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Our Ref./Ein Cyf.
Your Ref./Eich Cyf.
Contact:/Cysylltwch â:

THIS IS A MEETING WHICH THE PUBLIC ARE ENTITLED TO ATTEND

Dydd Mawrth, 7 Mawrth 2023

Dear Sir/Madam

PWYLLGOR CRAFFU LLEOEDD

A meeting of the Pwyllgor Craffu Lleoedd will be held in Ar MS Teams on
Dydd Mawrth, 14eg Mawrth, 2023 at 10.00 am.

Yours faithfully

Damien McCann
Interim Chief Executive

AGENDA

Pages

1. CYFIEITHU AR Y PRYD

Mae croeso i chi ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg yn y cyfarfod, mae angen o leiaf 3 diwrnod gwaith o rybudd os dymunwch wneud hynny. Darperir gwasanaeth cyfieithu ar y pryd os gwneir cais am hynny.

2. YMDDIHEURIADAU

Derbyn ymddiheuriadau.

Mae'r Cyngor yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg a Saesneg a byddwn yn cyfathrebu gyda chi yn eich dewis iaith, dim ond i chi rhoi gwybod i ni pa un sydd well gennych. Ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn creu unrhyw oedi.

The Council welcomes correspondence in Welsh and English and we will communicate with you in the language of your choice, as long as you let us know which you prefer. Corresponding in Welsh will not lead to any delay.

3. **DATGANIADAU BUDDIANT A GODDEFEBAU**
- Derbyn datganiadau buddiant a goddefebau.
4. **PWYLLGOR CRAFFU LLEOEDD** 3 - 6
- Ystyried penderfyniadau'r Pwyllgor Craffu Lleoedd a gynhaliwyd ar 31 Ionawr 2023.
- (D.S. Cyflwynir y penderfyniadau er pwyntiau cywirdeb yn unig).*
5. **DALEN WEITHREDU** 7 - 8
- Derbyn y Ddalen Weithredu.
6. **CYNLLUN CREU LLE BRYNMAWR** 9 - 112
- Ystyried adroddiad y Cyfarwyddwr Corfforaethol Adfywio a Gwasanaethau Cymunedol.
7. **CRONFA FFYNIANT GYFFREDIN** 113 - 214
- Ystyried adroddiad y Cyfarwyddwr Corfforaethol Adfywio a Gwasanaethau Cymunedol.
8. **BLAENRAGLEN GWAITH – 28 EBRILL 2023** 215 - 218
- Derbyn y flaenraglen gwaith.

To: M. Cross (Cadeirydd)
Councillor R. Leadbeater (Is-gadeirydd)
P. Baldwin
Councillor S. Behr
Councillor J. Gardner
J. Hill
J. Holt
J. P. Morgan
Councillor D. Rowberry

All other Members (for information)
Interim Chief Executive
Chief Officers

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 31ST JANUARY, 2023

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR R. Leadbeater (Vice-Chair in the Chair)

Councillors P. Baldwin
 S. Behr
 J. Gardener
 J. Holt
 J.P. Morgan

WITH: Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services
 Head of Community Services
 Team Manager - Streetscene
 Team Manager – Regeneration Opportunities
 Team Manager – Commercial Services
 Team Leader – Built Environment
 Senior Homelessness Officer
 Team Leader – Housing Solutions Infrastructure Manager
 Team Manager – Trading Standards
 Service Manager – Community Services
 Service Manager – Development and Estates
 Team Leader – Environmental Protection
 Communications Officer
 Scrutiny and Democratic Officer

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>
No. 1	<p><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>

<p>No. 2</p>	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>The Vice-Chair reported that Councillor M. Cross, Chair who was currently in hospital following a heart attack. It was informed that Councillor Cross had undergone an operation and was doing well. The Committee wished Councillor Cross a speedy recovery.</p> <p>Another apology was received from Councillor J. Hill.</p>
<p>No. 3</p>	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>No declarations of interest or dispensations were reported.</p>
<p>No. 4</p>	<p><u>PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the decisions of the meeting held on 13th December, 2022.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the decisions be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>
<p>No. 5</p>	<p><u>ACTION SHEET</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the action sheet.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the report be accepted and the action sheet be noted.</p>
<p>No. 6</p>	<p><u>REGENERATION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES PERFORMANCE REPORT</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services.</p> <p>The Vice-Chair proposed that a positive step would be that tourism in Blaenau Gwent be further developed in the area.</p> <p>This proposal was seconded and AGREED by the Committee.</p> <p>The Committee thereupon AGREED that the report and information provided within the appendix be accepted and the aforementioned recommendation for improvement be considered by Cabinet (Option 1).</p>

No. 7	<u>FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME: 14TH MARCH, 2023</u> Consideration was given to the report of the Scrutiny and Democratic Officer. The Committee AGREED that the report be accepted and the Forward Programme for the meeting scheduled
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Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

Action Sheet - Place Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting	Action to be Taken	By Whom	Action Taken
13.12.22	Item 6 – Waste Management and Recycling Strategy Review <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Link to recycle breakdown to be provided.	Service Manager, Neighbourhood Services	https://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/en/resident/waste-recycling/where-does-my-recycling-go/ Action Complete: 31.01.23
31.01.23	Item 8 – Regeneration and Community Services Performance Report <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Member briefing session to be arranged in relation to the work being undertaken with empty properties.	Team Leader – Housing Solutions	Member briefing session scheduled for 15 th May 2023. Action Complete: 06.02.23

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Agenda Item 6

Cabinet and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer:

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer:

Committee: **Place Scrutiny Committee**
Date of meeting: **14 March 2023**
Report Subject: **Brynmawr Placemaking Plan**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr J.C. Morgan, Cabinet Member for Place and Regeneration**
Report Submitted by: **Amy Taylor, Team Manager Regeneration Opportunities**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Governance Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Cabinet	Council	Other (please state)
X	02.03.23	06.06.23			14.03.23	19.04.23		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1. To present and seek support of the Brynmawr Placemaking Plan from Scrutiny Committee.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1. The Brynmawr Placemaking Plan aims to direct change and investment in Brynmawr town centre over the next five years and is intended for use by Blaenau Gwent CBC as a 'roadmap' for future regeneration in the town centre, with a view to inspiring renewed economic growth and vitality in and around the town centre, and function as Supplementary Planning Guidance for Local Development Plan (LDP).
- 2.2. The Placemaking Plan highlights opportunities to diversify the town centre to support existing business and facilities and to create the conditions to attract new enterprise. These opportunities have been considered in the context of available funding and delivery streams, and the particular economic conditions of Brynmawr.
- 2.3. Brynmawr like many towns across the UK has faced extremely challenging times because of the increase in online shopping and the economic challenges from the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 2.4. Town centres remain important focal points of communities and are increasingly becoming places to live, centres of community and cultural activity, a focus for public services such as health and education, and the location of new co-working spaces. They are more than the extent of designated retail areas. Town centres are the most accessible parts of our towns and should be the focus of growth and regeneration.
- 2.5. In Wales placemaking is a statutory requirement of the planning system. We will therefore take a placemaking approach to deliver sustainable development and provide solutions and investment that addresses the needs of Brynmawr.

- 2.6. The Council secured funding from the Welsh Government's Transforming Towns Programme to commission consultants to develop a Placemaking Plan for Brynmawr in line with other studies that have been developed or are currently in development for the 5 main town centres.
- 2.7. The work undertaken by Arup will be delivered in two parts:
- i. Deliverable 1: Placemaking Plan**
A public facing, overarching strategic vision that identifies priority areas for action within the study area.
 - ii. Deliverable 2: Delivery Plan**
An internally focused, 'detailed delivery plan' that utilises an appropriate methodology for the detailed analysis of the study area sites and puts forward 'evidenced based' recommendations on the preferred development/redevelopment options for the Council to take forward.
- 2.8. This report presents the first of their deliverables the Placemaking Plan and overall strategic vision that identifies our core ambitions for the town.
- 2.9. Placemaking Plans are a mechanism introduced by the Welsh Government for communities to engage creatively with the planning process and for planners to support in place-making initiatives with local people. The Placemaking agenda was developed in conjunction with the Design Commission for Wales with a pledge to:
- Involve the local community in the development process.
 - Choose sustainable locations for new development.
 - Prioritise walking, cycling and public transport.
 - Create well defined, safe, and welcoming streets and public spaces.
 - Promote a sustainable mix of uses to make places vibrant.
 - Value and respect the positive qualities and identity of existing places.
- 2.10. The primary focus of the Placemaking Plan for Brynmawr is to inform and influence strategic decision making for regeneration activity within the town and act as an evidence base to support the Council with future external funding options and support development of the replacement Local Development Plan (LDP).
- 2.11. The core of the study area is centred on cross town routes of Market Square, Bailey Street, Davies Street, Worcester Street, Beaufort Street and King Street. There are four 'threshold spaces' that define the entry and exit points of the Town Centre. Both the Stagecoach and Boilerhouse buildings remain in private ownership, although have been integral to future considerations as part of a scoping exercise within the Brynmawr Placemaking Plan.
- 2.12. The overall purpose of the Brynmawr Placemaking Plan is:
- To highlight development and redevelopment opportunities that will increase the viability, vitality and functionality of Brynmawr town centre and implement measures that will act as a catalyst for private sector investment and plan a

comprehensive range of development projects suitable for applications for Transforming Towns funding.

