***APPENDIX 2***

**Tranent Town Centre Regeneration: Summary of the Background Consultations**

Over the past 4 years there has been considerable consultation and engagement undertaken with the community of Tranent in relation to town centre regeneration and High St improvements – however there has been little practical action taken as a result.

There have been 3 key reports produced as a result of these consultations:

* **Tranent Planning for Real** (PfR) - In 2011 East Lothian Council’s Community Learning and Development Services, at the request of the then Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing, consulted with people living and working across the Tranent area on the question – ‘What could be done to make Tranent High St a better place to be?’ 244 people took part, with the majority living in the Tranent EH33 postcode area. This exercise was undertaken in preparation for developing a Town Centre Strategy intended to provide a co-ordinated framework for action and investment in the town centre however, following a change of Administration in 2012, work on this Strategy was suspended.
* **Walkable Communities: local people taking action** (LS) – In 2013 Tenants and Residents Associations from Tranent and Ormiston, supported by Living Streets Scotland, undertook a Street Audit of Tranent High St designed to evaluate the quality of the street and surrounding connections for walking from the point of view of those who use them. The group walked the audit route identifying and recording issues that encouraged and discouraged everyday walking and used this to agree short, medium and longer term priorities and recommendations designed to improve the environment for pedestrians. These were submitted to East Lothian Council in March 2013, and despite a small number of improvements having been implemented since that time (including a dropped kerb on Church St, some bollards being reinstated and road markings on Winton Place) there is considerable disappointment at the lack of action taken.
* **Tranent and Elphinstone Community Action Plan** (TECAP) – In January 2014 a Community Action Plan was produced as the result of an engagement process funded by the Coalfields Regeneration Trust’s Community Futures Programme. The process involved community views surveys, stakeholder interviews and focus groups and a public Community Futures event leading to the identification of priorities that the community intends to work towards achieving in partnership with public agencies and others. The Plan’s priorities for action are grouped under 5 themes - one of which is Local Economy and Heritage with a focus on revitalising the High St and improving traffic management and road safety.

Across all of these consultations, despite the differing focus of the engagement and the range of methodologies used, there is a high degree of consistency regarding the issues identified in relation to Tranent Town Centre and the suggestions put forward. The key conclusions and recommendations from these reports are summarised below (in no particular order of priority).

1. **Traffic congestion -** Improved traffic management & road safety on the High Street was a concern highlighted across the reports. The LS report, endorsed by the TECAP, strongly recommended that a comprehensive review of traffic management, street design and layout be undertaken, including consideration given to relocating bus stops and crossing points and the feasibility of re-connecting Bridge Street to Well Wynd (possibly as a one-way system).
2. **Parking -** The need for more parking was highlighted as a key barrier to accessing the High Street, with 62% of respondents to the PfR survey reporting that the availability of more parking would make a big difference. Inconsiderate High St parking, double parking, parking on footpaths and commercial deliveries were also all identified as issues with some recommending greater enforcement and more controlled parking / high turnover spaces as a solution.
3. **Range of shopping offer -** At the time of preparing the TECAP report there were 14 take away food outlets, 9 hair­dressers/barbers, 3 pubs, 3 bookmakers, 6 food shops and another 19 non-food outlets on the High St. The consultations highlighted people’s desire for an increased range and diversity of shops, suggesting both that this would improve existing user’s use of the High St and attract new users to the area. Suggestions to support this include setting up a Tranent Traders group and exploring options for community run enterprises using empty premises.
4. **Poor aesthetic quality of the High Street** - The TECAP report showed that the poor quality of the High St was the single thing people most disliked about Tranent, concluding that it was one of the worst looking towns in the county. This conclusion is backed up by the PfR recommendation that the High St was in need of a ‘makeover’– with 56% of those involved in the exercise stating that improving its overall look would make a big difference to attracting people to the area.

Key things highlighted for attention here included:

1. **Shop and building frontages** – Poorly maintained frontages detract from the character of the place, are unwelcoming and create an impression of neglect. All reports seek encouragement/incentives for owners to improve their frontages and the LS report adds the expectation that they comply with ELC signage guidance (particularly in the conservation area).
2. **Pavements** - Pavement surfaces throughout the Town Centre vary and the need to resurface or properly repair footways to provide smooth and even surfaces suitable for pedestrians of all abilities was noted, particularly in the LS report. This report also highlighted a number of specific trip hazards, including empty tree grills, and stated that the blister paving and slabbed footways in some areas require treatment to ensure they are not slippery in wet or icy weather.
3. **Street clutter** – The LS audit identified a range of obstacles cluttering the pavement along the High St (commercial waste bins, a telecommunications box, advertising A-boards and poorly placed cycle stands) which reduce the available space for pedestrians.
4. **Signage** – Information and interpretation signage along the street was repeatedly found to be of a poor standard, of inconsistent style or in the wrong location.
5. **Public realm / civic amenities** – There is general concern that Tranent lacks high quality public spaces where people can gather. While Civic Square and the area around the war memorial do serve this function sustaining this in their current location may be difficult given that the majority of the services that attracted people to this part of the town e.g. Library, Day Centre, Council Office have moved (or are imminently moving).
6. **Walking access to the High St -** The PfR exercise showed that 80% of survey respondents regularly walk to the High Street, making safe, amenable walking routes important to those using the area. ½ of those surveyed felt these routes needed to be improved, something confirmed by details noted in the LS report.
7. **History and heritage of the area -** A key goal for the TECAP is that the history and identity of Tranent will be celebrated however there is a consensus across the reports that the existing signage and interpretation of heritage features is dated, in poor condition and often inappropriately located.