


Public Document Pack



Meeting: EAP Climate Change Environment & Growth
Date: Wednesday 31st August, 2022
Time: 9.30 am
Venue: Remote Meeting via Zoom (this meeting is not the subject of public meeting requirements)
The meeting will be available for the public to view live at the 'Democratic Services North Northants' YouTube channel.

To members of the EAP Climate Change Environment & Growth

Councillors Harriet Pentland (Chair), Tim Allebone, Jennie Bone, Lyn Buckingham, Dez Dell, Jan O'Hara and Kevin Watt

Agenda			
Item	Subject	Presenting Officer	Page no.
01	Apologies for Absence		
02	Members' Declarations of Interest		
03	Minutes from Meeting held on 4 August 2022		3 - 8
04	Northamptonshire E-Scooter Trial	Ian Achurch	9 – 20
05	3-Year Waste Plan	Charlotte Tompkins	Verbal Update
06	Kettering Station Quarter Masterplan	Simon Richardson	21 - 38
07	Close of Meeting		
<p>Adele Wylie, Monitoring Officer North Northamptonshire Council</p>  <p>Proper Officer 23rd August 2022</p>			

This agenda has been published by Democratic Services.

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Meetings at the Council Offices

This meeting will be held using the Zoom platform.

Members' Declarations of Interest

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Agenda Item 3



Minutes of a meeting of the EAP Climate Change Environment & Growth Held at 2.00 pm on Thursday 4th August, 2022 as a Remote Meeting via Zoom

Present:-

Members

Councillor Harriet Pentland (Chair)
Councillor Tim Allebone
Councillor Jennie Bone
Councillor Dez Dell

Councillor Jan O'Hara
Councillor Lyn Buckingham
Councillor Kevin Watt

Officers

Michael Bailey	Waste Management Officer
George Candler	Executive Director – Place and Economy
Liam Faulkner	Senior Works Supervisor
David Garrett	Head of Knowledge Transfer – Garden Organic
Greg Haynes	Climate Change Officer
Graeme Kane	Assistant Director – Highways and Waste
Carol Mundy	Senior Democratic Services Officer
Brian Ogden	Senior Tree and Landscape Officer
Raj Sohal	Democratic Services Officer
Jonathan Waterworth	Assistant Director – Assets and Environment

Also in attendance – North Northamptonshire Councillors:

Councillor Matt Binley
Councillor Wendy Brackenbury
Councillor Emily Fedorowycz
Councillor Jim Hakewill
Councillor Clive Hallam
Councillor Barbara Jenney
Councillor Graham Lawman
Councillor Lora Lawman
Councillor Paul Marks
Councillor John McGhee
Councillor Russell Roberts
Councillor Geoff Shacklock
Councillor Chris Smith-Haynes
Councillor Malcolm Waters

68 Apologies for Absence

No apologies were received.

69 Members' Declarations of Interest

No declarations were made.

70 Minutes from Meeting held on 11 July 2022

RESOLVED that:

The minutes from the meeting held on the 11th July 2022 were approved as a correct record.

71 Members' Awareness Session - Home Composting

The Panel, as well as wider elected members of North Northamptonshire Council, considered a presentation by The Head of Knowledge Transfer (Garden Organic), regarding home composting and ecological gardening.

RESOLVED that:

The report be noted.

72 Tree Management and Care Policy

The Panel considered a report by The Assistant Director of Assets and Environment, which outlined the North Northamptonshire Tree Management and Care Policy.

During discussion, the principal points were noted:

- Members expressed desire to see an expanded planting policy, identifying areas of urban land for additional trees.
- One member expressed concern that the local authority's policy to plant one replacement tree, for every existing one removed, would not be adequate. The member requested that additional detail be provided regarding the size and ages of potential replacement trees and posited that a ratio of ten trees for every one removed should be implemented; since the smaller size of new trees would require a larger volume, to offset carbon emissions.
- Members queried how the local authority could encourage partnerships with land developers, planners and farmers to strengthen tree management.
- One member suggested that floors of woodlands should be well-maintained to prevent the likelihood of wildfires and also to encourage pollinators.
- Regarding the local authority's intention to seek compensation from any organisation responsible for significant damage to council-owned trees, members queried whether this enforcement action could also be applied to individuals.
- One member expressed concern around the removal of dead trees. The member explained that dead trees could be a hive for insect and wildlife activity and queried whether this policy could be adjusted.
- Members suggested that sufficient tree aftercare and the promotion of community engagement/awareness would be essential following planting.
- Members queried how many insurance claims the local authority received, in relation to trees damaging private property.

- One member expressed disappointment where healthy trees had been removed by the previous legacy authority in Corby. The member hoped North Northamptonshire Council would use this tree policy to do proper analysis in future for tree removal.
- Members emphasised the importance of merging the Tree Policy with planning policy, to preserve open areas for tree development.
- Members queried whether any consideration had been taken to inform members of the public in advance of when trees were due to be removed.

In response, the Senior Tree and Landscape Officer clarified that:

- Officers sought to explore expansion opportunities for tree-planting by identifying existing areas of Council-owned land for such activity, within financial reason. The local authority had also submitted an expression of interest for the Woodland Accelerator Fund, which looked to give grants to Councils to employ resource staff to deliver local tree-planting.
- The policy had outlined a one-to-one tree replacement ratio as Officers had felt this would be more realistic to deliver. Nevertheless, the local authority would maintain flexibility to plant the right trees in the right places.
- The Local Nature Recovery Strategy would be significant in encouraging biodiversity to re-establish itself in places and flourish further. This strategy would be supported through partnership-working with developers, planners, farmers etc.
- The policy would be amended to include individuals to be liable for compensation, when damaging trees.
- The local authority would not seek to remove any trees which did not require removal and desired to maintain standing timber where it would be beneficial. TP14 of the Tree Policy was structured to deal with street trees and trees in parks, where there was high public access.
- Officers would provide further detail regarding trees and insurance claims following the meeting. Damage to private property was an issue where trees had previously not been planted in the right locations.
- Planning Officers had looked at supplementary planning documents to support tree development. The implementation of another planning document would be explored, to look at the requirements for trees on new development sites. Other local authorities had adopted documents whereby if trees had been removed as part of development, there existed a standard for number and sizes of replacements.
- As part of The Environment Act, the government placed a requirement on local authorities to consult members of the public before removing street trees. As tree management plans were developed, Officers had carried out surveys of trees, to build a tree management database. The Senior Officer suggested that this management database could also potentially be made public.

RESOLVED that:

The report be approved.

73 Pollinator Strategy

The Panel considered a presentation by The Assistant Director of Assets and Environment, which outlined the North Northamptonshire Pollinator Strategy.

During discussion, the principal points were noted:

- One member posited that the Pollinator Strategy needed to be strengthened around biodiversity and that references to local waterways and their own ecosystems should also be included. The member also suggested that maintenance and littering prevention should be more closely looked at.
- Members queried whether a timeline had been established to reduce the use of pesticides and phase out blanket spraying.
- Members suggested that the local authority should explore greater public collaboration through partnership-working with voluntary groups, to allow them to carry out their own pollinator projects and empower members of the public to run such projects.

In response, The Assistant Director of Assets and Environment clarified that:

- The strategy was in place to focus on land management however, much of the local water management did not fall under the Council's responsibility. Nevertheless, the local authority would look at water management holistically as part of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, to address water pollution and maintenance issues.

The Senior Works Supervisor clarified that:

- North Northamptonshire Council had already begun to reduce its use of pesticides and blanket spraying, by adopting more sensitive approaches to weed spraying. The local authority had continued to work with subcontractors to carry out weed spraying and reduce use of pesticides.
- The local authority had also worked with volunteer groups and schools to create forest school areas and reuse trees, which were damaged during Storm Eunice, to be repurposed as natural play equipment.

RESOLVED that:

The report be approved.

74 Climate Impact Assessment

The Panel considered a presentation by the Climate Change Officer, which provided an update regarding the development and next steps of the North Northamptonshire Council Climate Impact Assessment.

