

---

**TOWN CENTRE BUSINESS PLAN**

---

**Responsible Cabinet Member(s) -Councillor David Lyonette,  
Regeneration and Planning Portfolio**

**Responsible Director(s) - John Buxton, Director of Development and Environment**

---

**Purpose of Report**

1. To present the draft Darlington Town Centre Business Plan and annual Action Plan to Cabinet for comment, as part of a wider consultation programme.
2. To seek approval for Council Officers to implement those actions which are attributed to the Council within the Action Plan.

**Information and Analysis**

3. The draft Business Plan and Action Plan are based on the discussions at several Town Centre Board meetings.
4. The Business Plan has been based on a three year period:
  - (a) Year 1 commencing October 2004 and concluding in March 2005;
  - (b) Year 2 commencing April 2005 to March 2006; and
  - (c) Year 3 commencing April 2006 and concluding March 2007.
5. The Business Plan has been formulated as a concise 'glossy' brochure with a high profile image. It is intended that the Business Plan be used to inwardly promote the Town Centre and the 'vision' for Darlington, as well as to Head Offices and Developers.
6. A folder element has also been allowed for within the inside back cover to retain the annual Action Plan, allowing for easy and regular updating.
7. The Business Plan and annual Action Plan have focussed on the key issues for the town centre, as identified by the Town Centre Board. The Plans are not intended to duplicate the work areas or issues identified and carried out within other plans and strategies e.g. public arts issues have been addressed within the Moving Up Strategy (local cultural strategy).
8. Any photographs used within the document at this stage are for illustration purposes only. New photographs will be sought for the publication to illustrate and support key issues and visions. The document will be given a more 'polished' look by the designers/printers prior to it being published.

## Outcome of Consultation

9. At their meeting on 13 May, the Town Centre Board agreed the following timetable for consultation on the draft Business Plan, before it is launched in September/October 2004.

May	13th	First draft of the Business Plan and annual Action Plan to be approved by the Town Centre Board
May	20th	Draft Business Plan and Action Plan to be presented to Economy and Environment Group of Darlington Partnership for comments
June	18th	Draft Business Plan and Action Plan to be presented to the Town Centre Forum for consideration and approval
July	13th	Council's Cabinet to consider and comment on the draft Business Plan and Action Plan
July	15th	Comments and issues relating to the first draft of the Business Plan and Action Plan to be considered by the Town Centre Board and final approval granted
September	30th	Council to approve the Council's role in the Business Plan.
September		Printing of the Business Plan and Action Plan
October	7th	Launch of the Darlington Town Centre Business Plan

## Comments

10. The Business Plan proposed by the Town Centre Board fully accords with the Community Strategy and relevant Council policy documents and is therefore welcome. It helpfully complements the Town Centre Development Strategy and other key Council initiatives.
11. As one of the partner organisations which form the Town Centre Board, the Council will need to carry out some of the actions in the Business Plan since the Board has no formal status in its own right. Other partners will carry out other actions.

## Legal Implications

12. This report has been considered by the Borough Solicitor for legal implications in accordance with the Council's approved procedures. There are no issues which the Borough Solicitor considers need to be brought to the specific attention of Members, other than those highlighted in the report.

## Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998

13. The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely, the duty on the

Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area. It is not considered that the contents of this report have any such effect.

### **Council Policy Framework**

14. The Town Centre Business Plan will effectively be an addition to Council policy for the town centre and it is therefore proposed to refer it to the Council meeting in September for consideration.

### **Decision Deadline**

15. For the purpose of the 'call-in' procedure this does not represent an urgent matter

### **Key Decisions**

16. This report represents a key decision because it affects more than one Ward.

### **Recommendation**

17. It is recommended that :-
  - (a) Cabinet welcomes the **attached draft Business Plan and annual Action Plan**, and informs the Town Centre Board that the contents are supported.
  - (b) Cabinet authorise Council Officers to implement those actions which are attributed to the Council within the Action Plan.
  - (c) The Council meeting in September is recommended to adopt as Council policy those aspects of the Business Plan which impact on Council responsibilities.

### **Reasons**

18. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons :-
  - (a) To provide Council comments on the Business Plan and Action Plan.
  - (b) To give Officers the appropriate authorisation to implement the relevant action points within the annual Action Plan.
  - (c) To enhance the vitality and economy of the town centre.

**John Buxton**  
**Director of Development and Environment**

### **Background Papers**

No Background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

Louise Payne : Extension 352834

ec