

Mold

SENSE OF PLACE Feasibility Study

Final Report

October 2010

heritageinitiatives

Conservation
Planning
Regeneration
Urban Design



Report for

Keira Darbyshire
Sense of Place Officer
Cadwyn Clwyd
Llys Clwyd
Cwrt y Dderwen
Lon Parcwr Business Park
RUTHIN
LL15 1NJ

01824 705802

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Report prepared by
Nathan Blanchard MRTPI IHBC
Director
Heritage Initiatives Limited



Supported by
Alan Brown MRICS
Director
Alan Brown Associates



Paul Harrison CMLI
Director
Harrison Design



Ted Cleaveley MCIM
Director
Cleaveley Associates



Our reference

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Foreword

Flintshire County Council and Mold Town Council have recognised the economic, social and environmental benefits of promoting Mold as a vibrant and successful place. With the help of Cadwyn Clwyd this study was commissioned to provide the focus for a stronger sense of place for Mold, building on its local distinctiveness and identifying how the town may be developed to the greater benefit of residents, businesses and visitors.

This study demonstrates that Mold is worthy of greater public and private sector investment. There is a recognition that it is vital to set out a strategy and make long-term plans for the town. As such, this study has highlighted a range of initiatives for future environmental, streetscape and infrastructure improvements that will assist in conserving and enhancing the distinctiveness of the town. It aims to provide a structure for future action, exploit Mold's role in the local and regional economy and establish the town as a desirable place to live in, work in and visit through a series of initiatives which build on and develop the town's heritage and cultural assets.

The study is fundamental to the working of both the public and private sectors, to inform the development of Mold in the years to come. We are therefore happy to commend its findings and support its recommendations.

Councillor Matt Wright
Executive Member – Regeneration and Tourism
Flintshire County Council



Councillor Chris Bithell
Town Mayor of Mold



Executive Summary

Introduction and background to the Feasibility Study

- I. As with many market towns throughout Britain, Mold is experiencing unprecedented pressures as competition for consumer spend during an economic downturn increases and where shopping habits continue to evolve in an online and out of town retail environment dominated by the major superstores. The consequences of such change facing traditional town centres has resulted in a recognition that innovative measures have to be adopted by partnerships of local authorities, chambers of commerce and retailers to seek to develop a competitive edge which will retain footfall and therefore sales and profits.
- II. Heritage Initiatives, leading a team of consultants, was appointed by Cadwyn Clwyd on behalf of a Steering Group of Mold stakeholders in August 2009 to develop and deliver a feasibility study focussing on the town's Sense of Place.
- III. This Sense of Place feasibility study responds to the challenges Mold faces in realising its potential. It provides a focus for a stronger Sense of Place in building on local distinctiveness through evidence gathered, taking account of existing strategies and planning policy, discussions with stakeholders and the community, reasoned advice, best practice and an outline of a series of realistic projects to develop Mold's attributes. A sustainable, prosperous future for Mold will be optimising where opportunities are developed in line with the Cittaslow aims of:
 - **supporting local businesses,**
 - **fostering local traditions,**
 - **protecting the environment,**
 - **welcoming visitors and**
 - **encouraging active participation in community life.**
- IV. The most successful towns have recognised and adopted an integrated approach which seeks to ensure that the shopper and visitor experience is unique, memorable and likely



to result in repeat visits. The integrated approach means that towns like Mold must be welcoming, accessible, interesting, legible, safe, varied, clean and vibrant. Distinctiveness is the umbrella word which embodies all of these requirements and which makes a town memorable as a place to visit - a must-see destination. The development of a Sense of Place for Mold will be the framework for this distinctiveness. Joining the Cittaslow initiative at an early stage has already given Mold a competitive advantage in that the principles laid down by the Cittaslow movement are now part of the Town's identity and philosophy.



- V. Embracing and strengthening Mold's Sense of Place is fundamental to a new approach in managing the town. Mold town centre and its unique setting with all its associations in terms of culture, language, history, architecture, and people, has a genius loci - 'the special atmosphere that is characteristic of a place'. By contrast that special character is absent in the replicated and manufactured spaces of out of town retail centres. Enhancing, expressing and revitalising those elements which combine to give a Sense of Place not only strengthens the cultural, geographical and historical associations of a place with its past, it also draws people to interact within, relate to and make connection with that place in the present.

- VI. In order to ensure Mold's economic survival, the town needs to be attractive with distinctive and special qualities. Ultimately the town centre will only survive if it develops as a vital and vibrant place where people want to go, to meet, to interact and to share experiences. It is first necessary to understand the key components of the town in order to embrace and strengthen the Sense of Place as an essential part of ensuring that vitality, which includes;

- A strong sense of community and connection between local people, the place and the Welsh language;
- Twice weekly markets that are diverse, colourful and high quality;
- Specialist and family owned independent shops, such as Hammersleys, Foresters and Vaughan Davies;
- A direct visual connection to the rural surroundings;
- The eastern gateway to the Clwydian Range Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
- The location of an ancient and historic Norman motte and bailey Castle;
- A Welsh marches border atmosphere with Welsh widely spoken;

- A dominant and planned High Street with broad pavements and distinctive architecture;
- The iconic St Marys Church, overlooking the High Street;
- Other notable architectural highlights such as Bethesda Chapel, the Town Hall and the former Assembly Hall, amongst others;
- A diverse mix of building uses and the human scale of development;
- Strong Cultural associations – including Daniel Owen and Richard Wilson;
- Historic and recent host of the *National Eisteddfod*;
- The real home of the *Mold Cape*, the unique Bronze Age ceremonial gold cape, currently held at the British Museum;
- The opportunities of having Clwyd Theatr Cymru as a major cultural venue within a mile of the town;
- The location of the administrative centre of Flintshire County Council on the town's outskirts.

Summary of the Analysis

- VII. The full feasibility study report extends to over 205 pages and is split into four parts. **The first part of the feasibility study** report introduces the background to sense of place, our understanding and response to the brief, the goals of the feasibility study and the methodology utilised. Four key stages formed the basis of the methodology:

- undertaking a community questionnaire,
- assessing the issues facing Mold including meeting with key stakeholders,
- holding a workshop with stakeholders, and
- reviewing the draft report with the Steering Group.

- VIII. The first stage was held during the Mold Food & Drink Festival in September 2009, providing a unique opportunity to interview the general public on the four themes which have been developed from the Brief, namely:

- Visiting & Shopping in Mold
- The Streets and Places of Mold
- Activities and Enjoying Mold
- The Heritage of Mold

- IX. 376 valid questionnaires were obtained from the exercise, primarily though face to face interviews over the two days of the Festival



and also those returned either in the mail or by hand to the Library, post event. The second stage involved a review of public policy documents relating to tourism, economic development, highways, planning and conservation. This was accompanied by an appraisal of the built heritage, public places and streets alongside discussions with partner organisations and stakeholders. The third stage involved a workshop with 26 stakeholders being held in December 2009 and the outcomes were incorporated into the Draft Report, submitted to the Steering Group in February 2010. The Steering Group responded at the fourth stage in July 2010 with comments to be incorporated into the Final Report.

- X. **The second part of the feasibility study** report responds to the tasks in the brief and details the issues, challenges and the results of the research undertaken as summarised in the following pages.

The Marketing Audit

- XI. The Study Brief asked for a Marketing Audit of the town with the following objectives:

- to identify those assets which contribute to the town's distinctiveness,
- to explore the potential for improving the town's competitive position, and
- to provide a baseline inventory and to score each retailer in terms of its appeal.

- XII. A complete inventory of all enterprises in Mold town centre was subsequently undertaken in August 2009. There were 159 enterprises trading in 2009 compared with 189 in August 2008 plus 15 traders in the Market Hall. The inventory also found there were 48 regional or national multiples in Mold town centre and 111 independents, excluding pubs. This ratio of 2.3 independents to every multiple shows how successful the town is in retaining its independent retailers and would be the envy of many market towns in the country. The number, variety and quality of the independent retailer has been proved to be a significant factor in defining the distinctiveness of other successful market towns.

- XIII. Mold remains the most significant town centre for shopping in Flintshire in terms of the number of outlets and the range of products and services on offer. The consumer view of Mold is that it is accessible, legible, safe and welcoming, illustrating the town has in place most of the building



blocks necessary to secure its continuation as Flintshire's premier shopping destination. 80% of people who completed the community questionnaire shopped in Mold daily or weekly and 67% stated that Mold's retail offer met their needs.

- XIV. When asked about their experiences as a shopper or visitor to Mold, over 90% found the town accessible, legible, safe and welcoming with around 70% finding Mold clean and bustling. 72% of people stated that Mold has a good range of places to eat and drink and 81% believed that the town would be a good potential base for visitors to North Wales. These results show that Mold has a strong loyal customer base which many market towns would envy and provides a robust foundation for the proposals contained within this report. Complacency would be dangerous and there are issues to be addressed if Mold is to retain its current position.

- XV. Mold is well placed to exploit its heritage and cultural assets to help to create distinctiveness and to enhance the visitor experience but the potential of these assets must be viewed in the context of visitor appeal and heritage value. On their own, it is doubtful that Mold's heritage assets would be of sufficient significance to greatly enhance the town's competitive position but as part of a wider initiative encompassing Flintshire and the sub-region, then the contribution will add depth and value to the existing tourism offer. Mold's contributions to a regional tourism offer could be related to The Gold Cape, the remains of a Norman motte and bailey castle, the medieval St Mary's Church and Welsh literary hero, Daniel Owen. The marketing audit is more fully referred to in the main body of the report at paragraphs 2.1.1 to 2.1.52

Townscape Character Analysis

- XVI. The focus of the Townscape Character Analysis was on those elements which contribute to Mold's Sense of Place and which should be utilised as a contributor to the town's future. The goals of this analysis were:

- to define the specialness of the town,
- identify the visual and architectural character,
- identify the challenges and threats to the historic environment,
- to review planning and conservation policies, and



- identify key heritage themes which can be utilised to promote the distinctiveness of the town.

XVII. The town's long history is a major contributor to its distinctiveness, from the location of the remains of a Norman motte and bailey Castle, the layout of the high street, to the location of the medieval Church of St Mary in dominating the High Street's skyline, to the site of the Mold Cape, now kept at the British Museum. Mold's local identity is largely defined by the historic layout of roads, paths and boundaries, the characteristic building materials, the particular mix of building uses, the public and private spaces, such as gardens, parks and greens and trees, the street furniture and significant views - all these and the interrelationships between them create the familiar and cherished local scene.

XVIII. A number of general and specific challenges were identified. It is clear from the appraisal and the community workshop that there is a valued and important architectural character to the Town within a broader landscape setting. Increasingly much of this character and setting are under threat at the present, with clear concerns existing as to how this can be reversed into the future. These issues include protecting unlisted buildings, the gradual erosion of special character, the underuse and vacancy of historic buildings, the mixed design quality of new development and the need for the robust implementation of conservation and planning policies and practice to ensure the proper stewardship of the town's historic environment. The townscape character analysis is more fully referred to in the main body of the report at paragraphs 2.2.1 to 2.2.54.

Public Realm Appraisal

XIX. The look and feel of the spaces and places in and between buildings is called the 'public realm' and the quality of this will be a vital factor in making Mold's distinctive future. Most of what is public realm in the town centre is managed by Flintshire County Council as are other key areas such as Daniel Owen Square and Bailey Hill. Like most other market towns, Mold has evolved with an arrangement of streets which suited local needs over years rather than today's needs and many towns are attempting to use their heritage and cultural life to halt commercial decline and to compete with the out of town retail parks. Improving the public realm is part



of what is needed to offer a more distinctive environment and enhance visitor experience. The appraisal covered the following aspects;

- the town's gateways,
- the attractiveness and legibility of the approaches,
- the sense of arrival, welcome and orientation in the car parks and bus station,
- the experience of moving to the centre of the town, and
- the character and appearance of the streets.

XX. Particular consideration was given to Daniel Owen Square and Mold's parks and greenspaces. The main points arising from the appraisal of the public realm were:

- the gateway signing is often cluttered and lacking information,
- there are crude and poor quality boundaries to commercial and residential properties on some approaches with uncoordinated private signs,
- the public realm along parts of the A541 is fragmented, car dominated and unfriendly to the pedestrian,
- there are too many directional road signs of mismatching styles,
- warning signs often mask other signs,
- the current segregation in the car parks is confusing,
- there are no safe routes for pedestrians,
- there are no arrival points for visitors and users, and
- there is little tree shelter, which may increasingly become an issue as our climate changes.

XXI. Unfortunately, the town centre has a number of narrow pavements unfriendly to users and potentially off-putting to visitors and the central section whilst the High Street provides a distinctive high quality public realm. The results of the Community Questionnaire agree strongly with the appraisal and Mold does benefit from a very special setting with a rural backdrop. However, the quality of the approaches is poor as is the sense of arrival and welcome. The public realm appraisal is more fully referred to in the main body of the report at paragraphs 2.3.1 to 2.3.55.

Events Ground Options Appraisal

XXII. The events ground options appraisal looked at ten potential sites throughout and in the vicinity of the town. From these sites a shortlist of five sites was given further consideration, which included New Street car park, Love Lane car park, Kendrick's Field, land on the Pentrehobyn Estate

and a site at Northop College. Following a comprehensive review of the above, it was determined the preferred location should have the following attributes:

- an in-town location with a main road frontage close to car parks and the bus station,
- be linked to Daniel Owen Square and the High Street,
- be accessible by pedestrians and cyclists,
- be preferably already in public ownership, and
- require only a reasonable level of investment to be available for use.

XXIII. The results of the Community Survey supported the Steering Group's view that Mold needed an events ground with 79% of the public in favour, with the largest group of respondents favouring an in-town location. In the appraisal, it was necessary to be sure that a new events ground benefitted the town in that visitors would also have easy access to the retail offer thus contributing to the wider prosperity. The Events Ground Appraisal is more fully referred to in the main body of the report at paragraphs 2.4.1 to 2.4.27.



Summary of Proposed Actions & Projects

Vision, Aims & Objectives

XXIV. To provide a focus for these proposed actions and project areas in building a stronger Sense of Place and the town's local distinctiveness it is proposed that the town has the following vision;

"By the year 2025, Mold will be an economic driver for North East Wales and a must-see destination for visitors to the region. The local community, their families, friends and tourists will be able to enjoy the benefits offered by the town's heritage and its natural and economic assets. This will be supported by the shopping experience offered by the range of successful customer-focused retail, tourist and professional businesses creating wealth and new job opportunities"

XXV. In order to achieve this vision three key aims must be adopted, which will guide the development and delivery of the proposed actions and projects, namely:

1. to create a distinctive, sustainable and attractive market town,
2. to encourage a prosperous and growing local economy, and
3. to maintain and enhance a quality environment and special places.

XXVI. These are further supported by six objectives:

- ensure the long term viability and competitiveness of Mold as a market town serving a range of consumer needs,
- support and enhance the tourism, cultural and recreational opportunities for residents and visitors,
- support local businesses and assist them to prosper through being responsive to local needs and offering a high level of customer care,
- protect and improve the distinctive character and appearance of the town through integrated service delivery, management and maintenance of the town's public assets,
- promote local distinctiveness by means of good design, the use of vernacular materials and through the conservation and enhancement of the historic and environmental assets of the town,
- ensure that the overall Vision is complementary to the aims and objectives of other strategies including the Town Centre Action Plan and Cittaslow movement.

XXVII. The proposed actions and project have been developed to respond to the four themes that represent all aspects of the visitor experience, which will make Mold competitive among the market towns in the region. Too many revitalisation programmes concentrate on seeking public funding for physical works, which are put forward as the only solution to a town's problems. Equally, the concentration of resources on improving the retail offer alone, whilst ignoring basic infrastructure shortfalls will not achieve the vision. The suggested vision, aims and objectives help link the different elements of the brief but will undoubtedly need to be revised to respond to wider issues of Mold as the Town Centre Action Plan process progresses and should therefore only be seen as relevant to the study at this time.



The Feasibility Study Assessment Areas & Project Areas

XXVIII. The study responded to the four task areas for assessment identified in the brief and has translated these into a series of proposed actions and project areas, which forms **the third part of the feasibility study report;**

| Assessment Areas | Corresponding Proposed Actions & Projects Areas |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Marketing Audit | Visiting & Shopping |
| Townscape Character Analysis | The Heritage of Mold |
| Public Realm Appraisal | Streets and Places |
| Events Ground Options Appraisal | Activities & Enjoying Mold |

Please be aware the order of the assessment areas differs from the order of the proposed actions and projects areas in the main body of the report.

Visiting & Shopping

XXIX. As a market town with a loyal and significant customer base, Mold is ideally placed to both retain and grow market share in the years ahead if real efforts are made to enhance and develop the customer and visitor experience. All of the investment in the public realm, streetscape and physical infrastructure will be wasted if the customer experience is spoiled by ugly shop fronts, uninspired window displays, poor merchandising and untrained staff. 81% of those who took part in the community questionnaire thought that Mold was an ideal touring base but the existing Tourist Information Centre (TIC) in Mold is small and in a relatively difficult location to find. Many TICs are now located at major car parks, edge of town locations or gateway sites in order to engage as many visitors as possible and to allow space for parking. As a result the following projects are proposed to address these issues through offering;

- merchandising training for retailers,
- customer care training for retailers,
- creation of a retail window fund, and
- to explore the potential of a new TIC for Mold.

XXX. These actions are more fully referred to in the main body of the report at paragraphs 3.2.6 to 3.2.7



Streets & Places

XXXI. The public realm strategy is required to guide management decisions to ensure that the town’s character and appearance are positively regarded by the community and visitors. This strategy is based around the following areas:

- The Gateways and Approaches to Mold
- Town Centre – Welcome and Arrival points
- Town Centre –Streets and Places
- Daniel Owen Square
- Parks and Green Spaces

The recommendation for The Gateways and Approaches to Mold is to include removal of existing redundant signs, the replacement of directional signing and amendments to car park signage. The recommendation for the Town Centre welcome and arrival points is to prepare a scheme of enhancement to the New Street/Meadow Lane/Griffiths Square/ Love Lane car parks, to improve the provision of direct, safe and attractive pedestrian links to the town centre and to provide well presented visitor information.



XXXII. The recommendation with regard to the Town Centre streets and places is to introduce new pedestrian crossings and new traffic management measures following a Highways feasibility study. For Daniel Owen Square the recommendation is to develop a feasibility proposal for the Square to increase space for events, specialist markets and greater community use. And finally, the recommendation for Parks and Green Spaces in the town, are:

- to more effectively manage Bailey Hill to make it safe, attractive and a more effective visitor destination, leading to a long term Conservation Management Plan,
- for the enhancement of Kendrick’s Field to make it work better as a public park and accommodate new events and festivals
- to create gateway treatments, car park enhancement and the creation of a riverside walk at Leadmills Field.

These actions are more fully referred to in the main body of the report at paragraphs 3.3.4 to 3.3.53.

Activities & Enjoying Mold

XXXIII. In addressing the activities and enjoying the town three projects were identified. Firstly, for Daniel Owen Square, it is proposed to develop this as a events space for a series of future events and to host a festivals programme. It is proposed that a multi-phase approach be taken to Daniel Owen Square as this develops into a venue and link this to its proposed physical enhancement. Secondly, the proximity of Kendrick's Field to the town makes it ideal as the preferred initial option for the proposed larger events ground for the town, which will be further enhanced by the proposed upgrades and linkages to the town centre. Thirdly, the value of events and festivals in creating distinctiveness and increasing footfall in market towns has been well proven over the recent past.



© Phil Jones

XXXIV. Mold already has a good track record in hosting such activities but the challenge is for the town to seek new opportunities given the scale of Mold and the likely available resources. As part of the feasibility study an outline Marketing Plan has been produced to guide this process. These actions are more fully referred to in the main body of the report at paragraphs 3.4.7 to 3.4.16.

The Heritage of Mold

XXXV. In response to the challenges and threats to Mold's historic environment, a series of projects and actions are proposed to address these issues. These largely focus on the town centre conservation area. If local aspirations for the historic environment are to be delivered then a clearer and more focused approach must be adopted for the current strategic framework for the town. Flintshire County Council should determine with greater clarity what its aims and objectives are and how they can secure broad stakeholder support for its future identification, designation and management of the historic environment.

XXXVI. In summary, the recommended actions for monitoring and enforcement are to prepare a Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan for the town centre, deliver a programme of training for Elected Members, officers and stakeholders, ensure planning enforcement becomes and remains a priority for the County Council and to establish an award scheme for excellence in conservation and design. The actions under policy and guidance are to develop a more proactive approach to

managing the historic environment, use identified issues damaging the historic environment to generate new policies, introduce targets and measures to gauge impact of policies and positively promote the Conservation Area.

XXXVII. In summary, for the finance and partnership elements of the historic environment, the recommendations are to deliver in-house training for development control staff, secure external funding for conservation projects, demonstrate excellence in repair and management of the County Council's estate and establish a programme of education on the historic environment. These actions are more fully referred to in the main body of the report at paragraphs 3.5.37 to 3.5.40.



Courtesy of Flintshire Record Office

Summary of the Way Forward

XXXVIII. **The fourth part of the feasibility study report** details the way forward and covers issues concerning further development of the proposed actions and projects, their implementation and delivery, the ownership of the study, the governance and conclusions of the study.

XXXIX. Mold could perhaps be described as a well kept secret, as despite its rich historical legacy and County Town status it is relatively unappreciated outside the region. The town has a number of assets, which collectively whether they are fixed assets or working capital, offer opportunities for the town's future prosperity. The fixed assets can be seen as the wider historic environment, its rural setting, its location off the A55 and proximity to major population centres, the site of Clwyd Theatr Cymru on the outskirts of town and its rich historic legacy of national figures. Its working capital can be seen as the much appreciated busy street and livestock markets, a balance of local and national retailers, the growing calendar of events and festivals that provide useful opportunities for the community to bond and visitors to experience the Mold offer, to the employment opportunities both within the town and in particular through sites on the outskirts of town. Optimising the town's assets and capital is clearly further supported by the town's membership of the Cittaslow movement, the development of a Town Centre Action Plan and the policies contained within the Flintshire Unitary Development

Plan. In moving forward the challenge is to harness these fixed assets, the working capital and the underpinning policy framework, as positive attributes and opportunities so they can be maximised for the future benefit of the Town’s residents, businesses and visitors.



- XL. The Study has shown that there are exciting opportunities to develop the town’s heritage and cultural assets thereby leading to a stronger Sense of Place. Many of the recommended projects can be implemented in the short term and at a relatively low cost, while longer term more complex projects are developed further. However, achieving the vision for Mold is too large for any single stakeholder or body and an integrated approach will be needed to capture the town’s full potential.
- XLI. Whilst all public bodies have responsibility to provide services in a joined up and efficient way, if Mold is to grow and prosper a philosophy of mutual cooperation and partnership between all stakeholders must be adopted. Moving from the Feasibility Study phase into the development and implementation phase will require strong public and private sector alliances, intelligent investment and good communication.
- XLII. There can only be one vision for Mold and decisions will need to be taken on who owns this and who will deliver it. Clearly, it is vital that the vision, aims and objectives of the Town Centre Partnership, Cittaslow and other stakeholders with an interest in Mold, are part of any debate on ownership of its future direction.
- XLIII. The study recommends that the model below be used as the ownership and delivery structure:

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Mold Town Partnership | <i>High level decisions and owner of the Sense of Place Study</i> |
| Officer Group | <i>Delivery by Flintshire County Council officers/ Town Centre Manager</i> |
| Elected Members | <i>Political support</i> |
| Working Groups | <i>Task & Finish Groups to deliver key projects</i> |

- XLIV. This multi-disciplinary team approach is already strongly advocated by the Welsh Assembly Government.
- XLV. The proposed actions and projects should be now adopted by the

Steering Group and their partners, and this is critical to the future success of the town. There is an immediate need to build a greater level of trust between the public and private sectors and the public sector must demonstrate that it understands the issues and is committed to achieving the shared vision.

- XLVI. The Mold Town Partnership is the ideal vehicle to deliver a successful future for Mold if well supported by colleagues in the public sector. This is an important opportunity to secure the future of Mold, otherwise the town will face an uncertain future and a gradual decline in its status as one of the premier shopping destinations in North East Wales.
- XLVII. The ‘Way Forward’ for Mold is to utilise this study to not only inform the Town Centre Action Plan but also to inspire the delivery of realistic projects at a challenging time, while certain in the knowledge that aspirational projects can be fostered and developed for implementation at a later date, the combination of which will launch Mold on the route to securing its future prosperity in the longer term.
- XLVIII. The community has informed and responded during the formulation of this report and this has assisted in validating a number of existing projects, including those for Bailey Hill and the celebration of Daniel Owen. However, the challenge remains. Can the sponsors to this study individually, corporately and in partnership respond and realise the community’s aspirations as outlined in this study, at a time of diminishing resources and external funding? It is hoped that at a time of adversity this feasibility report can act to bring partners together in pooling resources, working in closer cooperation, reviewing and integrating service delivery, responding effectively and delivering the various proposed projects. This is to ensure Mold responds to its Sense of Place and optimises its unique components in creating a prosperous future for its community.



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to ‘Sense of Place’

- 1.1.1 ‘Sense of Place’ is about defining identity. Our Sense of Place is the interrelationship between who we are and where we are. The identities of places are a largely a direct product of people but also the identity of people reflect the identity of place. As Winston Churchill said in 1951 on the post war rebuilding of the House of Commons following bomb damage:

“.....first we shape our buildings and afterwards our buildings shape us.”

- 1.1.2 In the context of this study Sense of Place is concerned with not just the built fabric of Mold but also the importance of how it operates as a modern market town serving a wide rural hinterland and how this can be sustained into the future and how Sense of Place contributes to wider prosperity. Sense of Place can be divided into two distinct strands – core elements and dynamic elements.
- 1.1.3 Core elements are the physical features of the town and its rural hinterland and the character of the built fabric and hard elements of the settlement, the streets, places and buildings. These slow-changing elements form the foundations of uniqueness and have been addressed through the tasks related to townscape character and the public realm.

Core elements of Sense of Place

- 1.1.4 The topography of a rural town and the natural resources of its surroundings are closely integrated into the identity of rural areas and hinterland, underpinning the reasons for the settlement being established in the first place: whether it is for the fertile agricultural land, availability of other natural resources, the defensive advantage offered by topography, such as Bailey Hill in Mold’s case, and the accessibility of transport links such as roads, rivers, canals and, since the 19th century, the railways. Topography defines the character of the settlement with its hills and valleys, woods and heaths, openness or enclosure, with the water that runs through the settlement be it stream, river – such as the River Alyn in Mold’s case - or a brook, with the character of its local plants and with the building materials available from its geology.
- 1.1.5 The hinterland has historically sustained rural towns and in turn, the rural towns have served the needs of the countryside, largely through the market place function of buying and selling, but also by serving the domestic needs of its residents and providing a social hub for all of the hinterland. The interdependence between the hinterland and the rural town is a source of resilience but also of weakness, as the strength of that connection is not constant.

- 1.1.6 The greatest decline in rural towns can be traced in history to changes in agriculture, as in the last quarter of the 19th century when cheap imported grain undermined the cereal growers. Likewise, where the existence of a rural town was dependent mainly on manufacturing or mining, the fate of these rural towns was closely linked to the fortunes of such industries. For Mold this can be seen in the loss of the mining industry and later the railway and much later the impact of Foot & Mouth in 2001.

- 1.1.7 Before the industrial revolution came to create new manufacturing centres, nearly all the towns of Wales had grown up from early settlements or were founded as towns. Most of these foundations had been laid in the Middle Ages. Many towns therefore have distinctive character developed through centuries of building, rebuilding, extending, renovating and converting. They have tight, organic street and squares patterns, with mixed-use dense streets defined by vernacular architecture, built with local materials.

- 1.1.8 Most of the built fabric, the so-called everyday architecture, is similar in many towns. In contrast, the major public buildings, such as town halls were built as an expression of civic pride, such as the Town Hall on Earl Road. The buildings of worship, such as St Mary's church and Bethesda chapel, and the homes of the rich and the powerful, such as the remains of the castle at Bailey Hill and the surrounding great houses, all are unique to Mold. The fabric of the built environment carries memories of historic alterations, of decay and of the idiosyncrasies of successive owners and of the influence of particular trades. Rural towns were built on a human scale that allowed visual connections to the surrounding countryside; the uniqueness of this relationship constitutes a further level of a Sense of Place. These qualities are cherished and hold timeless attraction because of the authenticity that only the passage of time can reveal.

- 1.1.9 The value of the authenticity has been recognised with the Town and Country Planning Act and later statutes, which introduced the concept of preserving heritage and protecting historic rural towns from inappropriate development through designating listed buildings and conservation areas. The distinctiveness of the built fabric creates local identity and has a strong tourism value but it also conflicts with modern demands. The growth of car use has often turned traditional market areas in rural town centres into car parks.

- 1.1.10 Changing shopping habits and trends for retail chains has forced large supermarkets to be developed on the edges of conservation areas, outside the town centres, causing local shops to close. Changes in governance have left many civic buildings without a purpose, such as the Old Court House. All of these factors undermine the distinctiveness of rural towns and many attempts are now being made to arrest this erosion and restore the convivial nature of market towns. These initiatives are wide ranging and include finding new uses for listed buildings, introducing pedestrian priority to high streets and reinvention of the market place through specialist and farmers markets. Although the built heritage is under siege, it forms the backbone of distinctiveness. Historic towns have an in-built resilience founded on the timeless appeal of a rich history, traditions and customs that are held within the historic built fabric. Although such historic fabric cannot guarantee sustainability it helps to attract new generations of people who choose to live there.

Dynamic Elements to Sense of Place

- 1.1.11 Dynamic elements relate to human enterprise and the people themselves. These elements create change, allow places to be reinterpreted and modified and have the capacity, unlike the former element, to reinvent distinctiveness and have been covered by the areas under marketing and the events in this report.

- 1.1.12 The residents of each town are the keepers of its Sense of Place. They are the ones most familiar with the history of the place and most interested in its future. They are also the carriers of the distinctive cultural traditions be it language, dialect, colloquialism, names, skills, recipes, musical traditions, arts and crafts, local products or myths and stories. People who live and work in a place, and others who care about its future, are also most likely to be motivated to find enterprising solutions to contemporary problems, to implement them and reap the rewards. They are often motivated by considerations of the benefits to the community and of quality of life. It is the openness of the local community that governs their ability to adapt to new circumstances. In addition, their entrepreneurial skills determine whether advantage is likely to be taken of new opportunities.

- 1.1.13 It is the civic pride of local people in their distinctive identity that provides the ultimate security against homogenisation. The establishment of events in distinctive towns such as festivals, community activities, exhibitions or even local association meetings, provides an opportunity for stakeholders to 'perform' their sense of belonging. In turn this helps to foster and strengthen the social and entrepreneurial capital, while reinforcing a sense of identity.

- 1.1.14 All of the activities undertaken in a place contribute to the uniqueness of experience but some of those activities have an overriding impact and become the vital ingredient of distinctiveness. These enterprising activities can be industrial, retail, or cultural. All have the power to contribute to local distinctiveness and all are vulnerable to changes in the wider society.

- 1.1.15 Trading activity was one of the fundamental reasons for the existence of most rural towns. The great majority of rural towns were market places designed for exchange of goods between the people of the hinterland and of the town. Although towns may hold other employment opportunities, the relationship between the town and the countryside was very intimate. The identification with agriculture was more than nominal. In Wales the connection has been largely lost, although the recent emergence of farmers' markets and increased interest in local customs may be early signs of the connection being recovered and with it an important relationship between rural towns and their hinterland.

- 1.1.16 Retailing has always been an essential activity and is as prone to historic trends as is the nature of employment. It is the considerable independent retail sector that is one of the most distinguishing factors separating rural towns from cities and yet this is the sector which public policy manages least well to protect. The displacement of local retail by supermarkets and chains is well documented, as is the lack of suitable premises for new forms of retail. All approaches to Sense of Place need to include elements of local food, local produce and local businesses but these are the

elements rather than the main focus of distinctiveness. It is important to note that currently local food is an increasing focus of many tourism initiatives due to the new health awareness and concerns regarding food miles. Local food is likely to hold less tourism and economic value in terms of a distinctive offer as all regions start laying claim to such uniqueness. The local food offer can only have lasting value when it is totally integrated with the culture of the place over centuries, as it is in many European countries: Tuscan dishes can be found on every menu in Tuscany and Venetian recipes dominate menus in Venice. In Wales the regional food traditions are not as strong as in some other European countries. Although undoubtedly food does form part of the regional distinctiveness, as for example in Welsh Salt-marsh Lamb and Beef, these traditions may not be sufficiently strong for a themed distinctiveness initiative. Food related distinctiveness is further undermined by multinational companies such as Carlsberg who purchased Wrexham Lager then closed it in 2000 and is possibly lost forever.

- 1.1.17 Cultural activities undertaken in the rural towns are one of the greatest source of distinctiveness and the most common subject of themed and induced distinctiveness. The town crier in Chester, the race course at Bangor on Dee, the book festival in Hay-on-Wye, the Boxing Day Hunt in Denbigh, the Victorian extravaganza in Llandudno and Mold's own food festival, and numerous other music, art, folk, food and dance festivals are almost always locally conceived and sustained.
- 1.1.18 Most of the time these cultural activities are relatively small scale enriching the quality of life of a town's residents and of the hinterland, representing just a small element of the uniqueness of place. More specialised events can attract visitors from the region and further afield, in some cases the success and uniqueness of the event is so great that they attract national or even international visitors. Over time the town's identity may become synonymous with that activity. Such is the case with Hay-on-Wye Book Town and Hay Literature Festival.
- 1.1.19 In most instances the Sense of Place movement has grown organically over time. However, in recent years, a number of international movements have emerged that network like-minded towns; they offer rural towns a 'readymade' brand of distinctiveness. These 'designated' distinctiveness themes are driven by local people largely motivated by the changing nature of society and a desire to create models of more sustainable neighbourhoods and happier communities. Mold enjoys the accolade of being the first Cittaslow town in Wales. Cittaslow is defined as a 'network of towns where quality of life is important'. Cittaslow is Italian for 'slow city' or 'slow town'. A Cittaslow town signs up to working towards a set of goals that aim to improve quality of life.

1.2 The Brief

- 1.2.1 The rural development agency, Cadwyn Clwyd, Mold Town Council, Cittaslow Mold and Flintshire County Council formed a steering group who sought a feasibility study to provide the focus for a stronger Sense of Place for Mold with the aim of building on its local distinctiveness, identifying how the town may be developed to the greater benefit of residents, businesses and visitors and feeding into the new Town Centre Action Plan. The study was to be fundamental to informing the development of Mold's identity, and establishing the town and the surrounding area as a desirable place to live in, work in and visit.

1.2.2 The Steering Group recognised the economic, social and environmental benefits of promoting the town as a vibrant and successful place and wish to exploit its role in the regional economy through a series of initiatives which would build on and develop the town's heritage and cultural assets. A strategy was to be developed that established long-term plans for the town.

1.2.3 The objectives of the study were to:

- Develop a "Sense of Place" for Mold which will enhance its local and regional role,
- Identify new initiatives and attractions which will generate more visitors,
- Introduce creative measures which will increase footfall and retail profits,
- Demonstrate that Mold is worthy of public and private sector investment,
- Conserve and enhance the distinctiveness of the town and help local people to understand, protect and enjoy its heritage and greenspace assets,
- Ensure an integrated approach to the development of the "Sense of Place",
- Integrate the findings of the study into the Town Centre Action Plan for Mold.

1.2.4 To achieve the aim and objectives of the study, the following were required to:

1. Undertake a Marketing Audit of the Town to identify and evaluate the retail and tourism 'offer' and propose enhancements which are innovative, realistic and deliverable,
2. Undertake a Townscape Character Analysis to identify the scale and quality of the heritage and cultural assets,
3. Produce an outline Public Realm Management Guide for future environmental improvements, streetscape infrastructure and maintenance,
4. Produce a Marketing Plan to include the extension and promotion of established and new events,
5. Set out options for the development of Daniel Owen Square as a multi-use facility for community events, festivals and other activities,
6. Identify suitable sites for an events showground in the vicinity of Mold and advise on their viability and potential,
7. Identify and evaluate potential funding streams for the capital and revenue costs of implementing any new schemes recommended in the Study,
8. Work closely with the Steering Group and consult with stakeholders and the community during the progress of the Study
9. Present the findings of the Study to the Steering Group upon completion. The Study should aim to prioritise the findings and recommendations.

1.3 The Report Methodology

1.3.1 The feasibility study report has centred on four key stages:

1. Undertaking a community questionnaire,

2. Assessment of the issues facing Mold,
3. Workshops with key stakeholders,
4. Review of the draft report with the Steering Group,

The format of the report groups the tasks of the brief for assessment purposes in section 2. These are translated into a series of proposed actions and project proposals in section 3, which are the preferred groupings as used in the questionnaire. The tasks concerning marketing for instance becoming visiting and shopping, the townscape elements are dealt with under the heritage of Mold, the public realm is dealt with under streets and places, while the event ground is dealt with under activities and enjoying.

- 1.3.2 The two day Mold Food & Drink Festival held on the weekend of the 19th & 20th September 2009 provided a unique opportunity to engage with the community directly on issues facing Mold. The study tasks were grouped into four more user-friendly areas to assist the completion of the forms – Visiting and Shopping, Streets & Places, Activities & Enjoying Mold, the Heritage of Mold. A stand was manned throughout the two days by at least two members of the consultancy team, who proactively engaged with those attending, encouraging them to discuss and complete the questionnaire. Further copies of the questionnaire were left with the Town's Library at the front desk and a specific section of the Town Council's website was given over to the study, where a link and details were also left. The event had been highly publicised by the local press, which assisted in securing 376 completed responses, providing an invaluable insight into the community's thoughts on the question as covered. A copy of the questionnaire can be found at Appendix A. Individual responses to the questionnaire are embedded within the report.

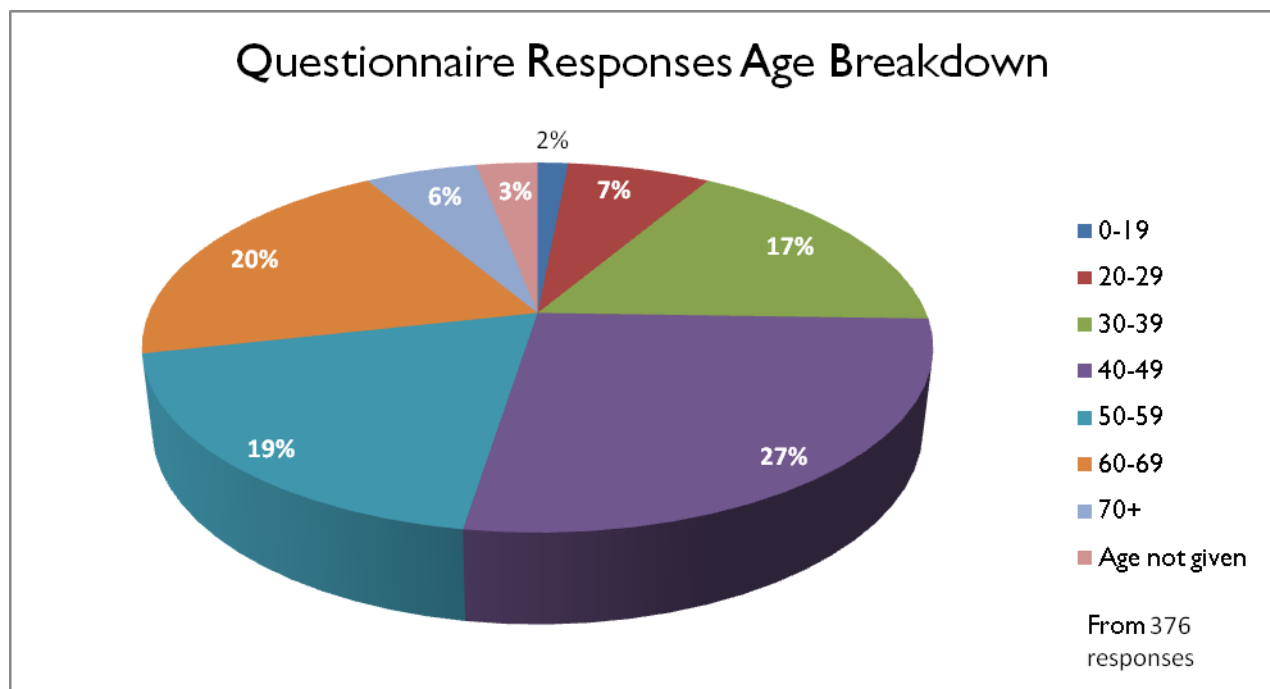


Figure 1: Mold Community Questionnaire Responses Age Breakdown

- 1.3.3 The age range of the respondents was broad, ensuring the relevance of the results as broadly representative of users of Mold, as illustrated on the previous page. As illustrated below, of the 376 responses 67% were from respondents living in the CH7 postcode area, which covers Mold and a broad rural hinterland including Caerwys, Northrop, Rhosesmor, Llanarmon-yn-aïl and Buckley. A further 24% of respondents were located in other postcodes adjoin CH7, reflecting the sub-regional nature of the event, while a further 17% were from postcodes outside the adjoining area.

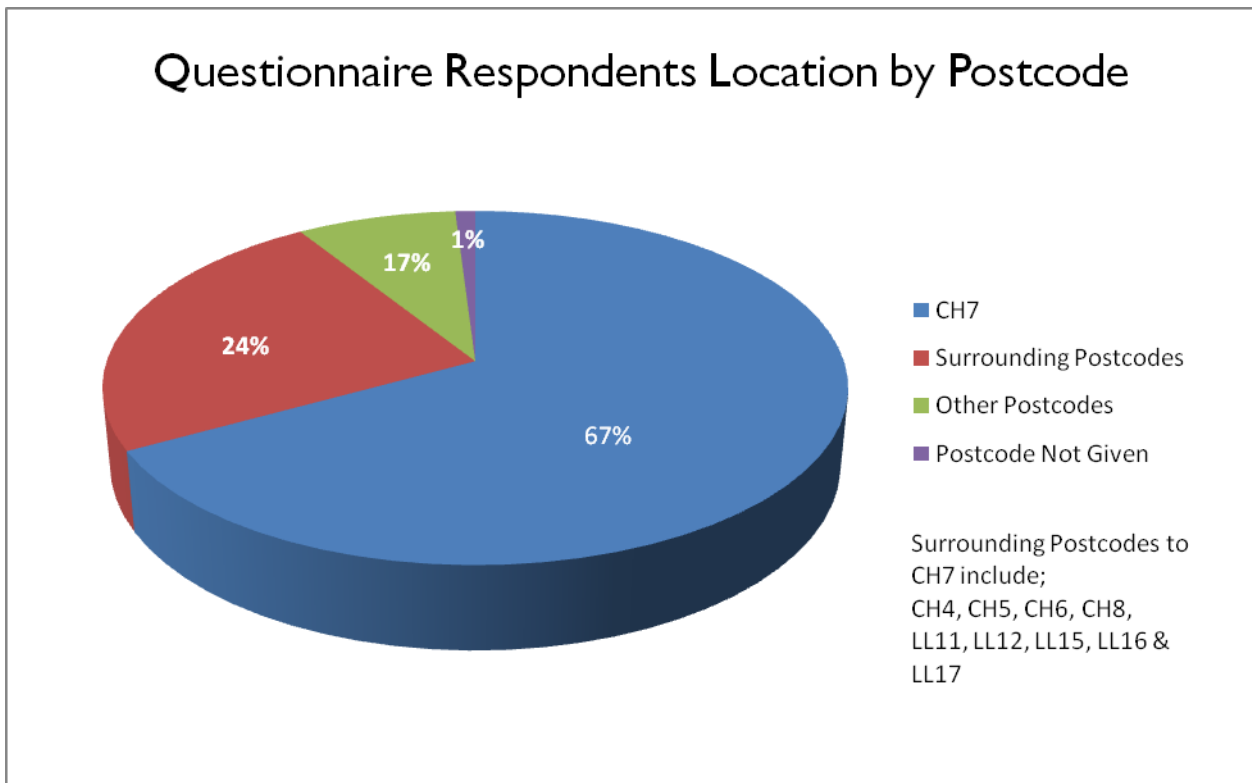


Figure 2: Mold Community Questionnaire Respondents Location by Postcode

- 1.3.4 Further to the questionnaire the initial stage of the process was the gathering of evidence and an assessment of the issues facing Mold in relation to the areas identified in the brief. This activity focused on;
- A review of relevant tourism, economic development, highways planning, conservation national, regional and local policy,
 - Appraisal of the built heritage, public places and streets of the town centre,
 - Discussions with relevant partners in relation to current and future, policy, practice or delivery.
- 1.3.5 Following analysis of the assessment, the identification of relevant policy and current practice, invites were sent out to various bodies in the locality with an interest in the study. A meeting with 26 local stakeholders was held on the 16th December 2009 representing local political, business, civic, historical bodies with relevant members and officers from Flintshire County Council also present.

