**B O R O U G H O F K E T T E R I N G**

**PLANNING POLICY COMMITTEE**

**28th July 2010**

**Present:** Councillor Mike Tebbutt (Chair)

Councillors Maurice Bayes, June Derbyshire, Terry Freer, Christopher Groome, Christopher Lamb, Greg Titcombe, Keli Watts and Alison Wiley

**Also Present:** Councillors Russell Roberts and Derek Zanger

**10.PP.13 APOLOGIES**

None.

**10.PP.14** **MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 24th June 2010 be approved and signed by the Chair, subject to the following amendments:-

1. The addition of Councillor Greg Titcombe to the list of those present at the meeting.
2. Minute No. 10.PP.06 – first bullet point of Paul Ansell's comments

The paragraph be amended to:-

*"He had asked at the last meeting that a Design Guide be available as soon as possible to ensure the unique character of the town centre was preserved. He suggested that there should be if possible red brick and traditional slate-coloured roofs and that Chris Prout's illustrations be included in the marketing documents relating to the various schemes."*

**10.PP.15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Greg Titcombe declared a personal interest in the Station Quarter as a member of the Cricket Club on Lake Avenue.

**10.PP.16** **PUBLIC SPEAKERS**

The following member of the public declared that he wished to speak under the Council’s Right to Speak Policy:-

Mr Paul Ansell indicated that he wished to speak on behalf of the Kettering Civic Society in accordance with the Council's Right to Speak Policy in respect of agenda Item 7, Kettering Town Centre Area Action Plan.

**10.PP.17 NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ARC**

A report was submitted which informed members of a proposed County Strategy for future planning and investment decisions in the county, and which sought endorsement of the officers' response to the County Council on the document.

The deadline for responses to the document was 16th July. However, it had been agreed that the Borough Council could submit comments following consideration of the document by the Committee at this meeting.

Members expressed concern that the Strategy failed to recognise key transport routes into and out of North Northamptonshire, and ignored connections with areas such as Peterborough, Leicester and Milton Keynes. The Committee also considered that the document was too Northampton-centred, and failed to recognise the movements of people and businesses into and out of the county. Members felt that the document was not a strategic planning policy, and that the on-going review of the Core Spatial Strategy would include consideration of the proposals set out in the Northamptonshire Arc Background Report as one of its options.

Members requested that the comments set out within the officers' report be strengthened to show the weight of the Council's dissatisfaction with the Northamptonshire Arc Background Report.

Specific comments on the document were as follows:-

* A sense of the county as a patchwork of transport networks was missing
* More about how Northamptonshire works and links with other areas as a whole (not just within the arc) should be emphasised more strongly in the document
* The direct benefits of the proposed new High Speed Rail Line (HS2) would be lost in Northamptonshire because the service would not stop in the county
* Paragraph 2.6 of the response should be strengthened regarding links to Milton Keynes, Peterborough, Leicester and London
* Improvements to rail services north on the Midland mainline should be improved by increasing capacity and frequency
* More emphasis should be made on Kettering's place in the arc, and improvements to the East-West links emphasised more strongly
* When the Strategy is discussed at Northamptonshire Enterprise Ltd and North Northants Development Company, representatives from Kettering should be briefed on the Committee's views to enable them to put across Kettering's case in strong terms
* The Strategy would seem to be at odds with the developing proposals for a Local Enterprise Partnership
* The A14 is classified as a Trans-European Route (E24) and should be given more importance
* Reference to Wellingborough to Northampton mass transport should also include Kettering
* Strategy Priority 3 should include reference to links with Leeds, Sheffield and Manchester
* Strategy Priority 7 refers only to roads between towns in the arc – the A605 has replaced the A43 as the main route, north-bound, to the A1 and is heavily trafficked
* No mention of the Nene Regional Park or the Ise Valley is made in the biodiversity statements

**RESOLVED** that the contents of the Northamptonshire Arc Background Report be noted and the comments provided by officers endorsed in response to the consultation, subject to the inclusion of points made during the meeting.

