

WORKSTREAM REPORT

Retail & the Town Centre July 2012

Appendix 1



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A Snapshot of the Strategy

The town centre retains much of its splendid Victorian architecture, and offers a good range of high street brands along with quality independent shops. However, to remain competitive in a rapidly changing retail environment, a comprehensive package of training, enterprise support, physical improvements, marketing and promotion is necessary.

Improving the quality and management of the physical environment is a priority. This will include improving public spaces such as the streets and pedestrian areas, but also addressing problems with those private properties in the town which have been allowed to deteriorate and are now a bit of an eyesore. Grants are available under the Townscape Heritage Initiative (see Useful Links) to assist such works.

We are also exploring how we can create a “Free Ideas Zone” for the streets at the edge of the town centre. The aim would be to embrace experimentation and innovation to encourage entrepreneurs to respond to tourism, retail and business service opportunities. This type of offer could be complimented by the street market, which currently has planning consent until December 2012. Until then we will continue to make improvements, manage and monitor the market, with a view to renewing the planning consent if its positive impact on the town centre can be clearly demonstrated.

There is a longer-term aspiration of the redevelopment of the Queen’s Market area as a new shopping centre, offering units of the right size and quality to retain and continue to attract new shops into the town.

Completed in last 12 months:	2
Number of committed projects:	6
Number of projects in development	0
Number of projects under consideration:	9
Number of projects not being progressed:	0

Completed in last 12 months

Projects that have completed on site/construction in the last 12 months.

Project	Sponsor	Manager	Est. Start	Progress
Brighton Road Environmental Improvements				
A new pedestrian access between the Morley Road car park and the town centre has been created through the demolition of a property on Brighton Road and subsequent environmental works. The scheme completed in July 2011.				

Project	Sponsor	Manager	Completion	Delivery Confidence
Town Centre Manager	TC Management Group			
New Town Centre Manager in post as of 01/03/12				

Committed Projects

A commitment has been made to deliver the project and the necessary funding is in place.

Project	Sponsor	Manager	Completion	Delivery Confidence
Environmental Audit of Town Centre	Mark Dixon	Carolyn Roberts		GRE
Works have commenced on works in the Queens Market area. Town Centre Management workshop held on 01/05/12 which explored ways of how we can improve our performance in terms of enforcement action on buildings in private ownership.				

Project	Sponsor	Manager	Completion	Delivery Confidence
Rhyl Market	Graham Boase	Mark Dixon	tbc	GRE
Independent consultants have been appointed to undertake an assessment of the market to ascertain whether overall the presence of the market is having a positive impact on the town centre.				

Project	Sponsor	Manager	Completion	Delivery Confidence
Bee & Station	Mark Dixon	Carolyn Roberts	Jun 13	GRE
Work commenced in March 2012 and is progressing.				

Project	Sponsor	Manager	Completion	Delivery Confidence
Costigans	Chris Davies	Gerald Thomas	Dec 12	GRE
Work commenced in April 2012 and is progressing.				

Project	Sponsor	Manager	Completion	Delivery Confidence
Empty Shop Initiative	Town Centre Forum	TCM	ongoing	GRE
Funding has been secured through HSBC to improve the visual appearance of the empty shop units in the town centre. £38,000 is now in the fund that has been created, with other potential contributions in the pipeline. Initial focus will be on Wellington Road, where works to remove weeds, redecorate and install window displays are planned.				

Project	Sponsor	Manager	Est. Start	Progress
45 to 47 Water Street	Pennaf		May 12	GRE
Works commenced in July 2012. External works scheduled for completion by end September 2012. Internal refurbishment/remodelling scheduled for completion March 2013.				

In Development

Feasibility or ongoing development of the project is underway. Some, but not all, of the required funding may be in place.

NONE IDENTIFIED AT THIS STAGE

Under Consideration

Some consideration has been given to the project but significantly more work is required to understand the feasibility of the proposal and to developing the concept.

