



HOLYWELL 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 Holywell. Whilst it has a focus on the town centre, the Plan also looks at the wider relationship with its neighbourhoods and residents and with nearby assets such as Greenfield Valley. Holywell is one of seven towns across the County that includes Buckley, Connah's Quay, Flint, 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 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 Holywell.



Holywell's Challenges

- The town's road system pulls you down to the eastern and northern edges of the town centre, not bringing you directly into its heart. First time visitors travel along a number of circuitous routes that either bring you into the Tesco food store car park or into rear service yards.
- The lack of green space in the town centre poses a challenge in that introducing trees into areas of hard landscaping is both more complex and costly compared to areas of soft landscaping.
- Whilst the town centre has a significant number of listed buildings, which tell the former story of the town, they have changed uses and been incrementally adapted over time, not contributing to a coherent streetscene.
- The Greenfield Valley Strategy – 10-Year 'Big Picture' Plan for the Greenfield Valley has identified it to be one of the top ten destinations in North Wales with an engaging mix of cultural, environmental, heritage and leisure experiences. Whilst the Valley is close to the town centre, when arriving from the west it needs a stronger message about its experience, history, local nature and its accessibility, building on its existing town heritage trail.
- The town centre is anchored around its High Street, which is not a through route to traffic, and has a wide-open space with strong architecture that frames the edges. However, the town has a 26% vacancy rate, lacks diversity of uses and does not have a social feeling to the space.
- Statistics show that some of Holywell's residents live in neighbourhoods of greatest need. Health rating, educational attainment, exposure to crime, economic activity are some of the indicators that measure well below the Welsh average.
- The Green Infrastructure Audit identified several challenges in the town centre. These challenges being, there is very little tree cover with limited/poor quality connections to green spaces including Greenfield Valley Wat's Dyke Way and Fron Park along the southern edge of the town centre.
- Vehicular dominance along Rue St Gregoire/ A5026, bisects the town centre, with poor walking and cycling provision. Moving into the town centre, the public realm is seen to be cluttered and incoherent with a poor sense of place and arrival points difficult to identify.

OUR VISION FOR HOLYWELL



Vision

Holywell – where Greenfield Valley meets the Wellness of St Winefride’s, with the town centre at the centre of local shops, meeting up, weekly markets and community life, reaching out to its immediate neighbourhoods.



Key Aims

To put Holywell on the map as a destination for wellness with Greenfield Valley, St Winefride’s Well, Halkyn Hill and its community facing town centre.

To direct people into the heart of the town centre experiencing its parks and leisure offering before dropping into the High Street.

To increase activity and life on the High Street through active uses, community spaces, local markets, regular events and festivals with quality street scenes looking on.

To improve the well-being of the wider community with access to a range of local services that supports health, well-being, employment, mobility and enhanced life chances.



PLACE BASED OPPORTUNITIES



Gateways into the Town

A hierarchy of gateways within the town will give residents and visitors a positive impression of the town and aid movement and legibility. These include:

- Strengthen the A5026/Fron Park Road
- Fron Park Road Gateway to Car Park
- Fron Park Road Gateways
- Victoria Hotel Gateway
- Whitford Street Gateway
- Main Car Park



Activating and Greening the Town Centre

Once people have arrived in the town centre a key consideration is how to encourage them to stay. The town currently suffers from some poor public spaces which can be car dominated, and offer little in terms of seating or greenery, which would invite people to dwell. There is a great opportunity throughout the town centre to create more people orientated spaces that encourage and prolong time (and money) spent in the town centre. Areas for attention include the High Street, Tower Gardens and the A5026.



Linkages into the High Street

There are a number of key links into and out of the town centre that connect into the wider area and are key for attracting people into the High Street. Public realm improvements to the High Street, A5026, car park and key gateways will create a more vibrant and attractive town but will only be beneficial if people can easily access the area.



