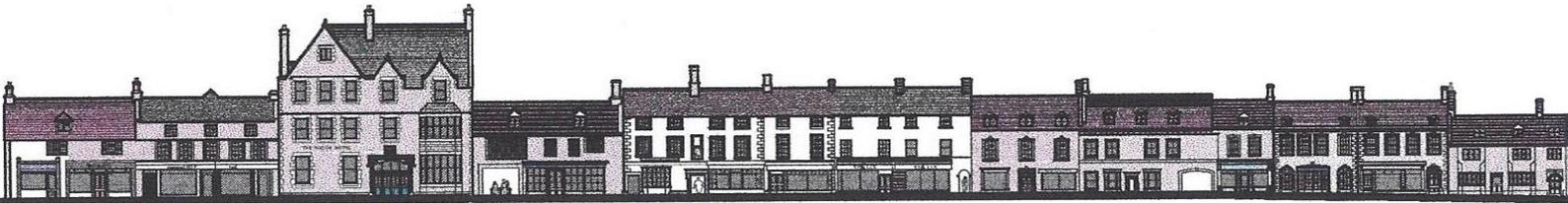


# Uppingham Town Centre & Business Zones Plan 2017 - 2036



**UPPINGHAM IN RUTLAND**

## Uppingham Town Centre & Business Zones Plan

A research document intended to inform and support the economic development of Uppingham in Rutland.

### Plan Construct

The introductory section contains an Executive Summary, a history of Uppingham and a review of The Plan's economic aims and objectives. The next section addresses a number of key topic areas in the following format:-

- An Introduction (in coloured text)
- A summary of the relevant issues (black text)
- A schedule of proposed actions (blue background)
- Supporting photographs and maps

Following publication of this second draft, the Task Group proposes to seek a grant to fund an independent costing of the major capital projects within The Plan before making its final recommendations for the town's economic future.

### Acknowledgments

Uppingham First acknowledges the support of a wide range of economic and social partners in preparing this updated version of The Plan. Sub-regional observations received include:-

*"I am hugely impressed with your strategy and scale of ambition for Uppingham - I think it will put many much larger places in the shade"*

**CEO - Opportunity Peterborough**

*"Uppingham has without question the most progressive agenda across the GCGP area"*

**CEO - Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership**

Front cover high street outline courtesy of Norman Thompson

Mapping by Jamie Kilpin of



and Janine and Christian of Uppingham School

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## Foreword

The Uppingham Town Centre And Business Zones Plan (The Plan) has been prepared as a publication in its own right and is not a statutory document. It does however present a range of ideas on a variety of topics, including land use, that the community may wish to see incorporated into statutory documents of the future. These include future versions of the Rutland Local Plan and future editions of the Uppingham Neighbourhood Plan.

This plan concentrates on the town's economic heart, the town centre and its related business and education zones. A number of business related issues are visited and solutions proposed. These issues are believed to be relevant to sustaining Uppingham as an outstanding place to live, visit, trade and invest in the period up to 2036. The Task Group has consulted widely to ensure that visitor, resident and local business views are, wherever possible and practical, incorporated into The Plan.

Economic and social development is at the core of this Plan. It aims to be bold, futuristic and achievable. A number of long standing issues are addressed. However, our hope is that the traditional values of a market town which has developed over the centuries will be retained in these forward looking proposals. Change for change's sake is not appropriate. The Task Group has listened and acted on those ideas which are believed to bring long term benefit to the town's commercial future. This delicate balance of 'change versus no change' is hard to reach. This is why this version of The Plan acknowledges many of the views offered following the publication of its first draft. The community's responses were much appreciated.

**County Cllr Edward Baines - Chair of the Town Centre & Business Zones Plan Task Group**

## The Plan's Vision

The Plan acknowledges government policy on localism, housing, community safety and education and draws upon local and national research to enhance the commercial and social sustainability of the town up to the year 2036.

It recognises the town's heritage but acknowledges that for the town centre to survive it must innovate rather than stand still. The Plan proposes that future development should reflect identified business and community needs and the aspirations indicated in recent community surveys, focus groups and public meetings. It also recognises the significant growth plans of neighbouring Corby Borough Council and the need to prepare for significantly increased vehicular traffic likely to pass through the town.

The Plan calls for the greater use of technology and a recognition that future prosperity demands an effective and user friendly virtual presence. It supports development in a number of zones and explores opportunities to enhance the town's visitor appeal and the diversity and heritage of its retail offer. The Plan seeks to encourage job creation and strengthen the educational opportunities available to the next generation of Uppingham residents and business owners.

Above all, The Plan aims to encourage further investment in public space and the required educational, residential and business infrastructure to enhance the desirability of Uppingham as a visitor destination of choice and a family friendly town in which it is safe and beneficial to live, work and trade.

**In short, The Plan seeks to establish Uppingham as a 'vanguard' market town; an exemplar of forward planning and best practice in the UK. Promotion of The Plan's objectives will be guided by a Vanguard Board incorporating a wide range of supporting social and economic partners. The aspiration is a safer Uppingham and a more sustainable economy in which key elements of the community collaborate for mutual benefit.**

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## Introduction and Executive Summary

### Uppingham Town Centre and Business Zones Plan - A Twenty Year Plan for Uppingham

#### Introduction

During the period 2017 to 2036 the UTC&BZ Plan (The Plan) proposes a number of actions to stimulate annual economic growth of 2%+ and create 100+ jobs. Uppingham's heritage will be protected and its offer to young people and the elderly strengthened. The town will be safer with an even stronger community spirit. Its economic prospects will be enhanced and the viability of local business strengthened. Delivery of The Plan will ensure a sustainable virtual and physical Uppingham worthy of 'vanguard' status with government, attractive to inward investment and an exemplar market town.

A summary of the proposals follows:-

#### 1. A Digital Action Plan

A new virtual portal (with audio and visual welcome to the town via the webcam) comprising a Virtual High Street, Uppingham App, electronic map, links to key business and community organisations including Uppingham in Bloom, an online shopping facility, accommodation and tourism links, an education and business database and a new Antiques, Arts, Books and Creative Crafts visitor trail and electric car trail.

Further development of the town's fibre to the premise broadband network

White Space Broadband provision plus improved town centre wifi

A revised Uppingham Mast 4G/5G proposal based at Welland Vale Nurseries

Electronic information boards at all key entrances to the town and in the town centre on the A6003

#### 2. New Homes for the Present and Next Generation

With landowner agreement, the acquisition of sites to build an additional (to the emerging RLP) 100-200 new homes

The creation of an E J Toon Housing Trust to build up to 10 first step apartments for young local workers

The construction of 50+ bungalows for the elderly

The construction of up to 50 skills based dwellings to enhance Uppingham's home based entrepreneurship offer

#### 3. A Safer A6003, Market Place and High Street

Traffic management at the London Road entrance to Station Road/Spring Back Way

Improved pedestrian safety at the North Street East/West/Ayston Road junction

Strengthened pedestrian protection for the public crossing between High Street East and High Street West with reduced speed limit and pedestrian priority

Safer traffic movement and parking layout in the market place following resurfacing and refurbishment of the monument

Upgrading of the public toilet

LED heritage lighting

A long term strategy to replace/improve town centre paving and encourage wall mounted heritage signage

Enhancement of Baines Corner as a community facility

Queen Street Improvements

#### 4. An Ayston Road Action Plan

A new long stay car park

Safer pedestrian movement

Bungalows for the elderly

## **5. An Uppingham Gate Action Plan (staged)**

Care home for the elderly

Innovation centre and employment starter units

A Joint Blue Light Services Station

Skills based/Employment linked homes with workshop facility

First Step and Family Homes

Retail Unit (last stage)

## **6. A Station Road Action Plan**

Support for collaborative work with the Local Enterprise Partnership to undertake a feasibility study on the upgrading of the site and the creation of new employment opportunities, a possible new entrance and public ownership of the highway.

## **7. A Welland Vale Action Plan**

Support for the limited expansion of retail in the fields of commercial leisure and play

Strengthening of footfall links between the site and the high street

## **8. An Education Zones Action Plan**

Enhancement of the facilities at UCC to incorporate a creative and media arts centre and a new sports facility

With Governor agreement, support for strengthened Uppingham Academy Trusts offering new/additional facilities for primary education, additional childcare provision, youth and adult education and a community transport hub

## **9. A Community Hub and Tod's Piece Action Plan**

Support for the creation of a community hub incorporating a replacement for the current dilapidated old library and the further development of Tod's Piece as a public park, recreation space and event site.

## **10. A Strategy for Public Transport**

The establishment of a permanent community transport solution linking business, residential, education and retail zones to the Uppingham surgery and the High Street

Safety improvements to the bus termini and irregular roundabout in North Street East

Improved transport services to and from surrounding villages and Leicester

## **11. Town Entrance Improvements**

Better lighting, signage and design with quality planting

## **12. Tourism, Marketing and Events**

Strengthen the town's presence in tourism and marketing structures promoting the branding of Uppingham as 'independent'

Create a new Antiques, Arts, Books and Creative Crafts Visitor Trail supported by a virtual and paper visitor map

Develop the new Rutland Electric Trail with Uppingham as its southern gateway

Collaborate with appropriate voluntary agencies and organisations to create a visitor reception service linked to a proposed community bus service

Support the work of the Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) and other environmental and tourism groups in the promotion of footpaths, bridleways and cycle paths in and around Uppingham

## How Has The Plan Been Created?

The Uppingham First Community Partnership has brought together council, community and business representatives in a skills based task group to prepare The Plan. Local businessman and partnership Vice Chair, Cllr Edward Baines, has led the task group.

