

WIRRAL COUNCIL

WIRRAL WEST CONSTITUENCY COMMITTEE

12TH NOVEMBER 2015

SUBJECT:	ACTION PLANS FOR RETAIL AREAS
WARD/S AFFECTED:	WARDS WITHIN THE WIRRAL WEST CONSTITUENCY BOUNDARY <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ GREASBY, FRANKBY AND IRBY▪ HOYLAKE AND MEOLS▪ PENSBY AND THINGWALL▪ WEST KIRBY AND THURSTASTON▪ UPTON
REPORT OF:	HEAD OF REGENERATION AND PLANNING
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	CABINET MEMBER – ECONOMY
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

1.1 The report provides an update on the action plan work undertaken within four retail areas within the Wirral West constituency - Hoylake, Irby, Upton and West Kirby. Copies of the respective action plans are available on the Council's website at <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/business/investment-strategy/investing-places/town-centres-wirral>

2.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

2.1 In July 2011 the Council's Cabinet agreed that the Council undertake a series of action plans for individual retail centres on a phased basis.

2.2 The action plans address a wide range of issues pertinent to each area's individual circumstances and include matters such as; traffic management and parking, potential environmental improvements and options for local marketing of retail centres. This work has been led by a team of officers within the Council drawing on expertise in retail planning, transport and regeneration. In addition to the action planning, a trader's online toolkit was developed, providing practical advice on how traders can support their local retail centre and this is also available on the Council's website at the link provided in 1.1 above.

3.0 CURRENT POSITION

3.1 In terms of Wirral West, action plans have now been completed in Hoylake, Irby, Upton and West Kirby. The majority of these retail areas appear to be functioning satisfactorily, though a number of action plans identified traffic management related issues as key inhibitors to the economic performance of the area. The current position for each area can be summarised as follows:

Hoylake

- 3.2 Hoylake continues to function well as a centre and this is demonstrated by below average vacancy rates. Home to a number of independent niche businesses, its coastal location and association with the Open Golf Championships gives the town its own unique identity. This image is further enhanced through The Festival of Firsts, Hoylake 10K and RNLi Lifeboat day which have now become permanent fixtures in the events calendar. There are a number of groups involved in ensuring the public realm and environment is maintained to a high quality and who work collectively for the benefit of the town centre.
- 3.3 In terms of outstanding issues identified within the action plan, progress is as follows:

Action Identified	Comments
On-street parking provision at Birkenhead Rd increased - Facilitate a study to assess potential/review of existing parking restrictions around the 'Shoppers' off licence	The introduction of limited waiting bays in this vicinity would result in a significant loss of on-street parking due to the requirement of junction protection in the form of double yellow lines. There may also be a requirement to provide double yellow lines along one side of Birkenhead Road between Deneshey Road and Manor Road due to the road layout which would again result in a loss of parking. For these reasons officers consider there would be no benefit in introducing/modifying parking restrictions in this area at present.

Irby

- 3.4 A relatively small yet successful centre nonetheless, the Irby action plan identified that the village was not in need of any significant change. The biggest concern of businesses and residents at the time was the need to improve on road parking provision within the village to meet the need of shoppers. In particular there was strong evidence that the limited on road parking spaces were being monopolised by owners/employees of local businesses. Consequently this was to the detriment of shoppers, forcing them to park further away from the centre or drive on elsewhere to a neighbouring area.

Action Identified	Comments
Improve the use of parking spaces - Better utilisation of the existing car parking provision in the centre	A proposal to allow persons to park for 90 minutes between 9am to 4pm Monday to Saturday along parts of Thingwall Road was advertised during early August 2015. A number of representations were received from business owners, visitors to shops and two local ward councillors. Comments and objections have been evaluated and a modified proposal has been developed. Mindful of all the objections and representations, officers are proposing to amend the proposal and remove two of the sections of limited waiting bays (by The Shippons and Irby Club) and have these remain unrestricted. It is proposed to extend the time limit in the remaining two bays

	outside McColls and on the opposite side of the road from 90 minutes to 2 hours. All of these parking bays will eventually be marked out to ensure that parking is used to its maximum capacity.
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Upton

- 3.5 Upton village continues to function reasonably well, though it does have above average vacancy rates. This, allied to the deteriorating condition the empty units had been left in, proved a catalyst to the formation of Upton Regeneration Focus Group (URFG), which in conjunction with some of the businesses has been instrumental in identifying opportunities to improve the environment and the physical appearance of the village. The work of URFG will now be taken forward in future years by the Upton Traders Group on Ford Rd. The action plan identified a number of environmental and traffic management issues and progress is as follows:

Action Identified	Comments
Improving the environmental quality of the village and providing an interesting and active streetscene	As part of an 'Upton in Bloom' campaign a number of planter boxes have been acquired and placed at various strategic locations within the village and the flowers/plants are maintained on a seasonal basis. Upton Traders Group has provided the funding with a local florist supplying the plants. A Community Fund grant of £1,000 from the Wirral West Constituency Committee will ensure provision continues well into 2016. It is proposed that Christmas lights and seasonal decorations which have previously only been displayed along Ford Road, will be introduced to Arrowe Park Road in December 2016 in order to integrate the village.
Consider introduction of limited waiting restrictions on main carriageway of Arrowe Park Road	Officers have assessed the feasibility of introducing limited waiting restrictions within the existing marked parking bay along Arrowe Park Road which runs adjacent to the service road and consider that such a proposal would only serve to displace parking into the residential roads located nearby.
Improve parking within the village - Removal of peak hour loading restrictions within the lay-by adjacent to the bus stop on Ford Rd	Proposals to remove the existing 'no loading' restrictions outside Bargain Booze on Ford Road are currently registered on the Council's TRO (Traffic Regulation Order) programme and will be progressed when resources become available and in line with other workload commitments.

