

# Rhyl Town Centre Vision / Masterplan

## Wellbeing Impact Assessment Report

This report summarises the likely impact of a proposal on the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Denbighshire, Wales and the world.

Assessment Number:	217
Brief description:	Creation of a co-ordinated Vision / Spatial plan that guides physical investment in Rhyl Town Centre in support of the vision and strategy for Rhyl and objectives for Rhyl Town Centre. Bring focus and co-ordination to the planning and redevelopment of Rhyl town centre over the next 10-15 years.
Date Completed:	23/07/2019 Version: 2
Completed by:	Mike Horrocks
Responsible Service:	Planning & Public Protection
Localities affected by the proposal:	Rhyl,

## IMPACT ASSESSMENT SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Before we look in detail at the contribution and impact of the proposal, it is important to consider how the proposal is applying the sustainable development principle. This means that we must act "in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

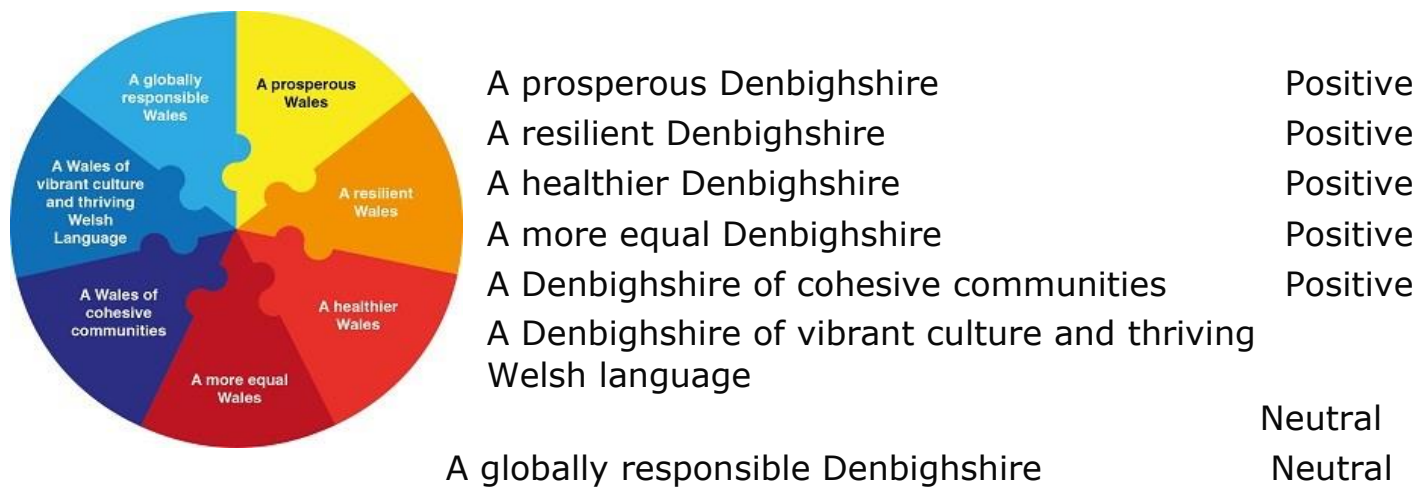
Score for the sustainability of the approach

Could some small changes in your thinking produce a better result?



Summary of impact

Wellbeing Goals



Main conclusions

The impact assessment which was carried out in July 2017 has now been updated as more detail is known about the scope of the Vision, the key priorities and some of the key projects. The likely impact in the long term for jobs in Rhyl is the sustaining of current and the creation of more entry level jobs, but Rhyl is well connected to other areas with higher paid/skilled jobs and the Vision contains projects which aim to exploit this.

There are clear plans to improve the town centre as a place to live healthily, work and visit. Coupled with community development action these will create a wider diversity of town centre residents and users with higher levels of disposable incomes – a major determinant of town centre success.

There are many opportunities to maximise the impact of the Vision on biodiversity, infrastructure, Welsh language and culture and a number of projects will be developed to reflect this.

Engagement from local stakeholders and strategic organisations has been thorough and supportive - a critical success factor in effective delivery of the Vision.

The Vision aims to re-purpose and re-use the town centre as an asset. It is in direct contradiction to approaches that seek to build new, out of town neighbourhoods and facilities which use up limited natural resources.

