

REPORT

To: COATBRIDGE LOCAL AREA PARTNERSHIP	Subject: COATBRIDGE TOWN CENTRE ACTION PLAN	
From: HEAD OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT		
Date: 15 January 2013	Ref: SP/03/12/JT	

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report seeks to update the Partnership and Committee on the progress made on the Coatbridge Town Centre Action Plan projects and initiatives.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Coatbridge Town Centre Action plan was approved by North Lanarkshire Council's Economic Regeneration Committee in March 2005 as a multi-agency and wide ranging approach for the regeneration process in Coatbridge Town Centre.
- 2.2 As previously reported, works as part of the current Action Plan are now complete in Coatbridge and as such there is no allocated budget for this year. The Council will determine its Capital Plan for the period 2013/14 to 2017/18 in early 2013 and the partnership will be advised of any budget allocation for the town centre at a future meeting.
- 2.3 The development of new Town Centre Frameworks to guide the management and change for North Lanarkshire's town centres is currently being progressed. A guidance note which sets out the process for preparing the Frameworks can be viewed on the North Lanarkshire Council website at www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/towncentres.
- 2.4 The Council is currently developing the Framework for Coatbridge. The first stages of survey and consultation work associated with the first phase of the town centre frameworks have taken place. Surveys were issued to businesses and traders within Coatbridge town centre seeking their feedback on the town centre as a place to do business and 40 surveys were received. Customer perception surveys were also undertaken using computer survey terminals at various locations: Quadrant Shopping Centre, Coatbridge Library, Coatbridge College, Municipal Building foyer area and the Buchanan Centre and 160 responses were collected. Both surveys were available online until 9th November 2012 and resulted in 2 trader and 16 customer responses. Workshop and drop-in events with community groups, local interest groups, traders, businesses, town centre stakeholders and community planning partners were held on 23rd October and 15th November. Notes from these group discussions are available on the council's website www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/coatbridge.
- 2.5 A further phase of public consultation is planned for Jan / Feb 2013 when the content of the draft Action Plan document will be consulted on.

3. Project updates

- 3.1 New fingerpost signs and two orientation panel signs (located near junction of Main Street and John Street and the main eastbound bus stop on South Circular Road) have been fitted, which include maps of the town centre, indicating the main destination points and landmark buildings. The Main Street to Faraday Retail Park link works have also been completed.
- 3.2 Monkland Steering Group are delivering a series of projects along the Monkland Canal Heritage Path/ National Cycle Network Route 75 Glasgow to Edinburgh with a shared funding package

from Sustrans, EKF, WREN with contribution from NLC amongst others. This will allow a new bound path to be formed from NCN75/ Monkland Canal Path at Coatbridge Canal Basin to Summerlee Heritage Park. This will afford direct off road access to Summerlee Heritage Museum (during opening hours only) from NCN75 and Monkland Canal - allowing walkers/cyclists to visit the museum. The path will pass under a road bridge at West Canal Street where a gate will be locked in the evening to deter anti social behaviour.

3.3 Work continues to find a positive use for Carnegie Library.

4. Dundyvan Church

4.1 The Council's legal team continues to seek reimbursement of costs incurred by the council in relation to the works carried out in default after the serving of an Amenity Notice on the owner of Dundyvan Church last year and also to monitor the security of the site.

4.2 Following recent site visits to Dundyvan, it was noted that the boundary Herras fencing is continually being knocked down, leaving the site unsecure. Building Standards and Planning are continually monitoring the situation and advising the owner that the fence has been knocked down. In addition, those who are entering the site have been creating openings into the existing Church (pulling off the metal cladding over the old windows and breaking through the brickwork). The site owner has been advised several times that the openings require to be closed up given that the building is dangerous inside. Unfortunately the owner has not yet responded and further action is under consideration.

4.3 Listed Building consent has also not been granted as the applicant has not submitted sufficient information in order to allow the determination.

5. Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme

5.1 A new Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS) programme was announced by Historic Scotland in December 2011 for schemes to commence in April 2013. A bid for the central part of the Coatbridge (Blairhill and Dunbeth) Conservation Area has been submitted and a decision on this bid is due to be made by Historic Scotland by the end of January 2013, after detailed assessment of all the bids received. A summary of projects included in the bid was reported to the Local Area Partnership Meeting of 29 May 2012. Letters of support for the bid received from the MP, MSP's, the Community Forum and other local groups were included in the bid submission. Priority buildings for which funding has been sought are: 3 - 13 Bank Street, Waterman's Public House, the Coia Building, Carnegie Library, Central Station Signal Building and 10 - 12 Church Street. A Shopfront Improvement grants programme and public realm works would also form part of the CARS if this bid is successful.

6. Merrystone Bridge, Blairhill Street

6.1 Traffic and Transportation have allocated £35,000 for repair of the road bridge at Blairhill Street within the Conservation Area (the bridge at Blair Street is also to be repaired). The contract is let this financial year and is due to continue into next financial year. It may be possible to contribute next year to use CARS funding to secure re-instatement of lantern tops on four short lighting columns present on the bridge.

7. Town Centre parking update

7.1 A project estimate is being developed for a DDA compliant pedestrian ramp access to Monklands Hospital. Some tentative investigations have taken place regarding the possibility of providing a Park & Ride facility to the north side of Coatdyke Station, however, any such proposal would be dependent upon land ownership agreements and the need to improve the access road. Partnership will be kept informed of progress.

7.2 New zebra crossing and signals with tactile paving at Faraday Retail Park, between the Health Centre and Tesco store are now in place.

8. Town Centre Activities

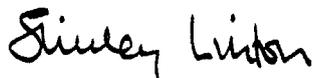
- 8.1 Town Centre Activities hosted this year's Coatbridge Christmas event including the Christmas Lights switch on in the town centre by the Provost / Deputy Provost on Thursday 29th November, signifying the official start of Christmas Shopping with a festive programme of entertainment.
- 8.2 Marks and Spencer's opened in November in Faraday Retail, and reported the highest footfall in a store opening of that size throughout the country. Coatbridge reported one closure (Comet), and the business (retail & offices) unit vacancy rate was 8.9% in November 2012.

9. Business Improvement Districts (BID)

- 9.1 A Business Improvement District (BID) is a defined area within which a levy is generated from all non domestic ratepayers and used to provide services additional to local authority baseline services. A BID is also conditional on strong support from the private sector via a formal ballot and must have the support of the local authority to succeed.
- 9.2 The growth of BIDs in Scotland has been steady since 2008 with 17 now established and a further 16 in development, covering 20 local authority areas. At its meeting of 22 November 2012 the Policy and Resources (Regeneration & Infrastructure) Sub Committee approved further work on BIDs. The work will involve engaging with town centre businesses to raise awareness of BIDs and assessing whether any of the town centres would like to work toward developing a pilot BID for North Lanarkshire. The work is scheduled to be completed by the end of April 2013.

10. Recommendations

- 10.1 It is recommended that the Local Area Partnership note progress made on the projects and initiatives contained within the Coatbridge Town Centre Action Plan.



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HEAD OF PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT**

Local Government Access to Information Act: for further information about this report, please contact Jennifer Thomson on 01236 632625, or Richard Cartwright on CARS on 01236 632628.
(4th December 2012)