Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council

West Bromwich Civic Quarter
Supplementary Planning Document

Consultation Statement

January 2011
Introduction

This Consultation Statement has been prepared in response to the requirement in Reg. 18(4)(b) of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 (which are referred to as the Regulations).

The Council undertook consultation on the West Bromwich Civic Quarter Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in accordance with Part 5 of the Regulations and subsequent amendments, which stipulate the requirements for the SPD process.

Consultation undertaken on the Draft West Bromwich Civic Quarter SPD

The consultation process for the West Bromwich Civic Quarter SPD was undertaken in accordance with legislation and guidance, which set out the guidelines for consultation on supplementary planning documents.

The Council engaged in a seven week period of consultation (one additional week to account of the Christmas period) on the West Bromwich Civic Quarter SPD in accordance with Reg. 18(3) of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004, commencing on 29th November 2010 and ending on 14th January 2011.

The Draft West Bromwich Civic Quarter SPD was presented to the Cabinet Advisory Team for Jobs and Economy on 15th November 2010 where approval to consult was granted.

The document was aimed at specific, local and organisational consultees (see Appendix 1: Schedule of Consultees). The consultation process undertaken for the West Bromwich Civic Quarter SPD included the following steps:

- Letters were delivered to local residents prior to the consultation period commencing in an attempt to raise awareness of the consultation on the Draft SPD.
- Letters were sent to the specific consultees during the week prior to consultation commencing.
- No documents were sent out during the consultation period though reference was made (within the letters) to where the SPD could be viewed.
- Copies of the Draft SPD were placed at key locations: Sandwell Council House, Development House and Central Library prior to the consultation commencing.
- The SPD and relevant documents were uploaded to the Sandwell website prior to consultation on the SPD commencing.
Consultation Responses

The Council received a total of 10 formal representations to the Draft West Bromwich Civic Quarter SPD. The full details of these are provided in Appendix 2: Schedule of Representations, which is appended to this Consultation Statement and was produced in accordance with Reg. 18(4)(b) of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004.

Schedule of Representations

The Schedule of Representations is presented in chronological order of the responses received during the consultation period. The Council’s response to the individual points is provided, any change to the document is noted and the relevant section of the SPD is highlighted.

Responding to Key Issues and Concerns

Sandwell MBC planning officers reviewed the 10 separate representations received on the Draft SPD prior to considering any potential amendments to the document that would take account of and address the issues that had been raised through consultation. A number of these representations did not require any further deliberation, response or action.

Additional Changes

In addition to the changes that have been considered for inclusion within the Final SPD as a result of the representations received through the consultation process, there will also be a number of amendments due to the evolving policy context (e.g. status and dates of policy documents).
Sustainability Appraisal

Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is an important part of the formulation of plans and policies within the Local Development Framework process, facilitating the detailed consideration of social, economic and environmental effects of proposals.

In accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004) the Council produced a Screening Statement detailing the scope of the document, the projected extent of sustainability effects and the role that the SPD will perform within the LDF and in relation to the West Bromwich AAP.

In line with legislation and guidance the Council consulted the Consultation Bodies (English Heritage, the Environment Agency and Natural England) for a 6 week period from 21st October to 29th November 2010 (in accordance with Reg. 12(6) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004) in order to establish whether there was a requirement for the compilation of an SA Report.

The responses from the 3 Consultation Bodies are detailed below.

Environment Agency
“The Environment Agency agree with the conclusions in the screening statement, and do believe that given the scope and nature of the SPD that a SEA is not required.”

Natural England
“We agree with the SEA screening of the West Bromwich Civic Quarter Planning and Design Brief SPD that an SEA is not required. We would however advice that there are likely to be opportunities to integrate into this SPD the findings of the Environmental Infrastructure Guidance and in particular outcomes from the recent EIG workshop that took place on Thursday 25th November for Sandwell.”

English Heritage
“The Screening Statement indicates that the Council considers that the SPD will not affect any ‘special natural characteristics or cultural heritage’ in the area, and in particular the listed and locally listed buildings within the area. It also identifies the role of the SPD in providing additional guidance to an existing policy in the West Bromwich Area Action Plan which has already been subject to a sustainability appraisal, incorporating the requirements of the SEA Directive. On the basis of the information supplied, and in the context of the criteria set out in Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment Regulations [Annex II of ‘SEA’ Directive], English Heritage concurs with the Council that the preparation of a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required.”

