

WELSHPOOL TOWN COUNCIL

TOWN CENTRE REVIEW

Last review: November 2015

Current review: October 2016

Introduction

The Town Centre Plan was first put in place in March 2008, it was reviewed in the Autumn of 2012 and again in 2015. This forms current policy of the Council. A Transport Policy to support the Plan was approved in October 2014 and also forms part of this plan.

The Town Centre Plan requires an annual review of the Town Centre and this report has been prepared to meet that requirement.

Health of the Town

The vacancy rate of ground floor retail and businesses in the Town Centre is as set out at appendix A.

The overall figures for retail (166 units) compared with the previous year are:

Year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Shop occupancy					
Occupied	88%	92%	90%	95.5%	96%
Vacant	10%	8%	8%	3.3%	2.5%
Under offer	2%	1%	2%	1.2%	1.5%
Comparison					
National Wales vacancies	17%	17.9%	17.5%	13%	15.4%
Town vacancy rate	10%	8%	£8	3.3%	2.5%
Market Halls					
Occupied	77%	73%	75%	95%	87%
Vacant	23%	27%	25%	5%	13%

Footfall through shopping centres nationally has increased by 1.6% in 2015 but has not increased further in 2016. Wales overall has seen an increase in vacant shops by 2.4%.

The larger towns and cities have the highest vacancy rates.

The Town, from both the figures and the reports at the Business Forum, has again fared better in the last 12 months. This is partly due to the improvement in the economy, partly due to the return of coaches to the Town and partly due to the increase in people taking their holidays in the UK.

The Town has also seen the building of two new shops on the Tesco Site (BC&M's with Pets at Home) along with consent given and construction started on the Mill Lane site for an Aldi Store.

Protection of the Town Centre

The Town has benefited from the actions of the Town Council Policies and actions with particular regard to:

- a) The introduction of a regeneration plan which is being implemented including the Puzzle Square Scheme.
- b) The retention of the Tourist Information Centre
- c) The introduction of a coach driver friendly scheme
- d) The retention of the public toilets
- e) The running of events which attract people to the Town
- f) Working with local business.
- g) Being part of the Cambrian Rail improvements.
- h) The regeneration of the corner by the Tourist Information Office.
- i) Soon to improve the environment the Town Council is to take over the street scene services.

Review of Regeneration Plan

The Town Council Regeneration Plan continues to support the decisions of the Town Council.

The Regeneration Plan is now part of the overall Town Plan adopted in May 2015.

One Way System

The Town Council carried out a further survey of people in Welshpool in June 2015.

Ever since the system was introduced the Town Council has sought to gain changes to the network particularly with regard to safety of pedestrians.

The Town Council will continue to press for the alterations needed to ensure the system is the best we can gain for Welshpool.

Recommendations

The review indicates that the following policies should be continued for the forthcoming year:

- a) Continue with the Town Plan Policies as they relate to the Town Centre.
- b) Continue with being active in supporting the market halls.
- b) Continue with the running of events.
- c) Proceed towards a regeneration of the street scene in Broad Street.
- d) Continue with Business Forum to ensure link with Business
- e) Continue to press for corrections/alterations to the One Way System as set out in the approved Town Council Transport Policy.
- f) A full review of the future of the Town Centre in the next Town Plan due to be prepared for mid 2017.

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Town Clerk

October 2016