

CONNDAH'S QUAY PLACE MAKING PLAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this Place Making Plan is to set out the needs, vision, approach and opportunities framework that will help plan and deliver place-based activity and investment in Connah's Quay. Whilst it has a focus on the town centre, the Plan also looks at the wider relationship with its neighbourhoods and residents. Connah's Quay is one of seven towns across Flintshire, having a Place Making Plan developed, including Buckley, Flint, Holywell, Mold, Queensferry and Shotton.

This Place Making Plan helps to draw out and identify local needs, thereby providing evidence to strategic delivery organisations in aligning day-to-day services, in addition to leveraging grant funding for future regeneration projects. It also sets out ways of working that bridge strategic-local partnering that helps foster joint project development, delivery and the longer-term sustainability of a town such as Connah's Quay.



Connah's Quay Challenges

- The town centre is close to a number of green assets as well as being alongside the River Dee, nevertheless it feels separated with no clear linkages to these Parks, amenity spaces and to the Docks area. It therefore feels urban in character yet has green spaces and the riverside to explore nearby.
- A vehicle dominated experience along the B5129 that has an impact on public realm, opportunities to dwell, uses and activities and quality of life. Physical experience is poor with constant vehicle volume, limited pavement areas, no sense of public space or places to meet and lack of maintenance/management.
- The Precinct and High Street are in the centre of the town but falls short as a public space that is surrounded by uses and activities. Floorspace is poor, the space lacks structure in addition to The Precinct not visually attractive. The Medical Centre is set behind The Parade and feels isolated due to poor linkage through the service yard.
- On arrival there are several prominent buildings and sites that bring down the quality of the town centre environment with redundant buildings, land and dominance of security shutters, boarded up windows and gradual decline in physical condition. These include the former Motorworld and the Customs House Public House.
- The town is holding on to its industrial past and needs to move forward so that it presents itself as a community that still has pride but is known for its location within a dynamic Deeside.

OUR VISION FOR CONNAH'S QUAY



Vision

The Quay – the High Street is revealed as a place that connects the Dee riverside with its parks and open spaces, being at the heart of community life, with space being social, active and for all.



Key Aims

To build on the heritage of The Quay with its town centre acting as a bridge between the River Dee, the former Docks, its parks and neighbourhoods.

To announce Connah's Quay on arrival and create more of a unified space at The Precinct that is people-friendly and serves as a place for the community to come together..

To create an improved streetscene and pedestrian experience along the B5129 that links into the Docks area, Parks and other community facilities.

To enhance the quality of the civic realm through community-led design and activities that lead to a cleaner, safer and more appealing town centre.



PLACE BASED OPPORTUNITIES



**Improving the Main Road (B5129)
through Connah's Quay**

The B5129 runs through the heart of the town, but does little to announce or celebrate the town. It tends to be a functional, but car-dominated space that offers limited high quality spaces for people. The street needs to be a place of life and activity, where residents of the town and come together.

At either end of the B5129, gateway spaces could announce your arrival in the town. These will require use of high quality materials, public art, signage and wayfinding to provide a positive first impression of the town and say "Welcome to Connah's Quay". This is particularly important at the eastern end of the town, at the Shotton boundary. Connah's Quay should have its own identity and a clear gateway space across the Wepre Brook bridge.

A key location along the road is the Dock Road junction, which leads you down to the Docks. The Victorian architecture of adjoining buildings and green spaces create a nice environment, but this could be enhanced through public art and wayfinding to better direct people. Consideration should also be given to cycle and pedestrian access between the B5129, the National Cycle Route and Wales Coast Path.



Improving the High Street Precinct Area

The Precinct could be the activity and social centre of the town. A place for people to go to get their daily essentials, where they can meet a friend and socialise. However, the Precinct is a very uninspiring place, dominated by cars and parking and offers no quality space for people.

The whole space, including the parking areas and the B5129, needs to be unified and transformed into Connah's Quay town square. A space for the people of the town, that allows for various activities and events, for socialising and gatherings, whilst also maintaining the day-to-day necessities for residents. The relationship between the parking areas and road needs to be redesigned to help create more space for people and a less car-dominated environment.

A 'shared surface' environment could allow people to seamlessly cross the space and encourage cars to slow down. Landscaping and trees could be used to soften the environment and define the spaces of the square. This town square could also serve a wider range of functions such as events, fayres, markets or performances. This would provide a unique and flexible space in the town otherwise not found in the local area. The Precinct buildings themselves also need uplifting. A consistent shop front design would help unify the ground floor whilst the use of high-quality materials or colour could revitalise the first floors.

