

# Penrith's Community Plan

Stepping stones

towards

a better future.

Draft 3 – September 2015



PENRITH PARTNERSHIP

Produced by the Penrith Partnership in association with individuals and community groups across Penrith



PENRITH PARTNERSHIP

# Contents Page

- Welcome to Penrith's Town Plan
- Background
- Vision
- Action Plan
  - To ensure Penrith offers an attractive environment in which to work, rest and play
  - To ensure Penrith offers a full range of events and activities for all age ranges.
  - To enhance Penrith's appeal as a dynamic commercial centre.
  - To improve Penrith as a transport hub.
  - To build on and promote the unique heritage of the town through active management of the conservation area, sensitive building developments and active management of the infrastructure
  - To improve the facilities in the town for young people

## Welcome to Penrith's Town Plan

Following a number of discussions with interested parties over the period October 2014 to October 2015, the Penrith Partnership sought to carry out an extensive survey with householders, businesses and schools to identify issues of particular concern to these interest groups and to develop where possible courses of action to address their concerns. A number of open meetings were held, seventy interest groups within the town were contacted for comment, as were the three main community residents' associations. A draft plan was produced which has been subject to a further round of consultation before this current version of the plan was produced.

The following is a summary Action Plan produced as a result of this research. The Action Plan details each area of concern categorized under six themes: subject matter headings. It describes areas of concern and the actions to be taken by a lead organization or person. The format is designed to allow the actions to be highlighted in red, amber and green to reflect progress over time.

The Penrith Partnership is striving to reflect the views of all residents but recognizes that there will be gaps in the information collected, and potentially important areas of local interest, which are not represented. However the aim is that this should be a dynamic plan, which is updated and reported on an ongoing basis. As a result there will be an ongoing opportunity for new ideas and views to be input at any time. Please feel free to contact any of the members of the Partnership or the Town Council or place comment on the Penrith Partnership web site at <http://www.penrithpartnership.org.uk/contact>.

## Background

The Penrith Partnership is just one of many community, business and activity groups in Penrith and the immediate surrounding area. It has been active in raising money for enhancement to the town e.g new lighting in St Andrews churchyard, installation and painting of street furniture, improvements to the alleyway between Little Dockray and Devonshire Street. It has also run events most notably the Eden Food and Farming Festival in July. This work has brought it into contact with other key groups in the Town where it has become apparent that there are overlaps both in ambition and detail.

The main drivers for a single joint plan were therefore as follows:

- The desire to maximize the impact of all of the good work that is already being taken forward by individuals and groups within the town.
- The wish to ensure that a critical mass of resources can be created to deliver any particular organization's objectives.
- The wish to minimize, or at least recognize, overlaps or areas of mutual interest and concern.

The Partnership claims no monopoly on ideas which is why we have sought to generate as much input as possible from other groups and individuals into this plan, and why we continue to welcome ideas and comments. Nor does the Partnership lay claim to any ownership of the Plan: we have simply sought to act as the catalyst to bring ideas together into a single document.

In arriving at this plan we have consulted as follows

- Initial meeting October 2014
- Web based survey February/March 2015
- Contact with 70 local organisations, asking for comments and ideas
- Community Forum meeting 13 April 2015
- Circulation of draft plan

## Next Steps

- Recirculation of draft for comment – September 2015
- Open Forum Library 17<sup>th</sup> November 2015
- Re survey community Spring 2016

DRAFT

# Vision

There have been a variety of visions produced for the town over the years. The important thing is that there should be a single agreed vision for the Town and that the various actions proposed can be seen to directly contribute over time to the delivery of this vision.

Following consultation the following vision has been agreed:

## **The aim is to make Penrith**

- attractive to residents and visitors alike
- economically strong
- a place where all residents and traders have a stake in its success and a sense of belonging
- a pedestrian- and cycle-friendly market town

with very high environmental standards and an active leisure and arts culture.

This aim is underpinned by six key themes which in turn will be underpinned by the activities in the detailed action plan.