Over a period of almost three years the group has met regularly to consider the economic development needs of the town and commission research and data collection. It has reviewed a range of appropriate literature and explored existing policy and practice on the development of market towns. The group's proposals acknowledge the opportunities and challenges presented by the National Policy Planning Framework (NPPF), existing County Council policy, the content of the Uppingham Neighbourhood Plan and the present and emerging new draft Rutland Local Plans. They also draw upon the aspirational ideas generated by local businesses for the publication 'Uppingham 2025' and by the community for the 'Uppingham Parish Plan'.

Most important of all, the task group has undertaken original research of local business and community opinion via a series of surveys and questionnaires to ascertain statistical facts plus local and visitor opinion. The detail of this research work is documented in the plan's supporting Data Book which will accompany the final version of The Plan.

At regular intervals during The Plan's preparation the task group has liaised with the town's Business and Neighbourhood Forums. In addition, the community at large has been regularly updated on its progress via appropriate articles in the Neighbourhood Forum Newsletter and on the Uppingham First website at [www.uppinghamfirst.co.uk](http://www.uppinghamfirst.co.uk), reports to participating partners by task group delegates, and news flashes on Twitter and Facebook.

A first draft of the resultant plan was published online for 12 months (August 2016 to July 2017) for public comment. Following public and business feedback on the early ideas, this updated version of The Plan is published prior to the costing of its proposals.

It is hoped that the costed version of The Plan will be published by the Spring of 2018.

### Key Steps

- Task Group invitations issued in November 2014
- Task Group meets eighteen times between December 2014 and April 2017
- Business surveys undertaken in February and December 2015
- Town Centre User and Resident surveys undertaken July - October 2015
- Market Trader and family surveys undertaken in November 2015
- Neighbourhood and Business Forum consultations in October 2015, January/February 2016, March 2017
- Vanguard Board+ to oversee promotion of Plan created in May 2016
- First Draft Plan published online in July 2016
- Public Consultation and Community Presentations/Feedback August 2016 to July 2017
- Task Group met to consider focus group & community feedback and update draft - January 2017 to July 2017
- Revised Plan published August 2017
- Costed version to be published - Spring 2018
- Ongoing research, visits and consultation 2014 - 2017

## Uppingham - A Brief History

The 6<sup>th</sup> century Anglo - Saxon farmstead that came to be known as the *settlement of the people on the hill*, otherwise *Uppingas*, developed where the ancient track from Oakham to Rockingham crossed the ridge. In Saxon and Norman times Uppingham was one of the seven small hamlets included in the King's Manor of Ridlington. The town gained its Market Charter in 1281, although a market had existed long before this date. The Market Place is the focus of the town and reflects a long history of Uppingham as a place to trade as well as a place to reside. This partnership between business and the residents is still a key feature of the town today.

Opening from the Market Place, St Peters & St Pauls church forms an integral part of the town. In Anglo - Saxon times it was one of the three attached to the Royal Manor of Ridlington. The church was rebuilt and enlarged early in the 14<sup>th</sup> century and its tower built several decades later. The early 1300s were prosperous times for Uppingham until the Black Death ravaged the town in 1348-9 AD.



In 1584 Robert Johnson, Rector of North Luffenham, founded two grammar schools, one each at Oakham and Uppingham, to provide free education for the sons of local people. The Elizabethan Schoolroom, built in 1584, is one of the three oldest buildings in Uppingham. Owned by Uppingham School, it is listed as a Grade I building of architectural and historic interest deserving of protection and preservation.

During the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, Uppingham was an important stop for coaches on the route between Stamford and Leicester. When the North/South route was opened in 1754-55 the London Mail coaches would stop at Uppingham and it was during this period that some fine coaching inns were built in the town. Two of them, the recently renovated Falcon Hotel and the Crown, are still in existence to this day and feature in the town's Heritage Trail, acting as vibrant destinations for visitors and locals alike.

Uppingham experienced a period of major expansion during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Firstly Uppingham School attracted a very influential Headmaster, Edward Thring, who oversaw a significant expansion of the school, both in terms of pupil numbers and buildings. Secondly, the people of Uppingham wanted to embrace the new technologies available to them at the time and, in 1894, after a lot of pressure and subsidy by the townsfolk, a railway station was built. This serviced a branch line between Seaton and Uppingham for both goods and passenger traffic. For many years the line was an essential element in the social and economic framework of the town but the increasing popularity of the motor car and the decline in freight traffic meant that closure in 1964 under the Beeching axe was inevitable. The station buildings were demolished and the area is now the town's Station Road Industrial Estate.

The motor car is still a vital part of daily life in Uppingham and key to its social and economic development. Yet every November it gives up its market place parking to host a Fatstock Show, the only one of its kind in the UK.



Uppingham has many residents who live in the town centre, the central part of which is a conservation area.

Community and business services provided in the town support the many villages in its hinterland with elderly residents tending to relocate to the town once they are unable, for reasons of age or health, to drive.

In the 1980s the A47 bypass was built and over the last 30 years the town has expanded its housing stock to reach a total of around 1900 properties occupied by a population of approximately 4700.

In 2009 Uppingham formed its first economic development partnership, Uppingham First, a company limited by guarantee. See [www.uppinghamfirst.co.uk](http://www.uppinghamfirst.co.uk). By 2010 the town had secured runner up status in the finals of the East Midlands Enterprising Britain Awards. In March 2013 The Times newspaper listed Uppingham as 18th in the UK's fifty most desirable places to visit. In April of the same year it joined the top 1% of communities in the world for broadband speed with phase 1 of its 1Gb 'fibre to the premise' (FTTP) network. In 2014, 2015 and 2016 the town was its category winner in the East Midlands in Bloom Awards. In 2014 the Uppingham Webcam was voted the best UK market town project to promote local business. In 2015 Uppingham High Street was announced as one of the top five market town high streets in Britain in the Great British High Street Awards.

This brief history sums up what Uppingham is all about. It is a town that is passionately proud of its heritage whilst always looking forward. Today it continues to reflect the spirit of its forefathers, who welcomed new innovations such as stage coaches and railways, as it succeeds in bringing 21<sup>st</sup> Century technologies such as low carbon vehicles and superfast fibre optic broadband to the town.

Uppingham has a proud history of being proactive and its much acclaimed Neighbourhood Plan was a government front runner. Now with this Town Centre and Business Zones Plan, the Uppingham community has again come together to innovate and explore the way forward on its economic and social growth. The following pages address a number of key concerns for the future and make proposals for action.

*The contributions of members of the local history study group to this section of The Plan are acknowledged*

## Economic Growth and The Plan's Aims and Objectives for the period to 2036

### Aim 1 - Economic Growth

A study of national, Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), County Council and Ward published policies and statistics reveals one of the challenges facing those planning the future of market towns such as Uppingham; a shortage of market town growth statistics on which to base sensible projections for the future. The Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership (GCGP LEP) has been very supportive of the search for market town data but has no strategic growth target for market towns in its Strategic Economic Plan. There is therefore value in accepting the LEP's offer to assist, where possible, in the creation and delivery of this plan.

Rutland County Council's Economic Growth Strategy 2014 - 2021 publication finds its approach to growth on four key principles:-

**Playing to the county's strengths with its wealth of natural, cultural, leisure and heritage assets**

**Maximising public and private investment outcomes**

**Encouraging suitable growth while retaining Rutland's unique characteristics**

**Recognising and supporting actions for sustainable growth at a community level**

The document's thematic areas for intervention and key objectives are listed as:-

**Enterprise and Innovation** – To retain, attract and grow successful businesses

**Education, Employment and Skills** - To maximise prosperity for all

**Land, Development and Infrastructure** – To provide the right physical environment for sustainable growth

**Inward Investment** - To raise the profile of Rutland as a place to visit and do business

The growth actions detailed in this longer term plan for Uppingham are consistent with, and supportive of, these themes and objectives. Action is proposed in all four areas plus a fifth, 'Safety, Sustainability and Social Engagement'.

Uppingham First is the local licence holder for the People and Places national market town benchmarking studies and collected basic data on 12 key performance indicators for 2015 to create a starting point for measuring the town's future progress. This local data is strengthened by the Partnership's business, resident and focus group surveys evidenced in the Plan's Data Book, to be published separately.

Looking to the future, the town's principal challenge is to stimulate economic growth in the context of low unemployment, a minimal number of residents on job seekers allowance and a higher number on Employment Support Allowance (ESA). It must therefore attract employers and create jobs that will encourage the importation of workers supported by appropriate education and housing strategies. Such efforts might also acknowledge the potential contribution of disabled ESA recipients on support programmes which recognise 'volunteering' as a gateway to employment

The need to strengthen further the town's retail and visitor offer is acknowledged in the following pages. Recognition of, and action on, national statistics projecting the present and future significance of virtual visitors and online trading for growth is a key component of this plan.

