

To: COATBRIDGE LOCAL AREA PARTNERSHIP		Subject : COATBRIDGE TOWN CENTRE ACTION PLAN UPDATE
From: HEAD OF PLANNING AND REGENERATION		
Date: 28 July 2015	Ref: PL/DIT/12/	

1. Purpose of Report

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

2. Coatbridge Town Centre Framework and Action Plan

- 2.1 The Council continues work on Town Centre Frameworks and Action Plans for all town centres. A guidance note which sets out the process for preparing these Frameworks can be viewed at www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/towncentres.
- 2.2 The Coatbridge Town Centre Framework and Action Plan have been reviewed and revised, where appropriate, to take account of comments received during the final public consultation period earlier this year. Committee approval will be sought in August to enable the adoption of the Coatbridge Town Centre Action Plan as Supplementary Guidance to the North Lanarkshire Local Plan 2012 and subsequent Local Development Plan.

3. Capital Budget

- 3.1 As previously reported, no funding was allocated to Coatbridge in the Council's Capital Programme for the period 2013/14 to 2017/18. Consequently the new Framework and Action Plan for Coatbridge will need to identify opportunities for external funding.
- 3.2 As reported at the last meeting, Historic Scotland has awarded the Council a grant of £800,000 to implement the Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme. The scheme, which is in the early stages of preparation, will be implemented over a three year period running from 2015/16 to 17/18. Match funding of £150,000 has been approved in the 15/16 Capital Programme with a further £500,000 approved over the following two years to support this project. It is considered that the CARS project will contribute significantly to delivering one of the principal themes in the Coatbridge Town Centre Action Plan.

4. Town Centre Projects' Update

Car Parking

- 4.1 Work is currently underway to increase parking facilities for shoppers, businesses and commuters within the town centre. In Kildonan Street 35 extra spaces have been created by removing areas of old concrete landscaping and overgrown landscaping within the current Council car park.
- 4.2 Works involving the demolition of a derelict building and site clearance in the Baird Street car park will result in an additional 28 spaces.
- 4.3 Site investigations are being undertaken on the site of the former Hebron Hall in Church Street to determine its suitability for further car parking and linking it to the adjacent car park.

- 4.4 The site at 7 Church Street is currently being investigated for development as a car park. There are, however, a number of issues to be addressed including ground conditions, site boundary and title deeds to determine if this is possible.
- 4.5 Consultants are being appointed to prepare design options for consideration of a potential addition to the ASDA car park.

Potential Housing Development

- 4.6 The planning application for the proposed housing development at 7-13 Bank Street is currently under consideration. Options for possible mitigation measures for noise/vibration abatement are currently being reviewed.
- 4.7 Further discussions have taken place with Historic Scotland regarding the potential redevelopment of the Carnegie Library building in Academy Street. A planning application is being prepared for submission in August 2015 based on retaining only the main building to provide 11 flats. A bid for the Town Centre Empty Homes Fund is also being prepared for this building.
- 4.8 The site of the former tax office at the corner of St John Street and Muirhall Street has recently been acquired by the Council. Committee approval will be required to transfer the site to Loretto Housing Association for the development of 24 amenity flats. Submission of the planning application for consent to demolish the building is imminent. This is required as the building lies within the Blairhill and Dunbeth Conservation Area.

5. Town Centre Activities Update

Town Centre	Total No. of Available Units	Total No. of Active Businesses	New Business	Business Closed	Void Units (% vacancy rate)	Footfall Between Q4 14/15 & Q3 14/15	Footfall between Q4 13/14 & Q4 14/15
Airdrie	316	291	4	0	25 (7.9%)	-10%	-5%
Bellshill	146	138	3	3	8 (5.4%)	-12%	-7%
Coatbridge	230	187	4	0	43 (18.6%)	-10%	-1%
Cumbernauld	215	175	4	3	40 (18.6%)	-5%	-6%
Kilsyth	97	84	1	0	13 (13.4%)	-7%	-3%
Motherwell	278	251	0	3	27 (9.7%)	-12%	-2%
Wishaw*	301	255	2	2	46 (15.2%)		
TOTAL	1583	1381	18	11	202 (12.7%)		

* Wishaw footfall counters have been displaced due to streetscape works. Current year figures are therefore not directly comparable with previous year figures.

- 5.1 Coatbridge continues to have a high vacancy rate at 18.6% (43 units) when compared with the other town centres in North Lanarkshire, however, in the period from January to March 2015 four businesses opened and no businesses closed.
- 5.2 Footfall figures for the period January to March 2015, as recorded on automated counters located throughout the town centre, show a decrease of 10% in levels of activity compared to the previous quarter, October to December 2014. During January to March 2015, footfall fell by 1% when compared with the same period in 2014.
- 5.3 Town Centre Wi-Fi received 179 new registrations between January and March 2015 and there were 9724 log-ins in total. Comparative figures for the other town centres are as follows:

TOWN CENTRE Wi-Fi	Airdrie	Bellshill	Coatbridge	Kilsyth	Motherwell	Wishaw
New Registrations	197	161	179	47	572	224
Total Log-ins	6,555	5,922	9,724	1,378	22,916	11,849

Source: TCA, Quarter 4 2014/15

6. Recommendations

6.1 It is recommended that the Committee notes the content of this report.

Shirley Linton

**SHIRLEY LINTON
HEAD OF PLANNING AND REGENERATION**

Local Government Access to Information Act: for further information about this report, please contact Shirley Penman on 01236 632633 (17 July 2015)