During discussion, the principal points were noted:

- One member acknowledged that the Council's largest usage of Carbon Dioxide was for gas boilers in social housing and queried that preparations the local authority had put in place for air source and ground source heat pumps and insulation of properties.

In response, the Climate Change Officer clarified that:

- There had been challenges relating to the collection of Carbon Dioxide information, in sourcing and structuring data to inform the Carbon Management Plan. Technology for air and ground source heat pumps was costly and the local authority did not find itself in a funding position to request such resources.

The Executive Director of Place and Economy reassured the Panel that Officers had almost finalised the baseline figure concerning Carbon emission figures. Regarding Carbon emissions from social housing, The Executive Director explained that this formed a key strand of the Carbon Management Plan, which was being developed and would be brought back to future Panel meetings.

RESOLVED that:

The report be noted.

75 Close of Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the Climate Change, Environment and Growth Executive Advisory Panel would be held virtually, via Zoom, on Wednesday 31st August at 9:30am.

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Executive Advisory Panel Climate Change, Environment & Growth 31 August 2022

Report Title	Progress report on the E-Scooter Trial in North Northamptonshire
Report Author	George Candler, Executive Director for Place & Economy and Deputy Chief Executive george.candler@northnorthants.gov.uk
Executive Member	Councillor Graham Lawman, Executive Member for Highways, Travel & Assets

List of Appendices

Appendix A – map of operating zones within North Northamptonshire

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the current e-scooter trial, and its impact, in North Northamptonshire.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. The Northamptonshire E-Scooter trial was one of the first to be launched in England. It operates across both North Northamptonshire and West Northamptonshire. The initial operating area focused on Northampton and expanded into North Northamptonshire in Kettering in December 2020, Corby in February 2021, Wellingborough, Rushden / Higham Ferrers in March 2021 and Burton Latimer in April 2021.
- 2.2. Since the launch of the trial, over 700,000 trips have been undertaken in North Northamptonshire replacing an estimated over 370,000 car trips, and saving 9.2 tonnes of CO₂.
- 2.3. The Northamptonshire trial has led the way for others piloting various innovations in the area, some of which have now been mandated or advised as 'good practice' for all trial areas. These include:
- the design and installation (with input from Northamptonshire Police) of identification plates on all e-scooters making it easier to track and enforce rule breaking;

- an on-line driving school and events to reinforce important safety messages;
- a 'three-strikes' policy for rule breakers; and
- a mandatory 'end of ride photo' which requires users to demonstrate that they have parked safely. Failure to do so results in a warning and then fines.

2.4 A decision was taken last year to extend the trial to 30 November 2022.

2.5 This summer, Ministers approved an 18-month extension of the current e-scooter trials to 31 May 2024. This is to allow Government to gather further evidence where gaps are identified, building on the findings of the current evaluation which has been commissioned by the Department for Transport (DfT).

2.6 NNC supports an extension so that it remains aligned with other DfT trials, further improvements can be introduced, and users in the area continue to benefit from this new form of transport. The continuation will also help to ensure that the results, experience and learning from the trial in North Northamptonshire can help inform new legislation which is expected this parliament.

3. **Report Background**

3.1. The Northamptonshire E-Scooter trial is part of a set of initiatives that were accelerated due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Northamptonshire was one of the first areas in the country to successfully bid to DfT to host a trial. A unique element of the Northamptonshire trial, differentiating it from others, was the intention for it to operate across different sized urban areas. It also involved looking at the role that e-scooters could play in tackling specific use cases (see below):

- Further/Higher education - Travel to/from the edge of centre campus particularly for students and staff.
- Major employer e.g., General Hospitals and industrial estates - Travel to/from work at busy compact sites, including shift patterns which make public transport challenging in areas with limited parking.
- Town Centre - Short trips in and around busy town centres.
- Park-and scoot hub site - Enable easy multi-modal choices delivering benefits to users.
- Out of town retail - Travel for employees and increasing leisure trips.

3.2. There was significant interest from suppliers keen to operate the trial in Northamptonshire. A competitive process saw Voi Technology (Voi) selected as the preferred supplier. Voi have successfully delivered similar schemes across Europe and are now live in more than 50 cities. Voi is also operating trials in other areas including Cambridge, Liverpool, and the West Midlands.

- 3.3. When launched in September 2020 the trial initially focused on Northampton. It then expanded into North Northamptonshire to Kettering in December 2020, Corby in February 2021, Wellingborough, and Rushden / Higham Ferrers in March 2021, and then Burton Latimer in April 2021 (see Appendix A). Voi also launched e-bikes in Kettering in February 2021 and these can be used across the town and in Burton Latimer with over 14,400 rides to date. North Northamptonshire was the first place, alongside Cambridge and Peterborough, to operate e-bikes alongside e-scooters.



- 3.4. The trial is helping NNC understand the role shared e-scooters, and e-bikes, can play now and in the future as part of an integrated transport system, alongside other modes, across North Northamptonshire. The trial was especially important during Covid-19 providing an alternative to car sharing and public transport for those who had to travel to work including emergency service employees, with over 32,600 trips across North Northamptonshire undertaken using the “Voi4Heroes” concession. It was also crucial addressing public health concerns regarding the risk of outbreaks at major manufacturing sites as many employees relied on public transport and car sharing to get to work.

Key Facts and Findings¹

- 3.5. Since the launch of the trial in North Northamptonshire over 700,000 trips have been undertaken in the area. It is estimated that this has helped to save 9.2 tonnes of CO2 through reduced car trips.



¹ All figures quoted relate to use to end of July 2022

- 3.6. Almost 29,000 people have registered as users since the start of the trial. This represents about 10% of the total population aged between 18 and 65+ in North Northamptonshire.
- 3.7. Voi undertake bi-annual user surveys, the most recent winter survey undertaken in February 2022 had 185 respondents in North Northamptonshire. Insights show:
- 80% respondents were in employment and 4% respondents were students
 - 50% respondents used the trial e-scooters to commute to or from work
 - 29% respondents used the trial e-scooters a few times per week
 - 67% respondents scored 5 or more (Agree or Strongly Agree) when asked about e-scooter safety
- 3.8. Analysis of data provided by Voi since the start of the trial shows an increase in average hourly rides during peak commuting hours of 5am – 8am and 4pm – 6pm with these now the dominant times for usage. The early (5am) start time for the morning commute peak is understood to be unique to North Northamptonshire compared with other areas where Voi operates.
- 3.9. The data provided by Voi has also been useful for the work on Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) and indicating the most popular start and end points for trips. This gives an indication of which routes may also be popular for cycling and where infrastructure improvements could be most beneficial.

Improvements and Innovations

- 3.10. The Northamptonshire trial has led the way nationally by testing and deploying numerous innovations some of which were introduced in response to negative impacts experienced at the start of trial. Many of these innovations have subsequently adopted by other areas and now part of Government 'best practice', for all trial areas. These include clearly visible ID plates on all e-scooters, safety events and an on-line safety school, pavement riding detection trial, compulsory 'end of ride' photos to demonstrate compliant parking, a 'three-strike' policy on rule-breaking and a dedicated form to report incidents at <https://www.voiscooters.com/report/uk/>
- 3.11. Other innovations include creation of incentivised parking zones which reward users for parking in defined areas, deployment of parking racks and pavement markings in areas with high footfall such as prominent town centre locations, in-app messaging reminding users of rules which has been shown to improve parking. Parking compliance has increased from 91% in September 2021 to 98% in August 2022 following implementation of these innovations.
- 3.12. Following the introduction of these improvements, which are constantly refined with input from partners, including Northamptonshire Police and

members of the public, NNC has seen a significant decrease in the numbers of reported anti-social behaviour incidents.

