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Minutes of a Meeting of the Planning and Environmental Protection Committee  
Held at the Town Hall, Peterborough on 21 February 2012

## **Members Present:**

Councillors – Serluca (Vice Chairman), Casey, Hiller, Simons, Stokes, Todd, Harrington, Ash and Shabbir

## **Officers Present:**

Simon Machen, Head of Planning, Transport and Engineering Services  
Nick Harding, Planning Delivery Manager  
Amanda McSherry, Principal Development Management Officer  
Jez Tuttle, Senior Engineer (Development)  
Carrie Denness, Principal Solicitor  
Gemma George, Senior Governance Officer

### **1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors North, Lane and Martin.

Councillors Ash and Shabbir were in attendance as substitutes.

### **2. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **3. Development Control and Enforcement Matters**

### **4. 10/01461/OUT - Former Royal Mail Sorting Office, Bourges Boulevard, Peterborough, PE1 1AE**

Outline planning permission was sought, for the redevelopment of the site to provide:

1. Office (use class B1) 6,000 square metres GEA;
2. An A1 foodstore 4,300 square metres GEA with a net sales area of 3,000 square metres (of which 900 square metres would be for comparison goods);
3. 850 square metres GEA of A1, A3 and/or A4;
4. Revised site access/egress from Mayors Walk;
5. Car and cycle parking; and
6. Highway and environmental improvement works, including new pedestrian/cycle crossing on Bourges Boulevard.

All matters were reserved, apart from access.

The application site was located within the city centre boundary and Railway Station Opportunity Area as defined by saved policies of the Local Plan. The site was adjacent to, but not within, the central retail area as defined by the Local Plan. The Bourges Boulevard public transport corridor ran along the eastern boundary of the site, together with part of the cycle route network.

The existing Great Northern Hotel site was positioned to the south of the site, to the north was railway station land that was used for car parking and the fire station site, and to the

west of the site were the railway platforms and tracks. Beyond Bourges Boulevard, to the east of the site, were the North Westgate Opportunity Area and the city centre multi storey car parks associated with the Queensgate Shopping Centre.

The application site covered an area of 1.293 ha (3.2 acres), and was formerly the Royal Mail Sorting Office site. The use was relocated and the buildings subsequently demolished and the site was currently being used as a temporary car park with 500 spaces for commuter car parking.

The Planning Officer addressed the Committee and gave an overview of the proposal and highlighted the main issues for consideration, those being the retail implications of the development, whether the proposed uses were compatible with the policy expectations for the redevelopment of the site, the transport impact and connectivity, the S106 planning obligation and the provisions of the development plan. The recommendation was one of approval.

Members were advised that the key issue for consideration were the policy issues. These were outlined in the committee report and summarised verbally by the Planning Officer.

The Head of Planning, Transport and Engineering Services addressed the Committee and stated that the proposal would deliver part of the solution needed to get the two different sides of Bourges Boulevard to interact with one another. The proposed crossing would not be in isolation, it would be part of a larger scheme incorporating the opposite side of Bourges Boulevard all the way down to the Car Haven car park. This would be the first phase in incrementally improving the city centre's physical environment.

The Highways Officer addressed the Committee and summarised the protocols and methodology that had been undertaken in order to reach the conclusions outlined with respect to the transport implications of the proposal. The main traffic considerations had been the site access form and position in relation to other junctions, the impact on Bright Street roundabout of more traffic, the interaction of the site access and Bright Street roundabout and the interaction of the proposed crossing point on Bourges Boulevard with Bright Street roundabout and Crescent Street roundabout.

It was accepted that whilst there would be an increase in the amount of traffic, this would not cause a highway safety issue. Alterations to the scheme had been suggested along with conditions, specifically in relation to the implementation of a box junction in order to prevent vehicles blocking the road.

Members' attention was drawn to additional information contained within the update report. There had been additional objections and comments received from Network Rail and Hawksworth Securities as well as additional supporting comments received from the Applicant. Planning Officers had also recommended a number of additional conditions to cover the provision of fire hydrants, positive biodiversity measures and crime and disorder prevention measures.

Mr David Shaw, an objector, addressed the Committee and responded to questions from Members. In summary the concerns highlighted to the Committee included:

- The scheme was contrary to policy contained within the Local Development Framework Core Strategy which stated that 'expansion of retail floor space would be encouraged in accordance with appropriate capacity forecasts, with priority given to retail expansion in the early years, in North Westgate';
- The Station Quarter Brief stated 'comparison shopping in the station quarter was fundamentally inappropriate';
- New people needed to be attracted to the city centre and an additional foodstore would do little to assist;

- Peterborough could not compete with places such as Cambridge and Norwich;
- The city centre had declined as a shopping attraction;
- Priority should be given to North Westgate development;
- The City Centre Action Plan was being prepared and, the North Westgate application could not be prepared until its completion;
- There was unlikely to be strong pedestrian flows, people would drive to the site;
- This site was not located within the city centre;
- The implementation of a foodstore could have a small impact on smaller convenience stores.

