



BUCKLEY PLACE MAKING PLAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

place making
FLINTSHIRE

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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 Buckley. Whilst it has a focus on the town centre, the Plan also looks at the wider relationship with its immediate neighbourhoods and residents. Buckley is one of seven towns across the County that Place Making Plans are being developed for that includes Connah's Quay, 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 levering in grant funding for future regeneration projects. It also sets out ways of working that bridges strategic-local partnering that helps foster joint project development, delivery and the longer-term sustainability of a town such as Buckley.



Buckley Challenges

- The town's population has grown over the last ten years but its connectivity and proximity to other towns and retail attractors does result in a diversion of activity and a diminished loyalty to the town centre.
- Within Buckley's neighbourhoods and on the edge of the town there are some key assets such as the town football club, The Common and duck pond, a number of primary schools and the High Street that draw in residents but aren't looking into the town centre through a network of physical links.
- The highway network takes you around the back of the town centre, with views to service yards and rears of properties that don't let you look into the town centre. Some key vacant bookend buildings add to these poor first impressions from both edges. Even on arrival in outer car parks is bland and featureless, with the pedestrian route not legible or attractive.
- The town centre experience is fragmented into two-character areas – Mold Road and Brunswick Road that does not present a unifying offer to its users, with vacancies and poor quality frontages not presenting a cohesive and coherent identity. There are also some key activity generators e.g. the Tivoli and Aldi food store that are divorced from the main shopping area.
- Existing public realm whilst in a relatively good condition is dated and does not provide structure for outdoor, social activity that is associated with commercial premises or for communal uses. There is no sense of outdoor dwell or opportunities to activate this outdoor public realm.
- Civic and community facilities are hidden, not visible or have been relocated from the town centre with no sense of public services or other facilities that residents and town centre users can turn to. For example, the town's library and town council offices are in the town centre but don't have any community interaction, with the police station closing and the primary health care centre moving out. There is a need to explore the location of public services as a driver of footfall and activity and community hubs.

OUR VISION FOR BUCKLEY



Vision

"Buckley – at the heart of community life, with its nearby neighbourhoods easily accessing local shops and eating places, active in health, well-being, arts, and culture, all underpinned by a proud heritage in industry and music and being well connected on the Welsh-English border."



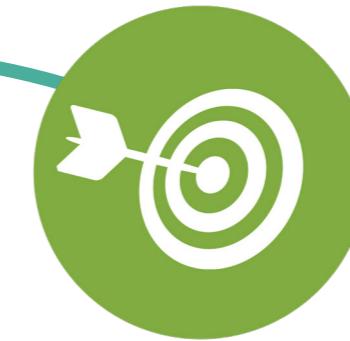
Key Aims

To enhance the quality and diversity of the town centre offer that feels local, appealing and touches community life.

To raise awareness of the "local" town centre experience to residents, create and develop its appeal, build a following and viable enterprises and activities.

To activate the public realm that links discrete spaces of music, culture, shopping, community and eating out through performance space, markets, use of trees and planting and extending commercial activities.

To highlight and improve the range of community services that support health and well-being, learning, socialising and creates a cohesive Buckley community.



PLACE BASED OPPORTUNITIES



Announcing & Arriving at the town centre

The town centre is bookended by two gateway spaces where Ffordd Argoed/A549 diverts traffic north, from the historical linear route through the town. This results in undefined car dominated spaces with visual connections along the high street but a poor pedestrian environment that makes accessing it more difficult and uninviting.

The roads need to be redefined so that more space can be given back to pedestrians and crossing becomes easier. Narrower junctions, removal of barriers and directs crossing points will help with this. This reclaimed space can help form new public spaces that are vibrant and attractive and help welcome people to the town centre. More space for landscaping, seating and public art will help create attractive and vibrant spaces that create a strong impression of the town centre and help draw people in. Public art and murals that can reflect the heritage of Buckley, can enliven blank facades and create a more colourful and vibrant environment.



Activating the Public Realm

There is the opportunity to create a focus of activity within the town centre, around Brunswick Road Car Park and Buckley Precinct. This would help enliven the town centre and help draw people in. This would be centred around a pavilion/stage in which various activities could take place such as music performances or festivals. Seating and landscape areas would be arranged to allow for views of this pavilion, with the option for additional temporary seating to also be used. This would create a hub within the street that people can gather in and socialise throughout the day and evening.