- 3.13. A further innovation is the use of the Vianova platform 'Cityscope', a web based open API data platform which enables fleet management, analytics and planning and audit and regulation functions and covers many major cities across Europe. NNC are unique in the UK for utilising Cityscope for the e-scooter trial. The real time monitoring of reported issues enabled through the platform results in swift action reducing the need for formal complaints/reputational impacts. The platform also helps to monitor supply and demand of e-scooters in real-time.
- 3.14. Despite the improvements enabled through these and other innovations, there is no complacency and both Voi and NNC are committed to continuing to improve the service and experience for both users and non-users. This includes continuing to reinforce rules on use, promoting safety including through free helmet giveaways and special events, and making it easier for the public to report anti-social behaviour involving the use of trial e-scooters.

Engagement and Collaboration

- 3.15. The success of the trial has been enabled by strong political leadership, latterly by NNC and WNC, and the positive engagement of many other organisations. These include in particular Northamptonshire Police (appointed national forces lead on e-scooters), especially the messaging on rules and safety for users, the General Hospital in Kettering, major business bodies, destinations and employers e.g. Sovereign Centros owners of Corby town centre and the Crown Estates owners of Rushden Lakes, and key special interest groups such as the Royal National Institute for the Blind.
- 3.16. Throughout the trial to date Voi has embraced the benefits of a collaborative approach working with these and other stakeholders. This culture underpinned their submission to operate the trial and was a major factor in their successful appointment. This collaborative approach has also been indicated in other arenas and activities. These include:
- Voi promoting clean growth and the e-scooter trial at local climate change events including the summit organised by NNC in November 2021
 - Voi demonstrating at the Business Expo organised by the Northamptonshire Chamber of Commerce at Kettering Conference Centre in March 2022, at the NNC staff learning at work events at the Corby Cube in May 2022, and at the Merged Futures technology showcase event in June 2022 organised by Digital Northamptonshire
 - The production of Voi [City Guides](#) which highlight local areas of interest in all the local towns, including independent attractions and shops, able to be accessed via the trial e-scooters
- 3.16 Voi and NNC also presented jointly to the LGA Conference held in Harrogate in the summer via the Innovation Zone.

4. Issues and Choices

- 4.1. Choice 1 – not participating in initial trial period. This choice would have resulted in lack of knowledge for NNC about new and emerging transport options involving e-scooters and other similar forms of shared transport, limited the ability to deliver on climate goals, and restricted travel options for residents during the COVID-19 pandemic by not providing an alternative to car sharing and public transport for emergency service employees and others required to travel to and from work.
- 4.2. Choice 2 - agreeing to participate and extend trial to November 2022. As post-Covid working and travel patterns emerged this opportunity allowed more data collation to aid learning. The direct benefits were car journeys replaced contributing to climate change aims, providing an additional green travel option for local residents, mutual learning, the ability for NNC to be a trail blazer at the forefront of a new type of transport, and the opportunity to influence operating practices and emerging legislation.
- 4.3. Choice 3 – continuing the trial beyond November 2022. Ministers have recently decided to extend the national programme of trials to 31 May 2024. This is to enable DfT to gather further information to help address gaps in their knowledge and for trials to continue to introduce innovations and evolve. The extension will also provide the opportunity for new legislation and guidance to be developed and implemented and avoid a potential hiatus and the risks that could present e.g. a growth in the use of illegal private e-scooters, and encourage operators such as Voi to continue to invest in the trials.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 The Queen's Speech on Tuesday 10 May 2022 announced the Government's intention to introduce legislation on the future of transport in the new parliamentary session as part of a Transport Bill. Baroness Vere of Norbiton added more detail to this in the House of Lords debate on 11 May 2022, outlining that one aim of the Transport Bill will be to create a new regime for regulating micromobility.
- 5.2 The statements indicate that Government intends to create a new, low-speed, zero-emission vehicle (LZEV) category which is independent from the cycle and motor vehicle categories, covering both new vehicles that are familiar to us today, such as e-scooters, and vehicles that have yet to be invented. New powers, to be set out in the Transport Bill, would allow the Government to decide which vehicles fall into this category in future and establish how they should be regulated to make sure that they are safe for users, pedestrians, and other road users, while still facilitating growth and innovation. The primary benefit of this is that the new framework would be more adaptable, enabling regulations to keep up with this fast-moving sector and evolving user behaviours.

- 5.3 It is anticipated that the powers within the Bill will be used to subsequently create regulations that will legalise e-scooters, but under new rules. These rules would include robust technical requirements and, most likely, a set of requirements for users. The Bill will also propose new powers for local transport authorities to shape and manage rental operations, for pedal cycles, e-cycles, and e-scooters. The details of this scheme would be set out in subsequent regulations.
- 5.4 The Government will consult publicly before any secondary regulations for e-scooters and the rental schemes are made. This means that no final decisions about regulations have been made, nor will they be until such point that the Transport Bill becomes law.
- 5.5 In June 2022, Ministers approved an 18-month extension of the current e-scooter trials to 31 May 2024. The extension will be restricted to existing trial areas only, such as Northamptonshire, and will allow Government to gather further evidence where gaps are identified, building on the findings of the current evaluation commissioned by DfT.
- 5.6 DfT have indicated that the move towards a new regime means that the trials continue to have significant value, as well as providing a practical example of how better regulation can encourage responsible use. They will continue to gather trip data and monthly incident reports to inform policy development. They are also keen to use the extension to allow local authorities to share lessons learned, amongst themselves and with non-trial areas, in preparation for the introduction of rental permit schemes under the new legal framework. This will be facilitated by DfT and provides an opportunity for NNC to play an active role.
- 5.7 NNC and other local authorities need to decide whether to take up the opportunity to extend the trials to 31 May 2024. Decisions need to be made by October 2022. As with the previous extension to November 2022, DfT hopes that all areas will want to continue, but there is no compulsion.
- 5.8 It is clear that the trial has made a significant and positive impact on North Northamptonshire by offering a clean form of shared transport which is popular with users and at zero-cost to NNC. It is also clear that extending the trial to 31 May 2024 provides the opportunity to build on the successes achieved to date, and also continue to tackle some of the important issues which remain regarding anti-social use and poor parking and making it easier to report and enforce against bad behaviour by users which although in a small minority should be addressed. NNC therefore intends to extend the trial with the decision confirmed in consultation with the Executive Member for Highways, Travel and Assets. WNC will also need to confirm its position and it is hoped that it will agree a similar course. This will also help to safeguard the local jobs supported through the trial.
- 5.9 Some of the potential opportunities which have been identified for exploring through the extension of the trial and in the longer-term once legislation and guidance is in place include:

- Tackling actual and perceived concerns regarding the safety of e-scooters
- Offering the use of e-scooters to staff as part of a travel plan with hubs at council sites and exploring the benefits that this could provide including potential cost-savings if journeys undertaken instead of using a private car
- More work on how interchange between different modes can be made easier for users – this includes information, journey planning, payments, infrastructure etc.
- Creating mobility hubs with dedicated parking infrastructure at major transport hubs and other key trip generators
- Collaborating with progressive developers to explore the scope for actively promoting the use e-scooters to new residents and an alternative to private car use
- Expanding the current e-bike offer, which is only available in Kettering and Burton Latimer, to other towns where the e-scooter trial currently operates and potentially to the rural areas, as well as looking at other forms of shared transport
- Integrating micromobility, including e-scooters, into the new Local Transport Plan
- Exploring how new developments can be planned to support the use of new forms of micromobility such as e-scooters, but also wider including delivery robots and other forms of new transport e.g. through dedicated parking, routes and other measures

6. Implications (including financial implications)

6.1. Resources and Financial

6.1.1. The e-scooter trial operates at zero cost to NNC.

6.2. Legal and Governance

6.2.1. Voi is required to meet stringent legal and technical requirements as set out by DfT.

6.2.2. The use of Voi e-scooters through the trial is legalised through Vehicle Service Operator Agreements (VSO's) issued by DfT.

6.2.3. A Collaboration Agreement is in place between Voi, North Northamptonshire Council and West Northamptonshire (WNC) which outlines how the trial will operate. NNC manages the trial as lead authority on behalf of WNC through the Digital Infrastructure Inter-Authority Agreement.

