



Rhyl town & area plan

Looking forward together 2014 – 2020

February 2014 edition

Rhyl

Introduction

Denbighshire County Council has adopted a strategic aim of being “a high performing council closer to the community”.

To help achieve this aim, the County Council invited the town and community councils and the businesses, community and voluntary sectors in each of its main towns and the smaller outlying communities which relate to them to join together to develop “town plans”. These are living documents which will be subject to regular reviews and will set out:

- the current situation in the towns
- the key challenges and opportunities which they will face over the next decade
- a vision for each town which will provide it with a sustainable future, and
- realistic and achievable actions which will deliver that vision.

A Town Plan was not developed for Rhyl at the same time as those for the other towns in the county because at that point the highest priority was considered to be the development of a strategic framework for the regeneration of the town. As a result, the Rhyl Going Forward Neighbourhood & Places Delivery Plan which outlined all the interventions in sites, buildings and associated neighbourhood management issues in the town was approved by the County Council’s Cabinet in November 2011

The Council has taken the decision to extend all the existing Town Plans to include the surrounding rural areas, it has now also been agreed that a Town Plan should be developed for Rhyl to help to identify priority actions and to align potential funding streams from the public, private and third sectors.

This then is the new Town & Area Plan for Rhyl.



Section One

Vision and priorities for Rhyl

The area now known as Rhyl was listed in the Domesday Book 1086 as the settlement of Bren which was scattered amongst sand hills and salt marshes. The Rhuddlan Marsh Embankment Act of 1794 enabled the land to be drained and with the subsequent Enclosure Act of 1813, reclaimed marsh land became available for sale, and Rhyl began to develop one of the newly popular seaside resorts.

The first hotel in Rhyl, the Royal, was built in 1825 and by 1829 a regular steam packet service was running between the town and Liverpool. The town grew steadily through the mid and late 19th Century, particularly in response to the opening of the Stephenson's railway from Chester to Holyhead in 1848. In 1853 there were just 604 houses in the town and by 1881 there were 1,300 houses and shops and a population of 6,028. By 1893, Rhyl was the largest settlement in the former county of Flintshire and the distinctive grid form of the town centre was complete by 1912.

Much of central Rhyl is still as it was constructed during the 19th century, and the sea front activities, though much changed, are still focussed on the tourist trade. However, commerce and industry now play an increasing role in the town's economy, as the tourism industry has changed and the town's dependency on this sector has declined.

Today, Rhyl has several important public facilities including three secondary schools, a college, two theatres, a library, a primary health care centre and hospital, harbour and community fire station. Rhyl Golf Club is North Wales' Oldest Golf Club and a Founder Member of the Golf Union of Wales.

The town is the principal conurbation in Denbighshire with a population of **25,149**.



Where we are now

(The actual figures are shown in the Statistical Appendix.)

It is clear from the statistics that there are large differences between West / South West Rhyl and the rest of the Town in terms of the age structure, housing stock and economic activity.

People & Community

Compared to the county as a whole, the town of Rhyl has

- a higher percentage of young people under 15 (mainly concentrated in the West and South West Wards)
- a lower proportion of over 65s (although there is a concentration of over 65s in the South and East Wards)
- two wards with a high proportion of over 85s (East and South)
- a higher proportion of people living in Council and Registered Social Landlord housing
- More people living in overcrowded households (mainly concentrated in the Rhyl West Ward)

Compared to the county as a whole, fewer people in the town of Rhyl

- were born in Wales, and
- can speak Welsh.

The Welsh Government uses a formula to measure deprivation called the “Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation”. They have split Wales into 1896 “Lower Super Output Areas” which are usually smaller than County Council wards. Each area is then ranked using a range of data with the most deprived given a score of 1 and the least deprived as score of 1896.

The scores in different years are not directly comparable because the way in which the index is calculated changes over time.

