

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

REPORT

To: NORTHERN LOCAL AREA PARTNERSHIP	Subject: CUMBERNAULD & KILSYTH TOWN CENTRES REPORT	
From: HEAD OF PLANNING & REGENERATION		
Date: 1 August 2013	Ref: PL/DIT/12/KG	

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report seeks to update the Partnership and Committee on the progress made in delivering the regeneration of Cumbernauld and Kilsyth Town Centres. It also provides an update on progress made on the preparation of new Town Centre Frameworks and Action Plans for Cumbernauld and Kilsyth town centres.

2. Town Centre Frameworks**2.1 Cumbernauld Town Centre Framework and Action Plan**

A draft Framework and Action Plan for Cumbernauld town centre has been prepared by North Lanarkshire Council, Planning and Regeneration. The aims, outcomes and actions within the Framework and Action Plan have been informed by a Town Centre Health Check (TCHC) of Cumbernauld town centre and feedback from survey and consultation work undertaken between September 2012 and February 2013. The findings of the Scottish Government's National Review of Town Centre have also been taken into account. The draft Framework and Action Plan is currently subject to consultation with Council Services and public sector partners. The documents will then be made available for public comment over August and September 2013 at www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/cumbernauld. The Framework and Action Plan together set out the strategy for Cumbernauld town centre over the next 10 years and are supported by the Cumbernauld Town Centre Health Check.

2.2 Kilsyth Town Centre Framework and Action Plan

Survey work on a new Town Centre Framework for Kilsyth town centre has been undertaken, involving surveys with local businesses and customers of the town centre. Public drop-in sessions have also been held within an empty shop unit on Kilsyth Main Street from Monday 10th to Friday 15th June 2013. The first stage Kilsyth town centre consultation workshop was held on Monday 20th May and involved representatives from North Lanarkshire Council Services public sector partners, local traders, Kilsyth and Villages Community Forum and Kilsyth Community Council. Feedback from the survey work, public drop-ins and consultation workshop is currently being collated and will inform the identification of a set of key issues for Kilsyth town centre and the preparation of a draft main aim, outcomes and actions for the new Framework and Action Plan. Information is on-line at www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/kilsyth. This will form the basis of a second round of consultation workshops to be held during Autumn 2013.

3. Cumbernauld Town Centre Action PlanCentral Way Corridor

- 4.1 Sale of the Cumbernauld Centre has now been confirmed and an early meeting is being sought with the new owners to discuss works around Central Way, the Internal Wayfinding Signage project and the feasibility study work recently undertaken into options for improving the Central Way bus facilities. Wider consultation on the Cumbernauld town centre bus facilities feasibility study work with a number of key stakeholders will also be required to determine which of the options prepared offer practical ways forward, how improvements could be funded and how any new or upgraded facilities would be managed and maintained in the long-term.

4.2 North Lanarkshire Council, Landscape Services, have been commissioned by Campsies Centre (Cumbernauld) Ltd (CCCL) to prepare landscape improvement proposals for four sites within their ownership in the town centre. Draft proposals have been prepared and are currently being refined following consultation with the CCCL Board. Arrangements for the long-term management and maintenance of the sites once upgraded are being developed. Landscape Services are also preparing landscape proposals for Town Centre West Roundabout and the shrub beds around Bron Way to complement investment from CCCL in improving the environment in Cumbernauld town centre. It is planned that all works would be implemented through a single contract, and that works on site will commence in Autumn 2013.

4.3 Cumbernauld town centre signage strategy

As reported at the last Local Area Partnership, agreement has now been received from two of the three shopping centre managers on the long term maintenance responsibility for the Cumbernauld town centre internal wayfinding signage, although one of these is conditional on agreement being confirmed with the new owners of the Cumbernauld Centre. Therefore, the contract for the new signs will not be awarded until such time as discussions have been undertaken with the new Cumbernauld Centre owners and their agreement confirmed.

