



REPORT FOR DECISION

Item No:- FC23/053

Committee:-	Finance and Governance Committee
Date:-	22 <sup>nd</sup> November 2023
Author:-	Martin Hammond, Clerk
Report Title:-	Bench and Planters, Silver St, Kettering
Wards Affected:-	William Knibb

**1. Purpose of Report**

To seek approval to install a bench and adopt some planters on land off Silver St Kettering, to improve the look of the are and prevent unauthorised parking

**2. Recommendations**

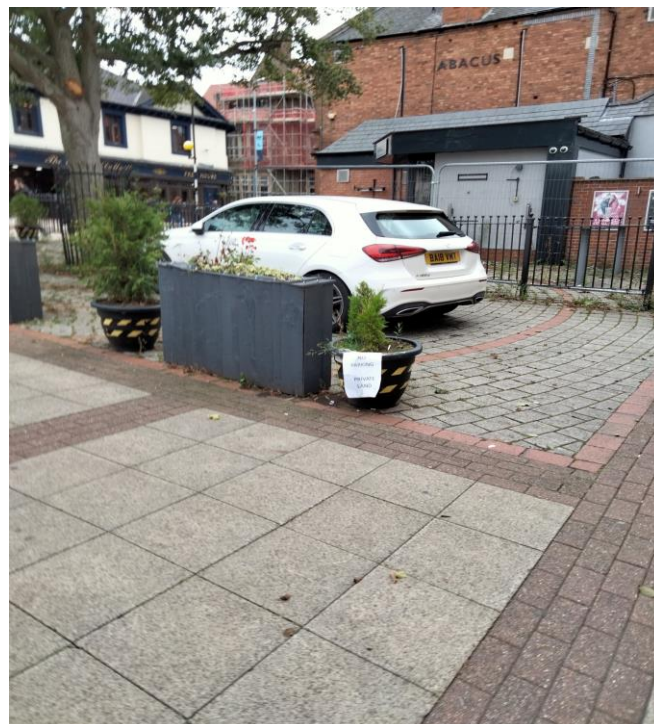
Members' instructions are requested.

**3. Information**

3.1. The map below shows a site in the centre of town which originally formed part of a larger public open space, some of which was leased to the former Abacus public house, to provide them with an external area for their customers to use. Abacus fenced off the area and the remaining space has continued to be publicly accessible, if a little run down in appearance. The remaining space is shown in blue on the map below.



- 3.2. Members may be aware that, earlier this year, Planning Committee raised concerns about the abuse of this space because it was in constant use for car parking, despite the granting of both a planning consent and a pavement licence for use by the adjacent business, Just Pizza, as an adjunct to their business. The area is bordered by double yellow lines and its use for parking is also contrary to the PSPO for Kettering town centre. The area, furthermore, was signed as private land when no licence to use it was in place with the landowner, NNC.
- 3.3. In September, Just Pizza renewed its pavement licence and this Council pointed out that the licence had gone un-used to that point, and that the space appeared to be only used for car parking. The licensing authority applied a condition to the pavement licence prohibiting the use of the space for parking and in the meantime, NNC began the process of agreeing a licence with Just Pizza for use of their land.
- 3.4. It was nevertheless considered a risk that the space would continue to be used for parking. (To date, the issue of parking fines had not discouraged its use.) It was suggested that the strategic location of a bench on the land would prevent parking taking place there. NNC have agreed to issue a licence to the Town Council if it wished to place a bench there.
- 3.5. The land is also currently bordered by planters which were placed there by Abacus. Abacus subsequently went out of business and the planters are therefore orphaned and not being cared for. Given that the Council is exploring the possibility of taking on town centre planting schemes, it might be possible to assume responsibility for the full size planters (not the small domestic ones) as part of that service. The picture below, (which also shows the parking and the unauthorised sign), shows one of the six larger planters in place.



- 3.6. Any bench would be located on the side nearest to Just Pizza and would not interfere with the siting of tables and chairs covered by the renewed pavement licence. An example of an appropriate style of bench is shown below. This one costs £550 and broadly matches the planters. Installation would be extra and there would be some maintenance costs to consider.



#### **4. Consultation and Engagement**

- 4.1. NNC has been consulted and is happy to issue a licence for the siting of the bench and the continued siting of the planters.
- 4.2. Consultation with Just Pizza would need to be undertaken.

#### **5. Finance, Legal and Resource Implications**

- 5.1. The cost of the bench can be met from the community infrastructure fund, which has £13,000 remaining, just over half of which is committed.
- 5.2. The cost of maintaining the large planters would need to be discussed with NNC as part of the assumption of the town centre planting scheme costs. The smaller containers would be disposed of.

#### **6. Climate change implications**

The bench should ideally be made from recycled materials. The one illustrated in the report is made from 98% recycled materials.

## **7. Policy Implications**

The Council's policy is to support the town centre and one way of doing so is to improve its appearance. This particular location is less than ideal in terms of visual amenity and will only get worse if parking continues there and the planters remain neglected.

### Background Papers

- Email correspondence with NNC as licensing authority, landowner, highways authority and planning authority, including with NNC councillors and KTC Councillors
- Minutes of Planning Committee 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2023

