

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **EXECUTIVE**

DATE: **27 MARCH 2012**

REPORT BY: **DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT**

SUBJECT: **BUCKLEY PUBLIC REALM DESIGN**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 To inform Members about the public realm design work undertaken in Buckley, which follows on from, and supports, the Buckley Masterplan. Its role is to set a standard for the future regeneration of the town and ensure any future developments are integrated with the existing town centre and contribute to an improved public realm.

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 The Buckley Masterplan was approved by Executive in May 2011. The Masterplan provides an evidence-based framework to guide future development for the town and contains a mix of short, medium and long term actions and aspirations designed to help create a strong, vibrant and sustainable town centre.

2.02 The key focus for the Masterplan is to explore the options for strengthening the town's convenience (food) retail offer, through the provision of a new medium sized store in the town centre. However, the Masterplan goes further than just addressing the food retail need, and provides a strategy for improvement and investment right across the town centre.

2.03 The development options identified in the Masterplan provide a significant opportunity and potential stimulus for wider change and public realm enhancement. The purpose of this public realm design work is to provide a benchmark and set key design principles for the quality expected for any future environmental and public realm enhancements. Whilst the vision is ambitious, it is also considered to be realistic, achievable and affordable.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

3.01 Improvements are proposed in three key areas – Brunswick Road, Precinct Way, and for the creation of a 'Town Square', in the vicinity of Brunswick Road short-stay car park.

- 3.02 This work has also considered options for the possible relocation of the War Memorial (which is currently located towards one edge of the Precinct car park), as identified in the Masterplan.
- 3.03 These two public realm reports should be considered as a first step towards guiding positive change, and will be used to inform negotiations with private sector developers and to support bids for regeneration funding. It is anticipated that potential developers will have an important part to play in the integration of new developments with enhancement of the town centre, the development of the town square, and the improvement of traffic and pedestrian circulation and linkage. This will be achieved through a partnership approach and shared funding responsibilities, including contributions from Section 106 agreements.
- 3.04 To support the above, it is also proposed that a short foreword be added to the public realm reports outlining the Council's overall vision and aspiration for Buckley regeneration.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.01 That Members note the contents of the two Buckley Public Realm reports and endorse their use, as part of and supporting the Masterplan, to assist with discussions with developers and to ensure that any new developments are integrated with the existing town centre and contribute to an improved public realm.
- 4.02 That delegated authority be given to the Director of Environment, following consultation with the Executive Member for Environment, to make any changes as felt appropriate to the public realm reports.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.01 Clearly there are costs associated with these improvements. As outlined under 3.04 above, it is likely that S106 funding will be sought from any significant new developments in and around the town centre. Additional funding will also be allocated from the County Council's Town Action Plan funding, and recently approved ERDF funding for town centre streetscape improvements.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

- 6.01 Town centres play a key role in providing accessible goods and services for those most vulnerable. Town centres are also a key source of local employment. Actions and activities that help to strengthen the vitality and viability of town centres are therefore very important.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

7.01 The Masterplan included consideration of environmental concerns. This follow on piece of public realm design work is to provide a benchmark for the quality expected for any new environmental and public realm enhancements.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.01 The Masterplan seeks to enhance and expand the vitality and viability of Buckley Town Centre. The public realm design work complements this and sets out detail and guidance to ensure the whole town is able to benefit from and complement any new development. Investing in the public realm of Buckley will achieve several objectives, from economic benefits and amenity improvements to greater social cohesion and an improved sense of civic pride. The town centre provides vital, locally-based services, especially to those without access to private transport.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.01 None.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

10.01 The County Council, Buckley Town Council and Buckley Town Partnership, along with the general public, will be involved with the detailed development of specific public realm proposals.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 Buckley Town Partnership members have attended two meetings with the design consultants, Environmental Associates. The second of these was a workshop style event, and representatives from Buckley Royal British Legion Branch attended too. Buckley Town Council members not already on the Town Partnership were also invited to attend.

11.02 The findings of the questionnaire provided at the workshop were tabulated, and responses and comments were reported back to the steering group and the evolving development and design options amended in response to the general consensus of opinion expressed.

11.03 This work has been led by a cross discipline team of Flintshire County Council officers, enabling input throughout the work from regeneration, planning, design, highways and property professionals.

12.00 APPENDICES

12.01 Buckley Town Centre Public Realm Enhancement – Report 1: A

Guide for Enhancement (Final Report, February 2012) (*PDF is called 'Final Report 1 - Feb 2012 - Buckley Public Realm'*)

- 12.02 Buckley Town Centre Public Realm Enhancement – Report 2: A New Town Square (Final Report, February 2012) (*PDF is called 'Final Report 2 - Feb 2012 - Buckley Town Square'*)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985
BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None

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