

Portsmouth City Council

Internal Report

Subject	Culture Leisure & Economic Development (CLED) Scrutiny Panel - Looking at the Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy, what recommendations can be made to further support the high street in its refresh in 2024.
Date	16 th Nov 23
Authors	Rebecca Alexander - Place & Markets Manager Jane Lamer - Head of Economic and Skills Claire Watkins - Business Manager (Culture)

Purpose

The CLED Scrutiny panel set the challenge of:

“Review the focus on High Streets within the current Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy and how can we recommend actions which better supports the reinvigoration of the High Street, recognising retailing and the need for a mixed-use approach to better support this vital industry”

The CLED Scrutiny panel seeks to review the current Strategy, and supporting work, and make recommendations for focus under the planned review.

Summary

Economic Development and Regeneration Strategy

The Economic Development and Regeneration Strategy was produced and consulted on in 2018/19 and implemented. In the light of significant economic constraints and positioning escalation due to Covid and the subsequent cost of living crisis which have added different challenges which drive Portsmouth’s economy.

The planned review of the strategy is designed to ensure that key themes and data remain in use, but that the strategy is refreshed to reflect the significant changes in economic challenges and links the work more strategically to other key work (for example the Social Value Policy, Imagine Portsmouth etc) to ensure it works with other policy drivers and is more simplified in its delivery plan to show clear measurable targets.

The Strategy Unit will lead this work to provide a cohesive thread.

[Portsmouths economic development and regeneration strategy 2019-2026](#)

Despite retailing representing the 2nd biggest employment sector in the city (source NOMIS 2022 data *), it has limited representation in the current strategy. In the refresh officers are seeking to rebalance and provide a more focused update on retailing.

Key objective 5.3 Revitalise the city centre, and high streets across the city

The strategy will drive the transformation of the city centre and all high streets such as those in Southsea, Fratton, North End and Cosham. It will make the digital high street a reality. It will embrace bold architecture. Our city centre and high streets will be re-purposed with more high-quality city living, leisure, restaurants, hotels, and co-working spaces.

The current action plan shows 3 key targets related to high streets

- Obtain maximum funding from the Future High Streets Fund (City Centre and Fratton bids)
- Deliver the new Portsmouth Markets strategy
- Specific action plans for each retail area of the city

Future High Streets

Secured in December 2020 and evidenced in the City Centre Regeneration work (including procurement of City Buildings on Commercial Road – moving to live meanwhile use for Enterprise Centres opening shortly) and Fratton Bridge Centre procurement

Portsmouth Markets Strategy

Approved at CLED 17th Nov 23 to provide a detailed action plan of activities and links to other economic development work including Pop Up Shops and business support measures

Specific Action Plans

Local Plan reflects the aspirations for different retailing space across the city (including shopping districts). Planning legislation to cat E precludes more direction within local plan work. No additional funding has been identified to support targeted interventions

Current information sources

The proposed refresh of the Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy in 2024 will relook and expand on this focus to provide clear tracking of progress against Shopping Centres and districts within the current budget.

In the original paper to Scrutiny Panel, extensive background research supporting the current work of the teams was provided (Economic Development and Culture) but the focus for 2023/24 Scrutiny highlights:

LGA (Local Government Association) report

Local Government Association general report reflecting on national trends.

[Creating resilient and revitalised high streets in the 'new normal' | Local Government Association](#)

Summary of FHS (Future High Streets) report

Specific to Portsmouth as part of the Future High Street Taskforce. This includes recognising key challenges around:

Collaborative working identified as the main barrier to transformation in Portsmouth

Better use of data to formulate strategies and action plans

Rebranding/reformulating communication internally/externally

Capacity build through effective relationships to deliver change

Facilitate a team approach to transformation with PCC (Portsmouth City Council), business and the community working together to create and achieve the vision

This work continues under both Property (development) and High Street Taskforce (Economic Development) with cross department working

Future High Streets (City Centre)

Future High Streets City Centre funding was secured in December 2020 and is subject to DLUHC (Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities) monitoring. The purpose of the project has developed, following the council's inability to purchase the original commercial property on the high street following a vibrant private market and our commitment to not compete with business.

Future High Streets City Centre funded the purchase, and meanwhile refurbishment of the City Buildings project. Part of the wider regeneration in the north of Commercial Road, the building is moving into meanwhile use as an enterprise centre and has already secured 2 tenants ahead of its opening December 2023/January 2024. It is anticipated that the site will run for around 5 years ahead of the demolition and development work.

Most recent updates are focused on the delivery of public realm improvements to the north end of Commercial Road. Activities are funded by Future High Streets. Further information can be found in public realm development.