- To direct change and investment in Brynmawr town centre over the next five years. It is intended for use by Blaenau Gwent CBC as a 'roadmap' for future regeneration in the town centre, with a view to inspiring renewed economic growth and vitality. in the town centre. The plan highlights opportunities to diversify the town centre to support existing business and facilities and to create the conditions to attract new enterprise.
- Brynmawr is a compact town surrounded by a residential area, making it an ideal candidate for the 15-minute town concept. With an enviable combination of urban and rural qualities, access to beautiful landscapes and a strong community, Brynmawr has some of the base ingredients to improve the life of residents and visitors alike, this is a core principle for the strategy for Brynmawr.

2.13. The overarching vision is for Brynmawr to be a 15-minute neighbourhood, where everything you need is within a 15-minute walk of your home. This model for self-sufficient, sustainable town centre offers improved access to nature, employment, housing diversity, amenity and services while reducing car dependency, supporting active travel, and strengthening sense of community and place.

2.14. The overarching vision is supported by six themes which act as a guide for future development and change in Brynmawr supporting its transformation:

- **Community:** creating a shared ethos of enterprise and fostering a strong inclusive community. Brynmawr's engaged and passionate community is one of its greatest strengths. This theme would support the diversification of the town centre, whilst also supporting well-being of the community.
- **Circularity:** directing sustainable growth and meaningful change. Adaptive re-use of existing buildings are major opportunities, as well as more strategic ambitions around low-carbon economy, local business and reducing waste.
- **Connectivity:** improving active transport and links across the town centre. Improved pedestrian and cycle movements within the town will be important for connecting the community and local businesses. It can also provide benefits to health and well-being, air quality and the natural environment. Digital connectivity also benefits local business by creating opportunities for advertising and reaching out to a wider audience.
- **Economy:** uplifting local business and the foundational economy. This could be through opportunities for training, upskilling and collaboration particularly within the foundational economy, with support for start-ups and social enterprise. Flexible public spaces can also be beneficial, supporting Brynmawr's existing markets and events.
- **Health and Well-being:** supporting a healthy and happy community in Brynmawr. Re-shaping the physical environment by promoting active travel

and taking advantage of Brynmawr's access to wider landscapes including the Brecon Beacons will have positive impacts on the future health and well-being of the community.

- **Creating a destination:** diversifying what Brynmawr has to offer to attract visitors. Varying the offer in terms of uses, activities and calendar of events will create an enhanced sense of place for the community and raise the town centre profile.
- 2.15. Within the draft Brynmawr Placemaking Plan a number of possible projects have been identified to support the Council in transforming the town and delivering upon the vision. It must be recognised that Brynmawr has been fortunate in attracting considerable private sector investment in recent years, with the likes of Costa Coffee and the recently developed former NMC retail site, which was supported financially by the Welsh Government.
- 2.16. The placemaking plan has identified several possible projects which could act as catalysts for regeneration and help realise the vision for Brynmawr. These include:
- Stagecoach Site.
 - Beaufort Street.
 - The Boiler House (Grade II listed).
 - Market Square and bus station.
 - Active Travel routes.
 - Improved pedestrian linkages between Lakeside and the Town Centre.
 - Environmental enhancements.
 - Introduction of public art.
- 2.17. The projects listed above are predominantly physical regeneration projects. Non-physical projects are not included in the intervention areas, but they are pivotal for the success of the town centre and are also included within the Placemaking Plan.
- 2.18. More detailed information is contained in sections 5.0 to 5.2 within the Place Making document that has been included as background paper to this report (**Appendix One**).
- 2.19. It should be noted that some of the opportunities for key buildings identified within the placemaking plan will include building currently in private ownership. The role of the placemaking plan is to identify the possible future role of key buildings within the context of the rest of the town centre and where possible we will engage with existing owners to explore their future plans for buildings in their ownership. The detail around these potential opportunities will be explored further during development of the delivery plan and will involve further discussions with building owners and partners.

Urban Place and Highways Plan

- 2.20. An Urban Place and Highways Plan has also been undertaken by Arup as part of the commission and to prepare a Strategic Outline Case, in accordance with the requirements for Stage One WelTAG, aimed at improvements to the Blaina Road corridor in Brynmawr, to the south of the town centre.

‘WelTAG is the Welsh Transportation appraisal guidance, which helps plan transport programmes, policies and projects.’

The guidance was developed “with the intention that it is applied to all transport strategies, plans and schemes being promoted or requiring funding from the Welsh Assembly Government”.

2.21. The study area comprises the following strategic sites and connections between them:

- Lakeside Retail Park including access to neighbouring communities;
- Former NMC brownfield site (consented development for retail)
- Stagecoach Depot Site (3a) and Austin & Sons Vehicle Repair Garage (3b) to the rear of the site and linkages to the neighbouring Warwick Road Park and housing estate;
- Auto Links Garage across Lake Road;
- 5. Roundabout on Blaina Road and linking to Blaen-Afon Road;
- Former GP Surgery site on Blaina Road;
- The Boiler House, Grade II Listed heritage building;
- Costa Coffee Shop, Blaina Road;
- Vacant Brownfield Site (9i) and Petrol Station (9ii), Blaina Road; and
- Improvement to the lakeside environment, including access to the waterside and enhancement of the Pump House as a local landmark should be considered as a local stopping point and feature of the landscape.

2.22. The Council has also commissioned further development of the WelTAG process with Stage 2 being completed and a Stage 3 currently under consideration. A Stage 3 WelTAG would focus on the delivery of detailed design options for the schemes proposed under earlier stages.

3. Options for Recommendation

3.1. The options contained within this report relate only to the approval of the overall vision and series of core ambitions contained within the Placemaking Plan in **Appendix One**. Future reports will be submitted in relation to the delivery plan and details of potential projects to be developed and implemented in order for us to achieve our overall vision.

Option 1 – Do Nothing

3.2. Note the contents of the Placemaking Plan and take no further action. Without Council endorsement of the projects contained within the plan it is unlikely that we would be successful in securing Welsh Government Transforming Towns money for any further work to support redevelopment/refurbishment of the Town.

Option 2 – Support the Placemaking Plan

- 3.3. Support the Brynmawr Placemaking Plan, its vision and core ambitions for the future and recommend approval by Cabinet. This will enable us to finalise the draft of the delivery plan and steps towards implementation of the projects that will be contained within it.

Preferred Option

- 3.4. The preferred option is Option Two. This will enable the projects that will support achievement of the core ambitions to be developed in greater detail as part of the Delivery Plan. Such projects are likely to be eligible to apply for funding through the Transforming Towns funding.
- 3.5. Projects which show a strategic vision and delivery approach that are supported by Placemaking Plans will be more positively received by potential funders such as the Welsh Government than ad-hoc projects which don't consider overall impact upon the area.
- 3.6. A placemaking approach will be taken for all towns across Blaenau Gwent, with the Ebbw Vale and Tredegar plans already having been adopted as policy, with the Abertillery and Blaina plans currently in development.

4. Evidence of how this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan

Future Wales – The National Plan 2040

- 4.1. Future Wales - The National Plan 2040 is the national development framework, setting the direction for development in Wales to 2040. It is a development plan with a strategy for addressing national priorities through the planning system. As the national development framework, Future Wales is the highest tier of development plan and focused on challenges at a national scale.
- 4.2. Policy 2 of the plan is Shaping Urban Growth and Regeneration – Strategic Placemaking. The aspirations of Future Wales are an opportunity to regenerate our towns. The plan sets out the policy for a strategic placemaking approach and principles to help shape urban growth and regeneration.
- 4.3. Policy 3 of the plan is Supporting Urban Growth and Regeneration – Public Sector Leadership. This policy highlights the role the public sector can play in assembling land and enabling development to realise aspirations.

