

Weston-super-Mare Town Centre

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

Scoping Report

December 2014

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This scoping report gives notice that the Council is commencing preparation of a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for Weston-super-Mare Town Centre. It sets out the proposed timescale for its production, consultation and adoption and sets out the emerging vision and issues which are likely to be covered. The purpose of the scoping document is to get early comments from key stakeholders regarding the proposed production and content of the document.
- 1.2 Please respond by **23 December 2014** with any comments on this scoping report by emailing planning.policy@n-somerset.gov.uk
- 1.3 To register for email notification of the consultation, please go to <http://consult-ldf.n-somerset.gov.uk/consult.ti>

2. Purpose

- 2.1 The SPD will agree a new vision for Weston-super-Mare town centre, consider the options for achieving this and set out how this is to be delivered within the planning process.
- 2.2 Town centres are facing challenging times both nationally and locally. The SPD will consider how we use the centre and propose a new approach that is aimed at ensuring the town centre continues to perform a vital socio-economic role in Weston-super-Mare and its wider area.
- 2.3 Once the vision is agreed it will be used to underpin marketing and promotion of the town to attract investors and business.

3. Policy Background

- 3.1 The North Somerset Core Strategy was adopted in April 2012.
- 3.2 Policy CS 29 provides an enabling policy framework in recognition of Weston's town centre regeneration needs with the aim of providing a prosperous, modern and vibrant centre to serve the existing and future population of Weston.
- 3.3 Policy CS25 supports the provision of further and higher education and makes specific reference to the expansion of Weston College and the growth at Weston Villages
- 3.4 Part 1 of the Sites and Policies document, due for publication and consultation in January 2015, sets the detailed planning framework for town centres, district centres and local centres throughout North Somerset. It includes a revised approach to retailing to reflect the changing economic environment and approach to shopping. This document will set the planning framework and following independent examination will be adopted by the council.
- 3.5 Whilst the policies contained in the SPD must be consistent with the Core Strategy, they also need to reflect the changing economic circumstances and greater focus on skills and learning as critical drivers for economic growth and development. The SPD will provide greater detail regarding how the Core Strategy and Sites and Policies Plan policies will be delivered in Weston-super-Mare and set out how key sites will be developed in line with the vision and policies.
- 3.6 The West of England Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) submitted to Government in 2014 prioritised skills and learning as one of the key pillars supporting economic growth and jobs in the West of England. This included a Legal and Professional Services Academy and a Higher Technologies Centre in Weston-super-Mare.

4. Scope of the SPD

- 4.1 This SPD is concerned with development within the area designated as the Town Centre in the Core Strategy.

5. Stages in production and timescale

Timescale	Stage	Details
December 2014	Stage 1: Scoping Early December agree draft scoping report.	There will be three weeks opportunity for comments to be made on the scoping document by internal departments and key stakeholders
February	Stage 2: Draft SPD Draft for Consultation to be approved by Executive 3 February	This will set out the vision, options, and emerging priorities, regeneration and redevelopment opportunities and policy guidance. It will invite comments and pose questions. It will be accompanied by a programme of consultation.
Feb/March	Stage 3: Consultation	6 weeks consultation on the draft SPD
April/May	Stage 4: Amendment	Consideration of responses and amendment to document
May/June	Stage 5: Adoption Full Council for Adoption	
Ongoing	Stage 6: Monitoring and review	

6. Proposed vision and objectives

- 6.1 This scoping report sets out the emerging vision. The purpose of the scoping report is to encourage key stake holders to consider what aspirations they have for the town and express views on the vision at this early stage. The consultation draft to be produced in February 2015 will allow further opportunity to comment.
- 6.2 The scoping report lists each of the objectives set out in the vision setting out the issues which will need to be considered in the SPD together with the possible questions which the draft consultation could ask. It is not intended that respondents to the scoping report answer these questions at his stage.

