

BOROUGH OF KETTERING

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Report Originator	Head of Development Services	<i>Fwd Plan Ref No:</i>	
Wards Affected	William Knibb Ward, Northfield Ward, All Saints Ward, St Michaels and Wicksteed Ward, St Peters Ward	25 March 2020	
Title	KETTERING TOWN CENTRE AREA ACTION PLAN – MONITORING UPDATE		

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform Members of the results of the eighth Monitoring Report of the Kettering Town Centre Area Action Plan.

2. INFORMATION

- 2.1 The Kettering Town Centre Area Action Plan (AAP) was adopted by the Council on 6th July 2011. The Plan sets out the aspirations for the town centre and surrounding area up until 2021, and sets out the Council's strategy and policies to meet the Plan's objectives.
- 2.2 The adopted AAP includes a policy on implementation and monitoring. The Plan sets out a monitoring framework to assess the effectiveness of the Plan in delivering its objectives.
- 2.3 This report has been written to evaluate the progress that has been made in delivering the plan's objectives. The first monitoring update was presented to Members of this Committee in September 2012, in subsequent years officers have reported in November. Last year the report was presented in February 2019, this, the eighth monitoring update reviews the progress made in delivering the AAP in the last 12 months.
- 2.4 Officers have also updated the Kettering Town Centre Health Check; this is attached at **Appendix 1**. The results of the AAP monitoring exercise are provided in summary below, discussed under the 7 objectives of the AAP.
- 2.5 In addition, this report also considers the impact of the amendments to the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended), which were introduced on 30th May 2013 (Statutory Instrument 2013 No. 1101) and have been updated several times since. The latest version of the General Permitted Development Order (Statutory Instrument 907) came into force on 25th May 2019.
- 2.6 In terms of the contextual environment, a report published by the British Retail Consortium in January 2020 reported that retail sales in the UK fell by 0.1% in 2019, this was the first sales decline since 1995.

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2.7 With regards to awards or recognition, the Kettering Museum and Art Gallery won Best Exhibition at the Northamptonshire Heritage Awards for '*Local Treasures: The British Museum comes to Kettering*'. This gives recognition for the investment made in the range and quality of cultural facilities available to visitors to Kettering town centre.

Monitoring Results

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

2.8 In order to provide a measure of vibrancy in the town centre, comparable footfall counts are used. The following analysis comes from the results of a footfall count conducted in September and December 2019, taking December 2008 as the base date, so an elongated trend can be derived. The Council is investing in a further footfall monitoring tool called Elephant Wifi. This will be installed in five locations, and add to the information measured by counters at two separate times of the year.

2.9 In September 2019 the survey shows that footfall increased on the non-market day (Monday) by 9.98%, and decreased on a market day (Friday), by 30.95%, compared with last year's survey. As the original baseline data was collected in December 2008, a direct comparison cannot be made. Footfall counts on non-market days in December 2017 and 2018 show a decline of 3.1% and 12.8% respectively. The surveys undertaken in December 2019 indicate a decrease of 4.8% on a non-market day but increased by 9.7% on a market day compared to the previous year. **Overall, the footfall trend is down.** In comparison, footfall data provided by Springboard, from the Newlands Shopping Centre indicates that footfall decreased by 5.7% and 9.3% in September 2019 and December 2019 respectively, compared to the same month in the previous year. In addition, the figures from the Newland Centre also show that although not directly comparable, figures for January 2019 show that footfall on Mondays during the month decreased by 5.3%, whilst figures for Fridays show a decrease of 1.2%, both compared to the previous year. Further to this, footfall counted during January 2020 has decreased by 3.6% compared to the same month in 2019.

2.10 Figures provided for the market day show fluctuations in pedestrian numbers counted since 2008. This year's figures from the September survey show a decrease of 30.95% on a market day compared to last year. The December survey shows an increase of 9.7% compared to last year. It should be noted that the Kettering Christmas Market was held in the town centre on Thursday 5th December, prior to the market day survey on 6th. This information is shown below in Figure 1 and Figure 2. **There was a small increase in footfall in December compared to the previous year, despite being significantly less than previous years.** Along with changes in shopping habits, another explanation for a decline in footfall is likely to be the competition provided by Rushden Lakes out-of-town shopping centre.

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Figure 1: Footfall Counts in September between 2013 and 2019