The future level of investment in and return from Uppingham business premises will be a key measure of the town's success in the period covered by The Plan. Improvement in this area is a key objective. County Council statistics confirm that there is a need to attract and retain the 20-40 year age range of resident/employee and lift the skill set available to local employers. Home based working can be a key economic driver and is prevalent in Uppingham, empowered by improving broadband speeds. It is capable of significant further expansion.

Business and employment site growth in Uppingham should acknowledge the county wide demand for business start-up units and the need to house incoming workers as well as supporting the expansion of existing businesses. Mixed use of employment sites may therefore be appropriate to stimulate innovation. One approach is to create work space linked to homes or homes likely to attract particular skill sets. Another is the need to recognise the economic case for increasing the supply of key worker homes and lower cost homes for younger workers at the beginning of their careers.

Local employers are currently obliged to engage with a commuting workforce to fill vacant posts. However, linkage of business innovation and creativity to wider LEP business networks may also support further expansion. Growth in the high street and higher visitor numbers will only be possible if new vehicular capacity is created in the town. Public transport links and car park capacity are therefore critical issues addressed in the plan.

This plan recognises and supports the commercial development zones identified in the Uppingham Neighbourhood Plan and makes some additional proposals in the interest of economic growth. It adds one key brownfield site to address the need for a substantial long stay car park close to the town centre. This proposal is linked to the possibility of more badly needed bungalows (see housing supply pages), and the development of a joint blue light services response station at a new site near the A47 roundabout.

Education facilities, personal development and the boundary relationship between school and work will be critical to the town's economic and social growth. Significant action is therefore proposed in The Plan linked to the provision of homes for young people.

In August 2017 the Bank of England was projecting average annual economic growth in the UK for 2016 – 2018 as 1.6% to 1.7%. It is believed that with county and town councils and LEP support for this plan's recommendations, the town could achieve average growth of 2% during the lifetime of The Plan. The Uppingham Town Centre and Business Zones Plan therefore seeks to help stimulate economic and social growth through a wide range of actions which together achieve the following objectives:-

**Objective Colour Code : Short term- Green Medium term - Blue Long term - Red**

**Objective - Appropriate post Brexit growth and investment in the business zones and town centre to create a thriving business community**

**Target:** 2%+ economic growth per annum for the lifetime of The Plan and 100 new jobs

**Measurement:** By annual turnover percentage increase survey and the use of KPIs

**Objective – A Digital Action Plan and the Development of a Virtual High Street Portal**

**Target:** Increased connectivity with FTTP, 5G and White Space broadband supporting high quality Wifi. A quality virtual portal which integrates the town's business and retail offer facilitating online trading and encouraging physical visits. A 100% increase in footfall from the 2015 benchmark and a 100% increase in virtual visitors to the town

**Measurement:** Connectivity surveys: Online hits: Smart Phone App usage: Footfall counts.

**Objective – Greater Retail Diversity**

**Target:** Recognising it is ultimately a commercial decision, to address the public call for greater choice and competition by securing key trades and crafts detailed in local surveys

**Measurement:** Regular monitoring of enquiries received, responses given and the resultant retail mix achieved

**Objective – Increased investment in, and financial return from, town centre business premises**

**Target:** To maintain a low premise vacancy rate and a greater than 7% return per annum on investment in business premises

**Measurement:** Regular surveying of returns and business arrivals: Monitoring of premise enquiries received and retail mix established

## Aim 2 - Land Use, Development and Infrastructure

Mindful of preserving the town's heritage appearance and conservation area while planning for economic growth, The Plan notes resident and visitor calls for action to repair, update and improve some aspects of the town centre to support its sustainability, make it safer, encourage further investment and enhance the visitor/resident experience.

After much investigation and research, the task group believes that the issues identified during their enquiries are best tackled collectively via the implementation of an Area Action Plan covering the Market Place, High Street and the A6003. A number of other areas were identified by survey respondents as in need of restoration and repair.

This plan recognises the housing growth agreed in the Uppingham Neighbourhood Plan and the further growth called for in the emerging new Rutland Local Plan. However this plan argues that Uppingham's prosperity will be better supported if the number and type of homes built are aligned with its economic and social growth targets. To achieve The Plan's economic growth target of 2%+ per year Uppingham's economy must grow 30% by 2036.

Good transport links, pedestrian safety and adequate parking must be at the heart of any economic development strategy for Uppingham. The Plan makes several proposals to improve the movement of vehicles and people. A forward looking parking strategy is crucial to the town's future economic growth. Capacity, traffic flow and the need for a change of parking culture are addressed in The Plan.

The Ayston Road area between Uppingham Fire Station and the town's garage is the subject of consideration given its location on a major route into town and the proximity of a critical junction. A new development zone is proposed for this area.

This plan recognises Tod's Piece as one of the town's most valuable commercial land assets and an important open space.

The Uppingham Town Centre and Business Zones Plan objectives with regard to land use, development and infrastructure are therefore:-

### **Objective – Character, Heritage and Modernisation**

**Target:** A Market Place and A6003 Action Plan

**Measurement:** Completion within the period of the Plan

### **Objective – Additional housing development linked to skills, employment & local need**

**Target:** 100-200 homes (additional to the 2017 –2036 RLP target: 10 First Step Apartments: 50+ additional skill/employment linked homes: 50+ bungalows/homes for the elderly

**Measurement:** Housing completions

### **Objective – Restoration and Repair**

**Target:** A phased programme of infrastructure restoration with priority given to town centre paving

**Measurement:** Phased targets agreed with RCC

### **Objective – Transport Links, Hub and Parking**

**Target:** 100% increase in long stay capacity: An improved public transport hub and properly funded community transport.

**Measurement:** By project completion

### **Objective – Conservation Area and Tod's Piece**

**Target:** Reinstate Tod's Piece into local ownership by undoing the current Deed of Dedication and improve as a centre for community activity and events

**Measurement:** Achievement of land transfer, increased usage and visible enhancement of facilities

### Aim 3 - Innovation, Enterprise, Education and Skills

This plan recognises that current government policy is moving toward the creation of greater parental choice and the development of academies. It acknowledges the important potential contribution of local centres of learning to the future sustainability of Uppingham and the future aspirations of public and private sector pre-school and secondary education providers. The Plan supports the development plans of Uppingham Community College and the need to further improve pedestrian links between town and school. It also recognises the current locations and future plans of the town's primary education institutions.

Consultation responses call for a more family oriented and child friendly town centre in which children and schools could play a more substantial role. The Plan recognises the need for stronger links between education and business zones, the possibilities for work experience learning opportunities and the need to support and encourage the next generation of young traders.

Much of the property development proposed in The Plan is strongly linked to the promotion of innovation and enterprise. The Uppingham Town Centre and Business Zones Plan objectives with regard to innovation, enterprise, education and skills are therefore:-

**Objective - Appropriate investment in the further development of the town's education and learning zones**

**Target:** Self-sufficiency as a town with support for the further expansion of UCC and primary academies

**Measurement:** Completion of expansion programme by a date to be agreed with establishment leadership teams

**Objective - Support the creation of enterprise and innovation start up units at Uppingham Gate**

**Target:** 10+ new units

**Measurement:** Completion by developer with full occupancy

**Objective – Business start-ups and a platform for teenage entrepreneurs created during the life of the Plan**

**Target:** 50+ new business start-ups during the life of the plan

**Measurement:** Number achieved with ongoing support and monitoring



## Aim 4 - Safety, Sustainability and Social Engagement

On community safety, the direction of travel now being dictated by government for collaborative work between the blue light services presents a huge opportunity for Uppingham. An innovative solution is proposed.

There is linkage between those elements of this plan that seek to make Uppingham Town Centre more family friendly and the issues of safety, disability and access. The Plan makes specific proposals to improve matters.

This plan recognises Uppingham's heritage as a wonderful place to live, visit, work, study and play and the important contribution to sustainability to be played by effective marketing and promotion.

The centre of Uppingham and its Market Place has long had a role as a venue for community social engagement and commercial events. However, market place parking is a vital component of the town's economic success and road closures and events impact upon those residents who live in the town centre. Public and business consultation on future road and car park closures will therefore be important. The town's Friday market continues to be a top attraction.

Safety concerns about traffic and pedestrian movement both in the market place and across the A6003 in the town centre, the rising rate of vehicle related incidents in the area, the state of town centre paving and the significant increase in heavy goods vehicles likely as a consequence of Corby's projected growth require this plan to propose road safety improvements. The Plan also notes survey respondents calls to further improve the Market Place, enhancing its heritage appearance and social potential.

The Plan also proposes a valuable parallel study of its community impact during implementation in collaboration with a local university.

The Uppingham Town Centre and Business Zones Plan objectives with regard to safety, sustainability and social engagement are therefore:-

### **Objective – Community Safety and Policing**

**Target:** To support the construction and operation of a joint blue light facility in Uppingham

**Measurement:** To be agreed with the PCC and partner organisations

### **Objective – To observe best practice on disability and access issues**

**Target:** Move toward wall mounted signage for town centre establishments and address outstanding surface and access issues

**Measurement:** By annual review of progress

### **Objective – A Safer, More Attractive Market Place and Town Centre**

**Target:** Modified traffic and pedestrian flow and explore safer parking arrangements while further enhancing the town centre environment and its facilities. Improvement of the Queen Street environment.