The former discount store at the end of Brunswick Road sits between and is a key landmark between the town centre and eastern gateway space. It is however failing in its potential to present a positive impression of the town and encourage people in. This building could become a key landmark for the town. Reimagined as a hub of activity that presents a positive and architecturally significant frontage onto the high street and gateway space. A possible use for this building would be the relocation of public services, with activities spilling out into the street and revitalising the area.

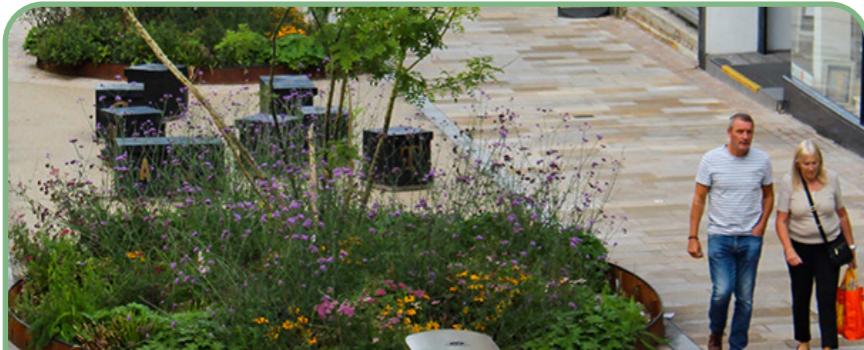


Rebuilding the Buckley Character & Identity

There exists an opportunity to help improve and unify the identity of Buckley through its built environment and public realm. At present, the retail core of the town centre has 2 distinct character areas. To the west is Mold Road: a historic fabric and environment. To the east is Brunswick Road: a fragmented mix of historic with more recent infill developments. There is the opportunity reinforce the distinct character areas whilst also providing some unity across the town centre. This could be in the form of a Streetscape Design Code.

- Creating a design guide for the whole street to help clarify the identity and vision of Buckley.
- Specifying the use of materials and landscaping to create a harmonious and unified street scene.
- A shop front design guide to encourage a move towards a unified design that minimises clutter.
- Develops a strategy whereby key buildings, frontages and historic detailing is enhanced and celebrated within the street.

PLACE BASED OPPORTUNITIES



Greening Buckley

Greening town centre streets that 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, local nature and wider resilience. Streets can also promote local growing, herb boxes and recipe cards to promote use of seasonal vegetables and use of local supply chains. These activities also underpin wellness within a town like Buckley.

- Additional planting on key town centre approaches and gateways;
- Tree planting within the pedestrianised area;
- Use of productive landscape to support community activity, training and use in food based community enterprises;
- Supporting civic planting that improves pride in place and is functional as rainwater gardens in addressing climate adaptation.



The Role of Activity Generators

The need to develop the town centre's identity as a neighbourhood within neighbourhoods is a critical success factor for those towns that have found ways to repurpose and rediscover themselves. Where people meet and engage, leads to a sense of belonging, feeling good in a place and building a buzz and energy. Buckley has a significant town population that, due to their mobility, have choice when it comes to their leisure and shopping time. They are drawn by an experience that is created, made, crafted, produced and curated that is a trip out or linked into their working week.

Currently, they do not see Buckley town centre as their first choice. The need to present a diverse, local and quality experience is an opportunity that can be achieved through developing hubs or destinations in the town centre. Their location is also important as they can generate footfall and linked activity in

between. There are three existing or potential hubs/destinations in Buckley town centre that create dumbbells at either end being the former Swimming Baths and The Tivoli music venue and nightclub. There is also potential for a third destination that would activate Buckley Precinct, being the former Original Factory Shop on Brunswick Road.

PEOPLE BASED OPPORTUNITIES



Connected Communities

To improve the connectedness of Buckley neighbourhoods with the town centre that is accessible, networked and attractive whether this forms part of active travel, biodiversity schemes and local nature projects.

- Develop and deliver active travel investments that link into local trails and paths;
- Implement active travel facilities in the town centre specifically for cyclists;
- Develop local interpretation on heritage, arts and culture;
- Develop ways to improve linkages between train station and town centre.



Local Solutions

Buckley needs to come together to explore, create and co-deliver local solutions that meet existing gaps in the town centre offer but also brings people together through the trial, campaign or project. This can be achieved through a meanwhile project approach, use of outdoor markets and through events and festivals.

