

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

**EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM'S REPORT TO THE
ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT AND PLACE COMMITTEE**

17 December 2019

1. **Title** Town Centre Benchmarking
- Submitted by:** Regeneration and Economic Development Manager
- Portfolio:** Corporate and Service Improvement, People and Partnerships
- Ward(s) affected:** All

Purpose of the Report

To conclude the report on benchmarking with other town centres.

Recommendations

- That members consider the findings from the benchmarking and the actions proposed in the Town Centre Benchmarking Appendix.

Reasons

In order to sustain and improve our town centre to increase footfall, rejuvenate our historic market and support town centre businesses.

1. **Background**

- 1.1 A report was presented on Newcastle-under-Lyme's town centre at Scrutiny meeting on 14 March 2019 and an update provided to Scrutiny Committee on 20 June 2019. Members asked that benchmarking with other successful town centres was undertaken by Cabinet members to see what can be learnt from other towns and their approaches to improve our town centre.

2. **Issues**

- 2.1 We followed previous online research by narrowing the list of similar towns to seven for a benchmarking visit. The towns were selected as they all had markets at the heart of their town centres, most were undertaking wider regeneration schemes and some had similar attractors. They were:

Nantwich
Wigan
Leek
Warrington
Lancaster
Market Drayton
Stafford

The benchmarking findings focussed mainly on town centre parking and open market offer but also considered the instances of anti-social behaviour present on the day of visit and other attractors.

2.2 The work commenced June 2019 and was completed on 13 November 2019.

3. **Proposal**

3.1 The proposed actions are shown in the "Action" column of the appendix for Scrutiny Committee consideration.

4. **Reasons for Preferred Solution**

4.1 In order to sustain and improve our town centre offer for the benefit of our communities it is appropriate for Scrutiny Members to review the issues outlined in the Town Centre Benchmarking document.

5. **Options**

5.1 Previous Scrutiny committees have confirmed that they wanted benchmarking to take place and it is clear from the comparative review that many of the issues interlink with other existing policies and strategies. By implementing the actions in the appendix this will support the town centre and market rejuvenation, which are clearly within the corporate priority of a Town Centre for All.

6. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

6.1 None.

7. **Equality Impact Assessment**

7.1 There are no specific requirements.

8. **Financial and Resource Implications**

8.1 Projects requiring additional funding above existing budgetary provision will need to be considered by Cabinet as part of the relevant approval to proceed.

9. **Major Risks**

9.1 If we do nothing it is likely the town centre footfall will decline even further, which may impact on local job and services for the people of the Borough.

10. **Sustainability and Climate Change Implications**

10.1 The Newcastle Sustainable Transport Group's wayfinding improvement work will support minimising unnecessary car journeys and effective walking routes through the town centre.

11. **Key Decision Information**

11.1 This is not a key decision item.

12. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

12.1 Economy, Environment &Place Scrutiny meeting on 14 March 2019 and an update provided on 20 June 2019 to the same Committee.

13. **List of Appendices**

13.1 Town Centre Benchmarking.

14. **Background Papers**

14.1 None.