Local Development Plan

- 4.4. The Placemaking Plan will play a key role alongside the replacement Local Development Plan that is being prepared for Blaenau Gwent. All place making plans will be used to form the town centre policies that will be used to support future planning decisions within the towns and function as Supplementary Planning Guidance for Local Development Plan (LDP). It is the intention that placemaking

plans will all be complete or substantially complete in advance of the finalisation of the deposit Local Development Plan.

Well-Being Plan – ‘The Blaenau Gwent We Want’ (2018-2023)

4.5. It also supports delivery of the Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan:

- Safe and friendly communities;
- To look after and protect the environment;
- To forge new pathways to prosperity and;
- To encourage and enable people to make healthy lifestyle choices in the places they live, learn, work and play.

4.6. The Town Centre Strategy will seek to ensure that our town centres are safe and friendly communities for our residents and visitors to shop within. This will include projects to maintain and enhance the local environment, increase business occupancy, and create an environment in our town centres that encourages our residents to spend time there for work, learning and leisure.

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Corporate Plan 2022/27

4.7. The vision of Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council:

‘Blaenau Gwent – a place that is fair, open and welcoming to all by working with and for our communities’

4.8. The Corporate Plan 2022/27 sets out an ambitious programme of activity for the Council over the next five years. The Corporate Plan 2022/27 priorities are:

- *Respond to the nature and climate crisis and enable connected communities* – we aim to greatly reduce carbon emissions and provide an environment which supports growth and well-being and connects communities
- *An ambitious and innovative council delivering quality services at the right time and in the right place* – working in partnership to provide high quality services to meet local need, and improve the quality of life and well-being within the community
- *Empowering and supporting communities to be safe, independent, and resilient* – increasing resilience of communities, where everyone is welcome and safe which minimises dependency and maximises independence

5. Implications Against Each Option

Impact on Budget (short- and long-term impact)

5.1. Option 1 – there would be no financial implications association with option one of this report.

5.2. Option 2 – there would be no immediate budgetary implications as a result of endorsing the Brynmawr Placemaking Plan. There would however be medium- and

long-term capital and revenue implications associated with taking forward the emerging projects that will form the Delivery Plan.

- 5.3. In the medium to long-term taking forward Option 2 will result in future development and implementation costs. It is likely that development costs such as surveys, feasibility studies would be eligible under the Transforming Towns programme (subject to a successful application) but this would only be for up to 50% of the eligible costs and there would be a need for the Council to identify suitable revenue match funding for the remaining 50%.
- 5.4. Implementation costs are also likely to be eligible for capital funding under the Transforming Towns programme (subject to successful application) but this would only be able to cover up to 70% of these costs and the Council would need to identify capital match funding for the remaining 30%.
- 5.5. Further detail on development and implementation costs will be included within the Delivery Plan.
- 5.6. The future maintenance cost implications will be incorporated into the project proposals when they are presented for approval. All project proposals will be developed to limit maintenance liabilities for the Council, and this will be included in the proposals along with recommendations to establish a maintenance budget.

Risk including Mitigating Actions

- 5.7. Option 1 – if no further action is taken there is risk that vacant sites will remain undeveloped or fall into disrepair.
- 5.8. Option 1 – footfall within the town centre associated with retail has been severely hit with the increase in online shopping and enforced lockdowns because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Key to recovery will be intervention that supports repurposing and reinventing our town centres. This would not happen if option 1 is chosen and then we would have a further risk of deterioration in footfall.
- 5.9. Option 2 – further work to develop / implement projects that will achieve the core ambitions would require revenue and capital funding. Such funding is likely to be eligible for application under the Transforming Towns programme but there is a requirement to identify a suitable source of match funding to fully meet the costs. Without match funding to develop projects there is a risk that they will be unable to be developed further.

Legal

- 5.10. There are no direct legal implications for any of the options considered within this report. The report seeks endorsement of a Vision and set of ambitions that set out our approach to future regeneration of Tredegar Town Centre
- 5.11. Legal implications associated with project delivery will be explored as part of the delivery plan.

Human Resources

- 5.12. Staff within Regeneration and Development are leading the preparatory work and working across other service areas within the Council where required.

6. Supporting Evidence

Performance Information and Data

- 6.1. The town centre health check, which can be found on page 26 of the Placemaking Plan, is a study of the existing physical, social, and economic conditions and historic trends of Brynmawr town centre. It draws on both published data and findings from site visits and analysis including knowledge from the previous Brynmawr masterplan and WelTAG study. The key findings and opportunities from the baseline study are detailed below:

- The current Blaenau Gwent Local Development Plan has identified sustainable growth and regeneration opportunities in Brynmawr, including sustainable economic growth, quality housing and complimentary roles around tourism and mixed-use development.
- The key interventions from the WelTAG Stage 1 study (2021-2022) were to divert traffic away from town centre, reinforce active travel, enhance public transport, focusing on buses, and explore potential for meanwhile uses.
- The town centre and new Lakeside Retail Park are disconnected by roads physically and experientially. Businesses in the town centre face strong competition for footfall and trade from the new retail park. At present Lakeside Retail Park is a self-contained attraction with weak pedestrian links and little customer spill over to the town centre. It is a major draw to Brynmawr, but the challenge is to attract some of these customers into the town centre
- There has been a sustained decrease in footfall in the town centre which presents a real challenge. There must therefore be a focus on projects and measures that will attract people into the centre.
- The Gross Value Added (GVA) for Blaenau Gwent has been increasing over the past 10 years with manufacturing constituting the largest proportion of GVA, followed by real estate activities. Yet the underlying economic performance lags behind large areas of Wales and the UK.
- Despite being surrounded by beautiful landscapes such as The Brecon Beacons and The Valleys, the relationship is peripheral, and the town centre lacks green spaces.
- The vacancy rate in the retail submarket in Blaenau Gwent is low, compared to Cardiff and other towns in Blaenau Gwent. However, the drop off in business rates is a trigger for action to help town prosperity

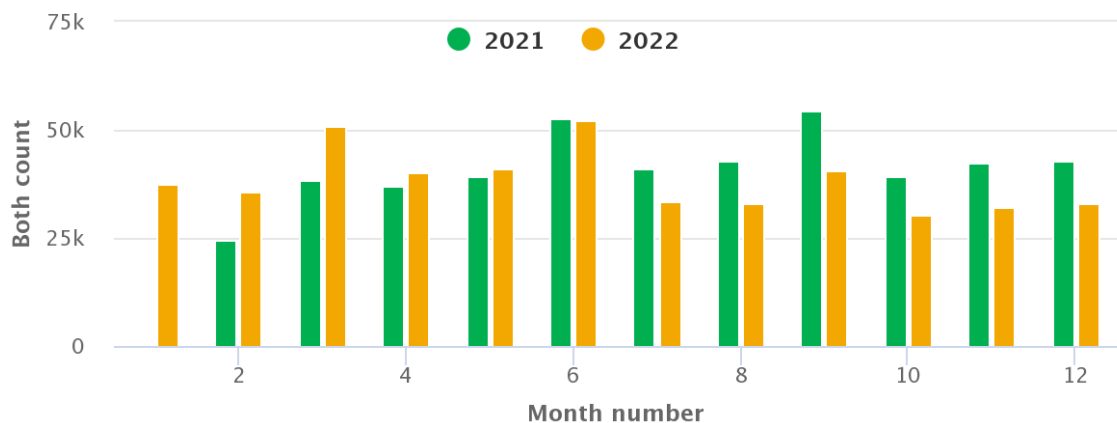
6.2. Town Centre footfall was declining prior to the COVID-19 pandemic which resulted in complete lockdowns in early 2020. Some footfall data from Brynmawr is shown below:

Month	Year	Footfall	% Change
March	2018	39,454	
	2019	39,863	+1.04%
	2021	7,684	-80.72%
	2022	10,176	+32.43%

Footfall in March 2022 was 74.21% lower than the footfall that the town saw in March 2018. Whilst we saw an increase in footfall between March 2021 and March 2022 of 32.43 percentage points the footfall for Brynmawr did not return to preCOVID-19 pandemic levels.

6.3. More recent data from November and December 2022 shows footfall is still struggling to return to pre-pandemic levels. Footfall for the week of the Christmas Light switch-on in 2022 was 7,495 compared to 11,028 for the same week the previous year. Likewise, footfall for the week of the Santa Express in 2022 was 7,241 compared to the same week in 2021 when footfall was 8,601.

Annual Performance



6.4. The graph above shows footfall performance by month for 2021 and 2022. It should be noted that the last COVID-19 restrictions did not end in Wales until May 2022. Footfall data between June and December 2022 each month was lower than its corresponding month in 2021.