6.2.4. Monthly meetings are held with Voi involving NNC, WNC and Northamptonshire Police.

6.3. Relevant Policies and Plans

6.3.1. [DfT E-scooters trials: guidance for local authorities and rental operators](#)

6.3.2. [North Northamptonshire Council corporate plan](#) – the green, sustainable environment priority.

6.4. Risk

Risk	Mitigation
Anti-social behaviour	Continued improvements to mechanisms for reporting incidents. 'Three strikes' policy deters rule breaking and bad behaviour
Accidents involving trial e-scooters	On-line driving school. Safety events. In-app messaging. Helmet giveaways
Poor parking	'End of ride photo' requirement. Options explored for additional parking infrastructure and incentivised parking zones
Increased use of private e-scooters	Continued education and communications, including via Northamptonshire Police, explaining rules

6.5. Consultation

- 6.5.1. Consultation is undertaken via the wider Steering Group with attendance by Voi, NNC and WNC officers, and Northamptonshire Police. Engagement with officers includes neighbourhood teams, planning, highways, trading standards and environmental leads. The Police are consulted on any amendments to the operating areas and other operational changes proposed by Voi. They are also consulted on safety improvements.
- 6.5.2. Consultation has taken place with the RNIB to design suitable parking racks (see below). RNIB are also involved in an acoustic trial led by Voi testing a unique sound for e-scooters. This trial is being undertaken in the West Midlands. Voi have also presented to local business networks.



6.6. **Consideration by Executive Advisory Panel**

6.6.1. This item has not previously been considered by Executive Advisory Panel.

6.7. **Consideration by Scrutiny**

6.7.1. There is no identified need for wider consideration by scrutiny although should members of the scrutiny commission request it to go into the work programme, they can do so.

6.8. **Equality Implications**

6.8.1. Equality implications are considered through engagement with key groups representing vulnerable users such as the RNIB. Voi are proactively engaging with RNIB and other organisations representing vulnerable users at a national level.

6.9. **Climate Impact**

6.9.1. Transport is a major source of emissions targeted as part of net zero plans. Voi has been a carbon neutral company since January 2020, and they work to continually reduce residual emissions. As part of the trial, electric vans, cargo bikes and battery swapping technology are used for fleet management and rebalancing.

6.9.2. It is estimated that the trial has helped to save 370,000 car trips and 9.2 tonnes of CO2 emissions in North Northamptonshire.

6.10. **Community Impact**

6.10.1 Oxford Consultants for Social Inclusion (OCSI) overlaid the Community Needs Index with the Index of Multiple Deprivation to find those communities that suffer from the highest levels of combined social, cultural, and economic deprivation. Those wards that rank in the top 10% most deprived on both indices, are arguably the most 'left behind' neighbourhoods in England.

6.10.2 The Left Behind Communities in North Northamptonshire are Kingswood in Corby, Windmill in Kettering and Brickhill and Queensway in Wellingborough.

Figure 1. Table showing car availability as at 2011 Census for Left Behind Communities and North Northamptonshire

Locality	% Households with no car or van	% Households with 1 car or van	% Households with 2 cars or vans	% Households with 3 cars or vans	% Households with 4+ cars or vans
Kingswood, Corby	27%	44%	24%	4%	1%
Windmill, Kettering	27%	45%	23%	4%	1%
Brickhill and Queensway, Wellingborough	32%	45%	18%	4%	1%
North Northamptonshire	19%	42%	30%	7%	2%

Source: ONS Census 2011 Crown Copyright Reserved [from Nomis on 15 March 2022]

6.10.3 Analysis of Census 2011 data for car ownership shows that the Left Behind Communities generally have higher percentages of households with no access to a car or van than the North Northamptonshire average. These areas generally have higher percentages of households with access to 1 car or van than the North Northamptonshire average which could represent occupations with works vehicles.

6.10.4 Data from Voi indicates that e-scooter usage is noticeably higher in these areas when compared to the rest of the Operating Zones. This indicates the attractiveness of shared transport and the trial e-scooters as an alternative and affordable method of transport.

6.11. Crime and Disorder Impact

6.11.1. Voi and NNC have worked closely with Northamptonshire Police to discourage rule breaking and support enforcement actions, especially through education. Reports of anti-social behaviour have decreased from 131 in December 2021 to 20 in July 2022.

7. Background Papers

7.1. None.

CLIMATE CHANGE, ENVIRONMENT & GROWTH EXECUTIVE ADVISORY PANEL 31 August 2022

Report Title	Kettering Station Quarter Masterplan	
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List of Appendices

None

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. This report seeks to inform Members of the content of the Kettering Station Quarter Masterplan; and to initiate discussions ahead of the Masterplan's presentation to Executive for approval on how the Council can promote a way forward to deliver improvements to the station and investment in the surrounding area.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 In 2019, the Northamptonshire Property Partnership, which included Kettering Borough Council, was successful in an application to secure up to £115,000 of capacity funding from One Public Estate Phase 7. This was to prepare a joint Services & Assets Delivery Plan which would establish detailed options for the delivery of housing sites, commercial floor space, and the provision of car parking to serve Kettering railway station. This is referred to as the Kettering Station Quarter Masterplan.
- 2.2 Western Williamson +Partners were appointed as consultants to lead on the development of the document, and formed a Project Board to work alongside it to ensure that key partners were aligned. The Board included representatives from the Council, Network Rail, East Midlands Railway and Northamptonshire County Council Highways.
- 2.3 Early pieces of work involved identifying constraints and opportunities with the site. One such issue was around conflict that occurs at the station entrance with

pedestrians/cyclists, drop-off and pick up, taxis and car parking traffic all trying to use the same space. It was also identified there was opportunity for significant improvements to the immediate environment and enhancing the business potential of the area, including the prospect of a western access to the station platforms and improving accessibility across the line for pedestrians and cyclists, not just those using the rail service.

- 2.4 During the development of the Masterplan, the Covid-19 pandemic influenced the parameters of the project, significantly reducing the numbers of commuters using the services provided and raising doubts as to whether they would return with the same frequency or at all. This clearly also had implications for car parking requirements, which is land hungry. A reduced requirement could open more land up for potential development opportunities.
- 2.5 A phased strategy was agreed, with five interlinked strands to it. This involved a change to the parking strategy and a new interchange/plaza on the eastern site of the station as phase 1, before creating a new access and car parking on the western side of the station, further development of open space for housing, and environmental improvements associated with the Slade Brook.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 That Members note and endorse the content of this report and the Kettering Station Quarter Masterplan; and agree comments which will be forwarded to Executive for consideration in the Masterplan's approval and agreeing ways to bring projects forward.

Reason for Recommendation:

- 3.2 To introduce to Members the Kettering Station Quarter Masterplan and agrees ways for taking its findings into investment and redevelopment opportunities for the area.

4. Report Background

- 4.1 In March 2019 Kettering Borough Council, and partners making up the Northamptonshire Property Partnership, were successful in securing £115,000 of capacity funding from One Public Estate Phase 7 to prepare a joint Services & Assets Delivery Plan which would establish detailed options for the delivery of housing sites, commercial floor space, and the provision of car parking to serve Kettering railway station. The award included a sustainability grant of £25,000 which had to be returned before the end of the spend period, leaving £90,000 for investment in the project. The One Public Estate programme is a joint initiative between the Cabinet Office, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and the Local Government Association. The period of the project was 24 months (starting in June 2019) with multiple partners involved including Network Rail, East Midlands Railway and Northamptonshire County Council.
- 4.2 The purpose of the project was to formulate a Station Quarter Delivery Plan that sets out development principles for housing sites, commercial floorspace, and the provision of car parking to serve the railway station. The Plan was also to design and layout improved access and public realm for a new station forecourt,

including a multimodal interchange area and a potential second entrance to the station from the land to the west, opening up this land as a potential redevelopment opportunity with direct links to access the railway station and the rail network.