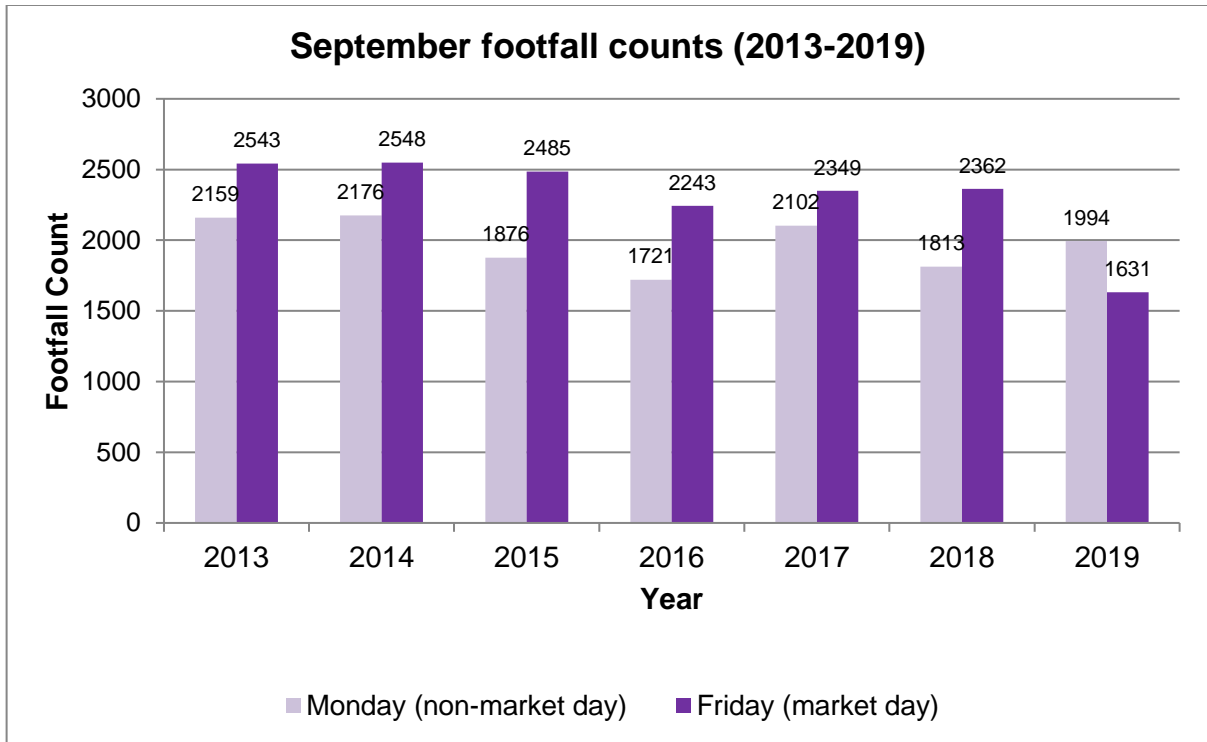
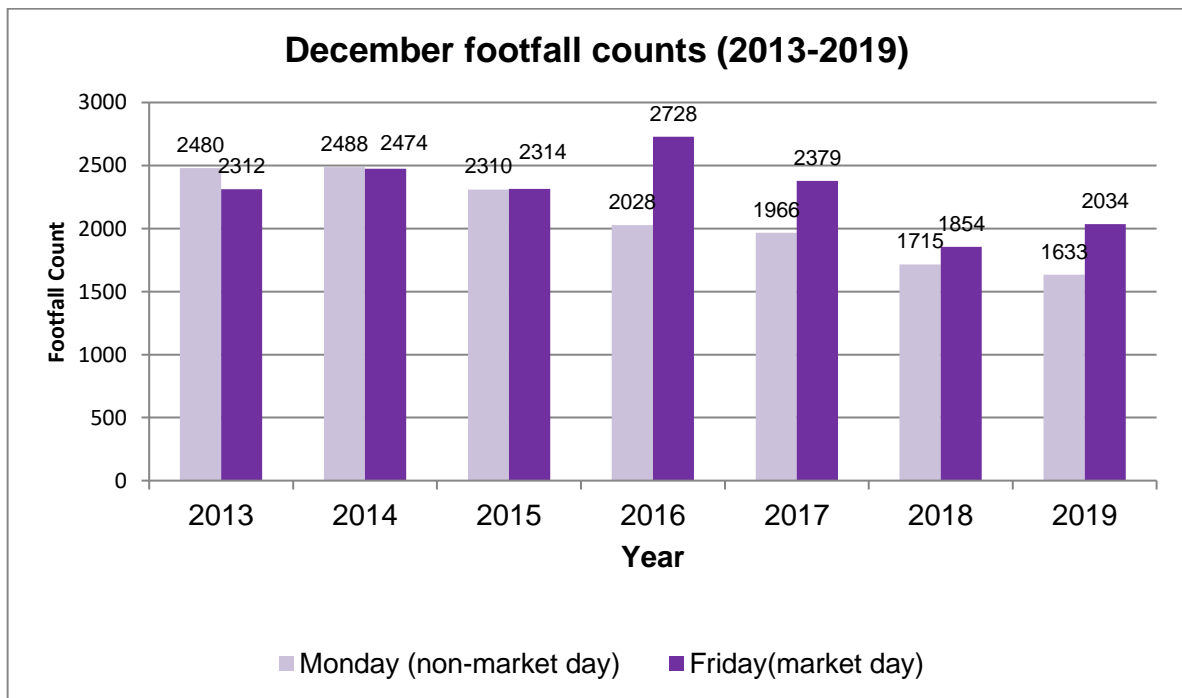