**Measurement:** Delivery of the Market Place Area Action Plan

### **Objective – Marketing and Events**

**Target:** To encourage the greater use of Tod's Piece for major events and the market place for social engagement: More effective promotion of the town's assets and events

**Measurement:** Monitoring of event attendance and visitor/investor/business enquiries

### **Objective – Conduct a Social Impact Study of the Plan's delivery**

**Target:** To be undertaken by the University of Northampton

**Measurement:** By the University

## Aim 5 - Encouraging Inward Investment

The economic success of Uppingham has, throughout its history, been in part due to significant private sector investment in the town. The town's character and heritage is the result of many years of expansion and renewal by Uppingham School and proactive investment by a number of significant property and business owners. As a consequence, privately owned property in the town centre is on the whole in excellent condition and the vacancy rate on business premises remains low.

These are, however, difficult economic times for the high street and this plan recognises the importance of encouraging and supporting new business start-ups as well as the need to create and sustain an environment that will encourage and attract/retain investors in the town's trading capability.

Public sector investment in the town, however, is a different matter. Due to budget restrictions and limited Section 106 development in Uppingham, Rutland County Council has no ongoing investment strategy to refurbish the town centre although it has now resurfaced High Street East and is proposing to install LED lighting in the conservation area. In recent years Uppingham Town Council has strengthened its efforts to play its part, concentrating on the refurbishment of Tod's Piece. The Town Council has had some success in attracting grants, for example for the creation of its Heritage Trail and the new skateboard ramp. However it recently abandoned plans to refurbish the town hall as a community hub and library. Others in the community may now need to take up the reins to create such a facility in the town.

Uppingham First's success in securing front runner status for Uppingham and partners' efforts in delivering a successful Neighbourhood Plan should result in the delivery of many thousands of pounds of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) monies to help address the town's needs. Top economic priorities, according to survey respondent opinion, are an additional car park and a major refurbishment of town centre paving. Both issues are addressed in this plan.

**Objective** – To continue to make the town centre an attractive investment proposition

**Target:** Ongoing continual improvement of the town centre and its infrastructure

**Measurement:** Annual monitoring

**Objective** – To support the bid for Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) funds to address the town's infrastructure needs

**Target:** A Station Road Improvement Feasibility Study

**Measurement:** LEP Funding to undertake the study

**Objective** – Increasing the level of public sector expenditure on the town's infrastructure with a particular emphasis on appearance and personal safety

**Target:** Attracting sufficient funds to complete the projects outlined in this plan

**Measurement:** Annual monitoring of progress made

**Objective** – To attract further investment into the town's education and employment zones

**Target:** A proactive programme of marketing the town's employment zones to potential investors and employers

**Measurement:** Annual monitoring of new business arrivals and jobs created

## Technology Infrastructure and the Virtual High Street

Community partners and local businesses recognise just how vital it is that Uppingham equip itself with the very best technological capability. This plan acknowledges the government's Digital Strategy 2017 the importance of mobile and fixed infrastructure, digital skills and the opportunities for growth afforded by high quality internet access. Many of the town's businesses have already invested in online trading, attractive websites and an online view of their premise interiors. The County Council/BT Digital Rutland project has brought fibre to the cabinet (>60Mbps) to all community and business zones. The Digital Uppingham project introduced the town to free public wifi and fibre to the premise broadband from leading fibre provider Gigaclear. This plan supports the argument that profitability, economic growth, educational attainment and social advantage will be maximised by broadening consumer choice of available IT infrastructure.

A number of high street and business zone traders already derive the majority of their profit from online sales. Yet they recognise and benefit from Uppingham as a desirable physical trading address. Some traders and service providers, however, by the very nature of their business must deliver their offer in a physical way. Uppingham's developing infrastructure must recognise this dual requirement and support it. The Digital Uppingham project and task group research also recognise that Uppingham town centre is a 'living high street' with many residents' 'living above the shop'.

This plan rejects the traditional planning conflict of 'edge of town' and 'centre of town' development and believes the correct approach to technology and infrastructure in a small market town is to bring such areas together by building physical and technological connections thereby empowering a mutually supportive approach to profitability and economic growth. The Plan also extends this principle to social and education centres believing this will maximise learning, educational attainment and social gain. As a consequence, the following issues require attention:-

**Issue 1** - The need to extend the town's fibre network fibre into the town centre and to remaining education, community and business zones with an emphasis on reliability and quality of service

**Issue 2** - The need to recognise the future significance of wireless and improve and extend the public wifi offer to match visitor and resident expectations

**Issue 3** - The need to update the Uppingham on Line cluster of websites to create a single business and visitor friendly virtual trading portal linked to the Uppingham Webcam, an Uppingham Mobile Phone App, local business websites and the updated Rutland tourism website - A Virtual High Street Portal linked to an enhanced social media presence

**Issue 4** - Recognition of the contribution that might be made to the Uppingham economy and its hinterland by the construction of the Uppingham Mast and the social benefit of providing innovative low cost affordable broadband options

**Issue 5** - The need to bring better 4G and 5G wireless services to the town and further improve mobile phone signals

**Issue 6** - The need to create a collective online retail/support/learning zone within the virtual high street portal for new and existing businesses with and without a website

**Issue 7** - The need to encourage the development of cashless payment in the high street

**Issue 8** - The need to facilitate the delivery of care, learning and other public/private services by electronic means

## Technology Infrastructure and the Virtual High Street Actions

**Action 1** - Support and promote the extension of the town's 1Gbps FTTP network. Examine the potential of working with BT Openreach to establish the presence of BT fibre to assist the extension of the planned town's fibre network.

**Action 2** - Work with interested parties contractors to prioritise the installation of fttp fibre broadband in the high street linking the Market Place to the Town Hall and with possible extensions to businesses and homes in the bottom of High Street East, High Street West, Orange Street and Queen Street

**Action 3** - In partnership with White Space UK, pilot a 'white space' trial of affordable <10Mbps broadband with up to 30 appropriate family households selected in consultation with local schools. Use this network to pilot the delivery of relevant community services

**Action 4** - Extend the town's fibre network to the Welland Vale Commercial Zone and support the construction of the Uppingham Mast offering point to point 100+Mbps broadband to surrounding rural households/businesses and a strategic opportunity for the delivery of high quality mobile signals for Uppingham and the south of Rutland. Liaise with Corby BC to prioritise the delivery of a 100+Mbps signal to several of its industrial estates

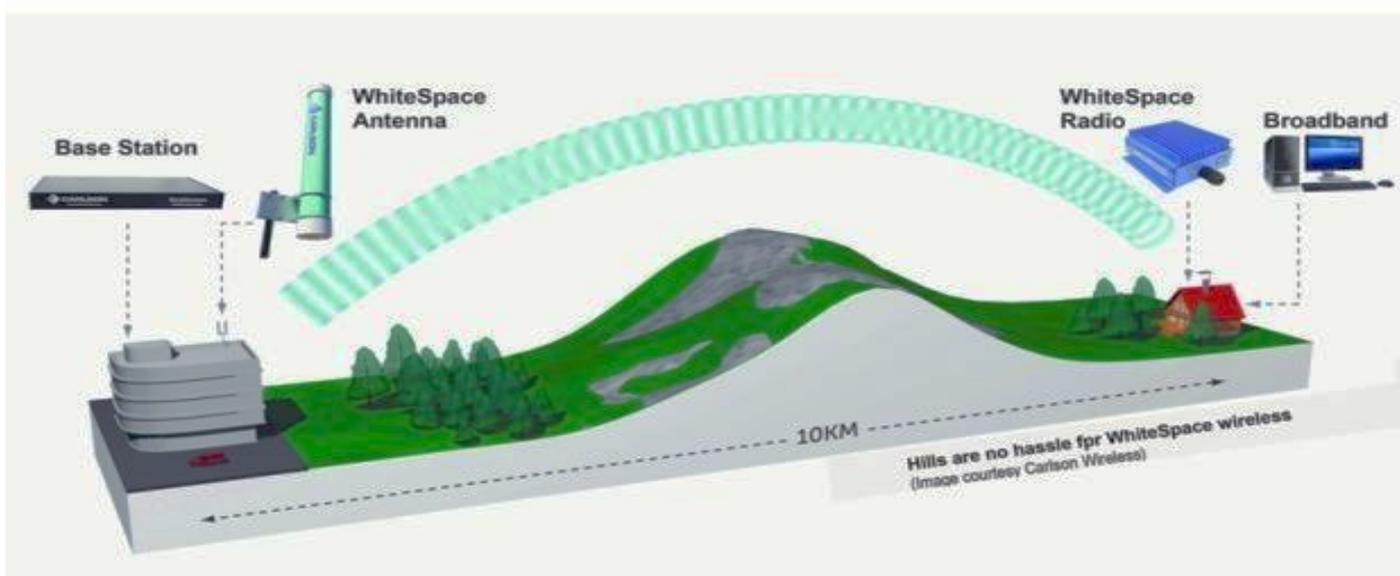
**Action 5** - Work with a technical partner to develop the Uppingham App offering a customised version to Oakham and other interested market towns and linking the initiative with the promotion of cashless payments. Working with cutting edge technology developers, e.g. Accelleran Ltd, examine the use of TV White Space and Mobile 4G and 5G 'mini cells' to extend the cellular transmission coverage to poor reception areas and 'not spots'.