Following short presentations on each of the four areas of Visiting and Shopping, Streets & Places, Activities & Enjoying Mold, the Heritage of Mold, a workshop was held to discuss the findings and to look at broad solutions. From this event a draft report was produced and issued in mid February.

- I.3.6 The Steering Group and many of those who contributed to discussions during the formulation of the report were invited to review the draft report and have informed the publication of the final report.



Bailey Hill and environs, Mold (20th September 1963)

2.0 TASKS

2.1 The Marketing Audit

Background

- 2.1.1 The future of Mold town centre and the other six towns in Flintshire has been adopted as a Strategic Priority by Flintshire County Councillors who decided on a course of action in correctly anticipating the effect of the current recession on business and enterprise in the County. Mold Town Council and its partners had already taken steps to improve the town's competitive position through international initiatives like the Italian Cittaslow movement and successfully promoting events and festivals, including the Food & Drink Festival which attracts thousands of visitors over a two day period in September. The Council has also appointed a part-time Town Centre Manager.
- 2.1.2 Flintshire County Council commissioned a Town Centre Health Check Study which was presented in October 2008 and which recommended a level of intervention for each of the County's seven towns which would secure the investment needed to help ensure a successful future. This initiative was quickly followed by the Regeneration Department of the County Council setting up a Town Centre Action Plan Programme which would engage with retailers and other enterprises to set up Town Centre Partnerships in all seven towns who would produce an Action Plan for its town which, based upon the findings of the Health Check Study, would seek to devise deliverable and realistic projects, which would be adopted by Flintshire County Council and other potential funders as warranting financial support.
- 2.1.3 During this programme, an analytical and training exercise aimed at retailers in each of the seven towns called the 'ShopDoc' Scheme was successfully managed by the County Council to work on issues such as window dressing, merchandising, marketing etc at a detailed level to demonstrate real support to town centre businesses.

The Visitor Experience

- 2.1.4 In the increasingly competitive environment of retailing and the pursuit of every consumer pound, success is based upon the ability to be able to anticipate demand and meet that demand with a quality product which offers value for money. The skills of the retailer should be focused on the point of sale with the immediate ambience of the shop and its appeal being as important as the attitude and responses of staff. The role of the local authority and chamber of commerce where it exists is to create the physical, economic and cultural environment in which this retailing focus is most effective. Research shows that a bad experience in a shop, restaurant or hairdresser is passed on to 15 other consumers. Equally, a bad experience in a town centre will have the same negative effect whether this is a problem with access, the attitude of the townspeople, personal safety, cleanliness, or a combination of these.

2.1.5 Successful town centres recognise that their future success will depend upon addressing all of these issues in partnership where every public and private sector person with a stake in their town has a responsibility to everyone else in the partnership. The bank clerk, planner, traffic warden, street cleaner and highway engineer must all understand that they have a prime responsibility for the economic, social and environmental well-being of their town centre community. Too many past and poor decisions based on policy, rather than reality, have been made in the country's market towns and the results are now becoming all too apparent.

2.1.6 The list of criteria by which a town centre can be judged and assessed in relation to others of a similar size and quality are:

- Accessibility
- Legibility
- Safety
- Cleanliness
- Welcome
- Interest
- Variety
- Vibrancy

These criteria form the framework for what has become distinctive, which makes a town memorable and a must-see destination and where the visitor experience is of the highest quality.

2.1.7 The quality of the visitor experience is fundamental to the successful future of Mold town centre and in seeking to enhance this, the Sense of Place Study will examine the role which could be played by the town's heritage and culture in helping to create distinctiveness.

Visitor Perceptions

2.1.8 In order to set up a baseline of the current visitor experience in Mold, a number of research exercises can be used:

- The Flintshire Town Centre Healthcheck Study,
- The ShopDoc Scheme,
- The Town Action Plan Programme,
- The Flintshire Residents Survey,
- The community questionnaire conducted during the Food & Drink festival.

2.1.8 All of these will combine to provide a robust and objective assessment of where Mold stands in the public perception as a place to visit and provide evidence for change.

The Flintshire Town Centre Healthcheck Study

- 2.1.9 The recommendations arising from this study were published in August 2008 and moderate intervention was proposed to stave off potential decline in the retail offer in Mold. Whilst considered to be a healthy town centre, the proposal was based upon the strengthening competition from larger centres in the region and the planned expansion of Broughton Retail Park. Accordingly, it was suggested that a new centrally located high quality retail and leisure investment be secured for the town. It was also stated that of all the seven towns in the study, only Mold would attract the private sector investment needed to deliver such a scheme.
- 2.1.10 In the last year things have moved on and the retail investment market has slumped making developments harder to secure even in areas which promise a high return. Besides which, recommendations for such an investment should take into account of Mold's competitive position and its vision for the future.
- 2.1.11 The Healthcheck Study included a level of quantitative and qualitative consumer research which was undertaken in January 2008 in an attempt to establish existing shopping patterns. Part of this exercise examined mode of travel to the seven town centres and found that 69% of shoppers to Mold came by car. This was the highest of all the towns and is reflected in the questionnaire responses where 97% of respondents considered Mold to be easily accessible. (Queensferry was recorded as having 78% travel by car but this was because Asda Walmart was included as part of Queensferry town centre)
- 2.1.12 Other findings from this research were:
- 76% of all food shopping by residents of Flintshire is spent within the County but almost three quarters of this is undertaken in Tesco in Mold, Asda Walmart and the Broughton Retail Park,
 - Around 34 % of the non-food expenditure in Flintshire is retained within the county but again, Broughton Retail Park accounts for a third of this,
 - The main leakage of non-food expenditure is to Chester and Wrexham,
 - Given a 2% growth in non-food expenditure in Flintshire between the year 2015 and 2020, any new development should be located in Mold rather than spread over a number of centres. This is because Mold is the "highest order town in Flintshire" and has potential development sites as well as apparent operator demand.

The Shop Doc Scheme

- 2.1.13 The objective of this project was to offer retailers in all seven towns the opportunity to equip themselves with basic marketing skills to attract more profitable business. The programme comprised a series of workshops with follow-up one-to-one sessions for individual retailers where requested. A mystery shopping exercise was conducted prior to the workshops so that the level of existing customer care could be assessed and feedback given where appropriate.

- 2.1.14 64 delegates attended at least one workshop from 35 independent retailing and service businesses. Considering that the seven towns have around 400 such enterprises then an attendance level of 8.7% is a sad reflection of the retail trade's attitude towards training and customer care despite the enormous impact of these skills on visitor experience. Three Mold enterprises were included in the mystery shop exercise and each scored reasonably well against the criteria used. A further five Mold retailers requested one-to-one sessions to improve their customer care skills.

The Town Action Plan Programme

- 2.1.15 The first phase of Flintshire County Council's Town Action Plan Programme involved a holding a workshop in each of the seven towns where retailers, other businesses, councillors and stakeholders were invited to discuss the issues in their particular town, to identify problems and then put forward real and deliverable solutions to help to ensure the future economic success of each town. This would then form the basis of an Action Plan which would be adopted by the County Council and implemented by newly formed Town Partnerships in each of the seven centres.
- 2.1.16 Invitations to each workshop excluded national multiple retailers as the focus was to be on the survival of the independent sector. Attendance at workshops was significant reflecting the concerns of both the independent retailers and elected members about the future of Flintshire's towns.
- 2.1.17 On Tuesday 16th June 2009, 40 people attended the Mold workshop and the key issues raised were as below:
- Transport including parking,
 - The retail offer including the retail mix, lack of specialist shops, too many discount retailers and planning policy,
 - The lack of marketing and the need for more events with an events showground.
- 2.1.18 The attendees were then asked to develop their vision for Mold town centre and identify deliverable actions which would address the key issues above.

Transport

- 2.1.19 Actions revolved around the provision of parking, the number of spaces and charges. (Parking was not an issue raised by consumers in the community questionnaire)

The Retail Offer

- 2.1.20 Actions under this heading focused mainly on improving the retail mix, improving the appearance of the indoor market, selling more local produce and introducing incentives to attract new retail investment. One group also advocated relocating the livestock market and redeveloping the site.

Marketing

- 2.1.21 Promoting the town was seen as an important action together with better signing, introducing more events and festivals and exploiting the heritage of Mold.

The Flintshire Residents Survey

- 2.1.22 This survey is conducted every two years and includes a section where residents are asked questions about their nearest town and their rating of various attributes. The results of the 2007 Survey for Mold are given below with the same data for Flint and Holywell to allow comparisons.

| | Mold | | | Flint | | | Holywell | | |
|---------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|-------------|
| Issue | Good | Fair | Poor | Good | Fair | Poor | Good | Fair | Poor |
| Congestion | 20 | 53 | 22 | 34 | 28 | 38 | 22 | 58 | 4 |
| Parking | 40 | 42 | 14 | 48 | 29 | 11 | 24 | 36 | 9 |
| Safety | 44 | 44 | 9 | 33 | 58 | 2 | 33 | 49 | 10 |
| Attractiveness | 19 | 54 | 16 | 16 | 53 | 22 | 11 | 50 | 27 |
| Shop Hours | 42 | 46 | 7 | 39 | 41 | 11 | 25 | 47 | 19 |
| Places to eat/drink | 39 | 44 | 13 | 15 | 20 | 53 | 6 | 48 | 33 |
| Services | 32 | 55 | 8 | 23 | 48 | 17 | 9 | 57 | 24 |
| Retail Mix | 38 | 50 | 10 | 25 | 49 | 22 | 7 | 40 | 48 |

Figure 3: The Flintshire Residents Survey 2007: Mold, Flint & Holywell extract

Please note all figures are expressed above are expressed as percentages.

- 2.1.23 It can be seen from the above table that there are few real differences in the way in which residents rate the various attributes of their nearest town centre except that Mold clearly scores well on the

range of places to eat and drink, as confirmed by the community questionnaire, and that the retail mix is considered to be poor in Holywell. Parking also appears to be a bit of an issue in this town compared with Mold and Flint yet there are adequate car parks but an unequal system of charges is in operation.

The Community Questionnaire

- 2.1.24 The first section of the questionnaire covered topics relevant to the Marketing Audit, it is worth recording the key findings here as they contribute to the discussion about visitor perceptions.
- 2.1.25 80% of people who completed the questionnaire shopped in Mold daily or weekly and 67% stated that Mold's retail offer met their needs. When asked about their experiences as a shopper or visitor to Mold, over 90% found the town accessible, legible, safe and welcoming with around 70% finding Mold clean and bustling. The lowest positive percentage response was in connection with the retail mix where 59% stated that the town offered a good mix but the balance of 41% said it did not or they were not sure. This compares well with the 67% who had already said that Mold shops met their needs.
- 2.1.26 72% of people stated that Mold has a good range of places to eat and drink, please see the table above, and 81% believed that the town would be a good potential base for visitors to North Wales. These results show that Mold has a strong loyal customer base which many market towns would envy and provides a robust foundation for the proposals contained within this report.

Study Brief

- 2.1.27 The Study Brief asked for a Marketing Audit of the town which would inform the other aspects of the Study and enable the Project Team to competitively position Mold in the North Wales, regional and national marketplace. The objectives of the Audit were therefore set out as follows;
- To identify those assets which contribute to the town's distinctiveness,
 - To explore the potential for innovative enhancements which will improve the town's competitive position,
 - To provide a baseline inventory,
 - To score each retailer and service outlet in terms of its appeal.

Methodology

- 2.1.28 A complete photographic and descriptive inventory of all enterprises in Mold town centre was undertaken on Monday 3rd August and Wednesday 5th August to include all town centre streets as well as the indoor market and precinct. The aim of this exercise was to provide an up-to-date picture of the current retail offer, the number of independents and multiples who are trading in the town, a record of all products and services for sale and a visual record of each premises. There were 159 enterprises (excluding public houses) trading on these two dates compared with 189 in

August 2008 plus 15 traders in the Market Hall although Wednesday was the peak day and included the outdoor market in High Street.

- 2.1.29 Vacant premises were down by half and there was no change in the number of comparison shops, although some categories had gone up (china/giftware/glass) and others had gone down (electrical/DIY/menswear) Convenience goods outlets were down by 22% markedly so in every category except Convenience, Tobacco, and News retailers. Service uses (except public houses) were down by from 72 in August 2006 to 61 in August 2009, a drop of 15%.
- 2.1.30 The inventory shows that in August 2009 there were 48 regional/national multiples in Mold town centre and 111 independents (excluding pubs). This ratio of 2.3 independents to every multiple shows how successful the town is in retaining its independent retailers and would be the envy of many market towns in the country. The number, variety and quality of the independent retailer has been proved to be a significant factor in the distinctiveness of a town and community questionnaire Mold has a strong independent sector now, much needs to be done to improve the retail offer particularly in terms of visual quality and customer service.
- 2.1.31 A method of scoring retail and commercial outlets through a combination of;
- The visual appearance of the premises,
 - The range of products and services,
 - The location.
- 2.1.32 The community questionnaire is qualitative in its application, the method allows a subjective analysis of the overall appeal of a town centre and where there is room for improvement. The table below shows the results:

| Score | 1 | | 2 | | 3 | | 4 | | 5 | | Total | |
|---------------------|----|-----|----|-----|----|-----|----|-----|---|---|-------|------|
| Independents | 18 | 15% | 38 | 33% | 38 | 33% | 22 | 19% | 0 | - | 116 | 100% |
| Nationals | 10 | 20% | 29 | 60% | 10 | 20% | 0 | - | 0 | - | 48 | 100% |
| Total | 28 | 17% | 67 | 41% | 48 | 29% | 22 | 13% | 0 | - | 165 | 100% |

Figure 4: Mold Community Questionnaire Analysis of Mold Town Centre Appeal

It can be seen from the above table that in the opinion of community questionnaire, not one shop or business premises warranted a Score of 5 and only 22 independents received a score of 4. Out of 165 enterprises in the survey, 95 (58%) were scored 2 or less. So over half of the businesses in Mold town centre are considered to be poor in terms of visual quality, goods and services sold and location.

Competitive Positioning

Mold in Flintshire

- 2.1.33 Mold is the most significant town centre for shopping in Flintshire in terms of the number of outlets and the range of products and services on offer. The table below shows the number of independent shops in each town as estimated in the spring of 2009.

| Town | No of Independent Shops | %age of Total |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| Connahs Quay | 31 | 7 |
| Queensferry | 38 | 9 |
| Shotton | 52 | 12 |
| Holywell | 57 | 14 |
| Buckley | 59 | 14 |
| Flint | 69 | 16 |
| Mold | 116 | 28 |
| Total | 422 | 100 |

Figure 5: A Comparison of Independent Retailer Numbers across Flintshire Towns

- 2.1.34 Buckley, Holywell, Flint and the Deeside towns of Connahs Quay, Queensferry and Shotton all have an important role to play but their customer base is different and more localised. This is reflected in the scope of the retail offer in these towns and the various studies which have been undertaken demonstrate that a hierarchy has been established driven by consumer choice and perception. The almost 100% consumer view that Mold is accessible, legible, safe and welcoming shows that Mold has most of the building blocks necessary to secure a continuation as Flintshire's premier shopping destination. Complacency would be dangerous and there are issues to be addressed if Mold is to retain its current position. Consumer markets are dynamic, not static, and the Town Council and

its partners must constantly monitor consumer attitudes and be prepared to take any necessary remedial action. The newly formed Mold Town Partnership is the ideal vehicle to manage this process.

Mold in the Region

- 2.1.35 The Mersey Dee Alliance (MDA) is an organisation which has been set up to promote the economic development of the local authorities of Flintshire, Wrexham, Chester and West Cheshire and the Wirral. There are sound economic, social and environmental reasons for these public bodies to work together and these can be demonstrated by the example that over 80% of all journeys to work take place within the MDA area. A large proportion of shopping trips also take place within the same area but now the larger towns and cities start to play a role. Chester, Wrexham and Birkenhead meet the need for more select items and are the location of the big name national chains. Apart from meeting a local need – they each have daily produce markets – they also satisfy the demand for quality and choice especially in fashion, giftware, antiques, etc, and easily compete at a national level.
- 2.1.36 A hierarchy should thus be created with each centre meeting the differing needs of its catchment area population, providing an economic balance and a profitable future for all retail enterprises. Unfortunately, this balance is not yet achieved for these reasons:
- Out-of-town and edge-of-town retail parks have been allowed to develop at the expense of the town and city economies and is proving to be ever popular with the car borne consumer, there is overwhelming evidence that these developments are in the process of killing off the traditional high street retailer. Consumers have to make the choice. Most bemoan the loss of the independent retailer in their town yet continue to use the supermarkets where they enjoy wide choice and value for money.
 - Towns in Flintshire especially continue to compete with each other for public funds on the basis that their role as a premier shopping destination is only constrained by lack of public investment. It would be more productive and more profitable to concentrate on meeting the needs of their current market well by improving the retail offer, customer service, marketing and generally enhancing the visitor experience. The creative use of a town's heritage and culture is a sound and proven method of growing market share especially in an area like that covered by the MDA which is rich in heritage and already established as a tourist destination.
 - Internet shopping continues to be a growing threat to the traditional high street with clothes, computers, books, household goods and small electrical goods being sold on-line in increasing numbers. In 2006 alone, John Lewis Direct increased its sale by 70 %. This represents both a challenge and an opportunity to the high street retailer. A greatly enhanced visitor/shopper experience will have to be provided in the high street if the traditional retailer is to successfully compete. This means not only investment in the retail stock over the years ahead but also in

merchandising, training, marketing and the exploitation of every possible asset which will add value to the visitor experience.

Mold and other market towns

2.1.37 There are around 450 market towns in the United Kingdom similar to Mold and all are facing the same problems. Most local authorities and chambers of commerce or trade have reacted by introducing a series of measures which it is hoped will retain the shopper and build loyalty to the high street. What is unthinkable is the slow demise of the high street retailer to the point where a market town centre is dead. At the same time as these measures are being implemented, planning authorities all over the country continue to struggle with the pressure of dealing with applications from the supermarket chains for more and more edge-of-town and out-of-town sites. Below is a selection of initiatives introduced by comparable market towns.

▫ Redruth. Pool and Camborne, Cornwall.

£5m investment in the public realm of both town centres including new public artworks. Introduction of a weekly farmers market in Camborne. Launch of the “Heart of Cornwall” Loyalty Scheme in April 2009 which offers incentives and discounts to shoppers from retailers who can join the scheme at no cost.

▫ Frodsham, Cheshire

Community Partnership formed as part of the Market Towns Initiative. £3m secured from public and private investors for public realm works and a business development grant scheme. The Christmas Festival attracts 10,000 visitors.

▫ Hexham, Northumberland

Community Partnership formed in 1998 led by local authority. Introduced a Market Town Welcome programme and a Christmas Market. The Hexham Destination Plan published in 2009 has projects in Marketing, Events (emphasis on arts, culture and heritage), the Hexham Welcome (retail, food and accommodation), and facilities/infrastructure/transport.

▫ Wayland, Norfolk

The Wayland Partnership organises a monthly farmer’s market, arts and crafts fairs and promotion of the area’s heritage.

▫ Lewes, East Sussex

Introduction of the Lewes Pound as an incentive to shoppers to buy from the independent retailers in the town.

▫ Totnes, Devon

Production of a Local Food Guide to promote local producers and to encourage local people and visitors to take pride in the rich local food culture. Introduction of the Totnes Pound similar to Lewes.

▫ Nuneaton and Bedworth

Preparation of an Action Plan which will include marketing, brand development, developing the market and improvements to the public realm.

▫ Dumbarton, Scotland

Public realm works including shop front facelifts, improved lighting, new signage, restoration of listed buildings and landscaping.

▫ Poole, Dorset

Setting up four Working Groups responsible to the Town Centre Management Board for community safety, marketing, business development and environment with access each with its aims and objectives.

▫ Merthyr Tydfil

The Town Centre Partnership produces a Business Plan which sets out how the agreed Action Plan will be implemented. The Plan has specific actions under safety, retailing, public realm (including developing a “distinctive” identity for the town) , marketing and accessibility.

▫ Wigan

Created a Buy Local in Wigan Borough campaign with a Business Directory listing 5000 local businesses.

▫ Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire

Launch of the First Stop Local Shop campaign to stem the leakage of consumer spend from four small market towns. The range of initiatives includes NVQ level training for retailers, a retailers award scheme, grants for improving shop fronts, floral displays, an on-line shopping guide, a loyalty scheme named the Forest Rewards Card (now has over 8500 public members and 150 participating retailers), branded shopping bags, shoppers magazine, shopping vouchers, retailers newsletter, etc.

▫ Chester

Chester City Council launched the Charisma Card in 2004 where cardholders could enjoy discounts and offers from the City's retailers. The card was sent free to 43,000 households and over 300 participating retailers are included in a free directory, on a website and given point of sale material. The card also gave shoppers discounts on parking fees.

- 2.1.38 Mold has the unique opportunity to replicate any of the above schemes where appropriate as what may work in one place may not work in another. A bespoke approach is needed which is targeted directly at the Mold consumer profile.

Tourism

- 2.1.39 In Flintshire, tourism contributes around £150m a year and supports a wide range of attractions, accommodation and activities. In Mold, tourism helps to maintain shops, pubs and local facilities but we believe that there is much more which could be done to exploit Mold's assets as part of an integrated approach to creating a new Sense of Place. Day visitors account for over 70% of the tourism volume and 33% of its value so this is an important sector in the Mold economy. Shopping is a key tourism activity in the County.
- 2.1.40 Over half of all visitors to Flintshire are aged over 55 and this group is expected to increase significantly in the future. (see 3.2 below) 61% of these are in the ABCI socio-economic grouping which has the highest potential spend and the highest expectations. The biggest single group of visitors are aged 45 and over without children living at home and this group is considered to be a key target sector for Flintshire in the Flintshire County Council's Tourism Strategy 2008 – 2013. In addition to the high levels of satisfaction with Mold found in the community questionnaire, the North Wales Visitor Survey 2004 recorded that 77% of visitors would recommend the area to friends and relatives.
- 2.1.41 The Strategy urges everybody to position the tourism offer to take advantage of these coming changes:
- Fewer families and more active older age groups,
 - The importance of distinctiveness,
 - Rising expectations and demand for higher quality,
 - The importance of the environment.

Mold's Tourism Assets

- 2.1.42 Mold is well placed to exploit its heritage and cultural assets to help to create distinctiveness and to enhance the visitor experience but the potential of these assets must be viewed in the context of visitor appeal and heritage value. This must be an objective approach especially given the over-

optimistic cases submitted to and approved for funding in the recent past by the Heritage Lottery Fund for example, which have simply not delivered their targets.

- 2.1.43 On their own, it is doubtful that Mold's heritage assets would be of sufficient significance to greatly enhance the town's competitive position but as part of a wider initiative encompassing Flintshire and the sub-region, then the contribution will add depth and value to the existing tourism offer. Heritage tourism is big business and Mold is in a position to benefit from future growth given that there are issues to address such as accommodation. Cooperation is already evident as a result of Mold, Holywell and Flint working together to promote their heritage. What is important here is that each town recognises and accepts its limitations in increasing tourism market share alone but can see the benefit of combining the tourism offer and creating the necessary critical mass.
- 2.1.44 The potential to accelerate this process exists within the County and beyond into the sub-region identified as the Mersey Dee Alliance. The creation of a Strategic Tourism Group accountable to the MDA would enable Mold and its partners to profit by the huge tourism opportunities generated by Chester, the Wirral and Merseyside and give the Flintshire more prominence with other established tourism destinations including Denbighshire, who already tied into the North Wales Borderlands initiative, Snowdonia, Wrexham, Shropshire and the rest of Cheshire.
- 2.1.45 Mold's contributions to this regional tourism offer could be;
- *The Gold Cape.* Well known locally but not yet nationally, this treasure needs impressive interpretation in a new setting. The level of interest could be high (the level of interest in the recently discovered Staffordshire hoard is encouraging) but the Cape story should be told in the context of the other prehistoric finds in the region thus marking its significance.
 - *Motte and Bailey.* At present, this site is unsafe, unwelcoming and overgrown. Views are limited and historical interpretation at a minimum. Considerable work will be required with at least a Woodland Management Plan and Heritage Interpretation Plan to open up the site to visitors. Opportunities for a fitness trail, sculpture park, nature reserve etc should be considered as well as a new Heritage Trail linking the site to the town. The site could also be part of a regional castle trail telling the story of conflict to include Chester, Flint, Oswestry, Denbigh and a host of smaller and under exploited castle sites in the area's villages.
 - *St Mary's Church.* This impressive building could be part of a regional interpretation and presentation of the area's religious heritage linking to the Holywell and Oswestry pilgrimage sites, Wrexham and Chester Cathedrals, village churches etc as a themed activity and trail similar to those on the continent like Santiago de Compostella in Northern Spain.
 - *Mold Riots.* A little known but important event which can be presented as part of the region's industrial past.

- *Daniel Owen.* Whilst the Welsh following for this son of Mold is strong, much needs to be done to elevate this author into the wider literary consciousness of the area's target visitor market. Daniel Owen is unique to Mold and as such is a valuable asset. Promotion of Daniel Owen's has been undertaken by enthusiast's groups but a festival celebrating the man's work could be part of the Mold Event programme and this would start to raise the level of awareness of this notable figure.

The Future

Options

- 2.1.46 Few market towns now consider that a "Do Nothing" option is the way forward where reliance upon reputation and market forces will be sufficient to save the traditional town centre. Most elected members believe that to do nothing will simply lead to the complete demise of their town and is politically unacceptable. Mold Town Council and Flintshire County Council are committed to saving the town and have adopted an integrated and methodical approach to achieving this.
- 2.1.47 A modest "Do Something" option could be adopted which introduces a series of pragmatic actions aimed at retaining current market share and therefore maintaining Mold's current role in the shopping hierarchy. These actions are often a result of budget constraints and as a result are often ineffective in the long term.
- 2.1.48 We believe that an ambitious "Do Something" option should be developed to become the Mold Town Action Plan and it would be an integrated approach involving politicians, officers, the business and resident community. This becomes the "vision" for Mold and although the plan may not be achieved in a short timescale, actions should be costed and included so that when money becomes available in the future, each action is ready to be delivered. Such a plan would go far beyond what has been contemplated before and could include:
 - Public realm works,
 - Enhancement of shop fronts,
 - Traffic and parking management,
 - Customer Care training for retailers,
 - Creative use of Mold's heritage and culture,
 - A new Events and Festivals Programme,
 - Development and promotion of tourism,
 - Welcome Town Programme,
 - Marketing.

Mold's Consumer Market

- 2.1.49 The bulk of the shopping catchment population of Mold is currently within Flintshire and in keeping with many locations throughout the country, this mobile market has a wide choice of shopping

opportunities which are similar in their offer and easily accessible. The competition for this custom is fierce and demands a clear understanding of the customer with a total commitment to respond in a way which builds loyalty and trust. In approaching this challenge, retailers need to achieve three things:

- Know the customer,
- Reach the customer,
- Deliver the experience.

2.1.50 Customers can be identified in groups determined by their characteristics. Mold's dominant customer group is considered to be the "independent, retired domestic market" and examination of their characteristics shows how much work needs to be done to attract and retain this lucrative sector;

| Characteristic | Implication |
|---|--|
| High expectations | Seeking value for money, quality and high levels of service |
| Reasonable disposable income | Happy to spend on quality, giftware, locally produced products etc |
| Time richer | Will spend more time at destinations and often outside peaks but will be more choosy |
| Looking for an enriching experience | Opportunity to enrich experience through heritage and culture |
| Independent and self-sufficient | Confident and likely to complain |
| Motivated by landscape, scenery and heritage | Make best use of all assets |
| Competing for their time | Targeted marketing needed |
| Car borne but can travel free on public transport | Opportunity to introduce novel transport solutions and attractive parking regimes |

Figure 6: Consumer Group Characteristics

2.1.51 Understanding and exploiting these characteristics will drive customer loyalty which in turn will increase profits. There is room for the personal touch which is missing from the customer service

offered by the supermarket chains and evidence shows that things like this will become even more important in the future. In addition, retailers must pay more serious attention in Mold to:

- The external appearance of the premises,
- Access to and within the shop,
- The quality, range and value for money of their products and services,
- Merchandising and lighting,
- Customer care.

This is the responsibility of the retailer with the public sector providing the investment necessary in infrastructure to create the best conditions in terms of access, legibility, cleanliness, safety etc.

Competitive Positioning

- 2.1.52 The output from this study and the proposals it contains will enable the Town Council and its partners to develop and adopt a competitive position for the town which will underpin the vision and Action Plan. There will be a new role for the town's heritage and culture and with investment in the public realm, an exciting opportunity to exploit Mold's distinctiveness making it different and therefore competitive both locally and regionally. Positioning Mold in this way is an important step in understanding what may be achieved considering the level of competition and given the strong levels of customer loyalty which already exist, place the town in a strong position to withstand the future economic threat.

2.2 Townscape Character Analysis

Introduction

- 2.2.1 Mold's historic built environment is the town's most freely accessible cultural asset and an important contributor to defining its 'Sense of Place'. Sense of place is a concept that links people and their surroundings, why communities value them and why they are important to community identity. A sense of place is the relationship of a community to a combination of people, landscape, townscape and traditions and the past, which do not have set administrative boundaries and often cross generations. The designation of Mold as a Cittaslow town illustrates the commitment of the local community to manage this valuable resource for future generations to enjoy.
- 2.2.2 The focus of the townscape character analysis is to focus upon the built elements of the town as the most tangible contributor to its sense of place. Visitors and the community need only stand in any street to enjoy the wealth and diversity of historic buildings, their use of traditional materials and varying architectural styles. These very tangible aspects of Mold's heritage should also been seen in the light of more intangible elements which contribute to the town sense of place, including the Welsh language, its contribution to literature and art, the stories myths and legends but also its people and their interrelationship with place that assist in proposing themes that could be utilised in the promotion of the town.
- 2.2.3 The townscape character analysis will provide understanding of the historic asset as a valuable contributor to the town's future that should be both cared for and enjoyed. The goals of the analysis are to:
1. Defining the specialness of the town as an asset, illustrating its growth and broadly define its value,
 2. Identify the broad visual and architectural character of the town,
 3. Identify challenges and threats affecting the town's historic environment,
 4. Review planning and conservation policy but also practice,
 5. Identify key heritage themes which can be utilised to promote the distinctiveness of the town.

Sense of Place and the Historic Built Environment

- 2.2.4 Aspects of the historic environment can contribute towards people's sense of place, with place identity and attachment key to the process. The values people attach to the historic built environment vary considerably. The local environment is of course more than buildings because it is the setting for people's daily lives. Less conscious ways in which people experience places can still find numerous roles for more historic and attractive places, such as offering locations where people meet, over the way people understand the historic environment, how they value it, and how such values are shaped by official bodies such as the Council and other heritage organisations. The views of people change over time because of factors such as how long they have lived in a place, or perhaps due to their involvement in activities or events with the historic environment as a key

theme. A sense of personal history and a shared heritage is certainly linked to a strong sense of place.

- 2.2.5 Precise official definitions of historic built environment including conservation area designation, listing or scheduling of buildings cannot encompass what people value as historic from their individual perspective only shared values set against national criteria defined in statute. Buildings not identified by these formal means of designation and yet forming part of an areas sense of place can be particular vulnerable to the threat from loss or change. The links between historic built environment and sense of place are most clearly made through aspects of place identity such as place distinctiveness (what makes a place unique) and continuity (the way a place supports someone's personal sense of continuity).
- 2.2.6 Types of interactions between people and place can bring benefits such as better prospects and well-being and, in some cases, increased civic pride and engagement, through:
- the relationship between place attachment and outcomes such as higher levels of self-esteem or pride in a place,
 - the exploration and raising awareness of the past as supporting shared values and citizenship, with the process of volunteering and participating, for instance the Heritage Open Days weekend and other events,
 - it is also possible to see a link between communities and place dependency through the social interactions a place facilitates, illustrated by Daniel Owen Square and the High Street Market,
 - investing in both in the physical environment but also in its promotion of the historic environment as a means to strengthen sense of place,
 - supporting and nurturing local community groups interested in the historic environment in raising awareness and being actively engaged in responding to proposed change.

Why Conserve the Historic Built Environment?

- 2.2.7 In recent years 'place' has clearly emerged as an important concept in Government policy. *World class places: The Government's strategy for improving quality of place* published in May 2009 outlined how place can affect crime levels, social inclusion and regeneration, which developed the evidence around place and found that increasing local belonging or strengthening people's sense of where they live (their sense of place) can have many positive benefits, including increasing their sense of self-esteem and identity, which in turn can lead to stronger communities, in which individuals and groups are actively involved in local decision making.
- 2.2.8 The British Isles, both urban and rural, has some of the finest architectural heritage in the world, which contributes to the quality of place. As the popularity of certain styles wavered in past decades, buildings such as Victorian terraces or the warehouses that saw the birth of the industrial revolution were seen as symbols of decline and social deprivation. More recently, the true cultural, social and economic value of buildings such as these has finally been recognised. Using the historic environment as an asset, and giving it new life, has been one of the cornerstones of the economic and social revival of our towns and cities.

- 2.2.9 Integrating historic buildings into urban regeneration schemes has been shown to create popular, successful urban quarters with character, where people enjoy living. Such regeneration represents an opportunity for conservation and development to work together and transform the built environment and public realm for the communities that live there. Our collective past can ably support the future of our cities, towns and rural economies.
- 2.2.10 Our built heritage represents the very best of our past. It also provides a huge resource that can play an important role in the future of our towns, cities and rural areas in giving the stimulus provided to regeneration and the promotion of sustainable development. Evidence from across the country demonstrates that the historic built environment is a valuable asset that has an important role to play as a catalyst for regeneration.
- 2.2.11 The positive qualities and benefits that heritage assets can add to a regeneration scheme clearly depend on the nature of the properties involved, but all or some of the following may apply:
- Historic buildings are important to the quality of urban areas, creating a focal point that people can relate to and are familiar with, giving a sense of place and fuelling interest in the past,
 - They may be well-loved local landmarks which the community will rally around to support or save, fostering community involvement and caring for a place,
 - The fabric and design can add a distinctive identity to the 'new build' part of a regeneration scheme, enhancing townscapes and lifting the overall quality of the built environment,
 - They may have interesting historical and cultural associations which can be interpreted and developed, which assists community confidence and civic pride,
 - They can assist in achieving sustainable development objectives, through the use of existing assets and maintenance of embodied energy,
 - They may attract tenants/occupiers who would not be interested in a less distinctive building, creating distinctive entrepreneurial communities especially arts or technology based,
 - Create employment opportunities through increased retail offer or tourism activities and contributing to positive perceptions of a town to visitors and potential investors.

A Summary of Mold's Development

- 2.2.12 Mold is the County Town of Flintshire and lies on a fertile plain along the River Alyn. Its early origins remain unclear although evidence does suggest the area was inhabited from as early as the Bronze Age, as illustrated by the unearthing of the Gold Cape from this period (better known locally as the Mold Cape) held at the British Museum.
- 2.2.13 The Mold Cape is one of Britain's most famous ancient artefacts. It ranks alongside the Battersea Shield, the Mildenhall Treasure, and King Redwald's burial ship at Sutton Hoo. Alongside these and the other Welsh artefact, the Caergwrle Bowl, it is one of the most important European Bronze Age finds. The Mold Cape is a solid sheet-gold ceremonial artifact dating from about 1900-1600 BC in the European Bronze Age. The Cape is considered to be one of the most spectacular examples of prehistoric sheet-gold working yet discovered and the largest of its kind in Europe. It is of particular

interest as both its form and its design is unparalleled, showing both indigenous and continental influences. With its fine ornamental work the Mold Cape represents the last major piece of second millennium BC sheetwork so far discovered. Thereafter, the dominant preference for sheetwork in the British Isles is eclipsed and the evidence is more of massive goldwork in the form of solid bracelets, twisted bar-flanged torcs and solid rings.

- 2.2.14 The Cape was found in 1833 by workmen who were quarrying for stone in an ancient burial mound in Mold. The mound lay in a field named Bryn yr Ellyllon (the Fairies' or Goblins' Hill) near Pentre Hill. The Cape was sold by the landowner in 1836 to the British Museum, where it remains on display. However, it remained unclear until the 1950's actually what the gold artefact was and only recently it is now believed to be a ceremonial cape for a woman.

- 2.2.15 Later finds such as a coin of Vespasian, the ninth Roman Emperor (AD69-79) in the vicinity also point to the Roman occupation and settlement, probably related to the mineral reserves of the area. Another important historic location in the vicinity of the town is Maes Garmon (The Field of Germanus), which is reputedly the traditional site of the 'Alleluia Victory' by British forces led by Bishop Germanus of Auxerre over invading Picts and Scots, fought shortly after Easter 430. The believed battle site is marked today with an obelisk.

- 2.2.16 The town's medieval origins extend back to the remains of the 11th century Norman motte and bailey castle, strategically situated overlooking the River Alyn and the principal route to Chester, which today is known as Bailey Hill and occupies a prominent location just to the north of the modern town centre. This early Norman settlement, initially an enclosed fortification, provided both control but also security for trade and the creation of a market place used as an important regulatory tool to ensure taxes could be levied on goods sold. The town grew outside the fortified castle, probably in the High Street area and descended southwards. Although much unrest was experienced up until the 14th century as a result of the conflicts for English and Welsh control of the area, by the 15th century Mold had become a significant settlement with numerous town officials, a courthouse and, it is recorded, the local Lord's Mill.

- 2.2.17 The early pattern of settlement up until the 15th century can still be seen in the survival of the wide market place and many of the towns burgage plots, the long thin strips of land which border the High Street and create the tight knit pattern of buildings we see today within the core of the town centre and largely form the basis of the town's Conservation Area boundary.

- 2.2.18 Unfortunately, almost none of the town's buildings from the medieval period survive. As yet undiscovered remnants of older medieval buildings may however lie within buildings along High Street that have been refronted with later Georgian and Victorian facades. The only lasting remnant of the wealth of the town from this period is the Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin, which dominates the northern view from the High Street and whose tower can be seen from some distance on the approaches to the town. Margaret Beaufort of the Stanley family, who held the Lordship of the area, funded the work to commemorate the victory of her son Henry VII at Bosworth Field in 1485. It is reputed that while construction began to replace an earlier Norman building with the current church in the perpendicular gothic style in 1485, it wasn't completed until

1597, to a very different original intention. The present tower which is particularly distinguishing visual feature of the Church was built between 1768-73 and probably replaced an earlier version. A major restoration followed in 1856 under Sir George Gilbert Scott to 'reinstale' its Gothic integrity and forms the basis of the building we see today. The Churchyard was radically cleared of tombs in the 1950's but the tomb of the famous landscape painter, Richard Wilson RA, was left in situ on the north east side of the Church.

- 2.2.19 The town appears to have settled into a long period of stagnation possibly as a result of lack of activity by local land-owners having invested in their own rural property rather than invest in the town. The range and quality of local Halls is today of great interest and are amongst the finest of their relative periods. These include Gwysaney, Soughton, Pentrehobyn, Rhual and Nerquis amongst others.

- 2.2.20 Not until the 18th and 19th centuries do we see Mold experience major growth largely as a result of the impact of the agricultural and industrial revolutions and in particular the growth of the extractive industries, linked to coal, lead and associated manufacturing. The impact of these industries cannot be fully appreciated today without being aware that much of the 18th and 19th century buildings in the town replaced earlier buildings leaving only a handful of buildings which pre-date this such as the Solicitors office at the north end of High Street. Many buildings from the 18th century have also been replaced or remodelled leaving only a handful, including perhaps the most prominent adjoining W H Smiths on the western side of the High Street, as being largely untouched and displaying its Georgian appearance.

- 2.2.21 Little evidence of these extractive industries survives today, surprising given their likely impact on the appearance of the area in the 19th century, although place names do persist such as Leadmills on King Street on the eastern route out of town. An important survival from this period of industrialisation are the terraced houses in the Glan yr Afon area of the town, which are undoubtedly linked to the housing of workers linked to these industries and the chemical works at the north eastern edge of the town. The current Synthite plant was previously the site of a cotton mill built in 1792 and replaced in 1832 with a tin plate works and probably makes the site one of longest active industrial sites in North Wales. Some of the existing buildings on site relate to these industries and have been reused as the nature of ownership has changed.

- 2.2.22 Industrial growth was not the only factor contributing to the town's position. Mold became the administrative centre for the County of Flintshire with the arrival of the Quarter Sessions in 1769, a new County Hall in 1833 also followed after the creation of the town as a Borough in 1832, and the Gaol in 1871, largely at the expense of Flint due to the parlous condition of the court and militia barracks there. The town also benefitted greatly from the arrival of railway in 1849 initially forming a terminus for the Chester to Mold line, allowing the better distribution of raw materials and goods to potential markets. The line eventually was extended in 1869 to Denbigh creating the Chester to Denbigh Line. The railway station remained open until 1962 for passengers and it wasn't until 1983 that eventually the line closed when trains were no longer used to transport chemicals. However, the rapid growth of the town during the 19th century precipitated perhaps one of Mold's darkest events. It has been argued The Old Courthouse was the scene of one of the most important points

in British social history. In 1869 the Mold Riot resulted in the death of four people and also formed the basis of one of Daniel Owen's books, a great Welsh novelist of the time.

- 2.2.23 The decline of the lead and coal industries during the late nineteenth century led to the release of much land in the vicinity of the town centre which was reclaimed for other uses mainly for housing in the early and late twentieth century. Mold continued to grow from the early twentieth century onwards as it became more reliant on serving a wider rural hinterland and increasingly its administrative role continued to grow as further responsibilities were given to local government. This culminated in 1974 with the creation of the new Clwyd County Council with its new headquarters on the outskirts of the town and the Crown Court opposite, cementing the position of the town as the administrative heart of the County. The general historical development of Mold, utilising OS maps, can be seen at the end of this section at Figure 7.

Visual and architectural character of the town

- 2.2.24 Mold's local identity is largely defined by the historic layout of roads, paths and boundaries, the characteristic building materials, the particular mix of building uses, the public and private spaces, such as gardens, parks and greens and trees, the street furniture and significant views - all these and the interrelationships between them create the familiar and cherished local scene. Where this relationship is of particular special architectural or historic interest then Conservation Area designation, such as the town centre, gives broad protection to all the features, listed or otherwise, within the area recognised as being part of its character and appearance.
- 2.2.25 The town's housing stock demonstrates the changing economic fortunes and periods of great social change, which can be broadly divided into a number of categories.

Pre-1871



This property on Cunliffe Street illustrates a highly decorated and early form of terraced housing, associated with the industrial development of the town. The rare survival of the boot scrape to the left of the front door and the use of margin lights to the unhorned sash windows tend to infer a very late Georgian date for this property, possibly as late as the mid 19th century. The quality of the brickwork laid in a Flemish bond, with alternate brick and render voussoirs add detailing and interest to an universal design of the period.



This end terrace property on Gladstone Street illustrates the diversity of this building type. While the Flemish garden wall bond has been retained, there has also been an attempt to lay the brick in such a manner as to create a polychromatic effect. This has been partially achieved by laying the shorter 'header' end of the brick, exposing a lighter fired yellow colour. This contrasts with the red colour of the longer 'stretcher' face of the brick, illustrating the relatively higher status of this terrace. This quality can be further seen in the quality of the stone cills and lintels to the sash windows.

Figure 8: Examples of Mold Properties Pre-1871

1871-1899



This small terrace on Grosvenor Street demonstrates the increasing influence of the Gothic, with the lancet arch with a hood mould above the door a particularly fine feature consisting of alternative stone and brick with a herringbone brick infill. The dentil and string courses and the projecting ground floor bay window with horned sash windows, iron railings atop a low brick wall with stone detailing to the pillars and coping illustrate the development of the terraced house model for a higher social status. In comparison, the painted version on the right has robbed much of this building of its interest. Careful removal of the paint with a poultice is recommended.



Mold has a broad design range and surprising level of survival of iron gates and railings in areas outside the Conservation Area. Such features add greatly to quality and interest of their locality. This example on Victoria Terrace, off Bridge Street, is a particularly fine but simple design set within a stone pillar framework. Although of a later date, other good examples can be seen along West View, King Street, Wrexham Road and Ruthin Road to name a few. Their careful maintenance, repair and authentic reinstatement of lost elements should be encouraged to avoid their loss and replacement with inappropriate modern fabricated examples, which often do not reflect the quality of detail of the original examples.