The Head of Planning, Transport and Engineering Services addressed the Committee and provided Members with an update on the North Westgate development.

Mr Tim Webb and Mr Ben Wrighton, the Applicant and Agent, addressed the Committee jointly and responded to questions from Members. In summary the issues highlighted to the Committee included:

- The proposal before Committee was the culmination of a year and a half of hard work;
- The decision had been taken to continue to invest in the site;
- By providing a high quality public realm setting and crossing, the link could start to be strengthened between the station and the retail core;
- ING had been involved with the station quarter for over seven years;
- ING had liaised with Hammerson during the evolving proposals for North Westgate;
- ING were not opportunistic in providing piecemeal development, the entire station quarter had been master planned;
- ING had been open and clear about their development intentions over the past couple of years and had undertaken significant public consultation during that time;
- Further refinements had been made in response to comments received;
- The retailing units would provide diversity and would allow for not only A1 use, but also A3 and A4 use;
- The foodstore would service the growing city population;
- There was strong public support overall for the foodstore;
- The application was fully in accordance with the Development Plan;
- It would be a good advert for Peterborough, being on the main entrance to the city centre and it would act as a frontage to the station;
- The proposal would bring around 635 jobs to the city.

The Planning Officer addressed the Committee in response to comments raised by the speakers and addressed the objections made by Network Rail, as outlined in the update report, in further detail.

Members debated the application and it was commented that another supermarket in the city would not make for an overly exciting development. The proposal would cause traffic issues in the city centre and could also have a negative impact on smaller retailers in the area.

The Head of Transport and Engineering addressed the Committee and stated that he could understand Members concerns with regards to traffic issues however, it was to be noted that the site was already being utilised as a car park, which generated traffic at the current time.

After further debate, Members commented that overall the proposal, which was at the outline application only stage, would be good for the city. The design and final appearance of the

development would be subject to a later application. The proposal would connect the station area to the city area and would enhance the entrance to the city.

A motion was put forward and seconded to approve the application. The motion was carried by 7 votes for and 2 voting against.

**RESOLVED:** (7 for, 2 against) to approve the application, as per officer recommendation, subject to:

1. The prior satisfactory completion of an obligation under the provisions of Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 for a financial contribution to meet the physical and social impacts that the development would have;
2. The conditions C1 to C21 as detailed in the committee report;
3. If the S106 has not been completed within three months of the date of the resolution without good cause, the Head of Planning, Transport and Engineering Services is authorised to refuse planning permission for the reason R1 as detailed in the committee report.

**Reasons for the decision:**

Subject to the imposition of the conditions, the proposal was acceptable having being assessed in the light of all material considerations, including weighting against the relevant policies of the Development Plan and specifically the proposal:

- Could not be reasonably accommodated within the city centre and more specifically, within the central retail area;
- Was located within the next available location which was edge of centre and so was in line with the sequential approach to the location of the retail development;
- Would result in improvements to the connectivity between the site and the city centre and in particular Westgate;
- Would not result in a significant detrimental impact on the city centre or district centre as a consequence of trade draw either individually or in conjunction with other recent developments, planning approvals or schemes under construction;
- Contained a range of competing uses of a nature compatible with policy requirements;
- Did not compromise the development of the other parts of the Station Quarter;
- Was of a scale that would not be detrimental to cathedral views or be intrinsically likely to result in a poor design or give no opportunities to the creation of high quality public realm areas;
- Would not result in an unacceptable impact on the local road network or compromise highway safety or the implementation of the Primary Public Transport Corridor;
- Provided an appropriate level of parking and gave opportunity for travel by public transport, walking and cycling, particularly due to its good location;
- Could be controlled by condition in respect of design and layout, crime and disorder, environment capital/renewable energy, infrastructure/infrastructure provision, transport, biodiversity, flood risk and archaeology; and
- Provided for new office development in the city centre.

The proposal was therefore in accordance with Core Strategy Policies CS4, CS10, CS11, CS12, CS13, CS14, CS16, CS17, CS22, the Peterborough Planning Obligations Implementation Strategy SPD, Local Plan Policies OIW5, T6,T8, T9, T10, T11, R5, CC7, CC12, CC15, CC16 and the Station Quarter Development Brief.

CHAIRMAN  
1.30 - 3.10 pm

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