Figure 2: Footfall Counts in December between 2013 and 2019



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- 2.11 In addition to the footfall counts in the 12 locations used annually, monitoring was also undertaken in Meadow Road. The purpose of this is to determine the use of this part of the town, as well as to gauge the potential access to, and use of, Meadow Road Park. This is connected to the Kettering Town Centre Delivery Plan proposal for a short-term delivery project at the Meadow Road Park. The 'Meadow Road Urban Park' scheme aims to enhance the park as a visitor destination by improving the all-round environment for play and general use, and strengthening the area's connection to the town centre. Following improvements to the park, it re-opened in August 2019.
- 2.12 Monitoring the footfall in this area of the town centre as part of the annual footfall survey has allowed the Council to establish a baseline level of usage for both Meadow Road as well as the park itself. Monitoring can then be undertaken, now some improvements have been made, to establish the success of the scheme, and the complementary activities that might ensue. The results of this monitoring can be found at Appendix 1.
- 2.13 The AAP has a floorspace target of at least 38,500m² new office space in the plan area by 2021. Employment monitoring for the 2018/19 period, showed there was a net gain of 1,092m² in office floorspace in the plan area, although this was an estimation and was not sought from the primary data collection associated with annual monitoring, given that the monitoring year had not been complete at the time the previous year's report was published. The monitoring for the 2019/20 year has yet to be undertaken, therefore this information is not available at this stage. However, given that the monitoring has now been taken for the full monitoring year for 2018/19 (April-March), it is now possible to report these figures. This shows that for this period, there was a net loss of 5,295m², this is primarily through development rights afforded, to allow the conversion of office space to residential use, the most significant application is at Clarendon House, 8-12 Station Road, which has seen the loss of 3,280m² of office floorspace to accommodate approximately 40 residential units. In next year's monitoring update the 2019/20 monitoring figures related to the gain or loss of office floorspace, will be reported.
- 2.14 The focus for new office development in the plan area is the Station Quarter. The Council is engaged in discussions with Network Rail and the current train operator, East Midlands Railway, about aspirations for the rail service in terms of the new franchise and timetable, electrification of the service, new retail facilities at the station, and the potential for development in the vicinity of the station through the preparation of a Masterplan. This Masterplan work is supported following success in securing £115,000 of One Public Estate funds. The new franchise commenced in August 2019 and electrification of the line north of Bedford to Kettering and Corby is currently ongoing with work due to be completed by spring this year. Work also involves the extension of all four platforms at Kettering as well as work to trim the current canopies located on these platforms.

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2.15 The AAP has a target for delivering 957 new dwellings in the plan area by 2021. The table below shows those sites in the AAP area to have seen housing completions over the last 12 months.

Address	No. of dwellings complete
Garages & Yard, Howard Street	4
14 Green Lane	1
Times Complex, School Lane	4
Clarendon House, 12 Station Road	37
Clarendon House, 8-12 Station Road	9
11-12 Newland Street, Kettering	24
Hazelwood Lane (land at)	6
26A-30A Rockingham Road	5
22C Market Street	4
46 Gold Street	1
Montagu House, Montagu Street	16
Total	120

2.16 A total of 358 dwellings (37.4%) have been delivered in the town centre in the 8 years since the Plan was adopted, the past 12 months has seen more completions than any other in the plan period. The two most significant contributing sites are at Clarendon House and 11-12 Newland Street, the former involved the changing of use from offices to residential through permitted development rights set out in the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended). With regards to the site on Newland Street, this was the location of a number of retail units which were damaged following a fire in 2008 and had since been vacant falling further into disrepair. Following the demolition of these, the site now consists of two retail units at ground floor level fronting onto Newland Street with 24 flats above and therefore providing a dual benefit to this part of the town centre.

Cultural Quarter

2.17 At the AAP Examination the Council committed to producing and consulting upon a Development Appraisal for the Cultural Quarter. This has not yet been progressed; however the Council continues to provide a range of public services based at the Council Offices, adding to the visitor numbers in this part of the town centre. In recent years the Probation Service has taken space in the Borough Council offices, joining the Phlebotomy Unit, the Police, Citizens Advice Bureau and other voluntary sector organisations.

2.18 In addition, a project called GLaM (Gallery, Library and Museum) was set up last year to bring together representatives from the KBC owned assets of the Museum, and Art Gallery and Library which is owned by Northamptonshire County Council. The main purpose of this project is to explore opportunities of how, through place-based regeneration and joining of physical assets, changes can be made in the way communities access and engage with culture and

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creative industries, unlocking economic growth through skills development, job creation and boosting the visitor economy. In the summer of 2019, the Council conducted a survey to ascertain the views of residents regarding the changing role of the town centre. The results of this survey showed that GLaM was the town's greatest asset and therefore, this is the catalyst to revitalise and extend GLaM to become a Creative and Cultural anchor for North Northamptonshire. In doing so there will be a focus on cultural amenity, space and teaching facilities.

- 2.19 A feasibility study was conducted in 2019 and recommended improvements to enable this change. The most significant was the construction of a 2-storey extension to the rear and between the library and Alfred East Gallery. This building would enable the unifying of facilities and provide a range of flexible workspaces, with potential to also be used for exhibition and educational purposes. In addition, this project would also see a new atrium space and café with access to improved public gardens on site. To fund the project, a number of funding streams have been explored. Further work will be undertaken this year to develop a business case to then secure funding to get the project to planning application stage.

