre boundaries, and market town healthchecks.

3.0 POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

3.2 Section 2: Ensuring the Vitality of Town Centres seeks for Local Planning Authorities (LPA's) to plan positively for town centres in order to encourage economic activity, and ensure that they are viable and vital. The NPPF sets out a number of requirements for Local Planning Authorities in preparing Local Plans. These are set out in table 1 (below).

3.3 In addition, paragraph 24 - 25, Section 2 sets out a Sequential Test for assessing planning applications for main town centre uses that are not proposed within an existing centre or in accordance with an up-to-date Local Plan, unless they involve proposals for small scale rural offices or other small scale rural development. The Sequential Test places a requirement on the developer to demonstrate why a more suitable location for their proposal cannot be met through a suitable site located firstly within the town centre. Only if no suitable sites are available in the town centre, then edge of centre locations should be considered, and failing that only then should locations outside of town centre sites be considered.

3.4 Paragraph 26, Section 2 sets out an Impact Assessment test against which proposals for retail, leisure and office development located outside of town centres, should be assessed. This test only applies to proposals with a floor space of 2500m² or above (unless a lower locally set floorspace threshold has been set e.g. through a Local Plan). The impact assessment test places a requirement on the applicant to demonstrate the predicted impact of the proposal on existing, committed and planned public and private investment in a town centre/town centres in the catchment area of the proposal; and the impact of the proposal on town centre vitality and viability, including local consumer choice and trade in the town centre and wider area, up to 5 years from the time the application is made (or 10 years for major proposals).

3.5 Development Plan Policies

3.6 Policy 11 of the Joint Core Strategy (JCS) defines the network and hierarchy of centres throughout the North Northamptonshire area, focusing development on the hierarchy of settlements. Policy 12 (JCS) identifies Kettering Town as the largest centre within the North Northamptonshire area, in terms of comparison shopping floor space and expenditure. The North Northamptonshire Retail Capacity Update (2014) (NNRCU) which informs Policy 12 (JCS), forecasts a net comparison goods and net convenience goods retail requirement for the Northern sub-area of North Northamptonshire. Policy 12 (JCS) sets this requirement out as an additional 12,500m² (min) of net comparison shopping floor space within Kettering Town Centre. This requirement will downgrade the

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Kettering Town Centre Area Action Plan's (KTCAAP) more ambitious existing net comparison shopping floor space requirement of 20,500m².

- 3.7 This reflects a shift in retail focus of the JCS, which takes into account the Secretary of State decision to approve Rushden Lakes which the NNRCU identified is likely to draw trade of comparison retail from the Northern sub-area and be challenging for the area to permanently increase its retention rate over and above its current position, coupled with increase pressure from internet shopping. This highlights the sensitivity of the town centres to pressures from the south of the North Northamptonshire area. The revised comparison shopping floorspace requirement will need to be reflected within future updates to the KTCAAP which currently covers a plan period of 2011 – 2021, and remains a standalone policy document which takes forwards Kettering Town Centre Issues.
- 3.8 Policy 12 (JCS) and the NNRCU also identifies a qualitative need for a medium sized foodstore (approximately 2000m² net floorspace) to serve the Desborough/Rothwell area over the plan period, and lends support for its delivery. Conversely, no retail requirements have been set for the market town of Burton Latimer, although general support is given for development in market towns of an appropriate scale and nature. Policy 12 (JCS) supports proposals involving a change of use and redevelopment in Primary Shopping Areas, where they add to the attractiveness of the centre and do not lead to the predominance of A1 retail use being critically undermined.
- 3.9 Policy 12 (JCS) echoes the requirements of Section 2 (NPPF) with respect of the Sequential Test and Impact Assessment Requirements, but offers additional exemption from these requirements for main town centre use proposals which involve the creation of local centres in SUEs.
- 3.10 Policy 12 (JCS) leaves it to the discretion of the SSP2 Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plans to identify any additional development opportunities where they do not undermine the focus of retail development at the town centres of Growth Towns (e.g. Kettering). The KTCAAP provides the policy focus of Kettering Town Centre which will remain a standalone document separate to the SSP2 Local Plan. As a result, the SSP2 Local Plan will focus on all areas located outside of the Kettering Town Centre area. There are currently no Neighbourhood Plan groups which cover the Kettering Town Centre Area.
- 3.11 Whilst the market towns of Desborough and Rothwell have both designated Neighbourhood Plan Areas, and Desborough has made significant progress in their Neighbourhood Plan, moving it to the pre-submission stage. The sequential test / impact assessment exemption set out in Policy 12 (JCS) does not apply to these towns or Burton Latimer, as they are not defined as growth towns. It is noted that the Pre-Submission Draft Desborough Neighbourhood Plan does identify (but does not allocate) two potential sites capable of delivering additional retail floor space (notably the Lawrence's Factory and Old Dairy Sites).
- 3.12 Saved Policy 64 (Development within Established Shopping Areas) of the Local Plan supports proposals for new or upgraded shopping development within the