The six key themes are:

- 1) Environment - to ensure Penrith offers an attractive environment in which to work, rest and play
- 2) Leisure, Events and Amenities - to ensure Penrith offers a full range of events and activities for all age ranges.
- 3) Vibrant Economy, Shops, Commerce & Jobs - to enhance Penrith's appeal as a dynamic commercial centre.
- 4) Transport, Parking & Cycling - to improve Penrith as a transport hub.
- 5) Heritage, Buildings & Conservation - to build on and promote the unique heritage of the town through active management of the conservation area, sensitive building developments and active management of the infrastructure
- 6) Young People - to improve the facilities in the town for young people

**THEME 1: ENVIRONMENT - TO ENSURE PENRITH OFFERS AN ATTRACTIVE ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH TO WORK, REST AND PLAY**

*Penrith is already an attractive town but could be greatly improved. Specific tasks in this area will include the use, design and maintenance of quality green spaces, the greening of the town centre, maintenance of public space and removal of "grot spots"*

Action No	Issue	Action required	Key partners /Lead	Current Status
1A	Continued litter problems in various areas of the town despite some improvements over the last 4/5 years.	Bigger litter bins where a specific litter problem has been identified e.g. Cornmarket.	PP/BID/ Chamber of Trade	
		Community litter-picks using 'voluntary clean teams' to tackle problem areas on a regular basis	PP/Local voluntary groups & individuals	
		Encouragement to retailers to take responsibility for their shop fronts.	Chamber of Trade/CoT Ambassadors/BID	
1B	'Grot' spots which require improvement. For example: alleyways, the most prominent being the one between Little Dockray and Devonshire Street	Cleaning and general improvement of identified grot spots	Penrith Partnership/BID/Town Council	
		Alleyways	PP/BID/Town Council	The Partnership is in the process of upgrading the alley way that runs from Devonshire St to Little Dockray.

1C	Castle Park is old fashioned, under utilized and is in need of a new vision and the funding to take it forward.	Public consultation undertaken in 2014. Plans for improvement drawn up and funding now being sought.	Eden DC and Castle Park Steering group.	Plans considered and Heritage funding being sort
		Need to consider how to better signpost Castle Park from the centre of town.	EDC/BID	
1D	Poor public toilet facilities	Upgrade current facilities and charge for their use so as to create a fund for ongoing maintenance and improvement	Town Council/EDC	
1E	Maintenance of public spaces	<b>There is significant room for enhanced maintenance, for example:</b>	EDC/CCC Highways/Town Council/BID	
		Concerted action to penalise owners whose dogs foul the pavements.	EDC	
		Better weed control along footpaths and roads	EDC/Town Council	
		Repair of pavements and footpaths e.g Little Dockray	CCC Highways/EDC	
		Improvement and maintenance of flower beds so all-year display at lower cost.	EDC/Town Council	

1F	Improvements to signage, seating and the provision of planters and hanging baskets. There has seen significant improvement but further work is required	More seating required in the centre of town, ideally in a configuration so people can face each other.	EDC/BID/PP	New seating in Old Grammar school yard and Sandgate completed by PP
		Continue to improve greening of town centre in a way which makes it an enjoyable place to be.	BID/Town Council/PP	
		Monitor signage to ensure a coherent image for the town.	BID/Town Council/PP	
		Themed street furniture and signage	BID/Town Council/PP	
1G	Lighting around St Andrews. This is broken and totally inadequate for the winter when dark areas present a risk to pedestrians.	Upgrade all of the lighting round St Andrews	Highways / EDC/PP	Work completed by the Partnership

**THEME 2: LEISURE, EVENTS AND AMENITIES - TO ENSURE PENRITH OFFERS A FULL RANGE OF EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES FOR ALL AGE RANGES.**

*Penrith currently has some good events e.g. May Day, Eden Food and Farming Festival, Penrith Show, Pot Fest and the Winter Droving event. However there needs to be an improvement in coordination and learning between the organising groups and there is also need to find ways of making these and other events sustainable in the long term in an environment in which grant funding will be increasingly difficult to source. Other specific tasks could include proposals on how to enhance the existing range of activities, how to make better use of amenities like Castle Park and the Leisure Centre and how to develop a full calendar of cultural attractions.*