In the 2011 edition of the Index, 11 out of the 16 “Lower Super Output Areas” in the town are considered by the Welsh Government to more deprived than they were in 2005. In the 2011 index, 5 of the LSOAs in Rhyl are ranked as being in the 10% most deprived areas in Wales with three of these being in the town’s West ward. In this ward, properties formerly used for holiday lets have increasingly become a source of low cost residential units. This has led to a concentration of economically inactive and vulnerable people in the ward, putting a strain on public services.

Jobs

Compared to the county as a whole,

- slightly fewer people of working age who live in Rhyl work in the public sector (although more people in Denbighshire work in this sector than in any other local authority area in Great Britain reflecting the presence of the district general hospital and regional headquarters of various public services),
- more people work in retail
- more people work in tourism related businesses
- a lower percentage of people work in manufacturing
- a higher percentage of people of working age claim Job Seekers' Allowance.

Whilst some industrial estates and business parks have been provided in the town, the most extensive development of this type in the area in recent years has been at St Asaph Business Park which lies 5 miles to the south.

The Place

- The Town Centre includes a Conservation area and significant architectural designs.
- There is a physical disconnect between the beach and town
- There are a number of prominent vacant units within town centre, some of which are in a poor condition
- The town has extensive sandy beaches and whilst the water quality at Marine Lake would be regarded as "Excellent" using the criteria set out in the new EU Bathing Water Directive, the quality of the water nearest to the mouth of the Clwyd can be adversely affected by material running off fields up river during periods of intense rainfall
- There are easily accessible, attractive coastal paths on two national cycling and walking routes

Vacancy rates for retail premises – November 2013

The vacancy rate for retail premises is substantially higher than the county average and 2.3% higher than at the last count in 2012.

Rhyl	17.4%
Denbighshire	11.5%

Some of the properties in the town centre have been poorly maintained which detracts from its overall appearance.

Future challenges and opportunities

People & Communities

- The number of people aged over 65 and 85 in the East and South wards is higher than average for Denbighshire.
- The number of people in the town increases considerably over the summer months due to the influx of visitors.
- Rhyl will be eligible for community funds from the Gwynt y Mor off shore windfarm once it becomes operational.
- The perception of anti-social behaviour and risk of crime does not reflect the reality. A number of successful police initiatives have seen crime rates fall by up to 25% in some areas.
- Rhyl has successful football and rugby clubs which are important community facilities.
- The town's High school planned is to be completely rebuilt.
- There is a new Community Hospital planned on the site of the Royal Alexandra.
- The West Rhyl Housing Improvement Project is improving conditions and creating a more balanced housing market in West Rhyl.
- A new mountain bike track has been created at Glan Morfa which complements the existing 1.3km road cycling track.
- There is an opportunity to make more use of Rhyl's natural assets for cycling, walking and beach holidays / activities.

Jobs

- Rhyl is well placed to benefit from the employment opportunities associated with the offshore wind farm construction and operation and there is the potential for further development of marine economy in the Town.
- Current provision of public transport is not sufficiently flexible to enable residents of the town without their own transport to access many of the job opportunities available at St Asaph Business Park.
- Denbighshire's Local Development Plan identifies a key strategic site at Bodelwyddan including employment opportunities which would be reasonably accessible to people living in Rhyl.
- Many of the job opportunities available in the town itself are low paid and seasonal.
- The Holyhead to Chester railway line offers a sustainable means of travelling to centres of employment further afield.

The Place

- A new iconic pedestrian and cycle bridge has been opened across the harbour with new moorings provided in the harbour itself.
- Ageing leisure facilities and an untidy street scene are challenges.
- The former Bee & Station and Costigan's public houses have been restored and will be able to accommodate new types of employment in the town centre;
- There is currently a lack of suitable visitor accommodation within the town.
- There are a number of vacant sites which offer the potential for redevelopment.
- There are a rising number of vacant units within the town centre with the threat of further relocations.
- High water quality offers the potential for further accolades for Marine Lake and at the East Parade bathing beach
- There is the potential for improvements to the town's connectivity through the wider modernisation / electrification of rail services in North Wales.
- The County Council is exploring the options for the coastal leisure and tourism facilities including plans to secure a private developer to provide a new Aquatic Centre in Rhyl.

