

Report

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| Report to: | Cambuslang and Rutherglen Area Committee |
| Date of Meeting: | 30 August 2023 |
| Report by: | Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources) |

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| Subject: | Update on Town Centres |
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ update members on the activity currently being undertaken in town centres across the Rutherglen and Cambuslang area

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that members note the current activity across the town centres.

3. Background

- 3.1. The nature of town centres across the UK is in a transitional stage. The range of issues involved in the challenges town centres are facing are broad and complex. Factors such as the economic downturn, internet shopping, the growth of out-of-town shopping malls, changes in retailers' business models and consumer expectations have resulted in a decline in footfall.
- 3.2. Some of the issues are local and specific to individual towns, however, many are issues seen across the country influenced by wider economic patterns, consumer behaviour and corporate decisions. Supporting town centres remains a Council priority and officers continue to work in partnership with groups and organisations in each town to achieve the common goals.
- 3.3. The role town centres have in our communities is significant and, therefore, cannot be overstated. Town centres support and contribute to the lives of people across our communities whether this is to access essential services, visiting for shopping or enjoying leisure time.
- 3.4. Around 70% of businesses and jobs in the economy are located in town centres and they are the principal location for leisure and hospitality. They retain a vital social importance as a meeting, events and performance space.
- 3.5. Across the 10 towns defined in the South Lanarkshire Local Development Plan (LDP), there is active and ongoing engagement with the most appropriate groups in each town. These differ from town to town and include Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), Development Trusts, Community Councils and private property owners.

- 3.6. Town Centre strategies and action plans have been prepared and approved for Hamilton, Cambuslang, Larkhall and Blantyre with work now underway in Rutherglen. Similar plans are being progressed by the communities in Lanark and Carluke along with the master planning work being undertaken in East Kilbride and Hamilton.
- 3.7. These strategies and action plans are closely aligned with the Government's approach to town centres captured in the New Future for Scotland's Town Centres report and action plan.
- 3.8. Officers in Enterprise and Sustainable Development are working with key stakeholders across towns and have commissioned two key pieces of work to set the direction of the Council's work around going forward. These will inform and align with existing and emerging funding opportunities for town centres:-
- ◆ Town Centre Visioning – this will set out how the Council delivers on the strategic aims and objectives at a local level. As noted above, while all towns have similar challenges, the solutions are not always the same. This work will set out how the Council, communities and partners should deliver meaningful and sustainable change within our town centres through a series of projects and action plans
 - ◆ Transition to Net Zero – town centres are major contributors to pollution and although a number of early wins have been achieved, the ways to deliver long term meaningful and sustainable reductions are complex and not always palatable to business or customers. This work will set out a practical approach to working towards net zero across our towns

4. Town Centre Activity

4.1. Rutherglen

Officers are working with the Shaping Places for Wellbeing team, in partnership with NHS Lanarkshire, Public Health Scotland, Clyde Gateway and others, to develop a strategy and action plan for Rutherglen Town Centre. The draft town centre strategy will consider the continued change in consumer behaviour, the impact of the pandemic, the shaping places for wellbeing agenda and have an increased focus on the environment. A consultative draft will be presented to the Community and Enterprise Resources Committee later this year. Once approved, officers will hold a full consultation of the draft document early in the new year.

- 4.2. One of the key approaches to supporting and regenerating our town centres is increasing the amount of town centre living. In many towns this is at a low level relative to other towns and historic rates. There is potential for some of the less commercially viable parts of town centres to be considered for residential development. An internal officer working group has been established and recommendations will be presented to the appropriate committee in due course. Rutherglen is being considered within the working group.

- 4.3. Rutherglen will mark its 900th year as a royal burgh in 2026. A working group is being established to consider how best to mark the occasion.

4.4. Cambuslang

Work on Phase 2 of Cambuslang streetscape commenced in June. Work on this section on the streetscape could not be completed in the original phase due to emergency scaffolding being erected on buildings in this area. Remedial work has been carried out allowing completion of the streetscape works. Works are due to

complete in August. This project has brought significant improvements to the south side of Main Street.

- 4.5. The original streetscape works formed a significant part of the Cambuslang Town Centre Strategy and Action Plan. This action plan is due for renewal in 2024 following excellent progress on its actions. Officers will continue to work with Cambuslang Community Council to update the action plan in line with the needs of the local community. The renewed plan will be brought to Committee next year.
- 4.6. Cambuslang Main Street has been selected as a pilot as part of the Litter Strategy. Officers are working with Cambuslang Community Council to review litter, business waste and fly tipping in the area.
- 4.7. Officers are working with Cambuslang Community Council to launch the 'insideout' app. The app works as a digital notice board for town centres and contains user-generated content. A marketing campaign will commence in the town centre on completion of the streetscape phase 2 works.
- 4.8. As can be seen from above, there is significant and ongoing activity across the town centres in the Rutherglen and Cambuslang area and officers in Enterprise and Sustainable Development would be keen to explore further opportunities with groups across our communities.

5. Employee Implications

- 5.1. There are no employee implications from the information set out in this report

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1. There are no financial implications from the information set out in this report. All projects and spend referred to will be subject to separate approvals as appropriate

7. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications

- 7.1. Climate change and working to net zero is at the heart of the work on town centres as we seek to deliver sustainable town centres which support liveable neighbourhoods. Both the Rutherglen and Cambuslang town centre action plans will have a focus on sustainability.

8. Other Implications

- 8.1. All town centres face a challenging set of circumstances. It is important the Council plays an active role in their future. Not doing so will result in continued decline and greater demands on limited resources.

9. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 9.1. Town centres have to be available for all across. The Council will continue to work and consult with a broad range of groups.

David Booth

Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources)

14 August 2023

Link(s) to Council Values/Priorities/Outcomes

- ◆ Ambitious, self-aware and improving
- ◆ Fair, open and sustainable
- ◆ We will work towards a sustainable future in sustainable places
- ◆ We will work to recover, progress and improve
- ◆ Good quality, suitable and sustainable places to live
- ◆ Thriving business, fair jobs and vibrant town centres

Previous References

- ◆ None

List of Background Papers

- ◆ None

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:- Victoria Eccles, Project Development Officer, Enterprise and Sustainable Development

E-mail: victoria.eccles@southlanarkshire.gov.uk