

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

Report of Director of Development and Regeneration

1. Purpose of report

1.1 The report outlines an approach to collating best practice from other areas.

2. Best Practice from other areas

2.1 The Institute of Place Management (IPM), part of Manchester Metropolitan University, are internationally recognised leaders in the field of coordinated, multi-stakeholder approaches to improving places. Following the Scrutiny Review into the Council's approach to supporting District Centres in 2018/19, the Council developed a partnership arrangement with IPM to help with assessing how each District Centre was performing and to identify ways to build on areas of strength and identify what needed improving.

2.2 Shortly after the partnership work with the Council began, IPM, on behalf of government, were appointed to run the High Street Task Force which was established to support communities and local government to transform their high streets. The Task Force does this by providing information, advice, training, knowledge and data - helping people to make a positive difference to their local communities.

2.3 As part of their work running the High Street Task Force along with the work they deliver directly with clients, the IPM team have visited hundreds of high streets of different sizes across England and have a wealth of knowledge on best practice. As part of this latest Scrutiny Review the Council have approached them for examples of areas they feel have made positive interventions to help create thriving high streets where retailers and other businesses feel supported. The Local Authority areas they have recommended include Bristol City Council, Lincolnshire County Council and Warwickshire County Council.

2.4 The Council's Town and District Centre Team is carrying out some desk top research into the areas IPM has recommended as good practice prior to arranging online meetings with officers at the Authorities to discuss things further. Some authorities have collated information and advice into a single facility to help support smaller centres and how they have carried this out will be of particular interest in helping to shape Stockport's information portal for local centres. We will also explore with them any tools or systems they have introduced to allow retailers and businesses to communicate with one another.

2.5 IPM has confirmed that in many ways Stockport is leading the way with its approach to supporting its District Centres by having dedicated District Centre Managers. This specialist resource is often referenced as best practice when IPM are advising other areas.

3. Recommendations

3.1 The Panel is requested to:

- a) Agree which Members would like to be involved in the best practice meetings with other Local Authority areas.
- b) Put forward names of other areas they are aware of which they feel may have attractive and well supported District and Local Centres so they can be reviewed.

Anyone requiring further information should contact:

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