Restaurant Quarter

- 2.20 The restaurant units on allocated site RQ2 in the Restaurant Quarter occupy Prezzo and Jurassic Grill, which opened in June 2019. The Kino Lounge opened in August 2015 and continues to operate from the restored character building, The Corn Exchange.
- 2.21 The 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 proved to be very popular and provided a unique family experience in accordance with the vision of the AAP. It was also the focus for Christmas events during November and December, including the Christmas Lights Switch On and the Christmas Market held on 28th November.
- 2.22 The Kettering Market includes a general market on Fridays and Saturdays, as well as the flea market on Wednesdays. Whilst the flea market has been resilient, general decline in retail has been reflected in the Friday Market with a decrease in traders by 12% between April 2019 and January 2020 compared to the same period in the previous year, and the Saturday market with a decrease of 28% over the same period. Speciality markets such as Christmas Markets have been successful, for example during the Christmas Light Switch On. These events help increase footfall and attract additional income to the town centre.
- 2.23 KettFest, a popular arts and music festival, was held at various venues across the town centre in July 2019. As well as this, The Yards held live music events which enhanced the appeal of Kettering Town Centre as an attractive destination during the evening.

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

- 2.24 The AAP has a target of providing at least 20,500m² new retail floorspace by 2021. It should also be noted that the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, adopted in July 2016 has reduced the requirement for net comparison shopping floorspace to 12,500m². In the last year there was a net loss of 404m² retail floorspace. The most significant of which was at 10 Horsemarket which saw a change of use from retail to D2, *assembly and leisure*, to a gymnasium amounting to a loss of 289m². Given that this unit is a Secondary Frontage unit, it was considered that the retail focus for the area would not be undermined by this proposal and the occupancy of this unit for this purpose is likely to have an instant benefit, as opposed to a prolonged period of vacancy that existed previously. When this application was determined in March 2019, this period was reported as 2-3 months.
- 2.25 The Newlands Centre, owned by Ellandi, contains a concentration of town centre national retailers, such as Boots, H&M, and TK Maxx etc. Over the years, Ellandi has invested in improvements to the fabric of the shopping centre. To date, proposals for the delivery of a scheme accommodating Phase 1 of the Newlands Centre, compatible with allocated site SHQ1 for new large retail units and additional parking provision have not been progressed. The likelihood of a retail focussed redevelopment scheme of the scale proposed in Policy SHQ1 is minimal given the decline in High Streets nationally, and competition from Rushden Lakes to secure major High Street names.
- 2.26 The AAP includes a policy to ensure that no less than 75% of the Primary Shopping Frontage (PSF) is in A1 use (retail). This is to protect retail presence in the main shopping streets to seek to ensure the vitality and viability of the town centre through a strong retail focus. In the last year the retail frontages have decreased by 0.3%, and now stands at 70.8%, so below the targeted percentage. Vacancy rates in the PSF are calculated to currently be at 10.47%, this is an increase of 0.61% in a year.
- 2.27 The overall vacancy rate in the Plan area is 14.32%, compared to the national average of 10.3% and is an increase of 0.38% from last year's figure of 13.94%. In previous years Kettering town centre's vacancy rates have been favourable, below the national average; this is the second consecutive year that the opposite is the case. The most significant vacant units in terms of frontage meterage from this survey include the Naseby Hotel, which closed in 2016, as well as the Conservative Club on Montagu Street. An application for the Conservative Club (KET/2017/0237) was received in March 2017 for 13 apartments; this application has been approved, although no work has commenced on this site. In addition, there are 2 longstanding vacant sites on Horsemarket on either side of Queen Street. The site to the north of Queen Street had consent for a residential and retail mixed use scheme, which has now lapsed. However, the other site to the

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south, forms part of a planning application for a mixed use development of 35 no. flats with a commercial unit at ground floor level (KET/2019/0663), this application was received in October 2019 and has yet to be determined. It is acknowledged that it is important to utilise and maximise the potential to deliver housing on unused/vacant sites on previously developed land. Although, this must be where it is considered appropriate, as there is a risk that an introduction of residential properties in the town centre in the wrong locations could result in the potential further loss of other town centre uses, such as retail.

- 2.28 In addition, analysis shows a distinct cluster of vacant units at 11, 11a and 12 Newland Street since August 2009. The 2017 survey showed that these 3 units had been demolished. This site has been completed and comprises of 2 retail units and 24 flats (KET/2016/0674).
- 2.29 Evidence gathered by Peter Brett Associates, used in guiding town centre policies in the Joint Core Strategy, indicated that “It will be challenging for the Northern Sub-Area to retain its current market share, due to the likely strong comparison goods offer at Rushden Lakes, which can be expected to draw trade from the Northern Sub-Area. The North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, adopted in July 2016, includes a policy (Policy 12 – Town Centres and Town Centre Uses) advocating a minimum increase of 12,500m² net comparison shopping floorspace in Kettering town centre by 2031.
- 2.30 The Rushden Lakes out of town retail development in East Northamptonshire was granted consent by the Secretary of State in June 2014. Permission has been granted by East Northamptonshire Council to increase the retail floorspace beyond that approved by the Secretary of State. The first stores opened in July 2017; however, more stores have opened since then, with 78 stores open at present, as part of phase 1 of the development. An application to expand the existing site by 128,122 sq ft, by adding 29 new units was received by East Northamptonshire Council in summer 2018. The development known as ‘Rushden Living’ would add a further 752 car parking spaces as well as a new link road. Kettering and other Borough/District Councils have submitted objections to the application. However, since this time this application has been withdrawn with a new application received last summer, which saw a reduction in floorspace to that previously submitted. At East Northamptonshire’s Planning Committee on 12th February 2020, Members voted that it was ‘minded’ to approve this scheme, ahead of it being sent to the Secretary of State, who could opt to make a final decision or send it back to East Northamptonshire Council for approval. The concerns regarding the impact this additional development is likely to have on town centres remains.
- 2.31 The impact of Rushden Lakes was evident in Kettering Town Centre, with the closure of a flagship store, Marks and Spencer in August 2018. In addition to this a number of notable units also closed in 2018, including Gala Bingo, Body Shop, Officers Club, Oxfam, Topshop, Burton Menswear and New Look. In 2019, there were no larger scale closures of any high street stores in Kettering, the decrease

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in the figures was because of the closure and subsequent vacancy of smaller units.

