

SECTION SIX

THE DEEPINGS

The Deepings TCMP was established in February 2000. At its inception the Partnership formed two sub-groups, responsible for Access & Amenities and Attractions. In September 2001 the Partnership commissioned The Deepings Survey, a comprehensive survey of residents in the town, that was seen as a basis for future action planning¹.

Whilst initially very focussed, and whilst a number of significant projects were implemented, little material progress was made in developing an action plan arising from the survey findings. It was also becoming clear that the Partnership, re-named the Deepings Management Partnership was assuming a broader community focus rather than the town-centre specific remit that had been intended.

Following the resignation of the Chairman in April 2002, the Partnership appeared to lose its impetus. Whilst continuing under the Acting Chairmanship of a Council Officer, little material progress was made, although steps are now being taken to reform the Partnership. However, during this period, two significant projects were completed;

- A town-centre health check² was commissioned by the Town Council, supported by the Countryside Agency.
- An Arts Centre Feasibility Study³ was commissioned as an addendum to the Health Check, funded by the TCMP

The **health check**, produced to a standardised template, included 36 project recommendations. These appear to adopt a broader community focus, rather than being town-centre specific. A number of the projects do specifically relate to town centre issues.

The **arts centre feasibility study** concluded that the project was unlikely to be feasible, and prohibitive in both capital and revenue terms. The report made recommendations about the evaluation a revised project based upon a refurbishment and development upon the Deepings School / Leisure Centre site.

Review of the Partnership

In February 2005, the Economic Portfolio holder authorised a review of the partnership structure, terms of reference, membership and geographic area⁴. The partnership has now reverted to a town-centre specific focus, and measures have been taken to increase the private sector representation on the partnership.

¹ The Deepings Survey 2001; SKDC/Deepings TCMP. September 2001

² Graham Vallis Associates: Market Deeping Health Check; Spring 2004

³ Graham Vallis Associates: Market Deeping Arts Centre : A feasibility study. April 2004

⁴ NKD; February 2005; Report PLA.480. Review of terms of reference and composition of the Deepings Town Centre Management Partnership

An initial partnership meeting has been held, and there appears to be an encouraging level of private sector support for involvement in the partnership. With the assistance of a professional facilitator experienced in planning matters, efforts are presently being made to create a clear set of priorities for the partnership, that can form the basis for an action plan for the future.

The town centre has benefited from planning gain contributions arising from the Tesco development at Godsey's Lane, and further contributions may be forthcoming as a consequence of a store extension proposal.

One initial action that has been initiated was a proposal by the partnership to acquire land situated between High Street, Market Deeping and the River Welland, with the objective of creating a public amenity. This acquisition was the subject of a Non-key decision in April 2005⁵. This was an issue identified in the 2004 Market Deeping Health Check.

It is anticipated that in the coming weeks a clear set of short and long term priorities will emerge from the Partnership that will form the basis of an action plan. Steps are also being taken to strengthen the private sector involvement in the Partnership through the creation of a business club.

The emergence of an agreed action, and evidence of a robust, functioning Partnership structure would, in my view, represent a reasonable foundation to support the appointment of a part-time town-centre manager / co-ordinator. This could be funded in part from the planning gain contributions from the Tesco development, and there is a realistic prospect of funding support from the Welland SSP.

ACTIONS:

27. Create an Action Plan for the Deepings TCMP

28. That subject to the creation of a robust agreed action plan, and, the emergence of a robust partnership structure, and SSP support, appoint a part-time town-centre manager; funding being drawn from planning gain contributions.

⁵ NKD.April 2005. Report PLA.492.Land at High street, Market Deeping