- Shining a spotlight on community life, groups, clubs and stories that are found out in the wider town but are given a town centre space to promote their activity, partner a local café, social evenings, etc;
- Partner organisations that have a following and identity that would be more visible in the town centre e.g. Buckley Town Football Club community shop with indoor football net;
- Pop Up activity in Buckley Precinct. Work with landlord on a series of pop-up events such as supper club (partner Farm Shop), community cinema, theatre and other activities.



Partnership Working

To ensure place-based activity and investments have an impact and are sustainable, strategic and local partnerships need to be close to ensure all knowledge, experience, skills and effort is pointing in the same direction. A town partnership needs to focus on information, promotion and sharing. There is also a need in Buckley to pilot and trial some ideas that are community facing and activate the town centre.

- Developing a street activity programme – music, arts, markets – trial street “bandstand”;
- Develop a community art scheme that supports, signage, telling the Buckley story, gateway murals;
- Work with Precinct landlord on pop up events – cinema, supper clubs, theatre...;
- Keep Buckley Tidy/Green – explore tidying up/greening/planting gateways, underused space, public areas.

PEOPLE BASED OPPORTUNITIES

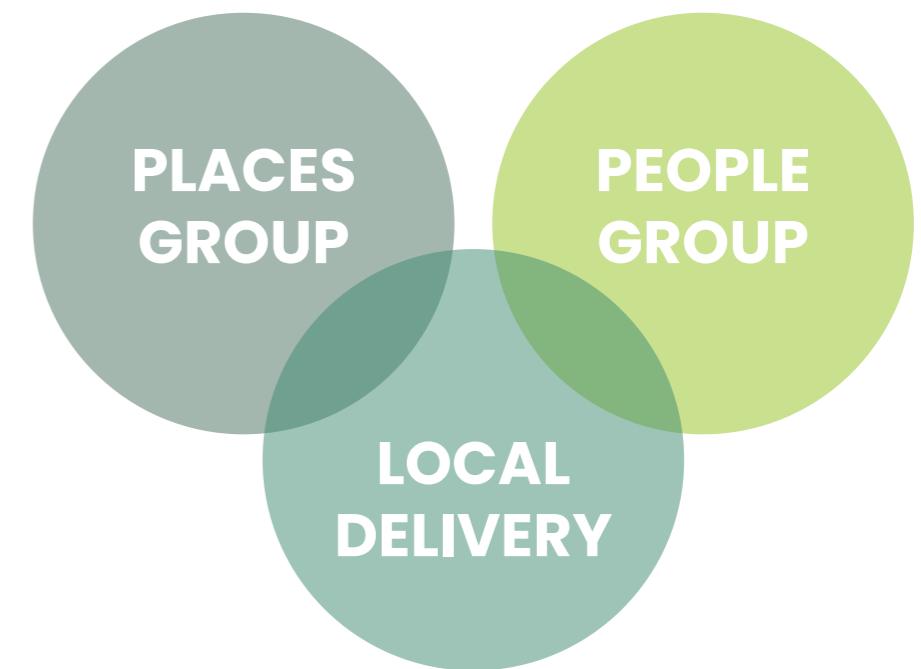


Buckley is a proud town, with a strong foundation in industry, making bricks and pottery, community, music and much more. From a small parish it has become Flintshire's second largest settlement due to its location on the English-Welsh border and the demand for housing. The settlement has outgrown what the village centre was with a need to reposition the town centre to its residents, established and new. Identity is not about a logo and a strapline but about a campaign that resonates with the sense of place and its people. It needs to elevate its unique assets such as being the town that built bricks that have been used across the world, through its brass band and that Led Zeppelin played at The Tivoli. Such a campaign could be about "Making it in Buckley" which looks to the past but also to the present.

- Design code for town centre that supports town palette, shop front design, signage, etc;
- Community led branding initiatives – community art projects, murals, trails and routes, local photography campaign and other initiatives;
- Develop local events programme – signature and local;
- Town centre business support that promotes "local" message and sense of place/ community through a blended approach that is on-street and digital.

Going Forward

Delivery of this Placemaking Plan is dependent on a partnership approach where groups and organisations mutually come together to develop and make change happen in Buckley 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.





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