

From: [REDACTED]  
Subject: Local Plan and a possible usp for northampton  
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Dear Sir / Madam

I have a general comment or two about direction of the local plan for Northampton which I hope are of interest to you

I fully accept housing and large scale planning are the most important, but Ive restricted comments to a potential USP for Northampton.

With one caveat ..

Transport! the town is already at gridlock, the air quality of often challenging and transport is more than key. I appreciate its a county council issue but Northampton will struggle to realise its potential (which is significant) without a coherent, into the evening useful transport offer.

Northampton's USP

It would be good to see some serious thinking into Northampton's significant potential as a centre for high quality independent and build up businesses of all kinds including specialist retail (clothing through food and experiential) and skilled manufacturing so it's great to see a primary option is to protect industrial use. We could compete with MK and Rushden Lakes if we were the destination of speccilist shopping backed up by a grade A dept store, or perhaps an emporium approach. We have an urban housing landscape where comparatively affordable housing frequently comes with end of garden workshops / offices / studios !!!! Throughout the whole county - such vast untapped marketing potential

This would set us apart and actually be true to history. This kind of economy spends the disposable income locally, so has a big generally hidden, local economic impact. It also follows all the indicators of national retail / online shopping and brand development - where niche is king. The high st is now about much more than shopping, but for northampton to realise its potential, it must attract a higher socio/economic footfall to the town centre and reverse what is an appalling reputation of same to even long standing residents.

A vast number of the working population do not attend a 9-5 office situation and need flexible workspace. Not only does Northampton have the build environment for this ( buildings with character) but the potential to become a significant showspace (3-6 month let for existing trading businesses ) being only 50 minutes from Euston and Birmingham.

The proposed developments at the old bus station and chronicle sites are a massive wasted opportunity for the town with the proposals yet again aiming at the bottom end of possibility. Why aren't we looking a flexible event / exhibition / mini conference space ? Or really imaginative leisure use? Both sites are right on the edge of a unique urban landscape which could eb teased back into life for creatives / light industrial / similar?

Northampton town centre could be stunning - some good work is happening around the empty shops scheme and the international leather centre, the new hotels and new restaurants which the populous can't see yet but is a good start.

And please someone stop the **dreadful** marketing coming out of the BID marketing! In fact way better marketing of what's already here could go a long way and perhaps a scheme or two to trial this in partnership / with advice from national agencies. But the borough has to clean up the centre, encourage a more brand diverse centre and start to change the night time economy.

When you look up to the first floor in Northampton you see what it could be ..

Many thanks for the opportunity of commenting

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