From the Screening Statement and the subsequent responses received it was established that an SA Report for the West Bromwich Civic Quarter SPD was not required as it was believed that the effects of the SPD would have been minimal. Further to this it was evident that the SA Report, prepared for the West Bromwich Area Action Plan provided sufficient sustainability input for the SPD area.
Appendix 1: Schedule of Consultees

Specific

- Advantage West Midlands, Mark Willietts
- Aquila Networks
- Arquiva
- Atlantic Electric And Gas
- Basic Power
- Birmingham City Council, David R Carter
- Black Country Consortium, Laura Shoaf
- British Gas
- British Waterways, Katherine Burnett
- BT Openreach
- Coal Authority, Mr Carl Benton/ Miss Rachael A Bust
- Countrywide Energy
- Department for Transport
- Dudley MBC
- East Midlands Pipelines Limited, K Tidswell
- Ebico Ltd
- Ecotricity
- EDF Energy
- English Heritage, Amanda Smith
- Environment Agency, James Kitchen/Simon Aplin/Debbie Jones
- Eon
- Gas Transportation Company Ltd
- Good Energy
- Green Energy (UK) Plc
- Gridcom
- Homes and Communities Agency, Rob Kilby
- Hutchinson 3G Ltd
- London Energy
- Midlands Electricity Board
- Mobile Operators Association, Carolyn Wilson
- National Grid
- National Power, Mattew Trigg
- Natural England
- Npower, Mr Nick Barnet
- Orange Personal Communications Ltd, Mr A Read
- O2 (UK) Ltd
- Planning Inspectorate, Stephen Carnaby
- Powergen Retail Ltd
- Sandwell PCT And Cycling In Sandwell, Dene Stevens
- Sandwell PCT, Richard Nugent/John Middleton
- Severn Trent Water Ltd, Mr Steve Southern/Ms Gillian Bullimore
- Scottish Power Ltd
• Scottish And Southern Energy
• Solihull MBC, Nicky Goodyear
• South Staffordshire Water PLC
• Telewest Communications
• T-Mobile (UK) Ltd, Mr J Woodhouse
• Transco
• UK Broadband Limited
• Utilita Services Ltd
• Vodafone Ltd
• Walsall MBC
• West Midlands Ambulance Service
• West Midlands Fire Service, Mr Phil James
• West Midlands Police, P.C. Ian Evans
• Wolverhampton City Council

Other Organisations

• Black Country Chamber Of Commerce (Sandwell Office), Tony Lear
• Commission For Architecture And The Built Environment, Ms Maloney
• Highways Agency, Ms Liz Davies
• Home Builders Federation
• HSBC Bank
• Midlands Architecture & The Designed Environment, Julia Ellis
• Museums, Libraries & Archives, George Munro
• Museums, Libraries & Archives, Kathy Gee
• RIBA, Izeham Che Dan/ Jessica Millington
• Stoford Developments Ltd, Jon Andrews (Director)
• West Bromwich High Street Traders, Mr Joginder Singh Purewal

Political

• Councillor Mohinder Singh Tagger
• Councillor J Wilkinson
• Councillor B S Dhallu
• Adrian Bailey (MP)
• Tom Watson (MP)
## Appendix 2: Schedule of Representations

### Representations to Draft West Bromwich Civic Quarter SPD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rep No.</th>
<th>Consultee</th>
<th>Contact</th>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Council Response</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Page/Section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>British Waterways</td>
<td>Katherine Burnett</td>
<td>In regard to this particular consultation document, British Waterways have no comments to make.</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| 2       | Central Networks  | Kevin Whittaker  | In this instance we do not object to the development as proposed. However, we must emphasize the following:  
• Central Networks has Network within close proximity to the proposed site.  
• Central Networks has Network within the proposed site.  
• Central Networks requires 24 hour access to this network.  

There are electricity substations within close proximity of the development. A substation is a potential source of noise, therefore the developer should adopt measures to ensure that acceptable noise levels are maintained for future residents.  

We must emphasise that any alteration, building or ground works proposed in the vicinity of our cables that may or may not directly affect our | It is envisaged that rather than work around existing constraints new development will require the re-siting of such facilities. In any such instance during the development process the appropriate bodies will be consulted. | n/a               |              |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3</th>
<th>The Coal Authority</th>
<th>David Berry</th>
<th>Having reviewed your document, I confirm that we have no specific comments to make on it at this stage.</th>
<th>n/a</th>
<th>n/a</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>English Heritage</td>
<td>Alan Taylor</td>
<td>We consider that your report correctly identifies the key issues and challenges of this area. Namely that it is a very significant part of West Bromwich town centre both architecturally and historically as denoted by its inclusion in part within a designated conservation area and by the presence of a number of prominent listed buildings. The character and architectural grain of the area has in part been diminished by some less than sensitive new development in recent years. Enjoyment and appreciation of the area has also been spoiled by heavy vehicular traffic along High Street. Your brief provides a welcome framework within which to promote a more sympathetic redevelopment of those damaged parts; to create a new and distinctive identity while recognising and reinforcing the special qualities of the conservation area (we prefer this term to your suggestion of “refresh” or “rejuvenate” (paragraph 6.1 – Focal points - bullet point 4 and Public realm bp 1); and to assist in the overall upgrading and regeneration.</td>
<td>Reword sentence.</td>
<td>Change text.</td>
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of the wider town centre in West Bromwich. English Heritage is fully supportive of your proposals.