<b>Action No</b>	<b>Issue</b>	<b>Action required</b>	<b>Key partners /Lead</b>	<b>Current Status</b>
2A	Lack of co-ordination and learning between events	Establish an events committee for the town, to bring together all of the major parties.	EDC/ Town Council/ BID/ Penrith Partnership/Penrith Chamber of Trade & Commerce/Lions/ Rotary/ Eden Arts	
2B	Lack of funding to support events	Need to find a way to generate an income-stream for/ from these events, so they are sustainable over the longer term.	EDC/ Town Council/ BID/ Penrith Partnership/Penrith Chamber of Trade & Commerce/Lions/ Rotary/ Eden Arts	
2C	Need to develop a year-round events calendar	Co-ordination with all groups in town	EDC/ Town Council/ BID/ Penrith Partnership/Penrith Chamber of Trade & Commerce/Lions/ Rotary/ Eden Arts	
2D	Develop a monthly Artisan market in town enhanced by quarterly key events	Liaison with all interested parties and raise funds to turn this into a reality	EDC/BID/Penrith Partnership/Chamber of Trade	Possible start date March 2016
2E	Future of Fairhill Playing Field	Seek to support developing Community Group		

2F	More engagement between sports clubs to share ideas, share equipment, promote each other etc	Greater engagement between all sports clubs and groups possibly by the formation of a sports forum	All sports clubs/EDC	Sports forum in discussion

DRAFT

**THEME 3: VIBRANT ECONOMY, SHOPS, COMMERCE & JOBS - TO ENHANCE PENRITH'S APPEAL AS A DYNAMIC COMMERCIAL CENTRE**

*There is an overriding need for a long-term commercial plan which addresses the key issues faced by the community. This would start by undertaking a detailed audit to understand what we currently have and what is its contribution to the local economy.*

*Specific tasks could include proposals on increasing the diversity of the town centre experience, how to increase footfall, create higher-value jobs and develop the town as a tourist centre.*

<b>Action No</b>	<b>Issue</b>	<b>Action required</b>	<b>Key partners /Lead</b>	<b>Current Status</b>
3A	Lack of footfall in the town.	Review Penrith's offering with the view that the town can't just be about shopping. It needs to be more about community and the creation of a 'different' town centre	BID/Penrith Town Council/EDC/P P/Chamber of Trade	
		Improve publicity via web site	BID/Chamber/P P/Town Council	Delivered through creation of Discover Penrith website; potential for integrating all other major websites so a single reference point.
		Creation of WiFi hub in town centre	BID	Delivered by BID 2015
3B	Penrith seems to lose out to other centers' in the Lake District	To market Penrith as a destination of choice and as a convenient tourist centre for the Lakes, Eden valley and beyond.	Tourist Information	
3C	Penrith as a shopping experience	To define what is in future going to	Penrith Town	

	is dispersed over a considerable area in spite of the fact that it is clear that there is not the demand for this quantity of retail outlets.	be the town centre, concentrating investment in this area and encouraging other shops to convert to residential use.	Council/EDC	
3D	Eden is a low-income economy with limited career-paths outside the public sector	To encourage the provision of higher-value jobs and career-paths in the area so as to make it a more prosperous work place.	EDC/Chamber of Trade	
3F	There is a danger that Penrith will be overrun with high street retailers.	Need to encourage and foster small independent shops and alternative shopping experiences. Penrith town centre needs to be different enhancing what we already have but having a different culture perhaps a café culture with open spaces etc		
3G	Requirement for a link road to Junction 41	This will enable the industrial estates to expand with new business start ups and allow existing businesses to flourish It will also ease congestion at Junction 40	EDC/CCC	

**THEME 4: TRANSPORT, PARKING & CYCLING - TO IMPROVE PENRITH AS A TRANSPORT HUB.**

Specific tasks could include proposals to develop the town as a transport hub, to remove traffic congestion in the town centre, to provide appropriate parking facilities and to enhance the town as a cycle hub

Action No	Issue	Action required	Key partners /Lead	Current Status
4A	<b>Penrith is currently a transport hub but faces a number of key risks including:</b>			
	Reductions in local bus links	Budget cuts at County Council level have meant that local bus routes have been cut. Need to better promote the needs for these services if the rural economy is to be maintained. and to develop viable alternatives (Community buses) .	EDC	
	Car parking, particularly when compared with free supermarket and out of town parking arrangements	Whilst there is not a shortage of car parking in Penrith there is evidence that charging places the town centre shops at a disadvantage when compared with out of town shopping. Need to find ways to level the playing field. Need for an overall parking strategy to ensure that the town car-parks are properly designated and managed.	EDC/ Penrith Town Council/BID	
	Potential reduction in train connections as operators seek to enhance journey times to London.	Need to continue to promote Penrith as a key destination so that there is a good regular service up/down the west coast line	EDC/Town Council/Penrith Chamber/PP	