- 4.3 This report provides images captured from the Kettering Station Quarter Masterplan. The Kettering Station Quarter Masterplan has been added to the Kettering Area pages of North Northamptonshire Council's website at the following link: [Kettering Station Quarter Report \(December 2021\) - Draft | North Northamptonshire Council - Kettering Area](#)
- 4.4 Weston Williamson +Partners were successful in their tender submission, bringing with them a vast amount of experience in design of railway station schemes. The first task was to identify the extent of the area of focus, which is provided in the aerial map below.

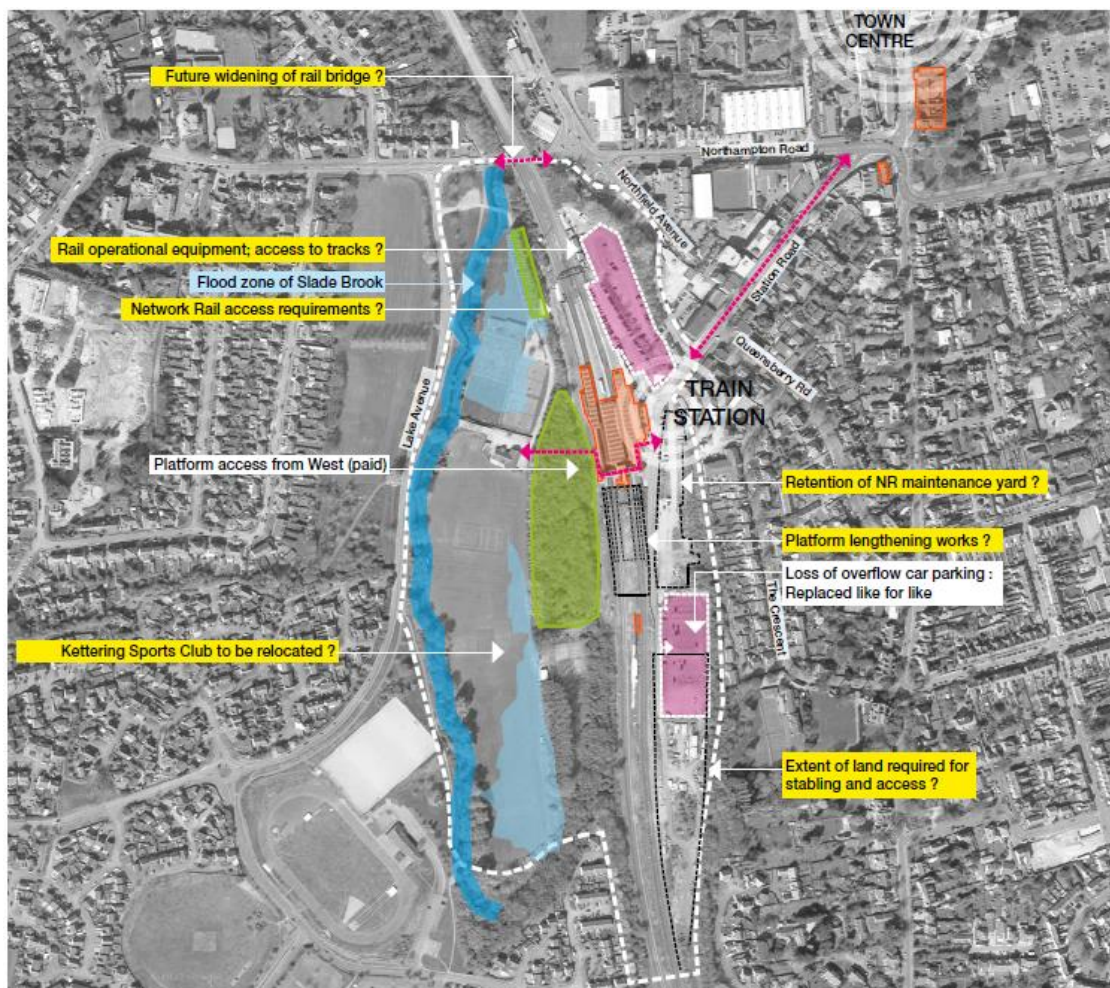


Kettering Station Quarter Masterplan: Area for Consideration

- 4.5 Whilst the study was progressing, East Midlands Railway (the train operator) had its own contractual commitments to meet, including delivery of an additional 200 car parking spaces and 70 cycle parking spaces. In addition, Network Rail had identified land to the south of the station to construct a stabling facility to be used for the maintenance of the electric trains operating on the line.
- 4.6 The study area is mainly in public ownership, with Network Rail owning a major part of the land to the east of the station and railway line, and the Council owning the open space to the west of the station, on either side of Lake Avenue. The Kettering Sports Club owns recreational land to the south of the Council's land.



- 4.7 In terms of methodology, a key objective of the commission was to engage with all key stakeholders, this included the Council, Network Rail, East Midlands Railway, and the Northamptonshire County Council Highways team; Stagecoach as bus service provider was also involved at times.
- 4.8 The group, led by Weston Williamson +Partners initially undertook a baseline assessment to identify constraints and opportunities associated with the delivery of additional car parking facilities and a potential western entrance to the platforms. An initial stakeholder workshop followed which mapped out the group's requirements and aspirations and helped to start drafting options regarding potential car parking locations and intermodal layouts around the station. The point here being that additional car parking at the station was a prerequisite, but space was needing to be found to accommodate improvements to the station entrance for its users, in creating a more attractive environment and setting.



Constraints & opportunities

Site Analysis

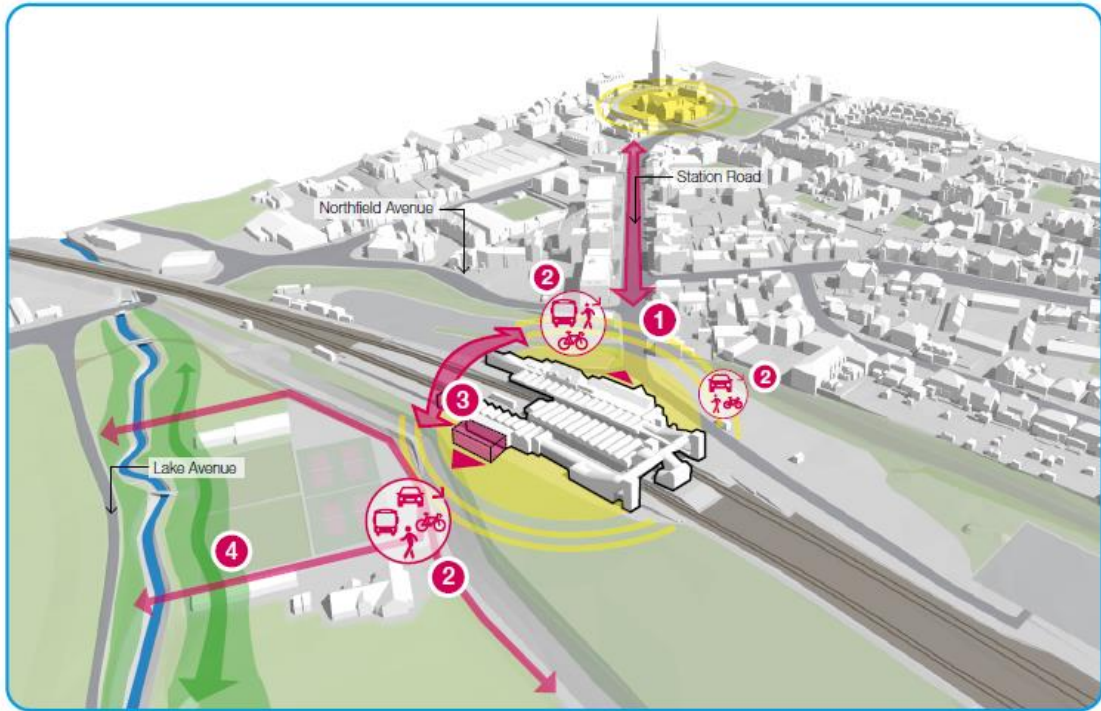
- 4.9 Kettering Station is a short walk from the town centre, although on exiting the station its location isn't that clear or visible. The immediate station environment consists of surface car parks, vacant land, and conflict between the different types of users using the space. It also doesn't allow for direct bus access, the nearest bus stop being in Northfield Avenue. There are quite severe level

changes with properties in The Crescent sitting on higher ground, with a drop to the Station and railway line, and then a further drop in levels down an embankment to the open space/recreational land and Lake Avenue.