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established shopping areas of the market towns, where the proposal would improve the range or quality of shopping facilities or the shopping environment and is suited in character, size and operational requirements to the established shopping areas. This policy provides the current framework for defining the extent of the town centre boundaries for market towns and will need to be replaced through the SSP2 Local Plan.

3.13 The summary table below illustrates how NPPF Plan Making for Town Centre policy can be addressed through the emerging Development Plan.

Table 1. Compliance with Section 2: NPPF.

| Section 2: NPPF | JCS | Emerging SSP2 | KTCAAP | Other |
|--|--|--|--|-------------|
| <p>Viability & Vitality Recognise town centres as the heart of their communities and pursue policies to support their viability and vitality.</p> | <p>Policy 12 provides focus on town centres.</p> | <p>Healthcheck updates will underpin emerging policy which will seek to support viability and vitality of town centres.</p> | <p>Policies 1 and 2 on regeneration priorities and the urban quarters</p> | <p>None</p> |
| <p>Hierarchy of Centres Define a network and hierarchy of centres that is resilient to anticipated future economic change.</p> | <p>Policy 11 – defines the settlement hierarchy for each of the towns and the roles that they provide.</p> | <p>Not necessary</p> | <p>Pre-dates the JCS, although the status of Kettering as a Growth Town prevails</p> | <p>None</p> |
| <p>Extent of Town Centres Define the extent of town centres and primary shopping areas, based on a clear definition of primary and secondary frontages in designated centres, and set policies that make clear which uses will be</p> | <p>Policy 12 leaves this to Part 2 Local Plans.</p> | <p>Emerging policy will define the extent of the town centre boundaries within the market towns of Burton Latimer, Desborough and Rothwell. This will use a single line defining the extent of a shopping area (see report).</p> | <p>Policy 2 - defines the extent of the primary and secondary frontages in Kettering Town Centre only.</p> | <p>None</p> |

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| permitted in such locations. | | | | |
| <p>Promoting town centres Promote competitive town centres that provide customer choice and a diverse retail offer and which reflect the individuality of town centres</p> | Policy 12 supports the development of the town centres of the Market Towns consistent with the character and role of the settlement | Include policy(s) which provides a strong retail and cultural presence, as well as promoting the offer and identity through economic development activity. | Various policies shaping the distinct Quarters in Kettering town centre. | None |
| <p>Markets Retain and enhance existing markets and, where appropriate, re-introduce or create new ones, ensuring that markets remain attractive and competitive.</p> | None | Include policy to allocate sites for market use, and facilitate their enhancement as an offer. | Future review to the KTCAAP will address this requirement. | None |
| <p>Site Allocations in Town Centres Allocate a range of suitable sites to meet the scale and type of retail, leisure, commercial, office, tourism, cultural, community and residential development need in town centres. It is important that needs for retail, leisure, office and other main town centre uses are met in full and are not compromised by limited site availability. Local planning authorities should therefore undertake an assessment of the need to expand town centres to ensure a sufficient supply of suitable site.</p> | Policy 12 identifies a need for additional 12,500m ² net comparison shopping floorspace within Kettering. | Emerging policy will identify development sites within the market towns to meet local need without impacting on the settlement hierarchy. | Policies 1 and 15 KTCAAP identify redevelopment sites within Kettering Town Centre for additional retail quantum. A future review will reconsider allocations, alongside work on the Kettering Town Centre Delivery Plan. | Emerging Desborough Neighbourhood Plan identifies potential redevelopment sites. |
| Outside of town | Policy 12 | Emerging plan to | Mainly | None |

