Bassetlaw Local Plan - Statement from Retford Civic Society October 2022

Matter 9 - Retail and Town Centres

Issue 9.9.2

In its October 2021 submission the Civic Society explained why the Primary Shopping Area should be extended to include Cannon Square. This is the historic centre of commercial activity in the town and is still mainly in retail uses. Its exclusion has not been explained by the Council.

Despite objections from the Civic Society and others, in 2019 the Council permitted change of use to flats of the ground floor of the former Yates bar at 4 Chapelgate. Work on this is now underway. It will result in windows to living rooms being introduced at street level, interrupting the visual and functional continuity of commercial uses and diluting the attractiveness of the area for shoppers and those seeking town centre services. The loss of this building from commercial use harms the character and function of this important part of the town centre and is indicative of what could happen if the area remains outside the primary shopping area.

Cannon Square meets the criteria for inclusion in the primary shopping area. It has a mix of retail and service uses but retailing occupies a similar proportion of the premises as in The Square and on Market Street which are within the designated area. Its designation would make it easier to protect the area's character and retail function, and avoid the area being diluted by too many non-retail uses which would erode its retail function and weaken the town centre as a whole.

A proposed main modification to the Plan would weaken the protection available in the Primary Shopping Area by confining it to Class Ea uses. This modification would make it easy to get round Policy ST14 by temporarily introducing a non-retail Class E use. Nonetheless, some control over the uses in the Primary Shopping Area would remain and extending the designation to Cannon Square would help achieve something worthwhile – protection of the character and function of this important part of the town centre.