- 4.10 The railway corridor running north/south creates a physical barrier between East and West Kettering. The links over or under the railway line are not all of high quality. One of note is in Northampton Road, which is a narrow, low arched bridge for use by vehicles and pedestrians. The arch means taller vehicles need to wait to use the centre of the road, contributing to delays and at times queues. The narrow pavements are also particularly unattractive for pedestrians and cyclists, compounded by the Slade Brook running beneath it which means that at times of heavy rain, water gathers making it almost impassable with vehicles creating bow waves over the footpaths.
- 4.11 The physical constraints to development also include issues of flood risk, the listed station building, and operational components including access points, substation, stabling works and the Maintenance Delivery Unit (now complete). The embankment and level changes is another constraint, but also opportunity, and the green corridor and leisure opportunities also present constraints to be mitigated.

Aspirations and Vision

- 4.12 The Station Quarter was recognised as having real potential for playing more of a strategic role within Kettering as it connects different parts of the town, and is the point of convergence of some key routes. In addition, an improvement in the frequency of the rail service offered from Kettering station enhances the status of the area and town as a destination for travelling both south towards London St. Pancras and to the towns and cities in the north.
- 4.13 The Masterplan proposal is built around 4 key concepts, these being
- A Quality Gateway to Kettering: Improvement to the links to the town centre, the urban realm and the future of the station.
 - Delivering a well-integrated transport hub: creation of a station forecourt and reconfiguration of the station car parks and intermodal connections.
 - Providing accessibility and permeability across the railway: potential extension of the existing station footbridge, opening of a new entrance on the western side and improvement of routes and wayfinding around the Station Quarter.
 - Potential for releasing public land and enhancing the green corridor: sustainable ways of moving and living encouraged throughout.
- 4.14 A concept masterplan was drawn up, providing a long-term vision designed around two hubs: the Eastern and Western Gateways.



Eastern and Western Gateways

- 4.15 **In the East** – the link to the town centre is enhanced by improvements made to Station Road and way finding; the station benefits from a generous forecourt dedicated to pedestrians and cyclists; buses can serve the station through a new intermodal loop off Northfield Avenue; two development plots are released on the former north car park, these plots will be available for some commercial and community uses at ground floor level and residential above.



Early masterplan development identifying character areas, improved connectivity and potential development plots

- New bus route
- New pedestrian and cycle routes (nature trail)
- Active frontages (community or commercial uses)
- Main vehicular route

- 4.16 **In the West** – another loop road off Lake Avenue serves the new station hub; the station sits on the embankment accessed via a set of steps and landscaped ramp overlooking new development. The intermodal area is at the lower level on the edge of a generous pedestrian plaza which becomes the heart of the community with commercial and community uses and a higher density of development (3-5 storeys); a mix of townhouses, detached and semi-detached houses are arranged around local public spaces and community uses.
- 4.17 Slade Brook is aligned and naturalised to maximise the development parcel and help with the flood mitigation strategy.
- 4.18 A stakeholder Workshop was undertaken on 27th February 2020 with transport, planning, health, housing, leisure, senior managers and local residents involved. The feedback in general was very supportive of the concept and prospects for the Station Quarter area going forward.

Covid-19 Pandemic

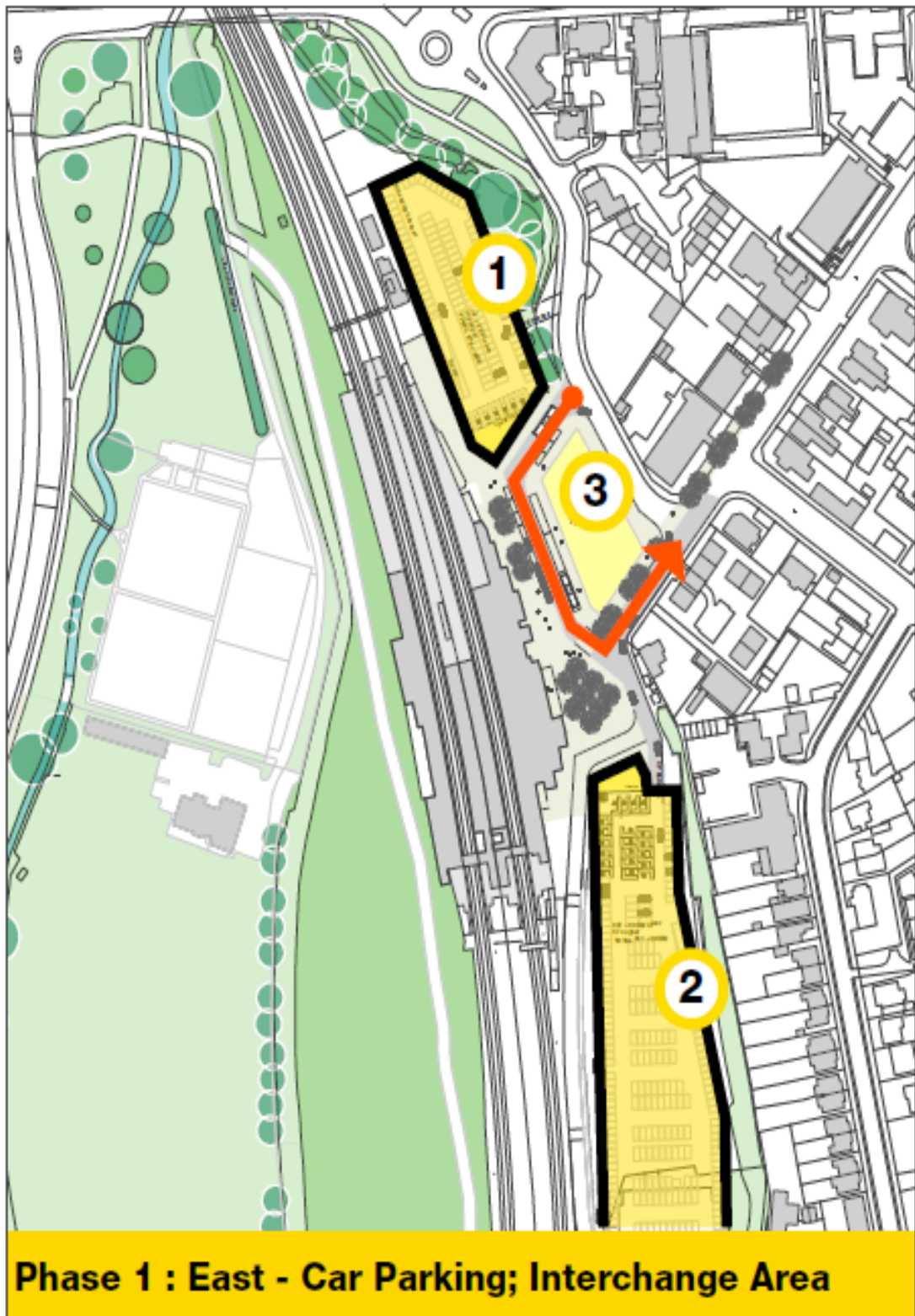
- 4.19 Shortly after the town centre consultation, with the Masterplan in its final stages before completion and approval, the Covid-19 pandemic struck and the country went into lockdown. The project team continued to meet virtually, but it became evident quite quickly there was a strong potential that travel habits, commuting in particular, would likely change as a result, and that this may be on a more permanent basis. Given this, the team sought to forecast the change, and the impacts this would have on the Station Quarter Masterplan and Business Case.
- 4.20 The conclusions soon after the lifting of lockdown was that patronage on the railways had changed and could fluctuate for a period to come. Commuter traffic had fallen away significantly, with people reducing their commute by train in favour of working from home. However, there had been significant growth in leisure travel, in more recent months increasing passenger numbers nearer to pre-pandemic levels.

