

Scrutiny Report on the Town Centre, June 2018

Responses to Recommendations

	Scrutiny Recommendation	Cabinet Response
1	<p>Signage, cleanliness, general appeal (which includes the challenges currently being faced where rough sleepers are deterring locals and visitors alike) and connectivity between the areas needs to be improved as does the transport infrastructure in order that visitors gain an immediate positive first impression to enable them to speak positively about Chesterfield and encourage others to visit.</p>	<p><u>Cleanliness/Welcome/Safety</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To encourage a warm welcome to the Town Centre, tackling cleanliness has been a focus, particularly targeting hot spots for improvements. The Town Centre has a dedicated response through Green Spaces Team. This team works closely with the Town Centre Unit to identify problems and influence work programmes. This action has resulted in improvements • Chesterfield in Bloom is operating again in the Town and planting throughout the Town Centre is designed to improve the general appeal and ensure that the Town Centre is as welcoming as possible. Gold Status was achieved for the first time in 2017 and retained in 2018. • Christmas decorations are put up throughout the festive period focussing on high footfall areas to make the Town Centre as attractive as possible. An events programme is delivered as part of the Christmas offer and promotions undertaken with partners at Destination Chesterfield to promote the town to a regional audience. • Work is underway on the Northern Gateway Scheme. This will see the northern part of the Town Centre undergo significant improvements including bringing the disused former Coop back into use, the creation of a modern and quality Multi Storey Car Park and the provision of quality public realm that is designed to improve the quality of the Elder Way area and to encourage penetration into the Town Centre. • A Public Space Protection Order came into effect in December 2017 (a joint partnership with Derbyshire Police and Chesterfield Borough Council) to tackle the anti-social behaviour issues that were being experienced in the Town Centre. This has had an immediate effect on issues with regards to

		<p>street drinking, legal high taking, begging and rough sleeping with banning orders and fixed penalties issued. Feedback from retail tenants and other town centres users have indicated that a significant improvement is being seen. To date, over 40 FPN have been issued. Through the Community Safety Partnership work will continue to enforce the PSPO but also to ensure that there is appropriate support for those who require it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In order to ensure that visitors are welcomed to the Town, work has been ongoing with Chesterfield College and the developers of Peak Resort to develop a “guide school”, a form of ambassadorial programme for the tourism economy. This in part builds upon work previously undertaken by Destination Chesterfield’s Ambassadors programme. It is likely that refreshing of this initiative is an outcome of the emerging Visitor Economy Strategy. It is vital that visitors are well informed and welcomed in a professional and friendly way as a means of enhancing the reputation of the quality of the place to visit and to encourage repeat visits. <p><u>Signage/Connectivity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chesterfield’s Town Centre Masterplan (2015) also highlights potential projects that could enhance physical connectivity, improve the public realm etc. Many of these initiatives are subject to funding/sites becoming available. • HS2 offers potential to significantly change the connectivity between the Station and the wider Town Centre. Cushman and Wakefield have been appointed to undertake spatial master planning exercise around the Station (May 2018), this will consider connectivity with Town Centre, potential for Hollis Lane link road, public transport accessibility. • We are submitting a bid to Business Rates pooling project for the development of a Transport and Movement Strategy for the Town Centre. Likely to be delivered with partners such as DCC. This will look at public transport, wayfinding, highways and other connectivity issues. • CBC exploring Town Centre wifi enabling project with other partners from across Derbyshire Market Towns (as part of the Business Rates pooling
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		<p>activities). This has the potential to feed into Town Centre connectivity and accessibility issues by allowing improved access to information and the collation of data from users to inform how people are really using the Town Centre.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work is on site on the Northern Gateway Scheme. This includes improvements to the public realm on Elder Way. Signage will be incorporated into this scheme as well as the use of quality public realm design to differentiate routes into the historic town centre from this area of Town.
2	To consider re branding with a new more generic tagline for the Town with the intention of bringing a clear focus to potential international and wider UK visitors.	<p>Destination Chesterfield is engaged in promoting Chesterfield as a place to live, visit and invest. Destination Chesterfield does not focus on promoting Chesterfield as a tourism destination. This activity is delivered by CBC and partners at the Visit Peak District and Derbyshire Destination Management Partnership (DMP). We have been working the DMP to ensure Chesterfield is showcased more effectively on their website and within their suggested itineraries to include Chesterfield. We are also in discussions with partners at North East Derbyshire District Council, Bolsover and the Peak District National Park and Chatsworth to ensure that linkages are made with Chesterfield tourism offer and the wider sector within the region.</p> <p>More can and will be done on this via the development of a Visitor Economy Strategy for Chesterfield. This is an emerging piece of work and is identified in the Council's Corporate Plan. An initial scoping exercise has been undertaken, an internal stakeholder event held and Destination Chesterfield's Champions have been consulted. The next stage of the development of the Strategy will include consultation with Members and the development of key actions to ensure Chesterfield is able to harness its visitor and tourism potential.</p> <p>Chesterfield has often benefited from being associated as the "Gateway to the Peak District" and this can be a positive and a negative (as often the visitors pass through). Emerging work around HS2 and the developments underway in the Town (new Hotels and Peak Resort) will encourage a change in perceptions and allow Chesterfield to develop its own tourism identity. This will be tackled in part via the Visitor Economy Strategy.</p>

