

# QUEENSFERRY 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 Queensferry. Whilst it has a focus on the town centre, the Plan also looks at the wider relationship with its neighbourhoods and residents. Queensferry is one of seven towns across Flintshire, having a Place Making Plan developed, including Buckley, Connah's Quay, Flint, Holywell, Mold 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 Queensferry.



## Queensferry Challenges

- The highway network is centred around strategic roads into Deeside with highway junctions at the A494 and B5129 of significant scale that results in Queensferry town centre feeling severed and traffic dominated.
- Whilst Queensferry, compared to other Deeside town centres appear to be cleaner and cared for, with some street furniture, pedestrian guard railings and other items need to be enhanced. Pavements are generally wide and in good condition but there is a need to manage licensing and co-ordinate street activity.
- Due to traffic accessing Deeside, Station Road is busy at peak times, with a constant flow of vehicles. Due to the length of the street, it can be difficult to cross even with a controlled crossing further down as well as some uncontrolled courtesy crossings. The pedestrian does not feel they can cross due to traffic volume and speed so there is the need to announce to vehicle drivers that they are in a town centre and pedestrians are moving in and around.
- The town centre has an 18% vacancy rate with some of the larger units being unoccupied, in addition to some smaller premises also being vacant. These do not positively contribute to the street scene along Station Road, with some existing businesses having a poor interaction with the street, disrupting the overall experience. There is evidence of some investment through building improvement scheme support but this needs to be widened.
- There are a number of buildings that are redundant close to the town centre, including the former public toilets, the church hall (Dundas Street) and BT/GPO exchange building (Pierce Street) that bring down the quality of the town centre and neighbourhood.

## OUR VISION FOR QUEENSFERRY



### Vision

Queensferry – a place to pop into for its friendly shops, cafes and local services, close to its community and at the heart of Deeside, its river and industries.



### Key Aims

To enhance the Queensferry identity from the A494 and B5129 that projects a warm community welcome and makes the highway environment more street based and people friendly.

To make Station Road more accessible as a “street”, where vehicles feel they are entering a people-centred environment.

To create a more coherent streetscene that builds diversity, activity and presents a unified independent experience and neighbourhood that appeals to passing traffic and visitors.

To co-ordinate the management of the civic realm that ensures clean, safe and active street life, daytime and evening.



## PLACE BASED OPPORTUNITIES



### A Welcoming Queensferry – Making a Strong First Impression

The approach off the A494 and into Queensferry along the B5129 offers a poor first impression of the town. It is overly car dominated, constrained by barriers and does very little to announce your arrival at Queensferry. The area should become a true gateway and arrival point, not just for Queensferry but for the wider area. The junction could be redesigned to allow for more greenspace and trees, which could help enclose and soften the harsh urban environment.

Public art, signage and gateway features should announce “Welcome to Queensferry” and link to the history and identity of the town and wider area. Arrival into the high street from the east is under the railway bridge, with its low bridge sign and advertising hoardings. This functional and non-descript bridge does not create a positive experience of entering the town. Expressive signage, artworks and lighting could help transform this bridge into an exciting and memorable gateway into the town.

The town links into the Wales Coast Path and National Cycle Routes. Wayfinding signage at the key gateways into the town could help draw people into the high street and increase footfall. Well-maintained foot and cycle paths, clear wayfinding signage, points of interest and artworks could help create a positive impression and draw people into the town centre.



### Celebrating Queensferry’s History and Character

Queensferry has interesting history and character that should be celebrated throughout the town. This includes the Grade II listed War Memorial, a Victorian High Street, the Grade II listed Jubilee Bridge and the Church of The Blessed Trinity.

The town could do more to highlight and celebrate these key buildings. A redesign of the B5441 gateway and removal of the barriers, would also make it easier for people to cross the road, better linking the town to the Queensferry War Memorial Institute. The public realm around other key assets could be improved to encourage people to stop and dwell.

The traditional red brick Victorian High Street gets lost in the jumble of styles of the ground floor shops and businesses. A mix and match of colours, characters and signage styles draw focus from the more attractive architectural features of the street. A Design Code, which encourages certain styles and colours for the shop fronts, would help harmonise the street and better celebrate the history and identity of the town.

At the end of the shopping day, roller shutters are brought down on the shop fronts and greatly influence the character of the street. Although the long-term goal should be to remove entirely or move these shutters to within the shop themselves, in the short-term, artworks and decorations could bring life and colour back into the street.