Project	Sponsor	Manager	Est. Start	Progress
Developing a Town Centre Strategy				
<p>The recent publication of the Portas Review leads to a need for further consideration of Rhyl Town Centre. The rise of internet shopping, out of town retail centres and the growing dominance of supermarkets are presenting all UK Town Centres with major challenges. Rhyl is no different, and to survive and prosper the town must understand what a successful town centre will look like going forward. Inevitably this will mean a greater mix of uses other than retail, with cafes and restaurants, office use and even residential uses all forming part of the new town centre mix. A contraction in the size of the town centre may also need to be explored, along with consideration of how the night-time economy might make a positive contribution. Work is required to develop a more comprehensive town centre strategy, to understand what the town centre could be, and to understand how it could be delivered. This would be developed with key partners such as Coleg Llandrillo Rhyl, Rhyl Business Group and the Town Centre Forum.</p> <p>Malcolm Hall – the Town Centre Manager – is currently preparing a Business Plan for town centre management which may touch on some of these issues. RGF Programme Manager to liaise with Malcolm over the production of this document to ensure it ties in with RGF Delivery Plan and begins to address some of the strategic issues.</p>				

Project	Sponsor	Manager	Est. Start	Progress
Review of Parking Provision, Charges & Traffic Flows				
<p>The Rhyl Town Centre Forum has requested that consideration be given to changing the parking arrangements in Rhyl, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase 3 hour parking to 4 hour with no additional charge • Introduce a free after 3 initiative • Introduce a “2 for the price of 1” ticket <p>The request is currently with DCC Highways for their consideration.</p>				

Project	Sponsor	Manager	Est. Start	Progress
Business Rate Issues				
<p>The impact of business rates has consistently been raised by town centre businesses. Options to explore how the Council could use its rate relief powers to promote new business start-ups or encourage further investment by local businesses could be explored. This is being discussed by the Town Centre Forum with a view to members of the Forum applying for rate relief.</p>				

Project	Sponsor	Manager	Est. Start	Progress
New Occupier for M&S Unit				
<p>M&S's decision to move to Prestatyn and vacate their Rhyl unit in 2013 will leave a big gap in the High Street and the loss of the major anchor store. Finding a new occupier for the unit that will act as a new anchor and continue to attract shoppers to Rhyl could be critical to Rhyl's future success as a retail centre. To progress this will require ongoing discussions with key stakeholders like the building owners, the Valuation Office, the White Rose Centre, as well as prospective occupiers.</p> <p>Initial contact has been made with the landlord who has indicated that there has been some interest from prospective occupiers. Further discussions pending.</p>				

Project	Sponsor	Manager	Est. Start	Progress
49 to 55 Queen Street				
<p>These properties are empty retail units currently in Welsh Government ownership, and options to secure their reuse need to be considered. Some very initial discussions have taken place with Denbighshire's Conservation Team with regard to developing proposals for the building, and also with Rhyl City Strategy with regards to them helping develop some proposals for use/occupation of the building for social enterprise. This might include some form of retail outlet for Rhyl College to compliment their retail Skills Academy; or other third sector type retail units.</p> <p>Progress is being made on commissioning architectural consultants to survey the building and prepare a report outlining what works would be required to refurbish the property along with cost estimates. This study will also identify and provide cost estimates for any urgent works that are required.</p>				

Project	Sponsor	Manager	Est. Start	Progress
Queens Market Redevelopment				
<p>To sustain and improve the position of Rhyl Town Centre and to enhance its viability and vitality, the Local Development Plan (LDP) has identified the Queen's Market site as the appropriate location for a comprehensive redevelopment as a large department store and/or indoor shopping precinct. Whilst market conditions suggest it would be difficult to secure a development partner at the current time, the longer-term aspiration to redevelop this area to help regenerate the town centre remains and so the situation will continue to be monitored.</p>				

Project	Sponsor	Manager	Est. Start	Progress
Arriva Development				
<p>Previously Arriva had sought to acquire some of the existing Council car park on West Kimnel Street to develop a new office building, although it is understood now that their requirements are for investment in the maintenance depot as well which requires significant investment to bring it up to modern standards. They are currently considering their strategic options.</p>				

Project	Sponsor	Manager	Est. Start	Progress
Public Art				
<p>The idea of introducing public art to the town centre and promenade has been discussed at various meetings. One proposal that seems to have found favour in many quarters is the idea of having a temporary exhibition of “Rhyl Donkeys” in the same vein as Chester’s “Rhinos” – temporary sculptures that are sponsored by local businesses and organisations. This concept requires further consideration and development. At the Town Centre Workshop (01-05-12) the idea of developing an Arts Strategy for Rhyl was mooted. This will be investigated further.</p>				

Project	Sponsor	Manager	Est. Start	Progress
Rhyl Train Station Refurbishment				
<p>It is understood that improvements are planned for Rhyl Train Station. Further detail will be sought for future updates.</p>				

Not being progressed

These projects have previously been in development or under consideration, but for whatever reason are no longer being progressed.

NONE IDENTIFIED AT THIS STAGE