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| <p>Centres (Pt1) Allocate appropriate edge of centre sites for main town centre uses that are well connected to the town centre where suitable and viable town centre sites are not available. If sufficient edge of centre sites cannot be identified, set policies for meeting the identified needs in other accessible locations that are well connected to the town centres.</p> | <p>identifies a qualitative need for a medium sized supermarket to serve the Rothwell / Desborough Area.</p> | <p>identify sites to fulfil Desborough/Rothwell supermarket requirement, and/or policy criteria to direct its location.</p> | <p>allocations identified in New Residential Quarter and Station Quarter.</p> | |
| <p>Outside of town Centres (Pt2) Set policies for the consideration of proposals for main town centre uses which cannot be accommodated in or adjacent to town centres.</p> | <p>Policy 12 also provides local centres SUE exemption to Sequential Test</p> | <p>Emerging plan to consider local exemption criteria to the Sequential Test and locally set impact assessment threshold.</p> | <p>None</p> | <p>None</p> |
| <p>Residential Development in Towns Centres Recognise that residential development can play an important role in ensuring the vitality of centres and set out policies to encourage residential development on appropriate sites</p> | | <p>Emerging Policy to contain policy to support residential development at 1st floor and above within town centre locations.</p> | <p>Policies 6 and 21 identify residential led development sites which will support and complement redevelopment of town centre sites.</p> | <p>None</p> |
| <p>Encouraging Economic Development Where town centres are in decline, local planning authorities should plan positively for their future to encourage economic activity.</p> | | <p>Emerging policy to identify sites suitable for environmental improvements, development sites and opportunities for redevelopment.</p> | <p>All policies to deliver Plan objectives and vision. Kettering Delivery Plan in preparation.</p> | <p>None</p> |

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4.0 **EMERGING SSP2 LOCAL PLAN**

4.1 **Vitality and Viability**

- 4.2 Healthcheck updates to the market towns of Burton Latimer, Desborough and Rothwell were reported to Members on 15th March 2016, and provide a reliable indicator to the overall vitality and viability of the Market Towns. Regular updates to these healthchecks are important part of providing the planning authority with an updated baseline for comparison with past performance of the towns and national average performance. In addition, it provides an evidence base to policy formation at a local level.

Officer Recommendation 1:

That market town healthchecks are regularly updated and reviewed in order to identify weakness in town centre health, and plan positively in order to support their vitality and viability.

4.3 **Hierarchy of Centres**

- 4.4 As set out in table 1, row 2 (above), the JCS provides an overarching strategy for the North Northamptonshire Area and defines the hierarchy of settlements (including centres) and their respective roles, which is considered sufficient to address resilience to anticipated future economic changes.

Officer Recommendation 2:

No further work required.

4.5 **Extent of Town Centres**

- 4.6 As set out in paragraph 3.12, Saved Policy 64 (Development within Established Shopping Areas) of the Local Plan provides the current framework for defining the extent of the town centre boundaries for towns in the borough, and will need to be replaced through the SSP2 Local Plan.
- 4.7 Policy 12 (JCS) seeks to provide general support to the vitality and viability of town centres, particularly within Primary Shopping Areas (PSA's) where proposals add to the attractiveness of the centres and A1 presence is not undermined. This will be achieved in part, through enhancing the public realm of town centres as well as pedestrian access. The policy gives clear emphasis for Part 2 Local Plans being responsible for defining the extent of the town centre areas (TCA's) and Primary Shopping Areas (PSA's), together with any sites to accommodate town centre uses.
- 4.8 The background paper: Defining town centre boundaries for Burton Latimer, Desborough and Rothwell (February 2012) sets out the revised methodology for defining town centre boundaries and primary shopping areas in the smaller

