

# Report

Report to:	<b>Community and Enterprise Resources Committee</b>
Date of Meeting:	<b>4 October 2022</b>
Report by:	<b>Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources)</b>

Subject:	<b>Blantyre Town Centre Strategy and Action Plan</b>
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## 1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ update the Committee on the outcomes of the Blantyre town centre consultation and request approval of the town centre Strategy

## 2. Recommendation(s)

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

- (1) that the outcome of the consultation process be noted;
- (2) that the amendments to the Blantyre Town Centre Strategy, as detailed in section 4.3 of the report, and the Strategy be approved; and
- (3) that the Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources) be authorised to proceed with implementation of the Strategy.

## 3. Background

3.1. Members may recall that that this town centre Strategy and Action Plan for Blantyre is the last in a rolling programme of 4 town centre Strategies for Hamilton, Cambuslang, Larkhall and Blantyre. These Strategies seek to engage with local businesses and communities throughout South Lanarkshire and create a dynamic Action Plan to tackle issues within the various town centres and help repurpose them for the future.

3.2. The nature of town centres across the UK is in a transitional stage. The range of issues involved in the challenge's town centres are facing are broad and complex. Factors such as previous economic downturns, the COVID-19 crisis, internet shopping, the growth of out-of-town shopping malls, changes in retailer's business models and consumer expectations have resulted in a decline in town centre footfall.

3.3. Strategies and Action Plans have already been approved for Hamilton, Cambuslang and Larkhall and approval is now being requested in this report for the attached Strategy for Blantyre.

3.4. To produce the Strategies, audits have all been completed in consultation with Scotland's Towns Partnership and this has helped to inform the Strategies and Action Plans along with a specifically designed community engagement and consultation process which now required to be undertaken for Blantyre as the latest town to be covered by the programme.

- 3.5. 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.
- 3.6. Supporting our town centres remains a Council priority and we continue to work closely with the appropriate groups and organisations in each town through a partnership approach to achieve our common goals. In the case of Blantyre, the key partner is the Blantyre Business Community and Blantyre community council with a focus on town centre regeneration.
- 3.7. Local communities remain supportive of their town centres and have a desire to see them thrive. The way in which they use their town centres is, however, very different to that of a generation ago. It is broadly accepted that the traditional function of a retail town centre needs to change to meet the needs and expectations of modern communities.

#### 4. **Current Position and Next Steps**

- 4.1. South Lanarkshire's town centres support a diverse range of economic, social, and civic functions. In common with the rest of the UK, our town centres have felt the effects of both the previous economic downturns of town centres and changes in shopping patterns.
- 4.2. Despite these challenges Blantyre town centre retains numerous assets that provide a solid foundation to help develop the centre to adapt to societal changes and provide a place that people will continue to wish to visit and spend time.
- 4.3. Following the completion of the consultation, officers updated Blantyre elected members and the Blantyre Community Council to consider the consultation feedback. In this regard it was noted that the outcomes from the consultation broadly supported the priorities and actions set out in the Strategy for the Town Centre, but additional information was provided that impacts the wider community plan. The following alterations have been made to the Strategy:-
  - ◆ insertion of the findings of the consultation
  - ◆ remarks to related sites out with the town centre sphere of influence but that have potential impact
- 4.4. The Blantyre Town Centre Strategy and Action plan (Appendix 1) sets out a range of initiatives which the Council will pursue with partners to support the vitality and viability of the town centre. The private sector has a key role in providing shopping services and leisure offers that will attract and meet the needs of the local community. Private sector support coupled with strengthening links between local businesses and the community will provide a strong base from which to drive town centre activity forward.
- 4.5. The Strategy lays out a series of objectives for which Blantyre which are consistent with the with the activity being promoted by Scottish Towns Partnership (STP) and others, namely a collaborative approach across all sectors is the only way to bring meaningful and sustainable regeneration.
- 4.6. Subject to the approval by the Committee, Officers from Economic Development will implement the plan and liaise with other Services and partner organisations to deliver the outcomes agreed.

4.7 Finally, the Strategy presents a town centre Action Plan which captures the priorities for Blantyre and illustrates where resources and activities should be focused. The action plan will remain a live document with projects and priorities being delivered on an ongoing basis.

## **5. Employee Implications**

5.1. The implementation of the Plan will be taken forward by officers within Economic and Sustainable Development Services.

## **6. Financial Implications**

6.1. Implementation of the Strategy will focus on the co-ordination of activity and events that will be funded through existing resources. The financial resources required to deliver the objectives of the Action Plan will be considered on a project-by-project basis. In addition, the strategy provides a basis to support funding bids from a range of sources however it is important to note that much of success of the plan will relate to support and investment from the private sector and the buy in from the community by increasingly using their town centre.

## **7. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications**

7.1. The recommendations in this report and the content of the strategy and action plan aim to align with the Council's climate change and sustainability policies and bring forward meaningful change in the town centre in support of these aims.

## **8.1 Other Implications**

8.1. The risks associated with not supporting the proposal is that Blantyre Town Centre will not have a coordinated approach to the challenges it faces. The support and partnership working within Blantyre Town Centre could be lost leading to a loss of activity in the town centre. The Council's reputation could also be damaged if it is not seen to actively support and encourage business initiatives and investments in Blantyre Town Centre.

## **9. Equality impact assessment and consultation arrangements**

9.1. This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a change to an existing policy, function, or strategy and therefore, no Impact Assessment is required.

9.2. Consultations have been co-ordinated by Economic Development Services with a range of other Council Services who have an ongoing role in delivering services and initiatives in our Town Centres. This consultation and co-operation will continue throughout the duration of the initiative.

**David Booth**

**Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources)**

14 September 2022

### **Link(s) to Council Values/Priorities/Outcomes**

- ◆ Focused on people and their needs
- ◆ Working with and respecting others
- ◆ Accountable, effective, efficient and transparent
- ◆ Ambitious, self-aware and improving
- ◆ Fair, open and sustainable
- ◆ We will work to put people first and reduce inequality
- ◆ 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
- ◆ Caring, connected, sustainable communities
- ◆ People live the healthiest lives possible
- ◆ Inspiring learners, transforming learning, strengthening partnerships

### **Previous References**

- ◆ Community and Enterprise Resource Committee 7 December 2021- Blantyre Town Centre Strategy and Action Plan - Consultative Draft -

### **List of Background Papers**

- ◆ Blantyre Town Centre Strategy and Action Plan (Appendix 1)

### **Contact for Further Information**

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

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