3	<p>That's measures such as Purple Flag Status, are considered to bring more life to the Town during currently quiet periods – 3pm onwards.</p>	<p>The decision to seek Purple Flag Status will potentially be an action/outcome of the Visitor Economy Strategy. Purple Flag Status seeks to highlight Town Centres that offer an entertaining, diverse, safe and enjoyable night out. To achieve accreditation action will be required across many areas and Chesterfield Borough Council will need to consider the costs and benefits associated with Purple Flag status and consider how likely we are to achieve it. A partnership approach would be needed including the Police and community safety, CCTV our own venues and events teams, representatives from bars and restaurants and ,health and wellbeing partners including East Midlands Ambulance Service and the local religious groups (street pastors).</p> <p>Some of this activity that would be required is underway. For example, we already undertake a Town Centre Health Check and on many levels the Town Centre is a successful place. Currently retail vacancies are low compared to other towns. The Town Centre is currently 92% let. New developments at the former Coop Department Store, former Post Office will see further improvements in occupancy levels.</p> <p>New housing is developing in the Town Centre with proposals for the former Victoria Centre anticipated, flats at the Post Office and 87 New Square and the former Magistrates Court. Further, there has been investment in new independent visitor accommodation “above the shop” at Jameson’s Coffee House. New housing development is on site on Saltergate (behind former NEDDC building) with a further development due to commence by McCarthy and Stone. This new housing provision across the Town Centre will deliver a new vibrancy especially into the evening when more traditional uses have ceased operation for the day. It will help contribute a balance to the more traditional evening economy offer.</p> <p>Chesterfield Borough Council is investing in improvements to the Theatres both in terms of the programmes offered and the provision itself (new investment underway to upgrade the Winding Wheel).</p> <p>Chesterfield Borough Council is also working to ensure events are delivered to ensure a vibrancy in the Town Centre. Recent examples include the Chesterfield Wheel (that operated into the evening) and the Street Food and Grooves festival in</p>
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4	A review (frequency, location, size, type) of the Market is required to provide an offering that meets the changing wishes of the modern day customer.	Chesterfield Market remains a key priority and further work will be undertaken to scope the options and attempt to secure funding, However the Market continues to operate in a challenging retail environment with national trends showing a decline year on year in markets (and Town Centre retail) on a national level. A review of the Market was commissioned in 2015 and was undertaken by IBI consulting. The key recommendation was to consider reconfiguring the market to reflect current occupancy and to create a versatile and vibrant space. The costs of the works range from a serious of interventions between £1 million to £2.5 million. Financial resources have limited our ability to consider moving forward with the recommendations. Efforts have been made to source external funding but it has proved difficult to achieve.
5	That ways to open up the Town from major events and cultural space are explored to broaden the appeal with a wider offering of activities focussing on areas as diverse as film, art, literature, food, jazz, busking and cheese, to name just a few, with a particular focus on enhancing the evening activities with night markets and live entertainment.	<p>Currently the event programme has been developed with diversity of offer and spread throughout the year. The traditional events held (Medieval Market, Market Festival, Xmas Switch on) have been enhanced and improved and a number of new events have been delivered/planned. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Artisan Market – this monthly event grows ever more popular and is attracting significant increases to footfall • The Young Persons Market – held on a quarterly basis seeing numbers increase from 15 to 70 stalls. • Food and Grooves Festival – held for the first time in May 2018 over 3 days, including the launch night party. This was well attended and further similar markets are being planned including a Xmas Market for 2018. • A Motor Fest and Auto Jumble is planned for August 2018 in the Market Square and throughout the Town Centre. Stalls and car displays planned. This will be held quarterly and the Motor Fest annually depending on the success of the inaugural event. • The Chesterfield Observation Wheel proved to be exceptionally successful event for the Town. On site in February 2018 for one month, the Wheel attracted significant visitors and traders reports an upsurge in footfall. Further activities are being planned with the operator to bring further events to the

	<p>Town.</p> <p>Chesterfield Borough Council has worked in partnership with traders to forms a Healthy High Streets Initiative. Collaboration and information sharing has seen greatly improved cross working and delivery of many events benefiting high street stores, markets and improving the offer to the public.</p> <p>Chesterfield Borough Council actively promotes the Market via the national “Love your Local Market” campaign. This activity helps to promote use of markets, encourage new traders, and works to improve the competitiveness of the market offer. There is a big push nationally in May each year.</p> <p>Partners like Destination Chesterfield work to support the Town Centre offer. Each year the Chesterfield Retail Awards are held and local businesses encouraging to enter. Local press promote the awards and share the message about the importance of using the High Street. Awards are allocated across a range of criteria including Best Market Trader.</p> <p>The developing Visitor Economy Strategy will review the events programme as part of its remit to ensure that as a town we are making the most of our events offer (in terms of programming, reach and wider engagement with partners).</p> <p>As well as the future potential for the market to be used more flexibly for events, opportunities elsewhere in the Town Centre are also being developed that will allow for this objective to be achieved. For example, Chesterfield Waterside will see as part of Phase 2, a new Basin Square developed. This space will be available for events that can complement what already takes place in the Town Centre. Developers are keen to see a vibrancy created within the public realm they are seeking to provide and are considering activities related to the Canal and Water and cycling, bars, restaurants and there is potential for open air theatre/cinema experiences.</p>
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		Proposals for Northern Gateway also show the creation of new quality urban realm within the Town Centre as part of the Vision for Phase 2. This space can be used as a location for events or to add to the events already held in the Town Centre.
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