West Kirby

- 3.6 West Kirby continues to function well as a retail centre. With its award winning eateries and bars it boasts a sustainable evening economy, however the loss of independent retailers and the lack of a diverse offer continues to be a cause of concern. In spite of this however vacancy rates continue to remain low. With no

formal business led organisation in existence, it is left to a wide range of community minded organisations to drive footfall in the town through the organisation of various events and activities throughout the year. The majority of key issues identified at the action planning workshops were traffic management related and are outlined below:

Action Identified	Comments
Provide business friendly parking opportunities and improvements	Reduced parking tariffs for the pay and display car parks at Concourse and Dee Lane were introduced in April 2015. Whilst there has been a slight drop in income in the first 6 months of 2015/16 compared to last year, there has been an encouraging 16% rise in the number of ticket sales, which would indicate more visitors coming into West Kirby.
Review waiting restrictions for parking in Acacia Grove	A proposal to increase waiting restrictions in Acacia Grove from 30 minutes to an hour (Mon to Sat 9.00 – 6.00pm) was approved and the order took effect from 14 October 2015.
Consider introduction of limited waiting restrictions on remainder of Banks Rd (from Salisbury Ave to Church Rd)	A scheme to introduce limited waiting restrictions along Banks Road between Church Road and Salisbury Avenue is currently being developed with a view to commencing formal statutory consultation later this year.
Review size and location of bus bays on Banks Road (between Shrewsbury Road and Church Road)	Merseytravel have been requested to consider the feasibility of reducing the existing bus stop cages to create additional spaces. Initial feedback however indicates that the current bus stop markings do appear to be to the minimum dimensions that would be effective, given the highway layout, traffic and parking arrangements within the Banks Road area.
Review measures to reduce traffic speed e.g. introduction of traffic calming measures or 20mph limits	Officers are acutely aware of the desire to create a more pedestrian friendly town centre. As detailed in a separate report to the Committee, it is proposed that the Constituency Committee's Road Safety Panel reviews the specific representations made in this regard and makes recommendations on the allocation of resources from its road safety budget.
Review locations of existing refuges and crossing points and re-engineer as necessary	As above
Review widening of footways and introduction of dropped kerbs to improve access for pushchair users and those with impaired mobility	As above

4.0 RISKS

- 4.1 The growth in out of town shopping centres and on line markets has in recent years had a profound effect on local centres, with it becoming increasingly difficult for retailers to remain in business and this is reflected in the increasing number of

vacant units appearing on the high street. By working collaboratively with retailers, community groups, residents and local councillors to identify issues affecting footfall and appropriate interventions to address this, high streets can be rejuvenated and continue to flourish, despite the prevailing economic conditions.

5.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 No other alternative options have been considered.

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 Officers have been working with traders/local businesses, community groups and ward councillors in the retail areas to ensure their views and input are reflected within each plan.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

7.1 The respective action plans have involved local businesses and voluntary and community groups in their preparation. The Trader's Toolkit also provides helpful advice and guidance for community and voluntary sector led organisations.

8.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

8.1 The action plans have no direct funding associated with them, as they are about businesses, community groups and councillors working collaboratively to improve their local areas.

8.2 The work to date has been undertaken using existing staff resources from within the Regeneration and Environment directorate.

9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

10.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

10.1 An impact review relating to Wirral's Retail Action Plans can be viewed at <http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/community-and-living/equality-diversity-cohesion/equality-impact-assessments/eias-2010/>

11.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The action plans address transport and accessibility of retail areas by public transport and on foot, which naturally impacts on the sustainability of centres.

12.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

12.1 The action plans should be read in parallel with a number of other strategic planning documents, including the Wirral Unitary Development Plan and the emerging Core Strategy. They will also provide an evidence base to inform more detailed aspects of the Local Plan for Wirral, including the proposed Site Allocations DPD and a

potential 'Town Centre SPD'. The Action Plan though will not be adopted as a Development Plan Document and will remain non-statutory, but will nonetheless be used to shape the future of the area.

13.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

13.1 The Committee is asked to note progress in relation to the action plans referenced in the report.

14.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

14.1 As requested by the Wirral West Constituency Committee at its last meeting in July, to provide an update regarding progress with the action plans produced in respect of Hoylake, Irby, Upton and West Kirby.

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APPENDICES

None

REFERENCE MATERIAL (available at <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/business/investment-strategy/investing-places/town-centres-wirral>)

Hoylake District Centre Action Plan
Irby Village Action Plan
Upton Village Local Centre Retail Action Plan
West Kirby Town Centre Retail Action Plan
Traders Toolkit

SUBJECT HISTORY

Meeting	Date
Cabinet - Town, District and Local Centre Study and Delivery Framework	21st July 2011