Greenfield Valley in the Town Centre

The town centre needs to develop its offer and experiences for visitors to the Greenfield Valley area whether these be for local residents, day-trippers, longer-stay visitors and those taking on long-distance paths such as the North Wales Pilgrims Way. Physical investments need to be crosscutting from arrival management, movement to and from Greenfield Valley, the role of greenery in the town centre to re-enforce character as well as an appealing and functional public realm. A range of visitor accommodation needs to be developed that support day and evening time economies, as well as stimulating new enterprise through revitalized outdoor markets, wellness festivals, holistic therapies and for food and drink to present a diverse and “local” offering.

PEOPLE BASED OPPORTUNITIES



Animating the High Street

The width of the street is generous and has the opportunity to present itself as an active space, alongside smaller squares and spaces such as Well Street and Tower Gardens. More opportunities for dwell through seating, areas of shade through tree planting and accessible public space should be provided. Working with opportunities to enhance townscape quality and maximise the location of the Greenfield Valley identity and experience in the town centre is key. Pavement life needs to be more social, engaging and diverse with street licenses providing the framework for display of goods, placement of tables and chairs and planting. These need to link in with a design code for commercial frontages. The role of outdoor markets within Holywell is a key area of investment, as if they are carefully curated and managed, they provide a platform to showcase local products, generate street activity and introduce emerging businesses to town centre locations.

PEOPLE BASED OPPORTUNITIES



Wellness in the Community

The development of active public space that is accessible, connected, inclusive and adaptable for all needs can lead to active daily living. Community outreach activity to increase participation rates in physical activities can be realised through walking clubs, cycle hire, community growing projects and through indoor activities such as yoga, exercise classes as well as outdoor green gyms. These activities can also support town centre businesses where local walking/running groups can meet and finish up at local cafes, establish community walking festivals and more. There are also links into community groups and organisations that have a focus on physical and mental health and well-being, with exercise referral programmes, diet and nutrition advice, the loan of community e-bikes and more.



Connecting Community Assets

Holywell has an active and diverse range of community groups and organisations that provide support for its residents. Some are town centre located, others situated on the edge, and some found within neighbourhoods at Pen-y-Maes, Holway and in the Greenfield Valley. The role of well-being in the town centre is ever more important with a need for residents to understand what is on their doorstep, what activities and support they provide and how to participate. There is therefore a need to network organisations so that there is a co-ordination between groups, and duplication is avoided. To continue with a multi-agency approach to anti-social behaviour and how a town centre hub approach can bring together skills, knowledge and links into the wider community. On a physical level some physical assets need to be more coherent and legible to people with the need for improved settings, linkages, parking and help with mobility.