Expected outcome for the public

6.5. Some of the sites included within the study area are no longer fit for purpose or underutilised. The Placemaking Plan seeks to identify these sites and identify alternative uses or opportunities for refurbishment or redevelopment.

6.6. Active travel routes between the town and sites such as the lakeside retail areas need improvement. Improved active travel will provide greater accessibility for residents and visitors to move within the area.

Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)

- 6.7. Initial engagement was undertaken with the stakeholders to understand how the town works currently and what ambitions there are for the future. The initial phase of engagement included fact finding and this was used to identify the issues and opportunities discussed within the Place Making Plan (**Appendix One**).
- 6.8. As a result of Covid-19 engagement has been undertaken with key stakeholders via online workshops. Engagement with business stakeholders has been undertaken via telephone calls. The Council's Regeneration Department intend to undertake further public consultation in early summer 2023 to ascertain public perception on proposals identified within the attached Placemaking Plan for Brynmawr
- 6.9. Stakeholders that have formed part of the engagement to date include:
- The Council (Officers and Elected Members)
 - Welsh Government
 - Brynmawr Business Forum
 - Gwent Police
 - Local businesses
 - Stagecoach (as part of the WelTAG process)
 - Design Commission for Wales
 - Tech Valleys
- 6.10. The initial engagement has supported the assessment of issues and opportunities that face Brynmawr, namely being:
- Lack of public transport with no rail connection and poor bus connections
 - Heavy traffic and vehicle dominance roads with lack of public realm and green infrastructure
 - Lack of connection between 'old' and 'new' town
 - Maintenance of buildings and shop fronts need updating and modernising
 - Lack of night-time economy
 - There is the threat of not addressing the issues and lack of action as the town needs regeneration or will get left behind
 - Competing with the neighbouring towns has led footfall to dramatically decrease
 - There is a lack of developable space within the compact town
 - Perception of Brynmawr is tainted with the increase of anti-social behaviour.

Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)

- 6.11. The Placemaking Plan sets a vision and series of core ambitions that are aimed at planning for the long-term future of the Town Centre.

Preventative focus

- 6.12. Taking forward the outcomes of the placemaking plan will ensure that areas of the town that are in need of attention are protected and enhanced in the future.

Collaboration / partnership working

- 6.13. Many of the projects that will be identified to deliver on our core ambitions for Brynmawr Town Centre will require collaborative approaches to delivery. This will be developed further alongside stakeholders subject to endorsement of this report and the delivery plan.

Integration (across service areas)

- 6.14. As outlined above, initial consultation has been undertaken across service areas within the Council. This includes service areas such as highways, housing, planning and education.

Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions

- 6.15. Blaenau Gwent declared a Climate Emergency in 2020 and as a Council we have committed towards achievement of net zero carbon emissions by 2030.
- 6.16. Mirroring this ambition there is a commitment towards supporting the borough of Blaenau Gwent to become net zero. The projects that emerge from the Placemaking Plan offer an opportunity to support further decarbonisation across Blaenau Gwent.
- 6.17. Creating high quality green spaces in the town centre will help with decarbonisation and offsetting carbon emissions. It will also help improve air quality.
- 6.18. The Stagecoach building may be considered for demolition and site clearance to form a green urban area, which could be used to offset carbon emissions of businesses that operate within the town. They can also help improve air quality.
- 6.19. New build projects and refurbishment projects can be used to deliver buildings that have a lower carbon impact. This can include using local supply chains to reduce travel of materials, energy efficient lighting and appliances.
- 6.20. Transport and movement projects can also support decarbonisation. Improved active travel routes alongside multi-modal transport systems and wayfinding can assist with reducing dependence upon car travel within the Town Centre.

7. Monitoring Arrangements

- 7.1. Progress will be reported through the Regeneration and Development business plan.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- *Appendix One – Brynmawr Town Centre Placemaking Plan*



Brynmawr Placemaking Plan

Stage 2 Report

Jan 2023

ARUP

ARUP

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Prepared by Arup on behalf of
Blaenau Gwent County Borough
Council

This report takes into account the particular instructions and requirements of our client. It is not intended for and should not be relied upon by any third party and no responsibility is undertaken to any third party. In preparing this report we are relying on information contained in reports supplied by the client and third parties, as stated throughout the document. We have relied in particular on the accuracy and completeness of such reports and accept no liability for any error or omission in this statement to the extent the same results from error or omission in the other consultants' reports.

Please note, proposals on private land require further discussions with private landowners.

This report is intended to be viewed and printed as an A4 double-sided document with cover page.

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Contents

1.	Executive Summary	
1.1	Executive summary	8
2.	Sustainability	
2.1	Sustainable growth	12
3.	Understanding Brynmawr	
3.1	Learning from the past	18
3.2	Placemaking Overview	20
3.3	Socio economic baseline	22
3.4	Transport baseline	24
3.5	Town centre Health check	26
3.6	Engagement Summary	28
3.7	Learning from elsewhere	30
3.8	Planning context	32
4.	A Vision for Brynmawr	
4.1	A Twenty First Century Valleys Market Town	36
4.2	A 15 Minute Neighbourhood	38
4.3	Objectives	40
5.	The Placemaking Plan	
5.1	Areas of change	44
5.2	Key projects	54
5.3	Phasing and delivery summary	88
6.	Conclusions and Next Steps	
6.1	Conclusions and Next Steps	74



1. Brynmawr Town Centre

Introduction

In October 2021 Arup was commissioned by Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council to produce a strategic Placemaking Plan that will provide a basis for future, strategic decision making in Brynmawr town centre and act as an evidence base to support Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Officers with future regeneration funding applications.

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The Placemaking Plan aims to direct change and investment in Brynmawr town centre over the next five year. It is intended for use by Blaenau Gwent CBC as a 'roadmap' for future regeneration in the town centre, with a view to inspiring renewed economic growth and vitality in the town centre. The plan highlights opportunities to diversify the town centre in order to support existing business and facilities and to create the conditions to attract new enterprise. These opportunities have been considered in the context of available funding and delivery streams, and the particular economic conditions of Brynmawr.

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY:

THE CHALLENGE

Brynmawr faces similar challenges to many of Wales and the UK's towns and cities. The rapid onset of digital retail, remote working and services in the wake of Covid-19 is transforming the way urban centres operate. From a position of having to use our centres to access services such as banks and retail we now need to want

to visit these places. This profound shift has led to a reduced need and lack of viability for physical retail and commercial spaces in town centres. In Brynmawr, this is coupled with the growth of the Lakeside Retail Park (to the south of the town centre), which has further drawn visitors away from the centre, and created a new retail destination. Lower than average spending power in Brynmawr and competing centres such as Merthyr Tydfil and further afield Cardiff have amplified the issue.

As a result of these changes the vitality of the town centre is likely to become more fragile and precarious without intervention. Yet a vibrant town centre remains essential to our sense of local pride, identity and as the basis of sustainable communities. To achieve this, Brynmawr will need to adapt, experiment and evolve, to capitalise on existing characteristics and opportunities for the town centre.

APPROACH: INNOVATION

Over recent decades public investment has typically been the subject of 'fixed-state' masterplans where the ultimate end goal is rarely realised due to the inherent complexity of aligning funding, local politics, delivery and long term stewardship.

The principle behind this plan is to drive sustainable change through local innovation; testing and trailing ideas in accordance with clear objectives. This incremental and more fluid approach embraces rapid experimentation to demonstrate to the public what change can look like and to test ideas in real time without committing to potentially high cost and high-risk interventions



2. Usk High Street

In doing so valuable lessons will be learned which will drive further innovation and reshape our thinking. It allows budding enterprises a lower risk pathway to growth by creating low-cost shared environments to operate from.

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

In Brynmawr, the private sector does not operate with the same level of activity or deploy the same level of investment compared to areas of higher disposable incomes or higher visitor numbers. Basing this plan solely on the premise of private investment could be a risk.