## PLACE BASED OPPORTUNITIES



### A Street Full of Activity

To maximise the potential of Station Road (the High Street), it needs to be brought to life. It is currently a very functional space with wide footpaths, plenty of parking and is lined by shops, cafés and businesses.

However, it does little to inspire people to use it or invite them to stay, dwell and spend. The wide footpaths are a great asset and provide ample space for a range of activities and features that will help animate the street. Shops and cafés should be encouraged to spill out onto the street, display wares or provide café seating. More seating and ‘activity’ spaces provide areas for people to stop, dwell and chat. This creates a more social environment and helps to create a wider sense of community. More greenspaces, rain gardens, planters and street trees could help to define these ‘activity spaces’ and provide shade, improve the air quality and soften the urban nature of the street.

The street currently can be difficult to cross, especially at busy times of the day. Crossing points can be characterised by narrowings in the road, encouraging cars to slow down and making it easier to cross. These crossing points can be linked to landscaped areas and ‘activity’ spaces to create more variation along the street and encourage social connections.



### Tackling Disused Sites and Buildings

Queensferry has a strong core in Station Road, which forms the heart of the town. Proposals within this Place Making Plan could help to further enhance this core and create a more vibrant and active town. However, this core can only be accessed through the ‘edges’ of the town where there are various sites, buildings and spaces that create a poor impression and weaken the town. Strengthening the ‘edges’ of the town could encourage more people into it’s heart and create a more positive environment for visitors and residents alike.

Between Station Road and Jubilee Bridge sits a row of large industrial units and garages. These tend to be of poor architectural quality with car parks to the front that offer little in terms of enclosure or activity. This street could be enhanced through landscaping, hedges or street trees which would soften the urban character, create enclosure along the street and partially screen some of the unattractive buildings.

An old toilet block sits next to the railway bridge at the western end of Station Road. This site is going to be redeveloped for residential uses. This development could create a new eastern gateway building for the street and should front onto and create activity onto Station Road.

Derelict buildings and empty sites within the town should be redeveloped to avoid the negative impression such sites can have on the community and quality of an area. The old Church site and BT exchange could be redeveloped for residential or commercial uses depending on the need of the area.

## PLACE BASED OPPORTUNITIES



### Taking Pride in Public Spaces

A common theme across other Flintshire towns is the need for a co-ordinated approach to managing streets so that 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. Whilst Queensferry exhibits better levels of cleanliness than some town centres, there are challenges related to deteriorating highway furniture, the deep cleansing of pavements and a lack of greenery in some places. Some areas for consideration include:

- Gateway signage
- Highway pedestrian guardrails
- Town centre information – waymarking and map/information boards
- Street furniture – seats, benches, litter bins, bollards
- Civic planters and planting

There is also a need to co-ordinate 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



### Celebrating Local Life and Community Spirit

Queensferry is mainly centred around one road – Station Road. The road is contained between the railway bridge to the north east and the B5129 to the south west. Its compact and contained nature, alongside the immediate rows of terraced houses creates a strong neighbourhood character. It therefore needs to use this character and sense of community as its key qualities in positioning its offer to its users.

Glimpses of this neighbourhood feeling are seen in a number of its cafes and a small number of destination shops (record, sports, convenience) within the street. There is therefore a foundation to work from when developing a simple marketing and promotional campaign that is centred on the values of “local”, “on your doorstep”, “coffee and a chat” and the “personal customer service”.

Physical investment should focus on building improvement works to traditional materials and colours, signwriting and appealing shop window displays and tasteful café menus. To complement this, marketing and promotion don't need to be complex. A simple blend of well-placed messaging at key gateways, traditional A-boards within the street scene, and features such as shop awnings in a Queensferry colour palette or vibrant street banners could be highly effective. Promotional material could be as simple as a local listing of shops, café and services, simple stickers and vinyls and a street plan. The heritage of the community is a thread that could also be developed in terms of colours, imagery and how this can be promoted through local shops, café walls and in the street.



### A Place for Learning and Skills Development

There are opportunities within Queensferry for people to thrive and enhance their life skills and further development.