5. Cumbernauld Village Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme

5.1 The Cumbernauld Village Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS) is now nearing completion. Through the CARS scheme, the historic character of Cumbernauld Village Conservation Area has been enhanced and restored through shopfront and householder grant schemes, public realm, street furniture and signage works and targeted action at four priority buildings identified. The total capital investment in Cumbernauld Village through the CARS scheme is £800,000, comprising £300,000 from Historic Scotland and £500,000 private investment. One of the priority buildings identified, the former Village Primary School, is subject to continued grant funding applications, led by the Cumbernauld House Trust, for a community and charity hub proposal, with the support of North Lanarkshire Council.

5.3 As part of the feedback required for Historic Scotland at the close of the CARS, a survey of local Community Groups has been carried out. All 8 groups who responded consider there has been significant or some improvement in the overall physical environment, and some improvement in the business environment in the Village. All 8 groups rate the overall public realm improvements (including signage, litter bins, seats, street lighting, Smithyends Car Park Wall rebuild, cemetery gatepiers & finials and railings refurbishment) as very good or excellent. 7 out of 8 groups rate both the Shopfronts and Lanriggs improvement work as excellent or very good.

6. National Review of Town Centres

6.1 Malcolm Fraser's External Advisory Group reported to the Scottish Government on 4th July with key recommendations for re-energising Scotland's town centres. The review - guided by the principles of Diversity, Empowerment and Pragmatism, identified "Leadership and Collaboration" as the key. Their recommendations were made under 6 themes:-

- Town Centre Living
- Accessible Public Services
- Vibrant Local Economies
- Digital Towns
- Enterprising Communities
- Proactive Planning.

Underpinning all of this is the key principle of "Town Centres First" – which is already included in the draft Scottish Planning Policy currently out to consultation.

6.2 It includes a number of proposals to help breathe new life into town centres.

- A 'town centre first' principle whereby public bodies will consider how they can support town centres before considering development elsewhere
- Working with housing providers to bring empty town centre properties back into use as affordable housing
- A town centre focus to review current business rates incentivisation schemes
- A recommendation that public bodies should consider the impact of proposals to relocate services out of town centres

- Broadening the appeal of town centres with a mix of leisure, public facilities and homes Officers will be addressing the points made in the emerging Town Centre Action Plans. The report is on-line at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/07/7250>

Town Centre	Total no. of available units	Total no. of active businesses	New businesses	Businesses closed	Void Units (% vacancy rate)
Cumbernauld	212	170	2	3	42 (20%)
Kilsyth	95	82	1	0	13 (13.7%)

7. Town Centre Activities

7.1 **Vacancy Rates:** The Local Data Company has an average UK shop vacancy rate average of 14.1% (May 2013) whereas the British Retail Consortium suggests the national UK town centre vacancy rate was 10.9% in January 2013. Kilsyth and Cumbernauld have a combined total vacancy rate of 17.91% - with Cumbernauld well above the national average.

7.2 **Footfall:** This has to be seen in context of average footfall in shopping centres falling 3.0% in April.

Town Centre	April 2013	May 2013	June 2013	End of Q1	% comparison Q1 2012/13 & Q1 2013/14
Cumbernauld (* as per counters – not total footfall)	84,173	90,925	89,932	265,030	16.6%
Kilsyth	237,943	252,134	255,481	745,558	- 5.1%

7.3 Cumbernauld and Kilsyth Events

TCA delivered an Easter Competition in Kilsyth with good feedback from the retailers. The Civic Week event days on 8th and 15th of June 2013 had an increase of 13.1% in footfall compared to the event days in 2012. The next Kilsyth town team meeting will take place on 29th August at 5.30pm in the Police station, Main Street.

7. Recommendation

7.1 It is recommended that the Local Area Partnership note progress made on the projects and initiatives that have progressed recently within Cumbernauld and Kilsyth Town Centres.

Shirley Linton

**SHIRLEY LINTON
HEAD OF PLANNING & REGENERATION**

Local Government Access to Information Act: for further information about this report, please contact Kirsty Gray on 01236 632629 or Richard Cartwright on 01236 632628 (26 June 2013)