Basingstoke Top of the Town Second Stakeholder Workshop  
(22 January 2014)  

Consolidated Comments from workshop  

1. Do you support the Vision promoted for the Top of the Town?  

Positive feedback  
• Good concept and thinking  
• Agreement on the vision generally - but now to make it happen  

Top of Town - an asset to Basingstoke  
• ‘Basingstoke Old Town’  
• Value of independent shops  
• Challenge how to get people to cooperate and deal with empty shops  
• Like outside eating/café idea  
• But some parts of Top of the Town are an eyesore (eg rear of McDonalds)  

Festival Place  
• Encouraged by engagement and link with Festival place  

Movement  
• Need plenty of car parking - business permits for parking and residents  
• May be some willingness of business users to walk about half a mile from car parks outside the town centre to within the town centre  
• Would be good not to funnel people into Wote Street- get people using Church Street etc  
• Like idea of pay as you leave car parking (currently a bit restrictive)  

Concerns  
• Resurfacing works affect businesses  
• More immediate ‘action’ objectives  
• Presumption that ‘modern’ TC was okay  
• Identification of investment  
• What can BDBC put into delivery  

2. The concept master plan promotes a series of ‘early win’ projects for Top of Town- Do you support these?  

A. Early win projects: Physical projects  
Better signage needed  
• Lots of people don’t go out of Festival Place  
• Welcome to Top of Town sign - ‘Church Street this way’  
• Naming walks a good idea  
• Top of Town ‘name was chosen by a bicycle shop – sounds like an ‘extra’  
• Suggest a more historic name or ‘Basingstoke Old Town’  

Market  
• More room to have market in Top of the Town and is public
Creative / public spaces
• Performance- seating needed to allow for this / a stage
• Create link to Fairfield Creation Space
• Make Caston’s Walk more attractive through artwork
• Need more water features in the town centres

Access
• Disabled parking needed nearer
• Improving visual access from New Road is good
• Improve north-south links (railway to TOTT)
• Enhance entrance to Festival Place on Church Street
• Connection to War Memorial Park supported

Other
• Would council consider buying back vacant properties to develop them - more confident if we owned them (Antonelli’s)
• Variety of views on toilet blocks from ‘more needed’ to remove toilets on Caston’s yard

Concerns
• Does not focus on retail areas of TOTT

B. Early win projects: Movement

Access by bus
• Bus review is ongoing
• Hard to get to TOTT if you come by bus - no clear path, only one stop
• No stops on New Street / back of Joyce’s Yard
• Bus station could become another stop for park and ride
• Potential to create a loop route with the Park and Ride

Parking
• Needs to be simple
• Flat rate fee
• Pay on exit
• May be difficult if car park is far away from businesses
• Need to ensure businesses can still receive deliveries

Cycling
• Cycling in pedestrian area should be allowed
• Bike park within Memorial Park- not secure? Should be well lit
• More cycling parking (secure, signage)

More efficient movement
• Is there scope for a town centre car share service?
• Don’t like traffic down London Street although there may be the possibility of out-of-hours access

C. Early win projects: Generating activity

Events and performance
• Culture and art- important attractor
• Have more music events
• Events - budget is critical, council must invest in culture – this is critical
• Need an outdoor performance platform in ToTT
• Need more festivals
• Get theatre to come out onto the streets

Market
• Market could be extended down London Street and Winchester Street
• Yes to specialist markets - more food markets, Christmas markets, vintage pop-ups
• Farmers market- regular traders don't like it - involve them

Eating and drinking
• Haymarket spin offs- needs a café
• Café in town hall
• Al fresco dining

Other
• Advertising of Saturday parking in Eastland
• Offer incentives for start up businesses

Concerns
• Business rates are too high

3. Do you support the ambitions to remodel the southern end of Festival Place to create a better interface with Top of the Town?

• Yes, supportive
• Get rid of Wote Street ‘funnel’
• Make it more attractive when leaving
• Need to improve the part of Church Street next to St. Michaels Church and the connection over the footbridge
• Important to create a retail loop
• Wall of smoke’ is a barrier

4. The concept masterplan promotes development of a multi-storey car park on the Southern Road site allowing other car park sites to be developed (Central car park, Albert Yard and Caston Yard). Do you support this?

Yes, generally supportive
• A MSCP on New Road is generally supported although there should be some parking on Central Car Park
• Multi-storey - open, bright, easy to drive around in, not tight spaces
• Design of car park is critical- can there be multi-use on ground? Active frontages?
• But also give consideration to businesses that have visitors
• Short stay and easy drop off points
• Link to car park is important

Concerns
• Concerns about temporary loss of car parking spaces but would be negated by longer term opportunities
• Could create traffic issues
• Potential issues with residents
5. **The concept masterplan promotes a transformation of New Road with two way working and development to either side. Do you support this?**

- Yes - supportive – for some this was the main priority
- One way people go to fast
- Historically this was possible
- Change name back to Victorian Name
- Buses could come into this area - better perception, means people would come into Basingstoke
- Issue with Winchester Road Junction - would need though as it is very tight
- Significant visual improvement
- Less of service yard feel
- Creation of better public realm
- Providing ‘on street’ parking

6. **Are there any other development opportunities that we have missed?**

**Parking**
- Central car park - can it have underground car park?
- Need an MSCP on Central Car Park

**Existing character**
- Ensure old buildings are protected and character is preserved
- Look at older town

**Promoting existing assets**
- What about doing something with the existing stock
- Lots of shops there that people don’t know about
- Visually or from brand perspective - connect wider town centre area
- Ensure that vacant shops are occupied as soon as possible – pop-up uses

**Security**
- Permanent security / police presence in London Street- lots of drunks day or night (can be a bit off putting)
- Impact of shelter?

**Other**
- More greenery and trees is good and welcome
- Need more residential development to get more people into the centre
- Need units to open up on May Place

**Research**
- What have other ‘towns’ done? Within and outside UK?
- More research to look at what you do provide around New Street / New Road

7. **How can Top of the Town be better promoted and marketed?**

**Promotion**
- What is Basingstoke known for?
- Change of name for Top of the Town
• Unify town centre
• ‘Basingstoke’ and ‘Quarters’ Old Town
• Radio / TV adverts
• Promotion and signage at train station / car park / bus station
• Web site - invest and kept up to date - What's on section
• Videos and images on website, show people eating out etc - 3D drawings and virtual walk
• Wifi
• Theatre packages, restaurant offers
• Information for locals and visitors
• Need events on particular dates to develop a rhythm of events
• RE-open Tourist Information

Shops
• Shop front improvement
• Refresh design codes before offering shop front improvement funding
• Halifax and Debenhams is bleak
• Use Burberry as part of marketing
• Link to shops on website - would allow shops without website to have presence
• Panel or something that includes list of shops

Signage and movement strategy
• Proper linked up signage between Festival Place and within town luring you out of Festival Place
• App for residents and visitors - when next market is on etc
• Touch screen maps with businesses

8. How can the town Centre Forum help the regeneration of Top of the Town?

Communication
• Talk to people
• Contact point, news feed, web site
• Keep talking to businesses
• Online consultations
• Opportunity to print off a flyer to give to customers
• Managing expectation
• Listening to what forum and members say
• Could get a member along to Town Centre Forum

Businesses
• Attract large multi-nationals to forum
• Business rates - how do they compare to other locations - bench marking

Other
• Prioritisation - understanding what you can / can’t do, the right order, where does the money go first?
• Have high end restaurant and bars, specialist retailers, nice bakery / patisseries / fish to attract affluent people to come here instead of Basingstoke