**10.PP.18 KETTERING TOWN CENTRE AREA ACTION PLAN**

A report was submitted which sought agreement to the contents of the Kettering Town Centre Area Action Plan – Proposed Submission and Sustainability Appraisal for public consultation.

It was noted that, since the last report, the agent for QD Stores had contacted the Council to query their premises inclusion in the new Wadcroft site boundary. It was noted that the Managing Director of QD and senior officers from the Council were in a dialogue about how plans in the Shopping Quarter were progressing, and that there was broad agreement between the parties.

The following timescales for consultation, Public Examination and final ratification by the Secretary of State were noted:-

Consultation on the proposed submission: August 2010

Submission to Government: December 2010

Public Examination: April 2011

Adoption: August 2011

Members noted that the statutory purpose of the consultation was to seek comments regarding the soundness of the Plan, rather than individual detailed objections into its content.

Mr Paul Ansell, speaking on behalf of Kettering Civic Society, addressed the meeting under the Council's Right to Speak policy.

Mr Ansell stated that the Civic Society was impressed and contented with the majority of the Plan. He urged the Council to ensure that housing development in the town centre focused strongly on type and social cohesion. Any additional uses in the Southern Quarter should have a cultural use or purpose. In order to complement the excellent Market Place improvements, the Civic Society would like to see a further site brought forward to support developers' aspirations in relation to backroom public services in partnership with the Council.

The Civic Society felt that Silver Street had developed its own unique culture over the years, which was not the same as that envisioned for the Restaurant Quarter.

In summing up, Mr Ansell stressed that it would be important to move forward in relation to shop front designs which should reflect the character and quality of the shop fronts. Proposed designs could also be publicised in the local press.

Debate then ensued on several issues and topics set out in the Area Action Plan as follows:-

The Shopping Quarter

Members sought clarification of timescales in relation to the Shopping Quarter. Although it was acknowledged that there was much work to be done in this area, it was felt that the identified timescales in the Area Action Plan could be achieved.

The Southern Quarter

It was noted that the reference in the document to a supermarket use was a consequence of the fact that this had been one of the alternative uses examined by the scoping study, which had been carried out in order to demonstrate that the Council had objectively examined various alternative uses for that part of town.

Members felt that the Southern Quarter (previously the Cultural Quarter) should not lose its heritage, and that any uses of the site should be complementary to the important cultural facilities in this area.

Members were of the opinion that reference should be made to "conservation of historic elements" in the descriptor for the Southern Quarter, and more emphasis should be placed on the open space and Gotch architecture it contained. It was also felt that reference to conservation of the London Road cemetery as a public open space should be strengthened.

The New Residential Quarter

In response to questions about the type and size of accommodation for a new town centre population, it was acknowledged that a mix of residential uses and retail premises injected vibrancy and activity into the town centre in the evening and at night time. Members felt that new residential accommodation should be a mix of 1, 2 and 3 bedroomed properties to ensure a diverse residency in the town centre.

Station Quarter

It was acknowledged that pedestrian movement solutions from West to East of the railway line needed more detailed thinking. Indicative maps used should differentiate between the development land and open space in this area.

In concluding the debate, members discussed the need for good architecture in shop frontages, which should reflect the character of the town centre buildings above the eye-line. It was noted that a continental approach to public conveniences would be taken, with retail/restaurant premises providing such facilities. Any Council facilities in the town centre would also be fully accessible for members of the public.

**RESOLVED** that:-

(a) the Kettering Town Centre Area Action Plan – Proposed Submission and Sustainability Appraisal be approved for public consultation;

(b) the finalising of the Proposed Submission and Sustainability Appraisal be delegated to the Head of Development Services in consultation with the Chair of the Committee, along with any minor matters requiring amendment as a result of the debate as summarised above; and

(c) the proposed eight week public consultation period and process outlined in paragraph 3.3 of the report be approved.

*(The meeting started at 7.00 pm and ended at 8.45 pm)*

Signed ....................................................

Chair

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