Figure 9: Examples of Mold Properties 1871-1899

1899-1912



The Queen Anne revival style can be seen on Victoria Road. This example from 1909 illustrates the eclectic nature of this style largely associated with a domestic revival. The use of dutch gables, rendered walls, pargetting to the bay, decorative chimneys, the dated cartouche and the use of leaded lights are all motifs of the style.



Elements of the Queen Anne revival style can be seen at this end of terrace property on Edmund Street. The use of alternate bands of brickwork set within a rendered upper floor and a decorative string course. This style is very unusually utilised on this form of company housing development. A number of examples on the terrace along Edmund Street have retained their original sash windows and doors. Care should be taken in encouraging the retention of original examples and the replacement of later versions with more appropriate examples.

Figure 10: Examples of Mold Properties 1899-1912

1912-1960



This example of the Dreflan development of interwar public housing illustrates the desire to create new opportunities for those returning from war. Housing conditions during the interwar period were particularly poor, until subsidies from government to construct such housing was taken advantage. The external quality of the housing was reflected by the internal fit-out with all the latest modern fittings available at that time. The housing was designed in a neo-Georgian style, which was very popular for public housing schemes at that time, by the popular local Architect FA Roberts, responsible for many private houses and public buildings in the town. The pediment above the door and flat topped three light bay window and tripartite sash are classic motifs of the style.



Mold also had a number of small developments which took inspiration from the moderne movement, along Hendy Road, & Clayton Road, sometimes referred to as 'art deco'. Only a single example remains which has retained this 'suntrap' window style, which is the typical motif that many people recognise of the moderne with the curved glass, which pick up on the streamlining associated with the style. Little but the windows of the building refers to the style, reflecting the likely conservatism of the locality and potential buyers. It is not until the second world war that a group of proper moderne houses are constructed along Gwernaffield Road, reputedly to serve ICI scientists based at the secret chemical weapons factory at Rhydymwyn.

Figure 11: Examples of Mold Properties 1912-1960

- 2.2.26 Mold, as with many of our settlements, has experienced an unprecedented period of pressure for physical transition since the early 20th century as a result of the large housing developments many of which during the latter of the century have unfortunately added little in terms of design quality to the appearance of the town.
- 2.2.27 While much of the town's former medieval core has been designated as a Conservation Area, many places and buildings of architectural and historic interest lie outside the protection of such designation and consideration should be given to examining the possibilities of extending designation to other parts of the town in recognising quality of the built environment but also as a means to secure high quality design. Designation should not be seen as a prohibitor of change but be regarded as an opportunity to secure high quality positive change, which has clear regard to the positive qualities of historic areas. Historic buildings demonstrate qualities of design, workmanship, the use of materials and interactions with surrounding space that simply cannot be replicated today and often form an important backdrop to everyday lives for those who live, work and pass through Mold.
- 2.2.28 A comprehensive historic urban characterisation of Mold would reveal more clearly the opportunities for further designations and areas warranting additional controls to maintain their character, appearance and value. From the broad work undertaken as part of this survey it is clear many of the late nineteenth century development and that of the Edwardian and interwar periods could form the basis of a review of potential areas for further investigation.

Challenges and threats affecting the town's historic environment

- 2.2.29 A number of general and specific challenges have been identified. It is clear from the appraisal and the community workshop that there is a valued and important architectural character to the Town within a broader landscape setting. Increasingly much of this character and setting are under threat at the present with clear concerns exist as to how this can be reversed into the future. The focus of many comments and issues emerging from discussions was reaction to the County Council's own approach to the management of the historic environment within the Town Centre Conservation Area, largely in terms of perceptions related to:
- A lack of integrated Council decision making, often leading to the planning aims of designation being ignored by other services, diminishing the approach valued by the community,
 - The impact of recent planning decisions and a long term lack of planning enforcement in relation to signage and shopfront replacement,
 - The potential impact of new development within and adjoining the town, which did not have regard to the specialness of the place and the quality of design of existing properties,
 - The continuing impact of traffic around the town centre and how this can be managed sensitively given the backdrop of the town's historic buildings and important spaces and places,
 - The lack of support in the securing financial assistance to secure the repair, maintenance and reuse of town centre historic buildings.

- 2.2.30 While the County Council has a key role through the planning system and in relation to its statutory duties with regard to Conservation Areas, they are only one stakeholder in the process. With continuing pressures on financial and human resources and political priorities for service delivery with regard to planning focussed on development control and delivery of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP), those areas of work related to conservation unfortunately have and will continue to slip down the priorities in operational plans.

Protection for Unlisted Structures of Positive Contribution

- 2.2.31 There are a number of buildings and features within the conservation area, which do not meet the criteria for national statutory listing, but which are considered important to the history, appearance, character and cultural value of Mold. These deserve further consideration in decision making to ensure their positive contribution to the overall interest of the area is taken sufficient account of, as too often works occur with no planning permission eroding the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.



Two very different but unlisted properties demonstrate the eclectic nature of Mold's historic environment. Both illustrate different forms of decoration, one in terms of the use of almost polychromatic brickwork and the other mock-Tudor timber framing, alluding to the proximity of Mold to Cheshire and the preference to have regard to a timber frame tradition, popular with architects at the end of the nineteenth century. The character of a place is often defined by the survival of the details such as fine sash windows, boundary walls, cast iron railings and gates, cast iron downpipes and panelled doors which add to the interest and specialness of a place. The continued survival and

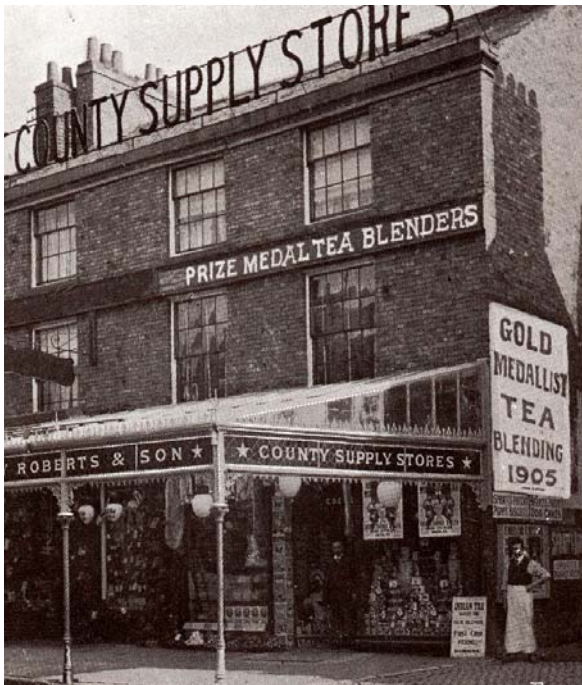
retention of historic details is important in defining the broader interest and appearance of the town, which can serve as useful exemplars for the reinstatement of lost details elsewhere.

Figure 12: Unlisted properties help define broad architectural character of Mold

Planning policy makes specific reference to the retention of features which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Areas. It should be noted that while positive buildings have been identified, as illustrated on the accompanying plan at the end of this section at Figure 13, this is not to say that associated structures such as boundary walls, fences, hedges and other ancillary structures are not also of value and should be retained also. Often it is the very relationship between major structures such as buildings and these ancillary structures which make a place of special interest. In Mold this can be clearly seen through the relationship between frontage buildings which are the face of the town, and especially along High Street, to rear buildings which previously served as stabling or other ancillary structures, many of which continue to survive in varying states of repair.

Gradual Erosion of Special Character

- 2.2.32 The gradual erosion of traditional vernacular detailing has unfortunately begun. Evidence can be seen in the replacement of traditional timber sash windows with stained timber, uPVC and top-hung imitations. Similarly, modern paint methods and renders are being used over traditional lime based approaches to the covering of brick and plasterwork. A number of historic shopfronts have been replaced with modern versions, eroding a very important means of defining local distinctiveness. These replacement versions often do not reflect the character of the host building, use modern plastic materials and encourage the use of over deep fascia's. Furthermore, the insertion of industrial roller security shutters to external elevations creates a deadening effect and is particularly unwelcoming to visitors and shoppers alike. Similarly, replacement signage to commercial properties has unfortunately tended to lead to examples in plastic and styles which have not added to the Conservation Area's specialness. If positive action is taken this situation can be recovered and the specialness of the Town and its Conservation Area reinforced.



These photographs illustrate the loss of detailing from the early 1900's to the present day. Conservation Area designation appears to have had little effect on the outcome, with shopfronts and signage reinforcing the brand rather than having any regard to the character of the host building or its context. Only through careful consideration of the implications of decisions made by property owners can the character and appearance of the town be conserved for future generations. Seemingly small

changes can irrevocably damage the specialness of the Mold and undermine the attractiveness and ambience. Often alternatives exist to more damaging changes which should be avoided thereby retain external character while being cost effective and enhancing value. Many shopfronts to historic buildings in the town centre have been replaced with inappropriate designs, where an over emphasis on the use of solid external security shutters, an unwelcome solution that deters visitors. Others have signage which is unsightly and garish compared with the host building and yet exemplars in the town do exist which clearly demonstrate a successful approach. Historic photographs are courtesy of Flintshire Record Office.

Figure 14: Gradual erosion of architectural detailing erodes the specialness of the town

2.2.33 There is sufficient evidence of the unfortunate tendency for historical detail to be lost when building elements are replaced. The timber joinery of doors and windows are often replaced with plastics, and substitutes for Welsh slate have been used for roofing materials. Erosion is also seen in the loss of whole examples and details such as signage to historic shopfronts and the loss of boundary walls for parking to properties with front gardens. Each individual case may be insignificant, but the cumulative effect can be damaging and erode the overall 'special interest' of the area. Often this issue has come about as a result of lack of access to information and suitable contractors skilled in the use and care of traditional materials. However, property owners should also consider more carefully the choices they make in undertaking works of repair or enhancement to the exterior of properties in ensuring local details are retained and the specialness of the town is not further eroded. Through better decision making on changes to properties a more holistic approach to the positive management of the Town will be achieved. Such a careful and well considered approach should encourage other owners to see the clear benefits from adopting a conservation-led approach.



This example at the top of High Street within the Conservation Area and in the setting of the Grade I St Mary's Church typifies the problems associated with a lack of effective planning control and lack of timely enforcement. Despite there not being an approved application since October 1983 it is clear a number of items requiring the benefit of consent can be seen, included the replacement upper floors windows, the concrete tiles to the roof, the illuminated signage, the multiple satellite dishes and lighting brackets, and Christmas tree holder. It is also likely alterations to the shopfront, the tiling to the ground floor wall and replacement front door would all require consent. The cumulative effect of relatively minor changes has transformed an attractive Georgian fronted property into a much altered frontage the appearance of which is inappropriate for a Conservation Area. Historic photographs are courtesy of Flintshire Record Office.

Figure 15: Gradual loss of character and appearance damages the setting to key listed buildings

Underuse and Vacancy of Historic Buildings

2.2.34 A number of buildings and sites within the Conservation Area appear vacant and underused and could benefit from investment in their fabric before their architectural and historic integrity is damaged. These buildings include a number of visually high profile and architecturally important properties along High Street and Chester Street amongst others and are at significant risk and the opportunity exists to encourage their retention and sustainable reuse. Sufficient encouragement through advice, appropriate and flexible use of planning policy and financial assistance should be made available to ensure these buildings continue to play an active role in the future of the community.



A number of buildings within the Conservation Area appear to be either vacant or under-utilised and could play a more active role in the vibrancy of Mold. Where necessary the Council should plan to invest in options appraisals and to use its various grant making and planning powers to ensure a long term future for the more complex buildings, such as the Old Court House. Other properties should be encouraged to reuse upper floors for appropriate uses.

Figure 16: Examples of key vacant historic properties

The quality of new development

- 2.2.35 One of the potential threats to the areas' character is the insertion of unsympathetic infill developments adjacent to listed or other unlisted, buildings that make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area or its setting.
- 2.2.36 Unfortunately, Mold has not escaped the damaging effect of previous attempts to overdevelop the town, some infill development has occurred along High Street, New Street & Chester Street in the Conservation Area and sites adjoining it, that have negatively impacted upon the town centre. Particular examples include the BT building on Chester Street, the new development opposite Bethesda Chapel and the development along Llys yr Efail. The scale, form, mass and materials of such developments have not taken into the account the fine grain of properties and plots in the Conservation Area. Vigilance is necessary to avoid the specialness of the largely intact townscape of the Town being eroded, as a number of sites could emerge for development both within and on the periphery of the Conservation Area in the future. Future proposals for development within or to the setting of the Conservation Area will need to be carefully considered against established guidance and to ensure it accords with the characteristics of the Conservation Area.
- 2.2.37 A few buildings and sites within and immediately adjacent to the conservation areas do not possess sufficient architectural detailing or historic interest to be regarded as making a positive contribution to the character of the area. Conservation Areas often contain sites, buildings and streets that may not necessarily reflect the overall special interest of the historic character and appearance of the Conservation Area. As boundaries to Conservation Areas have reflected the notion of 'an area'

they are contiguous and avoid creating 'doughnut' type boundaries. Often such buildings and sites have experienced unsympathetic alterations, inappropriate uses or have been built when planning controls in Conservation Areas were less able to influence the quality of development. This would include looking at opportunities to improve buildings and sites that have suffered the loss architectural detailing expected for a town of Mold's age. New developments within the setting of the Conservation Area should also enjoy the same careful consideration to ensure their impact does not damage the specialness of the town. Adjoining retail developments have had a tendency to have little or no regard to the quality of place.

Conservation & Planning Policy & Practice

2.2.38 The principal means by which the County Council has recognised the significance of Mold's historic environment has been through the designation of the town centre as a Conservation Area. The Planning Service of the Council has lead responsibility for the historic environment, through the operation of the planning system. Its role in relation to the historic environment is defined in relevant planning advice from the Welsh Assembly Government;

2.2.39 Circular 61/96 *Planning and the Historic Environment* supplements *Planning Policy Wales* by setting out advice on legislation and procedures that relate to historic environment. It recommends that:

- Conservation policies should be coordinated and integrated with other planning policies (para. 4),
- Councils should have appropriately qualified specialist advice available to deal with effects on the historic environment (para. 9),
- The quality of places should be a prime consideration in identifying and designating conservation areas (para. 20),
- Councils should take into account the resources likely to be required for development control, consultation and the formulation of policies (para. 23),
- Consideration should be given to establishing conservation area advisory committees to assist in the formulation of policies, to advise on planning and other applications which could affect the character of an area and to determine whether there is scope for communities to become involved in practical voluntary enhancement work (para. 28).

2.2.40 *Planning Policy Wales* (2002) makes it clear in Chapter 6, '*Conserving the Historic Environment*', that:

- The historic environment is a key aspect of local authorities' wider sustainable development responsibilities,
- Conservation areas are the main instrument to give effect to conservation policies for valued places,
- Councils should ensure, while protecting conservation areas, that they also remain alive and prosperous,
- Consistent criteria for their designation should be established,
- Councils are required to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas,

- The positive management of conservation areas is necessary if they are to be safeguarded,
- Designation objectives can generally be met only through planning policies and development control.

2.2.41 Further Welsh Assembly Government guidance on the role and value of the historic environment, encompassing conservation areas, can also be found in the *Wales Spatial Plan* (November 2004):

- The Historic Environment has an intrinsic value as well as its contribution to the economy and quality of life,
- It recognises distinctiveness and pride of place as elements of successful communities,
- Such places have a role in promoting Wales as well as their role in future economic competitiveness and social and environmental well being,
- There is a need to maintain and support the distinctive character of the Welsh historic environment,
- The Plan recognises the failures of standard building types and the need for new development to reflect better traditional building types and materials.

2.2.42 The Flintshire Unitary Development Plan (UDP) is nearing final adoption, with an intention to formally adopt as the development plan for Flintshire to be imminently published. The UDP describes the Council's intentions for the development and use of land within the County and forms the basis against which planning applications are assessed. The Plan contains specific policies designed to protect and enhance the County's heritage.

2.2.43 Current planning policies of particular relevance include;

- Policy STR8 '*Built Environment*'
- Policy D1 '*Design Quality*'
- Policy D3 '*Design*'
- Policy HE1 '*Development affecting Conservation areas*';
- Policy HE2 '*Development affecting Listed Buildings and their settings*;
- Policy HE3 '*Demolition of buildings in Conservation Areas*';
- Policy HE4 '*Buildings of Local Interest*;
- Policy HE7 '*Other sites of lesser Archaeological significance*';
- Policy HE8 '*Recording of Historic Features*'.

2.2.44 It is important that more detailed conservation advice that cannot be included in principal policies in the UDP should be adopted as SPG. When guidance is formally adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG), following public consultation, it has the full weight of planning policy.

2.2.45 Supplementary Planning Guidance produced by Flintshire County Council will complement UDP policies and aims to raise awareness of good design and to improve the quality of new development. The Council has published Local Planning Guidance (LPG) Notes as a precursor to the formal preparation of SPG. These LPG notes include No.6 Listed Building's, No.7 Conservation Areas, No.16 Advertisements and No.15 Shopfronts (not published as yet but identified to follow on). The

Council is also committed to reviewing the need to bring forward SPGs on further subjects as issues may warrant and staff resources permit.

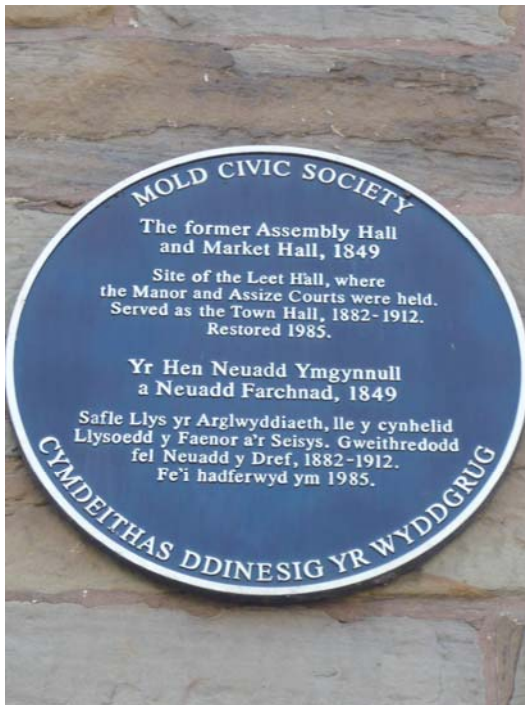
- 2.2.46 Within the Planning Service, much of the work that the Environment & Conservation Team delivers is focussed on activities that are required by legislation and national policy. It is, therefore, substantially a statutory service responsible for duties that the Council has to undertake. In large part this is due to the demands of the reactive work, particularly that associated with the development control process, which has tended to supplant the more creative proactive work such as conservation area character appraisals, design and conservation guidance and working with communities. This position has been further reinforced by the loss of the Council's full time Conservation Officer and the team's leader, that previously undertook some casework, replaced initially with only with a part time consultancy position, with a remit focussed on reacting to development control enquiries. Although it is anticipated the vacant Conservation Officer post will be filled in the near future having been advertised recently.
- 2.2.47 Although there is some recognition of the role of conservation areas, as part of the historic environment, within the County's Community Strategy the available resources do not reflect the intended aspiration to maintain a quality destination, nor is this desire clearly cascaded through to wider Council or service priorities. The absence of a clear historic environment strategy, informed by the public and other stakeholders, weakens the service and must be remedied as a priority. This will benefit the reactive work by providing a context for consistent decisions and assist the service in encouraging development control officers to accept greater responsibility for conservation and design input to the decision making process.
- 2.2.48 It has been identified that the Environment & Conservation Team needs to encourage the public to share the responsibility for stewardship of conservation areas as part of the historic environment. A key task for the future will be to enhance the broader involvement of the Team, which until now tended to be technical in nature and focussed on property owners, their agents and contractors through the administration of the development control process. A recent initiative on Conservation Area Management Plans in eight settlements started the process of addressing this issue but this ceased when the full time Conservation Officer left and no further work has been undertaken by the County on progressing this work. Increased public involvement and concern for conserving what is valued by local communities is a central tenet of sustainable development, as recognised by Welsh Assembly Government policy.
- 2.2.49 The former Flintshire Conservation Area Forum established in 1998, was discontinued in 2003 due to resource issues. The Forum was an important means to engage communities in the decision-making process and for raising awareness of historic environment issues, has unfortunately been lost. The opportunity to review the work of the Forum, and the means to increase its relevance to both Council decision making and broadening its relevance to local and civic groups concerned with the historic environment, should have been openly undertaken at that time. Where there has been proactive work, such as the Conservation Area Management Plan work or the securing of grant assistance for Holywell and Flint this has not benefited Mold, which is surprising given its status as

the County Town, although to some extent this has been determined by the priorities of external partners.

- 2.2.50 The weakness of any largely demand-led service is that unless target setting and performance management are rigorous there is every likelihood that pro-active work will not be delivered. This is evident in the present Planning service, as demonstrated by the lack of progress being made towards full coverage of up-to-date conservation area appraisals or to publish the draft Conservation Area Management Plans completed in June 2009 formally for wider consultation. Furthermore, no systematic attempts have been made to review the existing or potential new conservation areas against adopted criteria, nor to prepare proposals for their preservation and enhancement. Both of these failures could be construed as breaches of the Council's statutory duties under sections 69 & 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- 2.2.51 If efforts were put into promoting guidance, raising awareness and managing the expectations of property owners, it is highly likely the quality of applications submitted by applicants would improve and the need for specialist inputs to decision making could be reduced. Greater guidance has the potential, by promoting good design in developments that are in harmony with the character of the buildings in local communities, to make a major contribution to the quality of the local environment.
- 2.2.52 The Council appears to have long under-invested in its Planning Service. This has led to the prioritisation of resources away from pro-active work towards more reactive development control work, encouraged by Government targets and the delivery of the Unitary Development Plan. However, this has undermined the Council's ability to effectively manage the historic environment. In any future discussions regarding reviewing the Planning Service should clearly have regard to other responsibilities such as SPG formulation, up to date photographic record for enforcement purposes, reviewing Conservation Area boundaries and other more pro-active measures affecting the historic environment.

Potential key themes to promote the distinctiveness of the Town

- 2.2.53 There are insufficient signs or interpretation easily accessible to visitors or others within the area commemorating the town's origins or development over time. Sterling efforts have been made in the past by Mold Civic Society, Mold Town Council and in recent years Cittaslow Mold. The principal means they have achieved this is through blue plaques and other interpretation boards. Care should be taken in ensuring these are however legible. English Heritage has recently published very comprehensive guidance in its publication *Celebrating People & Place: Guidance on Commemorative Plaques & Plaques Schemes (2010)*. Visitors also expect more in the modern age with the better use of technology.



Examples of local plaques erected to celebrate both places and people of Mold. The town centre possesses a wealth of historic features which are currently underplayed.

Figure 17: Examples of existing local commemorative plaques

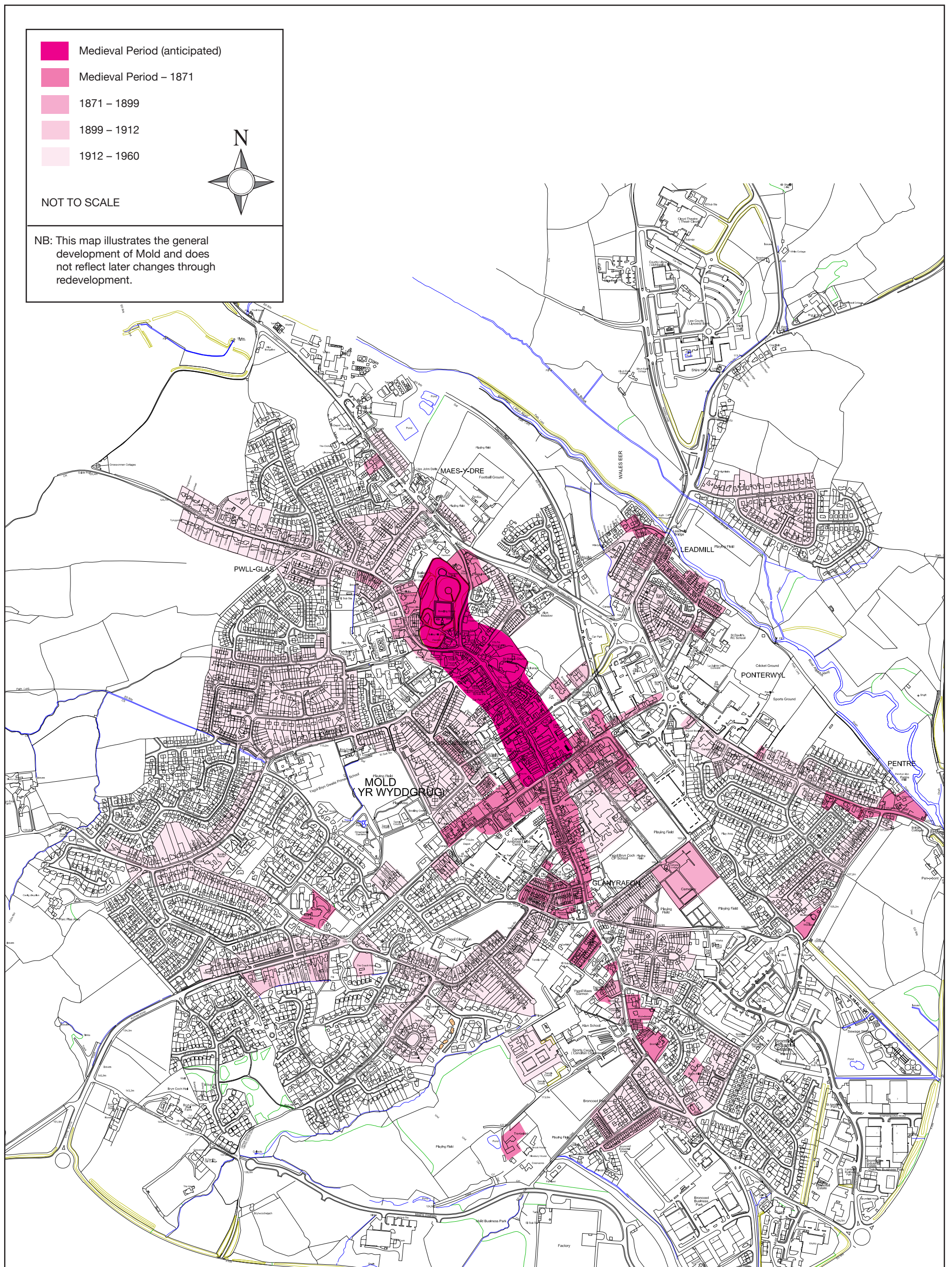
2.2.54 Thankfully, the depth and range of Mold's past and the survival of built elements to illustrate this creates many opportunities to promote the town to visitors against many themes including;

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Ancient Britain - | The Mold Cape and the Alleluia monument |
| Medieval Mold - | Bailey Hill, St Mary's Church |
| Heroes of Mold - | Daniel Owen & Richard Wilson |
| Law & Order - | The Old Courthouse, former Police Station, the Mold Riot and Old Gaol |
| Industrial Mold - | Terraced Housing, Broncoed Park colliery housing, Synthite works, former railway |
| Homes for Heroes - | Interwar housing and other associated services |
| Civic Mold - | Town Hall, former Assembly Rooms, Flintshire County Council offices |

These themes could be linked by a series of walks either by theme, age or interest supported through the use of recent technological advances, utilised elsewhere in Wales to promote heritage locations.

Mold Sense of Place Feasibility Study:

General Historical Development of Urban Mold (Medieval Period – 1960)



MOLD (YR WYDDGRUG)

Legend:

- Scheduled Ancient Monument
- Valuable Green Open Space
- Conservation Area Boundary
- Listed Buildings
- Buildings of Positive Contribution

NOT TO SCALE

Notes:

- (1) It is assumed that all Listed Buildings make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area.
- (2) Buildings of Positive Contribution to the character and appearance should be retained as indicated by paragraph 33 of Welsh Office circular 61/96.
- (3) Only principal buildings and structures have been identified on the map but it should be noted ancillary buildings and structures to both the front and rear should also enjoy the benefit of being retained.
- (4) This map is not exhaustive but an indication of the likely buildings, features and structures that should be retained. Further advice should be sought from the County Council's Conservation Officer to ensure the avoidance of doubt and especially with regard to the extent of Listed Building control which can extend to buildings attached to and within the curtilage to the principal identified building.

GLANYRAF

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2.3 Public Realm Appraisal

Streets and Places - the 'Public Realm'

- 2.3.1 In this day and age people have more choice than ever before in choosing where to do business, where to live, where to shop, or where to visit. At this time of unprecedented competition, the look and feel of a place is now vital to the wellbeing and economic survival of a town. The term *public realm* is used to describe the streets, spaces and places between and within buildings, where they are accessible to the public. It also includes privately owned spaces which can be seen or accessed by the public. 'By Design' (CABE, 2001), sets out what is meant by 'high quality public realm':

'A place with attractive and successful outdoor areas where the success of the public realm depends on the arrangement of paving, planting, lighting, orientation, shelter, signage, street furniture and the way it is overlooked, as well as the routes which pass through it, and the uses in and next to it.'

Why is Public Realm Important?

- 2.3.2 Mold, like most market towns, has evolved with an arrangement of streets and spaces which sought to meet local needs at the time they were laid out. In contrast 'out of town' retail centres are carefully planned and designed to cater perfectly for the modern-day shopper. Similarly business parks are laid out in well-connected locations within attractive settings, with plentiful parking to meet the needs of businesses. Other towns, more reliant on the tourist pound, have made co-ordinated efforts to present their heritage and cultural life in a way that is particularly attractive to the visitor. In order to compete with purpose-built retail and business centres and the growth in internet commerce, many towns are recognising the need to improve their public realm in order to offer a more 'distinctive' environment.
- 2.3.3 Local residents are acutely aware of the quality of their local environment, and according to MORI research in 2009 published by CABE nearly nine out of ten people say that better quality buildings and public spaces improve their quality of life.
- 2.3.4 In summary enhancements to the public realm in combination with other initiatives can help in making the town more appealing to shoppers, visitors, business people and residents alike.

Who looks after our Public Realm?

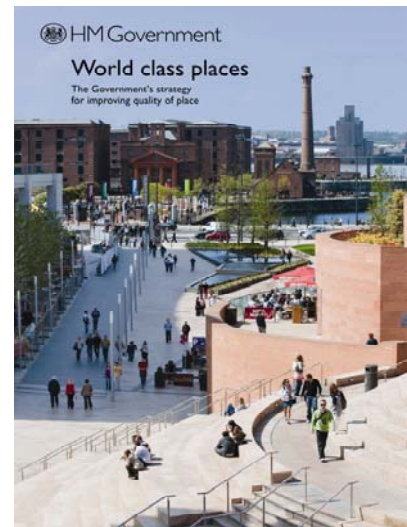
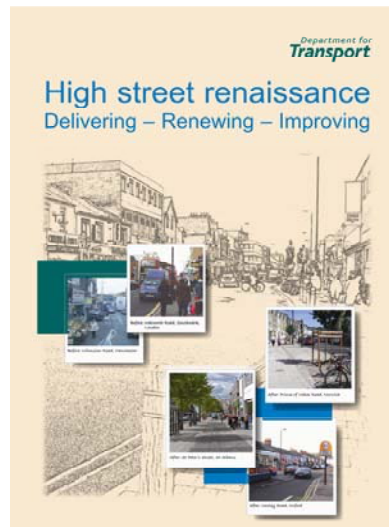
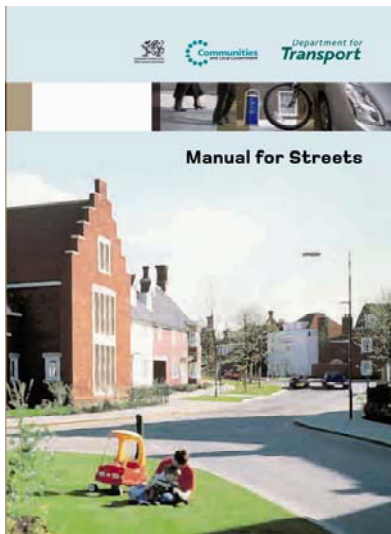
- 2.3.5 Much of our public realm is in public ownership, and managed by Flintshire County Council, largely through the Highways division. Parks and open spaces (notably Bailey Hill the Recreation Ground and Leadmills) are managed by Flintshire County Council's Leisure section whilst some important spaces such as Daniel Owen Square are managed by Property Services. In addition, the form nature and appearance of new development including building and shop frontages and advertising is

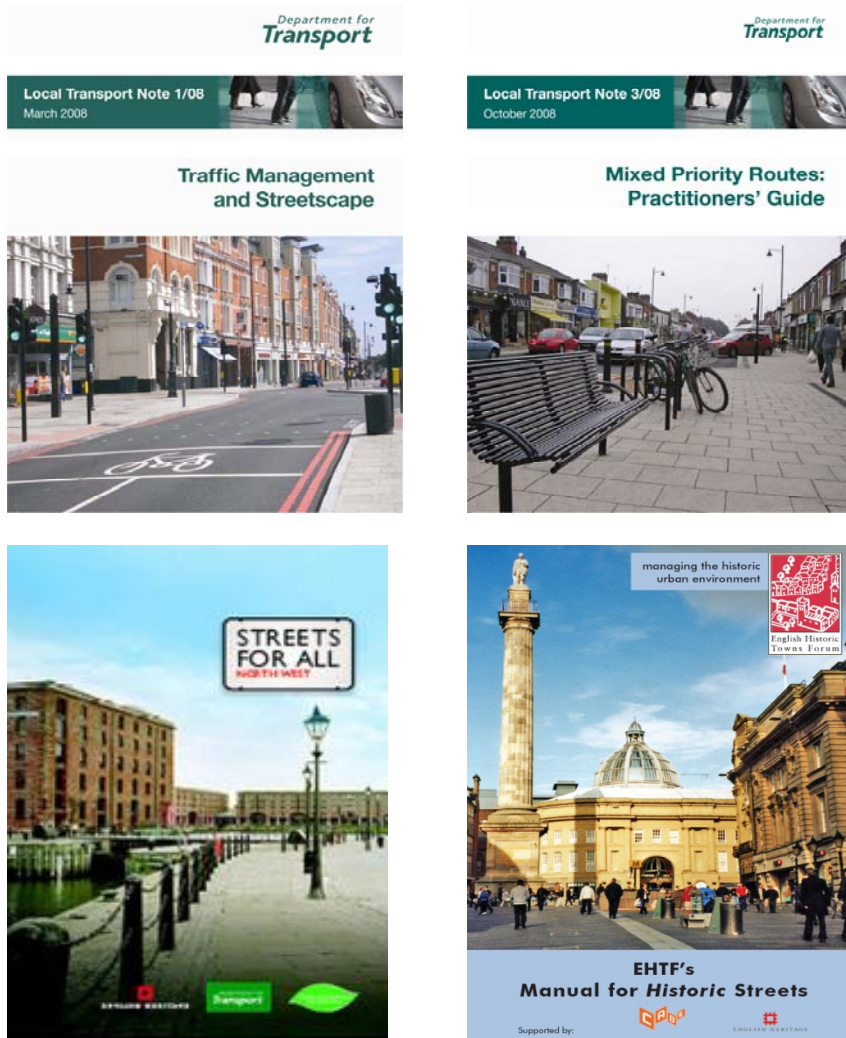
controlled and influenced by Flintshire County Council's Planning Service through planning and advertisement controls.

- 2.3.6 Other parts of the public realm such as alleyways, forecourts, verges and private parking areas are owned by private owners. Mold Town Council have only limited direct control over the public realm, such as signage and street furniture. The Town Council's influence in terms of public is exercised through consultation and liaison with Flintshire County Council on planning and highways matters as well directing applications for funding and new works.
- 2.3.7 It is now recognised that a high quality public realm can only be achieved where the various departments and agencies work in a co-ordinated fashion. In larger cities with unitary status this integration is sometimes facilitated by a Town Centre Manager. Whilst Mold Town Council employs a Town Centre Manager whose role is in part to 'champion' the public realm, the Manager is not in a position to directly control service delivery by the County Council.

What is Happening Elsewhere ?

- 2.3.8 Leaders in towns up and down the country, directed and encouraged by Government policy are recognising the need to make their streets and places more distinctive and appealing. Market towns such as Oswestry, Ludlow, Welshpool, Newtown, Chepstow and Abergavenny are amongst many towns implementing strategic public realm enhancements. Current guidance is illustrated below;





Recent Central Government guidance on public realm design and management, promotes a new way of thinking about our streets and places.

Other agencies have published complementary guidance.

Figure 18: Current public realm guidance

2.3.9 There is a wealth of guidance on the development and management of public realm (some developed for the English context, but nevertheless relevant). Guidance includes:

- central government guidance set out within *Better Streets, Better Places* (ODPM, 2003) and 'World Class Places', 'How to How Manage Town Centres', and 'Looking after our Town Centres' (all by Department for Communities and Local Government)
- 'Paving the Way' by CABI 2002 (Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment)
- 'Streets for All' (by English Heritage) and *Manual For Historic Towns Streetscapes* (English Historic Town Forum) which gives specific guidance on in respect of historic streetscapes.

2.3.10 Given the degree to which public realm is designated as highway (or managed by highways department) recent Highways guidance is particularly relevant.

- 2.3.11 *Technical Advice Note 18: Transport (TAN 18)* by Welsh Assembly Government (March 2007) provides advice on transport policy. TAN 18 sets out a number of objectives including that of ‘promoting cycling and walking’, and ‘encouraging good quality design of streets that provide a safe public realm and a distinct ‘sense of place’.
- 2.3.12 *Manual for Streets (MfS)* (issued in 2007) provides the latest government guidance on the design and management of the Highway in England and Wales. MfS represents a significant shift in terms of the way we should think of streets. It puts significant emphasis upon the street as a ‘place’ rather than as a corridor for moving traffic. It also sets out that the *pedestrian should be considered first* and foremost in the design and management of our streets.
- 2.3.13 MfS requires that new proposals potentially affecting the highway should always include a review of any ‘public realm strategies’ set out within the Local Development Framework and that they should also take account of any other street design guidance that is available- this potentially makes this document particularly relevant to future initiatives.
- 2.3.14 Recent guidance from central government also includes ‘*Local Transport Note 1/08*’ ‘*Traffic Management and Streetscape*’. (LTN 1/08). This aims to enhance the appearance of roads and streets by encouraging highways designers and managers to minimise various traffic signs, road markings and street furniture associated with traffic management.

Approach and Scope of the Study

- 2.3.15 This study takes the view of a visitor to Mold, and looks at the town afresh, from its very outskirts to arrival in the High Street. This approach helps focus proposals upon measures that will directly encourage people to visit, stay, spend, and invest in Mold. Other factors that also influence the ‘quality of life’ for local residents, such as the quality of parks and green spaces and the wider pedestrian environment, are also considered.
- 2.3.16 The geographical scope of this part of the study therefore takes in the outlying areas and the main approaches to the town, whilst considering the Town Centre area in more detail. This study adopts a broad approach by considering ways in which the streets and places of Mold can be made attractive and special, in a way that directly complements efforts to:
- maintain the town’s distinctive retail offer,
 - protect and enhance the built heritage of the town; and,
 - enable events and cultural activities.

An Appraisal of the Streets and Places of Mold

Methodology

- 2.3.17 An appraisal of the public realm of Mold has been undertaken. In order to properly understand the issues involved in the management of the public realm numerous consultations have also been

conducted with local authority officers. Feedback from the public consultation exercise as described above has also been analysed and used to inform the study.

2.3.18 The appraisal considers the experience of a visitor to Mold in terms of:

- the welcome first impressions gained at the gateways into the town,
- the attractiveness of the approaches through the town and the messages and directions given en-route,
- the sense of arrival, welcome, and orientation presented within the car parks and bus station;
- the experience in moving through to the centre of the town,
- the look and feel of the streets and places in the centre of the town.

2.3.19 Particular consideration is given to the condition, constraints and potential opportunities for Daniel Owen Square. The contribution made by parks and green spaces is also assessed and particular issues relating to the design and management of the 'streetscape' are identified. The appraisal is therefore structured in terms of the:

- setting and character of the town,
- the gateways and approaches to Mold,
- the town centre and historic core,
- Daniel Owen Square,
- parks and greens spaces,
- appraisal of public consultation questionnaire.
- findings and conclusion.

Setting and Character

2.3.20 Figure 2.3.1 illustrates an appraisal of the setting of the town. The identity of Mold as an historic rural market town is strengthened on account of its compact nature and its distinctive setting. On approaching the town Mold appears to nestle at the base of the Alun valley with fields rising on the hillsides around. Bailey Hill, with its mature trees is prominent in the centre of the town. There is a relatively abrupt transition between the open fields surrounding the town and the built up residential areas, particularly on the north-west (Denbigh) and south-east (Chester and Wrexham) approaches. The historic core of the town can be seen from many points rising on the central higher ground at the centre of the town, with St Mary's Church forming a prominent landmark. From within the historic core there are direct views back out to the hillsides around.

The Gateways and Approaches to Mold

2.3.21 Gateways and approaches to a town can be vital in defining the image of a town. First impressions count. There are five principal approaches into Mold. Denbigh Road (A541) approaches from rural areas of North Wales. King Street (A5119) provides access from the A55 to the north and north-east. The A494(T) bypass skirts the south side of the town. Chester Road (A541), Wrexham

Road (B5444) and Ruthin Road (A5119) approach the town from the east, south-east, and south respectively intersecting the bypass at three major roundabouts. Figure 19 overleaf highlights issues in respect of these main approaches and 'gateways' to the town.

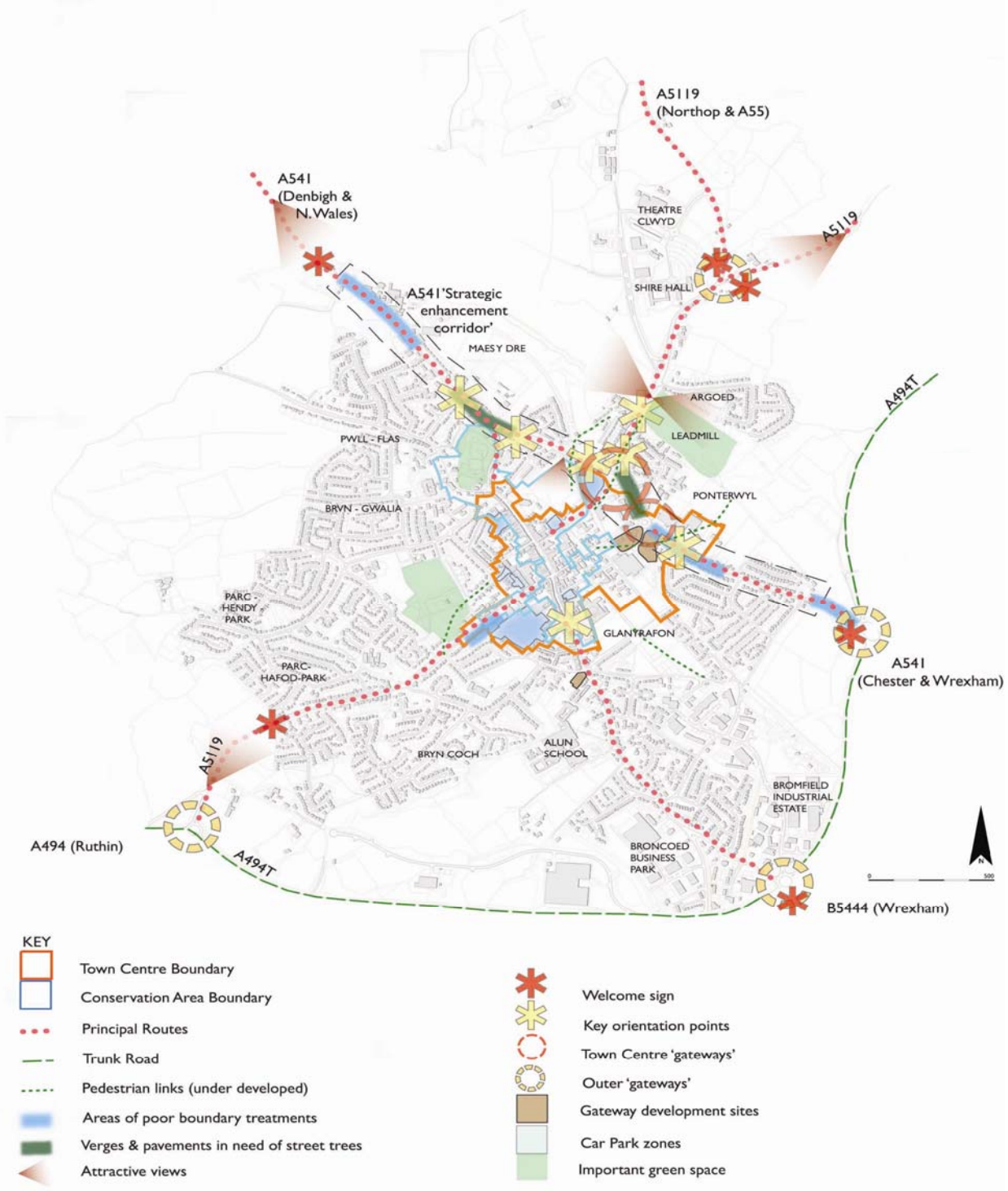


Figure 19: Issues in respect of these main approaches and 'gateways' to the town

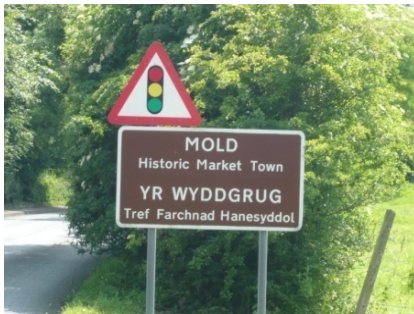
Gateways

- 2.3.22 The A494 roundabouts have simple but strong landscape treatments of trees shrubs and mown grass (albeit lacking seasonal colour). They are managed by NEWTRA (North East Wales Trunk Road Agency) and design and maintenance arrangements are currently being reconsidered with pressure being brought to reduce costs.
- 2.3.23 'Welcome to Mold' signs are currently simple brown highway signs lacking any information other than 'Historic Market Town'. Welcome signs on Ruthin and Denbigh Roads are well located against attractive hedgerow backdrops in 'uncluttered' locations. Others are compromised by being set close to (and even combined with) other directional and hazard signage.