- 2.32 Although there have been no further high-profile closures in 2019, to some extent it suggests that stores in town centres are finding it difficult to remain open following continued changes to shopping habits and competition from Rushden Lakes. Further expansion of Rushden Lakes is likely to only further exacerbate the decline of town centres, primarily in the retail sector, not only in Kettering but across North Northamptonshire as a whole.
- 2.33 Future Annual Monitoring Reports will continue to review the health of Kettering town centre in light of changes to retailing across the area. To this end, Section 106 funding was secured from the developers of Rushden Lakes to commission a study on the health of town centres in the area, and to understand the impact this scheme is having on our town centres.
- 2.34 The plan has a policy to ensure that A4 uses (pubs/bars) and A5 uses (hot food takeaways) do not become excessive and erode the retail function of the Secondary Shopping Frontages (SSF). In the SSF the figures show that both A4 and A5 uses have remained at the same level as last year. The A4 uses have remained at 15.4% and the A5 uses have remained at 7.5%. Last year it was stated that A4 and A5 uses should be resisted, in accordance with the adopted policy; this is still the case for both A4 and A5 uses within the Secondary Shopping Frontages.

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

- 2.35 As referenced in paragraph 2.15, the AAP has a target of delivering 957 new dwellings on the allocated sites; 540 to be within the New Residential Quarter. This year, of the 120 residential units that have been completed, only 4 are located on sites allocated within the New Residential Quarter, more specifically NRQ6 and NRQ7, for the proposal on Howard Street. The other notable sites that have seen residential completions in the last year are Clarendon House, Station Road which saw 37 completions and 24 dwellings at 11-12 Newland, which has been previously mentioned in this report. It should also be noted that the Council is able to demonstrate a 5 year supply of housing land, as required by national planning policy. The Council recognises the importance of maintaining a residential community in the town centre, including those above existing ground floor retail units, which can directly benefit the town centre through additional spending as well as enhancing the vibrancy of the area. Although this is not monitored specifically, over the past year there has been an increase in residential units in the town centre overall, which also has the benefit of improving surveillance and security in the town centre.

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

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- 2.36 The AAP seeks the provision of new high-quality public realm as part of the Wadcroft/Newlands retail development and the development of The Yards. In addition, public realm improvements in the form of a Station Plaza are also sought in the Station Quarter. Network Rail is currently in the process of installing a new stabling facility and staff building to the south of the station. This has the potential to trigger a redistribution of car parking spaces to free up land for improved public realm at the eastern entrance to the station. In addition, all four platforms are being extended, and the overhanging canopies cut back to allow for electric cabling to pass through the station. This has sought to be done whilst retaining the integrity of the heritage of the station. Running alongside this work, the Borough Council, Network Rail and East Midlands Railway are working collaboratively to formulate a Business Case Masterplan that delivers improved accessibility at the station, significantly enhanced public realm, and releases underutilised public service land for development. In the New Residential Quarter, new public realm is to be delivered as a part of this new development. The Council has published a Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan, which provides a project plan for new public realm, including at the Meadow Road Park. The Council is part of the way through delivering a major upgrade in play and open space at the park. Provision exists within the Section 106 Agreement for the developers of East Kettering to fund public realm improvements in due course. In addition, the Council is releasing capital funding and some S106 funding to match fund a successful bid made to Historic England's High Street Heritage Action Zone funding of nearly £1.5 million. The funding is intended to "Breathe new life into our town centres by revitalising buildings and helping to regenerate a vibrant place for locals, businesses and visitors".
- 2.37 A Section 106 receipt will fund cycleway improvements on Station Road. Work was undertaken in Spring/Summer 2016 to improve traffic flow at this part of the town centre. This work was completed in June 2016. This has resulted in a marked improvement to movement and flows of footfall in the area. Further planned improvements for Bowling Green Road/London Road/St Mary's Road are expected to better this yet further. This includes working with Northamptonshire County Council to improve the timing of the lights at the junction of Bowling Green Road to assist with traffic flow. This has been identified in the Kettering Town Centre Delivery Plan as a short-term project which is expected to be undertaken in the first half of this year.
- 2.38 The Seats on Streets Local Development Order (LDO) was adopted by the Council on 26th September 2018. This new LDO gives restaurants, cafes snack bars and hotels permitted development rights, subject to certain conditions, to use part of the public realm/ pavements for seating and tables associated with their businesses. It therefore means that only an annual street café licence needs to be obtained. The area of Kettering town centre the subject of the LDO has changed from the previous Order in 2013, and the lifetime of the LDO has been made permanent, so that it does not expire unless otherwise formally withdrawn or amended. The LDO will further encourage the development of a café culture

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and evening economy, which will attract and benefit visitors to the town centre so that they are able to enjoy food and drink whilst seated outdoors.