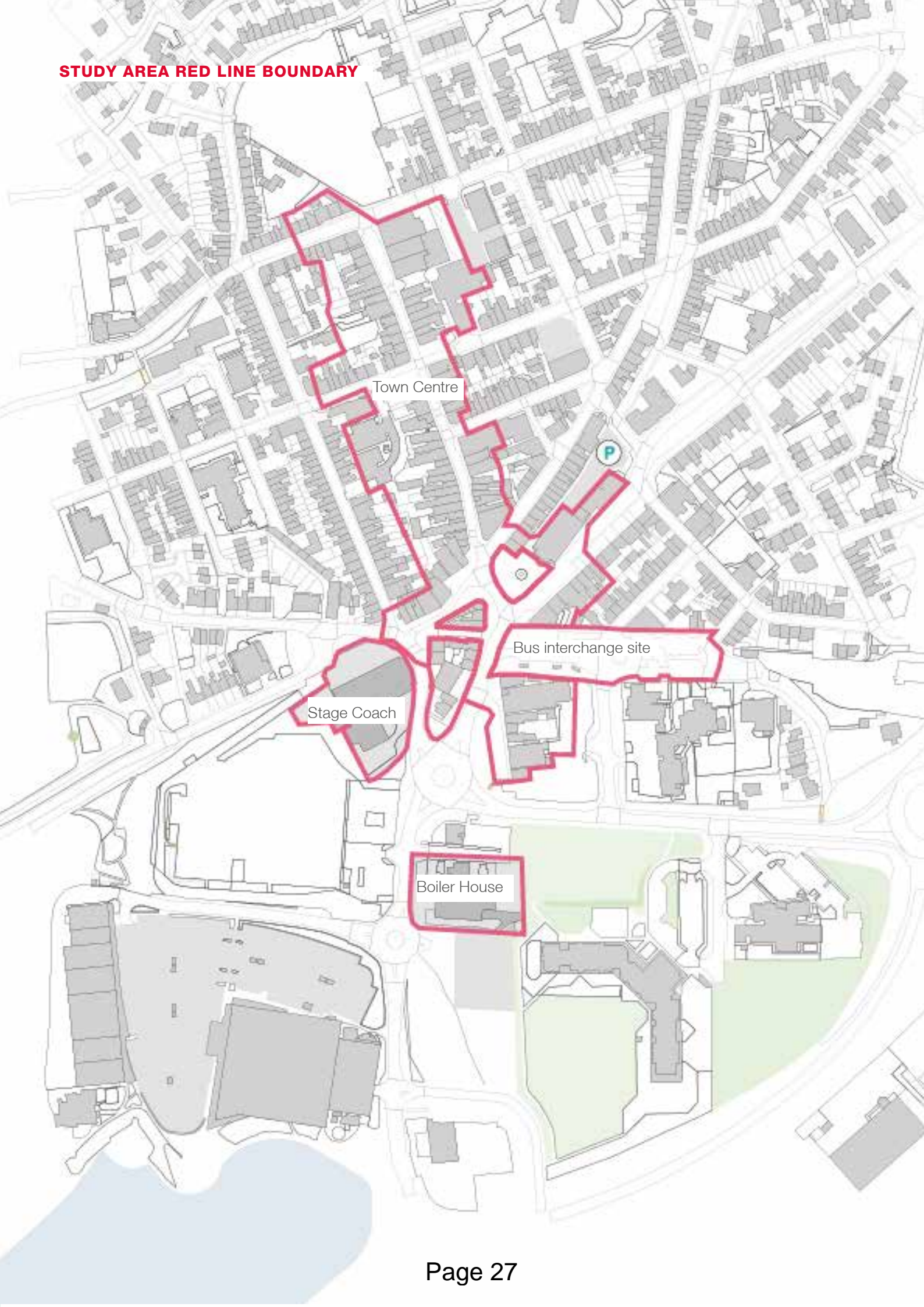
However, the onus does not need to be solely on public funding. There is a strong sense of community and local ambition for change in Brynmawr. Making a plan work for Brynmawr means working with the community to give a platform to local 'place' champions and to secure broad buy-in.

From the height of industrialisation where the 'penny in the pound' approach created the first schools, hospitals and libraries in the valleys to the Brynmawr furniture makers of the early C20th, social enterprise is part of the fabric of society in the valleys. Moving forward social enterprise can again be the driving force to reshape Brynmawr and deliver wider societal, economic and environmental benefits.

WHOLE TOWN APPROACH

The focus of this study is identified on the plan overleaf. In order to fully realise the potential of this area, a broader perspective has been applied which looks beyond these immediate confines. This is to ensure that opportunities to link change in the central area of Brynmawr with the wider area are understood. The second key aspect of this approach is the application of integrated place-making. This means exploring opportunities not through one particular lens such as transport but through multiple lenses including ecology, placemaking and sustainable transport and health to deliver multiple benefits from each intervention.

STUDY AREA RED LINE BOUNDARY



1.1 Executive summary

Communities today are facing unprecedented challenges. Climate change, recovering from a global pandemic, the exponential growth of digital technologies, the rise in the cost of living, and national political uncertainty all pose challenges to our people and places. There is a need to consider new ways of thinking to adapt to these challenges, and ensure the health and resilience of our towns and cities.

Brynmawr faces its own challenges. The decline of the high street and decreasing footfall over the years has been detrimental to the local independent businesses, and has subsequently affected the vitality of the town centre. This has in turn had an effect on the wider community. The emergence of a new retail park on the edge of town and the gradual shift to online shopping, particularly in a post-pandemic world, are further factors in this decline. The town faces a fundamental decision – what is the future of local businesses and what type of town will Brynmawr be?

Despite these challenges, Brynmawr benefits from significant advantages. These include its historic character, beautiful natural surroundings, access to a wider landscape, accessibility via new road infrastructure and, most importantly, an engaged local community. These are all ingredients that will help Brynmawr confront the challenges it faces. In addition, major assets such as The Boiler House and a rich history in social enterprise could play an invaluable role in the regeneration of the town.

The overarching vision is for Brynmawr to be a 15-minute neighbourhood, where everything you need is within a 15-minute walk of your home. This model for a self-sufficient, sustainable town centre offers improved access to nature, employment, housing diversity, amenity and services, while reducing car

dependency, supporting active travel and strengthening sense of community and place. Brynmawr already has the basic building blocks for this approach, and could provide a benchmark for other towns of a similar scale and character. These basic principles can transform Brynmawr into a vibrant, resilient town making it a benchmark for other towns of similar scale and character.

This overarching vision is supported by six themes which act as a guide for future development and change in Brynmawr, supporting its transformation into a 21st Century Valleys Market Town:

- **Community:** creating a shared ethos of enterprise and fostering a strong and inclusive community. Brynmawr's engaged and passionate community is one of its greatest strengths. This is coupled with its historic links to social enterprise and community ventures, such as the Market Hall Cinema. This theme would support the diversification of the town centre, while also supporting wellbeing of the community.
- **Circularity:** directing sustainable growth and meaningful change. Adaptive re-use of existing buildings such as the Boiler House and the Stagecoach building are major opportunities, as well as more strategic ambitions around a low-carbon economy, local business and reducing waste.
- **Connectivity:** improving active transport and links across the town centre. Improved pedestrian and cycle movements within the town will be important for connecting the community and local businesses. It can also provide benefits to health and well-being, air quality and the natural environment. Digital connectivity also benefits local trade by creating opportunities for advertising and reaching out to a wider audience.

- **Economy:** uplifting local business and the foundational economy. This could be through opportunities for training, upskilling and collaboration particularly within the foundational economy, with support for start-ups and social enterprise. Flexible public spaces can also be beneficial, supporting Brynmawr's existing markets and events.
- **Health and wellbeing:** supporting a healthy and happy community in Brynmawr. Placemaking plays a crucial role in people's lifestyle choices and activity. Brynmawr, like many other places in Wales, suffers from illness related to inactive lifestyles and poor dietary habits. Re-shaping the physical environment by promoting active travel and taking advantage of Brynmawr's access to wider landscapes including the Brecon Beacons will have positive impacts on the future health and well-being of the community.
- **Creating a destination:** Diversifying what Brynmawr has to offer to attract visitors. Varying Brynmawr's offer in terms of uses activities and calendar of events will create an enhanced sense of place for the community and raise the town centre profile. This, in turn, will attract a broader range of people and larger scale investments in the future.

The Placemaking Plan has identified a number of possible projects which could act as catalysts for regeneration and help realise this vision for Brynmawr. In the report, different levels of intervention are explored to demonstrate their potential in the short to medium to long time periods.

The Boiler House is one of Brynmawr's major assets with its industrial heritage as part of the Dunlop Rubbery factory. The Grade II listed

building has the potential to be refurbished into a new community space focusing on food based social enterprise. This type of project can create meaningful employment, education and social activity. Located on the edge of the town centre, its iconic structure and exciting new programmes could be a major draw into the town centre.

Beaufort Street, considered the main high street, will be an important part of the town centre revitalisation. Physical interventions such as general building façade improvements, wayfinding, lighting, planting and sustainable urban drainage will help lift the high street environment. These could be supported by non-physical interventions such as business collaboration and a website.

The Market Square is at the heart of the town centre and has significant ties to Brynmawr's heritage and culture. There is a real opportunity to celebrate this space as a public place of gathering especially for community events, street markets and festivals throughout the year.

