

**Report To: Communities Scrutiny Committee**

**Date of Meeting: 4 July 2013**

**Lead Member / Officer: Cllr Hugh Evans  
Lead Member for Economic Development**

**Report Author: Tom Booty – RGF Programme Manager**

**Title: Rhyl Going Forward – Rhyl Going Forward Update**

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**1. What is the report about?**

This report provides an update on the Rhyl Going Forward Regeneration Strategy.

**2. What is the reason for making this report?**

To provide information regarding progress in terms implementing the Rhyl Going Forward (RGF) Regeneration Strategy.

**3. What are the Recommendations?**

That Members note and comment on the progress made.

**4. Report details.**

The most recent Programme Update report is attached as Appendix 1 which demonstrates that in terms of the four workstreams of the programme:

- West Rhyl Regeneration Area has a current status of ORANGE
- Town Centre has a current status of ORANGE
- Seafront and Tourism has a current status of YELLOW
- Live & Work in Rhyl has a current status of ORANGE

At the Communities Scrutiny meeting of 18 April 2013 the committee considered that the strategic long –term vision for the town needed more clarity. Subsequently Rebecca Maxwell – Director for Economic and Community Ambition has produced a summary diagram which attempts to capture the spirit of what we are trying to achieve in the town. This is attached as Appendix 2. Whilst we recognise there is further work to be done on developing this vision and communicating it more widely, this work is in hand and is being developed as part of the Live and Work in Rhyl workstream. As well as the Economic and Business Development Section, support for this is being provided by the Communication, Marketing and Leisure section.

As with all projects under the Rhyl Going Forward Programme, we try and engage effectively with stakeholders in their development. Thus creating a compelling new vision for Rhyl that everyone can sign up to will take some time, although we are confident that this is achievable.

Projects completed since the last report to Community Scrutiny:

**Disabled Beach Access** – completed May 2013 to good reviews. This scheme is an important part of the longer-term strategy to achieve blue flag status for at least part of Rhyl's seafront, as this status relates not just to water quality but also to facilities provided.

**Bee & Station refurbishment** – this scheme completed in May 2013 and has created high quality office accommodation in the town centre immediately adjacent to the railway and bus station. This project has transformed a building that was a major eyesore. Tenants have already been secured for the ground floor which will become the only Lego Education Innovation Centre in North Wales

Progress on current key projects within the programme is generally good:

**West Rhyl Housing Improvement Project** – current status orange. This reflects the current uncertainty around the project whilst awaiting the Inspector's decision following the Compulsory Purchase Order Public Inquiry, which is expected within the next few weeks. Whilst confident that we put a compelling case for compulsory acquisition at the Inquiry and thus will hopefully see the order confirmed, we consider that with the number of properties already acquired through agreement we could still deliver a significant transformation of the area without confirmation of the order, although it would not be the optimal scheme we currently plan. Regardless of the decision the next phase of demolition - north Gronant Street – is scheduled to start this month. The project is currently forecast to complete within budget and on time.

**Honey Club Redevelopment** – current status yellow. Demolition of the existing is in progress. The Compulsory Purchase Public Inquiry for the adjacent burnt out building – 25/26 West Parade – was cancelled after the objections were withdrawn. This means the compulsory purchase should be confirmed and the building subsequently demolished and redeveloped as part of the overall scheme. Unfortunately, because we have not yet had confirmation we are unable to demolish the property as part of the current contract. Initial designs for the proposed 60 bed-roomed hotel have been discussed at a pre-planning application meeting, and a further design meeting is due to take place shortly. This should lead to a planning application being submitted sometime this calendar year.

**Rhyl Harbour** – current status orange. The bridge is due to complete by the end of July 2013. The further works to the harbour and Quayside building are currently 6 weeks behind schedule and due to complete in January 2014.

**Coastal Leisure Facilities** – work continues on the development of the business case for the Coastal Facilities (existing Sun Centre, Pavilion Theatre, proposed new Aquatic Centre and Sky Tower). Detailed work on the financial implications of various options is currently being developed, along with some soft market testing to

ascertain market interest in investing in the scheme. Work is also progressing on a report considering the potential economic impact of the proposals. A report is scheduled to go to full Council on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2013.

**Vibrant & Viable Places** – On 25/06/12 Cabinet approved the submission of a Stage 1 bid under the Welsh Government’s Vibrant & Viable Places Regeneration Framework for Rhyl Town Centre. Within the Rhyl Going Forward Programme the town centre has already been identified as a significant issue and the next priority to be addressed. A copy of the Cabinet Report providing fuller details of this initiative are attached as Appendix 3.

Because of the nature of the external funding used to progress the majority of these projects, there is no overall programme budget, but in terms of the projects we have committed to they are all scheduled to complete within budget. Equally, in terms of timetable there is little slippage in terms of time:

#### **West Rhyl Housing Improvement**

- first phase of refurbishment due to complete in 2015
- green space scheduled to start summer 2014 and complete late 2014/early 2015
- West parade development site and future housing refurbishment – tbc (subject to a developer partner selection process)

#### **Honey Club Redevelopment**

- Demolition scheduled to complete July 2013
- Planning application late 2013
- Start on site early 2014
- Completion late 2014/early 2015

#### **Rhyl Harbour**

- Bridge complete and operational August 2013
- Harbour and Quayside building complete Jan 2014

Coastal Leisure Facilities – no commitment to implement has yet been made but a possible timescale if there is a robust business case, a good prospect of a private sector investment partner and a positive Council decision in September would be:

- Start on new Aquatic Centre/Sky Tower late 2014/early 2015
- Completion of Aquatic Centre/Sky Tower late 2015/early 2016
- Demolition of SunCentre and start works to Pavilion – mid 2016
- Completion of works to Pavilion – early 2017

**Vibrant & Viable Places** – this would fund various projects in the town centre if our bid is successful, which would mean delivery between April 2014 and March 2017.

Overall progress on these key projects is encouraging and will make a real difference to Rhyl over the next three to five years.

**5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?**

**5.1: Priority 1 – Developing the Local Economy and Our Communities**

The main thrust of the RGF Regeneration Strategy is to create more jobs and business opportunities in the area, thereby directly addressing this priority.

**5.2: Priority 6 – Ensuring access to good quality housing**

Specifically the WRHIP will directly impact on the priority outcome of “*offering a range of types and forms of housing...to meet the needs of individuals and families*”.

**6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?**

The overall regeneration strategy does not have a dedicated budget. Funding is allocated to specific projects, in the main utilising external funding sources, and the funding is monitored on a project by project basis.

**7. What consultations have been carried out?**

The programme is monitored by the multi-agency Programme Board which ensure there is a broad consensus of approach across key agencies in Rhyl to the approach. Further work is being undertaken on developing a stronger marketing and communication approach to ensure there is a broader community awareness of the strategy. Individual projects have their own consultation strategy.

**8. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?**

Risks are monitored by the Programme Board utilising ***Appendix 4 – Programme Risk Register***.

**9. Power to make the Decision**

No decision required.