1. The brief emphasises the aim of recreating coherent street frontages throughout the area, an ambition to which we fully subscribe and which mostly the proposals seek to realise. However it seems inconsistent in this context to leave the present temporary surface car park at the junction of Lombard Street West and Edward Street as a permanent feature in the redeveloped area (fig 15). It would seem much preferable to recreate a building line which wraps around the corner to restore a full townscape linkage.

2. In the same vein figure 12 shows as desirable the reinstatement of a continuous built frontage along Lodge Road to the rear of the Town Hall but, inconsistently, figure 15 shows an open plaza in front of the proposed new office block. You will recall that we were critical of this proposal when we met in your office on 20 April 2010 to discuss an outline scheme for the Town Hall block. We suggested that it would be preferable to recreate a continuous frontage here as a

Car parking space was retained in the Draft SPD in order to show indicatively that existing and potential need was being considered. However, amendments will be made to reinforce the junction with built form with the aim to retain pedestrian permeability and reduced car parking provision. The relationship between the historic street pattern & the design proposals will be clarified & incorporated within the text. The inconsistency with the plans is a valid point. It is considered that there is opportunity for a civic square, providing a nodal point/meeting place in this location that will align with linkages. There is no historical link of built form in this location.

Plan to be amended to show built form. Fig.12 will be amended to show proposed building outline.

Fig.15, Page 46  
Fig.12, Page 39
counterpoint to the listed school building opposite and visual continuity to the flank elevation of the Town Hall. We reiterate that suggestion now and endorse the concept set out in fig 12.

3. At paragraph 6.1 bullet point 5 “varied” skyline may be a more appropriate term than “undulating”.

4. Key to the success of the vision will be finding viable and sustainable uses both for existing buildings and to occupy the new development. Although not necessarily relevant within a design and development brief it might be helpful to indicate your Council’s aspirations for the reoccupation and use of the listed Town Hall and adjacent buildings which mark the civic and visual focus of the area and which have been the subject of several ambitious proposals in recent years but which sadly have not come to fruition.

5. Although this study is rightly concerned exclusively with the character area defined by Lombard Street, High Street, Dartmouth and Edward Streets, it is separated from the retail area of the town centre by terraces of 19th commercial buildings along High Street.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section, 6.1, Page 45</th>
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<tr>
<td>Change text.</td>
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<td>No change.</td>
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Amend relevant text to include references. Sections 5 & 6
successful if the plan delivers the safe, attractive means in which people will then use these resources. Again the integration of the EIG and GI has a role to play here.

The GI/EIG comments made above also support the urban design appraisal development opportunities. In particular, public realm, memorial gardens, and links to bus, rail, metro etc., over and above, the acknowledgement made to green links in this section, to the memorial gardens; although this is also supported. GI in this context has more to offer.

Linkages to and connectivity through the site are important and GI can assist here too. Such features as street trees, green walls, green roofs etc can assist in reducing the heat island effect, contributing to reductions in the effects of climate change, but importantly for the civic quarter, have been proven to increase footfall and improve economic viability and vibrancy.

These recommendations will complement the key design considerations set out in section 6.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Environment Agency</th>
<th>James Kitchen</th>
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<tr>
<td>We are generally supportive of the proposed vision in Chapter 1.1 which focuses on physical, social and economic benefits for West Bromwich Town Centre but note that the key</td>
<td>This is a valid point and reference will be made to the potential improvement of green infrastructure within the Civic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where reference is made to physical and aesthetic elements opportunities for green infrastructure will be made. Public realm, SUDS, permeable surfaces.</td>
<td>Amend relevant text to include references.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sections 5 &amp; 6</td>
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</tbody>
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Amend relevant text to include references. Sections 5 & 6
objectives do not mention the improvement of green infrastructure within this quarter.

We welcome the inclusion of the key objectives within 1.2 to:
- provide innovation in design and sustainability and,
- to re-brand and provide a step change physically and perceptually.
- Provide a high quality public realm.