The bus station in its current form is oversized for its purpose and lacks character. It requires definition which can be created with the help of tree planting, SuDS, improved lighting, street furniture and shelter.

The stagecoach building is an opportunity for renovation. Whether the building is reused or not, there are some key opportunities on this strategic site which revolve around recreation, and support for employment and upskilling.

Ideas for a new park have also been explored with two possible locations – enhancing the existing Welfare Park or creating a new park at the heart of the town centre. In either option, the aim is to bring the landscape into town, providing a diverse range of indoor and outdoor community spaces.



A woman with short brown hair and glasses, wearing a bright green long-sleeved sweater and a white skirt with a large green and black pattern, is looking at a display of purple flowers. She is in a shop or market setting with colorful ribbons hanging from the ceiling and warm lighting. The text "2. Sustainability" is overlaid in white on the image.

2. Sustainability

2.1 Sustainable growth

A TRANSITION IN THINKING AND THE PURSUIT OF DE-CARBONIZATION

In 2019 the Welsh Government declared a 'climate emergency' recognising the need for urgent action to combat the effects of global climate change. The target for Wales as a country to transition to net zero by 2050 requires pragmatic thinking around transitioning to de-carbonization.

Fundamentally, the impacts of climate change and the pursuit of net-zero will change the way in which we live, move around and require new ways in which to respond to waste management energy production and food supply chains.

At a global and national level, the guidance, policy, and legislation to direct decisions makes clear the need for sustainability in its broadest sense.

THE DIMENSIONS OF SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability is not just for the pursuit of environmental 'green' policy but, it needs to be addressed in terms of long term economic sustainability whilst also maintaining and strengthening the social and cultural value of an area. This includes building upon Brynmawr residents strong pride in their community and the cultural impact of Brynmawr being one of the Valleys' only true market towns.

The Placemaking plan in Brynmawr provides an opportunity to respond at a town level, to global challenges through meaningful change within a rural community.

- Responding to a global issue on a local level to create local resilience associated with a changing climate (local flood issues, warmer summers, wetter winters, more extreme weather events)
- Impacts of climate change on economics (access to goods and services including availability of good and fluctuating prices associated with long distant supply chain)
- Issue of localised habitat loss, urban heat impacts and mitigation of these

SUCCESS THROUGH INNOVATION

Through innovative development and design guidance which carefully considers the impacts of climate change on social, economic, environmental, and cultural dimensions, Brynmawr can demonstrate how to begin to address the challenges we face.

This approach forms the basis for the strategies and recommendations included within this Masterplan document. This document assists Brynmawr in securing its long term sustainability through guidance and interventions that are specific to the unique challenges and opportunities contained within the town.

In a broad sense the project opens up the opportunity for a countering the issues of climate change through innovative solutions which work towards the same goals. Implementation of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems and a achieving an increase in net habitat and urban tree canopy along with adaptive re-use of buildings create the opportunity for Brynmawr to produce a truly innovative approach not yet seen within the area.

Innovation within the community is a key theme through Brynmawr's history and continuing this

tradition by upskilling the existing population, the creation of quality jobs and better utilisation of local supply chains, whilst supporting local businesses in more efficient business practices such as a reduction of single use plastics. All of these processes feed into the broad theory of the Circular Economy.

Strengthening the physical and economic resilience of Brynmawr will aid in securing long term sustainability for the area. It is key these links between the physical and economic elements of Brynmawr are to be strengthened which will improve the community's connection to the town centre.



GLOBAL

In response to the Paris Accord on Climate Change, The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals provide a blueprint at the highest level to direct decision-making towards environmental, political, social and economic sustainability.

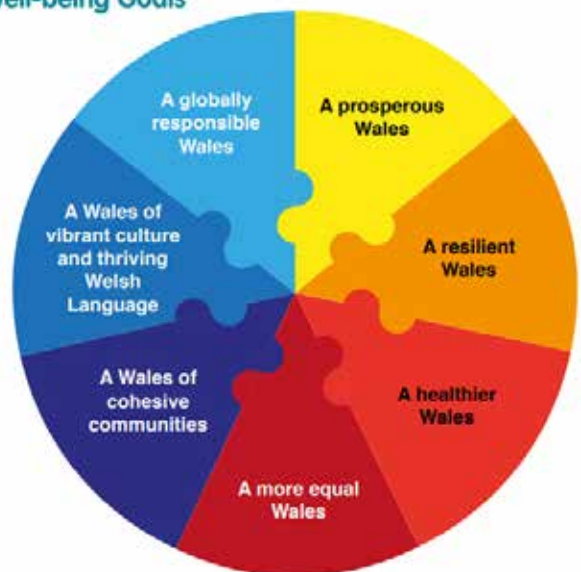
For Brynmawr, nine of the goals have been identified by Arup as being particularly relevant in steering the project.



NATIONAL

The Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 offers a radically different way of approaching development and change. The Act enshrines in law the need to consider the impact of our decisions on future generations. Central to the act are the seven goals and of equal importance, the five ways of working which set out the means for public bodies to achieve the goals. This is a unique piece of legislation that provides us with an unprecedented means of working differently toward a common goal.

Well-being Goals



Five Ways of working

- Long-term - Balancing short and long-term needs.
- Integration - Considering impacts on all goals.
- Involvement - Ensuring representative diversity
- Collaboration - Working together.
- Prevention - Preventing problems occurring or worsening.



Planning Policy Wales 10 identifies National Sustainable Placemaking Outcomes that should be used to inform the preparation of development plans and the assessment of proposals.

The five outcomes are:

- Creating and Sustaining Communities;
- Making Best Use of Resources;
- Maximising Environmental Protection and Limiting Environmental Impact;
- Growing Our Economy in a Sustainable Manner;
- Facilitating Accessible and Healthy Environments.

This considers how sites should be designed and delivered, through their full life cycle, including a wide range of socio-economic and infrastructure considerations beyond the site boundary.

‘Prosperity for All: A Low Carbon Wales 2019’ sets out Wales’ commitment to tackling climate change; cutting emissions while moving towards a low carbon economy. The plan includes Sector Emissions Pathways, including strategies across buildings, transport and energy.



1894

MARKET HALL CINEMA
Y FARM

MARKET HALL CINEMA



al Fish Bar



3. Understanding Brynmawr

3.1 Learning from the past

A TRADITION OF COMMUNITY PRIDE

Establishing an understanding of Brynmawr's history and heritage is a key factor in shaping a new and prosperous future. The people of Brynmawr are proud of their town's heritage and identity.

It was one of many communities that was shaped by the industrial boom in the nineteenth century. It has strong connections to traditional industries with a history of mining, ironworks, and manufacturing.

The population grew rapidly in the early nineteenth century due to the requirement for an increase in housing caused by Nantyglo ironworks. As these natural resources began to be exhausted the population of the town began to decline.

A HISTORY OF INNOVATION

One of Brynmawr's notable stories is its history in social enterprise. To alleviate the issues of unemployment and poverty caused by the Depression in the 1920's, a group of Quakers attempted to help the local community by providing work and practical help.

Aided by volunteers from the community, the idea of crafts and industries was established, providing work and food for the unemployed, improving the local environment and helping establish social and cultural clubs for all ages.

The most successful social venture was the furniture workshops. Brynmawr Furniture

Makers employed youths and school leavers and provided them with training in furniture making skills. The business flourished and established a name for itself across England and Wales.

A key historical feature of the site is the Boiler House building, which is Grade II listed building and the last remaining remnant of the former Dunlop Semtex Factory which was engineered by Ove Arup prior to his rise to international prominence for his innovative work on the Sydney Opera House.

THE SOUTH WALES VALLEYS TRUE MARKET TOWN

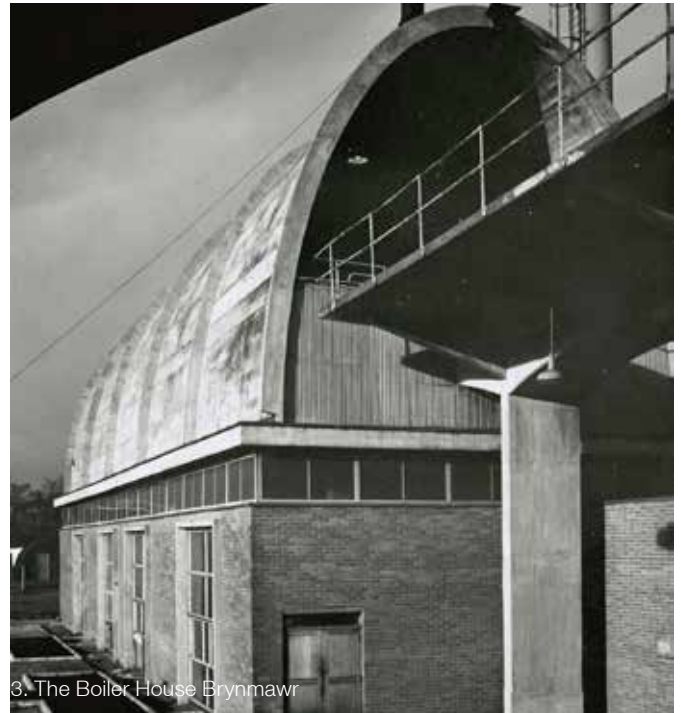
In the past Brynmawr was a market town that held regular markets and festivals around the Market Square and what used to be the Market Hall.