2.39 The Council has agreed a delivery programme with Northamptonshire Highways to bring forward the next phase of public realm improvements in the town centre. This phase of improvements, known as Public Realm Phase 4, will bring about a change in the appearance of High Street, Meadow Road, Lower Street and Gold Street with the introduction of new surfacing similar to that in Market Place, and new street furniture. The first elements of the proposals were delivered in 2015 through a new Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) for the zone and a rising bollard scheme at each of the gateways. This has limited vehicular access to this part of the town centre, making it a safer walkable space. The timetable for delivery of the whole project is determined by progress of the East Kettering development through Section 106 receipts, linked into the speed at which the development builds out.

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

2.40 As discussed above, the AAP has a target of at least 38,500m² new office floorspace in the plan area by 2021. In the past year there has been a net loss of 5,295 m² of office floorspace in the Plan Area, as aforementioned in paragraph 2.13. The Council is working with its Station Quarter partners (Network Rail and East Midlands Railway) to prepare a Kettering Station Quarter Business Case Masterplan, part of this may result in the creation of new commercial space close to the station. The new stabling facility and staff building currently under-construction to the south of the station will improve the working environment for existing staff based at the station, but also create new jobs for staff working on and associated with the railway.

2.41 The Department for Transport has been investing in the Midland Mainline; this includes electrification and the upgrade of key sections. The investment will improve line speeds, saving journey times, with the potential to provide the opportunity to reinstate two trains an hour north from Kettering. The new franchise agreement won by East Midlands Railway has proposed the restructuring of the service, provide two distinct services on the line. The intercity service will provide bi-mode trains first/last stop out of St. Pancras International at Kettering, before travelling to Derby, Leicester, Nottingham and Sheffield. The commuter service will be an electric powered service stopping at the stations south of Kettering before finishing at Corby. Kettering station is expected therefore to benefit with a significant increase in passengers from its new four trains an hour service. Kettering will be an important hub station where passengers change between services, as well as making it more attractive to commuters due to the frequency of service. This is also likely to make Kettering a more attractive business location.

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2.42 The new rail franchise period will run for 8 years to 2027, with a potential additional 2 years. East Midlands Railway have set out improvements across the network to the value of £600 million, to be made during the franchise term. The main improvements identified include the replacement of the train fleet, with the splitting of the franchise into three operating brands, Intercity, Electrics and Regional. In addition, £20 million has been identified to enhance and improve existing stations such as Leicester, Nottingham and Derby, all of which are accessible directly by train from Kettering. Through the initial proposals it is evident that Kettering will be a key location on the Midland Mainline route, providing an interchange between the Intercity and Regional services for East Midlands Railway.

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

2.43 The plan has a car parking policy for larger housing sites, which requires a car club/car share space for sites of 15 dwellings or above. In the last year no suitable sites of over 15 dwellings have been delivered in the plan area, so no car share spaces have been delivered.

2.44 The plan has a policy to provide at least one secure cycle space for each new dwelling. In the last year, no new cycle parking spaces have been secured in association with residential development.

2.45 The AAP sets out a number of road and junction improvements in the plan area. Several improvements have been completed, the most recent being at Eskdaill Street, resulting in the introduction of a two-way route within the town centre. Further improvements are planned to improve flows on Eskdaill Street as well as renewing the line painting, where the bus laybys are located. These improvements will allow for easier access to the town centre and reduce congestion as well as assisting future growth of the town. No progress has been made on the Bowling Green Road/London Road junction improvements to date. This involves work to improve traffic flows through traffic light changes, filter lanes and timings. This is likely to be implemented in the first half of the year. Operational changes are also planned for Newland Street/ Silver Street junction, which includes improvements to signage in this location. Other work involving signage has been identified to improve wayfinding for pedestrians and cyclists. In addition to this, work to improve cycle facilities and electric vehicle charging points is progressing, with the former being identified in the climate emergency strategy.

2.46 The Council is working in conjunction with Northamptonshire County Council to bring forward the next phase of improvements. The County Council published the Kettering Town Transport Strategy in January 2015. This document sets out the overarching vision for transport in Kettering and sets out a strategy to achieve it.