Approaches

- 2.3.24 Distinctive and attractive features contributing strongly to the character and quality of the approaches into town include:
- Boundary walls of limestone or original Buckley brick, and
 - occasional mature trees and hedgerows within gardens.
- 2.3.25 Features that detract from the character and quality include:
- crude boundaries to commercial or industrial properties of galvanised chainlink mesh, palisade fence; and even galvanised highway crash barriers,
 - poor quality residential boundaries of plain or rendered concrete blockwork and cheap poorly maintained timber knee rails,
 - a proliferation of unco-ordinated private signs alongside commercial premises.
- 2.3.26 The A541 skirts to the north east of the historic core and provides two gateways into the town via roundabouts at the end of King Street and Chester Street. The fragmented character of the area is defined by large scale retail developments, petrol stations, un-developed sites and the fire station:
- retail stores along the A541 corridor include the Homebase and Farm Foods sites. Stores are set back from road frontage with car parking in front so as to advertise the availability of that parking. Inexpensive shrub planting is used along the highway boundary. There is often insufficient room left for trees and plants to thrive and little or no incentive to maintain them properly. This results in tatty shrub areas that gather litter and are used for unauthorised advertising. This gives a public realm that is fragmented, car dominated and unfriendly to the pedestrian,
 - a proliferation of commercial signage, unauthorised and authorised gives a cluttered appearance,
 - the vacant site with derelict building (the Coal Yard/Ponterwyl) adjacent to the Chester Street roundabout and the Harleys garage site adjacent detracts from the appearance of the corridor at this key gateway site,

- tree planting on and around the King Street roundabout contribute to the character of the corridor but mature trees are lacking elsewhere . The Chester/Homebase roundabout looks particularly barren.



'Gateways' are uninspiring and welcome signs could be better presented and more informative.



Unightly boundaries detract from the character.



Signage could be clearer and better co-ordinated.

Signs have aggregated over the years

The principal gateway into the town centre off the Leadmills/Chester Road is cluttered and unattractive

Figure 20: Photographs of gateway issues around Mold

Highways Signs

- 2.3.27 Highways signs inform, direct, and orientate people, but also at a subconscious level they also create an impression and convey messages of quality and experience. Highways signs are erected over time in response to new initiatives and developments. There is rarely a budget nor a remit to consider the whole signage approach each time new signs are put up. Sign materials and guidance also change over time. As a consequence signage can often, understandably, develop an inconsistent appearance. The message they convey is thus weakened, and the impression they give as to the quality of the public realm (and the town as a whole) is weakened. Particularly apparent in Mold are:
- aggregations of directional ‘flag’ signs of mismatching styles shapes sizes and backgrounds,
 - larger directional signs themselves cluttered by add-on directions or obscured by other signage,
 - warning signs (particularly with reflective backgrounds) detracting from the street scene and even obscuring or detracting from directional signage,
 - extensive use of (discretionary) reflective backgrounds often in mis-matching colours and shapes.
- 2.3.28 Signs directing to the car parks, whilst numerous, do not distinguish between shopper and visitor parking areas. Also ‘Information’ and ‘Leisure Drive’ signage has been ‘added-on’ in a way that does not convey an impression of quality and is not always clear.

Town Centre and Historic Core

- 2.3.29 Figure 24 illustrates the public realm appraisal of the Town Centre.

Car Parks and the Bus Station

- 2.3.30 First impressions of a town are vital and these are often strongest at the point of disembarkation the car parks or bus station. As with most market towns, Mold’s car parks have evolved rather than having been designed. The car parks are not wholly designated as Highway but are managed by the highways section. In the past measures have been put in place using standard cost effective highway treatments. There is an increasing recognition that car parks need to be handled as if part of the resident and visitor experience rather than a mere extension of the highway.
- 2.3.31 *Car Parking Research’ A Detailed Report On How Parking Can Be Managed In The Region’s Market Towns’* by the ‘Yorkshire First - Renaissance Market Towns Programme ‘ sets out useful background. It cites a survey, “*Retail Distinctiveness of Market Towns*” undertaken by *mrug*, which questioned people about parking in market towns. Asked which parking attributes were important to them, respondents put the availability of spaces top and cost of parking last. Car park capacity and charging do not fall within the remit of this study (and a separate study has been commissioned

by Flintshire County Council on the matter). However, it is notable that the next most important factors after availability are ease of parking, signage, length of stay, overall quality and location. On the positive side the variety of choice and location of car parking is a real asset, albeit this is also a factor which makes clear signage more difficult to achieve. However, assessed in qualitative terms, the car parks (and New Street car park in particular) have:

- evolved with layouts that do not 'naturally' segregate short stay (shoppers) from long stay (visitors and workers), nor from disabled parking areas and employ crude highways style signage and lining to seek to redress this failing,
- no safe dedicated routes for pedestrians and few of the payment points are 'protected' from moving vehicles,
- no 'arrival points' providing orientation and information on shops, facilities, and attractions,
- little or no tree planting to provide shade or shelter and only small areas of vulnerable, often failed, shrub planting,
- inefficient layouts in terms of capacity with areas of wasted unsightly tarmac,
- poor quality ill co-ordinated street furniture.



Arrival points in Mold are unattractive, uninformative, unwelcoming and poorly co-ordinated.



Car park areas have historically been treated as 'highway space' instead of part of the public realm.



Important pedestrian connections need to be more welcoming and treated more appropriately.



Narrow pavements give a poor pedestrian environment.



Key crossing points and links need to be strengthened.



There are missing links between key areas.

Figure 21: Arrival Points & Pedestrian Crossing issues

Arrival Points & Pedestrian Connections

2.3.32 The bus station has been relatively recently refurbished and whilst it is not of locally distinctive materials, it is well laid out and furnished.

Pedestrian Connections to the Town Centre

2.3.33 Pedestrians pass to the central high street area via a number of routes. Issues include:

- the route to New Street alongside Somerfield is a loading bay of crude appearance, and the alternative route to Wrexham Street is very unwelcoming;
- pavements at the junctions of Grosvenor St/Wrexham Street and King St/High Street are very narrow;
- the pavements on both sides of Chester St. (connecting both with the bus station and the supermarkets to the north) are very narrow;
- a very large number of pedestrians travel between Tesco and Aldi and the High Street. Their route, to the rear of Harleys Garage, is unsightly due to the untidy and under-developed nature of that site;

- the New Street pedestrian crossing is an important linkage but its dog-legged nature with extensive barriers is not pedestrian friendly;
- the tree lined route up from Love Lane is an attractive asset.

The High Street, Chester St, Wrexham St, and Earl Road

- 2.3.34 The central section of the High Street arranged with wide pavements of York stone, brick paved loading bays, an unmarked central crossing, and street trees provides a distinctive high quality public realm at the heart of the town. The layout is uncluttered, characterful and yet practical. It readily accommodates the twice weekly Market and provides ample pavement space for shoppers and visitors, with convenient locations for stopping and loading.
- 2.3.35 By contrast pavements on Chester St, Wrexham St, and Earl Road (particularly at the junctions) are narrow and cramped. The combination of pavement width, traffic movements, and pedestrian barriers create an unpleasant pedestrian environment. This may contribute to a reduction in pedestrian 'footfall' south of the Cross and north of the KingSt/EarlRd/High Street junction. There is short stay on-street parking at the top end of the High Street and bottom of Earl Road but with the absence of loading bays elsewhere there is frequent illegal parking on Earl Road, Chester Street and at the top end of the High Street.



The broad stone paved pavements of the central High Street are one of the town's key assets.



Streetscape treatments elsewhere are being compromised



The quality of the public realm deteriorates quickly upon moving away from the High street



Chester Street has a particularly poor pedestrian and shopping environment.



Furniture clutter and narrow pavements at the Cross.



Pedestrians are hemmed in at the Earl Road/King Street /High Street junction.



Wide roads and narrow pavements at the Cross.

Figure 22: High Street issues

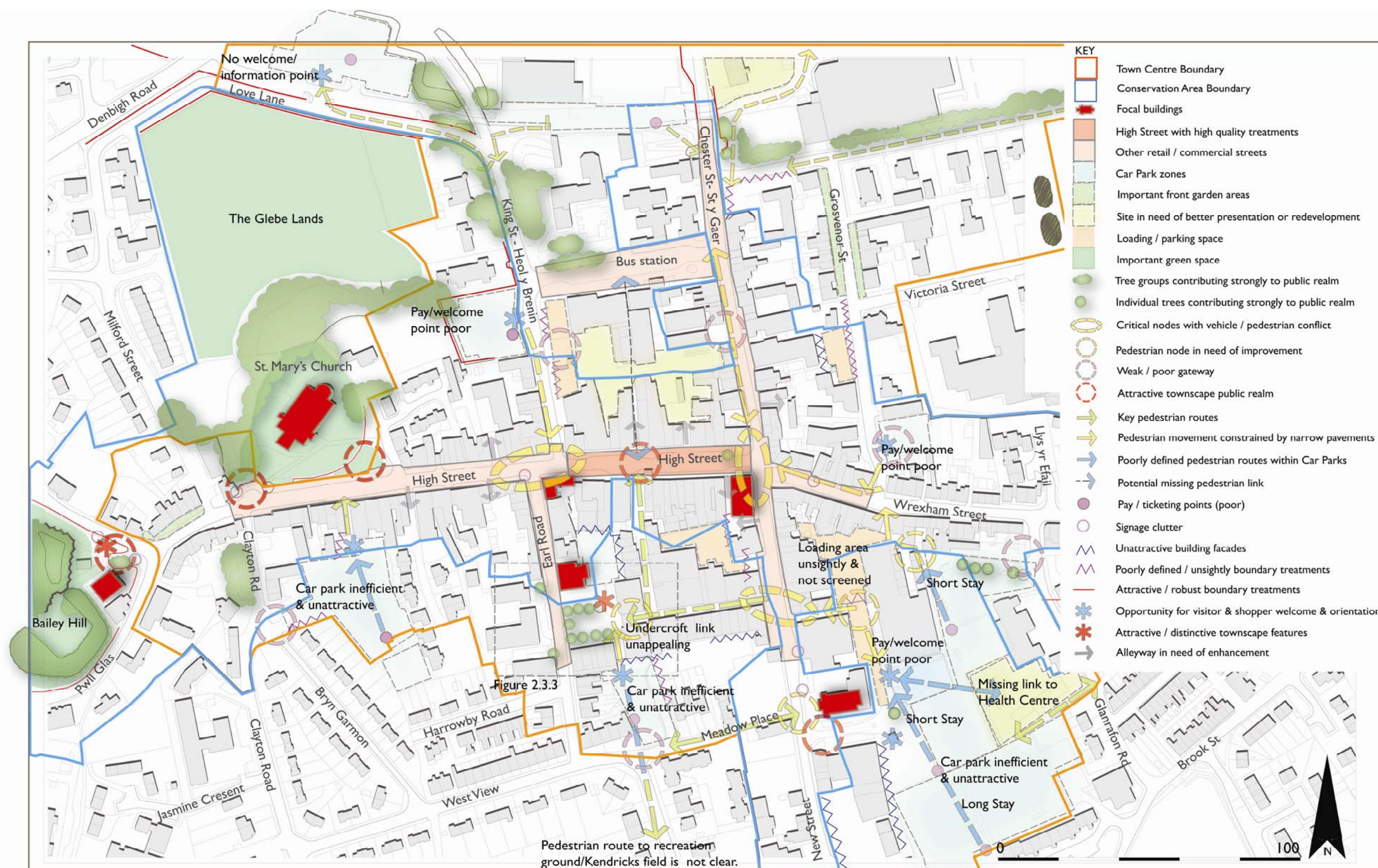


Figure 23: Town Centre Public Realm Appraisal

The High Street

Streetscape Element

- 2.3.36 **Paving:** Away from the central section of the High Street paved with its York stone, pavements, the upper end of the High Street, Chester Street, Wrexham Street, New Street, and Earl Road have been treated with a red 'screed' surfacing. This surfacing initially gave a unified appearance, lifting the apparent quality of the pavements. The effect of that investment is now being eroded as pavements have been extensively dug up for service trenches and then resurfaced in standard black tarmac.
- 2.3.37 **Lighting:** The High Street, New Street, Earl Road, Chester Street and King Street have a variety of columns and lanterns in decorative 'Victorian' and 'Edwardian' styles. Near white light sources are used with good colour rendering. Columns and lanterns are painted black, larger columns in the High Street have been fitted with brackets for hanging baskets and banners. Car parks, linking routes and service yards have plain galvanised columns and modern lanterns as do the roundabouts and main roads.
- 2.3.38 **Highway Signs, Markings and Lining:** Signs are variously mounted on walls, barriers, posts, or light columns in both 'flag' and stack style. Some are black backed and on black posts but most are not. Some recent signs have luminous backgrounds. Standard double and single yellow lines are used throughout the centre (the narrower 50mm primrose lines which are permitted in Conservation Areas and sensitive locations are not used). Crude yellow and or white hatching is used extensively in car parks and loading areas.
- 2.3.39 **Pedestrian Signs, Road Name Plates:** Victorian style finger posts direct pedestrians throughout the town centre and are relatively comprehensive in their coverage. The gold lettering is dull and difficult to read. There are also numerous 'highway style' pedestrian signs (notably to the Tourist Information point). The main streets have attractive historic name plates mounted on buildings at first floor level, elsewhere name plates are mounted on low galvanised angle posts types.
- 2.3.40 **Trees:** The town centre is poorly endowed in terms of trees. The trees in the High Street and Earl Road 'soften' the architecture giving shade and shelter but those in the High Street are set within guards and grilles in need of maintenance, in places trees have outgrown their grilles. Heavily pollarded limes on Earl Road appear in a poor condition. Larger mature trees off King Street and the Bus Station contribute strongly to the character of the area.
- 2.3.41 **Street Furniture:** On the main streets bins, bollards and benches are mostly in black painted cast iron with gold highlights. These are generally well maintained, although of a style that is dated and commonplace. Away from the main streets there are numerous ill co-ordinated items of street furniture including plastic bins and concrete bollards, yellow grit bins, and plastic planters.

Alleyways

- 2.3.42 There are a number of private alleyways leading off the High Street, some are gated. The condition of the paving, signage, gates, fixtures and fixings within these alleys is generally poor. They are often used to temporarily site bins or store rubbish and often lead through to areas that appear unsightly or disused.

Boundary Treatments

- 2.3.43 There are a number of attractive walls of traditional local limestone or traditional red Buckley brick (with blue or red saddle copings). Walls around the Church particularly contribute to the strength of character of the adjacent street as do boundary walls along King Street and Grosvenor Street. Elsewhere boundary treatments are conspicuous by their absence. Poor or substandard boundaries allow unrestricted views for the public into service areas.

Daniel Owen Square

- 2.3.44 Daniel Owen Square is the only substantial civic space within the town centre other than the High Street. It provides a vital Market space and could have significant potential to accommodate cultural events. It is within close walking distance to the recreation ground. A critical appraisal of the form and function of the Square space as illustrated on Figure 24 suggests that:

- the architecture of buildings facing onto the square is not special nor attractive;
- the overall space enclosed by these buildings is divided by Earl Road and the private layby used for parking in front of the Post Office;
- the space is further divided by the crude brick wall along the Town Hall side of the square behind which the space is used inefficiently for parking;
- trees provide a strong foil to facades but give excessive shade at certain times;
- the linkage from the precinct under the covered way is windy, dull, and uninspiring;
- the paving looks tired and dated and has maintenance issues;
- signage and lighting even within the space is of crude highways fittings;
- the Daniel Owen statue is a striking sculpture but is not prominent;
- views can be seen to unsightly rear elevations of buildings behind the Town Hall.

Heritage Initiatives Limited: October 2010



Daniel Owen Square is the only substantial civic space in Mold and occupies a key central location. It has the capacity to be a vibrant space used both for market activities and cultural events.

The Daniel Owen statue celebrates his life but is not prominent.

The paving is deteriorating, the trees cast heavy shade and the building frontages onto the square are uninspiring. There is an adhoc mixture of pedestrian and highway style signage.

Car parking takes up vital parts of this public space.

The Square is not well integrated with the Town Hall and Earl Road.

Figure 25: Daniel Owen Square Photographs

Parks and Green Spaces

- 2.3.45 There are three main areas of accessible green space close to the town centre: Bailey Hill, the Recreation Ground (including Kendricks Field) and the Leadmills. St Marys Churchyard also forms a small but attractive centrally located green space.

Bailey Hill

- 2.3.46 This Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) is a highly distinctive and valuable asset to the town. Its wealth of history, its mature trees and the magnificent views available from its slopes and summit make it potentially a really valuable attraction. However its steep topography, the over maturity of its dense shrubs, and the poor condition of its walls, paths, fences and furniture present real challenges and diminish its value. Increased management inputs in accordance with a clear long term strategy and (or) a significant capital investment will be required to fully realise its potential.

Recreation Ground and Kendrick's Field

- 2.3.47 The recreation ground is a valuable asset with its well used football pitches, play area, bowling green, tennis courts and changing rooms, and its mature trees and ornamental gardens. However, whilst close to the town centre (no more than 200m from Daniel Owen Square) it does not lie on a thoroughfare and has no major road frontage. The adjoining Kendrick's Field is simply a mown area of ground. It has not been significantly developed as a recreational asset and is spoilt by dog fouling. However Kendrick's Field is used for concerts and events and has a prominent road frontage onto Ruthin Road. The tennis courts and play area divide Kendrick's Field from the recreation ground separating what would otherwise be a much more useful and attractive recreational space. The land here is low lying, becomes boggy and even floods, although a drainage scheme is planned.

The Leadmills

- 2.3.48 Well used playing fields leased to Mold Rugby club extend along the banks of the River Alyn. Mounds and tree planting separate the pitches from the river adjacent. The access, via the rough surfaced car park off Kings Street, has a robust low stone wall but also has an unsightly collection of overhead barriers, gates, bins and paraphernalia, at a point on the road which otherwise offers some of the most attractive views on the approach into Mold. The public footpath which follows the river is not surfaced. It continues over the narrow stepped footbridge over the Alyn connecting via a well-used route through the rugby grounds back to the town centre (a route which, it is understood has some legal status). In this location, close to the town centre, the riverside path and the connectivity it provides, and the views it offers, could be better developed and more accessible.

Analysis of Public Consultation Questionnaire Results

- 2.3.49 375 returned questionnaires from the public consultation event at the Mold Food Festival have been analysed in detail. Asked about their impressions of the approach into Mold and of their arrival point in the town centre around two-thirds of all respondents noted that their impression of Mold at these points was ‘nothing special’. Around a third of all respondents answered the supplementary questions ‘*how or what could be improved?*’ and many give full, considered comments. In terms of the approaches into the town, over half of the respondents cited tidiness, landscaping and tree planting as being in need of improvement, around a quarter cited the need for better signage and a quarter also cited the need to address ‘unsightly’ sites. In terms of the car parks over a third cited the need to improve tidiness, landscaping and tree planting whilst a small percentage cited need for better signage.
- 2.3.50 Asked “*What spaces and places do you particularly like or dislike when you are out and about in Mold town centre?*” more than half of the people expressed an opinion. The most popular aspect of Mold (63% of respondents) was the High Street followed by the Market (30%) whilst a fifth (20%) liked the range of shops, and/or specific named shops. Fewer people expressed particular ‘dislikes’, and of those who did, 39% disliked eyesores including Harleys and Morris Garages and the vacant site near Tesco whilst others disliked closed shops (20%) and the linkages between Somerfield and the High Street (20%). When asked where they would take a special visitor to Mold the most popular response was the Market followed by particular shops or restaurants. St Marys Church, Clwyd Theatre Cymru, Bailey Hill and the Daniel Owen Centre/Museum were also cited as attractions.

Findings and conclusion

- 2.3.51 The results of the questionnaire tie in strongly with the detailed appraisal carried out above which finds that Mold benefits from a very special setting with a rural backdrop all around, but the approaches into town are made less attractive than they could be on account of a combination of poor boundaries, unsightly properties, a clutter of signage, and a lack of tree planting. This is particularly the case on the A541, Chester Road- Leadmills - Denbigh Road corridor.
- 2.3.52 The sense of arrival and welcome at the town centre car parks is poor, on account of the haphazard way the car parks have evolved historically with few safe pedestrian routes, little by way of trees, shade or shelter, and a lack of attractively laid out information. Routes from the car parks to the central shopping streets are unattractive, and their function as loading and bin storage areas appears to take precedence over their more important role as pedestrian corridors.
- 2.3.53 By contrast, upon reaching the centre of the town, the public realm of the High Street is a real asset, particularly on market days. At the Cross and at the Earl Road/High Street/King Street junctions there are real problems with the narrow width of pavements, roadside barriers and

clutter and the volume of traffic movements, factors which together make it less inviting for shoppers and visitors to explore areas beyond the central part of the High Street.

- 2.3.54 Daniel Owen Square is the only substantial public space in the centre of town and whilst it suffers from a number of problems it could potentially be developed to accommodate many more opportunities in terms of events and activities, thus becoming much more of a civic asset.
- 2.3.55 Bailey Hill is a unique historic park at the heart of Mold, but in need of significant investment to realise its true value to the town. Similarly Kendrick's Field and the Recreation Ground are a real asset close by to the town centre, but they do not form an integrated green space and much more could be made of Kendrick's Field in particular given its location.

2.4 Events Ground Options Appraisal

Introduction

- 2.4.1 The Study Brief asked the team to identify suitable sites for an Events Ground in the vicinity of Mold and advise on their viability and potential. At the outset it was recognised that there was a need to explore the synergies of this task with the criteria and aspirations of the wider Mold Sense of Place Feasibility Study.
- 2.4.2 It was therefore important to ensure that, the outputs associated with this task are linked to other key study themes such as the Marketing Audit (Task 2.1) and the future role of Daniel Owen Square (Task 2.3). At the commencement of the Study the Client Team were encouraged to articulate their aspirations for the establishment of an Events Ground and confirm key criteria such as preferred site size and mix of facilities.
- 2.4.3 Whilst an agreed and more detailed brief failed to emerge from these discussions a number of broad themes and points were tabled which helped inform the overall site selection process – as set out below;

- (i) The successful annual Mold Food and Drink Festival is outgrowing its current location in the town's New Street car park.*
- (ii) The 2009 Mold carnival procession had to be abandoned due to poor weather / flooding at the town's Recreation Ground. The availability of a site not prone or which could be protected from flooding is therefore essential.*
- (iii) Mold successfully played host to the 2007 Eisteddfod, which had been located on the outskirts of the Town on land owned by the Pentrehobyn Estate. Mold has therefore demonstrated its ability to cope with a large influx of visitors.*
- (iv) In 2009 Mold hosted a successful Welsh Music festival, (Ffin Festival) which attracted 1,000 visitors and was located at the town's Recreation Ground.*
- (v) Mold has a well-established and historic legacy as a market town with both a busy Livestock Market (held Mondays and Fridays) and Street retail markets (held on Wednesday and Saturday). This legacy and competitive advantage could present opportunities for further growth in market type events.*
- (vi) There is currently no single recognised venue where the town's events are held.*
- (vii) There was a broad aspiration to select a venue that could perhaps attract and house the annual Flint and Denbigh Agricultural Show.*
- (viii) The Show Ground at Oswestry was seen as a possible example of best practice.*
- (ix) The Flintshire Civic Centre (the County Hall) car parks have previously been used at weekends as overspill parking for major Town Centre events.*

Figure 26: Events Ground Broad Themes and Points Tabled by Client Team

- 2.4.4 Of these points perhaps the key issue is to ensure that the location and establishment of an Events Ground actually provides added value to the Town Centre. In this respect visitors to the Events Ground should have easy access to the Town Centre thereby facilitating participation by existing traders, and by doing so contribute to wider prosperity.
- 2.4.5 As part of the Sense of Place consultation exercise the public were invited to comment on the following questions in relation to an Events Showground.
- a) *Did they consider that Mold had the potential to support the establishment of an Events Ground?*
 b) *If so where would they like to see the Events Ground located?*

The results of this exercise confirmed that there is clear support for the establishment of an Events Ground (79% in favour). With regard to location there is a clear difference of opinion with (34%) favouring an 'Out Of Town' location and (44%) favouring an 'In Town' location.

- 2.4.6 As part of the Options Appraisal consideration has been given to potential competitors and where a Mold Events Ground should sit in the overall North East Wales offer of such sites and facilities. This analysis confirmed at present there are ten active and recognised showground / festival sites in Wales.
- 2.4.7 The best known and most successful of these is the Royal Welsh Show Ground at Builth Wells but in North Wales the circa 60 hectare Anglesey Agricultural Showground is growing in importance. Although not recognised as a Showground the Royal International Pavilion at Llangollen has a clear marketing strategy to build on its legacy as the home of the International Music Eisteddfod. In this respect Llangollen is developing a strong platform of events based around music, comedy, food and drink.
- 2.4.8 Given the close relationship of Mold to the wider Deeside regional economy the activities of Chester and Oswestry in attracting and hosting Events and Festivals are also important. At Chester the Racecourse has cemented itself as a strong Regional Events Showground with a diverse calendar of events including a Pumpkin, Food, Drink, Music and Literature Festivals, Summer / Winter Parades, Antique Fairs and Equestrian Events. At Oswestry the 15 hectare Showground and Pavilion plays host to a Food and Drink Show, Truck Fest, Agricultural Show, Vintage Machine Rally and Antique Fairs.
- 2.4.9 Based on this research it is clear that the market for Events and Festivals is competitive and there are already players in the field who have an established calendar of Local and Regional based events.

Methodology

- 2.4.10 In order to move forward the following methodology was used to prepare a long list of potential sites:
- The broad themes and aspirations expressed by the Client Team
 - A review of both 'In Town' and 'Out of Town' sites
 - Feed back from the public consultation exercise

In addition, the emerging Flintshire Unitary Development Plan was reviewed and discussion held with the Planning Policy Team at Flintshire County Council. A sequential test was applied to assist the site selection process. In this respect attention was given first to sites within the urban area on previously developed land. Thereafter undeveloped sites within the urban area, followed by land on the edge, but well related to the urban area on Greenfield sites.

- 2.4.11 Where available, published information relating to sites i.e. Planning Inspectorate Reports were reviewed. Discussions were held with the Environment Agency (Planning Liaison) and the Flintshire County Council Drainage Team regarding flood risk problems in Mold and the impact on potential sites.
- 2.4.13 Following a desk-based search a physical inspection was made of potential sites. Where practical, or possible informal discussions were held with site owners to assess potential interest in their land being used as an Events Show Ground.

Long Listed Sites

- 2.4.15 Based on this comprehensive approach and sieving exercise a long list of ten sites was identified for further consideration. The long listed sites are shown below and identified on the plan at Figure 1 (See end of this report)

| | Site | Size (Hectares) |
|-----|--|-----------------|
| 1) | New Street car park (Food Festival Site) | 0.60 |
| 2) | Love Lane car park | 0.50 |
| 3) | Maes Gwern Industrial Area | 4.70 |
| 4) | Lead Mill Bridge (Mold Rugby Fields) | 1.90 |
| 5) | Kendrick's Field | 1.00 |
| 6) | Alwyn Close / Meadows (Denbigh Road) | 3.40 |
| 7) | Pen y Bont Farm (Chester Road) | 8.10 |
| 8) | Pentrehobyn Estate | 8.00 |
| 9) | The Haven, Upper Bryn Coch | 8.10 |
| 10) | Northop College Estate Campus | 20+ |

Figure 27: Long List of Potential Events Grounds

Site Commentaries

- 2.4.16 An individual commentary was prepared for each of the long listed sites. The commentary outlines and compares site-specific issues such as Location, Ownership, Size, Existing Use, Topography, Sequential Ranking, Archaeological / Cultural impact, Ecology, Accessibility, Public Transport, Visual Appearance, Flood Risk, Proximity to Town Centre and Sustainability – please see appendix D.

First Discounting of Sites

- 2.4.17 Following review of the 10 long listed sites it is possible to make clear distinctions between the better and worst sites. Based on this exercise the following 5 sites were discounted:

Site 3 Maes Gwern

Reasons

Site Forms part of Mold Business Park

Site has been reserved for High Tech Industry / Employment purposes

Owners Flintshire County Council are reluctant to sell / allocate site for the proposed use

Site has poor visitor visibility – tucked away on business park

Site does not offer long term potential as only a temporary planning consent is likely to be granted due to proposed employment use

Site 4 Lead Mill Bridge

Reasons

Site has a history of flooding

Policies in UDP seek to protect playing fields from development

Playing Fields are intensively used and an alternative playing field site would have to be found

Site provides a green barrier between Town Centre and Flintshire Civic Centre

It is understood a new 25 year lease for use of playing fields has been signed between Mold RFC and Flintshire CC

Site 6 Alwyn Close / Meadowside

Reasons

Site previously withdrawn from UDP due to public opposition

Site opposite Synthite Works – poor visual impression for visitors

Lower portion of site floods

Lack of certainty that site could be delivered in the short term

Site 7 Pen y Bont Farm

Reasons

Site lies in open countryside and is designated as a Green Barrier in UDP

Vehicular access to site could be problematic

Land owner has no immediate plans to develop the site and will probably seek a longer term more profitable use

No existing site infra-structure so costs of development likely to be high

Site 9 The Haven, Upper Bryn Coch

Reasons

Site lies in open countryside and is designated as a Green Barrier in UDP

Site has previously been the subject of a planning appeal which was successfully resisted by Flintshire CC

Site contains a number of listed buildings and structures

Vehicular access to site could be problematic

Short Listed Sites

2.4.18 Based on the Options Appraisal the following 5 sites were shortlisted:

- New Street Car Park
- Love Lane Car Park
- Kendrick's Field
- Pentrehobyn Estate
- Northop College Estate

The following steps were undertaken to review and prioritise the short listed sites as follows:

- a. Preparation of a Matrix to compare and contrast each site against a number of key criteria See Appendix - Ref Appendix 2.4.3 (end of this report)
- b. Consideration as to whether an 'In Town' or 'Out of Town' site offers the best viability and potential for the establishment of an Events Ground.

In Town versus Out of Town

- 2.4.19 The selection of an 'In Town' site clearly addresses the concern that the location and establishment of an Events Ground should provide added value to the Town Centre and its traders. However, it is clear from the site selection process that an 'In Town' site will have a restricted and relatively small site area. Also the Town centre may see increased vehicle movements during Show Events, which if poorly managed could have a detrimental impact on the overall quality of life in Mold.
- 2.4.20 Notwithstanding these points the selection of an 'In Town' site would allow the opportunity to build on the success of existing ventures such as the Ffin Music Festival and meet the growing site requirements of the highly successful Food and Drink Festival. An 'In Town' site could also be linked to an improved Daniel Owen Square and the existing High Street Market Area. This would allow future events to be spread around the Town thereby increasing overall "buy in" and prosperity.
- 2.4.21 The use of Park and Ride facilities on weekends at the Flintshire Civic Centre could also help ease potential car-parking and traffic congestion problems in Mold Town Centre during Show events.
- 2.4.22 The selection of an 'Out of Town' site provides opportunities to select a site with a much larger site area than an In Town location. This is more akin to existing Show Ground sites at locations such as Oswestry, Anglesey and Malvern. This could potentially facilitate a much wider range of events such as Equestrian, Agricultural, Caravan and Enthusiasts Rally's. However, the market research undertaken by ourselves indicates that there is already strong regional competition for such events. Also if a larger site is selected the associated costs of site preparation / infrastructure etc are likely to be proportionately higher.
- 2.4.23 However, a larger 'Out of Town' site could potentially strengthen Mold's position as a regional destination and help support its continuing role as the County Town. Perhaps the overriding issue of selecting an 'Out of Town' site is how best to ensure that visitors have an opportunity to visit

the Town Centre during the course of the Show. There are good examples of this such as the Hay Literature Festival where a shuttle bus service operates between the festival site and the town. Return tickets cost £1 but are included in the parking fee at the official car parks near the festival site.

Preferred Site - Recommendation

2.4.24 Following a comprehensive review of short listed sites and the comparison of the relative merits of In Town and Out of Town sites the recommendation of the consultancy team is that Kendrick's Field be selected as the preferred location for the Mold Events Ground. The chief reasons for this recommendation are as follows:

- Central 'In Town' location
- Existing use – not making a major contribution to Towns life - dog walking area
- Main road frontage – A494 Mold / Ruthin Road
- Already in Public Ownership
- Close to existing Town Centre Car Parks
- Close to Bus Station
- Accessible by Pedestrians and Cyclists - Good Sustainability Credentials
- Expansion possibilities - adjoining Recreation ground
- Can be linked to Daniel Own Square / High Street (Market Area)
- Low Site Infrastructure / Establishment Costs
- Can meet expansion requirements of existing events
- Provides base from which to establish / attract new events
- Flood Risk to be addressed by proposed Mold Flood Alleviation Project
- Credible approach in current economic circumstances i.e. "start small and build"
- Use unlikely to affect the character and appearance of surrounding area
- Although green space – proposed use not inconsistent with Planning Policy
- Opportunity to use Flintshire Civic Centre Car Parks at weekends (Park & Ride)

2.4.25 During the site selection process two strong 'Out of Town' sites were identified namely Pentrehobyn and the Nothop College Estate Campus. In the final analysis it is the view of the consultancy team that the peripheral nature of these locations will not provide the added value to the town and it's traders and Kendrick's Field is a more appropriate location at the present time.

2.4.26 To some extent both Pentrehobyn and Northop could be termed Regional locations and therefore if developed may provide wider benefits to the North East Wales / Flintshire economy. As the overall purpose of this Study was to prepare a 'Sense of Place' for Mold it is considered that this could be more readily be achieved by selecting a site that is immediately identified with the town such as Kendrick's Field.

2.4.27 As a result the report has a series of recommended actions;

- I. Seek early resolution / support for the funding and implementation of the proposed Mold Flood Alleviation project. From discussion with Flintshire County Council it appears that these works are a high priority and a funding decision is currently awaited from WAG. Completion of these

works are essential before Kendrick's Field can be developed and used as the Mold Events Ground.

2. Obtain a formal commitment / resolution from Flintshire County Council that they are willing for Kendrick's field (Flintshire County Council asset) to be used as a future Events Ground and what legal arrangements are required.
3. Prepare a detailed budget relating to necessary capital expenditure such as the provision of services, drainage, hard-standings / fill, fencing, vehicular access from the A494 and a short site access roadway.
4. Agree who should champion, lead, manage and promote the future Events Ground project. Identify the revenue costs associated with these tasks and build these into future funding applications and a business plan for the venture.
5. Identify sources of finance to allow funding applications to be submitted once the revenue and capital budgets have been agreed.
6. Prepare and submit a Planning Application to Flintshire County Council for the proposed use.
7. In the immediate term make continued use of the New Street and Love Lane Car-parks as the preferred venues for existing and future events such as the Food Festival.
8. Prepare and adopt a structured and co-ordinated marketing plan for Events and Festivals See Section 3 of Report Proposed Actions and Projects with the aim of attracting a wider slate of activities to the Town building on the broad themes of theatre, markets, music and food.
9. Continue to build links with the Pentrehobyn Estate and Northop College as these locations could provide opportunities to trial larger events generated by future marketing activities.

| Site - Evaluation Matrix | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|-----------|------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|----------------------|----------------|------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Site | Ownership | Area hectares | Existing Use | Sequential Test Rank | Accessibility Walking / Cycle | Proximity Town Centre | Flood Risk | Visual Prominence | Sustainability | Establishment Costs | Car Parking Nearby | Concerns | Timescale before use |
| New Street Car Park | Public | 0.6 | Car Park | 1 | Excellent | Excellent | Yes | Fair | 1 | Low | Yes | Loss Carparking | Short |
| Love Lane Car Park | Public | 0.5 | Car Park | 1 | Excellent | Excellent | Yes | Excellent | 1 | Low | Yes | Loss Carparking | Short |
| Kendrick's Field | Public | 1 | Informal | 2 | Excellent | Excellent | Yes | Excellent | 2 | Medium | Yes | Loss | Short |
| Pentrehobyn Estate | Private | 8.01 | Agriculture | 3 | Poor | Poor | No | Good | 3 | High | No | Loss Countryside | Long |
| Northop College Estate | Public | 20+ | College Campus | 3 | Poor | Poor | N/K | Good | 2 | Medium | Yes | Remote From Mold | Short |
| Notes | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Sequential Test 1 = Best | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Sustainability 1 = Best | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Figure 28: Short List of Potential Events Sites Evaluation Matrix



Figure 29: Map illustrating locations of long list potential Events Ground Sites

2.5 Mold's Framework of Assets

- 2.5.1 Mold could perhaps be described as 'a well kept secret' or 'sleeping giant' as despite its rich historical legacy and County Town status it is little known outside the region. However, it is clear from the analysis of the 376 completed questionnaires collected at the September community consultation that the majority of local people are proud to be residents of Mold and consider it is a good place to live and work..
- 2.5.2 Despite changing economic circumstances and the current recession the town has continued to show a spirit of enterprise. The nomination of Mold as the first Cittaslow town in Wales is a good example of forward thinking as are the aims and objectives of this Sense of Place Study.
- 2.5.3 Surprisingly when as part of the community consultation people were asked to nominate positive features about living, working or visiting Mold the most popular comment was the friendliness of the town and its people. It is therefore important to note that it is not always hard or physical assets such as buildings that contribute to a sense of place or well being.
- 2.5.4 Whilst the purpose of this Study is to look forward and provide a focus for a stronger sense of place it is also important to acknowledge and celebrate that the town already has a lot to offer.
- 2.5.5 If we were to analyse Mold in accounting terms we could perhaps say the following:

Fixed Assets - The Town has many existing strong and robust fixed assets i.e.

- The Conservation Area – including the iconic St Mary's Church and The Bailey Hill etc but the wider historic environment somewhat largely being unrecognised
- Superb Countryside / Rural Setting
- Location – ease of access to and from Mersey & Deeside conurbations
- Theatre Clwyd and the Flintshire Civic Centre complex
- Rich Historical Legacy – Daniel Owen / Mold Cape / Richard Wilson etc

Working Capital - Good / varying income streams with potential for growth i.e.

- Busy Street and Livestock Markets
- Shopping - A good selection of independent and national retailers
- Events and Festivals – growing number of events and reputation
- Local and New Employment Sites

Innovation and New Business opportunities:

- Sense of Place Study – Proposed Findings / Projects
- Town Centre Area Action Plan / Partnership
- Cittaslow Movement
- Flintshire County Council Adopted UDP

2.5.6 In moving forward the challenge is to harness these many positive attributes and opportunities so they can be maximised for the future benefit of the town's residents, businesses and visitors. In the following Sections 3 and 4 we now consider and recommend in practical terms how Mold's Framework of Assets examined in the various task assessments can be translated into projects capable of implementation and delivery.



Mold town centre, looking north (20th September 1963)

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3.0 PROPOSED ACTIONS & PROJECTS

3.1 Vision, Aims & Objectives

3.1.1 This section of the Report introduces a number of projects which combine to meet the Vision, Aims and Objectives of the Study resulting from the research and analytical work described above. The realisation of the Vision and the achievement of the Aims and Objectives will take time and a great deal of investment of financial and human resources so we have allowed the next 15 years as an implementation timescale which will be subject to the approval of the various bodies responsible for delivery and the availability of adequate funding.

3.1.2 We propose that the Vision for Mold should be as follows:

Vision

“By the year 2025, Mold will be an economic driver for North East Wales and a must-see destination for visitors to the region. The local community, their families, friends and tourists will be able to enjoy the benefits offered by the town’s heritage and its natural and economic assets. This will be supported by the shopping experience offered by the range of successful customer-focused retail, tourist and professional businesses creating wealth and new job opportunities”

3.1.3 A number of key Aims can be adopted which will guide the development and delivery of the proposed projects. Namely:

Aims

Aim 1 To create a distinctive, sustainable and attractive market town;

Aim 2 To encourage a prosperous and growing local economy;

Aim 3 To maintain and enhance a quality environment and special places.

3.1.4 Achieving the proposed Objectives below will require a fully integrated approach and cooperation between the public and private sector at the highest level.

Objectives

Objective 1 Ensure the long term viability and competitiveness of Mold as a market town serving a range of consumer needs;

Objective 2 Support and enhance the tourism, cultural and recreational opportunities for residents and visitors;

- Objective 3 Support local businesses and assist them to prosper through being responsive to local needs and offering a high level of customer care;
- Objective 4 Protect and improve the distinctive character and appearance of the town through integrated service delivery, management and maintenance of the town's public assets;
- Objective 5 Promote local distinctiveness by means of good design, the use of vernacular materials and through the conservation and enhancement of the historic and environmental assets of the town;
- Objective 6 Ensure that the overall Vision is complimentary to the aims and objectives of other strategies including the Town Centre Action Plan and Cittaslow movement.

3.1.5 We have developed the proposed actions and project proposals around the four themes which represent all aspects of a visitor experience which will make Mold competitive among the market towns in the region. Too many revitalisation programmes concentrate on seeking public funding for physical works which are put forward as the 'only solution' to a town's problems. Equally, the concentration of resources on improving the 'retail offer' alone, whilst ignoring basic infrastructure shortfalls, will not achieve the Aims and Objectives above. Our approach is to concentrate on all aspects of the visitor experience and how these may be raised together to a level which would make Mold a premier destination for shopping, leisure and entertainment in the future. The four themes are explored in more detail in the following sections.

3.2 Visiting & Shopping

- 3.2.1 As a market town with a loyal and significant customer base, Mold is ideally placed to both retain and grow market share in the years ahead if efforts are really made to enhance and develop the customer/visitor experience. All of the investment in the public realm, streetscape and physical infrastructure will be wasted if the customer experience is spoiled by ugly shop fronts, uninspired window displays, poor merchandising and mediocre staff. Mold retailers have a very strong role in trying to ensure that every customer visit is memorable and will result in repeat visits. This will generate profits and a return on all investment.
- 3.2.2 At the Mold Town Centre Action Plan Workshop organised by Flintshire County Council on 16th June 2009, one of the three key issues raised was the retail offer. Specifically, the lack of specialist shops, discount retailers and planning policy were concerns expressed. The Workshop considered that actions should be taken to improve the retail mix, improve the appearance of the indoor market, selling more local produce and introducing incentives to attract new retail investment to the town.
- 3.2.3 It can be seen that to achieve these worthwhile goals will require a new level of trust and cooperation between the public sector through planning policy, indoor market, incentives and the private sector through local produce, specialist shops, investment and this imperative is covered in Section 4 'The Way Forward' below.
- 3.2.4 Mold is not yet a major tourist destination but has the potential to benefit from the County-wide and regional initiatives which are being developed. As a member of the Mersey Dee Alliance, Flintshire is ideally placed as the link between Snowdonia and Chester, both international tourist destinations, offering accommodation, quiet countryside and little-known heritage gems which will offer an alternative and interesting itinerary to the more discerning tourist. At the County level, Mold can contribute to the critical mass of emerging tourist attractions in Flintshire's other towns especially those which are addressing new or dormant markets such as religious heritage, ecology, industrial history etc.
- 3.2.5 The potential of Mold as a tourist destination was covered in the community questionnaire undertaken in September 2009. 81% of those who took part in the Survey thought that Mold was an ideal touring base but 54% felt that there were currently insufficient bed spaces of all types in the town. Action must be taken urgently to address this issue. A grant scheme already exists for accommodation providers to upgrade their premises from the Welsh Assembly Government.
- 3.2.6 The existing Tourist Information Centre (TIC) in Mold is small and in a relatively difficult to find location despite pedestrian signing. Many TICs are now located at major car parks, edge of town locations or gateway sites in order to catch as many visitors as possible and to allow space for parking. The refurbishment of Daniel Owen Square and the possible relocation of the Mold Museum, provides an excellent opportunity to build a new State-of-the-Art TIC in a more appropriate location. Several sites have been briefly assessed and we are recommending that the Love Lane Car Park offers the optimum location.