The Market Hall since converted into a cinema and theatre, is an important community anchor in the town. Although markets and events still take place in the town centre, it lacks the spirit it once possessed. Amongst the people of Brynmawr there is a strong positive feeling towards bringing this tradition back to life.

There is a key opportunity for Brynmawr to retain key elements of its former character and realise its potential as a 21st century Valleys market town. This proud town can move towards the next stage in its history whilst maintaining its connection to its past.

“It needs connectivity so old and new are stitched together - it needs a natural flow”

- Comments by BGCBC noted during SWOT session on Feb 3rd 2022



3. The Boiler House Brynmawr



4. The Old Furniture Factory, Brynmawr

3.2 Placemaking Overview

ECOSYSTEM OF TOWNS IN BLAENAU GWENT

At a strategic level, the town centres themselves have an important role to play in ensuring Blaenau Gwent is an attractive place to live, work, do business and invest in within a wider strategy for the area as a whole.

The Blaenau Gwent Town Centres Strategy Report was created by Nash Partnership in 2018 to set out the strategy for the 5 centres of Blaenau Gwent. The report had a number of outcomes and objectives. The report along with our own study and observations form and shape Brynmawr for the future in the context of the 5 towns eco-system. Along with the 5 towns of the “eco-system” Brynmawr should also be considered in the context of larger settlements slightly further afield. These being Abergavenny to the east and Merthyr Tydfil to the west.

The focus on the development of Brynmawr should view it within the context of the 5 towns. The challenge for Brynmawr isn't to compete with the other towns in the area but instead to find its place and grow with the other towns. There is the opportunity for Brynmawr to complement the other towns, rather than compete against them.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

There has been significant stakeholder engagement by both Nash Partnership in the creation of their report and also by Arup. The key themes from stakeholders were consistent in both cases. There is a clear community feeling that there needs to be an increase in support for community facilities.

BEAUFORT STREET

Feedback from engagement pointed to dissatisfaction amongst the community with the uses and quality of the high street with many feeling there were too many hot food takeaway and that metal roller shutters had a significantly detrimental impact upon the streetscape. Improving the quality of built environment to attract better land uses would improve the general sentiment toward the High Street.

TOWN CONTEXT

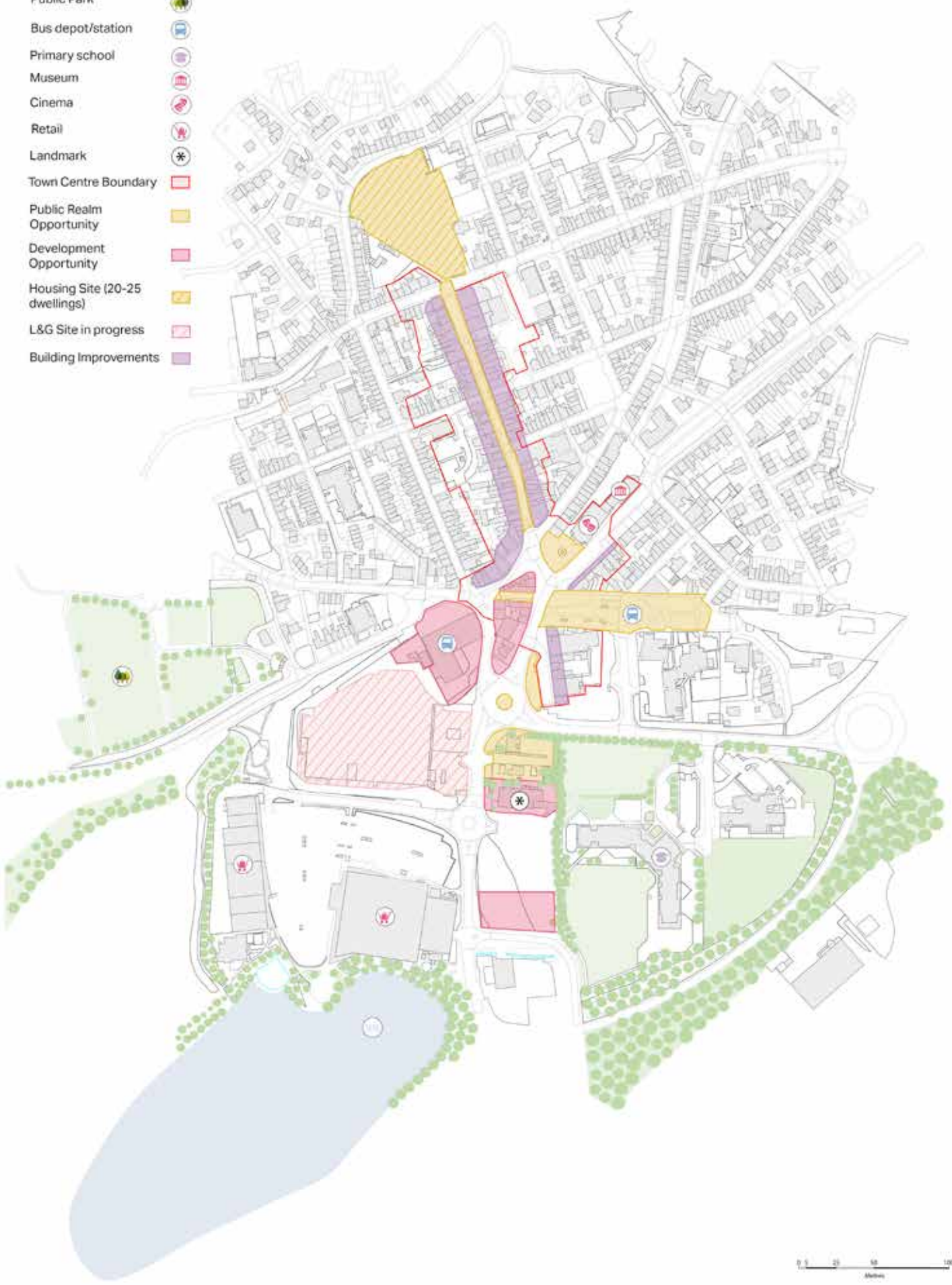
Currently the town is disconnected with little sense of continuity between the ‘old’ and the ‘new’. The former includes the retail along Beaufort Street, Market Square and the latter consisting of the retail park to the south. The complex layout of roads which intersect in the centre of the town create severance and impinge on the potential to redevelop the area into a coherent ‘place’. Despite these challenges a number of attributes exist from a centrally located bus interchange, local schools, health facilities and a the Grade II Listed Boiler House.

LOCATION OF INTERVENTIONS & OPPORTUNITIES



Key

- Water reservoir 
- Public Park 
- Bus depot/station 
- Primary school 
- Museum 
- Cinema 
- Retail 
- Landmark 
- Town Centre Boundary 
- Public Realm Opportunity 
- Development Opportunity 
- Housing Site (20-25 dwellings) 
- L&G Site in progress 
- Building Improvements 



3.3 Socio economic baseline

Due to low-income levels the potential for spending within the town centre is constrained. However, with the right type of interventions and development, its vitality and wellbeing across social, economic, environmental, and cultural dimensions can be greatly improved.

The fact that local communities experience social and economic disadvantage with lower levels of pay should not be a reason to write off opportunities for future regeneration and change. Regardless of economic and social background, all members of the community seek leisure, entertainment, engagement, and a sense of belonging in the place they live. Therefore, tailoring proposals for change to this demography is key to achieving a positive outcome.

The Gross Value Added (GVA) for Blaenau Gwent has been increasing over the past 10 years with manufacturing constituting the largest proportion of GVA, followed by real estate activities. Yet the underlying economic performance lags behind large areas of Wales and the UK.