Vision for Rhyl

We want Rhyl to be an even better place for people to live in and to visit where;

- people will choose to live in all parts of the town, rather than being forced to live in some areas through their personal circumstances which is currently the case;
- jobs are easy to access, whether these are at employers in the town itself or in nearby centres of employment;
- there is a growing maritime sector based around the new harbour facilities and the opportunities which the off shore energy industry provides;
- there is a vibrant town centre which has the number and type of retail units which are appropriate to current and future levels of demand;
- there are attractions which appeal to the current tastes of visitors and which provide a modern interpretation of the traditional seaside experience; and
- there is a strong sense of place and pride locally, with a positive reputation outside of the area.

Making this happen...
for people and community

Activity	Economic Ambition Strategy reference	This will be led by	Output	Start	Finish	Cost in £000's
Identify more suitable and accessible premises for the Registry Office.	6.2	County Council - Strategic Assets	Relocation of Registry Office	1 st April 2015	31 st March 2017	
Consider the inclusion of those facilities which have been identified as priorities by the community as in the new community hospital.	5.3	Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board	Amended plan	1 st April 2015	31 st March 2017	
Ensure the enhancements planned for the Railway Station will be accessible for all and cater for the needs of the community.	1.1	Network Rail	Night time access to station facilities and improved security.	1 st April 2014	31 st March 2015	Nil

Making this happen...
for the town centre

Activity	Economic Ambition Strategy Reference	This will be led by	Output	Start	Finish	Cost
Develop and deliver a Strategy for the Town Centre	5.1	County Council - Economic & Business Development	Publish a strategy and action plan designating areas of responsibility.	1 st October 2013	31 st March 2014	Nil
Strengthening partnership working and the co-ordination of service provision within the town centre	5.1	County Council - Economic & Business Development	Agreement of partnership to a revised town centre management function	1 st April 2014	30 th September 2014	Nil
		North Wales Police	Improvements and extension of the Town Centre radio link	1 st April 2014	31 st March 2015	Nil
Increase footfall within Town Centre	5.1	Town Council	Funding of an events programme	1 st April 2015	31 st March 2017	To be agreed
Creating a more attractive street scene in the Town Centre	5.1	County Council - Network Management	Exploit the opportunities provided by planned highway opportunities to consider the widening of the carriageway and improvements to be made to the street scene.	1 st October 2014	31 st March 2015	£200,000

	5.1	County Council - Street Scene	Replacement of street furniture.	1 st April 2014	31 st March 2015	
		County Council - Works Unit	Installation of catenary wires in the High Street which can carry bunting and Christmas lights, but will also help alleviate problems caused by birds.	1 st April 2014	31 st March 2015	
		County Council - Street Scene	Improved street cleaning regime.	1 st April 2014	31 st March 2015	Nil
		Town Council	Funding enhanced planting in the town centre.	1 st April 2014	31 st March 2015	To be agreed
		Town Council	Maintenance and operation of Christmas lighting and installation of bunting	1 st April 2014	31 st March 2015	To be agreed
Finding new uses for prominent empty premises in the Town Centre	5.1	County Council - Economic & Business Development	Development of creative industry accommodation in the vacant 49-55 Queen Street property with funding through Welsh Government	1 st April 2014	31 st March 2016	£1.2m