**Action 6** - In harmony with the Uppingham App, complete the development of the Virtual High Street Portal in consultation with the Uppingham Business and Neighbourhood Forums and interested businesses and community groups. In tandem, strengthen social media integration. Identify and pursue suitable funding for the project

**Action 7** - In collaboration with supporting businesses, extend the public wifi zone to cover the entire town centre retail area

**Action 8** - Further develop the Uppingham Webcam as a capture device for the virtual visitor, adding an audio stream and integrating it into the Virtual High Street initiative

**Action 9** - Integrate the Women in the High Street Network with a learning and development /business start-up zone in the Virtual High Street, developing stronger links with the town's education and learning centres, the Rutland County Council Adult Education Service and relevant universities



## Housing Supply

This plan recognises the housing growth agreed in the Uppingham Neighbourhood Plan and the further growth called for in the emerging new Rutland Local Plan. However, it questions the simplistic analysis of circa 35% affordable homes per site being required and would argue that Uppingham's economic growth will be better supported if the number and type of homes built are aligned with economic growth targets envisaged in other parts of this plan. Local research suggests that we need more homes to empower downsizing and that many of these should be bungalows. The town needs to be able to retain and house the 20-40 year old employees discussed elsewhere in The Plan. Crucially, Uppingham needs more quality homes for young families to rent. The Plan acknowledges the government's various housing initiatives and supports public sector intervention in this matter.



To achieve The Plan's economic growth target of 2%+ per year Uppingham must grow 30% by 2036. The linking of employer skills needs and new shared working space to innovative housing design could contribute to growth. This plan therefore supports a higher housing target but with the additional homes firmly linked to job creation, self employment start up opportunities and a significant first home initiative

The issues can be summarised as follows:-

**Issue 9** - The need to link employer skill requirements to housing supply

**Issue 10** - The need to create more affordable first homes to rent and buy

**Issue 11** - There is demand for low cost homes which might be met by prefabrication

**Issue 12** - The economic need to attract and retain young workers/families (20 - 40 year olds)

**Issue 13** - Uppingham is an ageing community with a demand for bungalows

**Issue 14** - The town has interested housing developers/landowners willing to innovate

### Housing Supply Actions

**Action 10** - With support from Locality, determine the viability of a recent offer of free land for starter apartments as part of an E J Toon Housing Trust

**Action 11** - Support the building of 50+ executive and employment linked dwellings

**Action 12** - Support the building of 50+ bungalows within the town

**Action 13** - Support the concept of community owned homes for rent

**Action 14** - Support the Neighbourhood Plan requirement for all new homes to be built such that they are suitable for next generation homebased working with fibre to the premise (fttp)

**Action 15** - Seek the support of RCC and government in delivering 100+ First Homes

**Action 16** - Support the construction of low cost homes incorporating prefabrication

**Action 17** - Invite the Neighbourhood Plan Committee to support the incorporation of these housing supply actions into any future Local or Neighbourhood Plan

## **Access, Signage, Heritage and the Case for Modernisation and Repair**

The growth of Uppingham from an agricultural settlement to a market town of around 4800 people, and its rise as a place of manufacturing and trading, has helped define its unique character and heritage. The task group preparing this plan was asked by many to be mindful of preserving the town's heritage appearance and conservation area while planning for economic growth. There is, however, a clear call for action to repair, update and improve some aspects of the town centre to support its sustainability, make it safer, encourage investment and enhance the visitor/resident experience.

Good signage can be attractive and helpful to those using it. It can also be pointless, unattractive, of the wrong size and unnecessary. Never is its appearance more important than in a conservation area. A review of signs recently on display revealed a number of unnecessary and/or overlarge signs on vacant property and several breaching existing planning policy.

It is not currently obvious to the casual visitor or new resident that the town centre is a conservation area. Routes to car parks within the conservation area are not well signposted. The same applies to the alleyway routes followed by visitors from the bus termini at Tod's Piece through to High Street East.

Some regular event signage is ugly and larger than A4, spoiling the street scene in the most attractive part of town. There is a case for designated event signage locations to address the issue.

The town's conservation area is one of its prize assets and should be valued. There is a strong case for a more regulated approach.

There is linkage between those elements of this plan that seek to make Uppingham town centre more family friendly and the issue of improving access. For example, some consultation respondents have identified the challenge of moving a large pushchair or pram through certain areas including alleyways with bollards in the middle of the footpath and entrances surrounded by goods or café/pub furniture or crowds. This is concerning, particularly if impacting on footfall.

Access to trader premises comes in for some comment, particularly where there is a change of level and an inadequate or missing ramp. Drivers who park such that they block access to pavements via dropped kerbs are heavily criticised by a significant number of respondents.

The unsafe condition of pavements, outside the Post Office for example, comes top of the list of respondent concerns. The poor surface drainage of the market place, noted particularly at the end of market day and in inclement weather, also attracts attention.

Pavement impediments, such as ground level portable signage, are perceived by some as a problem. This plan supports the efforts of Uppingham Town Council to find an amicable solution, perhaps by encouraging alternative wall mounted signage.

There is praise for the manner in which many traders support shoppers with dementia and generally very positive feedback on Uppingham as an abode for the physically impaired. There is however increasing criticism of inconsiderate parking by disabled drivers and a call for action to address the issue as it is now impacting on local businesses and public safety.

The following issues, and actions to address them, are believed to be relevant to the 19 year period covered by The Plan.

**Issue 15** - The manner in which the High Street is divided by the lorries and other heavy traffic moving North and South on the A6003, impairing the safe flow of shoppers and residents and creating dangers at each junction. Recognition that the situation is likely to deteriorate further given the planned expansion of Corby and the increased importance Corby Station for Rutland/London links (proposed electrification)



**Issue 16** - Evidence backed concern about poor road markings and the rising number of vehicle related incidents in the Market Place. Also the frequent number of vehicles witnessed to be travelling against the one way system and the speed at which some vehicles enter the top end of High Street East.

**Issue 17** - The deteriorating surface and drainage capability of the market place

**Issue 18** - The condition and appearance of the market place toilets

**Issue 19** - The recognition of the Market Place as a key daytime and evening economy asset with calls for its enhancement

**Issue 20** - Outdated street lighting and railings awaiting repair

**Issue 21** - Lack of a covered area to support outdoor events in the Market Place

**Issue 22** - The recognition that further public sector investment is required in the town's conservation area .

**Issue 23** - Given their current exemption from signage regulations, the need to limit the size of vacant property notices, perhaps as part of a new conservation area signage policy

**Issue 24** - The need for more pedestrian signage from Tod's Piece

**Issue 25** - The need for more highway signage to car parking

**Issue 26** - The need to identify more effectively the conservation area

**Issue 27** - The deteriorating state of the Market Place and high street paving for which the Highways Authority has no planned replacement programme

**Issue 28** - The deteriorating condition of the Market Place monument

**Issue 29** - Street and alleyway environment and the need to recognise the mixed residential/business character of Queen Street

**Issue 30** - Unattractive town entrances

**Issue 31** - Obstacles to free movement around the town for all

**Issue 32** - Difficult access to some business premises

**Issue 33** - Inconsiderate parking which is deterring some visitors

After much investigation and research the task group believes these issues are best tackled collectively through the implementation of an Area Action Plan covering the Market Place, High Street, Queen Street and the A6003. The following is proposed:-



### Market Place and A6003 Area Action Plan

**Action 18** - Following a Highway Engineer's Report, create a reduced speed zone between the old cemetery on London Road and the present site of the Uppingham Fire Station. Zone to also cover the Market Place, High Street East and Queen Street. Zone to also cover High Street East and Queen Street

**Action 19** - Within the reduced speed zone resurface with quality materials the A6003 stretching from the southern tip of Baines Corner to just past the entrances to High Street East/West, indicating priority for pedestrians and disability carriages crossing the road. Retain traffic light support for the new crossing. Create matching road surfaces at the Station Road/Spring Back Way and North St East/West junctions. Advise Corby lorry operators of new pedestrian priorities

**Action 20** - Resurface market place in a heritage treatment that complements the new A6003 treatment such as to visually extend the alert of pedestrian movement

**Action 21** - With land owner permission, support Uppingham in Bloom in upgrading and restoring a heritage appearance on Baines Corner incorporating a fibre linked community noticeboard.

**Action 22** - Narrow down the vehicle entrance to the top of High Street East to restrict vehicle entry speed and redesign the kerb edge, traffic flow and parking layout to reduce the risk of collision and maximise capacity.

**Action 23** - With the support of Uppingham in Bloom, remodel the market place kerb edge to create vehicle resistant low planting troughs

**Action 24** - Totally refurbish the Market Place public toilets to bring the facility up to modern standards and remodel to a heritage appearance.