PLACE BASED OPPORTUNITIES



Uniting the Areas of Connah's Quay

Connah's Quay has a rich history and cultural heritage, which needs to be celebrated within the town. It has a number of unique features and assets, which make it different from its neighbours like Shotton. It therefore needs its own identity, which works alongside Shotton's but is different from it.

The identity of Connah's Quay is linked to its Victorian heritage, with attractive red brick buildings and association to the docks and Flintshire Bridge. These all need bringing to the fore to form the basis for a design code for the town. This code can then be implemented into a heritage and arts signage and way-finding strategy. This would help unify the town and encourage visitors and residents to explore more of their town and its identity.

There are a number of key sites and derelict buildings within the town which contribute to a poor impression of the area. Sites such as the Motorworld need redeveloping and bringing back into use. The former Custom's House PH is set to be redeveloped into a dentist, in a boost to the area.

Making the most of the town's existing assets will be key. More can be done to make the docks and its riverside walk into a unique walking and cycling experience, which can tap into and reflect on the town's history.



Improving Connectivity

Due to the ribbon type nature of development in Connah's Quay, specifically the proximity of the North Wales coast railway line, the Docks and riverside area is severed from the main town centre feeling separated from the wider experience.

In exploring its history, the town's connections with rail meant that the former docks helped transport bricks, clay and pottery products from Buckley and products from the John Summers & Sons steel works. The port also included the Ferguson shipyard, which built the historic ship Kathleen & May, contributing to Connah's Quay becoming a major railway town. To celebrate this rich maritime and industrial heritage, the Kathleen and May Heritage Centre, located on Dock Road has exhibitions, interactive displays, and educational programmes, bringing history to life, sharing the stories of shipbuilders, sailors, and industrial pioneers. The Heritage Centre is a key local attraction that needs to form part of the wider placemaking plan, even with its location off-centre from the High Street.

The riverside has the Wales Coastal Path running through it as well as the Sustrans National Cycle Route, which local people and visitors use for leisure purposes. There is a need to consider physical enhancements at Dock Road and Quay Lane in terms of boundaries, signage and ways to extend visits. The need to promote links between the docks area and the town centre is important to ensure activity between these two areas of Connah's Quay flourishes.

PLACE BASED OPPORTUNITIES



Keeping the Town Clean, Safe and Welcoming

A common theme across other Flintshire towns is the need for a coordinated approach in managing streets so they are clean, safe, accessible and feel good to be in. Some of this responsibility sits with the County Council but the role of the private and community sector in supporting civic pride also needs to be explored and shared in terms of responsibility and benefit.

The presence and proximity of the B5129 running through the town centre causes challenges with resultant airborne pollution and noise. The constant through traffic and current carriageway set up means that people don't stop and it feels very much like a place to walk through. This has resulted in pavement areas looking dirty, with cleaning and maintenance appearing to be too infrequent to deal with the immediate intensity of the highway. This also means that trees and greenery have not been planted on a large scale due to the lack of civic space and a lack of purpose.

There is also a need to coordinate and manage the licensing of street advertisements and activity, so that town centre users experience an accessible environment, whilst balancing the needs of businesses to display their goods and have opportunities to use tables and chairs when the business is focused on food and drink.

PEOPLE BASED OPPORTUNITIES



Local People, Passion and Activity

There is a need to help the town centre by bringing together the Connah's Quay community spirit and the activities of various groups and organisations to:

- Develop listings for town centre uses, activities and facilities and promote them in print and digitally;
- Develop grass roots ideas, uses and activities for underused spaces and buildings;
- Trial on-street activity that appeals to local residents;
- Explore opportunities for cross-marketing between pastimes such as sports, recreation, hobbies, heritage, growing, etc;
- Think about the identity of Connah's Quay across the whole community that reflects on its past but where it is now;
- Include all local neighbourhoods so that a diversity of views is obtained;
- Seek volunteers to help trial new ideas, initiatives and campaigns;

Community-led approaches to town centre place making can often happen quickly compared to the private sector, as time is voluntary, people have local networks to make things happen and demand for the idea or activity is known within the community.