City Centre North regeneration has planning for phase 1 submitted and this will go to committee in October 23. Further information can be found at www.portsmouthcitycentre.co.uk

High Street Taskforce – Unlocking your Place Potential (UYPP)

PCC have a Mentor assigned (Neil Wild) and work done to SWOT assess the city centre and current approaches. Some traction lost due to a temporary withdrawal of our mention due to personal circumstances, work picking up again with a follow up session on 12th October 2023 and further sessions booked in. The funding for Future High Streets and the High Streets task force come from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities DLUHC

Further information can be found in High Street Taskforce report 'Unlocking Your Place Potential' UYPP

Safer streets

Economic Development focus in high streets connects with the Safer Streets Bid team, now on its 5th round of funding. Safer Streets projects focus on interventions to address violence against women and girls in public spaces and sit alongside interventions from the Police and Community safety in a 'task force' approach to high streets addressing anti-social behaviour and criminal activity. Safer Street funding unlocks projects with a focus on designing out crime, creation of 'safe spaces' and training for staff in licenced venues to recognise vulnerable individuals and offer support. Exploration of business needs uncovers that alongside business support, there is a need for support from community wardens and the police to manage high streets with a 'place' perspective, rather than a focus on one area of support.

BID (Business Improvement District)

Exploration underway. At the very least will unlock key stakeholders and facilitate better relationships to enable visioning and better partnership approaches.

Encourage buy in and a pro-active approach from businesses.

Decision on 'where' and potential (noting this must be business led)

Share learning across high streets/places in Portsmouth

Encourage traders/business associations formation to enable pro-active engagement with PCC and regular communication flow.

Rediscover website use to boost online support for high streets.

Evolutionary CRM (Customer Relationship Management) use to share information and enable better CRM.

Market strategy

The market strategy has CLED approval and support as of 17 November 2023.

The strategy sets out a 5-year action plan for markets, placing them at the heart of 'ground up' regeneration, supporting bricks and mortar businesses across the high streets. The Place & Markets team is undergoing a restructure to allow a more flexible and business friendly model working closely with SME (Small and Medium Enterprise) development advisor to support business growth across the city with a focus on high streets. The restructure has the same delivery costs but will position the service for growth and innovation after significant downturn seen over the last 5 years (exasperated by Covid) and is designed to support new business startup work. This work includes specific actions around Pop Up Retail outlets (under negotiation for Cascades) and Small Business Saturday event work in the market areas.

Market Strategy Recommendations

'Task force' and place-based, strategic approaches to the high street (not limited to the city centre) engaging with both internal and external partners e.g. Economic Development and Culture) to effectively formulate approaches and maximise potential schemes through shared resources and planning.

Map key stakeholders - internal/external.

Better use and sharing of data and evidence to inform action planning/strategies.

Set out vision, strategy, and action plan for high streets to encourage 'buy in' from internal and external partners.

develop internal/ external comms plans.

Internal/external partners fully engaged with high street vision, strategy, and action plan.

Exploration of BID/s subject to business interest

City Centre Projects and Programmes Review group

Led by Assistant Director for Regeneration (Property) and held monthly, this brings together the diverse project managers delivering across the City Centre to support better communication between projects. This is attended by the Place and Markets Manager. Governance and information sharing being worked up by Anna Limburn to

Attendance includes:

PMO

Strategic PM City Centre

PM for Future High Streets

Strategy Unit

Enterprise Centres

Transport

Traffic and network

Data sources

*[Labour Market Profile - Nomis - Official Census and Labour Market Statistics \(nomisweb.co.uk\)](https://www.nomisweb.co.uk)

Appendix 1

Invitation list for open committee meetings (ED (Economic Development)) has been issued with all participants are being asked to prepare a simple form ahead of attendance covering

- Name and business details
- Key concerns for the High Street
- What is working well in our high streets
- What can PCC do to support this further

29th November 2023 attendees

Andrew Philip – Cascades centre manager (potential BID)

Julie Carolan – H&M (potential BID)

Al Lye - Primark Manager

Nickii Humphries – Licencing Manager (PCC)

Tim Keeping – Port Solent Management

14th December attendees

Flude - Alice Masterman and Sebastian Martin

Phil Salmon and Les Pink - Planning Consultants - Jubilee Place (Debenhams site)

Lauren Taylor – Head of Community Safety (PCC)

Additional invites awaiting confirmation of attendance / written submissions for first two session include:

Peter Tisdale, THAT Group, Knight & Lee building developer

Gemma Nichols – CEO Portsmouth Creates

City centre/Cosham market traders

Tim Clark, Vail Williams property management

Sebastian Martin, Alice Masterman, Flude property management

Neil Wild, High Street Task Force mentor

Next Store Management

Proposed witnesses to call to CLED (Culture Leisure and Economic Development) Scrutiny Panel from Culture and Leisure (attendance in Jan/Feb meetings)

Cathy Hakes, Head of Museums (PCC)

Dave Percival, Head of Libraries & Archives (PCC)

Angela Gonzalez, Library Supervisor, Southsea Library (PCC)

Christine Taylor, Natural History Curator (PCC)

Grace Scott, Engagement Officer (PCC)

Katherine Webber, Museum, Heritage and Education Professional (external)

Ross Fairbrother, Manager, D Day Story (PCC)

Catherine Ramsay, Business Manager, HIVE (PCC)

Laura Weston, Education & Learning Officer, Conan Doyle (PCC)