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- 2.47 Since adoption, no large scale enhancements to car parks on the Station Quarter sites or Wadcroft site have been completed. However, the Council is working to generally improve car parks in the town and was recently successful in achieving the 'Park Mark', which recognises car parking excellence, for the 15th year running. At Full Council on 26th February, the Council agreed that in an effort to encourage increased footfall and dwell time in the town centre, it would provide free parking in its car parks after 3pm Mondays to Fridays.
- 2.48 The Council, alongside partner organisations, instigated a Purple Flag assessment programme in 2013. Purple Flag recognises quality in the night-time economy, in much the same way as Green Flags (Parks) and Blue Flags (Beaches). It brings with it, a useful toolkit for towns looking to improve the town centre environment at night. An overnight appraisal of the town centre was carried out in May 2014 which fed into the production of an Action Plan which identified a series of improvements which need to be made to meet Purple Flag standards. The Purple Flag was awarded in 2015 and renewed in 2017; Kettering has held this accreditation since then. Following an assessment by the Association of Town Centre Management (ATCM), Kettering was awarded Purple Flag status in May 2019 for the third time. The deadline for the interim renewal bid was 31st January 2020.
- 2.49 This award recognises the creation of a safe, clean and inviting environment in the town centre after 5pm. It is important that the standards set since 2015 are 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.
- 2.50 A number of improvements/achievements to the town centre which have helped to maintain interim accreditation through 2019, most notably, through private sector investment, include:
- Opening of Jurassic Grill, Casa di Roma and Sonora's Kitchen as well as Fiori, which opened last month
 - Early evening cafés and takeaways such as Delightful Desserts and Krusha's Delight
 - Improvements in existing pubs and bars such as The Old Market Inn and The Rising Sun and planned refurbishment of both Wetherspoons and The Peacock
 - Successful events at the Kettering Art Centre and Alfred East Art Gallery as well as festivals such as Kettfest and Ctrl-Alt-Delete Fest
 - Improvements to safety and wellbeing including Street Pastors, the Ask Angela campaign as well as a reduction in the number of rough sleepers and anti-social behaviour
 - Positive results from a perception survey, which show more people are feeling safe when visiting the town
 - Results from the Town Centre Survey which showed that cultural facilities, nightlife, events and restaurants are the greatest assets and opportunities to develop the town centre.

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2.51 In April 2018 the Kettering Town Centre Delivery Plan was approved by the Council's Executive Committee. The purpose of the Delivery Plan is to assist the AAP in meeting some of its objectives through recognising and addressing the challenges the town centre faces with regards to delivery and growth in the short, medium and long term. The Council has been working with Historic England to secure funding, which should deliver in excess of £4.3 million of investment directly into the fabric of the town centre environment. A report showing the findings of the Kettering Town Centre Delivery Plan Conference was taken to Executive Committee on 18th October 2017. In addition, earlier in 2017, an update on the Kettering Town Centre Delivery Plan was taken to Executive Committee on 12th April. This set out the intention to form a Delivery Plan to assist the AAP in meeting some of its objectives through recognising and addressing the challenges the town centres faces with regards to delivery and growth, in the short, medium and long term. At Executive Committee on 14th February 2018 the Draft Town Centre Delivery Plan was approved for consultation. The comments helped shape proposed amendments to the Delivery Plan which were presented and agreed at Executive Committee on 18th April. The final version of Kettering Town Centre Delivery Plan 2018 to 2025 was subsequently published.

2.52 The second Kettering Town Centre Conference took place on 27th February 2020, this event provided an opportunity to collaborate, reflect on the development and implementation of the Kettering Town Centre Delivery Plan (2018-2025) and continue to shape the future of Kettering Town Centre.

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

2.53 Several of the allocated sites in the New Residential Quarter are likely to be affected by surface water flooding. To ensure flood risk issues are managed, the provision of urban green space and the enhancement of the Slade Brook corridor are 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 has published both documents in January 2019 and March 2018 respectively. These include a scheme to improve the Slade Brook river corridor as a piece of green infrastructure.

2.54 In addition to this, the Kettering Town Centre Delivery Plan places a strong emphasis on Meadow Road, which lies adjacent to Slade Brook, in acting as a catalyst for improvements to this part of the town centre, with the potential in improving the connectivity and vibrancy of the town centre through engagement with businesses, the community and other agencies. This is despite on-going challenges brought about by the increases in vacancy rates, especially in the retail sector indicate. However, through the Kettering Town Centre Delivery Plan as well as a review of the Kettering Town Centre Area Action Plan, attempts are

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being made to make progress in facing these challenges. This review will take place once the Site Specific Part 2 Local Plan is adopted, which is currently anticipated to be December 2020.

Kettering Town Centre Delivery Plan

2.55 The Council's Executive Committee agreed the Town Centre Delivery Plan on 18th April 2018. The Delivery Plan contains 20 high level town centre projects categorised to be completed in short, medium and long-term periods. Commentary on progress with the short-term projects (by March 2019) are summarised below:

- Eskdail Street – project complete
- Meadow Road Urban Park – project partially complete
- Sheerness House – fully occupied
- Bowling Green Road/London Road Traffic Improvements – Work is in progress to improve traffic flows through traffic light changes, filter lanes and timings. This is likely to be implemented in the first half of the year.
- Seats on Streets – project complete

2.56 Other medium/long-term projects to be benefitting from progress include:

- London Road Site Development – Development options are currently being considered for the site
- County Court Site/ Dryland Street – Now under Council ownership and site specific plans with the objective of this site being utilised for residential are being progressed

Heritage Action Zone (HAZ)

2.57 In September last year the Council was successful in a bid for national funding to revitalise the town centre in co-ordination with Historic England as part of the High Street Heritage Action Zone programme. This funding can assist with repairing historic buildings and restoring shop fronts as well as stimulating commercial investment and supporting education projects and providing training opportunities. The total value including Historic England's contribution, Kettering Borough Council funding, and private match funding is forecast to be over £4.3million.

2.58 The next step is to work with Historic England to finalise the distribution of spend amongst these projects, known as a Programme Design. This process was completed in January 2020. As part of this process, the Programme Design submission was judged by the Midlands Assessment Panel, where a significant amount of positive feedback was received from Historic England, who were impressed with the amount of work that had been put in as well as the huge amount of potential that the scheme has. This will now go to the National Delivery

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Panel. Following this the development of the community engagement will begin to be developed in April 2020.