Creating larger retail units within the Town Centre to attract quality retailers.	5.1	County Council - Planning Policy	Formulation of a development brief for the Queens Market site.	1 st April 2014	31 st March 2015	Nil
Enhancing connectivity to the rest of the town and improving linkages with the seafront for local residents and tourists alike all year around.	5.1	County Council - Economic & Business Development	Develop a signage strategy for the town including pedestrian and tourism signage funded through service revenue budget	1 st October 2013	31 st March 2014	£20,000
		County Council - Economic & Business Development	Implementation of the first phase of new signage in line with the wayfinding strategy.	1 st April 2014	31 st March 2015	£50,000
		County Council - Traffic & Transportation	Amend the traffic order on North High Street / Sussex Street to allow vehicular access overnight.	1 st April 2014	31 st March 2015	Nil
		County Council - Economic & Community Development	Create a new pedestrian access to the underground car park giving easy access to the High Street with funding from the service revenue budget	1 st January 2014	30 th June 2014	£2,000
		County Council - Traffic & Transportation	Review transport options in the town centre and along the promenade (e.g. land train or improvements to bus routes)	1 st April 2014	31 st March 2015	Nil

Making this happen...
for the economy

Activity	Economic Ambition Strategy Reference	This will be led by	Output	Start	Finish	Cost
Improve access to employment areas for local people e.g. public transport to St. Asaph Business Park and opportunities arising from the development of the strategic employment site at Bodelwyddan	1.1	County Council - Traffic & Transportation	Better public transport links	1 st April 2015	31 st March 2017	Nil
Ascertain and make clear community ambition and expectations for the vacant 'Ocean Plaza' site subject to the outcome of the current Planning application	1.3	County Council - Planning Policy	Formulation of a development brief for the site	1 st April 2015	31 st March 2017	Nil
Look into the possibility of developing a Marina	3.1	County Council – Commercial Leisure	Feasibility / business justification report	1 st April 2015	31 st March 2017	To be confirmed
Redevelopment of the coastal leisure facilities including the Sun Centre, entrance to the Pavilion Theatre and the Children's Village	3.1	County Council - Coastal Facilities Board	Secure development partners for the site(s)	1 st April 2015	31 st March 2017	Nil
Develop the provision of maritime training courses in Rhyl in partnership with Coleg Llandrillo, allowing for the development of skills necessary for associated industries.	4.3	Coleg Llandrillo	Maritime training courses will be provided in the town	1 st January 2014	31 st March 2015	EU programme

Consider enhancements to allow the Harbour to be used to service the larger wind farm vessels.	3.3	County Council - Commercial Leisure	Business case considered	1 st April 2014	31 st March 2015	Nil
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Making this happen...

for the place

Activity	Economic Ambition Strategy Reference	This will be led by	Output	Start	Finish	Cost
Investigate options for making the events arena resilient to inclement weather conditions to increase the number of events held in Rhyl.	3.1	County Council - Economic & Business Development	Feasibility report	1 st April 2014	31 st March 2015	Nil
Explore the feasibility of creating an art trail in the town to encourage pedestrian movement to key attractions	3.1	Rhyl Create	Feasibility report	1 st April 2015	31 st March 2017	To be confirmed
Provide better access to the housing developments in the Rhyl South East area	1.1	County Council - Traffic & Transportation	Junction improvement at Dyserth Road / Pen y Maes Avenue funded by developer through s.106 agreement	1 st April 2015	31 st March 2017	To be agreed
Improvements to the public realm along the promenade.	3.1	County Council – Street Scene	Provision of replacement seating funded through the base revenue budget	1 st April 2014	31 st March 2015	£5,000
Consider further enhancements at Marine Lake which would increase its usage and improve the destination.	3.1	County Council - Commercial Leisure	Funding secured for enhancements	1 st April 2015	31 st March 2017	Nil
Make the entrances and gateways into the town more attractive.	5.1	County Council - Works Unit	Installation of decorative lighting on the Foryd bridge during the repairs planned for autumn 2014	1 st October 2014	31 st March 2015	£50,000