**Action 25** - Complement the RCC decision to renew all street lighting over the next three years by supporting the additional cost of heritage appearance LED lighting

**Action 26** - Negotiate with property owners around the Market Place to place an appropriate number of wall mounted stainless steel eyes enabling decorative triangular weather covers to be used for special events

**Action 27** - Create an all partnership working party to review conservation area signage and the case for environmental improvements in Queen Street

**Action 28** - Consult on the implementation of a voluntary agreement with property agents regarding the desirable size of property marketing boards. Propose a new Neighbourhood Plan Conservation Area Policy if voluntary agreement cannot be reached

**Action 29** - Recognising it as the top public complaint about Uppingham town centre, the implementation of a phased pavement replacement programme utilising heritage materials, commencing with High Street East and the Market Place

**Action 30** - Support the restoration of the market place monument

**Action 31** - Secure landowner permission for a programme of pressure washer cleaning of alleyways

**Action 32** - Identify overgrown path boundary owners and bring to their attention for action

**Action 33** - Secure business sponsorship for each of the town entrances and work with Uppingham in Bloom and relevant contractors/organisations to beautify. Address poor lighting/safety issues in collaboration with the Highways Authority

**Action 34** - Work with Rutland County Council and Uppingham Town Council to identify and remove footpath hazards on an individual basis. Also to identify suitable elements of this plan's proposals for consideration under the Integrated Transport Capital Programme (ITCP)

**Action 35** - Work with identified local businesses to improve building access where appropriate

**Action 36** - Work with RCC enforcement staff and Leicestershire Police to inform inconsiderate parking offenders of the consequences of their actions. Seek enforcement action in cases of non-cooperation.

## **Business Growth, Retail Diversity and Employment Zone Development**

As stated earlier, the town's principal challenge is to stimulate business growth in the context of low unemployment. It must therefore attract employers and create jobs that will encourage the importation of workers. The town needs to attract and retain the 20-40 year age range of resident/employee. Home based working is prevalent in Uppingham empowered by the improving broadband. Business and employment site growth in Uppingham should acknowledge the county wide demand for business start up units and the need to house incoming workers as well as supporting existing business expansion. Mixed use of employment sites may therefore be appropriate to stimulate innovation. This plan's objectives include the creation of work space linked to homes and homes adjacent to business start-up units.

Local employers are currently obliged to attract candidates from a wide area to fill vacant posts. Growth in the high street and higher visitor numbers will only be possible if new vehicular capacity is created and public transport links improved.

The direction of travel on community safety now being dictated by government presents a huge opportunity for Uppingham. The town can demonstrate to the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) its enthusiasm for a joint blue light services approach and the opportunity to be a trail blazer in respect of joint facilities. The relocation of the fire station to the A47 and its enhancement into a joint blue light facility would offer public savings and improve 999 response statistics. The move would also unlock land to allow the town to address one of its most strategic challenges, the need for more long term car parking.

This plan, therefore, recognises and supports the commercial development zones identified in the Uppingham Neighbourhood Plan but adds part of Ayston Road, (from the fire station to the garage) to address the need for a further car park close to the town centre. This proposal is linked to the possibility of remodelling the area's retail/service offer, and the securing of a site for the development of the new joint blue light services response station.

The sustainability of Uppingham will depend upon the growth and maintenance of a diverse and engaging town centre which offers a quality virtual and physical shopping and visitor experience. Current feedback from visitors is predominantly positive and is evidenced in a Market Town Benchmarking study funded jointly by Uppingham First and the Town Council.

The Uppingham Business Forum has supported the strengthening of links between business zones and the town centre, believing future prosperity and diversity can best come from a united business voice and a rejection of the traditional edge of town/centre of town planning divide. This plan aims to strengthen such links and widen choice.

While visitors praise the 98% independent trader characteristics of the high street, task group surveys of residents revealed some concerns about affordability and choice. Some survey respondents identified a commercial opportunity for new traders e.g. children's clothes, while others were very critical of the town's only supermarket and called for a quality competitor. Change in these areas would of course be a commercial decision.

A trend toward Monday closing is noted with concern, especially when it is not complemented by Sunday opening. Vacant business premises, although under 5%, present the opportunity for greater diversity and investment in the town by new types of business. This plan supports action toward that end.

Issues relevant to the town's economic growth and business zone development can be summarised as follows:-

**Issue 34** - The need to attract and house the 20 - 40 year old age group of employee/self employed noting that current Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) policy and programmes do not embody a market town strategy or a specific funding stream to support economic growth in towns such as Uppingham

**Issue 35** - Detailed parking studies undertaken in the past 12 months confirm that off road town centre car parking is at near maximum occupancy on busy days and is now impairing economic growth. The completion of a new 130 delegate conference centre at the heart of the town must only exacerbate the situation

**Issue 36** - No suitable town centre land, with the possible exception of the underused Tod's Piece allotments, remains for car parking without some form of clearance programme

**Issue 37** - Two development company controlled sites have expressed interest in hosting a new joint blue light services building as part of housing initiatives not currently captured by the Uppingham Neighbourhood Plan

**Issue 38** - The Welland Vale Business Zone is proving very popular as a visitor destination and has the potential to address some of the town's retail deficiencies as identified in the task group's survey work

**Issue 39** - The employment and skills potential of the Uppingham Gate Business Zone given its excellent strategic location and linkage to the Uppingham Fibre Network

**Issue 40** - The, as yet unsuccessful, efforts of RCC to interest the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) in supporting a feasibility study on the upgrading of the Station Road Industrial Estate

**Issue 41** - The Uppingham Hopper Bus trial linked the town centre and residential areas to all business zones, but the trial closed at the end of September 2016 causing considerable local concern

**Issue 42** - The current Local and Neighbourhood Plans do not support mixed residential and commercial use at Uppingham Gate.

**Issue 43** - The need to recognise and act upon the differing needs of visitors and residents

**Issue 44** - Consultation respondents' dissatisfaction with some aspects of the Co-op Supermarket

**Issue 45** - The need to strengthen consumer choice and attract more child/family friendly shops

**Issue 46** - The need to create low cost start up opportunities in the high street

**Issue 47** - The opportunity to offer window space opportunities and support for home based start ups and teenage/young aspiring traders

**Issue 48** - Community safety and crime prevention comes top of any survey of resident and business priorities

**Issue 49** - Uppingham Town Council has aspirations to redevelop the site of the present police office

**Issue 50** - Both town and county may benefit from a strategic relocation of the Fire Station



## Business Growth, Retail Diversity and Employment Zone Development Actions

**Action 37** - Seek government support for a requirement that an appropriate element of the LEP annual budget should have regard for the economic development needs of market towns

**Action 38** - Support and influence the further development of the Welland Vale Commercial Zone as a retail centre on the understanding that any additional retail development is complementary to the current retail mix in the high street

**Action 39** - Support the update of the Local and Neighbourhood Plans to permit mixed use on the Uppingham Gate employment site on the understanding that employment start up units, shared working space units or other appropriate business premises will be built at the same time as any agreed housing. Housing to be matched to the local job market skills requirement and/or the skill set relevant to the proposed new commercial premises

**Action 40** - Support the Uppingham Neighbourhood Plan proposal to seek LEP support for an access and modernisation feasibility study at the Station Road Industrial Estate

**Action 41** - Support the relocation of the current fire station to land near the junction of the A6003 with the A47

**Action 42** - Address the high street's number one growth issue (parking) by negotiating the purchase of the current fire station site, enabling the construction of a new long stay car park

**Action 43** - Support the preparation of a business plan to reintroduce the Uppingham Hopper

**Action 44** - Seek the collaboration of government and the LEP in the operation of the Uppingham Vanguard Board

**Action 45** - Launch a Discover Uppingham campaign to attract new trades not yet in the high street

**Action 46** - Sustain the current dialogue with Co-op HQ to share community aspirations

**Action 47** - Conduct a community consultation on the business case for a second or larger supermarket

**Action 48** - Seek funding for an 'aspiring young traders' initiative offering short term physical and virtual sales placements supported by business mentors

**Action 49** - Secure support from interested partners to establish a teenage market in Uppingham

**Action 50** - Prepare the business case for the Police, Fire and Ambulance services to build a new joint blue light facility near the A47 roundabout.

**Action 51** - Build on previous conversations with Leicestershire Police to prepare and promote a local service level agreement to sustain a permanent police presence with power of arrest at the new blue light facility.



## Education Zones

This plan acknowledges the important potential contribution of local centres of learning to the future sustainability of Uppingham. In the period up to 2036 a close working relationship between community, business and education will be essential. The Plan notes and supports the Uppingham School forward plan as presented in a recent public meeting. It also notes the Multi Academy Trust forward development strategy for Uppingham Community College and its aspiration to strengthen links with the community in the fields of sport and the creative arts. The Plan recognises the challenges faced by the town's primary age schools/academies, the age of their buildings and the lack of a sixth form the town can call its own. The Plan task group is also well aware of the limited resource now put into youth leadership in the community and would wish to encourage stronger links with business thereby strengthening community support.

Issues addressed by this plan are:-

**Issue 51** - The desire of UCC to develop two more centres of excellence on their site. A Sports Hall and supporting facilities with community access and a Creative Arts Centre. Also the community desire for an Uppingham based sixth form.