A Place for Learning and Skills Development

There are opportunities within Connah's Quay for people to thrive and enhance their life skills and further development.

There may be a number of opportunities to explore with local educational establishments, for example:

- A shop window for their activities within the town centre that showcases their services and provides retail and learning space.
- Using their services, such as Hwb Cyfle's woodworking resources, to help make raised planters and other wooden furniture for use as part of greening the town centre.

There are opportunities to support young people in learning about the retail and service sector, with hands-on experience alongside mentors and coaches. In this way, place-based activity and investment can open up training and upskilling opportunities for local residents, businesses and organisations.

Underused town centre spaces can also provide opportunities for local comprehensive schools, Further Education (FE) colleges and other organisations to trial new ideas and enterprises that meet unmet local needs. Local FE can also develop links with regeneration investment programmes with apprenticeships in brickwork, joinery and woodwork, plumbing and heating and other trades.

PEOPLE BASED OPPORTUNITIES



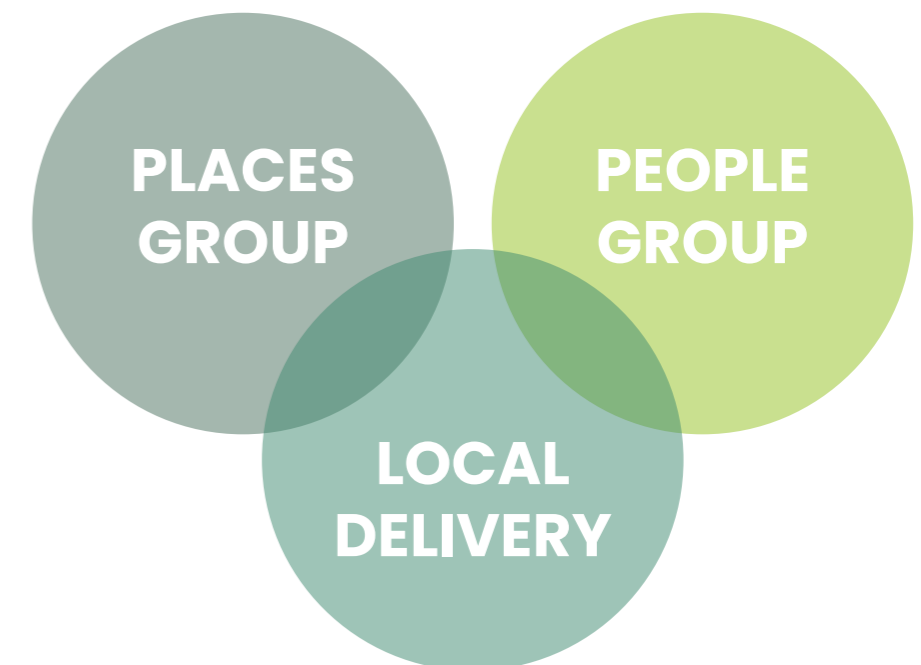
Opportunities to integrate green infrastructure and the role of greening/ biodiversity within the wider place is key to improving the sense of place, local well-being and also addressing climate emergency challenges.

Greening town centre streets to create form and structure is a key priority in adding to public realm, places to sit as well as providing solar shade, absorbing rainwater runoff and supporting other forms of climate adaptation and resilience. Streets can also be used to promote local growing, through the creation of herb boxes and recipe cards to promote use of seasonal vegetables and local supply chains.

Green spaces, parks, recreation and sports grounds, footpaths, verges and other areas of greenery need to be linked together so local residents can access and engage with them. Opportunities to introduce additional tree planting, pollination areas and ground planting adds to local biodiversity and nature conservation. Opportunities for community growing should be explored where groups are formed that can manage underused land for productive purposes. This can form part of social prescribing linked to community health projects.

Going Forward

Delivery of this Place Making Plan is dependent on a partnership approach where groups and organisations mutually come together to develop and make change happen in Connah's Quay town centre and its immediate neighbourhoods. The opportunities within this Place Making Plan require different mixes of partners, resources and timetable for development and delivery.



A stylized graphic of a cable-stayed bridge with a central pylon and multiple stay cables. The bridge is rendered in shades of green and teal. A horizontal deck with vertical supports is at the bottom. Several large, semi-transparent circles in various colors (blue, yellow, green, orange, purple) are scattered around the bridge. The central text is overlaid on the bridge's pylon.

place making
FLINTSHIRE

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