# THE LIKELY IMPACT ON DENBIGHSHIRE, WALES AND THE WORLD

## **A prosperous Denbighshire**

Overall Impact	Positive
Justification for impact	More and better jobs will be created.

### **Positive consequences identified:**

Opportunities for history and heritage which can be drawn upon to create attractions. Supporting the development of family friendly attractions. Diversification of target markets e.g. young entrepreneurs could include promotion of outdoor activities / businesses as a USP which will make it more attractive to a younger demographic as well as having lifestyle benefits. Supporting business start-up and opportunities for higher paid employment in the Town Centre e.g. through the "Tech Hub" project. The vision looks to encourage linking Rhyl residents not currently using the town Centre with the Town Centre offer, offering access to new markets for town centre businesses. One of the plans is to improve access into and from town centre car parks as well and improving traffic flows to reduce journey times, vehicle idling and unnecessary journeys, reducing vehicle emissions. We intend there to be better permeability between town centre and coast. We want to ensure reasonable green and direct routes from residential areas to the town centre (improved access to/around the town centre is a key objective). We are looking to reduce building density to make the town centre greener. Any new buildings will be up to standard.

The purpose of the project is to ensure the long term resilience of Rhyl town centre. A successful place is a good place to do business. We want to increase footfall and spend potential by increasing the residential population and encouraging people in work to live in the town centre. We want the visual appearance of the town to improve, and to ensure everyone is engaged in investing financially in Rhyl (also to invest emotionally). More of a mix of jobs. Jobs close to home.

### **Unintended negative consequences identified:**

Over reliance on, lower paid hospitality jobs – risks not maximising people's potential. We want more people to come to Rhyl and that could result in more carbon emissions and infrastructure demands. Current business owners might decide that Rhyl will not be the right place to trade and could move out.

### **Mitigating actions:**

Establish linkages with local Colleges in provision of courses so ensure they are providing relevant skills. Upskilling / service level of hospitality / retail sector.

We must continue to discuss the likely impact of the Vision on skills and jobs at the Rhyl Community Development Board and Rhyl Programme Board as projects develop. We want to create a balanced mixed of uses in the town (catering for local population and visitors). Link people to jobs that will give them a step up and use local employment agreements.

## **A resilient Denbighshire**

Overall Impact	Positive
Justification for impact	The overall impact will be a more desirable environment but increased building works will have an impact.

### **Positive consequences identified:**

There will be opportunities to make improvements to biodiversity on sites / across the town centre including planting schemes, street trees, green spaces etc. We could create new habitat/improve biodiversity (native species). The link between well-being and environment is strong. Prioritising reusing existing buildings and brownfield sites. Making recycling easier and acknowledging "plastic free" status. We want to reconnect people to the sea and create an environment that promotes well-being. Raise profile of environment and aspirations.

Business community resilience – creating opportunities for independent retailers to start up or grow in the town centre. Support for new and existing businesses to promote healthy resilient businesses. Community resilience – connected communities

### **Unintended negative consequences identified:**

Impact on waste generation and uses of resources. Possible air pollution impacts of highways proposals.

Increased footfall around the town and to the beach may increase littering which in turn if not addressed may affect the natural environment or create an imbalance. Negative carbon footprint from creation of new town centre, roads etc.

Building waste - we'd ask developers to reuse as much as possible. We will also remove street furniture.

Risk of increasing number of people at flood risk with more housing in the centre.

### **Mitigating actions:**

Emphasise plastic free status, opportunities to promote reuse and recycling schemes. Drinking water schemes. Prioritising the use of existing buildings / brownfield sites.

## A healthier Denbighshire

Overall Impact	Positive
Justification for impact	The Vision will provide an improved environment encouraging footfall to the town and encouraging mobility around the town. A more vibrant town centre should see improved food and leisure offers. An improved ambience will create the feeling of a safer environment and have positive mental wellbeing impact.