4B	Pollution in town centre – Narrows and Devonshire Street	Need to reduce/eliminate through traffic from the centre of town. Pedestrianisation of the town is key and should possibly start with the pedestrianisation of Little Dockray	CCC Highways/EDC	
4C	Penrith is on a number of key cycle routes – need to look at facilities available to ensure the local economy benefits		Penrith Chamber of Trade/Sarah Graham	
4D	Traffic wardens, whilst doing a useful job, are perceived to be unreasonable and do not help to promote the town.	Replace traffic wardens with a new Town Ambassador role. The Ambassadors would manage traffic and provide information in a way that helps to promote the town.	Highways CCC/Chamber of Trade/town Council/BID	
4E	Reinstatement of the Penrith to Keswick Railway	Through work already carried out there are strong economic arguments for this to be reinstated. However there needs to be the political will for this to happen	PP/EDC/CCC/Penrith Chamber of Trade & Commerce	

**THEME 5: HERITAGE, BUILDINGS & CONSERVATION - TO BUILD ON AND PROMOTE THE UNIQUE HERITAGE OF THE TOWN THROUGH ACTIVE MANAGEMENT OF THE CONSERVATION AREA, SENSITIVE BUILDING DEVELOPMENTS AND ACTIVE MANAGEMENT OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE**

*Specific tasks here might include an audit of historic buildings and their current state of repair, and measures to make the conservation area more attractive, to enhance understanding of Penrith's heritage and culture, and to publicise its attractions.*

<b>Action No</b>	<b>Issue</b>	<b>Action required</b>	<b>Key partners /Lead</b>	<b>Current Status</b>
5A	There does not appear to be an up-to-date listing of historic buildings etc, their current state of use and repair, and their potential	To undertake an audit of historic buildings	Civic Society/EDC	
5B	Whilst Penrith has a conservation area, and rules and regulations on signage and colour palette, these need updating and enforcement	To ensure that the rules/guidance around conservation areas are updated and enforced.	EDC/Town Council/Civic Society	
5C	Several of the buildings in Penrith are badly maintained and modern window fittings/promotions and signage spoil the overall impact of the town	Explore the option of a bid to the Heritage Lottery fund for town centre improvements, taking advice from Alston that has recently been successful with a bid.	EDC/Town Council/Civic society	
5D	Several buildings are in urgent need of improved maintenance and are currently an eye-sore	Working with EDC to serve notice of improvement on these building.	EDC	
5E	EDC have suggested a significant house-building programme for Penrith. Need to ensure that developments are a) built to best environmental standards b) provided with adequate affordable housing (meaning by this affordable in use)		EDC/Town Council	

	Need to look at opportunities for community-led housing, including self-build)			

DRAFT

## THEME 6: YOUNG PEOPLE - TO IMPROVE THE FACILITIES IN THE TOWN FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

*Young people and young families have significant pressures on their time. but it is important that we find ways to develop the town for these groups as they are the future and will reap the benefits of our work. Specific tasks could include developing destinations of choice for young people and finding ways to understand and respond to the requirements of young people.*

Action No	Issue	Action required	Key partners /Lead	Current Status
6A	There is limited youth space in Penrith. The Gathering café and the tables in the Old Grammar School Yard provide only a partial answer	Create a youth space within Castle Park	EDC/Castle Park Group	
6B	It is difficult to discover what the younger people actually want	To create a Forum where the voices of young people can be heard. This can be <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• via web sites</li> <li>• Facebook</li> <li>• Regular feedback from School Councils</li> </ul>		
6C	Need to create work and skills opportunities in town	This could include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short term work-experience</li> <li>• Apprenticeships</li> </ul> Greater engagement with businesses in and around the town	Penrith Chamber	
6D	Often the town is unaware of what the young people are doing in schools /colleges	Recently UCC has used a empty shop in New Squares to showcase their work, but we need to find ways to do more of this and to engage QEGS and Newton Rigg.		
6E	Limited shopping opportunities for younger people	Looking for branded goods, but could look to encourage small independents and market stalls.		
6F	Need youth engagement in the development of the Town	Engage the youth of the town in a major project that they can call their own.	Penrith Partnership	

			and UCC	

DRAFT