
Report to:	Cabinet	Date of Meeting:	4 th June 2015
Subject:	Review of Town Centres	Wards Affected:	(All Wards);
Report of:	Director of Built Environment		
Is this a Key Decision?	Yes	Is it included in the Forward Plan?	Yes
Exempt/Confidential	No		

Purpose/Summary

To present the response of the Cabinet Member – Regeneration and Tourism to the recommendations of the Town Centres Working Group Final Report, as requested by the Cabinet on 26th February 2015.

Recommendation(s)

That the comments of the Cabinet Member – Regeneration and Tourism on the recommendations of the Town Centres Working Group Final Report be approved and be reported back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills).

How does the decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Objectives?

	<u>Corporate Objective</u>	<u>Positive Impact</u>	<u>Neutral Impact</u>	<u>Negative Impact</u>
1	Creating a Learning Community		✓	
2	Jobs and Prosperity	✓		
3	Environmental Sustainability		✓	
4	Health and Well-Being		✓	
5	Children and Young People		✓	
6	Creating Safe Communities		✓	
7	Creating Inclusive Communities		✓	
8	Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening Local Democracy		✓	

Reasons for the Recommendation:

To incorporate comments and views of the Cabinet Member.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

N/a

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs – there are no financial implications arising from this report.

(B) Capital Costs – there are no financial implications arising from this report.

Implications:

The following implications of this proposal have been considered and where there are specific implications, these are set out below:

Financial	N/a
Legal	N/a
Human Resources	N/a
Equality	
1. No Equality Implication	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2. Equality Implications identified and mitigated	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Equality Implication identified and risk remains	<input type="checkbox"/>

Impact of the Proposals on Service Delivery:

N/a

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

The Head of Corporate Finance and ICT has been consulted and notes there are no direct financial implications arising as a result of this report. (FD 3570/15)

The Head of Corporate Legal Services has been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report. (LD 2862/15)

Implementation Date for the Decision

Following the expiry of the “call-in” period for the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting

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Background Papers:

None

1. Introduction/Background



- 1.1 On 20th January 2015, Overview & Scrutiny (Regeneration & Environmental Services) received the Final Report of the Working Group on the Employment Development and Development of Local Town Centres and Economies Working Group. The report was subsequently received by Cabinet on 26th February 2015, and referred to Cabinet Member – Regeneration for his views and comments.
- 1.2 The responses below were captured at the Cabinet Member's meeting of 2nd April 2015.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Environmental Services) Town Centres Working Group - Recommendations Response from Cabinet Member – Regeneration and Tourism

No.	Working Party Recommendations	Response from the Cabinet Member
1.	That the Director of Built Environment be requested to review the Town Centre Strategies in order that there is a co-ordinated and systematic approach to Town Centre Development that links into other strategies across the Council.	The draft Local Plan is the appropriate planning document for evaluating any proposal to change Sefton's town centres. The Director is satisfied that the proposed Development Strategies and Frameworks for Bootle, Crosby and Southport Town Centres are compliant with the policies contained in the Local Plan, and will help achieve its long-term objectives. For example, a Supplementary Planning Document will be prepared to support the Crosby development strategy.
2.	That the Director of Street Scene be requested to produce individual cleansing programmes for each commercial centre across the Borough, recognising that one size doesn't always fit all.	Agreed.
3.	That the Director of Built Environment, as part of any future Parking Review, be requested to investigate the possibility of undertaking a more focused and robust approach to a cost/benefit analysis. The Parking Review has now been completed.	Agreed.

No.	Working Party Recommendations	Response from the Cabinet Member
4.	<p>That the Director of Built Environment be requested to investigate the work that has been undertaken by Maghull Community Enterprise in designing and opening a Pop-up Shop known as “The Emporium” with a view to designing a Sefton Model for Pop-up Shops in order that other Town Centres across the Borough could adopt a similar approach.</p>	<p>Incentives to improve Sefton’s principal and secondary centres have been offered in recent years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Street Innovation Fund went to Crosby (£17,000), Maghull (£17,000), Southport (£49,000) and Waterloo (£17,000) • As part of the Portas Pilots, Crosby, Maghull, Southport and Waterloo formed Town Teams, and all four were allocated £10,000 to help support the high street. • The Council’s Capital Fund has made further investments totalling £300,000 for non-Town Team projects in Marian Square, Linacre Rd, Ainsdale, Birkdale <p>It is important that these investments are evaluated so that the social and economic return is understood before further financial commitments are entered into.</p> <p>The achievement of Maghull Community Enterprise in promoting pop-up shops is noted. This work is being carried forward in proposals for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pop-Up Shops in Southport BID through Southport Cultural Forum Ltd • A Well Sefton Pop-Up Shop in Bootle Strand Shopping Centre
5.	<p>That the Director of Built Environment, as resources allow, assign appropriate Officers to the Town Teams across the Borough in order that those Officers may offer support and guidance in promoting and improving Town Centres, assets and tourist attractions associated with individual Town Centres across the Borough as a possible income generator.</p>	<p>The Director will keep this under constant review. The Council currently employs two Locality Managers to track and support town centres. In addition, the Capital Fund has paid for three consultancy studies to inform investment plans for Bootle, Crosby and Southport. There are however significant budget constraints which may make for hard choices in future years.</p>