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towns. Members were advised on 4th September 2012 that it was proposed that the town centre boundaries and primary shopping areas for the market towns would be drawn with a single line (in accordance with Option 30 of the SSPLDD Options Paper Consultation (2012)) as the small towns do not have areas of predominantly leisure, business and town centre uses adjacent to the primary shopping areas. As a result, there would be no differentiation made between primary frontages and periphery secondary frontages. Since this recommendation, PPS4 has been replaced by the NPPF, but does not raise any material changes to this specific requirement.

- 4.9 Further review of the market town centre boundaries was undertaken in 2016, taking into account feedback from the SSPLDD Options Paper Consultation (2012), Focused Consultation with Town Councils, Chambers of Trade and Town Centre Partnerships, and relevant land use changes and material changes to Planning Policy since the boundaries were originally designated.
- 4.10 Updates to the proposed town centre boundaries were last presented to Planning Policy Committee on 15th March and 21st July 2016, and endorsed by members to take forwards for public consultation following further endorsement of housing and employment sites which would result in further change to the proposed settlement boundary. This work is still progressing and will be finalised shortly.
- 4.11 The extent of the town centre for Kettering is defined within the KTCAAP (July 2011) which updates the original town centre boundary set out within the Local Plan for Kettering Borough (1995). Although the Plan will need to be updated before the end of its plan period, it remains a relevant part of the adopted Development Plan where it remains consistent with the Joint Core Strategy and NPPF.

Officer Recommendation 3:

To progress the draft SSP2 Local Plan relying on single town centre boundary for the market towns of Burton Latimer, Desborough, and Rothwell as endorsed by Members on 21st July 2016.

4.12 Promoting town centres

- 4.13 Policy 12 of the JCS provides a criteria based policy, criteria (f) of which encourages the development of town centre uses in the town centres of the Market Towns, where the scale and nature is consistent with the character of the settlement and role of the Market Town. It also advocates that Part 2 Local Plans may identify additional development opportunities, but that these should not undermine the focus for retail development at Kettering town centre. The NPPF promotes competitive town centres, customer choice, and a diverse retail offer reflecting the individuality of town centres.
- 4.14 Individual town centre visions will help identify the character of the town centres, and the allocation of sites will help enhance this and deliver improvements in

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appearance and use of the Market Towns. This should be further enhanced by investing in economic development activities for the towns and town centres, growing the business activities and strengthening sense of community.

Officer Recommendation 4:

That officers prepare visions for Burton Latimer, Desborough and Rothwell town centres; identifying key sites for development and/or enhancement; and prepare a strategy of economic development that promotes the town centres as destinations in their own rights.

4.15 Markets

4.16 Market provision within each of the market towns is limited, and provides significant opportunity for enhancement. Burton Latimer only operates a farmers market once a month (1st Saturday) from Millennium Garden. Rothwell operates a weekly market on Mondays at Market Hill, whilst Desborough operates a weekly market on Thursdays from The Square, High Street. The Health Check update (March 2016) reported that one of the top three suggestions for improving Rothwell was an improvement of the weekly market. Although the same was not specified within Desborough and Burton Latimer, there was a recorded demand for better retail offer which Markets contribute towards. As set out in table 1 (above), the importance of markets to the viability and vitality of town centres is recognised within the NPPF. It would be appropriate to ensure that this is captured through an appropriately worded policy.

4.17 Kettering operates a number of markets from Wednesday through to Saturday, which includes a flea market, foodie market and general market. The Foodie market in Kettering is a new and evolving market, and its impact on the vitality and viability of the town will be measured shortly. In addition, seasonal teenage markets and Christmas markets are also organised, and are located within the town centre. Work to retain and enhance these markets will need to be addressed through an update to the KTCAAP.

