

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

DATE: **WEDNESDAY, 22 JANUARY 2014**

REPORT BY: **ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
FACILITATOR**

SUBJECT: **TOWN CENTRES, HIGH STREETS AND RETAIL
AREAS**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 To consider how the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee can undertake a review of Town Centre and High Street regeneration.

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 At the Forward Work Programme planning session held in July 2013 Members of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee requested that the Committee give further consideration to exploring new ways to enhance our town centres and high streets. Members also requested that Broughton be included as part of the review.

2.02 Cllr Matt Wright, Chair of the Committee convened a meeting on the 12th of December with Cllr Paul Shotton, Vice Chair, Cllr Derek Butler, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, David Heggarty, Head of Regeneration and Margaret Parry-Jones, Scrutiny Facilitator. All agreed that a considerable amount of good work was already taking place across Flintshire. It was also agreed that this was something which the Committee would be able to assist with.

2.03 At the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the 22nd May 2013 a presentation on Tourism in Flintshire was received. At the meeting comments were made regarding the need to rejuvenate town centres and the potential negative impact on tourism in Flintshire of visitors travelling on the old coast road. Additionally the need to review designated town centres with the aim of creating more sustainable town centre core areas and the need for more planning, marketing and investment was raised.

2.04 In September 2012, the Committee received a report informing Members of the progress made in developing and implementing Town Action Plans (TAPs) across eight towns in the County :-

- Buckley
- Connah's Quay

- Flint
- Holywell
- Mold
- Queensferry
- Saltney
- Shotton.

- 2.05 The Committee have received updates as part of the Quarterly Performance Report – Regeneration including:-
- Progress with the Flint Masterplan and how long term plans are in place for most town centres in Flintshire
 - The Streetscape Improvement Grant initiative funded through the Rural Development Plan
 - The Business Enhancement Scheme which was launched in February 2013 and is designed to tackle vacant premises on the High Streets in Flintshire and runs until mid 2014
- 2.06 The Quarter 4 report (January to March 2013) stated that “Progress is being made through the Town Action Plan programme in developing long term plans for each centre. However, the long term future of our town centres remains challenging and, although town centres in Flintshire are generally out-performing the national average, continued effort will be needed to help them to adapt to a changing world”.
- 2.07 The Council adopted a new style improvement plan in July 2013 which is aligned to the new three year Outcome Agreement and focuses on the priorities which are expected to have the most impact. We received the first of the new style Improvement Plan Monitoring Reports in November 2013 which reports on progress for sub priority Town and Rural Regeneration - Making local communities viable.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.01 At the meeting held on the 12th of December all agreed that it was important to undertake a corporate review of the many different elements involved in developing and maintaining vibrant town centres and high streets. The group felt that a joined up approach was needed across the Council including planning, housing, social enterprise and working with the many stakeholders which are listed in appendix 1.

There is a considerable amount of information and research available to inform a review if undertaken. Some suggested documents are listed in appendix 1.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Environment Overview & Scrutiny agree to undertake a Scrutiny Review of Town Centres & High Streets as outlined in the report and appendix 1.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None arising directly from this report.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

None arising directly from this report.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

None arising directly from this report.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

None arising directly from this report.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

None arising directly from this report.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

Publication of this report constitutes consultation.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

Publication of this report constitutes consultation.

12.00 APPENDICES

Project Plan for Review of Town Centres and High Streets

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None.

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