

## Town centre health check

COPELAND Council is undertaking a large scale study to gauge the economic health of its town centres - and businesses and the public are asked to get involved.

The retail study will help the council understand how the retail market is currently performing across the borough but particularly in Cleator Moor, Millom, Whitehaven and Egremont.

It will also reveal what the main problems are and how the council can help town centres thrive.

The first part of the project is a telephone survey of 500 residents across the borough, asking them about their experience of Copeland's town centres.

It will also include a business survey targeting all the businesses in the four towns. It will ask business people what is working in their town centre and what they think are the barriers to more people shopping here. They will also ask about the economic performance of their business over the last year.

The council has asked WYG to undertake the study on their behalf.

The results of the study will feed into the council's Site Allocations and Policies Plan (SAPP), which sets out areas where future development - including housing, commercial, employment and retail - will be encouraged and where it is unlikely to be supported. The SAPP is due to be consulted upon in late spring and the public will be asked for their views.

Portfolio holder for economic regeneration and deputy Mayor, Lena Hogg, said: "This is an opportunity to have your views heard, both positive and negative, on the state of retail in Copeland. The more results we collect, the more useful a picture we can build. If you are contacted by phone or receive a business survey by post, please get involved. It will help us to target our work towards the things that will really make a difference to you, your businesses and your town centres."

The study should get underway next week and the results will be reviewed by the council in early April.



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