In recent times, the Kings Academy (training academy) provides most of the pre-16 hair and beauty provision for high school pupils (+80 pupils). The academy also provides adult learning including hair, beauty and adult community engagement activities. They are located on Station Road, with a visible presence and outlet for local training and for young people and adults to learn, train and either seek employment or establish their own hair and beauty business.

Across the road from Queensferry town centre, accessed off Chester Road (west) are a number of educational and community providers that could form links with a number of place-making activities and initiatives.

There may be a number of opportunities to explore with these organisations such as:

- A shop window for their activities within the town centre that showcases their services, 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.
- Finding opportunities for young people to learn about the retail and service sector, with hands-on experience alongside mentors and coaches.

## PEOPLE BASED OPPORTUNITIES



Co-ordinating ways to improve the gateways into Queensferry and adding greenery to the streetscape within Station Road area, there is an opportunity for local groups, organisations and residents to get involved in greening up their town centre neighbourhood.

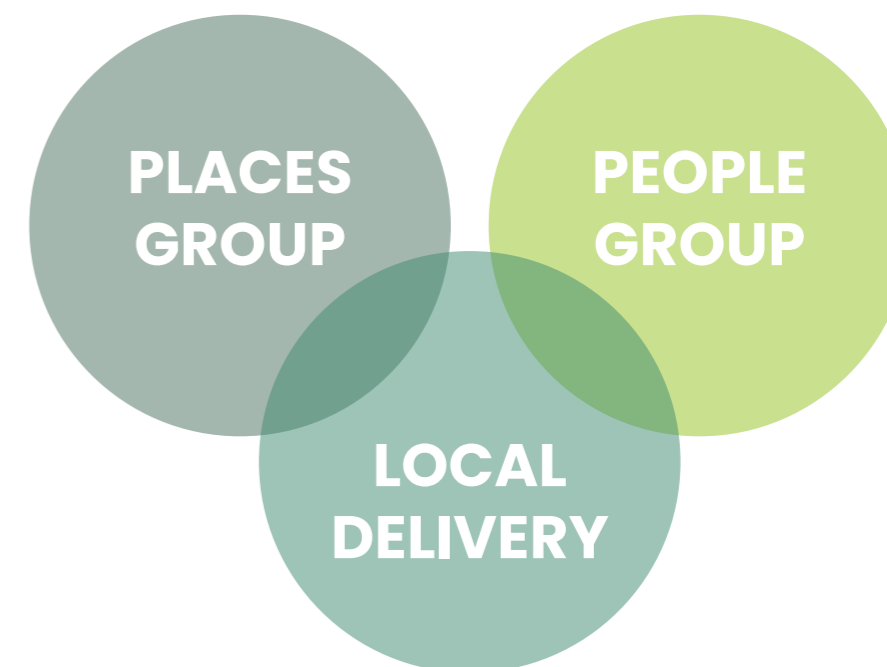
Works close to the A494 and B5129 will need to be delivered by the local highway authority due to health and safety implications. Nevertheless community groups, local businesses and residents could support some on-street greening activities, which could include:

