

BRAINTREE TOWN CENTRE STRATEGY - PRELIMINARY DEVELOPMENT ANALYSIS
Agenda Item 6

Contact Details: Paul Munson
Designation: Head of District Development
Ext. No: 2560
E Mail Address: paul.munson@braintree.gov.uk

Background Papers: Report from Cushman and Wakefield
Financial Implications: Costs of study being met from Housing and Planning Delivery Grant. Financial appraisal required for development costs.
Equalities Implications: None
Legal Implications: None
Options:
1. To endorse the study as part of the Local Development Framework evidence base and to accept the recommendations of the study.
2. Not to endorse the study as part of the Local Development Framework evidence base and not to accept the recommendations of the study
Risks:
Further work will assess the financial and development risks involved

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As part of the evidence base for the LDF Cushman and Wakefield have been commissioned to advise on ways of creating additional floorspace in Braintree town centre to accommodate comparison shopping. Their report examines the potential of 8 sites. It suggests the preferred option would be to extend the George Yard Shopping Centre to the west on to land currently occupied by the Somerfield supermarket and its adjoining car park and the George Yard Car Park. Three alternative options are put forward for this area with different intensities of development. Limited potential is also identified on the Bus Park/Manor Street Car Park site and at Rayne Road/Panfield Land as part of mixed use developments. The report recommends that more detailed should be carried out to take the preferred option forward.

DECISION

It is **RECOMMENDED** that:

1. The Braintree Town Centre Preliminary Development Analysis be endorsed as part of the evidence base for the LDF
2. That further detailed work is carried out on the Somerfield and adjoining car parks site at Rayne Road as follows:
 - A full architectural site option analysis and viability appraisal to understand fully the potential quantum of development which can be accommodated on the site and its viability
 - The preparation of a car parking strategy for the town centre to assess the overall quantum of car parking required both now and in conjunction with the potential redevelopment proposal
 - A full financial appraisal
 - Detailed discussions with the site owners

BRAINTREE TOWN CENTRE STRATEGY - PRELIMINARY DEVELOPMENT ANALYSIS

1. As part of the evidence base for the Local Development Framework Cushman and Wakefield have been commissioned to advise on the scope for providing additional shopping floorspace in Braintree Town Centre. Their draft report is now available. This will inform both the overall strategy for Braintree Town Centre in the Core Strategy and the more detailed proposals to be included in the allocations document. A copy of the draft report is available on the Council's website and hard copies can be made available on request. A representative of Cushman and Wakefield will make a presentation on the report at the meeting.
2. The report:
 - examines the locational, commercial and planning policy context for Braintree town centre
 - assesses the quantitative capacity for additional shopping floorspace in Braintree
 - explores potential site opportunities and constraints for accommodating additional floorspace
 - identifies a preferred site opportunity
3. The report concludes that:
 - Braintree town Centre is performing relatively well when compared to national indices but a range of multiples are absent from the Centre
 - Larger sized footplates are required to cater for modern sized retailers
 - The Centre has a different offer and range of goods than that provided within the larger centres of Colchester and Chelmsford
 - Braintree Town Centre should not try and compete with the comparison goods offer provided by the sub-regional centres such as Chelmsford and Colchester but consolidate and maintain its function as the highest order comparison retail destination within the District. This requires the provision of new floorspace
 - Based on the retail study carried out by GVA Grimley in 2006 there is capacity for an additional 8,136 square metres of comparison goods floorspace over the period to 2021
4. The report examines the potential of 8 sites in the town centre to accommodate comparison retail floorspace on the basis of existing site use and context, planning policy, planning suitability, site availability and commercial feasibility. The sites are:
 1. Somerfield and adjoining car parks, Rayne Road/Pierrefitte Way
 2. Sainsbury's store and adjoining car park

3. Bus Park, Manor St. Car Park and adjoining land
 4. Tesco Store and adjoining car park
 5. Causeway House and adjoining land
 6. Telephone exchange and Warehouse, Silks Way
 7. Allotments off Bunyan Road and Land at Rayne Road/Panfield Lane
 8. Former Government Offices, Panfield Lane
5. The report concludes that there may be opportunities for some small scale comparison retail development on site 3 (Bus Park, Manor St. Car Park and adjoining land) and site 7 (Allotments off Bunyan Road and land at Rayne Road/Panfield Lane) as part of mixed-use redevelopment schemes. Larger retail led schemes may be considered in future on site 2 (Sainsbury) or site 4 (Tesco) should the existing use cease or relocate. The main opportunity however exists at Site 1 as shown on the attached plan (Somerfield and adjoining car parks). This is identified as the current preferred option for retail comparison development and has the ability to deliver up to 5,300 square metres net increase in comparison retail floorspace by 2021.
 6. The report examines 3 different options for site 1 involving increasing levels of redevelopment from redevelopment of the existing Somerfield store only to redevelopment of the entire site. The options provide between 4,500 and 5,300 square metres of additional comparison retail floorspace.
 7. In order to take forward development options at site 1 the report recommends:
 - A full architectural site option analysis and viability appraisal to understand fully the potential quantum of development which can be accommodated on the site and its viability
 - The preparation of a car parking strategy for the town centre to assess the overall quantum of car parking required both now and in conjunction with the potential redevelopment proposal
 - A full financial appraisal
 - Detailed discussions with the site owners
 - The inclusion of part or the whole of the site within the primary shopping area as part of the LDF site allocations process
 8. It is considered that the study should be endorsed as part of the LDF evidence base and its recommendations for accommodating additional comparison retail floorspace in Braintree Town Centre should be accepted.

Site 1 - Somerfield and adjoining Car Parks



Enabled by Ordnance Survey

© Crown Copyright 2009. All rights reserved. Licence number 100020449. Plotted Scale - 1:1250

*This plan is published for convenience of identification.
Any site boundaries shown are indicative only and
should be checked against title deeds.*