

SCRUTINY REVIEW PANEL
DISTRICT AND LOCAL CENTRES – BEST PRACTICE AND BUILDING UPON IT

Report of Director of Development and Regeneration

Recommendations:

- to determine the scope of the review, and outline any areas which the panel may wish to scrutinise further; and
- to consider and agree the proposed outline review plan, including future meeting dates.

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The report outlines the proposed scope for reviewing how we can build on the best practice from the work carried out in the District Centres to help support Stockport's local centres.

Title of review	District and Local Centres - best practice and building upon it
Lead member	Councillor James Frizzell, Vice-Chair Economy, Regeneration & Climate Change Scrutiny Committee
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2. Background to the selection of the topic

- 2.1 In 2019, the Council established a partnership arrangement with Manchester Metropolitan University's Institute for Place Management (IPM) who are recognised leaders in the field of coordinated, multi-stakeholder approaches to improving places. The focus of their work was to support the Council in creating strong, healthy District Centres of which there are 8 in Stockport.
- 2.2 Following the initial high-level assessments of each centre by IPM, it became apparent delivering tangible improvements in complex multi-stakeholder environments would require dedicated capacity. Funding was secured from within existing budgets to support two new District Centre Manager posts. The two Managers were appointed in January 2022 and they each manage 4 centres.
- 2.3 With the removal of all Covid-19 restrictions, Phase 2 of the IPM work commenced in February 2022 involving a series of workshops with local stakeholders including local businesses, landowners, community groups and

Ward Members. This work culminated in a detailed report for each District Centre and led to the creation of a District Centre Action Plan for each centre based on the recommendations within the IPM reports together with other local intelligence gathered over the previous 12 months. The Action Plans reflect local priorities and include quick wins and longer-term actions.

- 2.4 To help with overseeing the delivery of projects, to generate ideas for new initiatives and activities and to identify priority actions, multi-stakeholder Visioning/Steering Groups have been established for each centre.
- 2.5 There is no 'one size fits all' approach, as each District Centre has its own set of challenges and this is reflected in the type of projects that are delivered in each Centre. The type of projects range from installing planters to add colour and greenery into centres through to large scale monthly specialist markets. The membership and frequency of the Visioning/Steering Group meetings is also specific to each Centre based on feedback from stakeholders.

What is common across all the centres is that the District Centre Managers engage regularly with businesses and retailers and make them aware of the support they can access from partner organisations to help them develop, what funding opportunities exist and disseminating information on local matters such as road closures.

3. What would be the scope of the Scrutiny Review of this topic?

- 3.1 In addition to the 8 District Centres, Stockport has a 9 large Local Centres that primarily provide for daily shopping needs but generally they have a more limited role than District Centres, along with 16 local centres (see table below). Whilst the District Centre Managers do not have the capacity to deliver the same level of support to all these centres, they have developed a detailed knowledge of the type of support businesses and stakeholders within those centres require to enable them to work collaboratively and help create strong, healthy centres.

Large Local Centres		
Davenport	Heald Green	Moor Top (Heaton Moor)
Gatley	Heaton Chapel	North Reddish
Great Moor	Marple Bridge	Shaw Road / Heaton Moor Road
Local Centres		
Adswood	High Lane	Fir Road (Bramhall)
Brinnington	Fiveways Parade (Macclesfield Road)	Smithy Green (Cheadle Hulme)
Cheadle Heath	Offerton	Turves Road (Cheadle Hulme)
Heaton Mersey	Offerton Green	North Park Road (Bramhall)
Berrycroft Lane (Higher Bredbury)	Woodley	
Hall Street (Offerton)	Councillor Lane (Cheadle)	

3.2 It is therefore recommended that the Scrutiny Review of District Centres focuses on the following proposed scope:

- To gain an understanding of best practice used to support the vibrancy of Stockport's district centres and assess how this could be applied to other district and local centres, with particular regard to how the council forges effective relationships between residents, businesses and the council, and assessing how the council can help to increase the benefits of the approach and extend it to our local centres.
- To understand how national policy can support the vibrancy of Stockport's district and local centres.
- To consider any other examples of best practice in this area that panel members are aware of to support learning and inform the panel's recommendations to Cabinet.

3.3 The Chair of the Scrutiny Review Panel has suggested that panel members speak to local business owners in the district centre within their ward as part of the evidence-gathering phase of the review. For members wishing to take part in these visits, questions will be provided to support members with their conversations with business owners. Following this, it has been suggested that members then speak to business owners in local centres within their ward, with the aim of finding out what support local centres could benefit from and using feedback from the district centre visits to inform the questions to local centre business owners. These activities have been incorporated into the proposed outline review plan below.

4. Proposed outline review plan

Stage	Key activity	Relevant meetings (bold) /key dates
Scoping	Scope agreed by Scrutiny Review Panel.	17-Sep-24
Evidence-gathering	Members to speak to a range of district centre business owners during this time period.	Sep - Oct
	Meeting to review evidence gathered from District Centres.	4-Nov-24
	Members to speak to local centre business owners during this time period, with the aim of finding out what support local centres could benefit from.	Nov - Dec
	Meeting to review evidence gathered from Local Centres. District Centre Managers to be in attendance.	11-Dec-24
Reporting	Meeting to review best practice and agree recommendations for the draft final report.	3-Feb-25
	Final meeting/wash-up session for the Panel to sign-off the final report and recommendations to Cabinet.	25-Feb-25
	Scrutiny Committee consider and agree report to go forward to Cabinet.	6-Mar-25
	Cabinet considers report and recommendations.	18-Mar-25

Anyone requiring further information should contact:

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