



## **NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY**

#### **SCRUTINY PANEL 2 – RETAIL EXPERIENCE**

**5<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2012**

#### **BRIEFING NOTE: SITE VISIT TO PETERBOROUGH**

### **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 At the meeting of the Panel on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2012, it was agreed that site visits take place so that a comparison could be made with other town centres against that of Northampton.
- 1.2 Councillors Elizabeth Gowen, Sally Beardsworth, Tony Ansell and Dennis Meredith visited Peterborough city centre on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2012.

### **2 Information**

#### **2.1 Bus interchange**

- 2.1.1 This was a reasonable sized area with the feel of a street but it was completely under cover. The sides were all clear panels with closing doors leading to the bus bay on both sides. Entrance was achievable both from the street and the main shopping centre, Queensgate. The facilities included a news kiosk and toilets as well as area to sit. The clear sides and roof gave an overall bright feel to the interchange and the area was kept very clean with bins provided.

#### **2.2 Queensgate**

- 2.2.1 This is a large shopping centre owned by a company who also own other centres including the Bull Ring in Birmingham. John Lewis is the primary shop and a large Primark is in the process of being fitted, making this one of the very few shopping centres in the country to have both stores. Being part of a larger company as well as having highly recognised store, John Lewis, there are very few units empty at this time and have a high success with short term renting. There is a large range of different types of stores including fashion, jewellery, computing and grocers, as well as price range, New Look, Poundland, M&S, Waitrose to name a few.
- 2.2.2 A reasonable number of people were using the centre on a weekday just before lunch. There was also a wide range of eating areas but most were within large shops rather than restaurants and café. The main downside was the sign were not very visible. We could not see if there was toilet

nearby or where exits were as well as were to pay for parking. It is my understanding that the signs are in the process of being replaced to address this issue. The centre has a large car park over many floors but each floor is very narrow with small spaces making parking rather difficult.

2.2.3 Footfall is reported to be on average around 300,000 visitors per week. Average dwell time is 81 minutes and visitors within the top five MOSAIC is 56%.

2.2.4 Queensgate also has retail merchandise units, promoted as a shop with no walls, offering all the facilities you would expect within a retail mall unit. Organisations operating in this way include Sky and the Nut Hut.

2.2.5 Details of Queensgate, Peterborough, can be located on its [website](#).

### **2.3 Peterborough**

2.3.1 As well as the bus interchange, Peterborough has a train station and large number of car parks across the city centre making it visitor friendly with good driving access. With a mix of old, Cathedral and Church, and new buildings working well together it is considered to be a very pretty and lively centre. Great care is taken over the city centre as litter and graffiti were not visible on our trip and a large number of bins provided. A down side was the large number of people on the street collecting for regular charity donations. The signing was clear, visible and place at many locations making navigating around the city easier. The street had many seating areas and was decorated with trees giving a friendlier atmosphere. Few shops were empty and there seemed to be a large number of people in the centre. The tourist information was located near the Cathedral and was fully staffed with helpful employees. It was set out in a shop selling souvenirs and books about Peterborough. There were a number of hotels and pubs but not so many that they dominated the city centre.

2.3.2 Detailed at Appendix A are photographs of Peterborough city centre.

## **3 Recommendations**

3.1 That the information gathered from the site visit to Peterborough be used to inform the Panel's evidence base.