We note that within the site context reference is made to Dartmouth Park a grade II listed park which is undergoing improvements but fails to include the incorporation of a green roof on the new Sandwell College and the location of the SLINC (site of local importance for nature conservation). The site context highlights that the only green space within West Bromwich Town Centre is located within the memorial gardens adjacent to Highfields Registry Office.

The town centre lacks green space which would create a more attractive environment for people, and would reduce the fragmentation of habitats within the surrounding area.

| Quarter. | The section provides contextual information and is not intended to provide scheme specific details. There may be potential to reference details elsewhere in the SPD. Valid point regarding the SLINC & green space. | Amend relevant text to include references. | Section 4.1, Page 29 |
We are disappointed that the creation of more green space by incorporating green roofs, or exploiting sustainable technologies has not been included within the development opportunities. Physical transformation of this area should include more areas of soft landscaping, incorporating green infrastructure and the inclusion of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) as areas of the Civic Centre are highlighted as areas susceptible to surface water flooding.

Where reference is made to physical and aesthetic elements opportunities for green infrastructure will be made. Public realm, SUDS, permeable surfaces.

Amend relevant text to include references.

| 7 | Sandwell Healthy Urban Development Unit | Paul Southon | Direct Influences Housing |
|   |                                           |             | Although there is housing within the area the brief does not include any planned changes to this accommodation. The brief does state that any housing development within the area will be compliant with the relevant CABE principles and national, regional and local policy. |
|   |                                           |             | Access to public services |
|   |                                           |             | This domain is not relevant to an assessment of this brief. |
|   |                                           |             | Opportunities for physical activity |
|   |                                           |             | A strength of the brief is the focus on improving opportunities for physical activity within the area. There is strong evidence for the benefits from increased physical activity as part |
|   |                                           |             | As proposals come forward specific site/proposal requirements can be considered in more detail. |
|   |                                           |             | No change to the text. |
of a normal lifestyle. The National Institute of Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) recommends the creation of built environments to encourage physical activity (NICE 2008).

One of the key objectives within the brief is to minimise the impact of vehicular traffic, promote active travel (walking and cycling) and the use of public transport.

The brief includes proposals to improve the pedestrian permeability of the area, with improved road crossing and enhanced access to the green space within the area (the Memorial Gardens). Achieving these proposals would increase opportunities for physical activity within the area.

The brief also states that an aim of development should be to enhance this existing public open space and enhance the public realm. Easy access to high quality green space has a positive impact on both physical and mental health.

Within access and movement (page 38) the brief reiterates the intention to reduce speed in the area to 20mph as set out in the West Bromwich Area Action Plan. SHUDU would support this approach; there is good evidence for harm reduction from wider 20mph zones in
urban areas.

**Air quality, noise and neighbourhood amenity**

Through complying with the principles and policies as described in the brief, especially with enhancement of green space in the area, air quality would be improved. The brief also promotes high quality public amenities in the area and a high quality streetscape.

The brief does not include provisions to ensure the residents in the area are not adversely affected, for example by dust from construction. This may be due to the high level nature of the brief but SHUDU would support this being included in more detailed plans as they develop.

**Accessibility and transport**

The brief includes proposals to improve the streetscape accessibility and permeability. The area is easily accessible and well served by public transport. Car parking demand is included as a possible development constraint and the specific issues regarding car parking and vehicle access are included as considerations.

The principles set out in the brief would encourage active travel in the area and would
therefore be likely to have a positive impact on health.

*Indirect Influences*

**Crime reduction and community safety**

Through application of relevant design principles and policy the brief supports the development of safe public areas.

**Access to healthy food**

The brief discusses the ease of accessibility to the shopping areas in West Bromwich, including the redevelopment of West Bromwich centre and the new Tesco store.

The brief does not include discussion of how access to healthy food could be promoted. There may be an increase in the number of takeaway providers in the area to meet the demand from offices in the area. Influencing access to healthy food may be more relevant to wider food policy such as the developing Supplementary Planning Document on hot food takeaways.

**Access to work**

A mixed office development would provide employment and training opportunities in West Bromwich. This employment would be easily accessible through the public transport links.
into the area.

**Social cohesion and social capital**
This domain is more appropriate to housing based plans and has not been assessed.

**Resource minimisation**
The brief aims to make the best use of land within the area. Through application of relevant design principles and policies it supports sustainable development. The brief sets out principles for sustainable development within the area. It does not contain specific mention of renewable energy or waste management provision within the area. This may be due to the high level nature of the plan and SHUDU would support the more detailed inclusion of these measures in more detailed proposals as they are developed.