Officer Recommendation 5:

In consultation with the Town Councils of Burton Latimer, Desborough and Rothwell, prepare a policy which identifies/designates sites suitable for hosting local markets, and which sets criteria in support of development proposals which seek to establish or enhance market provision within the town.

4.18 Site Allocations in Town Centres

4.19 The SSPLDD Options Consultation (March 2012) identifies a number of development opportunity sites for each of the market towns within each of the market town chapters. These recommendations were informed by the SSPLDD Background Paper: Town Centres and Town Centre Uses (February 2012). The

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consultation exercise sought views on the inclusion of these sites within the emerging SSP2 Local Plan, and whether or not to include a policy for identifying development in the market towns and set out uses for these sites. Options for uses on these sites could include:

- A) Primarily town centre uses at ground floor level with residential and employment above;
- B) Primarily residential or employment development.

4.20 The outcome of the consultation was reported to Members on 4th September 2012, concluding that *'There was strong support for policies identifying development sites and opportunities for redevelopment and in the smaller town centres and for setting criteria to be applied to development in town centres, some additional criteria were suggested.'* These criteria included: Re-use of buildings rather than redevelopment (to protect heritage); protection of existing businesses (avoid displacement), and design out crime standards.

Officer Recommendation 6:

To include within the draft Local Plan a policy which identifies opportunity sites for development within each of the Market Towns (Burton Latimer, Desborough and Rothwell) and set out uses for these sites. The policy would include primarily town centre uses at ground floor level with residential and/or employment above. The policy would give priority to redevelopment of historic buildings and buildings of local significance through a series of tests; the retention of existing business uses unless demonstrated unviable; and meet design out crime standards.

4.21 Outside of town Centres (Pt1)

4.22 As set out within paragraph 3.8, there is also a qualitative need for a medium-sized food store to serve the Desborough/Rothwell area, which could be located within one of those market town centres or its environs. No suitable sites have been put forwards or identified within the respective town centres to date. The North Northamptonshire Retail Capacity 2014 Update recommended that *'the provision of a medium-sized supermarket in the Rothwell / Desborough area should be a priority for the early part of the Plan period....'*, and should be progressed as a priority. It is therefore recommended that the draft SSP2 Local Plan includes a call for suitable sites, and a question seeking to clarify preference of location (i.e. Desborough or Rothwell Town Centre) or edge of centre/town locations.

Officer Recommendation 7:

To include within the draft Local Plan a call for sites seeking a suitable location for a medium sized supermarket, together with draft policy criteria to be used if a call for sites is unsuccessful, which ensures that any future supermarket proposal is located in an accessible location that is well connected to the town centres of either Rothwell or Desborough.

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4.23 Outside of town Centres (Pt2)