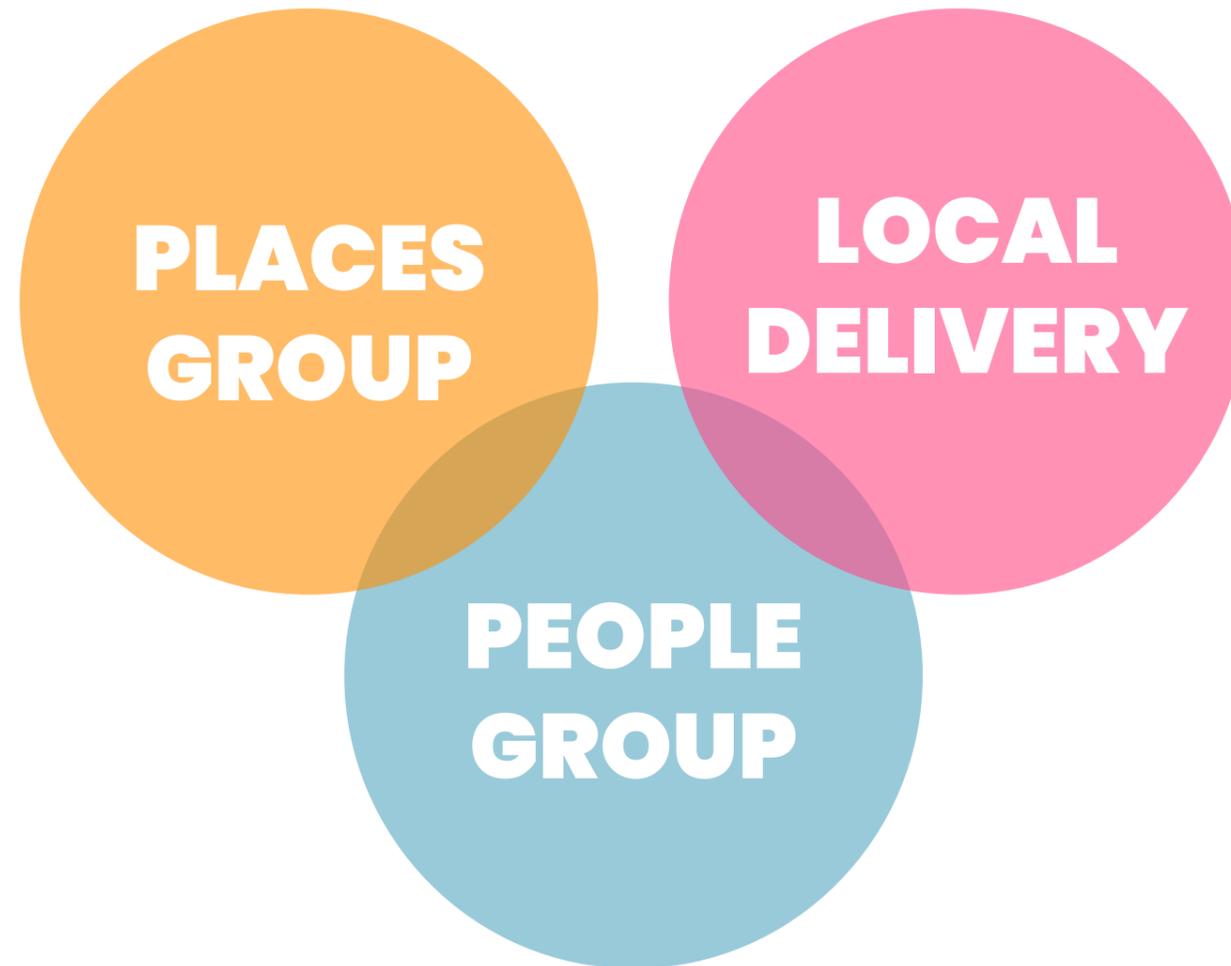
PEOPLE BASED OPPORTUNITIES ...

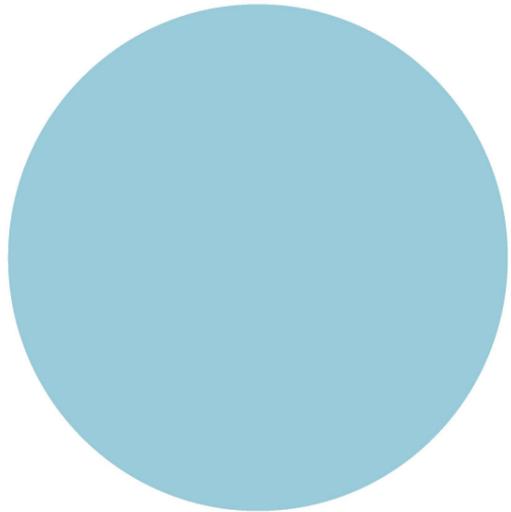


Holywell’s High Street has a strong canvass due to its Georgian and Victorian history and its public realm provides generous space. All of these qualities can underpin a town centre experience that looks to its former past with mining and cotton trade industries, continues its theme of wellness and a place you journey to, through pilgrimage and other walks and trails. There are opportunities for local enterprises to tap into these products, with support from public and local agencies and promotion and helping with business case development and growth. Possible gaps include non-serviced accommodation, lifestyle/recreational products, locally made produce, eateries with a homemade focus as well as the creative sector with items such as ceramics, jewelers, garments and green/circular economy enterprises. Creating a “wellness” campaign that connects like-minded businesses projects a critical mass of businesses and starts to build interest and curiosity in Holywell.

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 Holywell 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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