**Climate Change**
Sustainable development is a key objective within the brief. This is supported by the measures that would encourage active travel within the area.

Enhancement of the green space within the area would maintain and potentially enhance biodiversity which would have a positive impact.
Summary
The West Bromwich Civic Quarter Draft Planning and Design Brief sets out the principles for future development within this area of Sandwell.

SHUDU welcomes the draft brief and supports the principles on which it is based and the key objectives set out within the document. Application of the principles set out in the document would be likely to deliver an overall positive impact on health for the people living and working in the area.

A particular strength within the brief is that it would encourage active travel and the use of public transport. The proposal to limit traffic speed to 20mph is well supported by evidence for a health benefit. These measures, combined with the proposals to enhance the existing green space within the area would be likely to have a positive impact on health.

Due to the high level nature of the plan there are areas within the brief where the potential health impact is not yet as clear. The likely overall health impact will be clearer as more detailed proposals for the area are developed.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Observations</th>
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</table>
| 8   | Tyler Parkes (on behalf of Stoford Developments) | 1. It should be made specifically clear on the cover and in an introductory section in the text that this document is a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and when it is adopted etc., and that it carries material weight in determining planning applications.  
2. Our clients, Stoford Developments Ltd., have an interest in the West Bromwich Building Society (WBBS) site. The SPD should state specifically that there is no objection in principle to the demolition of this building, subject to securing planning permission for an acceptable redevelopment scheme, and which follows the design principles set out in the SPD.  
3. The SPD states that the WBBS site and the adjacent Sandwell College site can be | Changes will be made to incorporate this information.  
We believe that the potential demolition of the WBBS site is appropriately covered in Section 2: Policy Context, Page 15.  
We believe that Section 7: Delivery Strategy and the plans | Amend relevant text to include references.  
Potential change to text to make this point clearer.  
Potential change to plans & text to make clearer. | Section 1 & 2 |

SHUDU provides a formal route for engagement between health and wellbeing, local authority planning services and other stakeholders that have influence over the wider determinants of health. The unit can therefore facilitate access to a range of specialist expertise. SHUDU would welcome the opportunity to support the development of more detailed proposals based on this planning and design brief.
redeveloped as part of a phased and comprehensive approach. However, the sketch plans on pages 46, 48, 50 & 54 are ambiguous in that they could be construed to indicate a single development scheme. The SPD and the supporting illustrations should be amended to make it explicitly clear that the WBBS site may be redeveloped independently and separately from the adjacent College premises, accepting of course that the overall design concept is followed.

4. The illustration on page 48 indicates that the storey height for the WBBS site may range from 2-8, with 4-8 ‘to High Street’ is welcomed; however, on page 49 the text states that the landmark statement should be a minimum 5 storeys and maximum 8 storeys, so there is scope for confusion. The notes on the illustration should reflect the text.

5. The sketch on page 48 indicates an approximate floorspace of 65,000 sq.ft; it is not clear how this figure has been arrived at, and to what quantum of development it relates. This, again, may be a source of confusion and may lead to a constraint on any innovative design solutions for the site.

(Fig.18) make it clear that development can come forward as part of a phased approach. Valid point.

This figure was generated as an approximation in order to provide an indication. As this is not a feasibility study the figure will be removed.

Remove figures from plan (key) & text.

Plans (keys) & text to be amended to clarify & align.

Section 6, Fig.16

Plans (keys) & text to be amended to clarify & align.

Fig.16, Page 48
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SMBC</th>
<th>Keith Heyes</th>
<th>Section 4 mentions the development of Dartmouth Park, but excludes reference to:</th>
<th>It is accepted that these are relevant schemes happening in West Bromwich now and should be referenced.</th>
<th>Amend relevant text to include references.</th>
<th>Section 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• £1.9m scheme to develop the Oak House Barns and Gardens - Funding secured from Heritage Lottery Fund and SMBC capital programme</td>
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<tr>
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<td>• £13.5m scheme to build the new Leisure Centre in Moore Street/Bromford Lane - Funding secured within SMBC capital programme</td>
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<td></td>
<td>These are major projects contributing to the regeneration of West Bromwich Town Centre and the Leisure Centre is a priority of the political leadership. Both schemes are close to the Civic Quarter.</td>
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<td>I think it vital that these schemes are included, and I believe Members would expect to see them.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Finally, there is an image of The Public in the document but no other mention of its role and contribution to the regeneration of the Town (that I could see). It may be advisable to add something in, or it would be conspicuous by its absence.</td>
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</table>