- 4.24 Town centres are defined in the NPPF as *'Areas defined on the local authority's proposal map, including the primary shopping area and areas predominantly occupied by main town centre uses within or adjacent to the primary shopping area. References to town centres or centres apply to city centres, town centres, district centres and local centres but exclude small parades of shops of purely neighbourhood significance. Unless they are identified as centres in Local Plans, existing out-of-centre developments, comprising or including main town centre uses, do not constitute town centres.'*
- 4.25 Currently, determination of proposals for main town centre uses located outside of a town centre/edge of centre relies on the Sequential Test and Impact Assessment requirements of the NPPF discussed in paragraphs 3.3 and 3.4 (above).
- 4.26 The SSPLDD Background Paper: Town Centres and Town Centre Uses (February 2012) proposed the use of local policy criteria (including a floorspace threshold) to provide further circumstances regarding when the requirements of the sequential test should apply. At the time, the Borough Council Officers considered that the Sequential Test requirement was a blunt instrument which presented an overly onerous requirement on quite often minor applications, which was potentially fettering the development of small business and economic growth, particularly those aimed at serving their local community, such as corner shops, and other local services which served their immediate neighbourhood. At the time no exemptions to the Sequential Test existed, and all main town centre use applications located outside of the town centre were subject to the Sequential Test. The Background paper considered that a policy and floorspace threshold could ensure that only proposals which will not be a threat to the vitality/viability of town centres are made exempt from the Sequential Test, and that this could be effective in supporting small business development.
- 4.27 The background paper highlights that this issue was particularly pertinent for proposals in the rural economic and to support rural economic development as they were particularly undermined by the requirement for a sequential test, and likely to have limited impact on town centres due to their often remote locations. As discussed in paragraph 3.3, the Sequential Test no longer applies under these circumstances.
- 4.28 Conclusions from the SSPLDD Options Consultation (March 2012) were reported to Members on 4th September 2012 confirming that although the responses to the consultation were mixed, officers recommended that a *'balance needs to be struck between supporting small scale economic development and maintaining the vitality and viability of town centres. The sequential test is a requirement of national planning policy and it would not be appropriate or in line with the NPPF to remove it entirely. However, there would be benefits to small businesses and local communities if a local threshold was set....'* Members asked that the local

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thresholds for sequential tests be investigated and brought back to a future meeting.

- 4.29 Since the issue was originally considered in 2012, Planning Policy Statement 4 has been replaced by the NPPF, which has now introduced Sequential Test exemptions within paragraph 25 (Section 2) which are applicable to small scale rural office/development. In addition, the definition of town centres has been broadened to make it clear that town centres exclude areas where there may be an isolated parade of shops of purely neighbourhood significance. Conversely therefore, this definition provides a material consideration for assessing whether a development proposal is a 'neighbourhood' retail use, compared with a retail use in accordance with the definition of a 'main town centre use' and can be treated accordingly.
- 4.30 In July 2016, the Joint Core Strategy also replaced the Core Spatial Strategy, and introduced a further Sequential Test exemption relating to local centres at SUE's as set out in paragraph 3.9 above. Taking into account Sequential Test exemptions included in the NPPF and JCS, and clarification granted through the NPPF definition of 'town centres', the original incentives for setting a local Sequential Test threshold have been resolved.
- 4.31 The current view held by Borough Council Officers is a precisely worded policy to clarify the circumstances that apply when a sequential test would apply should provide the conditions necessary to support smaller scale proposals, whilst providing appropriate control over larger proposals which are more likely to have an adverse impact on town centre viability and vitality.
- 4.32 With respect of the setting a Local Impact Assessments threshold ,the SSPLDD Background Paper: Town Centres and Town Centre Uses (February 2012) proposed a local floor space threshold for each of the towns within Kettering Borough, to avoid a local policy vacuum, and give further protection to the vitality and viability of town centres within the Borough.
- 4.33 These were included in the SSPLDD Options Consultation (March 2012) as follows, and subject to public consultation:
- Kettering - 750m²
Burton Latimer- 400m²
Desborough - 300m²
Rothwell - 500m²
- 4.34 An alternative proposal to not set a local impact assessment threshold and maintain reliance on the nationally set 2500m² floorspace threshold was also proposed. The consultation responses were reported to Members on 4th September 2012, which concluded a degree of support for a locally set threshold. The current view held by Borough Council Officers remains in support of setting a local threshold below the nationally set 2500m² floorspace threshold.

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Officer Recommendation 8:

- a) To include within the draft Local Plan a policy which clarifies the circumstances under which a sequential test would apply, and not to progress with a locally set Sequential Test threshold.
- b) To include locally set Impact Assessment floorspace thresholds set out in paragraph 4.33 within the draft Local Plan.

4.35 Residential Development in Town Centres

4.36 As discussed in para 4.18 relating to Site Allocations in the Town Centres, there is local support through the SSPLDD Options Consultation (March 2012) to allocate identified opportunity sites for development in the market towns of Burton Latimer, Desborough and Rothwell, and set out uses for each of the sites. It has been promoted that a supporting policy for inclusion in the draft Local Plan would include primarily town centre uses at ground floor level with residential and/or employment above.