3.2.7 Arising from the above, we are proposing five projects to address the issues identified, namely:

- Merchandising Training for Retailers,
- Customer Care Training for Retailers,
- Retail Window fund,
- New TIC for Mold.

The details are shown on the following Project Sheets.

Figure 30: Visiting & Shopping project sheets

| Feasibility Study Initiative | I. Merchandising Training for Retailers |
|--|---|
| Anticipated Total Cost | £5,000 |
| Supports Feasibility Study Aims & Objectives | Aim A1 To create a distinctive, sustainable and attractive market town Aim A2 To encourage a prosperous and growing local economy Aim A3 To maintain and enhance a quality environment and special places Objective O3 To support local businesses and assist them to prosper and be responsive to local needs |
| Potential Time Frame | Short Term (1-3 years) |
| Potential Funding Contributors | Mold Town Council, Flintshire County Council, WAG |
| Implementation Timetable | Recruitment of independent retailers from Year 1 who will sign up to the scheme and invest in their business. |
| Description of Initiative | <p>In a detailed visual and photographic survey of 165 Mold town centre shops (including 116 independents) in August 2009, 58% were considered to be of such poor quality that they scored 2 in a range of 1 (very poor) to 5 (good). Not one shop scored 5 and only 22 out of 165 scored 4 but these were all independents.</p> <p>A very important aspect of the shopper/visitor experience in any market town is the quality, appeal and enjoyment projected by the shop fascia, window display and internal merchandising. Mold retailers have a lot to do to address this issue as many shop fronts are tasteless, many window displays are poor and obscured by posters and the internal layout, lighting and product presentation is lacking any style or flair.</p> <p>This scheme would provide on-site evaluation and advice from an experienced retail consultant and a heritage conservation specialist so that the whole premises externally and internally can be enhanced and the window display and merchandising upgraded to meet the expectations of the Mold shopper. A grant would be available to the retailer to invest into the business to achieve changes.</p> |
| Evaluated Through | Number of independent retailers who sign up to the scheme |
| Delivered By | Specialist consultants on behalf of Mold Town Council, Mold Town Centre Partnership and Flintshire County Council |

| | |
|--|---|
| Feasibility Study Initiative | 2. Customer Care Training for Retailers |
| Anticipated Total Cost | £5,000 |
| Supports Feasibility Study Aims & Objectives | Aim A2 To encourage a prosperous and growing local economy Objective O3 |
| Potential Time Frame | Short Term (Years 1-3) |
| Potential Funding Contributors | Welsh Assembly Workforce Development Programme – ProAct Scheme. |
| Implementation Timetable | Monthly programme of training events from Year 1. |
| Description of Initiative | <p>The level and quality of customer service at shop level is a major determinate in repeat business and word of mouth recommendation. Whilst national and regional multiples claim to have extensive customer care training programmes, the independent sector are in greatest need of training support and have the most to lose if their service is not of the highest quality. This initiative is therefore aimed at the independent retail sector and will seek to achieve a minimum standard of customer care which will meet the expectations of the typical Mold shopper, whether a local resident or visitor.</p> <p>Current levels of customer care among Mold retailers is patchy and insufficient to retain let alone grow market share. Unless this issue is addressed then the independent sector will continue to lose market share to its national and regional multiple competitors.</p> |
| Evaluated Through | Number of independent retailers who take up the offer and invest in their staff |
| Delivered By | Specialist trainers on behalf of Mold Town Council and Flintshire County Council |

| Feasibility Study Initiative | 3. Retail Window Fund |
|--|---|
| Anticipated Total Cost | £10,000 pa |
| Supports Feasibility Study Aims & Objectives | Aim A1 To create a distinctive, sustainable and attractive market town Aim A3 To maintain and enhance a quality environment and special places Objective O3 |
| Potential Time Frame | Short Term (1-3 Years) |
| Potential Funding Contributors | Mold Town Council, Flintshire County Council, WAG |
| Implementation Timetable | The scheme will operate on a “when required” basis and demand could be unpredictable. |
| Description of Initiative | <p>Broken shop windows are unattractive to shoppers and visitors and very irritating to the retailer. They also project the wrong messages to the shopper and will seriously affect a town’s potential if not dealt with quickly. There are instances where independent retailers refuse to have broken windows replaced because of cost or as a protest against “authority”. This exacerbates the wrong image making matters worse.</p> <p>Whilst national and regional multiples will have window replacement contractors on call through national agreements, the independent retailer depends upon insurance claims which are becoming more expensive every year and in some cases no longer available due to the high risk. This forces the retailer to either do nothing, pay for the replacement out of profits or appoint a contractor to fit a shutter or something similar which is often contrary to planning policy and projects a “siege economy” in the town thus making it more unattractive especially in the evening when the restaurants are hoping to trade.</p> <p>This scheme places a sum of money into a fund and appoints a glazing company on a stand-by basis to be able to replace a broken window within a short pre-specified time at no cost (or a nominal charge) to the independent retailer in Mold. No insurance claim is involved and no inappropriate shutters installed (this would be a condition for retailers who sign up to the scheme).</p> |
| Evaluated Through | The number of “call-outs” successfully dealt with by the appointed contractor |
| Delivered By | Contractor appointed by tender responsible to Mold Town Council |

| Feasibility Study Initiative | 4a. Tourist Information Centre Feasibility Study |
|--|---|
| Anticipated Total Cost | £20,000 |
| Supports Feasibility Study Aims & Objectives | Aim 2 To encourage a prosperous and growing local economy Objective 2 |
| Potential Time Frame for Implementation | Short Term (Year 1-2) |
| Potential Funding Contributors | Flintshire County Council, WAG |
| Implementation Timetable | Source consultants within 2 years |
| Description of Initiative | <p>The services offered by the existing TIC, which is based in the library in Daniel Owen Square, are constrained by lack of space and location. This also limits the opportunity to generate revenue through sales of books, CDs/DVDs, souvenirs, local crafts etc which would offset the annual running costs.</p> <p>State-of-the-Art TICs have been proved to have a significant impact on tourism and the local economy even in areas which do not have a tradition of tourism. Research shows that an efficient well-staffed TIC is still the favoured venue for tourists throughout Europe seeking information, advice, researching heritage, accommodation, where to eat etc.</p> <p>It is proposed that a new TIC be built at Love Lane Car Park as one of the main entrances to the town and the main car park to ensure a high level of footfall. The new facility would have retail space, themed displays, an on-line bed-booking service, touch-screen information etc fulfilling a role not only as an introduction to Mold but also as a visitor centre for North Wales and the region.</p> |
| Evaluated Through | The opening of the new TIC, increased visitor numbers |
| Delivered By | Flintshire County Council |

| Feasibility Study Initiative | 4b. Tourist Information Centre |
|--|---|
| Anticipated Total Cost | £350,000 |
| Supports Feasibility Study Aims & Objectives | Aim 2 To encourage a prosperous and growing local economy Objective 2 |
| Potential Time Frame for Implementation | Medium Term (Year 3-5) |
| Potential Funding Contributors | Flintshire County Council, WAG |
| Implementation Timetable | Start construction in Year 3 with transfer of existing assets by Year 4 |
| Description of Initiative | <p>The services offered by the existing TIC, which is based in the library in Daniel Owen Square, are constrained by lack of space and location. This also limits the opportunity to generate revenue through sales of books, CDs/DVDs, souvenirs, local crafts etc which would offset the annual running costs.</p> <p>State-of-the-Art TICs have been proved to have a significant impact on tourism and the local economy even in areas which do not have a tradition of tourism. Research shows that an efficient well-staffed TIC is still the favoured venue for tourists throughout Europe seeking information, advice, researching heritage, accommodation, where to eat etc.</p> <p>It is proposed that a new TIC be built at Love Lane Car Park as one of the main entrances to the town and the main car park to ensure a high level of footfall. The new facility would have retail space, themed displays, an on-line bed-booking service, touch-screen information etc fulfilling a role not only as an introduction to Mold but also as a visitor centre for North Wales and the region.</p> |
| Evaluated Through | The opening of the new TIC, increased visitor numbers |
| Delivered By | Flintshire County Council |

3.3 Streets and Places

Why have a Public Realm Strategy?

- 3.3.1 A defined strategy can help guide management and investment decisions so as to ensure that the public realm looks and feels attractive, co-ordinated and special. This in turn can assist in drawing in shoppers and visitors, maximising their length of stay and spend, encouraging investment, and engender local pride.
- 3.3.2 The primary 'Aims and Objectives' of this study are defined above. More detailed objectives of this public realm strategy are to:
- create good initial impression and welcome,
 - orientate inform and engage visitors, shoppers, and locals alike,
 - encourage footfall further up and down the High Street,
 - widen the apparent 'offer' of the town beyond the High Street,
 - make the most of the towns key assets– the Market and High Street,
 - maximise the use, vibrancy and attractiveness of Daniel Owen Square and develop its potential for events,
 - make more of other assets including Bailey Hill, and the Recreation ground.
- 3.3.3 The strategy is firmly based around the evidence established through public and stakeholder consultation including questionnaire findings as noted above. The strategy is set out under the headings:
- The Gateways & Approaches to Mold
 - Town Centre – Welcome & Arrival points
 - Town Centre –Streets & Places
 - Daniel Owen Square
 - Parks & Green Spaces
 - Management of the Public Realm

The Gateways & Approaches to Mold

Gateways

- 3.3.4 The simple but strong landscape treatments of the A494 roundabouts are an asset. Mold Town Council should maintain active liaison with Flintshire County Council Highways authority and NWTRA (North Wales Trunk Road Agency) who have responsibility for maintenance. Currently options are being considered for the re-design of the roundabouts, with a view to reducing maintenance costs. A reduction in overall mowing costs and frequency could be achieved by introducing a meadow 'regime' to central areas involving wildflower seeding and 2 or 3 cuts annually,

however to retain a neat appearance, the grass at the margins should always be kept neatly trimmed with 10+ cuts annually and with clippings collected at each cut. A wildflower meadow approach would need to be carefully designed to include the use of low fertility subsoils. Maintenance of the 10+ cuts to margins may still present an issue in terms of costs associated with traffic management, in which case the use of a broad margin of ground cover shrubs is advised. Gravel margins in local stone may also be considered however excessive use of gravel can look out of place and would detract from the rural setting of Mold.

3.3.5 Advertising on these roundabouts could assist in meeting uplifted maintenance inputs in the long term but permission to advertise will be largely influenced by Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) guidance and the position of NWTRA. If and where advertising is permitted, given the rural setting the following guidance should apply:

- floral displays should be naturalistic potentially relying on carefully designed colourful perennial mixes supplemented by annual planting rather than highly artificial ‘civic’ style displays of annuals (which can look contrived even in town centre locations),
- purpose built ‘planters’ in artificial materials should be avoided, planting should be in natural ground,
- advertisement signage should be of minimum dimensions and use low key lettering rather than garish coloured or shaped logos,
- the sponsorship message should be conveyed through high quality maintenance of the existing or modified landscape rather than through complicated emblems and / or sculptural elements which would be particularly out of character with the rural setting.

3.3.6 New distinctive ‘Welcome to Mold’ signs should be sought. These might still use standard highway-style posts and backing but should include a relevant and attractive image and/or the town crest. Attractions should be noted, preferably listed simply on the same sign (or alternatively listed and depicted with symbols on a separate second sign).



Attractive and informative welcome signs are required. Use colourful planting but avoid complicated arrangements of planters that can be difficult to maintain or that might soon appear dated.

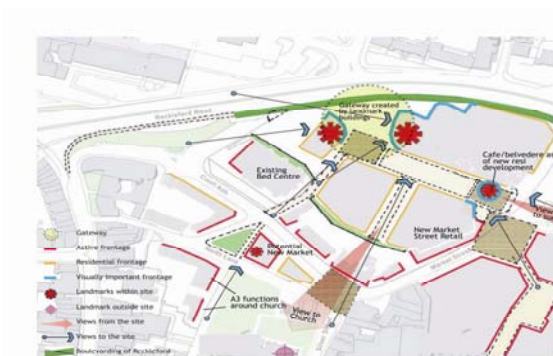


Simple uncluttered approaches with strong boundary treatments and tree planting



Tree planting in and adjacent to the highway would lift the quality of approaches to the town.

Limestone walls and tree planting should be used to provide robust boundary treatments.



Key gateway sites need to be led by carefully considered 'development briefs'.

Signs need to be reviewed, co-ordinated and updated to be neatly designed and clear— 'less is more'.

Figure 31: Gateways & Approaches to Mold

Sign locations should be reviewed and signs should be set against attractive hedgerow backdrops, 'uncluttered' by other highways signage.

- 3.3.7 Shrubs and colourful and perennial planting at ground level, adjacent to these signs used in combination with easily maintainable, removable troughs or baskets for annual planting should be used. Avoid larger-scale difficult to maintain artificial planters which are often made of materials that date or get damaged, or lie empty or unkempt for significant periods of time.

Approaches

- 3.3.8 Planning applications adjoining the highway on all main approaches into the town should be considered carefully. Boundary walls of local limestone should be favoured in such applications. Planting in addition can help soften or screen but should not be relied upon as the sole means of defining important boundaries. Large (extra heavy standard) trees should be included wherever space allows. Poor quality crude boundaries of galvanised chain-link mesh, palisade fence; rendered concrete blockwork, or timber knee rails are not appropriate on these main approaches. Robust boundary treatments, as noted, are easier to manage, strengthen local identity, and will stand the test of time and should therefore be promoted within new Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) relating to landscaping, trees and development as and when it is considered by Flintshire County Council.
- 3.3.9 Existing boundaries that would benefit from improvement include those on the A541 on the approach from Denbigh at Synthite and the Energy Networks site opposite. Mold Town Council and Flintshire County Council should work with landowners and other partners such as Groundwork to enhance key boundaries in these areas.

Key Gateway sites

- 3.3.10 The Farm Foods, Coal Yard/Ponterwyl and Harleys Garage sites, in combination with the Homebase site are particularly important in defining the western 'gateway' into the town centre. This fact was recognised in the original Flintshire County Council development brief for the Homebase site. That brief gave strong encouragement to the creation of a *landmark or gateway development*, and required the frontage to have a 'high quality structural landscaping' but did not prescribe how that should be achieved. In order to ensure proper development of Mold's northern gateway this study advocates the development of 'Planning briefs' or 'Development briefs' for key sites, including:
- Harleys Garage,
 - The Coal Yard/Ponterwyl (UDP site SI(6)),
 - Farm Foods Site.
- 3.3.11 Briefs should focus on achieving appropriate and acceptable development solutions in terms of boundary treatments, and 'live' frontages but should avoid restricting development potential. Briefs should refer to any new Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) being considered by Flintshire County Council relating to landscaping, trees and development, as noted above.
- 3.3.12 The route to the rear of Harleys Garage provides a direct link into the town centre from Tesco's, north of that the route across the Coal Yard/ Ponterwyl site links with Chester Road and north of that again a route exists across the Farm Foods Site via the Rugby Club and the Alyn riverside to residential areas north of Mold. Development briefs should acknowledge and promote these pedestrian linkages.

3.3.13 The Homebase roundabout, surfaced in gravel with no planting, looks particularly crude and bland especially in comparison with the attractive landscape treatments of the A5119 roundabout adjacent. A simple scheme using low multi-stem shrubs (clear stemmed to allow views underneath but not tall enough to disrupt CCTV sight-lines and light distribution), supplemented at ground level using colourful but very low maintenance perennial planting could significantly enhance its appearance. The majority of the roundabout would remain in gravel. There are also numerous potential opportunities, along the Leadmills, to enhance the appearance of the A541 corridor with street tree planting in the wide pavements. An initial feasibility study in terms of services (gas water telecoms and electricity) and traffic implications (sight lines) will need to be undertaken to inform designs for the roundabout and verges. This approach to landscape enhancement of the highway corridor is encouraged by authorities in other competing towns and cities. Treatments and ongoing maintenance could in part be funded by advertisement opportunities subject to the provisos noted above.

Approaches: Signage and Orientation

3.3.14 The design and positioning of Highways Signs is prescribed by *Traffic Signs Manual 1982 (TSM)* which is periodically updated. A wide-ranging review of traffic signs policy has been initiated by the Department for Transport with the aim of moving to a less prescriptive more flexible system, avoiding over-provision (known as sign clutter), which has road safety implications and can be inefficient and unsightly. This study advocates a review of existing signage on the main approaches into Mold and the setting out of a signage strategy guiding the use of directional and warning signs. Such a strategy would assist Flintshire County Council officers, when considering requests for new signs, to highlight the need for a high quality co-ordinated approach. Key elements within the strategy should include:

- a 'Less is more' approach and the removal of non essential signs;
- co-ordinated use of 'flag' style signs, mounted at similar sizes;
- limited use of reflective back signs, (which according to the guidance should only be used where there is evidence of drivers missing signs -and only then after other mechanisms have been considered);
- a review and re-design of directional signs;
- integration of 'Information Point' and , other Tourist signs;
- integration of car park direction signs;
- direction of visitors to Love Lane (see below);
- use of black-backed signs and mounting posts within the town centre boundary.

3.3.15 In conjunction with the above a review is required of private and advertisement signage. Enforcement is required against unauthorised signs which can distract from essential highway signage and add to the overall clutter.

Town Centre – Welcome & Arrival points

3.3.16 The public realm strategy for the town centre is illustrated on Figure 3.3.1

Arrival Points –Car Parks

3.3.17 ‘Car Parking Research’ (see above) provides useful guidance. It advocates enhancing the quality of charged car parks to give paying customers a better service. In that research ‘higher quality’ can mean:

- road signage to clearly direct new visitors to defined ‘visitor’ car parking areas (see above),
- attractive information in car parks to provide orientation to arriving visitors (this can show them the range of activities available and the routes to attractions, helping them to make an informed decision about how long to stay,
- safety and security measures,
- attractive soft and hard landscaping.



Attractive uncluttered approaches are required to car park and arrival points. Tree and shrub planting should be robust and well protected.

Better quality paving is needed.



Car parks are for people as well as cars. Well designed pedestrian routes should be clearly provided with no need to rely on lines and signs. Integrate proper paving and planting.



Information and directional signage, properly designed and co-ordinated, would enhance the experience of visiting the town.



The car parks in Mold could readily be modified to give more efficient layouts, with more spaces within a much more attractive environment, to benefit all visitors and shoppers.

Figure 32: Town Centre arrival points

- 3.3.18 Existing out of date signage, outdated and poor condition furniture and fixings should be removed from the car parks and their approaches. 'Welcome Points' with well presented shopper, visitor, and tourist information should be set out incorporating pay machines and lighting and rationalised signage alongside. These points should be attractively laid out within a purpose-designed pedestrian area rather than added in ad-hoc into tarmac areas. 'Welcome Points' in Love Lane car park and New Street Car parks should be targeted at new visitors and tourists.
- 3.3.19 There is scope to increase the capacity and efficiency of use of New Street, Meadow Place and Griffiths Square car parks, whilst also providing direct, safe, and attractive pedestrian links through the parking areas and into the shopping streets adjacent. Clearer separation of short-stay, long-stay parking, disabled parking and loading can be achieved not through signing but through better layout design. See Figures 3.3.2 and 3.3.3.
- 3.3.20 Vehicular gateways into existing car parks should be enhanced removing disparate signage clutter where present replacing with well designed integrated signage within permanent raised planting displays within masonry (stone) planters. Avoid bolt on signage or 'temporary' moveable planters which deteriorate or become mis-matched over time.

Pedestrian Connections to the Town Centre

3.3.21 Key pedestrian links that serve the town centre should be protected and enhanced. In particular the route from New Street Car Park to New Street (via the side of Somerfield) needs to be surfaced and marked so as to appear as an attractive pedestrian thoroughfare using a *shared-space* approach rather than a crude loading bay. Boundary treatments and lighting should be improved and a scheme investigated to improve the unattractive 'dead space' under the 'arches'- potentially an innovative 'public art' scheme and/or adapting them to provide vendor/stalls space. New lighting should include provision for banners (see below). There are also a number of 'missing links' which in the event of re-development of the sites concerned should be considered these include:

- a direct link from the bus station through to the High Street,
- a direct link between Grosvenor. St and Chester St. in the vicinity of the telephone exchange building.

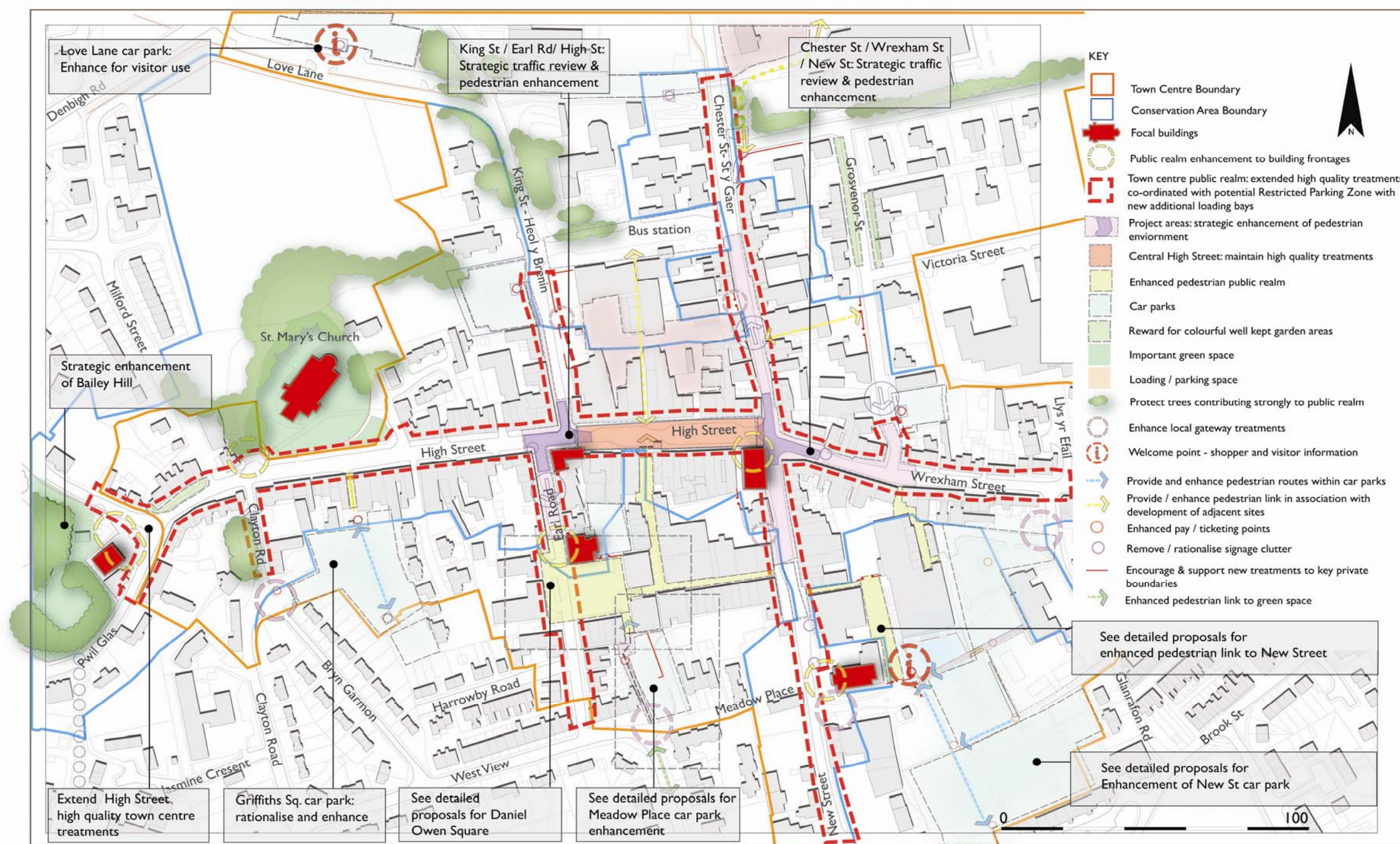


Figure 33: Town Centre Public Realm Study

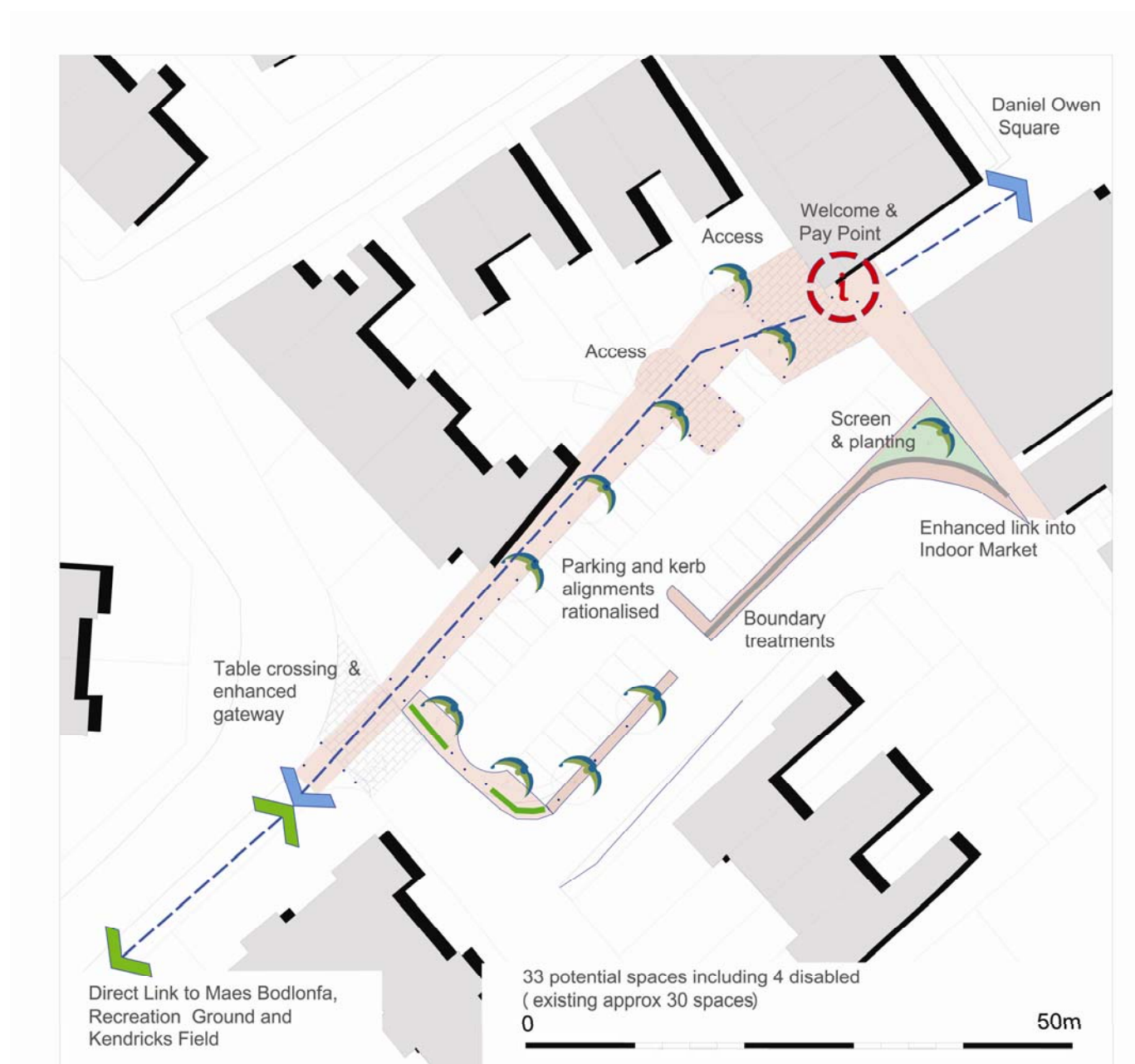


Figure 34: Meadow Place Car Park Enhancements

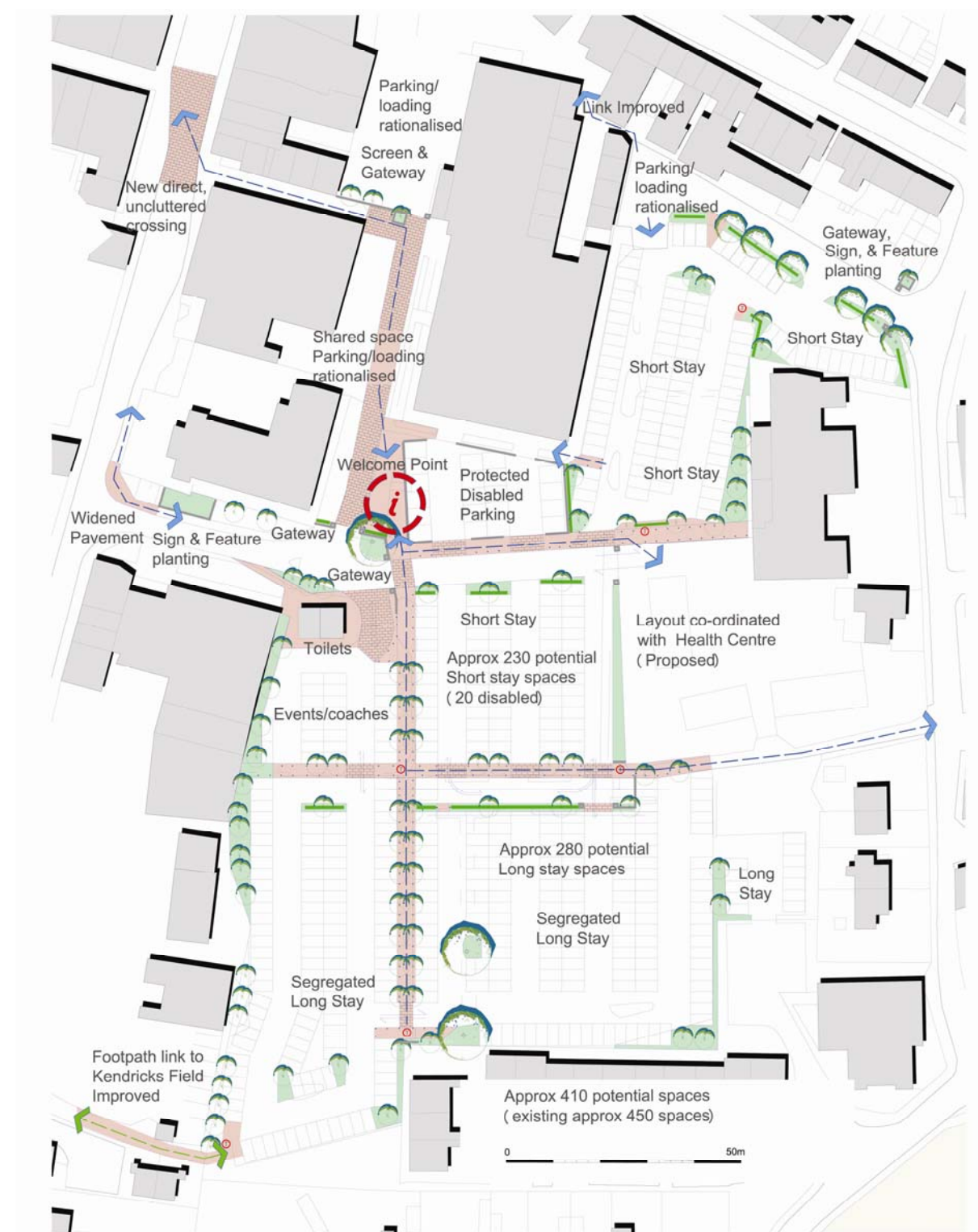


Figure 35: New Street Car Park Enhancements

Town Centre Streets & Places

3.3.22 The public realm strategy as illustrated on Figure 33 includes four key elements for the town centre:

- protect, maintain, and enhance the existing central High Street environment,
- extend co-ordinated town centre public realm ‘treatments’ beyond the High Street,
- enhance the pedestrian environment in two key project areas (i) the King Street/High Street/Earl Road junction and (ii) the Cross,
- consider the use of a ‘restricted parking zone’ combined with widened pavements and additional loading bays on the principal streets.

3.3.23 Long term aspirations should also include:

- enhancements to the public realm at the frontages to Bethesda Chapel, the Town Hall, the former Market Hall (now Lloyds TSB), St Mary’s Church, Bailey Hill entrance,
- enhanced treatments of gateways and boundaries to key public and privately owned spaces as and when development occurs adjacent.

Protect and maintain the existing central High Street environment

3.3.24 Existing paving materials work well, care should be taken to maintain and repair materials appropriately including joint repairs. Trees need more strategic maintenance including re-finishing (or removal) of guards. A review of signage and lining /marking is required (see below).

Make the most of the Market and Events

3.3.25 Options for making the Street Market even more attractive using co-ordinated more attractive colourful canopies should be investigated. Studies in other towns suggest it is not likely to be viable to provide a service whereby canopies/stalls are pre-erected for all market holders. However, options should be looked into for:

- provision of a limited number of pre-erected stalls at key visual locations, such as at the Cross and King Street/Earl Road; and/or,
- provision of a small number of “standard” free-issue canopies to regular traders on a deposit basis; and/or,
- provision of free-issue canopy ‘trims’ to decorate top-edges, frontages or sides to stalls,
- preferential rates/priority sites to those taking up the enhanced stalls or ‘trims’.

3.3.26 In addition the use of carefully designed semi-permanent market stalls to enliven key ‘dead’ spaces should be considered. Subject to investigating feasibility issues such as power, tenure, and planning permission locations might include, the covered alley linking into Daniel Owen square and the

‘arches’ on the approach from New Street car park.

3.3.27 Banners fitted to lighting columns can be an effective way of promoting the town’s cultural events and help in creating a colourful lively and attractive scene. Many authorities have standard arrangements for permitting banners:

- where they do not advertise commercial concerns (allowing for logos of event sponsors),
- where columns have been structurally checked to withstand wind loadings,
- subject to them being in locations that do not cause distraction to drivers,
- at heights of at least 2.5m above pavements or 5.8m above a carriageway.

3.3.28 Columns in Mold High Street have recently had banner mounting points fitted. This approach should be extended in close co-operation between Mold Town Council and Flintshire County Council highways and planning officers. Consideration should be given to providing mountings in the town centre at the north end of Chester Street, down Kings Street, New Street, Wrexham Street and as far as the approach to Denbigh Road at the north end of the High Street/Bailey Hill. Locations where banners could detract buildings of architectural or historic merit adjacent should be avoided. New lighting within car parks should also be designed to be able to accommodate banners. The precinct would also visually benefit from small banners albeit these would appear best where mounted on the buildings with the co-operation of the adjacent owners.

3.3.29 Once banner mounting points are in place their use (in highway areas) would be permitted and controlled through the Flintshire County Council lighting section, in liaison with the events co-ordination team (see section 3.4), the latter group ensuring that banners are available and used to promote events to the full.



The existing high quality treatments in the central High Street need to be cherished and maintained with care.



Make the most of the markets’ colourful stalls.



Options for providing canopies or canopy trims to traders should be explored.

Empty shops can be enhanced by well designed displays promoting events.



Public realm enhancement should be considered for spaces and frontage to key buildings.

Banners employed more widely could promote the town events programme.

Figure 36: Town Centre Streets & Places – The High Street & Markets

Extend 'Town Centre' Public Realm treatments beyond the High Street

3.3.30 Extend and maintain co-ordinated treatments to highways paving and furniture as far as Bailey Hill on the High Street , on King Street (to Love Lane), along Chester Street to the A541 roundabout, down Earl Road to West View, along New Street (to Kendrick's Field) and down Wrexham Street (to Glan yr afon). Typically treatments could be extended /co-ordinated over time and as and when replacement or re-surfacing is scheduled to include:

- red bitmac pavements (upgrading from red screeded pavements),
- higher quality kerbs and trims,
- all sign posts and sign backs in black with black backs,
- review and rationalise signage lining and marking (see below), with preferential consideration of back of pavement mounting locations,
- lighting columns in decorative style to match existing adjacent or those in the High Street.

Enhance the Pedestrian Environment at King Street/High Street/Earl Road and at the Cross

3.3.31 Proposals to enhance the pedestrian environment, increase permeability and footfall should be pursued. Simple options for consideration at these key junctions would include:

- removal of pedestrian barriers along with associated pavement widening, changes in traffic light timings and or revised crossing working,
- limiting certain left hand turn vehicular movements to potentially allow widening of pavements at critical points.

3.3.32 A more radical solution may be required to fully address the particularly poor pedestrian environment and narrow pavements on Chester Street. Here pavement widening with extensive loading bays could be of vital benefit to local shops but this might only be achieved through the introduction of one way circulation:

- north on Chester St,
- south on Earl Road,
- with potentially one way working elsewhere (Grosvenor Street/Clayton Road).



A detailed highway feasibility study will be required to enhance the pedestrian and shopping environment, with wider pavements, broad crossings and the minimum of street 'clutter'.



A more radical 'shared space' approach may be appropriate to create a civic space for Earl Road and Daniel Owen Square.



A 'Restricted Parking Zone' could enable additional loading bays, wider pavements, and help in reducing street clutter.



A simple, high quality but low cost approach needs to be co-ordinated and extended throughout the central town centre area, including treatments such as red pavements, black painted signs and furniture, narrow line markings, and minimum-sized neatly arranged signage.

Figure 37: Town Centre Streets & Places – Highways

3.3.33 A more radical 'shared space' approach at one or other junction is not proposed, however it may be an option for Earl Road as it passes through Daniel Owen Square (see below).

3.3.34 In order to develop these ideas a Highways Feasibility Study focussed on the town centre is required. This would include a qualitative and strategic assessment of traffic movements addressing efficiency of traffic movement, and alternative routes. The study would also consider average and peak flows, traffic generators, observed original and destination of traffic flows, service vehicles, emergency services, public transport, cycles, people with disabilities and special user groups and events.

'Restricted Parking Zone' on Principal Streets

3.3.35 In combination with the above options consideration should be given to options for amending parking arrangements. This with a view to:

- maximising the number of on-street loading bays to benefit shoppers, retailers and businesses alike,
- widening pavements in critical areas (and conversely narrowing carriageway to limit speeds and dissuade unauthorised parking),
- minimise and even eliminate requirements for yellow line markings and parking signs within the zone.

3.3.36 This approach could only be progressed further to a detailed review of on-street parking, loading, unauthorised parking and general traffic movements. Comprehensive consultation would be required. A study is timely given that Civil Parking Enforcement is also being considered. Large signs are often required for RPZ's at each entry/exit point and these can be intrusive and can outweigh benefits of de-cluttering of other areas of streetscape -special dispensations may therefore be requested from WAG on the grounds of the Conservation Area status. If a simple and effective Restricted Parking Zone scheme cannot be achieved then, as a minimum this strategy advocates:

- the use of 'primrose' 50mm instead of standard yellow lines, and a review of signs within the Town Centre area (see above) ;
- considering the option of widening pavements (instead of additional line marking) as and where parking problems may occur, and/ or on approaches to crossings
- additional loading bays using high quality surfacing as in the central High Street should be made available wherever practicable.

Enhancements to Key Spaces and Frontages

3.3.37 Particular care should be exercised in making any changes to highway and public realm elements at the frontages to Bethesda Chapel, the Town Hall, the former Market Hall (the Cross), St Mary's Church (entrance area), and Bailey Hill entrance. Existing signage clutter at these locations should be reviewed and removed (see also below). In the long term these areas merit higher quality stone paving (similar to that seen in the central High Street to emphasise their importance. In addition dramatic emphasis could be given to all these key areas by sensitive façade lighting.

Enhanced Treatments of Gateways and Boundaries –Private and Public

3.3.38 A number of key public and privately owned spaces have visually poor boundaries and/or gateway treatments at locations as identified on Figure 3.3.1 These allow views into loading areas and car parks detracting from the general street scene. Higher quality boundary treatments should be sought through planning as and when adjacent development is proposed. In the long term new SPG

or design guidance should seek to ensure town centre boundaries are robust and appropriately detailed.

Daniel Owen Square

3.3.39 The Strategic aims for Daniel Owen Square should be to:

- enhance the space as the towns civic square;
- create a facility to accommodate a range of cultural events;
- maintain and extend space available for market stalls;
- celebrate Daniel Owen;
- create lively facades and frontages that will attract and generate activity;
- improve links in and out.

3.3.40 The appraisal (above) recognises a number of issues and constraints. These include the fact that the square as a whole should take in Earl Road and the Post Office frontage, rather than simply be an adjunct to it, and car parking makes poor use of this vital public realm. Trees in Daniel Owen Square are a valuable asset especially given that they are the only substantial trees in the centre of town but the constrain layout give rise to excessive shade at times. A two phased approach is proposed.

Daniel Owen Square - Phase I

3.3.41 Phase I proposals are illustrated on Figure 38 and include:

- removal of the dividing wall and a small number of car parking spaces on the north side of the square,
- extension of the square to the north for market stalls and use of steps punctuated by large masonry/stone benches with new tree planting to accommodate the level change;
- tree planting within the car park to the rear of the Town Hall to hide unsightly rear facades and give a more pleasant back-drop,
- creation of an events space on a raised terrace of high quality materials accessed by two/three steps and incorporating the Daniel Owen memorial,
- a 'sound wall' to the rear of the events space with sculptural relief or carving celebrating the culture of the town, and also incorporating electrical and/or lighting and/or canopy mounting points,
- removal of one tree (of poor form) on the south (St David Building) to potentially allow use of the space in the Square for outdoor seating by the cafe,
- new bespoke designed 'bases' around the retained trees to accommodate the uneven ground and roots. These would double up as seating and incorporate in-built lighting and lighting points to allow easy and regular illumination of the trees with in the square,
- canopies to shelter illuminate and enliven entrance points to the Daniel Owen Centre, Library/Museum and the entrance point and/or cafe on the St David's Building,

- associated with the above works the existing paving could be upgraded, lighting and signage should all be co-ordinated removing utilitarian highways style signage and lights,
- the link under the covered alley could be enhanced through the incorporation of contemporary styled permanent market stalls with lighting to create a 'live frontage' throughout the week (currently only seen on market days when stalls occupy the space),
- links through Meadow Place would potentially be improved under the proposals noted above and in Figure 34.