**Issue 52** - The desire of UCC to create a Multi Academy Trust

**Issue 53** - The view held by many that more should be done at town level to support youth leadership activity outside sport

**Issue 54** - The need to create a stronger connection for UCC with the town's technological capability and its infrastructure plans

**Issue 55** - The need to revisit pedestrian safety on the route to UCC.

**Issue 56** - The opportunity to create a Teenage Market and Young Entrepreneur virtual and physical links between schools and the business community. Also adult education and business support for young start ups

**Issue 57** - The restrictive location of the town's two primary schools and the condition of their buildings



### Education Zone Actions

**Action 52** - Support the addition of a further development zone at UCC to facilitate new sport and creative arts hubs

**Action 53** - Support the exploration of improved pedestrian routes to UCC recognising the projected increase of vehicular and pedestrian traffic on the A6003

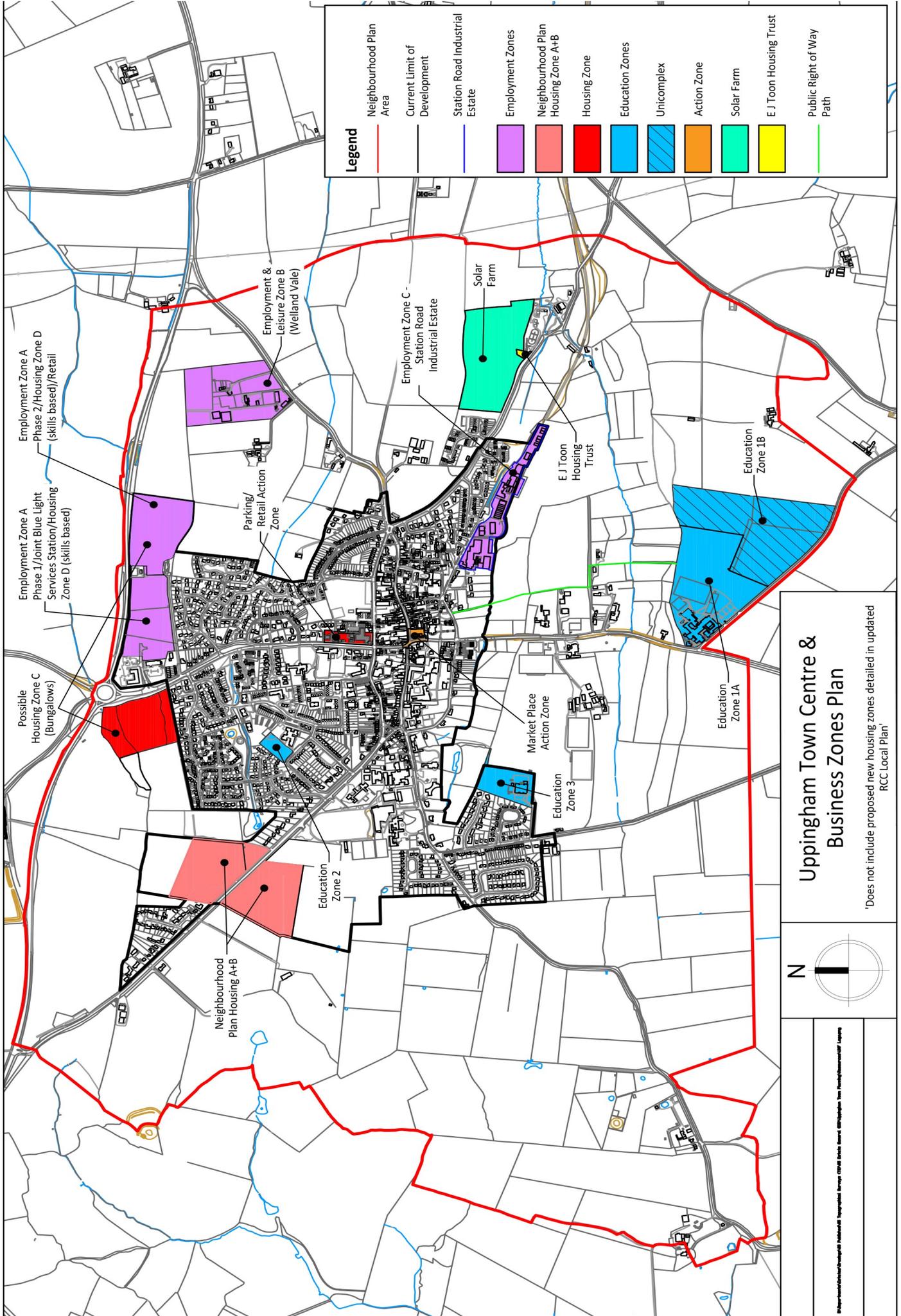
**Action 54** - Support the move toward creating a permanent home for rugby in Uppingham exploring the business benefits and commercial opportunity to promote the town

**Action 55** - Enhance the sustainability and future infrastructure choices of the town's state education institutions by creating optional links to the Uppingham fibre network.

**Action 56** - Promote joint initiatives between the schools, the Business Forum and the Women in the High Street Network to create pathways to business for the next generation of young entrepreneurs

**Action 57** - Given the adequacy of current provision, check at regular intervals the need for an Uppingham based 6th form

**Action 58** - With staff and governors, support the further development of both primary schools exploring possible funding links between new housing and any new centres of learning



## Tod's Piece and the Role of Green Space

This plan recognises Tod's Piece as one of the town's most valuable commercial land assets and an important open space. To date it has tended to be developed piecemeal, the latest addition being the new toilet block and skateboard ramp. Regrettably both have already suffered from vandalism.

During consultation few respondents have recognised the commercial value of Tod's Piece and instead have explored its further development as a public park. It is clear that most do not realise that Uppingham Town Council has given up the exclusive right to determine the area's future. It has dedicated the land to Fields in Trust in the belief this would protect it from further development and attract grants for its further improvement as an open space.

Regrettably, neither belief has proved accurate. The legal agreement transferring the land has a clause in it which enables a land swap if an appropriate commercial offer is made and no grants for its further development have been secured from Fields in Trust.

Given its potential to house major events and its developing infrastructure, Tod's Piece is well placed to make a major contribution to the economic future of the town as well as its social fabric. However, without an agreed masterplan and 100% ownership by the community, the site is vulnerable to inappropriate development.

Following consultation it is clear that a majority in the town wish to see Tod's Piece brought back into greater use (as it was many years ago) and become the venue of choice for some of the town's events. The issues for this plan therefore appear to be:-

**Issue 58** - The loss of self determination on the future of Tod's Piece

**Issue 59** - The lack of a Master Plan for Tod's Piece

**Issue 60** - The land's significant commercial value

**Issue 61** - The land's potential to house major events

**Issue 62** - The need to recognise the aspirations of Uppingham Football Club

**Issue 63** - The strategic location of Tod's Piece



### Tod's Piece and the Role of Green Space Actions

**Action 59** - Take such action as is necessary to recover exclusive community ownership of Tod's Piece by removing the Deed of Dedication to Fields in Trust

**Action 60** - Consult with the Town Council and Uppingham Football Club to prepare a Master Plan for Tod's Piece with a view to protecting and enhancing its facilities enabling the hosting of more community events

## Transport Links, Hub and Parking

Good transport links and adequate parking must be at the heart of any economic development strategy for Uppingham. This plan recognises the need to connect development at the centre of the town to that at its extremities. Indeed, connectivity between all areas of economic, education and social activity is key to this plan for economic growth.

Uppingham has a large percentage of elderly residents many of whom are no longer able to drive. The pilot of an Uppingham Hopper demonstrated the need for affordable and reliable community transport which had connectivity with established bus routes to Oakham, Corby and Leicester and assisted access to the Uppingham Surgery and the High Street.

Despite significant expenditure to make Rutland and Rutland Water a mecca for cyclists and attract the consequential inflow of tourism revenue, there is little evidence to date of benefit to Uppingham. There is an urgent need for a safe cycling route on the A6003 from the A47 roundabout to the Central Garage thereby linking the town centre to the new yellow path winding its way north toward Oakham.



This plan supports the call for the further enhancement of the bus transport hub at Tod's Piece/The Coop, the redesign of the oval roundabout at the bottom of the high street and the provision of a long distance coach stop and daytime parking provision for visiting/school coaches. It also supports the current effort to retain a commercial bus service to Leicester.

As stated elsewhere in The Plan, a forward looking parking strategy is crucial to the town's future economic growth. A change of parking culture and philosophy is required. Progress must be made on the local control of parking and a modernisation strategy to improve the North Street car parks appearance and operating technology implemented. If the state sector is not able to deliver this, then this Plan supports the creation of a corporate entity or social enterprise to do so.



This plan supports the Town Council and Business Forum strategy of attracting the growing market of electric car tourists. During the life of this plan, low carbon vehicles will be moving to induction charging and number plate recognition of user accounts. The period will also see the arrival of driverless cars. The town needs to respond when the time is right. This

plan supports the creation of the UK's first Electric Trail for low carbon vehicles in Rutland with Uppingham as its southern gateway.

The proprietor of the town's garage has indicated ongoing commitment to Uppingham but confirmed an intention of maximising the commercial value of the present site, perhaps enhancing its offer. Hence its inclusion in the proposed Ayston Road Development Zone. This may provide the opportunity to review the movement of pedestrians around this critical junction. The problem of heavy lorries thundering through Uppingham day and night with a significant increase expected during the next 20 years is dealt with elsewhere in The Plan.