		County Council - Economic & Business Development	Installation of public art at three principal road entrances into the town.			
		County Council - Development Control & Planning Compliance	Seek to improve the appearance of the Ocean Plaza site pending the re-development through enforcement action.	1 st April 2014	31 st March 2015	Nil
		Rhyl Town Council	Funding the planting of roses where possible at gateways into the town	1 st April 2014	31 st March 2015	To be agreed
Positively promote Rhyl through the use of good news stories.	6.1	County Council - Destination, Marketing & Communication	Development of a communications plan	1 st April 2014	31 st March 2015	Nil
Investigate options for making use of the County Council's freehold of the site where the former pier stood.	3.1	County Council - Economic & Business Development	Feasibility study	1 st April 2015	31 st March 2017	Nil
Ensure the development of high quality facilities in the Harbour café and public realm.	3.1	County Council - Commercial Leisure	Inclusion of quality criteria in the tender documents for the café operator	1 st April 2014	31 st March 2015	Nil
Develop the links between coastal and inland cycle routes	1.1	Connect2 group	Development of a cycle link between Marine Lake and Glan Morfa	1 st April 2017	31 st March 2021	To be confirmed
Encourage the use of East Parade beach for bathers	3.1	County Council - Commercial Leisure	Provide deck chairs from the lifeguard station during the summer season funded through base revenue budget	1 st April 2014	31 st March 2015	£5,000

Provide the opportunity to invite additional attractions along the promenade which complement the existing facilities and enhance the offer.	3.1	County Council – Street Scene	Identify and agree the preferred location to site new attractions.	1 st April 2014	31 st March 2015	Nil
		County Council – Strategic Assets	Secure expressions of interest from appropriate providers	1 st April 2015	31 st March 2017	Nil

Town & Area Plan Priorities –

Contributions required from the Town & Area Plan budget

Creating a more attractive street scene in the Town Centre - £200,000

- Exploit the opportunities provided by planned highway opportunities to consider the widening of the carriageway and improvements to be made to the street scene.
- Street scene improvements to include uniform decorative lighting, replacement street furniture and planting.
- Installation of catenary wires where feasible.

Enhancements to the key gateways into the towns to include the restoration of decorative lighting on the Foryd bridge and introduction of gateway features. £50,000

Begin implementation of the new pedestrian and tourism wayfinding signage strategy. £50,000



How will we know if we are on track?

Annual reviews of progress will be undertaken by the County Council together with Rhyl Town Council. More regular updates will also be provided to the County Council's Member Area Groups and to the Town Council, and also to the wider community through County Voice and through press releases made by Denbighshire County Council. The Plan will be treated as a living document in which aspirations can be added or removed according to changes in circumstances.

Who was involved in the production of this plan?

This plan was produced by Denbighshire County Council following consultations with County Council Councillors and Services, the Town Council, the Business Group, secondary schools and the wider community.

For further information:

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Statistical Appendix 2011 census data			
Percentage of...	In Rhyl	Rhyl excluding West & South West	In Denbighshire
Young people aged 15 or under	19.7	17.2	18.1
All people aged 65 or over	18.7	22.8	21.1
People aged 85 or over	2.1	2.7	2.8
Overcrowded households	6.7	3.9	4.5
JSA Claimants	6.3	4.1	4.2
Early Retired	17.0	19.7	18.5
People born in Wales	54.7	55.5	58.1
People over 3 years of age who can speak, read or write Welsh	22.2	23.5	35.4
Working residents employed in hotels and restaurants	7.5	5.8	6.9
Working residents employed in manufacturing	8.5	8.6	9.1
Working residents in retail	17.8	16.5	14.4
Working residents employed in the public sector	33.8	35.6	35.7

Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation			
Lower Super Output Area	Ranking in 2005	Ranking in 2008	Ranking in 2011
Rhyl East 1	300	301	479
Rhyl East 2	887	599	1040
Rhyl East 3	242	162	216
Rhyl South 1	608	598	533
Rhyl South 2	1058	1081	1142
Rhyl South East 1	797	692	752
Rhyl South East 2	1052	1033	1048
Rhyl South East 3	947	840	1053
Rhyl South East 4	167	235	287
Rhyl South East 5	1491	1517	1455
Rhyl South West 1	114	94	96
Rhyl South West 2	25	18	12
Rhyl South West 3	779	717	586
Rhyl West 1	17	4	7
Rhyl West 2	11	1	1
Rhyl West 3	79	88	34