

**WANTAGE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**  
**PLANNING WORKSHOP: 23 JANUARY 2015**  
**Shopping in Wantage and the Town Centre**  
Facilitator: Neil Homer

Key Points:

- Noted that the Market Square and retail on Limborough Road do not connect effectively with too little footfall from the latter to the former, despite original scheme assurances
- Noted that the new Local Plan indicated that there was a requirement for around 4,200 square metres of additional convenience and comparison goods floor space from 2014 to 2031
- There appear to be three options in/around the town centre to plan for such growth:
  - Limborough Road
  - Church Street/Portway
  - St.Katherine's/Broadway
- Likely that partial development of first two could be complementary and together would deliver the new floorspace over the plan period in two distinct phases (with distinct town centre propositions)
- If major schemes are possible in those locations then only one or the other would be needed; the third option would suffice on its own if all the land was made available – without that, the location would not have sufficient critical mass to overcome its relative remoteness off the edge of the town centre
- Limborough Road – two options:
  - Partial - complete existing retail area in line with old Local Plan policy - either with or without the hotel that has planning consent – and improve connectivity to town centre
  - Full - plan for redevelopment of whole site (and some environs – north of Mill Street?) including Sainsbury's and multi-storey car park to create a new multi-use town centre destination for the area, based on mix of retail, cafés/restaurants, leisure and residential around a new public space opening up Letcombe Brook and with full connectivity through to the town centre
- Church Street/Portway – two options:
  - Partial - redevelop Post Office Sorting Depot, Police Station and public car park frontage to Church Street
  - Full - all the above plus the remaining car park area (assuming it is re-provided elsewhere) plus The Beacon (ditto) and the cricket field south of Portway – unsure whether this larger site will work if not connected to the town centre via the Post Office and Police Station sites – also the Academy are very eager to ensure that the Beacon is retained as they use it a great deal and would like to use it more.
- St.Katherines/Broadway - The area is within walking distance of the town centre, it is noted however that work would needed to make the walk (100m) between the two more attractive. If this were achievable it would move the centre of gravity back to the town centre. A discount-type store (eg Aldi) here was seen as being complementary to local independent stores rather than in competition focusing on a limited range of products. Unlikely other sites would suit their preferred retail store format?

- All options need to consider traffic, access and public car parking issues, all of which are practical problems now for the health of the town centre - Park and Ride scheme possible? St.Katherines/Broadway growth option has fewer implications?
- That leads to re-consideration of Market Square pedestrianisation or part-pedestrianisation – should the Plan grasp this? Will it be forced to by other proposals?