

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **CABINET**

DATE: **TUESDAY, 18 DECEMBER 2012**

REPORT BY: **DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT**

SUBJECT: **TOWNS CAPITAL INVESTMENT**

1.00 **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.01 To inform Members of the range of current capital investment programmes that will benefit the town centres in Flintshire.

2.00 **BACKGROUND**

2.01 Nationally, town centre businesses continue to face a very challenging economic environment, in part due to long term changes in shopping patterns, in particular, from growing competition from out of town retail parks, supermarkets and internet retailing, in addition to the ongoing recession. Flintshire towns have not been exempt from this process but have, in general, suffered less than many comparable areas, with fewer vacant units than the national average and levels of footfall generally remaining stable.

2.02 Town centres in Flintshire have been identified as a strategic priority for the Council in the Strategic Assessment of Risks and Challenges (CL10 – County Town Network Regeneration and Protection) and are highlighted strongly as priorities in both the Community Strategy 2009-2019 and the Flintshire Regeneration Strategy 2009-2020.

2.03 There are a number of investment programmes in place that generate benefit to the towns in Flintshire but that are not part of the traditional town regeneration funding. This report provides a summary of these investment programmes.

3.00 **CONSIDERATIONS**

3.01 The various programmes outlined in this report represent a significant injection of external funding into the County and into the towns. In some cases, Council funds are used to lever in these resources. For example, the European Regional Development Fund project for town centre regeneration includes approximately £1.8m of capital and revenue of funding, facilitated by £262,500 of Council capital funding, a return of 686%.

3.02 The Flintshire Regeneration Partnership and the Town Partnerships have an important role to play to provide co-ordination between these strands of investment. The Town Partnerships each have a different structure in place to manage their activities and provide effective governance. In the Deeside towns, due to the overlapping programmes and the development potential arising from the Deeside Enterprise Zone, a new unified partnership and governance structure is being developed to co-ordinate the approach to regeneration.

3.03 The purpose of each investment programme is summarised below.

Programme	Description	Value
Rural Development Plan (RDP) property grants 2012-2014	Providing grants to High Street property owners, in our rural towns towards visual improvements to their premises. Mold and Holywell are town centres covered by the RDP.	£150,000
RDP streetscape projects 2012-2014	To improve the appearance and function of the streetscape in Mold and Holywell.	£200,000
Other RDP funding	The programme runs until 2014 and most funds are now committed. The different projects in the RDP have supported activity in communities across rural Flintshire including Mold and Holywell.	For 2011-14 the total value of the programme excluding the above elements is £4,634m
Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) 2012-2015	To provide property grants to regenerate important properties in conservation areas and facilitate new uses for them. The programme currently covers Holywell and Flint; the Holywell THI finishes this year and the Flint THI will run until at least 2017/2018.	£1,665,000
Neighbourhood Renewal Area 2012/2013	Improves the physical environment and the condition of private sector properties. The NRA has been designated around Deeside, where there is a significant cluster of poor quality housing.	£800,000
European Regional	The ERDF Property Grant scheme is to be launched in	£800,000

Development Fund (ERDF) Property Grants 2012-2015	December 2012 to bring vacant High Street properties back into active employment use. For the purpose of the Table below it has been assumed to be evenly spread.	
Housing Renewal projects (FCC capital programme – current year)	Renovations to private sector properties, especially for the most vulnerable residents.	£459,000
TAITH 2012-13	Improvements to the transport infrastructure especially for sustainable transport development and road safety projects.	£520,000
ERDF streetscape projects 2012-2015	The ERDF streetscape funding, matched by the Council's capital programme, will be invested in priority projects arising from the long term plans developed for each town under the Town Action Plan programme.	£1,302,500
FCC Capital Programme for Town Centres 2012-2015	Will complement the ERDF streetscape projects above to invest in projects from the town centre long term plans that are not eligible for ERDF.	£651,315

- 3.04 It is anticipated that, in towns with stronger development interest, private sector funding will be attracted as part of developer proposals. For example, in Buckley, the Co-operative have recently agreed to contribute £200,000 towards streetscape improvements.
- 3.05 In Flint, the regeneration of the town centre will be driven to a large extent by the redevelopment of the maisonettes. This housing investment, guided by the Flint masterplan, will generate extensive regeneration benefits to the town. The other regeneration programmes will be used to invest in complementary elements of the masterplan.
- 3.06 The funding under the ERDF streetscape and FCC town centre capital programmes will be allocated using criteria that reflect the priorities of the Council and the requirements of the funding programmes. As a minimum, projects will be expected to:
- implement the agreed long terms plans for each town;
 - offer good value for money and bring tangible benefits to the town

- centre; and
- be sustainable in the long term.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.01 That the capital investment programmes benefiting towns in Flintshire are noted.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.01 No new implications arising from this report; each programme is already built into Council budgets where required.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

6.01 Town centres play a key role in providing accessible goods and services for those most vulnerable.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

7.01 The investment programmes outlined in this report will make improvements to sustainable transport links, the quality of the built environment, heritage assets and the energy performance of buildings, especially housing.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.01 The investment programmes identified will help local service centres remain viable. These centres provide vital locally based services, especially to those without access to private transport. Some of the investment programme listed above specifically target support to the most vulnerable households in Flintshire.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.01 None.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

10.01 Consultation with stakeholders is undertaken in each town for each project undertaken. The ongoing consultation with partnerships also helps to maintain good communication between stakeholders.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 Considerable consultation has been undertaken in each town throughout the process so far, with two rounds of workshops held in most towns and more detailed consultation on the various masterplans as they have been developed.

12.00 **APPENDICES**

12.01 None.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985
BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

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