



**Open Report on behalf of Andy Gutherson, Executive Director – Place**

Report to:	<b>Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee</b>
Date:	<b>16 January 2024</b>
Subject:	<b>Town Centres Improvements Scrutiny Review - Executive Response Action Plan</b>

**Summary:**

On 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2023 the Executive received a report on Town Centre Improvements in Lincolnshire which was prepared by Scrutiny Panel A, on behalf of the Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee. The Executive agreed to make arrangements to respond to the report by 03 December 2023. The Executive's response will: 1. Indicate which recommendations have been accepted: and 2. Where recommendations are accepted, to bring forward an action plan for their implementation.

**Action Required**

The Committee is invited to receive the Executive's response to the report and to agree a plan to monitor and scrutinise the implementation of the agreed recommendations.

**1. Background**

In September 2021, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board approved a scrutiny review of town centre improvements to help:

- support business start-up and growth
- create employment opportunities
- retail revival and
- to support a broader demographic to use town centres in the county – with a particular emphasis on young people.

The Committee recognised that market towns and high streets across the UK had been 'hit by a perfect storm' including the impact that the rise of online shopping and the pandemic had had on footfall and the way that high streets were being used.

The following key lines of enquiry for the scrutiny review were agreed by the Panel:

1. Understanding changes in behaviours, shopping, land use and the impact of technology on the future of high streets across Lincolnshire and how that changes the infrastructure and changes in town centres.
2. Consider the delivery of existing town Deals; future project pipelines and the ways in which the Council could effectively support such changes and projects.
3. Examine how the council can support the needs of businesses (including retail and hospitality sectors) in town centres, including hardships arising from the Covid-19 pandemic and EU transition.
4. Identify the best practice of supporting the green recovery of the high street.

On 3 October 2023 the Executive was invited to consider the report and assign responsibility to the relevant Executive Councillor(s) for responding to the report.

As part of its response, the Executive is requested to indicate to the Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee which recommendations in the report are accepted.

Where recommendations are accepted, there is also a request for an action plan, showing what steps are being taken to implement the recommendations, with projected timescales, where possible. This will enable the Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee to monitor the implementation of any actions arising from the report.

The Executive Councillors and officers have met to establish the attached action plan. The Executive Councillors agree the vital importance of the market towns and town centres – in providing services, job opportunities and in supporting communities. Their strength is in their distinctive offer and their contribution to the visitor offer. The Executive also noted the need to ensure new investment is attracted to the high street and to review ways to ensure parking is not a barrier to supporting increased town centre use. The Executive also noted that the review should take account of and address any opportunities emerging from the government's review of business rates.

The actions in the attached Action Plan outline the practical steps that will be undertaken in the context of the Council's strategic role and in recognition of the number of national, regional and local stakeholders and partners that are actively engaged and investing in Lincolnshire town centres. Accordingly clearly defined activities must be undertaken that create an environment for growth, complement existing activity and harness local distinctiveness to support increased footfall throughout the year. Accordingly the Executive Councillors support the premise of collaboration and strategic leadership.

The key principles that will be adopted in delivering the action plan align with the themes set out by the Scrutiny Panel A:

- Leadership and policy
- High Street Business support
- Placemaking, Funding and Skills development
- Technologies, innovation and Digitalisation
- Data driven decision making and targeted investment and
- Green Growth

## 2. Conclusion

The Committee is requested to consider the attached Action Plan and agree a plan to monitor and scrutinise the implementation of the agreed recommendations.

## 3. Consultation

### a) Risks and Impact Analysis

Not applicable

## 4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Executive Response to the Town Centre Improvements Scrutiny Review - Action Plan Arising from Recommendations

## 5. Background Papers

The following background papers as defined in the Local Government Act 1972 were relied upon in the writing of this report.

Document title	Where the document can be viewed
Report by Scrutiny Panel A on behalf of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board	<a href="#">(Public Pack)Agenda Document for Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee, 12/09/2023 10:00 (moderngov.co.uk)</a>

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