



Report to Cabinet

Subject Town Centres Strategy

Date 2 December 2004

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1. Purpose of the Report

§ To seek members' approval for an outline Town Centres Strategy and for proposals to develop Action Plans for the Borough's main retail areas.

2. Background

2.1 – The Council appointed a Town Centre Manager in 2002. At the time, this was a temporary post, funded largely through contributions from Sainsbury's under a section 106 agreement linked to the development of their Arnold store. Given the nature of the funding, the officer's brief was to concentrate significantly on Arnold Town Centre.

2.2 – Personnel and Resources Committee agreed to make the post permanent in October 2003, at which point the Council took full responsibility for funding of the post. At this point, the brief of the post was extended formally to include support for all of the Borough's retail areas.

2.3 – The Town Centres Manager developed and substantially delivered a Business Plan for Arnold during the first 18 months of his appointment, working in partnership with council departments and external agencies. Lessons were learned from this around ways of working that have influenced future approaches.

2.4 – To direct future town centres work, development of a Town Centres Strategy was proposed and agreed as an Improvement Task in the 2004/05 Budget and Service Plan. The original intention was for this to be completed by Spring 2004, and that individual Action Plans for the main retail areas would be

developed from it thereafter. However, significant additional operational responsibilities for the Town Centres Manager, including work related to Severn-Trent's operations in Arnold Town Centre, delivering a consultation programme around the proposed introduction of car park charging for the Council's shopping centre car parks, and a greater than expected workload arising from the introduction of the ShopWatch radio scheme have delayed development of the Strategy. The Town Centres Manager has also taken on responsibility for the organisation of all Christmas lights switch-on events in the Borough.

2.5 – Cabinet therefore agreed to put back the target date for development of the strategy to Autumn 2004 at its meeting in August 2004.

3. Proposal

3.1 – An outline Town Centres Strategy has now been developed and is attached at **Appendix A**. It draws on accepted good practice in Town Centres management and on issues brought forward as priorities in the development of the previous Arnold Town Centre Business Plan.

3.2 – The Strategy focuses on regeneration and economic vitality issues, and related community activity. It is not intended to be a land use blueprint for the areas – this role is fulfilled through the Local Plan process. Equally, specific issues around crime relating to businesses will be addressed through the Crime and Disorder Strategy. The Town Centres Strategy and resultant Action Plans will, however, need to reflect and address issues in those and related strategies.

3.3 – At this point, the draft has not been subject to consultation with stakeholders, and it is proposed that such consultation should take place as part of the consultation process for the development of Action Plans as detailed below.

3.4 – The strategy should form the broad framework around which more detailed Action Plans for the Borough's Town Centres can be developed. The four main shopping areas are Arnold; Netherfield; Mapperley and Carlton Hill/Carlton Square, each of which have different characteristics and serve different needs. It is therefore proposed that separate Action Plans are developed for each of these four areas.

3.5 – There is not enough capacity in place to develop all Action Plans simultaneously and the work will therefore need to be staged. It is therefore proposed that Action Plans are developed in the following order, for reasons outlined.

- Arnold – As the Borough's largest shopping centre, it has also experienced significant disruption over the past twelve months as a

result of Severn-Trent's drainage works. The Arnold Local Area Forum is understood to be considering a "relaunch" for the town centre early in 2005, and development of the Action Plan could usefully coincide with this.

- Netherfield – Local businesses have recently expressed an interest in more collaborative working and the Town Centres Manager has begun working with them on this. Consultation on and development of an Action Plan for the town centre could link well with work on "revisiting" for the area next year currently being considered by the Netherfield Partnership.
- Carlton Square/Carlton Hill
- Mapperley

3.6 – Outline timetables for the development of Action Plans in each area are set out in the Strategy document.

3.7 – A four-stage approach to Action Plan development is proposed in each area.

- Establish baseline position
- Consult with stakeholders
- Draft Action Plan and consult with stakeholders
- Agree Action Plan for implementation

3.8 – Details of approach may vary from area to area, but the broad components will feature in each area.

3.9 – Resultant Action Plans will be presented in the following format.

- Overview of area – including details of baseline position
- Consultation carried out and findings/conclusions
- Summary areas for improvement
- Proposed actions – with lead responsibility and timetable for delivery
- Success measures and evaluation

3.10 – Actions may be the responsibility of a range of agencies, within the Council and amongst partners.

3.11 – Arrangements will also be made for feedback of results and findings to stakeholders, including by publication of Action Plans.