### Positive consequences identified:

Increased opportunities for cycling and walking. Designing in active travel, connecting people to blue and, green space to encourage use of outdoor space. An area of project work is looking at the opportunity to increase the range of fresh local produce and choices. New housing needs to be to a defined good standard. The aim is to promote healthy and locally produced food. By creating a positive physical environment will support positive emotional well-being. Improved town centre ambience creating an improved sense of safety and well-being. Consider design palette implications for conditions e.g. dementia. Consider 'softer' projects which will support the creation of a vibrant, welcoming environment to people with mental health issues. By creating a mix of offers within the town centre this may provide increased leisure and health services which will be easily accessible. By increasing town centre living and footfall to the town centre, this may increase the range of services available outside of traditional opening hours. Promotion of intergenerational activities. Encouraging businesses to be breastfeeding friendly. Dementia friendly status.

Increasing footfall and pushing footfall through the town and on the promenade may increase user's current activity levels. Improving links between town and promenade and leisure activities will again promote being mobile and active. The project aims to create higher quality public space to attract tourists, residents and employees to make use of the outside space, including those who may have limited access to pleasant space. The project should help to reduce emissions through improving traffic flow, ease of access to car parking and shorten journeys around the town centre. The provision of electric charging points within any residential developments again supporting improvements to air quality. Improved access and transport links into and out of the town should improve links to health facilities outside of the town centre. By increasing town centre accommodation and facilities it is anticipated that this will promote walking to local facilities and reduce car journeys out of the town. The project seeks to improve economic conditions improving employment levels and incomes which should in turn lead to improved health.

### Unintended negative consequences identified:

By increasing local car parks this reduces the need for people to walk / move around as much. A busier beach front environment may put off existing users.

## Mitigating actions:

Engage with wider range of stakeholder groups who can provide input into the design of the projects, providing expertise on a range of disabilities and mental health issues. Create a contact list of stakeholders who can input into the design of individual projects.

### A more equal Denbighshire

Overall Impact	Positive
Justification for impact	Overall the Vision seeks to address inequalities, creating opportunities and benefits for a wide audience.

## Positive consequences identified:

Short stay car parks closer to town would be better for people with disabilities. Reviewing parking/loading options to make it simpler. A well-designed shared space concept should provide an improved environment for people with disabilities / ease of access / family friendly. The projects will provide the opportunity to reconsider the needs of these groups within the re-design process of the town centre to ensure an up to date approach. DfT public realm guidance will be used which provides advice on better designed town centres for people with disabilities.

Local people would be supported to access local employment opportunities through Working Denbighshire (which would be in walking distance for some). By improving footfall and economic opportunities, the project should create a vibrant town centre area improving job opportunities, business creation and incomes for local residents. Local employment agreements will be used to identify and deliver training and work experience opportunities. The projects emerging will be linked through working Denbighshire, ensuring links with DWP to provide training in preparation for new jobs. Improved quality of housing. Improved energy efficiency tackling fuel poverty.

By creating local jobs and improved local housing this will reduce the spend on travel to work outside of the town. By creating a mix of employment opportunities this should cater for a range of resident's work needs. Development of the residential offer aims to redress the current socio-economic imbalance in the area helping to create a sustainable town centre.

## Unintended negative consequences identified:

Potential to displace residents on low incomes. Redesigning the highways and access/parking may lead to the removal of the stopping / disabled spaces on main streets. Disruption while work is going on making access difficult. If shared space is taken forward there may be the potential for some conflict between pedestrian and traffic. Remodelling the traffic flow may lead to significant temporary user confusion and will need to be managed. Temporary noise and pollution disturbances caused through construction works. Potential for increased risk of accidents with an unfamiliar traffic flow.

By improving the area there is the potential to increase rental levels and property prices which could impact on household disposable incomes. Redevelopment may have a negative impact on availability of premises for some existing businesses. Business incomes may fall during construction periods.

### **Mitigating actions:**

Create opportunities for local residents to access higher paid work. To minimise negatives – use press releases, clear signage, consideration of risks, work closely with NWP and other partners to minimise risks of accidents. Contractors will be required to follow the considerate construction code of practice. Ensure that the masterplan facilitates the creation of a range of commercial premises. Good engagement with businesses at an early stage. To maximise the positives – engage with stakeholders during development in order to ensure that the designs are appropriate and maximise benefits. Work closely with Working Denbighshire and the Community Development Board.

### **A Denbighshire of cohesive communities**

Overall Impact	Positive
Justification for impact	The new town centre will be safer, more economically viable and residents, businesses and visitors will be involved in its design/delivery.

