

## **Appendix 1 – Town summaries**

### Buckley

The 2008 Town Centre Healthchecks Study identified scope to improve the convenience (grocery/day to day shopping items) offer in Buckley Town Centre. A masterplan has been developed to provide a detailed guide for the future development of the town, in particular, the need to attract significant investment in new retail development. The masterplan was approved by Executive in May 2011.

The Council is a key landowner (Precinct Car Park) within the main proposed development area of the masterplan. The Council is identifying interested developers capable of bringing forward a development scheme for Buckley in line with the Masterplan framework.

The development options identified in the Masterplan also identified significant opportunity for public realm enhancement. Therefore a Public Realm Design Guide has also now been developed, which was approved by Executive in March 2012, to provide a benchmark and set of key design principles for the quality expected for any future public realm enhancements. The Public Realm Guide will be used to inform negotiations with private sector developers and to support bids for Council regeneration funding.

There is developer interest in the main proposal site from the masterplan and discussions are currently ongoing.

### Connah's Quay

Since the 2008 Town Centre Health Checks study was completed, Connah's Quay has benefited from the high quality Health Centre which has set a benchmark in terms of build quality. The Neighbourhood Renewal Area Programme has begun to improve the appearance of some of the housing that fronts the main road and environmental improvements have been made to the waterfront forming part of the All Wales Coast Path. The civic centre and precinct sites do not match the quality of these developments and the future of both sites needs to be considered in the context of developments across Deeside.

As for the whole of Deeside, the most significant opportunity for Connah's Quay in the coming years will be to capitalise on the positive changes (and high profile) that will occur as a result of Northern Gateway and the Deeside Enterprise Zone. Regeneration intervention will need to ensure that the Deeside towns, including Connah's Quay, become a convenient option for services, leisure and shopping and they must maximise on the advantage of having good public transport links and high quality leisure amenities, such as the Dee Cycle Path, Wepre Park and the Deeside Leisure Centre.

### Flint

The 2008, Town Centre Healthchecks Study concluded that whilst "Flint is a relatively healthy town centre, improvements to the Council's residential property, enhancements to

the eastern gateway and the provision of improved car parking, should be the top priority actions”.

The town is fragmented; Flint Castle and the waterfront are separated from the Town Centre by a busy main road and railway line and the benefit of the retail park is minimised because the poor link with the high street hampers footfall.

Since its inception in 2009, Flint Town Partnership has delivered some quick win projects including a walks brochure to promote the castle and waterfront, the formalisation of footpaths on the waterfront and along Swinchiard Brook, the re-launch of the Friday market on Church Street and the development of Tourist Information Points. The town is also likely to benefit from the publicity of the All Wales coast path launched from Flint Castle in May this year and FCC are keen to support the annual Flint Festival given its potential to attract visitors to the town.

The Flint masterplan was completed in March 2012 by consultants DTZ/Taylor Young and approved by Cabinet in June 2012. It recommends physical improvements to the built character (including housing stock), improved linkages, better distinction between private areas and public spaces, preferred options for a number of key development sites around the town, improved public service delivery (including a one stop shop/connects facility) and an enhanced image for Flint.

FCC Executive decided in December 2011 to empty both the maisonettes and adjacent council garages to enable their redevelopment which will be the major driver for the redevelopment of the town set out in the masterplan. The first phase of this work is due to start soon.

## Holywell

The 2008 Town Centre Healthchecks Study summarised that Holywell is a historic market town which now performs an essentially localised role, catering primarily for local service and food shopping needs. Although Holywell has benefited from investment, in the form of THI funding and two new supermarkets, there are also indications of decline.

A more detailed assessment was commissioned by the Partnership to identify the issues causing or contributing to the decline of Holywell Town Centre and to give a clear steer and direction for the future role of the town centre. The Holywell Town Centre Assessment was completed in December 2010. The Assessment recommended that linkages to and within the town centre and between the town centre and other attractions need to be improved to help increase vibrancy and footfall in the centre. The study also recommended developing a stronger tourism offer for the town based in its heritage assets.

Actions to date have included installing extra visitor signage, physical improvement projects and developing events to attract customers into the town.

The main priorities for Holywell have been identified as:

- Improving access to the town centre especially for pedestrians.
- Improving the appearance of the main shopping streets and the approach routes.
- Opening the first Flintshire Connects Facility in the High Street which will help to attract footfall.
- Encouraging investment onto empty sites and into vacant units.

- Improving the range and quality of shops in the town.
- Linking the town closely to the coast, Greenfield Valley and the rural hinterland.
- Promoting the town more strongly to visitors and supporting events.

## Mold

Mold was identified in the 2008 Roger Tym and Partners study as having the largest catchment of any of the Flintshire towns. They found that Mold was “the only one of the seven study centres where there would be sufficient developer and operator interest to make a significant retail-led development scheme viable.”