4. Resource Implications

4.1 – It is expected that the costs associated with development of the Action Plans can be met from within existing approved resources. The recently

appointed Community Projects Officers will be able to contribute to the consultation process. Possible external funding support is also being explored.

4.2 – It is less clear at this point how any actions included in the Plans may be funded since the current Town Centres budget is unlikely to be able to fund any significant additional developments.

4.3 - Consideration is being given to bringing in external funding, and negotiations are being held with Greater Nottingham Partnership around this issue. A resource development bid for an additional £10,000 has been submitted which if used as matched funding as part of these discussions has the potential to attract a further £50,000 towards the cost of town centres improvements.

4.4 - This would clearly be extremely advantageous for the progression of these Action Plans and members will be asked to give consideration to this as part of budget and service plan deliberations early in 2005.

5. Recommendation

5.1 – Members are **recommended**: -

- To endorse the draft outline Town Centres Strategy as a basis for further consultation
- To agree the proposed approach to the development of Town Centres Action Plans.

Gedling Borough Council Outline Town Centres Strategy

Town Centre Management: 'the effective co-ordination of private and public sector interests working in partnership to create a successful town centre – for the benefit of all'

Association of Town Centre Management

Introduction

The concept of Town Centre Management is not new but has grown considerably over the last ten years into a high profile, successful, action-focused partnership process in many towns and cities through the country.

The success of any town centre needs to be based on a range of attractions, facilities and services including shops, financial, entertainment and leisure. Town centres continue to play a very important role in society. Therefore it is vitally important that we all cater for the full range of people using the Boroughs main town centres of Arnold, Mapperley, Carlton and Netherfield, these include workers, local residents, shoppers, business visitors and those that spend their leisure time in the area. Attention also needs to be paid to the *environment* of the town centres in that they must be clean, pleasant and give a feeling of safety to all that attend.

Arnold remains the top district shopping centre in the Greater Nottingham area, confirmed in the recent report '*Nottinghamshire & Greater Nottingham Retail Studies*' commissioned by Nottinghamshire County Council and conducted by CB Hillier Parker.

Vision

To develop and maintain vibrant and viable town centres within Gedling Borough, by addressing key issues relating to: -

- Sustainability and Regeneration
- Traffic, transport & accessibility
- Crime & Disorder Reduction
- Publicity & Promotions

The above are linked to the Council's priorities and follow good practice promoted by the Association of Town Centre Management.

Objectives

- § To create and maintain attractive town centre environments
- § To support the development of local business forums in each of the 4 main shopping areas (where there is a local demand for this)
- § To encourage investment to the retail sector to ensure that these areas are an attractive and vibrant place where businesses wish to trade and people wish to shop.
- § To ease access around the town centres.
- § To improve the safety and security of the town centre through partnership working.
- § To promote environmental improvements.
- § To facilitate events and activities, promotion and publicise information and services.

Target audience/stakeholders

The main stakeholders include: -

- Shoppers
- Users of other facilities (e.g. Leisure Centres; Health Centres)
- Retailers and related town centre businesses (e.g. banks)
- Other town centre service providers (e.g. Leisure facilities; Health Services)
- Elected members representing the areas and their immediate environs
- Retailer and other business organisations
- Local Area Forums
- Support service providers (e.g. local authorities; transport operators)
- Gedling Partnership
- Nearby residents
- Landlords

Process

The strategy seeks to support and inform the formulation of long term practical Action Plans, for delivery in partnership with local businesses, other stakeholders and the wider community, within the 4 main shopping areas in Gedling Borough.

These localised plans will be the key vehicle through which the Strategy will be delivered.

Each Action Plan will include: -

- Overview of area – including details of baseline position
- Consultation carried out and findings/conclusions
- Summary areas for improvement
- Proposed actions – with lead responsibility and timetable for delivery
- Success measures and evaluation

The development of each of the plans will be time focused and will derived from consultation with key stakeholders.

Key Milestones

Timetable for the production of the Action Plans for consultation will be three months prior to the dates listed below. Once consultation has concluded the dates for works to commence for each town centre is in the following order:

Town Centre	Development / Consultation	Delivery of Plan
Netherfield	Jan – Mar 2005	April 2005 onwards
Arnold	Jan – Mar 2005	April 2005 onwards
Carlton Hill	April – June 2005	July 2005 onwards
Mapperley	April – June 2005	July 2005 onwards

Areas for Improvement

These will vary between areas and will be defined in the relevant Action Plans.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Improvement Projects will be evaluated using existing performance management techniques of lead organisations wherever appropriate.

Performance against any agreed indicators will be also monitored using existing performance management techniques of lead organisations wherever appropriate.