Phasing Strategy

- 4.21 A potential phasing and delivery strategy was developed in order to address the requirements and aspirations of all stakeholders involved. The timeframes in the first instance were indicative only, as the phasing strategy will be dependent on the availability of funding.

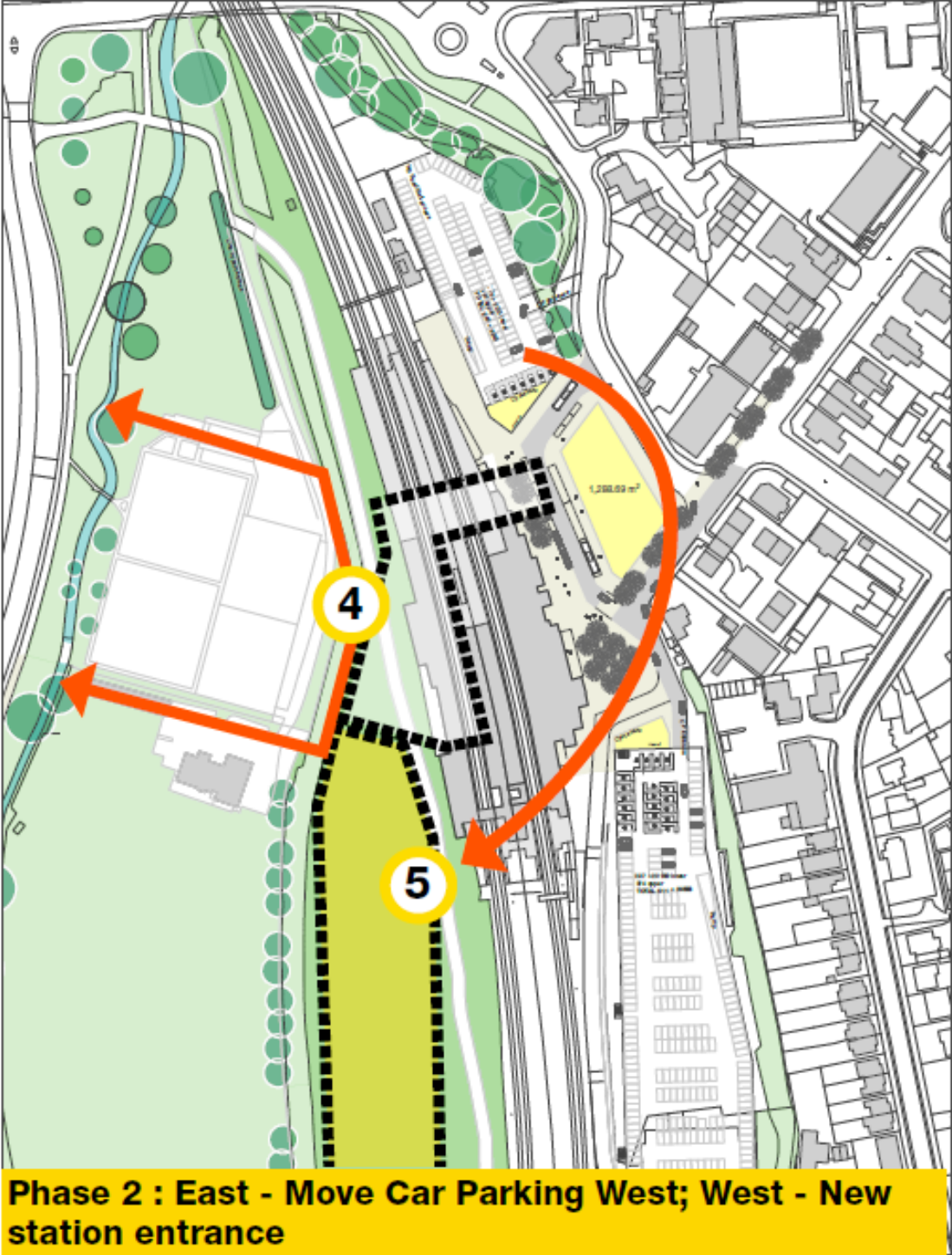
4.22 Phase 1: East – Car parking; interchange area

1. Car Park North reduced to 150 spaces
2. Car Park South redesigned and extended to accommodate extra spaces from CP North
3. New loop road (intermodal + new development plot) and pedestrian friendly station forecourt



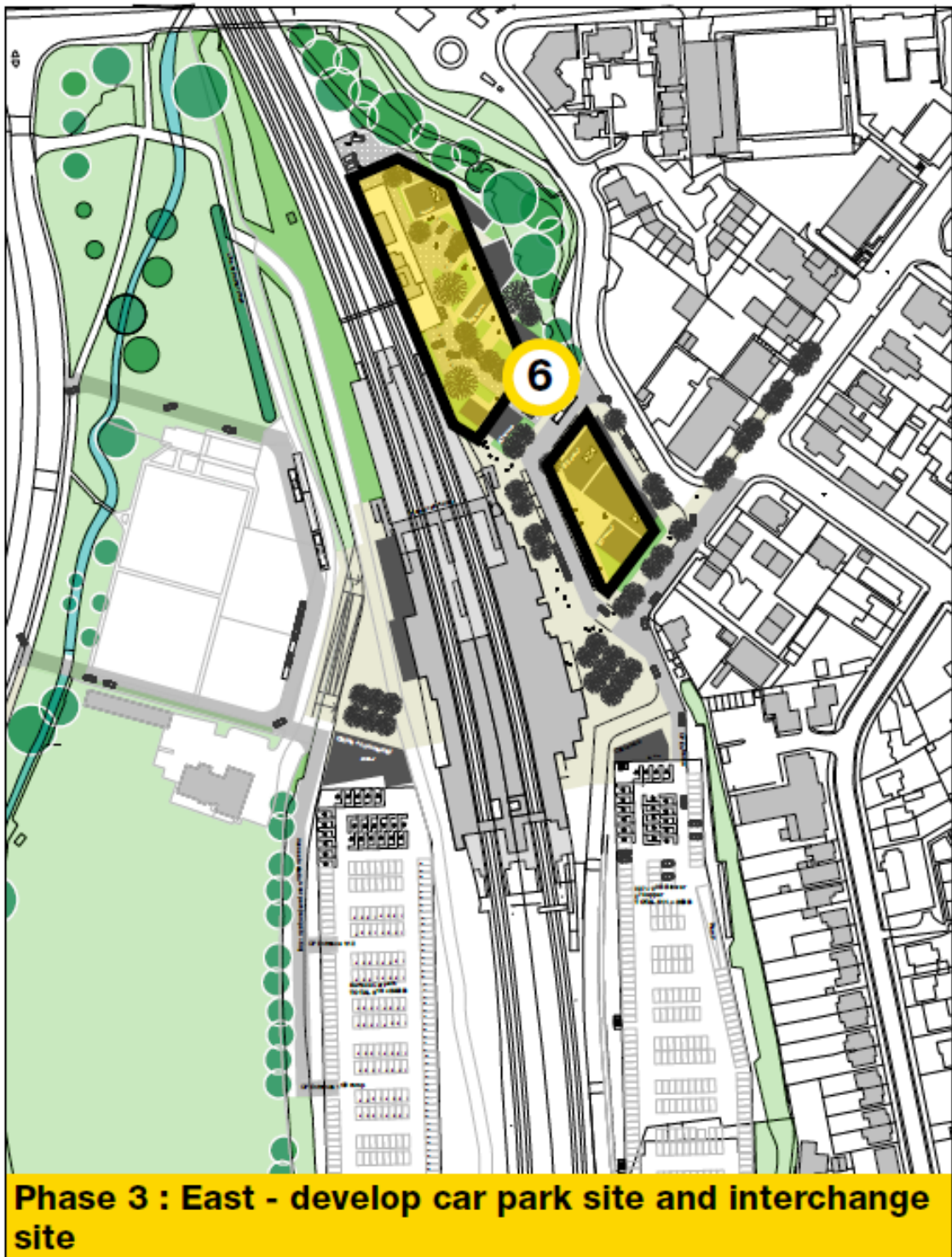
4.23 Phase 2: East – Move car parking west: West – New station entrance