The emerging vision for living, learning and lifestyles

Weston-super-Mare will become a lively, proud university town. The centre will be a highly desirable place to live, learn and spend leisure time. New high quality contemporary urban apartments and sought-after conversions will bring new vitality, youth and spending power to the town centre. Lifestyle choices and new facilities will be inspired by its great accessibility, the coastal location, and demands of a modern generation.

In the next 10 years Weston town centre will have:

- 1 Significant growth and investment in high quality residential development focussed on the seafront and town centre which in turn will help to grow and sustain new shopping, leisure and cultural facilities.**
- 2 A new university campus, based in the town centre, used by students for higher and further education as well as the community. This will provide students and professionals with high-quality study, new skills, accommodation and lifestyles.**
- 3 A new cinema, restaurants and leisure-led development.**
- 4 The regeneration of key sites in the town centre.**
- 5 An internationally recognised programme of events and activities including a growing reputation for extreme sports.**
- 6 A greater variety and quality of culture and leisure activity, visitor accommodation and sports provision including healthy lifestyle activities**
- 7 A more focused shopping area which links more readily with the seafront and promenade and which is more vibrant and welcoming during the evening**
- 8 A physical environment in which the buildings and spaces generate pride and identity in the town, are well managed, and can be used flexibly to meet changing demands and needs.**
- 9 The development of a town centre enterprise space and a range of town centre jobs provided by a new mix of activities, businesses and office development.**
- 10 Better accessibility to the town centre and an improved sense of arrival showcased by an upgraded railway station.**

7. Proposed issues to be covered by the SPD and questions which need to be addressed

	Objective	Possible issues to be included and questions for the SPD consultation document
1	Significant growth and investment in high quality residential development focussed on the seafront and town centre which in turn will help to grow and sustain new shopping, leisure and cultural facilities.	<p>Where; identify key sites and set guidance on smaller sites. Key sites could include:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police Station & Magistrates' Court • Avoncrest • Locking Road • Dolphin Square • Sunnyside Road <p>Type: set guidance for the type of residential units required :-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aspirational apartments/penthouse flats, sought-after conversions • Quality town centre living, empty spaces above shops • Purpose built modern students accommodation • Quality rental market and shared ownership <p>Questions for the consultation; How do we kick-start this process and get people to want to live in the town centre? If the target market is young professionals are there now different forms of tenure which have to be explored? If this age group is less likely to own property than in the past, how do we secure high quality owner occupier, shared ownership and rented schemes? How best to provide further guidance on the application of current policies (affordable housing, older people housing, employment led) so that they do not inhibit town centre renaissance?</p>
2	A new town centre based university campus used by students for higher and further education as well as the community. This will provide students and professionals with high-quality study, new skills, accommodation and lifestyles.	<p>What: The Legal and Professional Services Academy for Weston College. The Academy will provide state-of the art flexible teaching spaces to accommodate the employability needs of the sector, the curriculum themed spaces. It will include dedicated meeting and conference space to accommodate employer and professional association events. The aim is to support national regional and local initiatives to address the skills gap.</p> <p>Where: the proposal is to secure the future of the iconic Winter Gardens by enhancing the original Winter Gardens building for continued community use whilst re-modeling the new section as part of a bid with Weston College to create a new university in the town. Student accommodation will be required in the nearby areas with a consequent boost in the town centre economy. The aim is to create state-of-the-art facilities for all learners but also with resources that the community can benefit from. The Winter Gardens offers a unique opportunity to boost regeneration effects, host mix uses, contribute to wider social retail and employment activities and its proximity to the Knightstone Campus offers a clear and distinct advantage and would act as a catalyst for regeneration in the centre of the town.</p> <p>When: The Legal and Professional Services Academy will form the first phase of the development which is</p>