The study found the town to be generally healthy but made a number of recommendations:

- Cosmetic improvements to the high street and tackle vacant properties.
- Attract a development scheme to bring higher order retailers and hospitality businesses into the town.
- Develop new town centre bulky goods retail provision.
- Improve and increase green space in the town.
- Improve the street market and support more events.
- Resist further out of town retail development.

The Mold Town Partnership was formed in 2009 and actions to date have included:

- Implemented community-based 'early win' projects using funding from the WAG Tidy Towns programme and FCC capital funding.
- Developed the Mold Spring Clean in 2008 and annually since.
- Supported a range of events in the town including the Mold Food and Drink Festival.
- Implemented town centre projects to improve the environment of the town in 2009.
- Commissioned the Mold Sense of Place study to investigate how the unique character of the town can be protected and used to benefit the town.
- Masterplan developed for Bailey Hill to steer future development of the site.
- Cycle route from Mold to Flint being developed.
- Design work being commissioned to improve Daniel Owen Square as a community resource and site for events.
- Development of a widely-consulted Action Plan for Mold.

The Mold Partnership aspires for the town to be a high quality regional centre offering a distinctive and vibrant range of retail, hospitality and leisure opportunities. They recognise that this will need to be linked to a strong and innovative local business economy and a good quality housing offer.

The main priorities for Mold have been identified as:

- Identifying and assembling potential development sites in the town and encouraging business investment in sites and properties.
- Improving the attractiveness and distinctiveness of the town centre, especially the main access routes and the arrival points for visitors.
- Promoting the town to visitors and developing the visitor offer, including Bailey Hill, events, Clwyd Theatr Cymru and the link to the Clwydians.
- Further improving the street and indoor markets.
- Building further upon the Cittaslow status of the town and developing Mold as an exemplar for sustainability.
- Improving the walking and cycling routes into and around the town.

## Queensferry

Queensferry comprises two distinct areas, namely the 'old' district centre and the Asda Walmart superstore. The 2008 Town Centre Healthchecks Study highlighted that whilst the Asda store is performing well the 'old' part of the town centre has a high vacancy rate, higher than the national average and some units are situated in prominent gateway locations. Thus, Queensferry district centre performs a dual role. Whilst the Asda store and Deeside Leisure Centre which are located just outside the study area boundary, they are key 'anchors' and attract visits from a County-wide catchment area, the 'old' part of the district centre performs a more localised role. The study advised that the centre would benefit from minor intervention of a cosmetic nature.

With this in mind, Flintshire County Council commissioned Environmental Associates in April 2010 to identify landscape proposals that could enhance the visual amenity of Queensferry to provide a stronger identity for the town and encourage investment in the Queensferry area. The proposals will inform decisions on future projects.

Specific location areas were identified for improvement guidelines and work has been undertaken to raise the profile and enhance the physical fabric. The first was at the gateway of the A548 Coast road and its junction with Station Road by greening the junction and traffic island. The historic War Memorial Institute site has now been upgraded with improvements to the boundary and creation of a community garden at the rear.

Future action in Queensferry will continue the implementation of the Environment Associates plan to improve the image of the town. In common with the rest of the Deeside towns, there is a major opportunity for Queensferry to benefit from the Northern Gateway / Enterprise Zone development.

## Saltney

Saltney joined the TAP programme later than the other towns and the TAP programme is less advanced there. It was decided early in the process that a separate partnership wouldn't be formed for the town and work has been undertaken in partnership with existing groups instead.

Action to date has included:

- Supporting the Pathfinder project in Saltney with environmental improvement work.
- Commissioning a feasibility study into a new community hub building for Saltney including a library, Flintshire Connects facility and health centre.

Saltney does not have a clearly defined town centre frontage although the new Morrisons store has created a focal point along the linear main road through the town. The focus therefore will need to be on the wider town, where there are challenges in terms of areas of poor environmental quality, vacant sites and access to services. There are also potential opportunities arising from its proximity to Chester and to the Deeside Enterprise Zone.

## Shotton

The 2008, Town Centre Healthchecks Study concluded that Shotton performs a localised retail and 'day to day' services function, and only minor intervention is required to tackle cosmetic enhancement and a general environmental upgrade. The study recognises that traffic congestion is a key issue and that this is difficult to remedy, given the densely built up nature of the centre and lack of scope to further widen roads.

The town identified and implemented a number of projects to upgrade the town centre environment. The partnership wanted to undertake further environmental improvements and this resulted in the commissioning of a joint Shotton and Connah's Quay Masterplan which was completed in December 2010 – giving a primary focus to improving the environmental quality along the main street.

A number of projects have been implemented in Shotton to improve its appearance and function:

- Landscaping scheme for Ash Grove Car Park.
- Improvements to housing stock through Neighbourhood Renewal Programme.
- Improvements to the street environment.
- New bus lay-bys to improve traffic flow.
- Railway Station - Improvements

As for the whole of Deeside, the most significant opportunity for Shotton in the coming years will be to capitalise on the positive changes (and high profile) that will occur as a result of Northern Gateway and the Deeside Enterprise Zone – as well as infrastructure investment.