4.37 In addition, the importance of residential development within town centres needs to be carefully balanced in order to achieve optimal vitality and viability, and consideration of additional policy to support and encourage residential development on sites not yet identified may be beneficial.

Officer Recommendation 9:

To develop policy criteria to encourage and support the delivery of residential development within town centres on sites which have both already been identified as opportunity development sites, and those which have not yet been identified.

4.38 Addressing Town Centre Decline

4.39 Whilst recent Health Check updates reported to Members on 15th March 2016 were relatively positive, there were clear indications within the towns that their vibrancy and vitality needs to be carefully managed, and a clear expectation from visitor surveys for enhancements to the available offer within the market town centres.

4.40 In Burton Latimer, visitors indicated they wished for a greater diversity of offer at specialist and multiple shops, and excessive traffic and congestion in areas of the town centre. At Desborough, the issues of concern related to the lack of a large supermarket offer and choice of multiples and specialist shops in general, and that they have no clean public toilets and a number of derelict buildings. In Rothwell, visitors were concerned by traffic congestion, a lack of toilet facilities, no secure parking and poor police presence.

4.41 Policies in the Plan will seek to allocate suitable sites for development opportunities, and areas for environmental enhancement. This will be especially

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relevant when seeking to encourage economic activity where parts of the town centres are in decline.

Officer Recommendation 10:

To identify those areas of the town centres showing signs of decline, and plan positively allocating sites for development where necessary, and areas for environmental enhancement where it is considered it will be beneficial. In doing so, officers will explore ways of improving issues expressed to be of concern to visitors.

5. RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS

- 5.1 It is anticipated that Members may have comments to make on the recommendations made, which will direct a way forwards on the production of the draft Local Plan chapter covering town centres and retail, and town centre issues for each of the separate market town chapters. It should be recognised that these sections are still subject to further additional text, policies and refinement.

6. CONSULTATION AND CUSTOMER IMPACT

- 6.1 The draft SSP2 will be subject to public consultation early in the new year. Prior to this, Members will be asked to agree evidence, the contents of the plan and the approach taken with respect to consultation.

7. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The SSP2 will form part of the North Northamptonshire Development Plan and will guide the provision of sustainable growth in Kettering Borough.

8. USE OF RESOURCES

- 8.1 The preparation of the SSP2 will be met within the existing Development Services Planning Policy budget.

9. RECOMMENDATION

That Members note the content of this report and endorse the officer recommendation clearly set out in this report; and that officers brings back to a future meeting of this committee the Market Town Centres' chapter for agreement to be published for public consultation.

Contact Officer: Mark Coleman – Development Officer (Planning Policy)

BOROUGH OF KETTERING

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Previous Minutes:

Ref: Site Specific Part 2 Local Plan – Housing Land Allocations (Villages)
Date: 5th July 2017

Ref: Site Specific Part 2 Local Plan – Housing Land Allocations (Villages)
Date: 19th April 2017

Ref: Site Specific Part 2 Local Plan – Housing Land Allocations (Villages)
Date: 23rd November 2016

Ref: Site Specific Part 2 Local Plan – Housing Land Allocations (Towns)
Date: 1st November 2016

Ref: Focused Consultation Comments to Town Centre Boundary Update
Date: 21st July 2016

Ref: Site Specific Part 2 Local Plan - Updates for Burton Latimer, Desborough and Rothwell Town Centres
Date: 15th March 2016

Ref: Site Specific Proposals Local Development Document – Options Paper
Date: 4th September 2012

Background Reports

The North Northamptonshire Retail Capacity Update (2014)

Site Specific Proposals Local Development Document – Options Paper Consultation (March 2012)

Background Paper: Town Centres and Town Centre Uses (February 2012).

Background paper: Defining town centre boundaries for Burton Latimer, Desborough and Rothwell (February 2012)