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6.	That the Director of Built Environment (Regeneration) in consultation with the Director of Corporate Services (Neighbourhoods) be requested to engage with local businesses, the Community, Voluntary and Faith sectors to encourage the development of the Borough's Town Centres with a view to evidencing engagement with those groups to develop a proposed work programme that is effective and inclusive.	The three Town Centre Strategy studies (see above) are each required to prepare a consultation and engagement plan for approval by the Council's Consultation Standards Panel. DBE will also evaluate the consultation and engagement methods used, and report outcomes to the Panel.
7.	That an Officer and Member Working Group be established consisting of Officers from Built Environment (Regeneration) and Corporate Services (Neighbourhoods) and Members along with any other relevant Officers to take the task of Town Centre Development forward.	The Cabinet Member will consider the need for a stakeholder group.
8.	That the Director of Built Environment be requested to draft clear criteria to support Community Social Enterprise that reduce bureaucracy and create a greater understanding and empathy towards local business to include a consideration of rate rebates for social enterprises equivalent to registered charities when additional social value and support for community development can be clearly demonstrated.	The Council has adopted a Procurement Strategy which aims to support local businesses and SME's specifically by making it easier to do business with the Council. In addition, an extensive range of discounts on business rates may be applied for, which community and social enterprise may be eligible for – see answer to recommendation 10.
9.	That through the investment strategies for Bootle, Crosby and Southport, the Director of Built Environment be requested to contact the Town Centres and suggest that they conduct a mapping exercise of landlords in each of their Town Centres, using the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Tourism Capital Fund.	The Department of Built Environment periodically commissions Town Centre Health Assessments which include Goad maps and other information. Members may consult these Health Assessments. New Assessments are planned for Bootle and Southport in 2015. It should be noted that the Capital Fund is now fully committed.

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10.	<p>That the Director of Corporate Services be requested to investigate the possibility of landlords using the empty rate relief regime provided this leads to enterprise development, job creation and longer term economic and social value.</p>	<p>A discretionary re-occupation relief scheme is already in place in Sefton from April 2014 as per attached report “Business Rates Reoccupation relief”</p>  <p>20150220 S69 relief report.docx</p> <p>More information is available on the ratepayers bills and also on Sefton Council website using the following link http://www.sefton.gov.uk/business/business-rates/business-rates-re-occupation-relief.aspx. There has been very little take up of this relief in Sefton to date.</p> <p>In February 2015 a Section 69 discretionary rate relief scheme was reviewed at Cabinet Member briefing meeting – see attached report:</p>  <p>Business Rates Reoccupation Relief.r</p> <p>A report with details of the s69 discretionary business rates relief scheme will be made available later this year.</p>
11.	<p>That the Director of Corporate Services be requested to ensure that Charity Shops continue to be inspected prior to awarding relief and reviewed from time to time to ensure that relief criteria are met, with any abuse reported being investigated and appropriate action taken accordingly.</p>	<p>All Charity Shops are inspected prior to the award of mandatory charitable rate relief. We are also committed to an annual review of all cases where mandatory charitable rate relief has been awarded, including charity shops, to ensure that the relief criteria is met.</p>
12.	<p>That the Director of Built Environment be requested to investigate the possibility of using the lampposts outside the Bootle Strand Shopping Centre as advertising space and a</p>	<p>We can, subject to payment, and approvals for Planning Permission and Highways Traffic / Safety assessments. We can implement illuminated advertising signs in these</p>

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	possible income generator and if this proves to be successful, adopt a similar principle, wherever possible, throughout the Borough.	<p>areas. But installing such signs in conservation areas may not be approved.</p> <p>We have contracts in place with Bommel UK and Premier Postings for illuminated advertising on the highway, the potential challenges are the type of column currently in place may need to be replaced with a heavy duty street lighting column</p>
13.	That the Working Group welcomes that the Director of Built Environment intends to consult and seek local community representation in relation to any proposal to draft an investment strategy that impacts on that local community.	See answer to recommendation 6
14.	That, in the spirit of the One Council vision, all Directors and Heads of Service be requested to consider how their individual Departments actions impact on Town Centre development and how the development or decline then impacts on local residents and citizens.	DBE will consult with all Council services in preparing Town Centre Development Frameworks, and co-ordinating their implementation. For example, all relevant Council services are included within the underpinning Baseline Service Level Agreement between the Council and the Southport BID company.
15.	That the Working Group seeks reassurance from the Council that the regeneration of the Borough's Town Centres should not be delayed or blocked due to any unnecessary internal procedures within the Council by adopting local protocols that seek to support local community activities in a positive and supportive way.	Examples of such "unnecessary internal procedures" are needed for this recommendation to be actioned.
16.	That investment and operational planning be more closely aligned through the Director of Built Environment.	Examples of lack of integration are needed. The co-ordination of short-term maintenance and medium-term development appears to be working well.

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17.	That the Director of Built Environment, as resources allow, be requested to submit a quarterly progress report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Environmental Services) detailing the proactive work being done to promote and create vibrant Town Centres across the Borough.	An Annual Report to Overview & Scrutiny, and forwarded with views to Cabinet Member – Regeneration, is more appropriate, and as resources allow.
18.	That the Director of Built Environment, as resources allow, be requested to submit a six monthly performance monitoring report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Environmental Services), setting out progress made against each recommendation of this Final Report.	See answer to recommendation 17.

Note: Many of the Directors' and Heads of Service posts named in this report are subject to change or deletion in the Senior Management Review. Therefore future monitoring reports will re-assign responsibilities as appropriate.