

REPORT

To: COATBRIDGE LOCAL AREA PARTNERSHIP	Subject : COATBRIDGE TOWN CENTRE ACTION PLAN UPDATE	
From: HEAD OF PLANNING AND REGENERATION		
Date: 12 April 2016	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 Coatbridge Town Centre Framework and Action Plan were approved by the Planning and Transport Committee on 9 December 2015. The Coatbridge Town Centre Action Plan has now been adopted as Supplementary Guidance to the North Lanarkshire Local Plan 2012.

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 The Coatbridge Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS) which has up to £800,000 of grant funding awarded by Historic Environment Scotland and £650,000 of Council match funding will be launched in May 2016.

4. Town Centre Projects' Update

Car Parking

- 4.1 The additional 28 parking spaces and sandstone entrance walls at the Baird Street Car Park are due for completion by the end of March 2016.
- 4.2 The development of the proposed car parking on the site of the former Hebron Hall site has been delayed due to land acquisition problems relating to the vendor. There is no indication of a conclusion to this matter in the short term.
- 4.3 The site at 7 Church Street has been acquired by the Council for additional car parking.
- 4.4 The Feasibility Study for additional parking at the ASDA store has been completed.

Potential Housing Development

- 4.5 Housing and Social Work Services has received the Council's agreement, in principle, to consider the use of the property at 7-13 Bank Street for supported temporary accommodation. However the financial viability of this project is now in doubt due to recent changes announced by the Government that will potentially affect the amount of housing benefit that can be paid for supported accommodation. Further clarification, and exemption, is currently being sought from central government but until there is more clarity around revenue funding it is unlikely this project can proceed. All possible funding options are being explored.

- 4.6 Planning permission and Listed Building Consent are in place for the redevelopment of the former Carnegie Library Building by Clyde Valley Housing Association. The Building Warrant was submitted in March and it is currently anticipated that the tender for the work will be issued in May, with a site start by Autumn 2016. The redevelopment of the building will provide 12 flats. The Government has awarded a grant of £250,000 and a loan of £250,000 to this project through its Town Centre Empty Homes Fund. Historic Environment Scotland is agreeable, in principle, to some of the CARS funding being used in this project to redevelop a significant 'B' Listed Building.
- 4.7 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 has been granted to transfer the site to Loretto Housing Association for the development of 24 amenity flats. Consent to demolish the building and the Building Warrant are now in place. It is anticipated that demolition will commence in April. Further ground investigations will be undertaken by Loretto Housing Association once the site is cleared.

5. Town Centre Activities Update

- 5.1 The table below summarises the key findings of the business activity for the 7 town centres for quarter 3, October to December 2015/16.

North Lanarkshire Town Centre Vacancies September – December 2015					
Town Centre	Total no. of available units	Total no. of active businesses	New businesses	Businesses closed	Void Units (% vacancy rate)
Airdrie	316	286	0	2	30 (9.4%)
Bellshill	146	140	1	0	6 (3.2%)
Coatbridge	230	184	1	1	46 (20%)
Cumbernauld	215	173	1	1	42 (19.5%)
Kilsyth	97	84	2	4	13 (13.4%)
Motherwell	278	258	3	1	20 (7.1%)
Wishaw	301	255	2	0	46 (15.2%)
Total	1583	1380	10	9	203 (12.8%)

- 5.2 In November 2015, the average vacancy rate for Scotland's towns was reported at 8.7% reporting an improvement from the average vacancy rate of 10.6% previously reported. These figures were reported by Scottish Retail Consortium and Springboard. It puts the average vacancy rate lower than the average vacancy rate for the whole of the UK which sits at 9.1%.
- 5.3 Looking at North Lanarkshire as a whole we have a vacancy rate which is 4.1% higher with all but two towns performing much worse than the reported average.

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 (14 March 2016)