- 4. New entrance West and intermodal loop west of the tracks
- 5. Car Park North relocated to the western side of the tracks



4.24 Phase 3: East – Develop car park site and interchange

6. New development plots unlocked to the East



5.25 Phase 4: West – Loop road development

7. New development plots unlocked to the West on public land (flood mitigation measures required)



5.26 **Phase 5: West – Residential north**

8. Slade Brook realigned to unlock additional development plots to the West on publicly owned land (flood mitigation measures required)



5.27 A viability appraisal has been undertaken based on the conclusions contained within the Masterplan. This reports the development of housing and commercial units would result in excess of an £11m deficit, meaning the development would be unviable. Factors contributing towards this include high costs associated with flood risk measures and reduced land available for development; brook realignment, bridges and other infrastructure; and a weak market for apartments/flats in Kettering (reducing the density possible from the scheme). The assumptions used are that the scheme would deliver 95 private dwellings and 4 commercial units. For the scheme to be deliverable, there's a clear need for interventions and changes for the phases to be delivered in full. The consultants have indicated that circumstances can and will change over time, forecasting that the scheme has potential for improvements in its viability by 2028-29.

Next Steps

- 5.28 **Stakeholder engagement** – on-going stakeholder engagement to ensure alignment of priorities & delivery timescale. Public engagement for phase 1 could be undertaken so when a funding opportunity arises the project has an impetus and is already adopted in principle by the local community. Members of the Kettering Station Quarter Project Board haven't met for over a year, so it will be worthwhile to re-engage and work collaboratively to progress investment ideas for the Station Quarter, following the principles set out in the Masterplan.
- 5.29 **Priority projects** – work up the detail for early phase priority projects to the east to improve onward travel and station facilities. This can be in the form of a potential future double deck of the EMR new car parking facility (south car park) which would unlock opportunities for redevelopment of part of the north Car Park site. It could also be around investing in the station environment in terms of supporting uses or use of building space.
- 5.30 **Flood risk** – progress conversations with the Environment Agency to establish flood mitigation solutions for the Slade Brook, and potential funding opportunities to improve flood resilience, and as a result the viability of development at the site.
- 5.31 **Post Covid update** – A requirement of East Midlands Railway's franchise agreement was the provision of an additional 200 car parking spaces to serve the station. If this requirement has changed as a result of reduced need following Covid-19, then this has the potential for freeing up more land at the station for development, which could also enhance scheme viability. Enquiries should be made of both with Network Rail and East Midlands Railway to establish this as a scenario.
- 5.32 **Link to other strategies** – Initiatives, proposals and opportunities are always emerging or being developed which could develop or benefit the project areas highlighted through the Masterplan and this report. It is important that these are matched up with the Masterplan, and mutually supportive projects developed. An example of this is the preparation of the Kettering Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). The delivery of specific elements of this, as it relates to the Station Quarter, is likely to lead to investment and improvements for cyclists and pedestrians using the railway station.

- 5.33 **Funding potential** – Kettering station’s designation as a hub station, meaning it provides services for passengers using both the Inter-city and Commuter services, means it has an increased passenger potential serving North Northamptonshire residents and visitors, and as such growth potential making it an attractive location for those needing to commute, and for business. In addition, Kettering is identified as a Priority 1 settlement in the Government’s Levelling Up Fund Index. Furthermore, parts of Kettering are recognised as the most deprived wards nationally.
- 5.34 As such, investment in the area could enhance key deficits, and improve the area from an economic recovery and growth perspective, as well as providing improved transport connectivity and the regeneration of land in a highly sustainable location. Two Government funds with potential for investment in delivering on the projects making up phases of the Masterplan include the Shared Prosperity Fund and Levelling Up Fund.
- 5.35 The views of Members are sought on the “Next Steps” available to the Council in proceeding with development of the area at the railway station, using the Kettering Station Quarter Masterplan as the basis.

6 Implications (including financial implications)

6.1 Resources, Financial & Transformational

- 6.1.1 The majority of the Kettering Station Quarter Masterplan was funded through One Public Estate, a small contribution of £3,600 was required from the Council’s Planning Policy budget to enable a refund of a £25,000 sustainability grant. The Planning Policy and Economic Development teams will work with the Council’s partners in progressing the ambitions within the Masterplan.

6.2 Legal

- 6.2.1 No comment on the legal implications of the content of this report has been made at this stage.

6.3 Relevant Policies and Plans

- 6.3.1 Investment in the Station Quarter would be beneficial for many reasons of policy, including meeting the requirements of the following Development Plan policies and those contained in the Council’s Corporate Plan.
- 6.3.2 There are numerous planning policies of relevance contained within the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy including: Policy 2 – *Historic Environment*; Policy 4 – *Biodiversity and Geodiversity*; Policy 5 – *Water Environment, Resources and Flood Risk Management*; Policy 7 – *Community Services and Facilities*; Policy 8 – *North Northamptonshire Place Shaping Principles*; Policy 10 – *Provision of Infrastructure*; Policy 12 – *Town Centre and Town Centre Uses*; Policy 16 – *Connecting the Network of Settlements*; Policy 17 – *North Northamptonshire’s Strategic Connections*; Policy 19 – *The Delivery of Green Infrastructure*.
- 6.3.3 The Masterplan also goes about delivering on the vision for the Kettering Town Centre Area Action Plan, and the 8 quarters contained within it, one of which is

of course the Station Quarter. Of particular note is Policy 9 – *Public Transport*, which provides a focus on the Station Quarter Interchange and public realm enhancements.

- 6.3.4 In terms of the Council's Corporate Plan Priorities, the Masterplan will: create *Safe and Thriving Places* served by good transport links; and deliver a *Greener, Sustainable Environment* taking active steps to promote more sustainable, active travel and enhance the natural environment and ecology.

6.4 Risk

- 6.4.1 There are no significant risks associated with endorsing this Masterplan. However, it's worth noting that travel habits, commuting in particular, have changed since the pandemic, and it remains unclear in terms of forecasting how the rail network will be used in the future, or the space needed around the station to accommodate car parking. In addition, fragility in the economy at the moment will bring with it uncertainty and risk.
- 6.4.2 Partners will continue to work proactively in monitoring the situation and working collaboratively to find ways of reducing risk and increasing the prospects for delivering on projects, following the strategy set by the Masterplan.

6.5 Consultation

- 6.5.1 A Stakeholder Workshop was undertaken on 27th February 2020 with transport, planning, health, housing, leisure, senior managers and local residents involved. The feedback was positive, with attendees very supportive of the concept and prospects for the Station Quarter area. It is acknowledged that involvement was quite limited, so it would be worthwhile undertaking more focussed engagement on specific projects as details of the specific projects emerge.

6.6 Consideration by Scrutiny

- 6.6.1 This report has not been considered by Scrutiny.

6.7 Climate Impact

- 6.7.1 Investment in the Station Quarter area will make it a more attractive environment to use, for travel, to live, work or to visit. It's benefit as an interchange will encourage increased journeys using public transport and active travel. In addition, investment in removing the open culverted Slade Brook in favour of its naturalising will reduce flood risk and enhance the area wildlife, providing important habitats. The area will become more resilient to climate change.

6.8 Equality Implications

- 6.8.1 An Equalities Screening Assessment has been completed. There are no negative equality impacts identified.

6.9 Community Impact

6.9.1 The Masterplan sets out a design-led approach to a mixed range of uses that will deliver improvements to the eastern entrance to the station, creating an improved multi-modal transport interchange and making provision for a new access to the station from the west. It also plans for the efficient use of land for car parking, reallocating surplus land for enhanced public realm development potential supporting the community. In addition, the Masterplan designs homes for a new community, enhancing the Slade Brook and reducing flood risk whilst creating an improved wildlife habitat. The loss of recreational space would need to be replaced elsewhere, or other land intensified for leisure use.

7 Background Papers

7.1 None