

**REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ENTERPRISE**

Tamworth Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

EXEMPT INFORMATION

N/A

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to update Members on the response and feedback from the consultation events carried out for the Town Centre SPD and to consider an additional consultation phase, to take place before the final consultation and adoption by Cabinet of the SPD.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. That Members note that the consultation events were well attended but that there was a notable small response from local businesses.**
- 2. That Members approve an additional consultation period to gather opinions from the private sector especially those based in the town centre, through a targeted consultation.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The consultation events were held in conjunction with the wider consultation on the Local Plan, and ran between 22nd June and 20th July. The consultation was advertised in the newspaper, on our website and via a radio interview with the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and Enterprise.

The Development Plans Team held three events in total including an open day at the Council offices.

The first event took place for a morning on Wednesday 27th June at Tamworth Library. This was fairly well attended capturing footfall of people visiting the library. Approximately 75% of the attendees wanted to talk about the Town Centre. The attendees were predominantly residents however a statutory consultee representing Arriva also attended. The event generally went well with most people giving positive feedback about the concepts shown on the displays.

The second event was an open day in the Council offices. This was poorly attended with very little interest.

The third and final event was held on Saturday 30th June in a vacant retail unit within Ankerside. This was held on the day of the Olympic Torch relay. The turnout for the event was excellent; approximately 350 people discussed the information on display throughout the day. Most of the attendees were positive about the need for change within the Town Centre but some were concerned about certain images, specifically the indicative drawings for the extension to the Assembly Rooms. Although the event was well attended, this did not translate into responses. However, it is often the case that if someone is in general agreement they are unlikely to complete a response form.

In total 38 responses were received throughout the consultation period (see Appendix). The following is a general summary of the response: *Some good ideas, good start to stimulate ideas, an opportunity to regenerate the town centre; cultural infrastructure is key to success of the town, expand cultural infrastructure, have a cultural centre, more places to eat in the evening; sort out empty shop units, increase variety of shops, tidy up scruffy shop frontages, open shops later into the evening – vibrancy, sort out Gun Gate; low cost/free parking, shuttle bus to and from Rail Station and Ventura, increase car parking if existing is to be redeveloped, have a new bus/coach station, improve walking links to retail parks; take account of flood issues along river and improve use of Green Infrastructure within the town centre; increase amount of housing in the town centre; design of new development should reflect heritage of the town, need to take account of conservation areas and castle, maximise heritage assets – they play an important role in the future development, design of development should be sympathetic to town’s heritage.*

Although the events were well attended by the general public and some statutory consultees there was little representation from local businesses. As local businesses support is valuable to the vitality of the Town Centre, it is important to engage with them at the earliest opportunity. To remedy this it is suggested that an additional four week targeted consultation period is undertaken to present the information to local businesses. Through carrying out this additional consultation we will have a broader understanding of issues that concern those who use the Town Centre and also those who operate their business there.

This additional consultation will take place later this year; once this has been completed the Development Plan Team will draft a Town Centre SPD. The draft SPD will be presented to Members prior to a formal consultation for approval; once the consultation has been completed a final Town Centre SPD will be prepared for adoption by Council in early 2013.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

In the Cabinet report dated 13th June 2012, the intention was given that the Town Centre SPD would be adopted in late Autumn 2012. As the Local Plan progresses towards submission to the Secretary of State, less staff resource is available to progress the Town Centre SPD. Because of this it is expected that there will be further slippage from the original timetable set out in the Local Development Scheme, which will result in the Town Centre SPD not being adopted until 2013.

There are no financial implications arising from this report, other than publication costs which are covered by the existing LDF budget.

LEGAL/RISK IMPLICATIONS BACKGROUND

There are no legislative or service delivery implications arising from this report and no associated risks arising directly from the report.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The Local Plan (on which this SPD expands upon) has been subject to a Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment. This has ensured that sustainability issues are given full consideration in the preparation and adoption of policies. The findings of the appraisal showed a positive scoring for policies which delivered town centre regeneration.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

REPORT AUTHOR

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LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Previous report for portfolio holder – 13th June 2012, Tamworth Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document

APPENDICES

- Town Centre SPD responses - full report

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