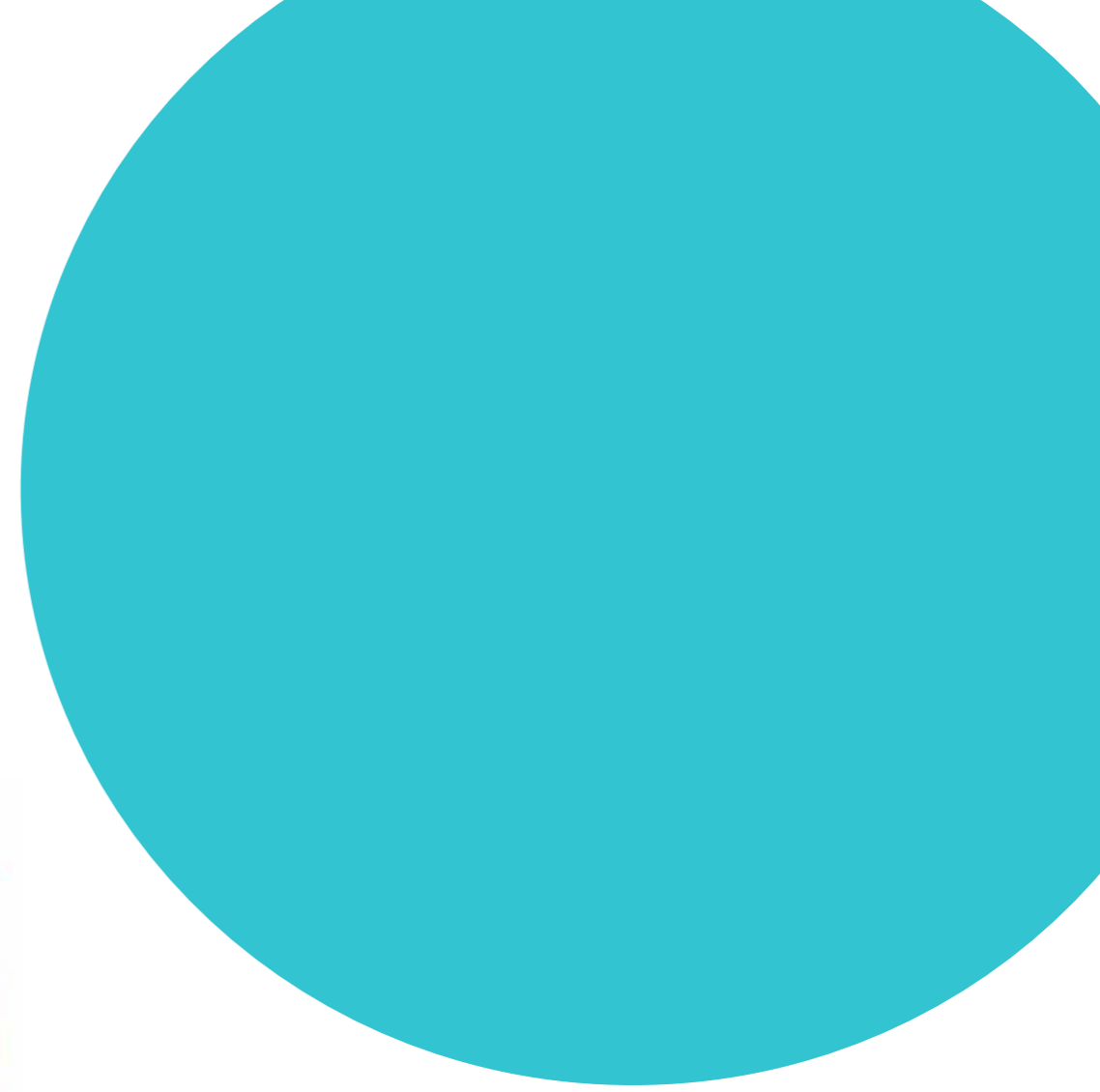
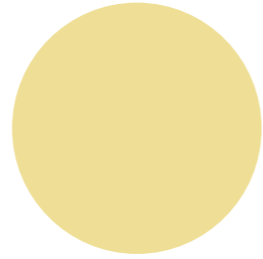
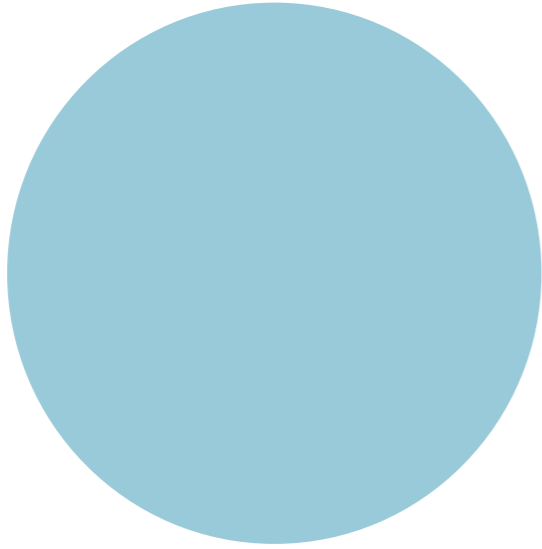
- Greening up key street approaches
- Planting within the green space between the B5441 and B5129
- Green walls within the street using existing structures
- Planting street trees with benches to provide shelter and dwell
- Making raised planters from upcycling wood for low maintenance grasses and/or providing edible herbs – could be linked into local cafés and eateries e.g. oregano
- Work with building owners to deal with building run-off and use of bio-retention planters

Some of the above activities could link into Ty Calon Hub, HfT Flintshire and Plas Derwen based in Shotton. This could help with adult and community learning, wider curriculum activities and supporting employment pathways.

### 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 Queensferry 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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