Implications of the amendments to the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended)

- 2.59 As discussed above, Policy 3 of the AAP seeks to protect the retail focus of the Primary Shopping Frontages (e.g. High Street, Gold Street, Newlands Centre, Newland Street, Market Street) by resisting development that would result in less than 75% of frontages being in A1 (retail) use. The aim of the policy is to ensure that the Primary Shopping Frontages remain the key locations for existing and new retail development. The policy is more flexible in relation to the Secondary Shopping Frontages (e.g. Horsemarket, Silver Street) and allows a greater diversification and mix of uses, including restaurants, cafes, public houses and take-aways.
- 2.60 In May 2013 the Government introduced amendments to the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995. The latest update to the Regulations (Statutory Instrument 2019 No. 907) came into force on 25th May 2019.
- 2.61 This update includes a number of amendments to the 2018 version of the General Permitted Development Order. There is one amendment that could have an impact on the KTCAAP. This is the creation of Class JA under Part 3, Schedule 2 of the regulations, which now permits uses falling under retail, takeaway, betting office, pay day loan shop and laundrette to change to offices (B1a), although floorspace is limited to 500m² and prior approval application is required ahead of any change being implemented. This amendment has the potential to result in the loss of retail units, particularly of concern in the Primary Shopping Area, where the threshold of 75% has already been breached and therefore could contribute to a further decrease of retail in an area where retail should have a strong presence and provide active frontages benefiting the vitality of the high street. It is not known at present the extent to which this will impact the mix of uses in the Primary Shopping Area, this will be reported upon in the next Monitoring Update.

3. CONSULTATION AND CUSTOMER IMPACT

- 3.1 The monitoring report is for information only, and no consultation is required.

4. POLICY AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The monitoring report does not highlight any current trends which may require changes to local policy. However, the Council is engaging with its partners to progress projects as identified in the Kettering Town Centre Delivery Plan, the

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purpose of this being to continue to deliver improvements in the town centre. This detailed work will help to provide focus for a future review of the AAP.

5. **LEGAL AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The purpose of the Kettering Town Centre Area Action Plan is to guide investment and future development within Kettering town centre. The AAP was subject to extensive consultation which involved engagement with a wide range of people, including hard to reach groups. This was examined by a Planning Inspector and found to meet legal requirements and equality standards. The Monitoring Update reports annually on a number of monitoring measures identified within the AAP, this is not required to be subject to consultation.

6. **CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The achievement of sustainable development is a key aim of national planning policy, the Kettering Town Centre AAP prepared in the context of this aim. The AAP was subject to sustainability appraisal throughout its preparation, this ensures the Plan will help achieve relevant environmental, economic and social objectives. The AAP can help contribute towards a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions through reducing the need to travel and providing opportunities for people to use sustainable transport. Policies contained within the AAP will secure that the development and use of land contributes to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change. A review of the AAP is planned to commence within the next 12 months.

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7. RECOMMENDATION

That Members note the contents of this report, including key indicators in relation to:

- Kettering Town Centre retains its Purple Flag status.
- Overall the night-time economy is growing significantly in strength.
- Events including the Christmas Market, and Kettering by the Sea continue to promote Kettering Town Centre as an attractive and vibrant destination.
- The Kettfest festival proved to be popular, incorporating arts, culture and music for the fourth consecutive year at various venues.
- Overall vacancy rates have increased to 14.32%; this is less positive than the national average of 10.3%.
- An increase of footfall on a non-market and a significant decrease on a market day in September, as well as a decrease on a non-market day and a significant increase on a market day in December, compared to last year. Resulting in an overall decrease when taking into account for both surveys.
- A total of 358 dwellings have been delivered in the town centre since the plan was adopted.
- The Council is working with the town centre stakeholders to deliver projects set out in the Town Centre Delivery Plan which provides improvements to Kettering town centre.
- Work is ongoing to progress the Heritage Action Zone programme in identifying areas that could be enhanced and improved in the town centre with through the funding that has been obtained.

Title of Document: Planning Policy Committee Item 6:
Kettering Town Centre Area Action Plan – Monitoring Update
Date: 20th June 2011

Title of Document: Planning Policy Committee Item 7:
Kettering Town Centre Area Action Plan – Monitoring Update
Date: 13th September 2012

Title of Document: Planning Policy Committee Item 8:
Kettering Town Centre Area Action Plan – Monitoring Update
Date: 7th November 2013

Title of Document Planning Policy Committee Item 8:
Kettering Town Centre Area Action Plan – Monitoring Update

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Date: 5th November 2014

Title of Document: Planning Policy Committee Item 6:
Kettering Town Centre Area Action Plan – Monitoring Update

Date: 4th November 2015

Title of Document: Planning Policy Committee Item 6:
Kettering Town Centre Area Action Plan – Monitoring Update

Date: 25th January 2017

Title of Document: Planning Policy Committee Item 5:
Kettering Town Centre Monitoring Update

Date: 23rd January 2018

Title of Document: Planning Policy Committee Item 8:
Kettering Town Centre Health Check Monitoring Report

Date: 26th February 2019

Contact Officer: Andrew Needham – Development Officer (Planning Policy)