Daniel Owen Square - Phase 2

3.3.42 Phase 2 proposals are illustrated on Figure 39. Phase 2 looks to make full use of the urban space by:

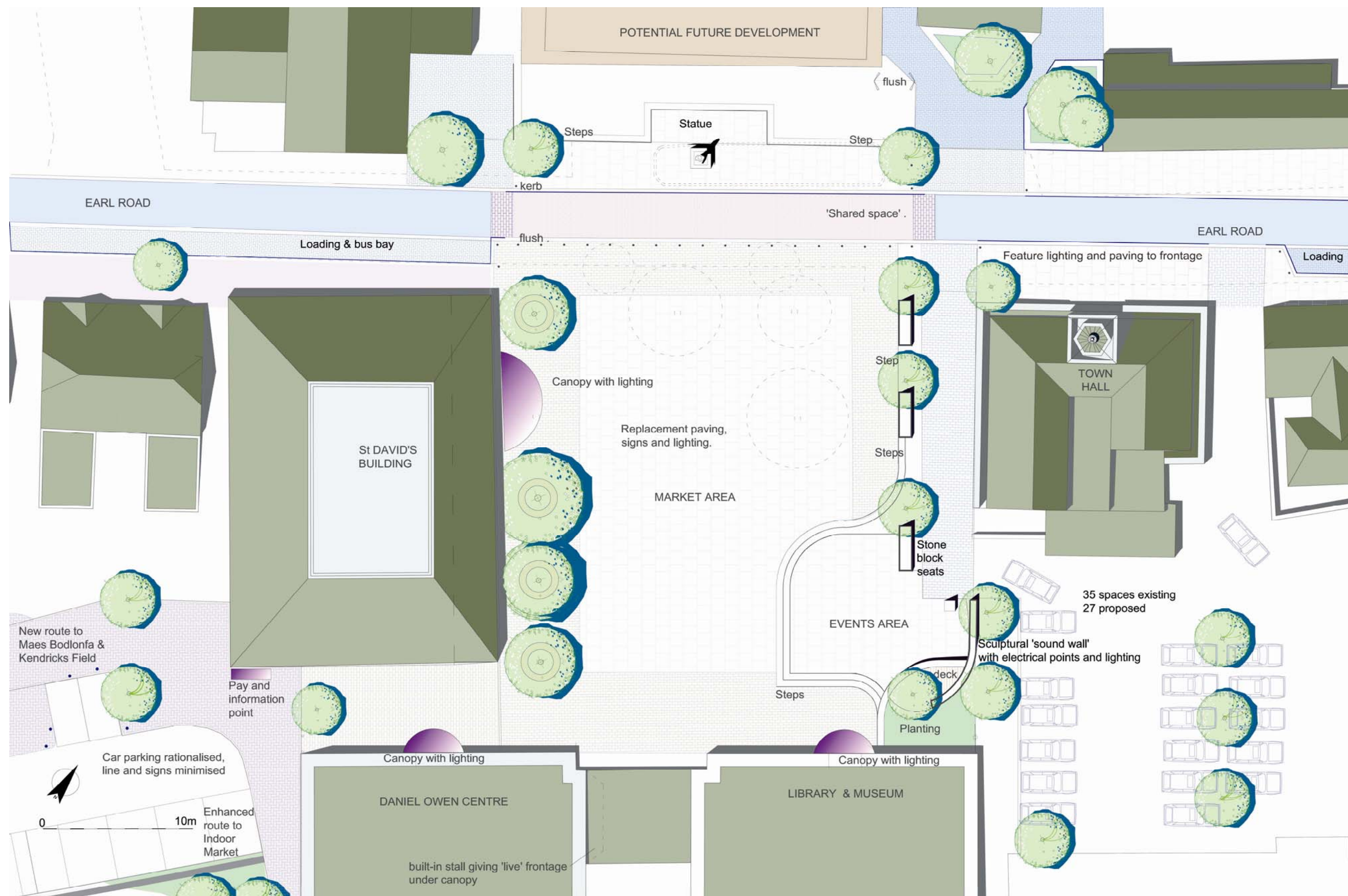
- extending the square across Earl Road through the use of a 'shared space' approach with high quality paving where cars and pedestrian share equal priority,
- re-locating Daniel Owen to a prominent position at the head of the enlarged square,
- removing additional trees to open up the space, allowing the additional trees planted in phase 1 to flourish.

The enlarged square would provide a distinctive and prestigious setting for any future redevelopment of the Post Office. The shared space approach would potentially complement measures to change priorities and provide additional loading bays along Earl Road as outlined above. Measures to enhance and celebrate the special frontage of the Town Hall through better paving and lighting could also be incorporated.



Figure 38: Daniel Owen Square proposals - Phase I

Figure 39: Daniel Owen Square proposals - Phase 2





Market squares can double up as a performance areas- this one has a purpose built canopy.



A flexible space could function without a permanent structure.



New and replacement tree planting can quickly make an impact.



High quality paving is required to to key areas.



Robust paving can withstand a wide range of uses and events.



Simple bold detailing is required to steps and level changes.

Figure 40: Daniel Owen Square photographs

Enhancement of Parks & Green Spaces

Bailey Hill

3.3.43 The Strategic aims for Bailey Hill should be to promote the Hill as source of pride to the people of Mold; whilst also making it attractive to visitors. Allied to this are the related aims of:

- promoting understanding of its historical importance,
- conserving and promoting the heritage value of the site,
- widening its use for informal recreation and cultural events.

3.3.44 A 'Vision' for Bailey Hill has been set out by Cittaslow Space and Place Group. This sets out useful goals to:

- develop interpretation of the site for the benefit of local people and visitors alike,
- ensure the long term health and vitality of the best mature trees,
- protect the motte and bailey landform; make paths safer, attractive, and more accessible,
- remove overgrown vegetation, re-instate wide-ranging views and make the park more secure,
- remove redundant, dilapidated, or inappropriate modern features,
- introduce new facilities to the park, with care and sensitivity, to encourage use of the site,
- make the approach to the park and the connection to the High Street more attractive,
- ensure appropriate maintenance in accordance with an overall management plan,
- involve townspeople and local community in all aspects of the project.

3.3.45 In order to guide and inform all future work and enable focused funding applications this Strategy suggests that an Outline Management Plan should be set out expanding on above. It would need to be developed alongside a brief 'Conservation Statement' and an 'Outline Masterplan' (illustrating the vision for the site). An Outline Cost Plan will also be required. Development of these will require the close involvement and continued consultation with Cadw, Flintshire County Council, Mold Town Council, The Civic Society, the local community and others. A range of surveys (arboricultural, topographical, geophysical, and users surveys) will be required to inform the Outline Plan. Ultimately and subject to funding the park would benefit from having a full 'Conservation Management Plan', set out (in the absence of specific guidance from Cadw) in accordance with guidance from The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and English Heritage.

Recreation Ground and Kendrick's Field

3.3.46 Kendrick's Field is largely undeveloped yet it lies close to the centre of town and is allocated as L3-Green Space within the UDP, and forms an extension to the Recreation Ground. The strategy for improvement should be:

- to make it more appealing as a design open space,

- to make it more suitable for general use by physical improvements to the drainage; and potentially raising ground-levels,
- to make it specifically more useable for events through provision of appropriate services and limited hard standing or ground reinforcement,
- enhance the Ruthin Road frontage to make it more clearly part of a public park including for instance avenue tree planting,
- consider provision of a direct vehicular access off Ruthin Road to enable access for events,
- provide a path giving access from the Bryn Coch area to Maes Bodlonfa (and thus onward directly to the Town centres).

3.3.47 Positive use of the site can only be achieved through a combination of the above. In order to progress this, a plan needs to be drawn up covering both Kendrick's Field and the Recreation Ground. This will need to be developed and promoted alongside the current proposals for drainage. In the long term, and given the existing and potential future uses of both Kendrick's Field and the Recreation ground for events, the design of the two areas should be integrated. Any changes in circumstance to the bowls or tennis facilities need to be seen as an opportunity to create better links between the two spaces.

The Leadmills

3.3.48 The Leadmills provides a vital facility for the Rugby Club yet is underdeveloped as a riverside walk. The views across the Leadmills playing fields on this northern approach into the town are a real asset but could be enhanced. A strategy for improvement might be to;

- develop a proper surfaced path alongside the river,
- investigate and develop more formally the link across the Rugby Club and the Farm Foods Site, making reference to it within any Development brief for the latter,
- develop more attractive gates into the Leadmills and promote use of the path by signage at both ends.

Management of the Public Realm and Outline Design Codes

3.3.49 In the long term an attractive high quality streetscape can only be come from ensuring that all who have an influence in the design, layout, appearance, maintenance and management of the public realm are aware that their inputs must form part of a coordinated approach.

3.3.50 A significant proportion of the public realm is under the management or control of Flintshire County Council Highways whilst new development often has a highway component controlled through both planning and highways departments. Other initiatives are also developed other county council departments such as markets and tourism and by Mold Town Council and associated sub-groups.

3.3.51 *Manual for Streets (MfS)* 2007 provides the latest government guidance on the design and management of the Highway in England and Wales. MfS requires that new proposals potentially

affecting the highway should include a review of any ‘public realm strategies’ set out within the Local Development Framework and also take account of any ‘*other street design guidance*’ (see below). At a detail level MfS requires that all new development must be subjected to an *audit of visual quality* in respect of the highway and in terms of that quality a focus is placed on reducing clutter (para 5.10) – the ‘*less is more*’ approach. Emphasis is also given within MfS to enhancing local distinctiveness (para 5.11). Some authorities have developed detailed guidance to implement MfS.

3.3.52 Local Transport Note 1/08 *Traffic Management and Streetscape* similarly aims to enhance the appearance of existing roads and streets by encouraging design teams to minimise various traffic signs, road markings and street furniture associated with traffic management. Key messages include that:

- good practice can be achieved using the flexibility offered within the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002 (TSRGD); and other regulations,
- local authorities have considerable discretion in developing local policies and standards and should apply appropriate professional judgement to bear in their application,
- Good scheme design must meet functional and visual objectives,
- ‘Less is more’ should be a guiding principle of good scheme design,
- It is important not to focus on single issues, look at the bigger picture.

Design Code

3.3.53 It is important that a Design Code for streetscape treatments is developed. The code should ideally be developed through a team working approach involving Flintshire County Council highways, planners and urban designer/landscape architects in consultation with Mold Town Council and Town Partnership resulting in a comprehensive ‘Streetscape Guide’ or ‘Design Code’. It should include an agreed palette which sets an appropriate, high quality approach for the Town Centre area as defined above. Such a guide should adopt the principles of MfS and LTNI/08 as and where appropriate.

3.3.54 Project sheets referring to proposals follow on in Figure 4I overleaf.

| Feasibility Study Initiative | 5. Gateways and Approaches to Mold: Signs |
|--|--|
| Anticipated Total Cost | £10,000 (Design /Approvals and Implementation Costs) |
| Supports Feasibility Study Aims & Objectives | Objectives O1, O2, & O5 |
| Potential Time Frame | Short Term (1-3 years) |
| Potential Funding Contributors | Flintshire County Council, Mold Town Council, Visit Wales, Private Sponsor |
| Implementation Timetable | Outline Design and Planning Implementation |
| Description of Initiative | Design and Implement new distinctive colourful 'Welcome to Mold Signs', in combination with Tourist Information signs. Permanent shrub bulb and perennial planting with/without demountable planters for annual planting. |
| Evaluated Through | Delivery of Scheme |
| Delivered By | Mold Town Partnership 'Project Team', Flintshire County Council 'Officer Group' Local businesses |

| Feasibility Study Initiative | 6. Gateways and Approaches to Mold: Roundabouts |
|--|---|
| Anticipated Total Cost | £2,500 (Development costs) £12,500 (Implementation costs) |
| Supports Feasibility Study Aims & Objectives | Objectives O1, O2,& O5 |
| Potential Time Frame | Medium Term (3-5 years) |
| Potential Funding Contributors | NWTRA, Flintshire County Council, Mold Town Council, Private Sponsor |
| Implementation Timetable | Outline Design and Planning Implementation |
| Description of Initiative | Enhanced (more colourful) treatments to approach roundabouts. Investigate and develop appropriate sponsorship options. |
| Evaluated Through | Delivery of Scheme |
| Delivered By | NWTRA, Mold Town Partnership 'Project Team', Flintshire County Council 'Project Team', Local businesses |

| | |
|--|--|
| Feasibility Study Initiative | 7. Gateways and Approaches: Gateway Sites – A541 and A519 |
| Anticipated Total Cost | £20,000 (Development Costs) |
| Supports Feasibility Study Aims & Objectives | Objectives O1, O2,& O5, O6 |
| Potential Time Frame | Long Term (5+yrs) |
| Potential Funding Contributors | Flintshire County Council, WAG (Local Environmental Quality Programme) |
| Implementation Timetable | Planning |
| Description of Initiative | Set out 'Planning /development 'briefs for key gateways sites into Mold including Morris Garage , Harleys Garage, The Coal Yard (UDP site S1(6)) and Farm Foods Site. Lead by Flintshire County Council Planning (policy) Officers in liaison with landowners/potential developers to focus on issues of achieving appropriate and acceptable development solutions in terms of boundary treatments, footpath and cycleway connections and 'live' frontages. Link to new Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) being considered by Flintshire County Council relating to landscaping, trees and development. |
| Evaluated Through | Development of Planning Briefs |
| Delivered By | Flintshire County Council 'Officer Group, Mold Town Partnership 'Project Team', private developers/landowners |

| Feasibility Study Initiative | 8. Gateways and Approaches: Clean and Green Approaches – A541 and A519 and Ruthin Road - |
|--|--|
| Anticipated Total Cost | £7,500 (Development I Costs) £50,000 (Implementation Costs) |
| Supports Feasibility Study Aims & Objectives | Objectives O1, O2,& O5, O6 |
| Potential Time Frame | Short Term (1-3yrs) |
| Potential Funding Contributors | Flintshire County Council, Mold Town Council, WAG (Local Environmental Quality Programme), Private sponsorship. |
| Implementation Timetable | Outline Design and Planning- Implementation- |
| Description of Initiative | <p>Development</p> <p>Liaise with public and private landowners, undertake detailed survey of constraints (including services) Set out firm proposals (to Landscape Institute Work Stage D) for tree planting and boundary improvements.</p> <p>Implementation</p> <p>Tree Planting in verges (private land), Greening Homebase roundabout Boundary Improvements- private land (Synthite/EPD Networks/Dutton and Peters) Boundary improvements public- Leadmills</p> |
| Evaluated Through | Numbers of trees established, Key sites enhanced Securing of Landowner agreement for maintenance |
| Delivered By | Mold Town Partnership 'Project Team' Flintshire County Council 'Officer Group', Cadwyn Clwyd, Groundwork, Private sponsors/landowners |

| Feasibility Study Initiative | 9. Gateways and Approaches: Town Centre Welcome and Arrival Points Town Centre Streets and Places: Enhancement: Signs - and Highway Features |
|--|--|
| Anticipated Total Cost | £10,000 (Development Costs) £50,000 (Implementation Costs) |
| Supports Feasibility Study Aims & Objectives | Objectives O2, O5, O6 |
| Potential Time Frame | Medium Term (3-5yrs) |
| Potential Funding Contributors | Flintshire County Council, s106, WAG (Local Environmental Quality Programme) Mold Town Council |
| Implementation Timetable | Detail Design tbc Implementation- tbc |
| Description of Initiative | <p>Development Audit of existing traffic related highway signage, guard rails traffic signals, parking signs and street lighting, on main approach corridors and within town centre. Develop detailed strategy to reduce overall numbers and sizes of signs, remove clutter, combine and integrate features. Review capacity of existing lighting to accommodate banners. Set out clear design principles, and policy for implementing and integrating new initiatives with existing signs to improve clarity. Communicate with and tie in with related strategy for non traffic related signage (Information, Tourism and Pedestrian Signs).</p> <p>Implementation Implementation of Sign Strategy including: Removal of existing redundant signs; Incremental replacement /re-combination/ of existing directional signs; Amendments to car park signage; Banners.</p> |
| Evaluated Through | Numbers of signs removed, Adherence to strategy, Visitor feedback, Completion of detailed strategy and recommendations, Formal adoption of within signage policy |
| Delivered By | Flintshire County Council 'Officer Group', Mold Town Partnership 'Project Team' |

| Feasibility Study Initiative | 10. Town Centre Welcome and Arrival Points Parking Area Enhancements (New Street /Meadow Lane /Griffiths Sq/Love Lane) |
|--|---|
| Anticipated Total Cost | £9,000 (Development Costs) £300,000 (Implementation Costs) |
| Supports Feasibility Study Aims & Objectives | Objectives O2,O5 |
| Potential Time Frame | Short Term (1-3 years) |
| Potential Funding Contributors | Flintshire County Council , WAG, Mold Town Council, Visit Wales, (Local Environmental Quality Programme) |
| Implementation Timetable | Tbc |
| Description of Initiative | <p>Development</p> <p>Liaise with public and private landowners, undertake detailed topographic and constraints surveys (including services). Set out firm proposals (to Landscape Institute Work Stage D) for the re-arrangement of New Street Meadow Lane and Griffiths Square car parks to increase their capacity and efficiency of use, to provide direct, safe, and attractive pedestrian links through the parking areas themselves and into the town centre and events areas adjacent, and to include well presented visitor and tourist information points. Set out a robust Delivery Programme including a Cost Plan and a Procurement Plan.</p> <p>Implementation</p> <p>Re-arrangement of New Street, Meadow Lane and Griffiths Square car parks to: increase capacity and improve efficiency of use; better segregate long and short stay use; facilitate better Civil Parking enforcement (CPE) through better design and reduced reliance on signage; provide direct & safe pedestrian links through the parking into the town centre; provide direct and safe pedestrian links outward to the recreation areas /Kendrick's field; provide direct and safe pedestrian links between residential and town centre areas (sustainable travel objective); provide opportunities for comprehensive and well presented visitor and tourist information; enhance distinctive and unique 'Sense of Place' . Re-arrangement and enhancement of access/loading areas used as pedestrian thoroughfares alongside Somerfield</p> |
| Evaluated Through | Visitor & Shopper Survey Feedback, Placecheck – Assessment |
| Delivered By | Mold Town Partnership 'Project Team' Flintshire County Council 'Officer Group' |

| Feasibility Study Initiative | 11. Town Centre Welcome and Arrival Points Town Centre Streets and Places: Information, Tourism and Pedestrian Signs |
|--|---|
| Anticipated Total Cost | £6,000 (Development Costs) £35,000 (Implementation Costs) |
| Supports Feasibility Study Aims & Objectives | Objectives O2, O6 |
| Potential Time Frame | Medium (3-5years) |
| Potential Funding Contributors | Flintshire County Council, Mold Town Council, Cadwyn Clwyd, Visit Wales, Private Sponsors |
| Implementation Timetable | Strategy /Consultation Implementation |
| Description of Initiative | <p>Development Review existing signage and develop an integrated system of signs at key welcome/information points</p> <p>Implementation Integrated system of signs at key welcome/information points including: removal of existing redundant and out-dated signs; new town maps/information points integrated with pay-points in shoppers car parks (New St/Griiffiths Sq/King St/Grosvenor St); new town maps with wider tourist and destination information integrated with paypoints in visitor car parks (Love Lane/New Street); integrated with proposals for museum/Daniel Owen/TIC; integrated with proposals for Bailey Hill. Linked to enhanced pedestrian signs including: removal of existing redundant pedestrian signs; amendments to existing finger posts to increase legibility/coverage; additional finger post and/or wall mounted.</p> |
| Evaluated Through | Completion of design ,implementation of signs visitor and shopper survey |
| Delivered By | Mold Town Partnership 'Project Team', Flintshire County Council 'Officer Group' |

| Feasibility Study Initiative | 12. Town Centre Streets and Places New Street Crossings |
|--|--|
| Anticipated Total Cost | Initial Highways Feasibility Study £7,500 Outline Design and Planning, Detail Design, Procurement, and Implementation- £50,000 |
| Supports Feasibility Study Aims & Objectives | Objectives O2, O5, O6 |
| Potential Time Frame | Long Term (5+ years) |
| Potential Funding Contributors | Flintshire County Council, WAG, Mold Town Council |
| Implementation Timetable | Initial Highways Feasibility Study, Consultation, Outline Design and Planning, Detail Design, Procurement, and Implementation-Implementation Phased tbc |
| Description of Initiative | New/enhanced crossings and pavements on New St. Potentially including direct 'at grade' crossing with reduced pedestrian barriers at Daniel Owen Precinct direct 'at grade' crossing between New St car park footpath (Dutton and Peters and Kendrick's field widened pavements Bethesda Chapel |
| Evaluated Through | Visitor & Shopper Survey Feedback 'Placecheck' – Assessment |
| Delivered By | Mold Town Partnership 'Project Team', Flintshire County Council 'Officer Group' |

| | |
|--|---|
| Feasibility Study Initiative | 13. Town Centre – Streets and Places Highways Study |
| Anticipated Total Cost | £20,000 (Development) |
| Supports Feasibility Study Aims & Objectives | Objectives O2, O5 |
| Potential Time Frame | Short Term (1-3 years) |
| Potential Funding Contributors | Flintshire County Council, WAG (Local Environmental Quality Programme), MTC |
| Implementation Timetable | |
| Description of Initiative | <p>Carry out Highways Feasibility Study focussed on town centre (notably Wrexham St/ Chester St / High St/New St/ King St and Earl Road). To include a qualitative and strategic assessment of traffic movements addressing efficiency of through traffic movement, alternative routes, average and peak flows, traffic generators, observed original and destination of traffic flows, service vehicles, on street parking, off street parking, emergency services, public transport, cycles, people with disabilities and special user groups and events. Develop feasibility proposals to enhance pedestrian environment, increase permeability and footfall with potential <i>options</i> for consideration at key junctions to include</p> <p>removal of pedestrian barriers along with associated pavement widening, changes in traffic light timings and or revised crossing working at the cross</p> <p>introduction of one way circulation (Chester St, Earl Road) to facilitate significant pavement widening with/without waiting bays- potentially combined with one way working elsewhere, a more radical 'shared space' approach at one or other junction.</p> <p>a combination of the above</p> <p>introduction of restricted parking area with 'waiting bays'</p> |
| Evaluated Through | Delivery of Feasibility Study |
| Delivered By | Mold Town Partnership 'Project Team', Flintshire County Council 'Officer Group' |

| Feasibility Study Initiative | 14. Town Centre Regeneration Daniel Owen Square and Library Link - Phase I Implementation |
|--|--|
| Anticipated Total Cost | £26,000 (Development Costs) £310,000 (Implementation Costs) |
| Supports Feasibility Study Aims & Objectives | Objectives O1,O2,O5 and O6 |
| Potential Time Frame | Medium Term (3-5 years) |
| Potential Funding Contributors | Flintshire County Council, WAG, Mold Town Council, Aggregates Levy sustainability grant (Local Environmental Quality Programme), Private sponsorship. |
| Implementation Timetable | Formation of dedicated Daniel Owen Square Project Team, Feasibility and Consultation, Outline Design and Planning, Detail Design, Procurement, and Implementation |
| Description of Initiative | <p>Form Daniel Owen Square Regeneration Team. Delivery Programme, including cost plan and procurement plan. Submit Funding Applications/raise funds. Significant scheme to increase space available for events and activities and/or additional market stalls. Potential to make space available for special/themed markets in Daniel Owen and to work alongside property/business owners to develop vibrant facades and extended trading hours.</p> <p>Phase I works to include; minor re-arrangement of parking, rear of Town Hall; associated tree planting, screening, and boundary treatments around car parking removal of wall and parking spaces alongside Town Hall to increase size of Square; new surfacing, steps and detailing to provide multi function space alongside the Town Hall; tree works and removal of (some) of the poorer quality trees to open up Square; provision of dedicated lighting and power outlet points for events and feature lighting ; provision of permanent tourist information/museum service/retail booths providing light/colour and active 'facades' under the library link.</p> |
| Evaluated Through | Visitor & Shopper survey feedback / 'Place check' – Assessment / Events Programme Voids rate Daniel Owen Precinct, Earl Street David's Building |
| Delivered By | Mold Town Partnership 'Project Team', Flintshire County Council 'Officer Group' |

| | |
|--|---|
| Feasibility Study Initiative | 15. Parks and Green Spaces Bailey Hill - Conservation Management Plan |
| Anticipated Total Cost | £15,000 (Development Costs) |
| Supports Feasibility Study Aims & Objectives | Objectives O2, O5 |
| Potential Time Frame | Short Term (1-3 years) |
| Potential Funding Contributors | Flintshire County Council, Mold Town Council, HLF Parks for People, WAG (Local Environmental Quality Programme) Cadwyn Clwyd, Communities First, Private Sector |
| Implementation Timetable | Strategy /Consultation Implementation |
| Description of Initiative | <p>Development of a comprehensive strategy to effectively manage, make safe, and restore Bailey Hill with a view to promoting its usage by locals and visitors alike , for events and adding to the towns visitor 'offer'. Initial work to include:</p> <p>Baseline surveys including topographic survey, detailed tree survey, condition survey and geophysical surveys 'Conservation Statement' 'Outline Masterplan' Outline Cost Plan</p> <p>This work would potentially lead to a full 'Conservation Management Plan' in accordance with guidance from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) /English Heritage. This can then underpin and co-ordinate all future investment, management and enhancement works, afford better protection of the Ancient Monument and assist in grant applications.</p> |
| Evaluated Through | Completion of baseline surveys / Conservation Statement Masterplan / Cost Plan / Development of wok programmes |
| Delivered By | Mold Town Council 'Project Group' Flintshire County Council 'Officer Group', Cadw, |

| Feasibility Study Initiative | 16. Bailey Hill - Conservation and Enhancement |
|--|--|
| Anticipated Total Cost | £250,000 (Implementation Costs) |
| Supports Feasibility Study Aims & Objectives | Objectives O1,O2,O5,O6 |
| Potential Time Frame | Medium Term (3-5 years) |
| Potential Funding Contributors | Flintshire County Council (Leisure), Mold Town Council, Aggregates Levy, Cadwyn Clwyd, Communities First, Private Sponsors. |
| Implementation Timetable | Strategy /Consultation Implementation |
| Description of Initiative | <p>Enhancement of Bailey Hill and the recreation ground to make the whole work better as a public park and so as to make area more accessible intellectually and physically.</p> <p>Initial development work to include: Baseline surveys and studies (topographic survey, detailed tree survey, and hydrological surveys and feasibility, highways feasibility) Drainage proposal, 'Outline Masterplan' Outline Cost Plan</p> <p>Subject to the outcome of the above studies, enhancement works would potentially involve: Rationalisation of footpaths Tree and shrub planting and boundary treatments Limited areas of hard standing serving both informal recreational and events use. General enhancements in line with the planning policy in respect of its status Liaison with Cadw and Flintshire County Council as owners</p> <p>In tandem with physical improvements a Management Plan would be developed to set out more formally the arrangements for usage of the park (for existing as well as potential new events), addressing terms of use, traffic management and reinstatement.</p> |
| Evaluated Through | Completion of baseline surveys feasibility Completion of Management Plan |
| Delivered By | Mold Town Partnership 'Project Team', Flintshire County Council 'Officer Group', Cadw, Communities First. |

| Feasibility Study Initiative | 17. Parks and Green Spaces Leadmills Field - Riverside Link and Green Space Enhancement |
|--|---|
| Anticipated Total Cost | £140,000 (Implementation Costs) |
| Supports Feasibility Study Aims & Objectives | Objectives O1,O2,O5,O6 |
| Potential Time Frame | Long Term (5+ years) |
| Potential Funding Contributors | Flintshire County Council, Mold Town Council, Aggregates Levy Tax, Sustrans, Environment Agency |
| Implementation Timetable | Strategy and Consultation Implementation |
| Description of Initiative | <p>Gateway and boundary treatments, car park enhancement, riverside walk. (Link to any consents/applications associated with formalisation of Rugby Club storage arrangements on Leadmills playing fields).</p> <p>Long term enhanced footpath connection from Milford Street (A519) via improved footbridge and footpath. (Involves appropriate redevelopment of Farm Foods and Coal Yard site SI(6) in the long term in addition to access agreements with Rugby and/ or Cricket Club. Rugby Club, Farm Foods Site A514 Chester Road and town centre.</p> <p>Enables alternative off-road route to shops and Town Centre for residents/workers south of the Alyn.</p> |
| Evaluated Through | Completion of riverside walk / Completion of entire link for cyclists/pedestrians Planning brief for Farm Foods Site, access agreements with Rugby/Cricket Club |
| Delivered By | Mold Town Partnership 'Project Team', Flintshire County Council 'Officer Group' Mold Rugby Club, owners of Farm Foods site |

3.4 Activities & Enjoying Mold

Introduction

3.4.1 Under the theme of Activities and Enjoying Mold the Study identified 3 key project areas for further action and development as follows:

- Daniel Owen Square,
- Proposed Events Ground,
- A Future Events and Festivals Programme.

Daniel Owen Square

3.4.2 During the course of the Study and consultation a number of people commented that the Square currently attracts anti-social behaviour in the form of drunkenness, which was seen as contrary to future aspirations and would need to be addressed in any future management plan. In addition to the Client team the following key stakeholders were also interviewed during the course of the Study due to their influence and involvement in relation to Daniel Owen Square:

- Mark Hopley, Legat Owen, Managing Agents, Daniel Owen Shopping Centre and St David's Building,
- Frank Marney, Daniel Owen Centre Manager,
- Paul Brockley / Tony Bamford, Flintshire County Council L Property Assets Team,
- Esther Roberts, North Wales Tourism, Mold Tourism Information Centre

3.4.3 Daniel Owen Square and the footways passing through the Shopping Centre is adopted public highway and owned and managed by Flintshire County Council. The in-door market is let on long lease to Flintshire County Council by Daniel Owen Estates (owners of Daniel Owen Shopping Centre) and Flintshire County Council also lets the outdoor market stalls. It is clear from discussion that Daniel Owen Square lacks a commercial focus and apart from the St David's Building in retail terms has three dead frontages.

3.4.4 Approximately five years ago a national developer gave consideration to a re-development of Daniel Owen Square. This ambitious and major scheme included a possible relocation of the Library, Museum and the Post Office fronting Earl Road. This scheme was abandoned due to the inability to obtain a WAG grant, as the development was not considered financially viable without public support. The prospects of another commercially led re-development proposal for Daniel Owen Square looks unlikely although there are clear synergies between the Square and the adjoining shopping centre. The lack of an electricity supply in the Square is seen as a disadvantage to the holding of Events in the Square as is in the inability to gain vehicular access from Earl Road.

3.4.5 Discussions with the Flintshire County Council Property Assets Team confirmed that they currently regard Daniel Owen Square as a cost to the Authority as it fails to generate a profitable revenue stream. In this respect the income from market stalls is received by a

separate department of Flintshire County Council and does not contribute directly to the day to day management costs such as cleaning, lighting, footpath, surfacing repairs etc. However, during the course of the Study there was willingness from all parties interviewed to participate in ongoing discussions regarding the future of Daniel Owen Square as all realised that the Square is currently not fulfilling its wider potential.

- 3.4.6 As outlined in Section 2.3 *The Public Realm Appraisal* a number of exciting concepts have emerged for the future enhancement and regeneration of Daniel Owen Square. At the heart of these proposals is that Daniel Owen Square is retained and developed as a vibrant multi-use facility for future community events, festivals and other activities
- 3.4.7 However, in moving forward Daniel Owen Square should not be regarded as a standalone asset but linked via public realm improvements via High Street to the Historic core of the Town and the proposed Events Ground at Kendrick's Field. Such a linkage is intended to enhance the overall experience of visitors and provide a variety of interlinking venues and sites which can be fully utilised for future Town Centre events. A list of recommendations related to the future enhancement and regeneration of Daniel Owen Square is shown on the project proposal sheets attached.

Events Ground

- 3.4.8 As detailed in the Events Ground Options Appraisal at Section 2.4, it is recommended that a future Events Ground is established at Kendrick's Field.
- 3.4.9 The Sense of Place consultation exercise confirmed that 80% of people supported the aspiration to establish a future Events Ground. Feedback from the Stakeholders Workshop held in December also provided broad support for the selection of Kendrick's Field as the preferred location. Following a comprehensive review it is clear that the selection of Kendrick's Field will provide added value as it will encourage wider participation by existing traders thereby involving the town as a whole in future Events and Festivals. The future use of Kendrick's Field linked via proposed public realm improvements to Daniel Owen Square and the historic core of the town will also ensure that the Events Ground is not isolated from the day to day life of the town. Further detail is shown on the attached Project Sheet and also summarised in Section 2.4 of the Report.

Future Events and Festivals Programme

- 3.4.10 The value of events and festivals in creating distinctiveness and increasing footfall in market towns has been well proven over the recent past. Mold has seized this opportunity with a number of successful events including the Food & Drink Festival which attracted over 10,000 visitors in September 2009 and is estimated to have pumped a quarter of a million pounds into the local economy. In addition, the Mold 10km run and the annual carnival play an important role in developing the community spirit of the town, reinforcing loyalties and encouraging both residents and visitors to enjoy their local culture. Keen to build upon this success and wishing to attract more visitors to the town, the Study Brief asked that a Marketing Plan be produced which would provide the framework for an enhanced events and festivals programme. In undertaking this task, we have carefully considered the

implications of the options for the future use of Daniel Owen Square and the identification of suitable sites for an events showground

- 3.4.11 Mold is already recognised as an established venue for livestock and street markets and in recent years has hosted the National Eisteddfod and successful Food and Music Festivals. The location of Clwyd Theatre Cymru on the periphery of the town is a considerable advantage and helps to distinguish Mold as a regional and contemporary cultural destination. In addition, the historic legacy of Daniel Owen, The Mold Cape, St Mary's Church and the Motte and Bailey provides Mold with tourism assets which set it apart from many other market towns.
- 3.4.12 Mold therefore has a track record and portfolio of exciting events and assets on which to base a Marketing Plan for Events and Festivals. The challenge is to select a strategy which Mold should adopt given the scale of the Town and the resources likely to be available and link this to wider supporting themes such as the Cittaslow Initiative. From research it is apparent that a number of market towns have been active in developing events and festivals as a way of generating new visitor spend and increasing retailer profits.
- 3.4.13 As outlined earlier in Section 2.4 *Events Ground* section of the report at present there are ten active recognised showground / festival sites in Wales. The best known and most successful of these is the Royal Welsh Show Ground at Builth Wells but in North Wales the circa 60 hectare Anglesey Agricultural Showground is growing in importance. Although not recognised as a Showground the Royal International Pavilion at Llangollen has a clear strategy to build on its legacy as the home of the International Music Eisteddfod. In this respect Llangollen is developing a strong platform of events based around music, theatre, food and drink. Given the close relationship of Mold to the wider Deeside economy, it is important to be aware of the activities of places such as Chester, Oswestry and other locations which are active in the events and festivals market.
- 3.4.14 Chester has established itself as a strong regional events showground with a diverse calendar of events including a Pumpkin, Food and Drink, Music and Literature Festivals, Summer / Winter Parades, Antique Fairs and Equestrian Events. At Oswestry, the town plays host to a Food and Drink Show and Park Hall, the 15 ha showground on the A5 hosts a "Truck Fest", agricultural show, vintage machine rally, motorcycle gatherings and antique fairs. The Towns of Nantwich and Ludlow are also worthy of review and comparison. Nantwich plays host to an International Cheese Festival, holds Folk and Jazz Festivals, has an Annual Food Festival and holds Farmers Markets and in the winter The town has also provided an outdoor ice rink and undertakes ghost walks. The Cittaslow Town of Ludlow has built on the theme of food as a core offer of the Town but has a particular strong and quality web site to promote its wider calendar of events.
- 3.4.15 As part of the Sense of Place consultation exercise the public were invited to describe 3 key positive features about living, working or visiting Mold. Interestingly the most positive feature was the Friendly nature of the Town and its People, followed by the Towns Markets and overall selection of shops and independent retailers. Surprisingly Theatre Clwyd recorded only circa 4% of the vote which is disappointing as although located on the

periphery of the Town it is a major asset and helps to distinguish Mold as a Regional and contemporary cultural destination.

- 3.4.16 The challenge is therefore to select a competitive strategy, which builds on the local strengths and distinctiveness of the Town and link this in a coherent way to wider supporting themes such as the Cittaslow initiative. Perhaps the key aspect is to ensure that Future Events and Festivals are developed and co-ordinated by a “Working Group” to ensure that there is a regular and non conflicting calendar of events ideally covering each month of the year.
- 3.4.17 The future availability of a dedicated Events Ground and an enhanced Daniel Owen Square should be central to any future Events and Festivals Marketing Programme. A list of recommendations is shown on the attached project proposal sheet and the Marketing Plan is shown in Appendix B. Project sheets illustrating relevant proposals can be found overleaf at Figure 42.

| Feasibility Study Initiative | 18. Daniel Owen Square Events |
|--|--|
| Anticipated Total Cost | £5,000 |
| Supports Feasibility Study Aims & Objectives | Aims 1, 2 & 3 Objectives 1, 2 & 6 |
| Potential Time Frame for Implementation | Medium Term (Year 3-5) |
| Potential Funding Contributors | Flintshire County Council / Mold Town Council / WAG / Private Sector |
| Implementation Timetable | Following formation of dedicated Daniel Owen Square Project Team |
| Description of Initiative | <p>To enhance Daniel Owen Square as a vibrant multi-use facility for future community events, festivals, markets and other activities</p> <p>Form Daniel Owen Square Regeneration Team, team to include both public and private sector partners i.e. owners of Daniel Owen Shopping Centre. Prepare detailed plan of proposed public realm enhancement as outlined in other Daniel Owen Project Sheets. Obtain any necessary approvals from landowners such as the Daniel Owen Shopping Centre and FCC, (adopted public highway). Prepare a detailed business plan relating to required development costs (capital works and ongoing revenue costs (management / marketing). Prepare and submit any necessary applications for Planning and Statutory Consents. Submit required Funding applications to WAG, FCC, Mold Town Council, etc to raise overall required funding package. Build venue into future Events and Festivals Marketing Plan thereby lifting the overall profile of Mold.</p> |
| Evaluated Through | Agreed Project Milestones |
| Project Lead | Daniel Owen Square Project Team |

| Feasibility Study Initiative | 19. Events and Festivals Programme |
|--|--|
| Anticipated Total Cost | £20,000 |
| Supports Feasibility Study Aims & Objectives | Aims 1 & 2 Objectives 1,2 & 6 |
| Potential Time Frame for Implementation | Short Term (1 -3 Years) |
| Potential Funding Contributors | Flintshire County Council / WAG / Private Sector / Theatre Clwyd / North Wales Tourism / Mold Town Council / Cittaslow Mold |
| Implementation Timetable | Form New Events and Festivals Central Organising Project Team and commence |
| Description of Initiative | <p>To promote Mold as a location for future Events and Festivals based around a monthly co-ordinated calendar of events.</p> <p>It is recommended that a formal Mold Events and Festivals Marketing Committee is established. The Committee should have both public and private sector representation and include those persons already active in promoting and organising events in the Town.</p> <p>It is recommended that the Committee give consideration to building the Events and Festivals Programme around the following key themes which have been confirmed by the Sense of Place Study as having good marketing potential and visitor appeal.</p> <p>History – Promote and Build on the Theme of Daniel Owen / Golden Cape – improved museum display / town trail / Daniel Owen Literature Day etc</p> <p>Culture – Build improved links with Theatre Clwyd – potential spin out activity from the Theatre leading to community involvement in a Town Centre Play performed in Daniel Owen Square.</p> <p>Music – Build on success of Ffin Music Festival and previous events at the Y Pentan Cafe Bar and seek to establish Mold as a leading contemporary NE Wales music venue</p> <p>Food – In addition to an ongoing annual Food and Drink Festival introduce two annual European food markets and seek to improve links with the livestock market.</p> <p>Markets – Maximise on Mold's existing strength as a market Town and seek new events such as Antiques / Books / Records and Toys. Consider use of Mold Town Hall as a venue together with Daniel Owen Square.</p> |
| Evaluated Through | Agreed Project Milestones – New Events and Festivals secured |
| Project Lead | New Events and Festivals Project Team |

| Feasibility Study Initiative | 20. Events Ground - Kendrick's Field enhancements |
|--|---|
| Anticipated Total Cost | £300,000 (Implementation Costs) |
| Supports Feasibility Study Aims & Objectives | Aim 2 Objectives O1, O2, O5, O6 |
| Potential Time Frame | Medium Term (3-5 years) |
| Potential Funding Contributors | Flintshire County Council, Mold Town Council, Aggregates Levy, Cadwyn Clwyd, Communities First, Private Sponsors. |
| Implementation Timetable | Strategy /Consultation Implementation |
| Description of Initiative | <p>Confirm with landowner Flintshire County Council that they are supportive of the proposed use and confirm proposed legal arrangements. Form Site Development Project Team and lobby for early resolution of Flood Alleviation Scheme.</p> <p>Enhancement of Kendrick's Field and the recreation ground to make the whole work better as a public park and so as to make the field and playing fields more able to accommodate events. Initial development work to include: Baseline surveys and studies (topographic survey, detailed tree survey, and hydrological surveys and feasibility, highways feasibility) Drainage proposal, 'Outline Masterplan' Outline Cost Plan</p> <p>Subject to the outcome of the above studies, enhancement works would potentially involve: Drainage proposals for both Kendrick's Field and the football pitches Rationalisation of footpaths Tree and shrub planting and boundary treatments Creation of new vehicle access off Ruthin road for special events use only Limited areas of hard standing serving both informal recreational and events use. General enhancements in line with the planning policy in respect of its status as L3 – Green Space</p> <p>In tandem with physical improvements a Management Plan would be developed to set out more formally the arrangements for usage of the park (for existing as well as potential new events), addressing terms of use, traffic management and reinstatement.</p> |
| Evaluated Through | Completion of baseline surveys feasibility Completion of Management Plan |
| Delivered By | Mold Town Partnership 'Project Team', Flintshire County Council 'Officer Group', Cadw, Communities First. |

| Feasibility Study Initiative | 21. Shuttle Bus – County Hall / Mold Town Centre |
|--|---|
| Anticipated Total Cost | £5,000 per annum (with an aim to become self funding) |
| Supports Feasibility Study Aims & Objectives | Aim 1 Objective 1 |
| Potential Time Frame for Implementation | Short Term (1-3 years) |
| Potential Funding Contributors | Town Centre Traders via Town Centre Partnership / Flintshire County Council |
| Implementation Timetable | Can be implemented immediately subject to funding support |
| Description of Initiative | <p>The purpose of this Initiative is to build closer links between the Mold Civic Centre Complex and the Town Centre by the introduction of a Shuttle Bus to run between County Hall and the Town Centre on Wednesday and Friday lunchtimes (market days).</p> <p>The introduction of this initiative will help capture the spending potential of Civic Centre employees—circa 2,000 people and a reduction in the number of car journeys between the two locations will help reduce overall carbon emissions and free up Town centre car parking spaces.</p> <p>It is recommended that the Shuttle Bus Service is developed jointly by the Town Centre Partnership and Flintshire County Council. The Initiative can also be linked to a future Mold Shop Loyalty Scheme thereby providing increased benefits for shoppers and retailers.</p> <p>It is suggested that the cost of bus is linked to the cost of car parking in Mold. The service may require subsidy in the first year of operation with contributions from both retailers and FCC although the long term aim should be for the service to become self financing.</p> |
| Evaluated Through | Numbers using Bus / Increased retail turnover in Town in Wednesday / Friday |
| Project Lead | Flintshire County Council / Town Centre Partnership |

3.5 The Heritage of Mold

- 3.5.1 In response to the challenges and threats facing Mold's historic environment a series of proposed projects and actions are proposed to address these issues. These largely focus on the town centre's conservation area, as the core of Mold's historic environment, in supporting other actions and project proposals, but should not be seen as wholly exclusive to the town centre. The following actions should be read in conjunction with the associated attached project proposal sheets, found at the end of this section, and be adopted and delivered in securing the future management of the historic environment.

Recognising existing good practice

- 3.5.2 Flintshire County Council has a central role to play in the management of the historic environment. Although the administration of conservation areas is largely a planning function, there are many other actions by other services areas that can impact on character and appearance for instance through highways and the maintenance of trees within the public realm or through property and the management of historic public buildings. It is important, therefore, that conservation aims are coordinated across all relevant local authority services. The Council has an enviable record with regard to its duties in regard to the historic environment across the County. These include:
- Development control being supported by a full time Conservation Officer and the support of the team leader (however these positions have remained unfilled for over year since the last two post holders left, although the Conservation Officer post has been advertised recently),
 - Flintshire Conservation Area Forum which operated from 1998 to 2003,
 - An up to date Unitary Development Plan with relevant historic environment policies, nearing final adoption,
 - The availability of general local planning documents on key subjects, which will form the basis of future supplementary planning guidance (SPG),
 - An excellent track record for securing grants and delivery of projects for the historic environment and its regeneration, such as the Holywell and Flint Townscape Heritage Initiatives (THI),
 - The emerging recognition of the need to develop proposals to manage Conservation Areas, through the drafting of associated management plans for 8 of the County's 32 Conservation Areas, not including Mold,
 - A planning service review underway, which could serve as a timely opportunity to integrate many of the proposals and actions into the operational plan.
- 3.5.3 In support of the Council's central role, Mold Civic Society has a regular programme of speakers on subjects concerning the town and its past and leads on the 'Mold Heritage Open Days', a celebration over a weekend in September of the town's finest historic buildings. This position provides a sound basis from to build upon in ensuring the management of the historic environment can play a more active role in supporting the future prosperity of Mold.