### **Positive consequences identified:**

Engagement with key community groups – identify groups to address specific needs e.g. dementia. Creating opportunities for people to identify with Rhyl. Developing a safer and more inclusive evening economy. Improved access to services – including digital connectivity. The improved ambience will lead to improved perceptions of safety and increased footfall will help. Safer road and pedestrian crossing (but shared space will need to be managed). A significant part of the project is about engaging with stakeholder groups to involve them in the design of projects and delivery of the Vision. The Vision is focused on improving the economic attractiveness, visual appearance and feel of the town – as these improve so will local pride and belief in the town, creating a more cohesive community.

### **Unintended negative consequences identified:**

Potential for conflict with existing community and incoming populations. There could be a risk that by creating a more pleasant environment this will encourage people to congregate and lead to anti-social behaviour. In a less busy / managed environment this type of behaviour is more noticeable. By increasing the number and diversity of visitors to the town centre this will displace and discourage incidents of anti-social behaviour. Working with other partners (i.e. NWP) will also ensure that such issues are managed effectively. There are people who won't engage/actively undermine this work, or who have a vested interest in Rhyl not changing. Consultation fatigue could be a problem.



## Mitigating actions:

Incorporate clear principles into the process of developing projects to ensure delivery of benefit for local people and appropriate engagement in shaping projects (Big Ideas 7 & 8 in the Vision Document). Use Secure by Design - discuss with police. Consider additional research / engagement with more affluent residents, and the tourists we are hoping for in the future. People's expectations may be beyond what can be delivered in the timescales so we will need to manage these through a communications strategy. Supporting a safer evening economy – action plan e.g. best bar none scheme. Ensuring digital connectivity is included in developments.

## A Denbighshire of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language

Overall Impact	Neutral
Justification for impact	There are numerous opportunities for this to become positive but needs to be considered particularly as individual projects are brought forward.

## Positive consequences identified:

Some of the projects that come out of community engagement could be designed to increase the social use of Welsh. The Signage & Materials palette guide will include guidance on use of Welsh. The Vision will actively exploit opportunities to design in art/culture relevant to the local population and promote use of Welsh. Opportunities for local produce /events / activities and Welsh language schemes for businesses will arise.

## Unintended negative consequences identified:

Making Rhyl more attractive could dilute language and culture amongst non-Welsh speakers, with impact on schools for instance.

## Mitigating actions:

Reach out more proactively to Welsh speaking populations to involve them in project design – engage Welsh Language Officer in relevant projects.

## A globally responsible Denbighshire

Overall Impact	Neutral
Justification for impact	The Vision is of a more efficient, improved town centre environment that better connects people with more sustainable living. However, delivering the masterplan will involve construction, use of materials etc.



## **Positive consequences identified:**

Improvements to street greening / green spaces. Biodiversity improvements. Street trees which can improve air quality. Cycle racks / storage provision within schemes. Major changes will be around physical change to the footprint of the town and major activity around construction. Positive – renewal of old buildings with new more efficient buildings utilising better technology with scope to build in renewable energy. Insist of use of local materials and labour on DCC contracts. Encourage use of energy efficient measures and use of local materials with local business and consideration of this within design palette. Use of effective engagement / consultation will ensure that people have the opportunity to contribute to the development. Generally, the project will create more opportunities. All contracts will be let according to legislation. Revitalising the town centre is focused on attracting a wide range of services to the area.

Repurposing town centre buildings for residential and leisure use requires less use of greenfield land and natural resources than building new homes, roads, sewers, electricity services.

## **Unintended negative consequences identified:**

By its nature, physical regeneration will involve the use of some new materials, much of which may be difficult to source locally. There could be some negative consequences relating to unethical supply chains which we will find hard to assess. There is the potential to overload existing infrastructure if we cannot encourage changes in human behaviour e.g. reduction in car use by town centre residents.

## **Mitigating actions:**

Maximise use of recycled materials. Consultation with a range of partners on infrastructure capacity. Communication with residents & businesses on the sustainability of redevelopment works.

Require projects to make a conscious contribution to – greening, renewable energy, biodiversity / habitat improvements and openly promote this strength.

The Vision itself is a mitigating action by providing a long-term focus on actions and priorities for the town centre to ensure that new investment is targeted in the most effective way. The Vision aims to re-purpose and re-use the town centre as an asset. It is in direct contradiction to approaches that seek to build new, out of town neighbourhoods and facilities.