		<p>expected to be open for Sept 2016. A further phase aimed at Higher Education on an expanded site will follow.</p> <p>Questions for the consultation Are there other issues which need to be addressed? For example how would we encourage new businesses/enterprises to start up, especially those that have strong links to higher and further education.</p>
3	A new cinema, restaurants and leisure-led development.	<p>Set out the current leisure proposals at Dolphin Square which will commence in the New Year</p> <p>Questions for the consultation Welcome views in the context of national economic conditions and the emerging vision regarding leisure and retail provision</p>
4	<p>The regeneration of previously identified key sites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Victoria Street • St James Street Area • Lower High St East (NCP Car Park) • Walliscote area - Police station/Magistrates Court • Sunnyside Road • Rugby Club • Tesco • Locking Road Car Park and other car Parks • Avoncrest • Tropicana • Birnbeck Pier 	<p>Proposals for some of these sites may need to be re-thought in light of the vision.</p> <p>The SPD will set out options and invite new ideas. Other sites may also be included as appropriate. Consideration will be given to how they will be delivered.</p> <p>Questions for the consultation Are there other sites which need to be considered? Are there alternative proposals for the sites put forward?</p>
5	An internationally recognised programme of events and activities including a growing reputation for extreme sports	<p>Consider whether there are any land use requirements for managing large events such as: Importance of the Beach Lawns for temporary events Park and ride. Storing carnival floats. Coach parking etc.</p> <p>Questions for the consultation Are there other issues which need to be addressed?</p>
6	A greater variety and quality of culture and leisure activity, visitor accommodation and sports provision including healthy lifestyle activities	<p>Consider: Multi use of buildings especially university buildings</p> <p>Questions for the consultation Changing demands, whether there are different demands from visitors and residents. How can these be delivered?</p>
7	A more focused shopping area which links more readily with the seafront and promenade and which is more vibrant and welcoming during the evening	<p>Importance of linking this SPD with the consultation on the Sites and Policies Plan and the revised retail policies to ensure that the two are joined up. Linking seafront/town centre, Encouraging residents into the centre especially from the new Weston Villages developments. Managing for better quality shopping - and getting people to shop, linger and enjoy Enhancement of the Sovereign Centre/High Street.</p>

		<p>More early evening uses making the evening family friendly and a better night-time economy</p> <p>Questions for the consultation Are there issues regarding the changes to retailing which you want to raise? Are there issues retailers want us to address regarding increased footfall and making better use of premises? Do we have the right size and configuration of premises and if not how can this be achieved within the existing retail space?</p>
8	A physical environment in which the buildings and spaces generate pride and identity in the town, are well managed, and can be used flexibly to meet changing demands and needs.	<p>Strategic design guidance can be included which references for example: Making the most of views Heights of buildings Use of local materials Making the most of historic assets Creating spaces that enables collaboration, innovation and enterprise in both formal and informal setting. Flexible use of buildings and spaces Further public realm enhancements Improving town centre management Identification of areas for improvement - how to deliver improvements?</p> <p>Questions for the consultation What and where are the most cherished and loved aspects and parts of Weston town centre which will help attract investment and new residents? Where are the most important areas in need of improvement? How do we deliver these improvements?</p>
9	The development of a town centre enterprise space and a range of town centre jobs provided by a new mix of activities, businesses and office development	<p>Delivering an enterprise space.</p> <p>Questions for the consultation Are there other issues which need to be addressed? For example how would we encourage new businesses/enterprises to start up, especially those that have strong links to higher and further education. Any specific locations for office development? Will greater emphasis on housing-led regeneration in the town centre help to facilitate more employment in the town centre?</p>
10	Better accessibility to the town centre and an improved sense of arrival showcased by an upgraded railway station.	<p>Better accessibility and creating desirable first impressions. Upgrading the railway station and approaches to the town centre. Views from the A370 corridor from M5 J21 to the sea - sense of arrival. Ability to park - and quality of the parking. Arriving by bus/coach - improving Alexandra Parade Better quality access for pedestrians and cyclists.</p> <p>Questions for the consultation Suggestions for how these or other areas might be improved and ways this could be delivered.</p>
	The above shown in a graphic/map format	

7 Welcoming your views

- 7.1 Comments and views are welcomed on the vision, scope and production of the Weston Town SPD. These will help inform its development. Further consultation and engagement with the community, stakeholders, developers and interested parties will take place once a draft of the document has been produced.

The main point of contact for the SPD will be:

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Please respond by 23 December 2014