Maintaining Conservation Values

- 3.5.4 Central to achieving good practice in historic environment conservation is adopting the value of stewardship. Government guidance sees the role of local authorities in achieving this by:
- Maintaining a commitment to managing the historic environment through the integration of conservation with other policies¹,
 - Reflecting this commitment in resource allocations²,
 - Ensuring they have access to specialist conservation advice in order to make informed decisions³.
- 3.5.5 It is also recognised that the stewardship of the historic environment is shared by all stakeholders with an interest, including local business, the voluntary sector, owners, users and visitors to Mold. However, the Council has a central and leading role in achieving this and so many of the proposals and actions relate to the way in which the Council delivers in respect of the historic environment. Highway or building control standards designed for modern environments should not be applied unthinkingly to areas and buildings that have stood the test of time. The Council is, therefore, encouraged to be sensitive to the special architectural and historic interest of conservation areas and listed buildings in exercising, for instance, building control, fire regulations and highways standards. In addition, while such designations are primarily related to the function of the planning system, other Council services can also impact on their preservation and enhancement.
- 3.5.6 As a result, there is need to reconfirm corporate intent to encourage and promote cross service working and the integration of the conservation aims and actions into the allocation of resources, decision making and through the delivery of Council services and by providers through their operational plans. It is important that any strategy for future management should be more than aspirational but expectations should be realistic given resources and priorities of the Council, if the historic environment of Mold is to fulfil its potential as an asset and infrastructure resource that underpins the future prosperity of the town.
- 3.5.7 The Welsh Assembly Government recommends Council's have access to appropriately qualified specialist advice. The presence of a Conservation Officer is vital if the Council is to make informed decisions on conservation and urban design issues. The post could be supported by a reformed and revitalised Conservation Area Forum, also supported by Welsh Assembly Government guidance. This guidance suggest that such groups should not only look at development control matters but also policy, enhancement schemes and the possibility of local voluntary action to safeguard conservation areas. This is further supported by changes in the wider planning process and the role of local government with greater emphasis being placed on direct involvement of the community in policy setting. This can be seen in the formulation of the future LDP and also the future reviews of the Community Strategy. Conservation areas, as only one element of the historic environment,

¹ Welsh Office Circular 61/96 *Planning and the Historic Environment: Historic Buildings and Conservation Areas*, December 1996, paragraph 4

² Welsh Office Circular 61/96 *Planning and the Historic Environment: Historic Buildings and Conservation Areas*, December 1996, paragraph 23

³ Welsh Office Circular 61/96 *Planning and the Historic Environment: Historic Buildings and Conservation Areas*, December 1996, paragraph 9

need to be integrated into these important policy processes as they can also have impacts on delivery and resource implications in the future.

Having an evidence base for decision making and planning policy formulation

- 3.5.8 It is important to have a proper understanding of the Town's built environment in order that planning policies can be formulated, change can be managed and informed planning decisions can be made. At present no detailed urban characterisation study of the town, nor Conservation Area appraisal of the town centre have been undertaken and as a result neither the 'specialness' of the town's historic core, as defined by the existing Conservation Area, or other areas potential design quality, architectural or historic have been defined.
- 3.5.9 Effective management relies on through understanding of all elements of this historic environment. Urban characterisation studies are a useful means to manage change in the historic environment by tracing the imprint of history. Piecing together information from maps new and historic, from aerial photos, and from the wealth of data that we already have about archaeology and buildings, it builds up area-based pictures of how the town has developed into the surrounding countryside over time. It shows how the past exists within today's world. These fascinating insights into the historic environment, however, are about the future, not the past. Characterisation is not an academic exercise but a vital tool for developers and planners to make sure that a place's historical identity contributes properly to quality of life, as recognised by the town's Cittaslow status. Characterisation attempts to define what makes a place special. This allows an estimate to be made of how much change, and of what sorts, a place can absorb without losing its distinctive qualities. This has led a number of agencies to promote historic characterisation as part of wider housing renewal areas but also more recently in Wales prior to regeneration strategies, as seen through Cadw's recent work at Flint. It will also be an important tool to further explore the possibilities of additional areas of potential special interest, the architectural and historic qualities of which may warrant designation as Conservation Areas or additional planning policies or controls to protect their qualities from inappropriate change.
- 3.5.10 On the more detailed level Conservation Area appraisals are key to a local authorities ability to define and guard against inappropriate change. They are also a key means to engage communities during their formulation in raising the profile and understanding of the historic environment of an area. The appraisal would contain a photographic survey as a baseline record for measuring change, monitoring building condition and to provide evidence for enforcement. For the latter, however, it is important that the record is updated at least every four years because in many cases breaches more than four years old cannot be enforced against.

Appropriateness of the Conservation Area Boundary

- 3.5.11 The local authority is under a statutory duty to review Conservation Area designations 'from time to time' and to prepare proposals, such as conservation area appraisals or grant schemes, to

support the preservation and enhancement of such areas⁴. Conservation area designation is the primary means by which the Council can safeguard, for future generations, areas of valued distinctive places that help to define the individual cultural identity of communities.

- 3.5.12 The special character of these areas does not come from the quality of their buildings alone. The historic layout of roads, paths and boundaries; characteristic building and paving materials; a particular 'mix' of building uses; public and private spaces, such as gardens, parks and greens; trees and street furniture; significant views - all these and more create the familiar and cherished local scene. Conservation areas give broader protection to all the features, listed or otherwise, within the area recognised as being part of its character and appearance.
- 3.5.13 Boundaries to Conservation Areas are important means to define the difference between those areas considered of 'special interest', which affords an area additional consideration in decision-making. During the townscape analysis and in discussion with the community it was felt while the boundary was largely fit for purpose there were a number of useful additions that could be incorporated into the existing town centre Conservation Area, especially along its southern edge.
- 3.5.14 In order to reflect more closely the special architectural or historic interest of areas within the Town, it is suggested the existing conservation area boundary be altered. These changes are largely focussed on the southern edge along Wrexham Road, Grosvenor and Victoria Roads and the area in the vicinity of Glan yr Afon. The proposed changes would afford greater protection to later Victorian and Edwardian properties, which largely retain their external historic character and would add to the Town Centre Conservation Area, as gateways and later development reflecting the growth of the town during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It should be noted that a very few of these properties are listed buildings and therefore do not enjoy protection but it is felt they also contribute to the special interest of the town centre and should be included in a revised boundary.

Future Planning Policy Development

- 3.5.15 Planning policy in the soon to be adopted UDP covers general points in relation to conservation. Consideration should be given to the need for more specific policies, controls and guidance to support the managerial approach that is necessary for the long term future of Mold. It is important to establish these needs now so that they can feed into the programme for the future Local Development Plan process and ensure sufficient resources are made available.
- 3.5.16 Issues where guidance will make a significant difference to public understanding and assist decision makers includes:
- The Council's expectations as to what constitutes a material change in a Conservation Area,
 - Shopfronts and signage and the various design approaches for different types of building,

⁴ Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990, s69

- Traditional doors and windows, their maintenance, repair and incorporating energy efficient and sustainability without damaging character,
- New buildings in historic areas, their siting, design and materials,
- Boundary walls and parking within gardens, the retention of historical detail, planting and landscaping,
- Trees and hedges maintenance, species and legal requirements.

Where guidance has public support and has been formally adopted by the Council as a development control guide, it will carry weight in the consideration of planning proposals by decision makers. Guidance also reduces the need for the Council to repeat advice in every case, allowing scarce professional resources to be deployed more effectively. It also assists in transforming the Council's relationship from being one a reaction to planning applications to proactively managing the historic environment.

Development Management and the potential for additional planning controls

- 3.5.17 The Council already has controls available through its planning powers, and much depends upon how they are interpreted and implemented. For instance, any material changes to the appearance of properties that are not single dwellings require planning permission, but the interpretation of what is 'material' is left to the Council. For instance, a new shopfront is generally regarded as a material change, but there is less certainty about the renewal of windows on upper storeys or a change in roof materials. In illustrating an enhanced level of control within the Conservation Area 97% of the 376 respondents to the community questionnaire supported the preference to see traditional shopfronts retained on historic buildings. It is therefore vital that the Council officers are fully aware of the need to meet the statutory duties and case law with regard to Conservation Areas.
- 3.5.18 Single dwellings have considerable permitted development rights that enable some alterations to be carried out without the need to obtain planning permission. These works include, for example, changes to doors, windows, roof materials or rainwater goods and the construction of minor extensions. Although they may be minimal in each case, such alterations can have a surprisingly negative cumulative impact that is damaging to historic areas, eventually undermining their specialness and as a result their reason for designation. An Article 4(2) direction, prepared and approved by the Council, can remove permitted development rights. This does not necessarily prevent alterations, but allows for discussion to be held with applicants as to potential options which secure the needs of the householder and those of conservation policy. 93% of the 376 respondents to the community questionnaire supported the retention and repair of architectural features.
- 3.5.19 Commercial buildings and flats have fewer permitted development rights, but an Article 4(1) direction can be useful for controlling, for instance, the painting of walls, which can only be approved by the Welsh Assembly Government. Where there is a real and specific threat and it is necessary to help protect features that are key elements of the conservation area, then the

minimum withdrawal of permitted development rights through an Article 4 should be considered⁵. For Mold consideration should be made for the use of an Article (4)2 Direction covering doors and windows, as it is evident a number of properties have replaced their original examples, which has caused some damage to the special interest of the conservation area. This should also be supported by better guidance on what the Council's requirements for what constitutes a material change to commercial premises, ensuring planning applications are submitted to authorise development. Consideration will also have to be given to the control of advertisements to ensure Mold does not further reinforce the current tendency to reinforce its clone town image. In illustrating an enhanced level of control within the Conservation Area 86% of the 376 respondents to the community questionnaire agreed that modern, large plastic signage and non-traditional colours should be avoided on town centre historic buildings. Climate change is an area where potential future alterations may be sought to enhance insulation of properties. It is hoped such alterations are carefully considered and that practical measures can be adopted which may require non-standard solutions which ensure clear regard has been made to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Careful consideration has to be given to balancing the period of pay back, the impact on the historic environment and the likely benefits to the environment as a whole, of external improvements.

Compliance and Monitoring

3.5.20 Most local authorities subscribe to Government guidance for all public bodies on enforcement⁶, which sets out best practice principles such as appropriate standards for helpfulness, openness, consistency, proportionality and responding to complaints. The Council should take these forward into an enforcement strategy in order to:

- Explain the scope of planning enforcement,
- Openly define priorities – especially those related to Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings,
- Set measurable standards for service delivery,
- Explain how investigations are carried out,
- Explain enforcement procedures and enforcement actions.

3.5.21 While the need to ensure public safety will always come first, enforcement in relation to the historic environment should generally have the next highest priority because, as Welsh Assembly Government guidance on enforcement recognises historic fabric may not be regained through enforcement action⁷. This approach has been adopted by other local authorities, such as Denbighshire County Council, where potential breaches related to the historic environment are given a very high priority in recognition this is an irreplaceable resource. The strategy should also explain the circumstances when the Council could make use of Repairs Notices, Urgent Works Notices and Amenity of Land Notices.

⁵ Welsh Assembly Government *Planning Policy Wales* March 2002, paragraphs 6.5.19 & 6.5.20

⁶ DTi / Welsh Assembly Government *Enforcement Concordant: Good Practice Guide for England & Wales*, June 2003

⁷ Welsh Office Circular 61/96 *Planning and the Historic Environment: Historic Buildings and Conservation Areas*, December 1996, paragraph 121

| POWER | STATUTORY BASIS | PURPOSE | WORK REQUIRED BY LPA | REALISTIC TIMEFRAMES | POTENTIAL ISSUES |
|--|--|--|--|----------------------|---|
| Amenity of Land Notice | s.215 Town and Country Planning Act 1990 | Remedy the poor condition of land and exteriors of buildings | Drafting of notice and accompanying schedule | 2-4 weeks | Appeal to magistrates |
| Urgent Works Notice (Listed Buildings) | s.54 Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 | To allow the LPA to undertake urgent necessary works | Drafting of notice and accompanying schedule | 2-4 weeks | Unoccupied parts of properties only |
| Urgent Works Notice (Unlisted Buildings) | s.76 Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 | To allow the LPA to undertake urgent necessary works | Drafting of notice and accompanying schedule | 4-6 weeks | As above but also requires prior approval of WAG |
| Repairs Notice | s.48 Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 | To allow the LPA to undertake lasting necessary works | Drafting of notice and accompanying schedule | 4-6 weeks | Unoccupied properties only |
| Compulsory Purchase Order | s.47 Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 | To allow the LPA to purchase the property in order to repair | Drafting of notice and accompanying schedule / value | 3 months | Follows service of Repairs Notice Appeal to Lands Tribunal |
| Planning Enforcement Notice | s. 172 Town & Country Planning Act 1990 | To remedy a breach of planning control | Drafting of notice and accompanying schedule | 2-4 weeks | Appeal to Planning Inspectorate |
| Listed Building Enforcement Notice | s.9 Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 | To remedy a breach in listed building control | Drafting of notice and accompanying schedule | 4-6 weeks | Appeal to Planning Inspectorate |
| Conservation Area Enforcement Notice | s.38 Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 | To remedy a breach in Conservation Area Consent | Drafting of notice and accompanying schedule | 2-4 weeks | Appeal to Planning Inspectorate |

Figure 43: The principal planning enforcement powers available to the Council

The principal powers available to the Council as Local Planning Authority in dealing with issues affecting the historic environment and its proactive management are outlined on the previous page. Discontinuance action under Section 102(1) of the Town and Country Planning 1990 or for adverts under the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007 are also potential routes for dealing with issues which the damage amenity of a neighbourhood, including both uses and advertisements, but care should be taken due to the potential consequences of claims for compensation.

Promoting appropriate design

- 3.5.22 Careful consideration will need to be given to the treatment, height, scale, massing, form and quality of future development and alterations and extensions adjoining and within the Town centre Conservation Area. Unfortunately, a number of new developments, some of which have been previously referred to in townscape character analysis, have been constructed within and immediately adjoining the conservation area and their impact has been damaging to both the setting and character of the area in many cases. However, careful consideration will need to be given to preventing future poorly designed proposals gaining consent, avoiding the creation of unduly dominant development in such places, where otherwise local distinctiveness and character could be eroded. It would be appropriate that the character of the Town can only be maintained through adjoining high quality development, which addresses the issues positively. Within and adjoining the conservation area, where the quality of the general environment is already acknowledged by designation, the Council should work to encourage the highest quality schemes that respond positively to their historic setting, retain historic boundaries, have regard to preserving open space and the positively address reducing the visual impact of standard highway splays and access in accordance with planning policy.
- 3.5.23 A perception often exists within the community and other stakeholders that planning decisions can appear inconsistent. While each has to be determined on its own merits, much can be achieved by having detailed policy and guidance, and training to help elected councillors to work within these constraints.

Vacant Historic Buildings

- 3.5.24 Unfortunately, Mold has a number of key buildings which are either disused, underused or in poor condition and prominent sites, which undermines both community and investor confidence in Mold. Many of these are unfortunately historic buildings without a long term viable future and include amongst others the Old Court House, Pen y Bont Farm (Pentre), the former St John the Evangelist's Church, now the Church Hall. While other historic buildings remain unoccupied this is largely as a result of current short term economic conditions and could be tackled through specific area based grant scheme.
- 3.5.25 An options appraisal would identify the most beneficial use for such buildings, clearly demonstrating the potential financial viability or reasons why there is no viable use, provide a statement of the building's importance in conservation terms and an assessment of the social and public benefits of a

proposed scheme. 99% of the 376 respondents to the community questionnaire supported the need to retain the use historic buildings in the town centre. In addition 97% felt upper floors of buildings in the town centre should be in use rather than left vacant.

- 3.5.26 The main aim of an options appraisal is to establish the best end-use for the building and to assess financial viability. It should identify risks and reduce uncertainties to acceptable levels. An objective and professional assessment carried out with the assistance of independent consultants is therefore essential to identify the most 'beneficial' option, i.e. one that is appropriate to the building and is likely to be financially viable, if necessary with the aid of grants and other funds. The best options appraisals consider all potentially viable options for re-use. An appraisal that considers only one option will be of limited benefit in finding other viable uses for the building, potential funders will need to know that all alternatives have been adequately explored and, where options have been considered and rejected, explain clearly the reason for rejection.

Secure targeted historic building regeneration grant assistance

- 3.5.27 The availability of grant assistance to tackle vacancy, dilapidation, architectural mutilation and for streetscape degradation can act as an important catalyst for change. For a number of years, until recently, the Council had operated a very successful small grant scheme to support repairs and reuse of historic buildings and has historically operated a townscheme for Mold in partnership with Cadw. This form of targeted historic environment funding can be used in partnership with other public sources of grant assistance to achieve the repair and reuse of historic buildings. Opportunities for the re-emergence of such a proposal should be considered positively as an important catalyst to address the current appearance of the town centre, support local business and support the town's visual appeal to shoppers and visitors.
- 3.5.28 It is also important to ensure that such investment is prioritised and appropriate. Grants should seek to tackle the most damaging and problematic properties to community, business and visitor perceptions in supporting local vitality, as defined previously in section 2.2. The focus of any investment should be upon those properties in most need, as illustrated at the end of this section at Figure 44, which is based on a combination of condition, appearance and vacancy. This investment must be carefully focussed to ensure during implementation that works are appropriate for the structure and meet the highest conservation standards, acting as exemplars for future work elsewhere within the County's conservation areas. This would also build on the Flintshire County Council's experience with regard to its THI schemes for Holywell and Flint.
- 3.5.29 In illustrating the level of community support for such a measure, 96% of the 376 respondents to the community questionnaire supported a grant scheme to assist with the repair and enhancement of properties in the town centre. Three options for securing grant assistance in relation to historic buildings within the town centre Conservation Area;

(a) *Continue with Cadw: Historic Buildings and Conservation Area Grants*

Continue with the schemes operated solely by Cadw details of which can be found at <http://www.cadw.wales.gov.uk/upload/resourcepool/Historic%20Buildings%20Grant%20booklet%20E10000.pdf> These grants tend to be prioritised to buildings considered to be of outstanding quality and interest. Overall allocations tend to be small and extremely competitive and generally over-subscribed, given their all Wales nature and with a potential eligibility pool of 1,018 Listed Buildings and 32 Conservation Areas in Flintshire alone.

(b) *Enter into a Town Scheme Partnership with Cadw*

Flintshire County Council and/or Mold Town Council working with Cadw would jointly fund a Town Scheme Partnerships, which would provide assistance for repairs to the external elevations of properties within the Town Centre. The scheme would operate for 3 years with the grant fund equally supported by each partner, with a contribution from each partner of up to £90,000 over the 3 years. The overall grant fund could be increased if further partners could be secured. Grant awards to property owners generally range from 50% to 80%. In order to support a bid to Cadw a conservation appraisal and management plan would need to be in place. Cadw accepts applications at any time of year but early discussions with the Architects Branch are advisable, especially as likely budgets will fall as public sector cuts gather pace.

(c) *Secure a Townscape Heritage Initiative*

The Heritage Lottery Fund promotes a programme the Townscape Heritage Initiatives (THI) to tackle such issues through grant assistance to groups of historic buildings in Conservation Areas. The HLF offers assistance of between £500,000 and £2m to support each successful scheme as a contribution to the overall funding. The scheme operates as a single application round per year with a November deadline, an annual budget of £10m and is open to applications from across the UK and as a result is highly competitive with around half of all applications being refused. The aims of the scheme could be to improve the appearance and perception of the historic environment and tackling evident decay and vacancy of street frontage properties, create opportunities for investment, skills development and support the economic and social viability of Mold acting as an important partner in wider initiatives for the regeneration of the town centre, ensure the appropriate conservation and reuse of historic buildings and their settings, including the quality and maintenance of spaces and the public realm, increase both physical and intellectual access to and understanding of the cultural heritage and ensure increased involvement of local businesses, the community and visitors with the historic built environment to build on the sense of civic pride.

- 3.5.30 However, Mold may not exhibit either the high levels of deprivation, dereliction or dilapidation that communities the HLF normally award's THI upon – as evidenced by other successful applications within Flintshire to Holywell and Flint. As a result it is recommended early discussion be held with both the HLF and Cadw, as to the preferred route for supporting the town centre with grant assistance. A stronger case is likely to be made if a conservation area appraisal is already underway

and adopted by the time of a grant application submission to either potential funding contributor. It is normal for the County Council to take a lead in such discussions but undoubtedly the ongoing involvement and potential of financial assistance of the Town Council will assist in demonstrating local commitment and support for any future submissions, strengthening the case at a time of increased competition.

Maintenance of Properties

- 3.5.31 To ensure the properties which contribute to the special interest of the conservation area's character and appearance are sustained into the future, it will be necessary to engender an awareness that maintenance of properties is a regular issue which needs to be considered on a seasonal basis. To assist in this process of greater awareness the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) sponsored National Maintenance Week and National Gutters Day in November should be promoted in order to remind property owners of the need to prepare for the winter months. Another means will be the wide distribution and availability on the Council's website of the SPAB / IHBC publication '*A Stitch in Time*' or that of Cadw's soon to be launched '*Maintenance Matters*' initiative to owners and other relevant stakeholders, including local building contractors and professionals.

Celebrate, Educate & Promote Mold's Historic Environment

- 3.5.32 Engaging the community and stakeholders in understanding Mold's past and its value for the future is important to securing a more sustainable approach to the conservation of the historic environment. Through education and promotional events the relationship with the local community can move beyond a reactionary approach to planning applications to one where their aspirations for the historic environment can be more clearly determined. This is an important step in building local capacity in moving beyond cherishing the asset for future generations to being translated into a more active form of increased sense of civic pride and custodianship of the historic environment. Mold demonstrates a high awareness within its community this should be further supported, as illustrated by the 35% of the 376 respondents to the community questionnaire felt the history of Mold's people, places and features were well promoted as part of the town's future an attraction to visitors.
- 3.5.33 Access can be a key tool in building an increased sense of community ownership of the town centre's historic buildings. Mold already takes part in such events such as the European Heritage Open Days in Wales, coordinated by the Civic Trust for Wales (<http://www.civictrustwales.org/ehd/index.htm>) held in September each year, as a means for the public to gain access to historic properties or parts thereof not normally open. Such access can be supported through the availability of accompanying detailed information about the buildings. The event is currently coordinated by local groups with minimal Council support.
- 3.5.34 Widening awareness, understanding and celebrating both these early origins and later development is important in disseminating the significance of the Town on a number of levels to the local community and visitors. Famous inhabitants, local folklore, historic incidents or chartering how the

Town has changed over time from the medieval period onwards could all be visualised and interpreted by appropriately located interpretation boards. This would complement existing leaflets available in suitable outlets, which include a heritage walk linking features of interest both in the Town and in the vicinity. This is further supported by a limited number of discrete plaques mounted on particularly important buildings to assist visitors and others interested in the town's history. The plaques scheme could be further developed in partnership with local schools in the vicinity using elements of the national curriculum and with other groups in the community. Such an approach may attract funding assistance from such bodies as the HLF through their 'Your Heritage' programme or Awards for All.

- 3.535 A coordinated Heritage Interpretation Plan could assist in providing a basis for ensuring the various aspects of Mold's past were better presented to both the community and visitors. The plan could include proposals for interpretation boards, an oral history project, support for further historic plaques, an annual exhibition on a relevant Mold heritage theme, 'architreks' of walking tours of the architecture of the town, 'Slow walks' with way-marking leading into the surrounding countryside and features of interest in the wider landscape, training for tour guides, the lighting of key historic buildings, celebration of local heroes, further support for the Open Heritage Weekend and the creation of a design and heritage award to acknowledge efforts and raise awareness of the value of quality places and buildings to the future of the town.
- 3.536 A particular innovative means to promote the town to visitors is the use of hand held mobile devices to disseminate interpretative material. For a number of years the Royal Commission for the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW) has been developing the use of mobile devices to attract both new and well-established audiences to enjoy and learn about the diversity of the Welsh historic environment. These applications allow the delivery of information and audio-visual resources outside traditional environments such as museums or heritage sites, and help bring new meaning to buildings and landscapes. As part of the Royal Commission's education programme, the use of Personal Digital Assistants (PDA's) has improved the learning experience of people in Wales. This was pioneered as an educational project with young people in Ruthin and the later as an e-trail at Blaenavon. The Ruthin e-trail project shows how collaboration between a number of organisations can work to the benefit of all involved. Through this partnership it has been possible to develop new and innovative ways of delivering heritage information to a wider audience, whilst local students have developed measurable Key Skills which counted towards their attainment of the Welsh Baccalaureate. At Blaenavon IT students worked towards their Welsh Baccalaureate are learning about the fundamentals of GIS, GPS and mobile technology and investigating their local heritage. By encouraging these young people to investigate the heritage resources available to them, it is hoped they will develop an appreciation of the historic environment that surrounds them. This could be further developed with local schools in Mold in a similar fashion. Initial discussions with the Royal Commission has indicated their positive wish to be involved in further development of this proposal and act as partner. The dissemination of historic environment information through the use of such technology could be linked to the complimentary provision of information on local business.

Summary

3.5.37 If local community aspirations are to be delivered, a clearer and more focussed approach must be adopted to the current strategic framework for Mold's historic environment. Flintshire County Council, as the principal body with responsibility for the historic environment, should determine with greater clarity what its aims and objectives are and how they can secure broad stakeholder support for future identification, designation and management. To assist in setting these aims and objectives it is felt there a number of general principles that should guide this process. The Council should:

- (i) Be seen as a proactive custodian of the quality of local areas,
- (ii) Ensure the historic environment is recognised and where relevant designated,
- (iii) Promote the better integration of the historic environment across the organisation,
- (iv) Commit to an effective and properly resourced service, with training support for members,
- (v) Provide clarity of expectation in policy making and decision taking,
- (vi) Ensure quality is maintained through enforcement and compliance,
- (vii) Proactively manage the historic environment within the planning process through clear objectives and standards and the securing of grant assistance,
- (viii) Ensure the historic environment is clearly stated as an element within relevant strategic documents,
- (ix) Ensure services are accessible and the support of stakeholders engaged.

Future implementation will depend on the availability and reprioritisation of resources and a more effective partnership between the local community and the County Council. The Council in the future will need to ensure that through decision-making and the day to day delivery of all its environmental based services the designation of the town centre Conservation Area is given due regard. Many of the recommendation actions positively impact on service delivery for the County as a whole, illustrating the need for service improvements. In relation to Mold a series of associated projects sheets at the end of this section indicate the investments required to secure the future management of the historic environment.

Recommended Actions

3.5.38 Managing Change: Designation, Consent Processes, Monitoring & Enforcement:

- (i) Prepare a conservation area appraisal and management plan for the town centre to establish a baseline of evidence to act as a base to manage and monitor change, conducted within a detailed historic environment characterisation study of the Town;
- (ii) Establish a programme of courses, seminars, visits and presentations for members, stakeholders and officers on broad design principles and approaches, to build confidence and understanding in decision making;
- (iii) Ensure that the Council's agreed policy for dealing with enforcement with a historic environment dimension is afforded a high priority for action, is recognised in policy and is implemented on a consistent basis;
- (iv) Create an award scheme in partnership with the relevant interest groups to recognise excellence in conservation and design. Encourage by example and recognise the efforts of all involved.

3.5.39 Vision: Understanding, Policy, Strategy & Guidance:

- (i) Develop a more proactive approach focussed on the management not just preservation of the historic environment and in particular Conservation Areas;
- (ii) Use identified issues damaging the character and appearance of the historic environment to generate appropriate LDP policies and generic and specific SPG;
- (iii) Develop comprehensive targets and measures to gauge the impact of policies and decision making on the historic environment;
- (iv) Publish up to date guidance and information relevant to a broad range of users, raising awareness of Conservation Area, their purpose and what it means to live and work within them.
- (v) Use planning obligations from new development more effectively to secure off-site contributions towards tackling dilapidated and underused historic buildings within the town centre, based on need.

3.5.40 Resourcing: Skills, Finance & Partnership:

- (i) Ensure there is an appointed full time experienced Conservation Officer supported by in-house training for development control in design and conservation in order to deal with low level actions and to interpret advice;
- (ii) Develop external funding for conservation projects, including the possibility of a grant scheme for the town centre, supporting and utilising community groups as the vehicle for successful applications, disseminating more widely the Council's enviable track record in this regard;

- (iii) Make use of the Council's own estate of historic buildings as exemplars in repair and management;
- (iv) Establish a programme of historic environment education and awareness raising for stakeholders, the community and within the Council, through imaginative use of the web and consideration of regular 'state of the historic environment' report;
- (v) Investigate the reformation of a Conservation Area Forum, perhaps focussed more widely on the historic environment, as a means to directly engage and involve a broad range of community and interest groups in the development of policy, input into key development control issues, environmental enhancements and the development of further community based initiatives related to the historic environment.

3.5.4I A series of project sheets now follows illustrating proposals for Mold's heritage at Figure 45.

| Feasibility Study Initiative | 22. Undertake a Town wide Urban Historic Characterisation Study |
|--|---|
| Anticipated Total Cost | £20,000 |
| Supports Feasibility Study Aims & Objectives | Aim A3 To maintain and enhance a quality environment and special places Objective O5 & O6 |
| Potential Time Frame | Short Term (Years 1-3) |
| Potential Funding Contributors | Mold Town Council, Flintshire County Council & Cadwyn Clwyd |
| Implementation Timetable | Short term onwards |
| Description of Initiative | <p>Historic Characterisation is the term given to a range of techniques that have been developed to guide and inform the sustainable management of change. It is the process and product of defining the overall historic character of a place or landscape in terms of its present day archaeological and architectural identity. Characterisation produces an area-based understanding of how places and their landscapes have evolved. It moves beyond individual buildings, archaeological sites and designated heritage assets to provide a more integrated and holistic view of management by considering the historic environment as a whole. It operates at many different scales from county-based characterisation of historic landscape, to complex urban areas, market towns and sites. Historic characterisation does not replace traditional methods of assessment and mitigation but supports them.</p> <p>The methodology offers a constructive approach to heritage conservation. Its starting point is that any regeneration or development is set within an inherited landscape containing the remains of human activity. The most successful schemes are those that recognise and capitalise on this. Historic characterisation is not just a tool for planners or local authority historic environment specialists, it can also be used by developers, architects and those involved in area regeneration strategies and masterplanning. Because characterisation opens up heritage management to more varied and multiple viewpoints, personal as well as specialist, it is more open to absorbing and responding to community views. The results can be combined with ecological, visual or scenic analysis to produce a holistic assessment and strategy for a landscape or townscape. Such integration between the historic, cultural and natural environment is one of the key benefits of the characterisation process. As a tool for managing change historic characterisation is well suited to regeneration and place making, and to informing a variety of strategic planning and management purposes. It is most useful when carried out as early on in the design process as possible.</p> |
| Evaluated Through | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Study findings used to underpin the formulation of relevant Mold planning policies 2. Improved development control decision making and improvement in the town's appearance |
| Delivered By | Flintshire County Council working with community stakeholders |

| Feasibility Study Initiative | 23. Supporting Maintenance of Properties |
|--|--|
| Anticipated Total Cost | £20,000 |
| Supports Feasibility Study Aims & Objectives | Aim A3 To maintain and enhance a quality environment and special places Objectives O5 & O6 |
| Potential Time Frame | Short to Medium Term (Years 1-5) (ie £4,000 pa) |
| Potential Funding Contributors | HLF (£10,000) Other Partner (£10,000) |
| Implementation Timetable | Focussed on events each Autumn supported by the SPAB through 'National Maintenance Week' potentially as part of a wider THI scheme. |
| Description of Initiative | <p>This measure is designed to support the development of awareness amongst property owners and occupiers of the need to regularly undertake a simple programme of maintenance to prevent deterioration of the condition and appearance of their properties. Maintenance safeguards the historic fabric because less material - if any at all - is lost in regular, minimal and small-scale repair than in eventual, disruptive and extensive rescue. The avoidable loss of fabric through neglect diminishes the heritage value of the building and is a waste of resources. The measure is supported through the SPAB supported 'National Maintenance Week' and 'National Gutters Day' campaigns, which promote the idea of systematic ongoing maintenance rather than major sporadic repair works. This is further supported by the 'Maintain our Heritage' website. Initially the measure would involve distribution of the IHBC / SPAB document 'A Stitch in Time', to all historic properties within the town centre conservation area, in preparation for each Autumns 'National Maintenance Week' when a series of events would be launched. Reference to Cadw's soon to be released 'Maintenance Matters' initiative should also be made. The initiative would include a Council supported initiative of the use of a cherry picker to clean gutters along key streets, targeted at those buildings at most risk during the early years of the scheme. In future years the event would seek to tackle those properties not seen as a priority for grant assistance yet nonetheless in need of attention to prevent further deterioration in their condition and improve the visual attractiveness of the 'High Street' and thereby a well maintained town. The involvement of schools would be encouraged through a poetry competition to highlight the problems and perceptions of the impact of poorly maintained buildings on the community. Such an event would link into the measures regarding owner involvement in understanding conservation repairs. Similar work has been previously undertaken by Flintshire through its work in Holywell through the Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) programme.</p> |
| Evaluated Through | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of properties in the low priority who's condition is stabilised. 2. The number of competition entries. |
| Delivered By | Mold Town Council in partnership with Flintshire County Council |

| Feasibility Study Initiative | 24. Feasibility study for the regular display of the Mold Cape in the Town |
|--|--|
| Anticipated Total Cost | £5,000 |
| Supports Feasibility Study Aims & Objectives | A1 To create a distinctive, sustainable and attractive market town O2 To support and enhance the tourism, cultural and recreational opportunities for residents and visitors |
| Potential Time Frame | Short Term (Years 1-3) |
| Potential Funding Contributors | Mold Town Council, Flintshire County Council & Cadwyn Clwyd |
| Implementation Timetable | Medium to Long Term |
| Description of Initiative | <p>The Mold Cape is one of Britain's most famous ancient artefacts. The cape is considered to be one of the most spectacular examples of prehistoric sheet-gold working yet discovered. Its lasting interest can be seen in its prominent display at the British Museum as one of the nation's finest pieces of Art. The cape was number 6 in the list of British archaeological finds selected by experts at the British Museum for the 2003 BBC Television documentary 'Our Top Ten Treasures' presented by Adam Hart-Davis. The Cape also was the centrepiece of the exhibition hosted by Wrexham Council in 2005, which attracted over 11,000 visitors in 3 months, negotiated by the Heritage Minister of the Welsh Assembly Government.</p> <p>The Mold Cape could form an important means to increase the tourism and visitor offer of the town through the regular display of this priceless artefact of great public interest. While a permanent return to Mold would not doubt be fraught with difficulty, negotiating a regular return of the Cape could be a possibility subject to overcoming long held requirements by the British Museum for the loan of such artefacts.</p> <p>Building on the 2005 precedent, the study would look to determine the requirements to regularly display the Cape in its Home Town, such as security, potential locations, insurance and willingness of the Flintshire Museum Service, National Museums of Wales and the British Museum to collaborate in seeking to create an opportunity to achieve this. The study would also need to determine potential funding sources, likelihood and potential contexts in which the Cape could be displayed as a key feature of relevant wider collections.</p> |
| Evaluated Through | 1. Production of a feasibility study leading to the loan on a regular basis |
| Delivered By | Mold Town Council and Flintshire Museum Service |

| Feasibility Study Initiative | 25. Conservation Area Appraisal & Management Plan |
|--|--|
| Anticipated Total Cost | £10,000 |
| Supports Feasibility Study Aims & Objectives | Aim A3 To maintain and enhance a quality environment and special places Objective O5 & O6 |
| Potential Time Frame | Short Term (Years 1-3) |
| Potential Funding Contributors | Flintshire County Council |
| Implementation Timetable | Short Term |
| Description of Initiative | <p>Conservation Area designation is the primary means by which the Council can safeguard, for future generations, areas of valued distinctive places that help to define the individual cultural identity of communities. Designation is a statutory duty placed on local planning authorities, in recognition of areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is designate to preserve or enhance. However, designation in itself will not achieve their preservation or enhancement alone. An important element of formulating policies is firstly to understand the Conservation Area. This is a first step in a dynamic process in providing a basis for sustainable and robust decision making about its future development and the preparation of management proposals, The appraisal defines and evaluates the special interest and records its character and appearance and also helps the community to understand more clearly the value of their historic environment.</p> <p>A complementary document is a Conservation Area Management Plan. Designation should not be seen as an inhibitor of change but be regarded as an opportunity to secure high quality positive change, which has clear regard to the positive qualities of this historic area. In order to ensure that such a precious environmental and cultural resource is managed for future generations and to assist the Council in meeting its statutory duties with regard to the Town's conservation area, a Management Plan would provide a statement of the Council's commitment to achieving this through formulating broad proposals and guidance for future decision making. At present Mold has neither document and as a result both decision making and management of the conservation area could be radically improved and as a result respond to the issues identified in the report. In the recent past a programme of similar work was undertaken for 8 of the County's Conservation Areas. Availability of such documents would support grant application submissions to either Cadw or the Heritage Lottery Fund.</p> |
| Evaluated Through | <p>3. Formal adoption of the Appraisal and Management Plan</p> <p>4. Improved development control decision making and improvement in the town's appearance</p> |
| Delivered By | Flintshire County Council working with community stakeholders |

| Feasibility Study Initiative | 26. Shopfront & Signage Design Supplementary Planning Guide (SPG) |
|--|---|
| Anticipated Total Cost | £20,000 |
| Supports Feasibility Study Aims & Objectives | A1 & A3 O1, O5 & O6 |
| Potential Time Frame | Medium Term |
| Potential Funding Contributors | Flintshire County Council, Heritage Lottery Fund |
| Implementation Timetable | Medium term onwards |
| Description of Initiative | <p>Good shop front design can contribute to attracting shoppers and encourages them to stay and spend. The impression of high quality goods on offer begins at the shop front, tempting passers-by into the shop. This proposed SPG is not intended to lead to all shops looking the same, or to stifle flair or entrepreneurial spirit. However, having consideration for the appearance of a shop, as well as respect for the effect it has on its surroundings can produce benefits for the business and assist the economic prosperity of the area.</p> <p>Unfortunately, Mold has lost many fine historic shopfronts as a result of their replacement with versions inappropriate to the host building in terms of design, proportion, use of materials, the size of signage and increasingly low quality of investment, leaving a very few exemplars still surviving. Thankfully, good photographic evidence of the town exists which demonstrates the variety and quality that once existed that could guide future implementation. The guide would also promote local distinctiveness as being key to creating competitive attractive locations and address the issues of branding, globalisation and avoiding the creation of a 'clone town' and the impact of changing nature of retail sales to online and out of town managed locations.</p> <p>The guide's aim will be to improve the quality and appearance of the town's retail and commercial centre in sustaining competitive locations for shoppers and visitors, be responsive to the town's social and economic context in seeking solutions that support local regeneration, to conserve traditional and historic shopfronts and commercial premises, to prevent unsympathetic alterations to existing shopfronts, to encourage the submission and implementation of high quality proposals for schemes of amendment, enhancement and new shopfronts and encourage the use of available planning powers to effect positive change. Given the nature of the brief this work could be adopted as guidance for the County as a whole.</p> |
| Evaluated Through | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The number of restored shopfronts 2. The use of planning enforcement, discontinuance action and s215 notices to effect change |
| Delivered By | Flintshire County Council |

| Feasibility Study Initiative | 27. Heritage Interpretation Plan |
|--|--|
| Anticipated Total Cost | £15,000 to develop plan (Each project would need to individual assistance) |
| Supports Feasibility Study Aims & Objectives | A3 O2, O6 |
| Potential Time Frame | Short Term |
| Potential Funding Contributors | Flintshire County Council, Mold Town Council & Cadwyn Clwyd |
| Implementation Timetable | Medium Term |
| Description of Initiative | <p>At present promotion of the town's heritage is uncoordinated and sporadic, leading to mixed results across various stakeholders.</p> <p>A coordinated Heritage Interpretation Plan could assist in providing a basis for ensuring the various aspects of Mold's past were better presented to both the community and visitors. The plan could include proposals for interpretation boards, an oral history project, support for further historic plaques, an annual exhibition on a relevant Mold heritage theme, 'architreks' of walking tours of the architecture of the town, 'Slow walks' with way-marking leading into the surrounding countryside and features of interest in the wider landscape, training for tour guides, the lighting of key historic buildings, celebration of local heroes, further support for the Open Heritage Weekend, the provision of PDA's linked to information provided by the RCAHWW, the creation of a design and heritage award to acknowledge efforts and raise awareness of the value of quality places and buildings to the future of the town.</p> <p>Each of these proposed elements are individual projects, requiring further development but would sit under the overall Heritage Interpretation Plan. The plan would be developed in partnership with key stakeholders to ensure interested parties fed their interests into the coordinated approach. The plan would provide a strategic approach and illustrate the linkages to funding partners of the approach and a suite of projects that contributed to a critical mass creating a seamless Mold experience. It would also ensure that limited funds available from funding bodies would be channelled to an agreed list of priorities, rather than an ad hoc and uncoordinated approach.</p> |
| Evaluated Through | Delivery of the various individual elements in |
| Delivered By | Civic Society, Cittalsow Mold, Mold Town Council and other partners |

| Feasibility Study Initiative | 28. Historic Building Regeneration Grant Scheme Development |
|--|--|
| Anticipated Total Cost | £15,000 (Related to developing a Conservation Plan & Delivery Strategy to accompany the application) |
| Supports Feasibility Study Aims & Objectives | A1, A2 & A3 O3, O4, O5, O6 |
| Potential Time Frame | Short Term (Years 1-3) |
| Potential Funding Contributors | Cadw, Mold Town Council, Flintshire County Council |
| Implementation Timetable | Medium Term |
| Description of Initiative | <p>Unfortunately, many of the town centre's historic buildings are in need of assistance to tackle a back-log of repairs, the reinstatement of lost architectural detail, the reinsertion of historic shopfronts and support to encourage the reuse of upper floors. As a result it is suggested a bid to Cadw for Town Scheme Partnership is more likely to be a success than an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a THI.</p> <p>The aims of the scheme could be to improve the appearance and perception of the historic environment and tackling evident decay and vacancy of street frontage properties, create opportunities for investment, skills development and support the economic and social viability of Mold acting as an important partner in wider initiatives for the regeneration of the town centre, ensure the appropriate conservation and reuse of historic buildings and their settings, including the quality and maintenance of spaces and the public realm, increase both physical and intellectual access to and understanding of the cultural heritage and ensure increased involvement of local businesses, the community and visitors with the historic built environment to build on the sense of civic pride.</p> <p>The first stage is to submit a preliminary appraisal essentially describing the heritage merit, need and benefits of a potential scheme to Cadw. If approved Cadw may offer assistance towards the production of a detailed Conservation Plan and Delivery Strategy. Once prepared and submitted Cadw will if approved offer a three year contract to deliver the scheme. The submission would be supported by other initiatives, such as that for the preparation of a Conservation Area appraisal as a necessary precursor. Flintshire County Council has plenty of experience in the preparation of such bids, having secured THI's for Holywell and most recently Flint and as a result the Council are very well placed to develop this proposal further.</p> |
| Evaluated Through | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of buildings repaired and reused 2. Number of reinstated historic shopfronts |
| Delivered By | Flintshire County Council |

| Feasibility Study Initiative | 29. Options appraisal studies for key unoccupied Historic Buildings |
|--|--|
| Anticipated Total Cost | £15,000 per building |
| Supports Feasibility Study Aims & Objectives | Aims A1 & A3 Objectives O2, O5 & O6 |
| Potential Time Frame | Medium Term |
| Potential Funding Contributors | Flintshire County Council, Architectural Heritage Fund, Cadwyn Clwyd |
| Implementation Timetable | Long Term |
| Description of Initiative | <p>Unfortunately, Mold has a number of key buildings which are either disused, underused or in poor condition and prominent sites, which undermines both community and investor confidence in Mold. Many of these are unfortunately historic buildings without a long term viable future and include amongst others the Old Court House, Pen y Bont Farm (Pentre), St John the Evangelist's Church. While other historic buildings remain unoccupied this is largely as a result of current short term economic conditions and would not be a focus of this proposal.</p> <p>An options appraisal would identify the most beneficial use for the building, clearly demonstrating the potential financial viability or reasons why there is no viable use, provide a statement of the building's importance in conservation terms and an assessment of the social and public benefits of a proposed scheme.</p> <p>The main aim of an options appraisal is to establish the best end-use for the building and to assess financial viability. It should identify risks and reduce uncertainties to acceptable levels. An objective and professional assessment carried out with the assistance of independent consultants is therefore essential to identify the most 'beneficial' option, i.e. one that is appropriate to the building and is likely to be financially viable, if necessary with the aid of grants and other funds. The best options appraisals consider all potentially viable options for re-use. An appraisal that considers only one option will be of limited benefit in finding other viable uses for the building. Potential funders will need to know that all alternatives have been adequately explored and, where options have been considered and rejected, receive an explanation of why they have been rejected. Such appraisals would support discrete single property grant applications to appropriate bodies, due to their scale being inappropriate for area based grant assistance.</p> |
| Evaluated Through | The number of historic buildings reused |
| Delivered By | Property owners working in partnership with Mold Town Council & Flintshire County Council |

| Feasibility Study Initiative | 30. Town Design Statement Supplementary Planning Guide (SPG) |
|--|--|
| Anticipated Total Cost | £25,000 |
| Supports Feasibility Study Aims & Objectives | A1 & A3 O6 |
| Potential Time Frame | Medium Term |
| Potential Funding Contributors | Flintshire County Council |
| Implementation Timetable | Medium Term |
| Description of Initiative | <p>The purpose of a Town Design Statement is to manage change in both landscape and buildings, whether large or small, in a way which reflects and harmonises with the local character of a town's buildings, spaces and landscape setting, with a focus on residential development. The main aims of a Mold Town Design Statement are to augment the current UDP policies and influence the forthcoming Local Development Plan, align with national and local landscape policies, promote a sense of place and acknowledge local distinctiveness, encourage development which will make a positive contribution to Mold, improve new developments by providing guidance to landowners, developers and architects before they prepare proposals and reduce unsympathetic development by making it easier for planning authorities to seek improvements in planning applications and reject those which are not in sympathy with the community's design aspirations for the town. Other positive benefits may include raising awareness of local design, distinctiveness and environmental issues, creating partnerships between different groups in the community, acting as a catalyst for new initiatives which may be started as a result and speeding up the development process.</p> <p>The document will provide guidance to householders and local businesses, planner's, builders and architects and any other organisation or individual wishing to undertake development in Mold so that proposals contribute to and maintain the local character and distinctiveness of the town and its setting.</p> <p>It is intended that the Mold Town Design Statement will be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Guide (SPG) by Flintshire County Council and will become a material consideration when assessing planning applications.</p> |
| Evaluated Through | Improvement in the quality of Expanded design role of the Civic Society in the planning process |
| Delivered By | Flintshire County Council |



Mold town centre (17th May 1964)

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4.0 WAY FORWARD

4.1 Development, Implementation and Delivery

- 4.1.1 It is the view of the team that the overall task of delivering a Sense of Place for Mold is too large and diverse for any single stakeholder or body to deliver on their own and that an integrated and inclusive approach is required to capture the town's full and latent potential, given the range and cost of the 30 identified projects, a summary of which is provided overleaf at Figure 46. To underline this point the Study Steering Group has comprised representation from Cadwyn Clwyd, Mold Town Council, Flintshire County Council and Cittaslow Mold and the wider Sense of Place stakeholder group comprises over 25 separate representative groups and bodies.
- 4.1.2 The Study has confirmed there are exciting opportunities to develop the town's heritage and cultural assets thereby leading to a stronger Sense of Place. However, the ownership and responsibility for these assets is wide ranging and diverse. The Study has identified a number of potential projects some of which can be delivered immediately whereas others require long term and more detailed consideration, planning and funding discussions.
- 4.1.3 In accordance with best practice all public bodies have a responsibility to ensure that they provide services in the most joined up and efficient way thereby avoiding an often quoted silo mentality of working. Undoubtedly, if Mold is to grow and prosper a philosophy of mutual co-operation and partnership must be adopted particularly in the future implementation and delivery of the proposed projects which have been identified in this Study.
- 4.1.4 Unfortunately, across the United Kingdom many visions remain unachieved and abandoned often due to a lack of commitment, skills or partnership working. Moving from the Feasibility Study stage into the Development, Implementation and Delivery stages will therefore require a combination of the following elements:
- Project Ownership – Who will lead and inspire others to follow?
 - Integrated Delivery – How can policies and programmes be co-ordinated?
 - Strong Public / Private Sector Alliances
 - Intelligent Investment – Prioritised and cross cutting projects set within an agreed Business Plan
 - Agreed Milestones – To measure progress and celebrate success
 - Communication – Clear consensus about where Mold is heading to encourage and brief supporters and potential public / private sector investors.
- 4.1.5 It is clear that due to reductions in public expenditure in future years will require a more focussed and business orientated approach to support future investment decisions. This Feasibility Study provides the context for the development of a Sense of Place however, action is now required otherwise it will become merely a talking shop or 'a nice idea'. For this reason it is essential that steps are taken to establish a

management structure that is committed and capable of delivering the projects which have been identified in this Study.

