

Name of meeting: Council

Date: 11 October 2017

Title of report: Town Centre Working Party – Final Report

Purpose of report:

To submit to Council the report and recommendations of the Town Centre Working Party.

Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?	No
Key Decision - Is it in the Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports?)	No
The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?	No
Date signed off by Director & name	Naz Parkar, Strategic Director of Economy, Skills and the Environment
Is it also signed off by the Service Director - Finance, IT and Transactional Services?	Debbie Hogg, Service Director – Finance, IT and Transactional Services
Is it also signed off by the Service Director - Legal, Governance & Commissioning?	Julie Muscroft, Service Director – Legal, Governance and Commissioning
Cabinet member portfolio	Councillor McBride

Electoral wards affected: All

Ward councillors consulted: None

Public or private: Public

1. Summary

The Town Centre Working Party was established by the resolution of Council on 14 December 2016, and was asked to consider the challenges to town centres of internet shopping, out of town shopping centres and the specific opportunities which Kingsgate 2 and HD1 and town centre living can afford to Huddersfield.

The Working Party held a series of meetings between February and May 2017 in order to receive information and evidence from a cross-section of key witnesses who were selected by the Working Party to represent a range of local businesses and town centre users.

The final report of the Working Party is appended and it's findings and conclusions are set out at Sections 8 and 9.

2. Information required to take a decision

Council is asked to consider the final report of the Working Party and endorse the Recommendations at Section 9.

3. Implications for the Council

None specific.

4. Consultees and their opinions

Councillor Richard Smith, Member of the Working Party, has requested that his comments as follows be incorporated within the submission to Council;

“I would like it formally recorded that I do not agree with any of these recommendations, findings, conclusions and do not want my name associated with any element of it.”

5. Next steps

Officers will determine appropriate next steps in accordance with the decision of Council.

6. Officer recommendations and reasons

Council to endorse the Working Party's recommendations that;

1. There needs to be a clear, communicated vision for the town, which should be business led, in order to drive the town forward and overcome the current lack of agreement and direction in how to achieve this. The town needs to establish itself as a brand and be visually appealing in order to attract investment.
2. The Car Parking areas within the town need to be smarter, with improved car parking experiences, for example, with ANPR facilities (within privately owned car parks), brighter, safer, colour coded, marked zones, which will provide customers with an 'easy parking' experience and attract more visitors to travel into the town by car.
3. There needs to be improved signage, both in and around the town, particularly it was considered that the town centre would benefit from increased and well positioned signage to car parks, and on the approach roads.
4. The town needs to adhere to standards of up-keep and there needs to be an enhanced awareness of retailers that shopping is a leisure activity. The town centre needs to be attractive and appealing, and develop an evening economy - the challenge is to create a town that is vibrant until 9pm and flexible in terms of delivering a evening/weekend shopping experience.
5. There is a need to reinvigorate cultural regeneration, support local talent development and take advantage of the existing large creative economy.

6. There are many opportunities for the town, and the Council, University and Football Club, as major beneficiaries of a vibrant and sustainable town centre, to work together, with businesses, to create and improved and thriving town centre location.
7. The Working Party supports further progress and improved measures to increase the appeal of the town centre, and encourages the partnership working of key stakeholders to continue to work together and create a safer and healthier community for residents to live and work in, and to enjoy the amenities of the town centre.

7. Cabinet portfolio holder's recommendations

Not applicable.

8. Contact officer

Andrea Woodside, Principal Governance Officer

9. Background Papers

Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Development and Environment) Town Centre Strategy Report, March 2015

Huddersfield Town Centre Access and Connectivity Project – Impact Assessment Report, July 2017

Report of Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee – Huddersfield Town Centre Accessibility Scheme (Bus Gates), September 2017

Huddersfield Town Centre Access and Connectivity Report, September 2017

10. Service Director responsible

Julie Muscroft, Service Director – Legal, Governance and Monitoring