**Issue 64** - The need for permanent integrated community transport to link residential areas to the high street, schools, business zones and doctors' surgery

**Issue 65** - The infrequent or missing community transport links with surrounding villages and cities

**Issue 66** - The need to improve the currently congested transport hub outside the Co-op

**Issue 67** - The need for a long distance coach stop integrated with local bus routes

**Issue 68** - The need for day time and overnight coach parking

**Issue 69** - The lack of suitable, cost effective, all day parking for business owners

**Issue 70** - The poor appearance of present car parks

**Issue 71** - The need for more enlightened and welcoming parking enforcement

**Issue 72** - The need to improve pedestrian safety in the area of the town's garage

**Issue 73** - The need for a cycle path along Ayston Road together with some seating and additional lighting

**Issue 74** - The need to redesign the much disliked and potentially dangerous roundabout at the cricket pavilion



### Transport Links, Hub and Parking Actions

**Action 61** - Take action to create community transport for Uppingham

**Action 62** - Revisit the Uppingham 2025 design for a bus terminus fully integrated with Tod's Piece

**Action 63** - Agree with developers that a long distance coach stop be created at Uppingham Gate

**Action 64** - Develop a suitable coach park with help of a local landowner

**Action 65** - Create a community owned social enterprise to acquire and manage off street parking

**Action 66** - Pursue the redesign by RCC of the cricket pavilion roundabout

**Action 67** - Incorporate a new 'town to bypass' cycle path along Ayston Road into the design of the area's new development zone

**Action 68** - Work with RCC and Uppingham in Bloom to improve public car park appearance

## Tourism, Marketing and Events

This plan recognises Uppingham's heritage as a wonderful place to live, visit, work, study and play. It also acknowledges the commercial profile already secured by a number of leading businesses with physical and virtual customers. However, it can be argued that a great deal remains to be done to promote the town's unique offer. To ensure economic growth and a prosperous future more needs to be done to acknowledge its key attributes: its predominantly independent retailer offer; antique, art, book and heritage crafts visitor experience; potential for a long weekend; its outstanding location; proximity to the cities of Leicester and Peterborough and the Eyebrook and Rutland Water reservoirs. The town also has a new role as the southern entrance to the imminent Rutland Electric Trail. Its potential as a walking/cycling route stop over is capable of further development.

Past publicity of the town's potential for new businesses appears to have been minimal except for a little undertaken by RCC. The marketing of Uppingham as part of the county's tourism offer has traditionally been as the smaller of the two market towns with limited facilities, an attractive high street, a public school and more recently an excellent heritage trail. Economic sustainability requires much more and a greater self determination. The Plan, therefore, seeks to address these issues.

The centre of Uppingham, and its market place in particular, has long had a role as a venue for community and commercial events despite being a public highway and subject to road traffic legislation. Underwritten by an ancient charter, the Town Council licenses the Market Place from its owner, Rutland County Council, and earns considerable income from running the regular Friday Market. Events such as the annual Fatstock Show are part of the town's heritage and enjoy considerable community support. More problematic for the town's commercial future is the week long travelling annual fair.



Market Place parking is a vital component of the town's economic success and would benefit from improvement. Road closures and events impact upon those residents who live in the town centre. Effective communication and public consultation on any closure is therefore very important as is the frequency of events, noise levels and start/finish times. Many consultation respondents have called for the greater community use of Tod's Piece in collaboration with the football club for local events, retaining market place parking at the same time. The new construct of the

August Fete, Flower and Produce Show is an exemplar in this respect.

The potential role of the Market Place for start up trading opportunities and as the inaugural site of a future teenage market is worthy of consideration in the community's efforts to empower the next generation of Uppingham entrepreneurs.

Issues particularly recognised by The Plan include:-



**Issue 75** - The need to engage more fully with the county's tourism initiatives enhancing perception of the Uppingham offer. This to include development of the town's walking and cycling potential

**Issue 76** - The need to highlight the town's independent trader offer in future marketing literature

**Issue 77** - The need to acknowledge visitor requests for portable guidance around the town's cultural and creative skills retail offer

**Issue 78** - The need to create coherent and mobile friendly visitor support mechanisms

**Issue 79** - The need to promote further the town within UK, EU and international markets as a high quality of life location for potential employers in the fields of manufacturing, technology, healthcare and commercial services

**Issue 80** - The need to further promote the town as a conference and event centre

**Issue 81** - The need to attract a greater share of the county's visitor spend

**Issue 82** - The lack of a full time tourist office

**Issue 83** - The need to protect and enhance the Market Place as a vital component of the town's economic future

**Issue 84** - The economic impact of lost car parking spaces during the annual travelling fair

**Issue 85** - The desirability of holding road closure events on a Sunday

**Issue 86** - Ensuring suitable trading access opportunities for young and first time start-ups

**Issue 87** - The community desire to see greater use of Tod's Piece for community events

**Issue 88** - The need to acknowledge the work of the Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) and its potential contribution to the Uppingham environment and tourism

### **Tourism, Events and Marketing Actions**

**Action 69** - Seek appropriate representation in tourism and marketing structures including those directed at walking and cycling.

**Action 70** - Support the creation of the Virtual High Street Portal and the Uppingham App

**Action 71** - Strengthen the trade branding of Uppingham as 'independent'

**Action 72** - Create a new Antiques, Arts, Books and Creative Craft Visitor Experience supported by a virtual and paper visitor map. Also the UK's first electric car trail.

**Action 73** - Design a new advert/brand image to market Uppingham internationally that might be included in commercial virtual and physical literature by collaborative agencies and employers

**Action 74** - Collaborate with appropriate voluntary agencies and organisations to create a visitor reception centre linked to the return of the Uppingham Hopper and local support for parking management

**Action 75** - Explore improving the travelling fair's profitability and capacity by relocating it to a less damaging location and offering it marketing support. Alternatively seek a reduction in its negative economic impact on some businesses

**Action 76** - Support the concept of 'most major town centre events requiring a road closure' being on a Sunday

**Action 77** - Seek all community group support for a Neighbourhood Forum Code of Conduct for events requiring a road closure

**Action 88** - Explore with the local committee of the CPRE economic actions that would enhance the Uppingham environment and promote the economic development of the town as a tourism centre.

# Summary

The Task Group has spent considerable time determining the content of this plan and its proposals for action.

Uppingham Town Council, Uppingham Business Forum, residents groups, the Church, Uppingham Town Partnership, Uppingham Neighbourhood Forum, Uppingham in Bloom, local traders, Uppingham First and the County Council have contributed to its make up.

Not all of the ideas put forward have made it into this edition. Some have been rejected following further public feedback. Also, for example, the town still strives to attract the interest of a second major bank following the departure of HSBC.

This version also excludes more radical proposals, principally on the grounds of cost. These include tunnelling to send the A6003 under Uppingham, the creation of a north south bypass and the building of an underground car park below Tod's Piece. However, all three of these approaches to vehicle management have been successfully implemented in a number of other European towns.

The Task Group has taken the view that the proposals in The Plan must be realistically achievable from both an economic and social perspective within its 19 year time frame.

Of one thing the Task Group is sure. For Uppingham to prosper in the future, it cannot remain unchanged or stand still. Some respondents to earlier consultation called for 'no change'. Such a choice would, we believe, damage the long term economic future of the town.

The Task Group would like to thank everyone who has helped create the Plan and contributed to amendments. Your efforts have attracted praise from a variety of local, regional and national agencies. It is now proposed to seek funding for an independent costing of the proposed major actions. Success in this matter will enable publication in its final form complete with supporting Databook.

## Task Group Members

Cllr David Ainslie: Edward Baines (Chair): Peter Baker: Andrew Dighton (retired)

Cllr Cornelius Vincent-Enright (till late 2016): Cllr Stephen Rozak (From March 2017)

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## **Existing Literature and Sources of Reference**

### **Literature**

BE Group Employment Land Assessment Update—Jan 2016

Economic Growth Strategy 2014 - 2021 - Rutland County Council

The Future of Small Towns: Challenges and Opportunities - AMT Towns Alive

Rutland ... A great Place to do Business - Rutland County Council

Rutland Retail Capacity Assessment ... 2013 Update

Complexity of Town Centres - British Retail Consortium

Why our High Streets Still Matter - Mary Portas

Town Centre Futures - Association of Town Centre Managers

The Emerging Rutland Local Plan

Rutland Together Culture and Leisure Strategy 2013-2016

The Uppingham Neighbourhood Plan

The Uppingham Parish Plan

Uppingham 2025 - Uppingham First

### **Consultation Questionnaires**

Business Survey: Family Survey: Market Trader Survey: Resident Survey: Visitor Survey

2015 Town Benchmarking Surveys

Parking space occupancy - January to December 2015 - Uppingham First

### **Conversations and Consultation with**

Uppingham Business Forum

Uppingham Neighbourhood Forum

Retailers of Uppingham

Directors of Uppingham First

Portfolio Holder and Economic Development Officer - Rutland County Council

Planning and Highways Departments of Rutland County Council

A range of relevant landowners, developers, property owners, public service agencies and local businesses

### **Research Visits to**

A variety of UK and European Market Towns

Consultants - People and Places

Revive and Thrive events

Locality, CTA and NCVO

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