Mold Sense of Place: Summary of Project Sheets & Estimated Project Costs

| | | Development Project Costs | Implementation Project Costs | Total Cost |
|---|--|------------------------------|--|-------------------|
| Visiting & Shopping in Mold | | | | |
| 1 | Merchandising Training for Retailers | | £5,000 | £5,000 |
| 2 | Customer Care Training | | £5,000 | £5,000 |
| 3 | Retail Window Fund | | £10,000 | £10,000 |
| 4a | Tourism Information Centre | £20,000 | | £20,000 |
| 4b | Tourism Information Centre | | £350,000 | £350,000 |
| | Sub Total | £20,000 | £370,000 | £390,000 |
| The Streets & Places of Mold | | | | |
| 5 | Gateways & Approaches: Signs | | £10,000 | £10,000 |
| 6 | Gateways & Approaches: Roundabout | £2,500 | £12,500 | £15,000 |
| 7 | Gateways & Approaches: Gateway Sites | £20,000 | | £20,000 |
| 8 | Gateways & Approaches: Clean Approaches | £7,500 | £50,000 | £57,500 |
| 9 | Town Centre Welcome: Signs | £10,000 | £50,000 | £60,000 |
| 10 | Town Centre Welcome: Parking | £9,000 | £300,000 | £309,000 |
| 11 | Town Centre Welcome: Information | £6,000 | £35,000 | £41,000 |
| 12 | New Street Crossings | £7,500 | £50,000 | £57,500 |
| 13 | Highways Study | £20,000 | | £20,000 |
| 14 | Daniel Owen Phase I | £26,000 | £310,000 | £336,000 |
| 15 | Bailey Hill: Conservation & Management Plan | £15,000 | | £15,000 |
| 16 | Bailey Hill: Conservation & Enhancement | | £250,000 | £250,000 |
| 17 | Leadmills Enhancement | | £140,000 | £140,000 |
| | Sub Total | £123,500 | £1,207,500 | £1,331,000 |
| Activities & Enjoying Mold | | | | |
| 18 | Daniel Owen Square Events | | £5,000 | £5,000 |
| 19 | Events & Festivals | | £20,000 | £20,000 |
| 20 | Events Ground | | £300,000 | £300,000 |
| 21 | County Hall Shuttle Bus | | £5,000 | £5,000 |
| | Sub Total | | £330,000 | £330,000 |
| Heritage of Mold | | | | |
| 22 | Urban Historic Characterisation Study | | £20,000 | £20,000 |
| 23 | Supporting Maintenance | | £20,000 | £20,000 |
| 24 | Mold Cape Feasibility Study | £5,000 | | £5,000 |
| 25 | Conservation Area Appraisal & Manage. Plan | | £10,000 | £10,000 |
| 26 | Shopfront Signage SPG | | £20,000 | £20,000 |
| 27 | Heritage Interpretation Plan | £15,000 | | £15,000 |
| 28 | Historic Buildings Regeneration Grant Scheme | £15,000 | | £15,000 |
| 29 | Options appraisal for key Historic Buildings | £45,000 | | £45,000 |
| 30 | Town Design Statement SPG | | £25,000 | £25,000 |
| | Sub Total | £80,000 | £95,000 | £175,000 |
| | | | Total Estimated Project Costs | £2,283,500 |

Figure 46: Summary of Project Sheets & Estimated Project Costs

4.2 Project Ownership

4.2.1 As a next step it is important that the Client Team and wider stakeholder group decide who should take ownership for the Sense of Place Study and be tasked with responsibility for moving the projects from feasibility towards implementation and delivery. In this respect there can only be one Sense of Place or future vision for Mold so it is recommended that the aims and objectives of the Town Centre Action Plan and Cittaslow Mold are included as part of any future ownership debate.

4.2.2 There a number of potential models or ownership structures that can be adopted to deliver the findings of this Study. However, the key to success will undoubtedly revolve around strong leadership, integrated public sector delivery and a programme of clear prioritised, phased and costed projects set within a measurable and realistic plan.

Below is an example of a possible future ownership and delivery structure:

- **Mold Town Partnership**

To take High Level decisions / guardian owner Mold Sense of Place.

- **Officer Group**

Day to Day Delivery – representatives from all relevant Council Departments working with the Mold Town Centre Manager.

- **Elected Members**

To provide political support and endorsement.

- **Working Groups**

Task and Finish Groups responsible for taking forward specific projects

4.2.3 It is possible that this suggested delivery structure could if required also assume responsibility for the management of a number of day to day issues which contribute to the Mold's overall Sense of Place. An example of this could be future management of the Conservation Area to ensure that this precious asset can be maintained into the future and protected from ill conceived building alterations, signage and new developments.

4.2.4 This proposed multi-disciplinary team approach is already strongly advocated as best practice by the Welsh Assembly Government in their planning guidance documents as seen in TAN 12 (Design) in paragraph 6.12.

4.3 Governance

- 4.3.1 Governance can be described as a process whereby organisations make important decisions, determine whom they involve and decide how best to deliver. There is general agreement amongst economists that good governance is necessary for economic success. Across the UK partnerships have emerged as the preferred mode of governance for the delivery of economic visions and regeneration and many of these projects have similarities in Mold.
- 4.3.2 On this basis it would be helpful to consider whether the future governance arrangements for implementation and delivery of Mold's Sense of Place would pass the test of a successful partnership?
- 4.3.3 Below are our suggested principles for the governance of successful partnerships:

Legitimacy and Voice

- Everyone who needs to be is represented is at the table,
- There are mechanisms for bringing partners together,
- Discussion is genuine, respectful and inclusive,
- There is a consensus of opinion at the table.

Direction / Strategic Vision

- All parties share a joint and clearly understood Vision of their goal,
- Each party sees how their organisation can contribute to the Vision,
- Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined,
- The Vision is capable of being refreshed / updated as changes occur.

Performance

- There is clear agreement among partners about what constitutes success,
- Performance and milestones are monitored and reported,
- The framework for measuring performance is developed jointly and is transparent,
- There are sufficient resources to build and maintain the partnership,
- The different working styles and structures of partners is understood and accepted.

Accountability

- All partners are accountable,
- There are transparent relationships between partners,
- The accountability of partners to their employing organisations is recognised and respected,
- Wherever possible also business is conducted and reported in the public domain.

Equity and Fairness

- All partners derive the same value from their involvement,
- The rules which govern each partner are recognised and respected,
- Self or personal interest is disregarded.

4.3.4 In order to move forward the status of any future partnership will need to be agreed. In this respect it could be that an informal representative partnership based on good will and shared common purpose emerges as the most appropriate model. Alternatively if necessary a more formal structure could be developed with the partners agreeing and signing up to a common Memorandum of Understanding.

4.3.5 Ultimately it is now for the Client Team to determine how best they wish to progress matters in order to implement and deliver the findings of this Study.

4.4 Conclusion

- 4.4.1 The actions which will now be taken by the Feasibility Study Steering Group will be critical to the future success of Mold as a shopping, service and leisure destination. There is an immediate need to build and consolidate a much greater level of trust between the public and private sectors especially at present when the business community is feeling vulnerable.
- 4.4.2 The public sector must, through its actions, demonstrate to private enterprise that it understands the issues, is committed to achieving a shared vision, can resource its own services and can apply policies and regulations with common sense and clarity.
- 4.4.3 The Mold Town Partnership provides the ideal vehicle to deliver a successful future for Mold, if keenly supported by the public sector, properly managed and given the opportunity to influence real change. There will only be one opportunity for the public sector to get this right otherwise Mold will face an uncertain future and a gradual decline in its status as a potential premier destination in North East Wales.



Mold town centre, looking south (14th August 1954)

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Appendix A: Mold Community Questionnaire

Finding a vision for Mold

Mold Town Council, Cittaslow Mold, Flintshire County Council and Cadwyn Clwyd are working in partnership to prepare a 'Vision' for Mold. The completion of this short questionnaire will be the first step in helping the process of defining the vision and its elements. The results of the questionnaire will be used to guide the next stage and to formulate proposals for the town. These proposals will be presented and consulted upon more fully later in the year, before being considered by the partners to guide future work and investment over the next 10 years in the town.



Visiting & Shopping in Mold

1. How often do shop or visit Mold? (please tick the relevant box)

Daily ☐ Weekly ☐ Monthly ☐ First time ☐ Never ☐

2. Do you find that the range of shops or facilities in Mold meets your needs? (please tick the relevant box)

Yes ☐ No ☐ Why? _____

3. Please tick the relevant box based upon your experience as shopper/visitor to Mold

| | | | |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Is Mold easy to get into and out of? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | Not sure <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Is it easy to find your way around the town? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | Not sure <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do you feel safe in the town? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | Not sure <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are Mold's streets and pavements clean? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | Not sure <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are town's people welcoming? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | Not sure <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do you find Mold an interesting place? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | Not sure <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are shops sufficiently varied in the goods they offer? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | Not sure <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Is Mold a bustling place? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | Not sure <input type="checkbox"/> |

Please add any further comments or explanation to the above table, below

4. Does Mold offer a good range of places to eat and drink? (please tick the relevant box)

Yes ☐ No ☐ If no, what's missing? _____

5. Could you see Mold being used as a potential base for visitors to tour North East Wales? (please tick the relevant box)

Yes ☐ No ☐ And why? _____

The Streets & Places of Mold

1. What are your first impressions when you arrive at the outskirts and pass into Mold? (please tick the relevant box)

Special /Attractive ☐ Nothing Special ☐ Unattractive ☐ Not sure ☐

How or where could things be improved? _____

2. What is your impression of the car park when you come into the town, or if you come by bus what do you think of the bus station? (please tick the relevant box)

Special /Attractive ☐ Nothing Special ☐ Unattractive ☐ Not sure ☐

How or where could things be improved? _____

3. Which streets and places do you particularly like or dislike when you are out and about in Mold town centre?

4. If you were bringing a visitor to Mold – are there special places, buildings, shops, activities or anything else you would want them to experience and why?

Activities & Enjoying Mold

1. **Would you support Daniel Owen Square being developed as a location for community events, festivals and other activities?** (please tick the relevant box)

Yes ☐ No ☐ If so, what particular ideas do you have for re-organising the square?

2. **Do you consider that Mold has the potential to support the establishment of an Events Show Ground?**

(please tick the relevant box)

Yes ☐ No ☐ If so, where would you like to see the Events Show Ground located?

3. **If you were to describe 3 key positive features about living, working or visiting Mold what would these be?**

1

2

3

The Heritage of Mold

Below are a few statements. Please tick the appropriate box which best reflects your thoughts

The people, places and features of Mold's history are well promoted as part of the town's future as an attraction for visitors

Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Not sure ☐

The Welsh heritage of the town could be better promoted (eg famous people, the language or the built heritage)

Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Not sure ☐

It is important to retain historic buildings in use in the town centre

Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Not sure ☐

It would be preferable to see traditional shopfronts retained on historic buildings

Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Not sure ☐

Upper floors of buildings in the town centre should be reused rather than left vacant

Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Not sure ☐

The painting of historic stonework and brickwork should be avoided

Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Not sure ☐

Modern, large plastic signage and non-traditional colours should be avoided on town centre historic buildings

Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Not sure ☐

Traditional timber windows and other architectural features should be repaired and retained

Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Not sure ☐

The town could benefit from a grant scheme to assist with the repair and enhancement of properties in the town centre

Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Not sure ☐

Please add any further comments or explanations to the statements, below

Please provide the first 4 letters/numbers of your postcode – this will help us identify whether you're local or a visitor but also maintain your privacy. **Your postcode:**

In order for the results of this questionnaire to be properly assessed, it would be most helpful if you would tick the appropriate box for your age range 0-19 ☐ 20-29 ☐ 30-39 ☐ 40-49 ☐ 50-59 ☐ 60-69 ☐ 70+ ☐

If you would like to take part in the prize draw for a **free dinner for two in Mold** please leave a telephone number or email address so we can contact you. Please be assured these details will only be used for the prize draw and will not be used for any other purpose or passed onto third parties.

Telephone: Email:



Many thanks for your time in completing this questionnaire

Please return this questionnaire to the Mold Sense of Place stand at the Food & Drink Festival, Mold Town Library, or by using the pre-paid envelope to arrive no later than Monday 28th September.

Appendix B: Marketing Plan

The Marketing Plan

I Introduction

I.1 Background

The value of events and festivals in creating distinctiveness and increasing footfall in market towns has been well proven over the recent past. Mold has seized this opportunity with a number of successful events including the Food & Drink Festival which attracted over 10, 000 visitors in September 2009 and is estimated to have pumped a quarter of a million pounds into the local economy. In addition, the Mold 10km run and the annual carnival play an important role in developing the community spirit of the town, reinforcing loyalties and encouraging both residents and visitors to enjoy their local culture. Keen to build upon this success and wishing to attract more visitors to the town, the Study Brief asked that a Marketing Plan be produced which would provide the framework for an enhanced events and festivals programme. In undertaking this task, we have carefully considered the implications of the options for the future use of Daniel Owen Square (Task 5 in the study) and the identification of suitable sites for an events showground (Task 6)

The Marketing Plan sets out the activities necessary to seek to secure a larger share of the events and festivals market. There is a need to raise awareness and appeal to the target markets. In order to derive the maximum economic benefit for the town, it is essential that an increase in visitor market share is secured. In seeking to obtain this market share, it will be valuable to seek to ensure that the programme is co-ordinated not only in Mold but with other venues as well so as not to displace visitors from other events in the County or region. The aim is therefore to work in partnership with the other events organisers that are targeting the same market sectors so that collectively, the visitor numbers will increase and the resulting additional income shared.

This co-operation will enrich the visitor experience, encourage joint ticketing, create discounts and offers, reduce costs to individual events and harmonise the promotional effort. An on-line scheme to offer a “one-stop shop” facility could be introduced working with the events planners, accommodation providers, retailers and the public agencies to make it as easy as possible for new visitors to enjoy the “Mold Welcome Town” experience as a package. One of the principle aims being to extend both the length of stay and the season. Collaborative marketing opportunities will be sought and agreed with partners to take advantage of budgets, skills and experience to promote the new programme.

However, markets are dynamic not static so the Plan must be flexible to be able to respond to changing market demand over time. This will in turn shape the development and resulting introduction of new events and festivals with a promotional programme to reflect this.

I.2 Objectives

In undertaking the study and this task in particular, we propose that the objectives of the Marketing Plan should now be as follows:

- To provide a structured and realistic programme of potential events and festivals which Mold could host subject to demand, resources and funding.
- To include an assessment of the potential of Daniel Owen Square and a new events showground in delivering such a programme. (Input from Tasks 5 and 6)
- To provide a document which can be used to promote Mold as an ideal location for events and festivals and to support future funding bids.
- To monitor customer awareness, satisfaction and competitive activity so that new events can be developed, the offer enhanced and new creative promotional programmes introduced.

2 The Marketing Plan

2.1 Assessment of Potential

Mold is already recognised as an established venue for livestock and street markets and in recent years has hosted the National Eisteddfod and successful Food and Music Festivals. The location of Theatre Clywd on the periphery of the Town is a considerable advantage and helps to distinguish Mold as a regional and contemporary cultural destination. In addition, the historic legacy of Daniel Owen, The Gold Cape, St Mary's Church and the Motte and Bailey provides Mold with tourism assets which set it apart from many other market towns.

Mold therefore has a track record and portfolio of exciting events and assets on which to base a Marketing Plan for Events and Festivals. The challenge is to select a strategy which Mold should adopt given the scale of the Town and the resources likely to be available and link this to wider supporting themes such as the Cittaslow Initiative. From research it is apparent that a number of market towns have been active in developing events and festivals as a way of generating new visitor spend and increasing retailer profits.

At present there are ten active recognised showground / festival sites in Wales. The best known and most successful of these is the Royal Welsh Show Ground at Builth Wells but in North Wales the circa 60 hectare Anglesey Agricultural Showground is growing in importance. Although not recognised as a Showground the Royal International Pavilion at Llangollen has a clear strategy to build on its legacy as the home of the International Music Eisteddfod. In this respect Llangollen is developing a strong platform of events based around music, theatre, food and drink.

Given the close relationship of Mold to the wider Deeside economy, it is important to be aware of the activities of places such as Chester, Oswestry and other locations which are active in the events and festivals market.

Chester has established itself as a strong regional events showground with a diverse calendar of events including a Pumpkin, Food and Drink, Music and Literature Festivals, Summer / Winter Parades, Antique Fairs and Equestrian Events. At Oswestry, the town plays host to a Food and Drink Show and Park Hall, the 15 ha showground on the A5 hosts a "Truck Fest", agricultural show, vintage machine rally, motorcycle gatherings and antique fairs. The Towns of Nantwich and Ludlow are also worthy of review and comparison. Nantwich plays host to an International Cheese Festival, holds Folk and Jazz Festivals, has an Annual Food Festival and holds Farmers Markets and in the winter The town has also provided an outdoor ice rink and undertakes ghost walks. The Cittaslow Town of Ludlow has built on the theme of

food as a core offer of the Town but has a particular strong and quality web site to promote its wider calendar of events.

Based on this research it is clear that the market for events and festivals is competitive and there are already players in the field who have an established calendar of local and regional based events. Taking into account this competitive position it is recommended that the Marketing Plan should be based around the unique strengths and track record of Mold as follows:

History

Promote and build on the theme of Daniel Owen by for example, develop a Daniel Owen Town Trail, hold an Annual Welsh Literature Festival, improve and develop the current Daniel Owen Exhibition.

Culture

Build improved links with Theatre Clwyd so the Theatre becomes synonymous with the Town of Mold. Activities could include the commissioning of a play about Daniel Owen or poetry reading.

Music

Build on the success of the Ffin Music Festival and the growing calendar of events at the Y Pentan Café Bar and seek to establish Mold as the contemporary Welsh Music venue of North East Wales.

Food

Host the Food Festival annually and promote the current Farmers Market. Aim to introduce two European food markets in 2010. Build improved links with Livestock Market and promote the home of locally produced food etc

Street Markets / Fairs

Seek to widen appeal and quality by introducing new events such as a twice yearly Antique or Book fair (linked to a Daniel Owen Event) or Record / Toy fair linked to Music Festival. Consider using Mold Town Hall as a potential venue for these markets linked to Daniel Owen Square.

2.2 Prospectus

Mold will offer an ideal location for events and festivals for the following reasons;

- **Market Appeal**

Mold is the county town of Flintshire, a successful community of 8000 people and the gateway to North Wales and Snowdonia. The residents of this historic town welcome over visitors a year because of its shops and markets, heritage and existing events and festivals programme. The town is within a 90 minute drive of 2.5 million people in Merseyside and Manchester and a popular destination for day trippers.

- **Access**

Access to the town is straightforward and congestion free with direct links to the A55 dual carriageway which connects to the Cheshire motorway system and national networks. Parking in Mold is cheap and plentiful with well signed secure car parks in the town and at events sites. Park & Ride facilities are

provided at big events and additional buses will run from towns in the region to the bus station in the heart of the town.

There are a number of events sites with all the facilities to ensure a good visitor experience ranging from civic spaces in the middle of the town to purpose built showgrounds.

- **Mold's Events and Festivals Programme**

The town already hosts a number of successful events so has the experience which is often lacking in other towns. The Mold Food & Drink Festival attracted over 10,000 people in 2009 and pumped a quarter of a million pounds into the local economy. Other events include;

The Mold 10km Run
Ffin Music Festival
International Eisteddfod
Santa Claus Race

- **Support**

The Mold Town Council, Mold Town Centre Partnership and their partner organisations will provide a high level of support to event's organisers;

Infrastructure Street and venue cleaning, direction signing, secure parking, public facilities,

Resources Town Centre Manager, Town Clerk, Town Councillors, police and fire brigade, and council staff work together to provide a seamless support service to organisers of events with a good understanding of the local community.

Marketing Advice on marketing, targeted advertising and public relations.

Financial Detailed knowledge of funding sources and contacts in the public and private sector. Support for funding bids.

Business Support Support from the retailing and business community, promotion, participation and a welcoming attitude.

2.3 Channels of Communication

A promotional programme will be developed and implemented to achieve the objectives of the Marketing Plan at the least cost yet with maximum impact. There will be several strands to the promotional programme as below.

Targets

The target markets for the Mold Events and Festivals Programme can be divided into these segments

Tourists – Comprising both day and staying visitors from local, regional, national and international bases.

Residents – Local community with their friends and relatives.

Media – Specialist writers.

Politicians – Local Councillors, MPs and MEPs.

Events Organisers

Funders

Media

The promotional message will be different for each target and will be directly aimed to raise awareness, achieve understanding and commit to visit. The message will be clear, sustained and informative. The message will be delivered through a variety of media which offer the best and widest opportunity for effective communication. Some or all of the following will be used depending upon the target audience and the cost:

- Distribution through the national Tourist Information Centres/Points network.
- Local communication channels.
- Electronic/Digital media.
- Specialist publications.
- Partner organisations.
- Media and Public Relations.
- Advertising.
- Collaborative marketing.
- Newsletters.

2.4 Programme

The work programme over the first five years could be as follows;

Year 1

- Develop and refine the Plan and Prospectus
- Secure the budget
- Set up the Working Group to be accountable to the Mold Town Centre Partnership
- Prepare the Work Programme in detail
- Research targets

Year 2

- Implement the Work Programme
- Monitor progress

Year 3

- Update Prospectus

- Monitor progress
- Review budget
- Review targets
- Update Work Programme to exploit new show sites (if appropriate)

Year 4

- Monitor progress
- Update Work Programme to exploit new show sites (if appropriate)

Year 5

- Update Prospectus
- Review budget for the next 5 years
- Review progress and achievements against Objectives
- Plan remedial action if needed
- Update Work Programme to exploit new show sites (if appropriate)

2.5 Budget

A marketing budget will need to be set aside for the implementation of the Marketing Plan over the first five years of the project. This will be made up from the income from a variety of sources including grants and sponsorship. A notional sum of £10,000 a year should be allocated for each year over the first five years of the Plan. This would not include salaries or the capital costs of developing new show sites.

2.6 Monitoring & Evaluation

Close monitoring of the marketing spend will be an integral activity as part of the implementation of the Marketing Plan. The reasons for this are;

- To evaluate the effectiveness of each channel of communication used in respect of raising awareness, achieving understanding and securing the target visitor numbers.
- To obtain visitor feedback through a regular programme of consumer research that will enable the promoters to change the promotional message and/or the events programme.
- To facilitate the development of new “products”.

Appendix C: Cittaslow Goals



CITTASLOW GOALS

(The goals that Cittaslow towns sign up to work towards)

Section A 1-10

Environment

*** Section B 1-10**

Infrastructure

*** Section C 1-8**

Quality of Urban Fabric

Section D 1-9

Encouragement of Local Produce and Products

Section E 1-8

Hospitality & Community

Section F 1-9

Cittaslow Awareness Creation

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## **CITTASLOW MOLD SPACE & PLACE GROUP CONCENTRATES ON SECTIONS B and C as follows:**

### **Infrastructure**

- B1 Existence of well kept green spaces**
- B2 Developing and implementing an integrated traffic management and access strategy paying attention to the needs of pedestrians and the historic character of the town.**
- B3 Disability-friendly access to public places and offices**
- B4 Infrastructure which facilitates alternative mobility**
- B5 Free and easily accessible public conveniences**
- B6 Places for people to sit down and rest, not just in town centres.**
- B7 Uniform opening hours for the different departments of council offices**
- B8 Provision of Public Relations office**
- B9 Slow City Call Centre for people to contact**
- B10 Plan for all business hours to coincide with townspeople's needs**

### **Quality of Urban Fabric**

- C1 Plans to promote the maintenance, conservation and enhancement of historic areas, buildings and artefacts of cultural and local significance and their sympathetic re-use.**
- C2 Plans to abolish faulty theft alarms combined with measures for the protection of private property and the safety of the community.**
- C3 Encouragement of use of reusable crockery and cutlery in public establishments.**
- C4 Use of sympathetically designed litter bins and effective litter and waste management.**
- C5 Plans to plant sweet smelling or environment-enhancing plants in public and private gardens.**
- C6 Encouragement of the use of interactive websites where the public can communicate with the administrators of the town.**
- C7 Plans to promote eco-friendly architecture.**
- C8 Plans to promote appreciation of historic centres and to make them user friendly through the production of a Town Plan, Conservation Area Appraisal, Town Design Statement or similar.**

**THE SPACE & PLACE GROUP IS ALSO AWARE OF THE OTHER GOALS AND CONTRIBUTES TO SECTION F: CITTASLOW AWARENESS CREATION WHERE IT CAN**

**VC/3.9.09**

## **Appendix D: Long List of Events Ground Site Commentaries**

## **APPENDIX D – EVENTS GROUND SITE COMMENTARIES**

### **I. New Street Car Park**

#### **Introduction and Site Location**

New Street Car Park is situated in a central Town centre location with good access from the A 5119 Mold / Ruthin Road. The site has been the venue and played host to the Mold Food and Drink Festival for the past two years.

The loss of car parking spaces would be of long-term concern to Flintshire CC and Mold Town Council and should the site be selected spaces may have to be replaced elsewhere in the Town. The site also currently lacks a main road frontage.

#### **Ownership**

Flintshire CC

#### **Site Area**

0.60 hectares

#### **Existing Use**

Pay and Display Car Park

#### **Topography**

Flat Tarmac Surface

#### **Ranking in the Sequential Test**

As an existing developed site within the urban area, the site ranks at the top of the sequential hierarchy.

#### **Archaeological / Cultural Heritage Impact**

The site is in reasonably close proximity to Bethesda Chapel a Grade II\* listed building.

#### **Ecological Impact**

No Ecological Study has been carried out but as an existing developed site the impact is expected to be minimal.

#### **Accessibility**

The site is within the walking catchments of a significant proportion of the town's population. The site is also easy to access by cycle.

#### **Public Transport Accessibility**

The site is well served by bus routes and is in close proximity to the town's Bus Station

#### **Visual Appearance / Influence**

The site has a poor visual appearance and could be regarded as "back land development" hidden away from the main A 5119 Mold / Ruthin Highway.

The zone of visual influence is from the immediate residential and commercial properties adjacent to the site.

#### **Flood Risk**

The site is located in an area of flood risk.

#### **Proximity to Town Centre / Sustainability**

Excellent Town Centre location with good sustainability credentials.



## **2. Love Lane Car Park**

### **Introduction and Site Location**

Love Lane Car Park is situated at a prime gateway entrance to the Town centre with good access from the A 541 Chester / Denbigh Road. The site is the venue for a weekly car boot sale held on Sundays. The loss of car parking spaces would be of long-term concern to Flintshire CC and Mold Town Council and should the site be selected spaces may have to be replaced elsewhere in the Town. The car park also provides a number of reserved car parking spaces for users of the twice-weekly livestock market.

### **Ownership**

Flintshire CC

### **Site Area**

0.50 hectares

### **Existing Use**

Pay and Display Car Park

### **Topography**

Flat Tarmac Surface

### **Ranking in the Sequential Test**

As an existing developed site within the urban area, the site ranks at the top of the sequential hierarchy.

### **Archaeological / Cultural Heritage Impact**

St Mary's Church and Bailey Hill over looks the site. The possibility of linking these historical and cultural assets into the wider use of the Events Show Ground perhaps by a sign posted walking route is a possibility. Scope may exist to utilise Glebe Fields below St Mary's Church Yard bounded by Love Lane as an additional Show Ground Area. However, local enquiries suggest that this proposal is unlikely to gain local support due to wider conservation concerns.

### **Ecological Impact**

No Ecological Study has been carried out but as an existing developed site the impact is expected to be minimal.

### **Accessibility**

The site is within the walking catchments of a significant proportion of the town's population. The site is also easy to access by cycle.

### **Public Transport Accessibility**

The site is well served by bus routes and is in close proximity to the town's Bus Station

### **Visual Appearance / Influence**

The site has an attractive, open visual appearance and can be easily identified and viewed by persons travelling on the A 541 Chester / Denbigh Road. The zone of visual influence would have an impact on St Mary's Church and the adjoining Alyn Meadow residential development.

### **Flood Risk**

The site is situated in an area of flood risk.

### **Proximity to Town Centre / Sustainability**

Excellent Town Centre location with good sustainability credentials.

### **3. Maes Gwern Industrial Area**

#### **Introduction and Site Location**

The Maes Gwern Industrial Area is situated on the southern boundary of the Town adjacent and bounded by the Mold Bypass. The industrial area remains partially developed and as such offers some undeveloped areas and plots which could be utilised as an Events Show Ground. Whilst easily accessible from the Mold Bypass the site is somewhat hidden away and cannot be regarded as prominent. As the site has been allocated in the Flintshire Unitary Development Plan for high quality employment purposes it is unlikely that a long-term tenure of the site or planning consent could be obtained for use as an Events Show ground.

#### **Ownership**

Flintshire CC

#### **Site Area**

4.70 hectares

#### **Existing Use**

Development site

#### **Topography**

Flat

#### **Ranking in the Sequential Test**

As an undeveloped site within the urban area, the site is within the second tier of the overall sequential hierarchy.

#### **Archaeological / Cultural Heritage Impact**

There are no cultural or archaeological heritage sites in immediate proximity.

#### **Ecological Impact**

No Ecological Study has been carried out but as a proposed development site the impact is expected to be minimal.

#### **Accessibility**

The site is reasonably accessible to the Town' southern residents and it may be possible to improve foot path linkages from both Wrexham Road and Ruthin Road via Upper Bryn Coch. The site can also be accessed by cycle.

#### **Public Transport Accessibility**

Bus routes serve the site.

#### **Visual Appearance / Influence**

The site has a poor visual appearance and could be regarded as "back land development" hidden away from the main Mold Bypass. Depending on precise location there could be a visual influence to properties located in Broncoed Lane and Upper Bryn Coch.

#### **Flood Risk**

The site is not known to have any flooding problems.

#### **Proximity to Town Centre / Sustainability**

Reasonable proximity to the Town Centre and reasonable sustainability credentials.

## **4. Lead Mill Bridge / Mold RFC Playing Fields**

### **Introduction and Site Location**

Lead Mill Bridge is situated on the A494 Mold Queensferry Road. The site enjoys a prominent location and provides a green barrier / buffer between Mold Town and the Flintshire Civic Centre Complex. The site is utilised intensively by Mold RFC who it is understood have recently signed a new 25-year lease with Flintshire CC for use of the area.

### **Ownership**

Flintshire CC / Mold RFC (Tenant)

### **Site Area**

1.90

### **Existing Use**

Playing Fields

### **Topography**

Flat

### **Ranking in the Sequential Test**

As an undeveloped site within the urban area, the site is within the second tier of the overall sequential hierarchy. However, policies in the Unitary Development Plan seek to protect playing fields from development.

### **Archaeological / Cultural Heritage Impact**

There are no cultural or archaeological heritage sites in immediate proximity.

### **Ecological Impact**

No Ecological Study has been carried out although any grass on the playing fields is unlikely to have ecological interest. The margins of the playing fields may have potential species of habitats.

### **Accessibility**

The site is within the walking catchments of a significant proportion of the town's population. The site is also easy to access by cycle.

### **Public Transport Accessibility**

The site is well served by bus routes and is in reasonable proximity to the town's Bus Station

### **Visual Appearance / Influence**

The site has an attractive, open visual appearance and can be easily identified and viewed by persons travelling on the A 494 Mold / Queensferry Road. The zone of visual influence may have an impact on adjoining residential properties such as Bryn Awelon and Alyn Street and St David's Lane.

### **Flood Risk**

The site is situated in a flood risk area.

### **Proximity to Town Centre / Sustainability**

Good proximity to the Town Centre and reasonable sustainability credentials.

## **5. Kendrick's Field / Mold Recreation Ground**

### **Introduction and Site Location**

Kendrick's Field is situated on the A494 Mold / Ruthin Road. The site enjoys a prominent location and is designated as Green Space in the Flintshire Unitary Development Plan. The site is predominately used as an informal dog walking area and adjoins the more formal Town Park. The site has previously played host to the Towns Carnival and Welsh Music festival. A portion of the site subject of an Appeal Decision in August 09 Ref APP/A6835/A/09/2102660 regarding a proposed construction of a Skate Board Park which was refused.

### **Ownership**

Flintshire CC

### **Site Area**

1.00 hectares

### **Existing Use**

Informal Recreation Area.

### **Topography**

Flat

### **Ranking in the Sequential Test**

As an undeveloped site within the urban area, the site is within the second tier of the overall sequential hierarchy.

### **Archaeological / Cultural Heritage Impact**

The site is in reasonably close proximity to Bethesda Chapel a Grade II\* listed building.

### **Ecological Impact**

No Ecological Study has been carried out although any grass on the playing fields is unlikely to have ecological interest.

### **Accessibility**

The site is within the walking catchments of a significant proportion of the town's population. The site is also easy to access by cycle.

### **Public Transport Accessibility**

The site is well served by bus routes and is in close proximity to the town's Bus Station

### **Visual Appearance / Influence**

The site has an open and prominent visual appearance and can be easily identified and viewed by persons travelling on the A 494 Mold / Ruthin Road. The zone of visual influence may have an impact on adjoining residential properties situated in New Street, Llys Preswylfa and Maes Bodlonfa. There is a clear demarcation between Kendrick's Field and the more formal Town park, with a line of trees and hedge forming a boarder between the two areas.

### **Flood Risk**

The site is situated in a flood risk area.

### **Proximity to Town Centre / Sustainability**

Excellent Town centre location with good Sustainability credentials.

## **6. Alwyn Meadow**

### **Introduction and Site Location**

Alwyn Meadow is situated on the A541 Mold / Denbigh Road opposite the Synthite Works. Flintshire CC originally allocated the land under policy SR7c of the Unitary Development Plan to allow for the relocation of Mold Alexandra Football Club. Following widespread local objections to this proposal the landowner declared that the land would not be made available for this proposal. Given that land use allocations require a degree of certainty that they can be delivered within the period of the Plan, in 2006 Flintshire CC withdrew the allocation as part of the proposed changes to the UDP.

### **Ownership**

Private Land Owner

### **Site Area**

3.4 hectares

### **Existing Use**

Grazing.

### **Topography**

Undulating

### **Ranking in the Sequential Test**

As an undeveloped site outside the designated urban area, the site is within the third tier of the overall sequential hierarchy.

### **Archaeological / Cultural Heritage Impact**

There are no cultural or archaeological heritage sites in immediate proximity.

### **Ecological Impact**

No Ecological Study has been carried out.

### **Accessibility**

The site is reasonably accessible to the Town' northern residents and it may be possible to improve footpath linkages via Gwernaffield Road and Sunny Ridge. The site can also be accessed by cycle.

### **Public Transport Accessibility**

The site is well served by bus routes.

### **Visual Appearance / Influence**

The site has an open and prominent visual appearance and can be easily identified and viewed by persons travelling on the A 541 Mold / Denbigh Road. The zone of visual influence may have an impact on adjoining residential properties situated in Alwyn Close, Meadowside. The location of the Synthite Works gives a somewhat industrial appearance to the site and may not give a positive impression to visitors to the Town although consideration could be given to some form of landscaping on the site boundaries etc.

### **Flood Risk**

The lower portion of the site adjacent to the A541 is situated in a flood risk area.

### **Proximity to Town Centre / Sustainability**

Reasonable proximity to the Town Centre and reason sustainability.



## **7. Pen y Bont Farm – Chester Road**

### **Introduction and Site Location**

Pen y Bont Farm is situated adjacent to the A541 Chester Road and bounded by the Mold Bypass and Woodlands Road. The site lacks a recognised access point for vehicular traffic although it may be possible to gain access via Mold Industrial Estate. The site is currently lies in open countryside and is designated as a Green Barrier in the current Flintshire Unitary Development Plan.

### **Ownership**

Welsh Assembly Government

### **Site Area**

8.10

### **Existing Use**

Grazing

### **Topography**

Undulating

### **Ranking in the Sequential Test**

As an undeveloped site outside the designated urban area, the site is within the third tier of the overall sequential hierarchy.

### **Archaeological / Cultural Heritage Impact**

There are no cultural or archaeological heritage sites in immediate proximity.

### **Ecological Impact**

No Ecological Study has been carried out.

### **Accessibility**

The site is reasonably accessible to the Town' southern residents and it may be possible to improve footpath linkages via Woodlands Road. The site can also be accessed by cycle.

### **Public Transport Accessibility**

Bus routes serve the site.

### **Visual Appearance / Influence**

Although the site is situated adjacent to the Mold Bypass and Chester Road it is somewhat hidden away however this could perhaps be improved should it be developed as an Events Show Ground.

### **Flood Risk**

The site is not known to have any flooding problems.

### **Proximity to Town Centre / Sustainability**

Reasonable proximity to the Town Centre and reasonable sustainability credentials.

## **8. Pentrehobyn Estate**

### **Introduction and Site Location**

Pentrehobyn Estate is situated adjacent to the B5444 Wrexham Road on the southern boundary of the Town. The proposed site sits adjacent and can be seen from the Mold Bypass. In 2007 the Pentrehobyn Estate played host to the 2007 Eisteddfod. The site currently falls outside the designated urban area and lies within open countryside

### **Ownership**

Private – Pentrehobyn Estate

### **Site Area**

8.00 hectares

### **Existing Use**

Agriculture

### **Topography**

Undulating

### **Ranking in the Sequential Test**

As an undeveloped site outside the designated urban area, the site is within the third tier of the overall sequential hierarchy.

### **Archaeological / Cultural Heritage Impact**

It appears that a Scheduled Ancient Monument is situated within the wider Penrehobyn Estate.

### **Ecological Impact**

No Ecological Study has been carried out.

### **Accessibility**

As the site is approximately 2 miles from the Town Centre and the Mold Bypass acts as a barrier it does not provide good access for pedestrians and cyclists.

### **Public Transport Accessibility**

Poor although it may be possible to improve this aspect.

### **Visual Appearance / Influence**

A prominent and open aspect, which can be viewed from both the Mold Bypass and the B5444 Wrexham Road. Main zone of influence would be on the Pentrehobyn Estate who are the owners of the site.

### **Flood Risk**

The site is not known to have any flooding problems.

### **Proximity to Town Centre / Sustainability**

Poor proximity to the Town Centre and poor sustainability credentials.

## **9. The Haven – Upper Bryn Coch**

### **Introduction and Site Location**

The Haven Upper Bryn Coch is situated to the South Western edge of the Town adjacent to the Mold Bypass and A494 Mold / Ruthin Road. The site currently falls outside the designated urban area and is designated as a Green Barrier.

The site has previously been the subject of a planning appeal, which sought to include land at the Haven within the settlement boundary for Mold, which was successfully resisted by Flintshire CC.

### **Ownership**

Private

### **Site Area**

8.10

### **Existing Use**

Agriculture

### **Topography**

Undulating

### **Ranking in the Sequential Test**

As an undeveloped site outside the designated urban area, the site is within the third tier of the overall sequential hierarchy.

### **Archaeological / Cultural Heritage Impact**

This location comprises the site of the former Mold Prison, of which the boundary walls, former gatehouse and former workshops still survive. These structures and buildings are grade II listed.

### **Ecological Impact**

No Ecological Study has been carried out.

### **Accessibility**

The site is reasonably accessible to the Town's western residents and it may be possible to improve footpath linkages via Upper Bryn Coch. The site can also be accessed by cycle.

### **Public Transport Accessibility**

Reasonable.

### **Visual Appearance / Influence**

A prominent and open aspect, which can be viewed from the Mold Bypass. Main zone of influence would be the Upper Bryn Coch residential area.

### **Flood Risk**

The site is not known to have any flooding problems.

### **Proximity to Town Centre / Sustainability**

Reasonable proximity to the Town Centre but poor sustainability.

## **10. Northop College Estate Campus**

### **Introduction and Site Location**

The Welsh College of Horticulture now known as the Northrop College Campus is situated close the A55 approximately 3.5 miles to the north of Mold. The college has plans to diversify its campus and maximise the use of its extensive grounds.

### **Ownership**

Deeside College

### **Site Area**

Campus set in 91 hectares

### **Existing Use**

Horticultural College

### **Topography**

Undulating

### **Ranking in the Sequential Test**

Although partially developed the site falls outside a designated urban area, as such the site is regarded as being within the third tier of the overall sequential hierarchy.

### **Archaeological / Cultural Heritage Impact**

Not Known

### **Ecological Impact**

No Ecological Study has been carried out.

### **Accessibility**

As the site is approximately 4 miles from the Town Centre and does not provide good access for pedestrians and cyclists.

### **Public Transport Accessibility**

Poor

### **Visual Appearance / Influence**

A prominent and open aspect, the site has potential as a regional location due to its good road links.

### **Flood Risk**

Not known

### **Proximity to Town Centre / Sustainability**

Poor

[illegible]



# heritageinitiatives

Conservation | Planning | Regeneration | Urban Design

31 Station Road  
Deganwy  
CONWY  
Gwynedd  
LL31 9DF

t. 01492 583443

f. 01492 233443

e. [info@heritageinitiatives.co.uk](mailto:info@heritageinitiatives.co.uk)

[www.heritageinitiatives.co.uk](http://www.heritageinitiatives.co.uk)