In the following chapters, ideas that address key gaps in the market are explored in addition to opportunities that could encourage footfall to support existing businesses in Brynmawr. It is also acknowledged that broad societal trends such as online shopping and large retail parks challenge the vitality of town centres, particularly in a post-covid era. The key to overcoming these challenges is to offer what is missing, an interactive, dynamic new market town with a sense of community and place.

£23,300

Mean average equivalised disposable annual household income, Brynmawr

Before housing costs. Income estimates for small areas, England and Wales: financial year ending 2018, ONS

13%

Blaenau Gwent areas in Most deprived 10% of Welsh LSOAs

Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019, StatsWales

5,530

Population of Brynmawr

2011 Census, ONS

15%

of the population of Brynmawr were employed in personal services in 2011. This was followed by 14% in elementary occupations and 13% skilled trades



3.4 Transport baseline

Main access to Brynmawr is via the road network. The new Heads of the Valleys Road (A465) running east to west towards the northern edge of town has created connections to wider areas. The A467 from the south and the A4047 running east to west are linked to the Heads of the Valleys Road and are gateways to the town centre. However, the town is dominated by vehicular movement which is detrimental to the success and wellbeing of the town centre. There is an opportunity to fully capitalise on the A465 connection and divert through-traffic away from the town centre.

The old town centre and the new Lakeside Retail Park are disconnected by roads physically and experientially. It also provides an expanse of free parking, which is contrasted by the relative lack of parking in the central town area. It is not just a pedestrian route that is required, but an environment that creates a high quality pedestrian experience.

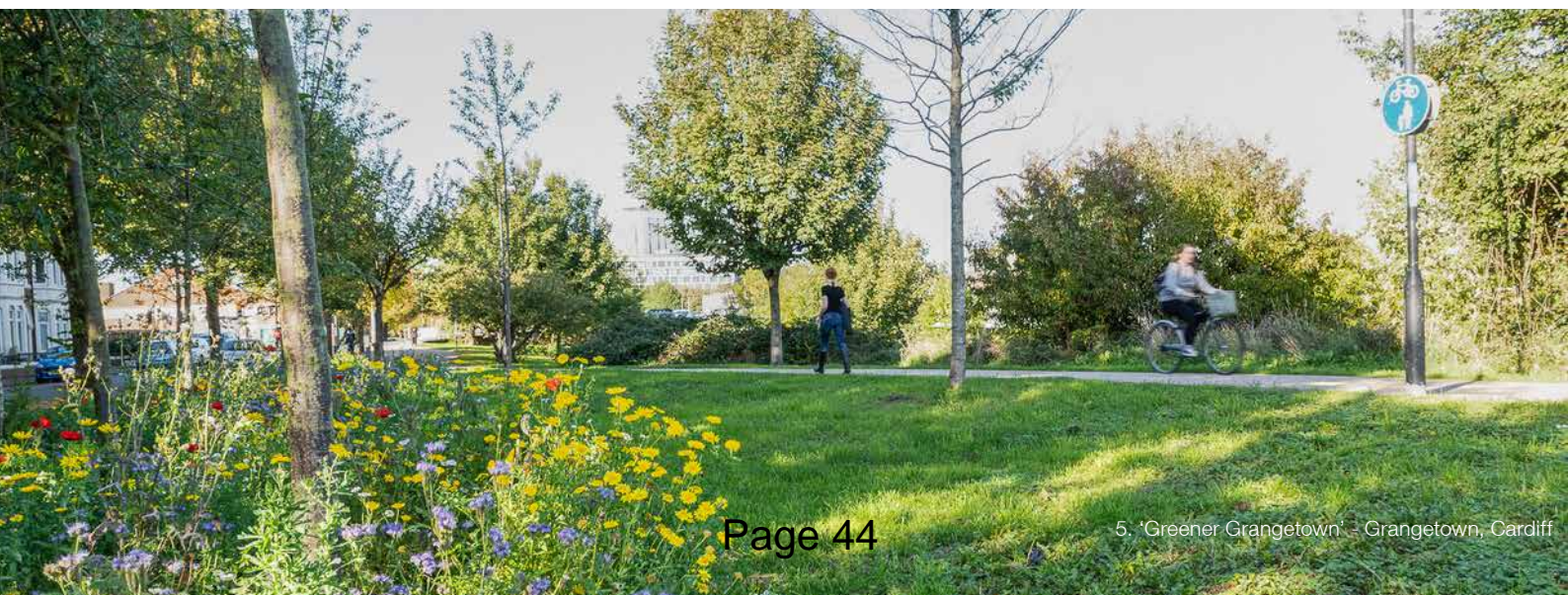
The town does benefit from a bus service connecting the town to Cwmbran, Forgeside, Merthyr Tydfil, Ebbw Vale, Newport and Abergavenny. However, feedback from engagement suggest they tend to be infrequent and inaccessible. The closest train station is 4 miles away in Ebbw Vale.

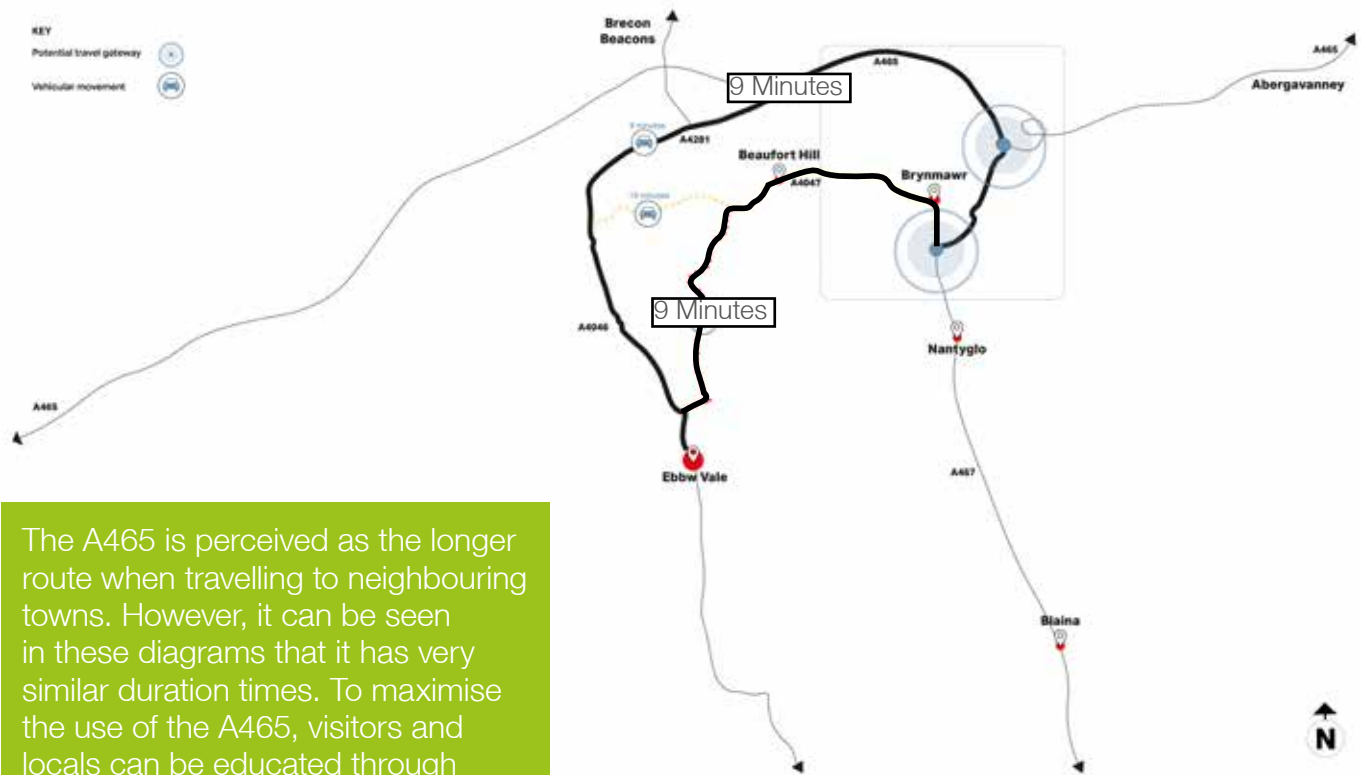
Our approach works in conjunction with the WelTag Stage 1 assessment completed by Arup in 2021 as well as the newly appointed WelTag Stage 2 assessment. The key interventions in the WelTag Stage 1 report are grouped into four areas. These are:

- Active travel interventions designed to improve the quality of walking and cycling
- Public transport interventions that focus on buses and the existing Brynmawr bus station
- Highways interventions that seek to change the layout of roads and car parks and
- Meanwhile uses that seek to make the best use of vacant or poor-quality development sites.

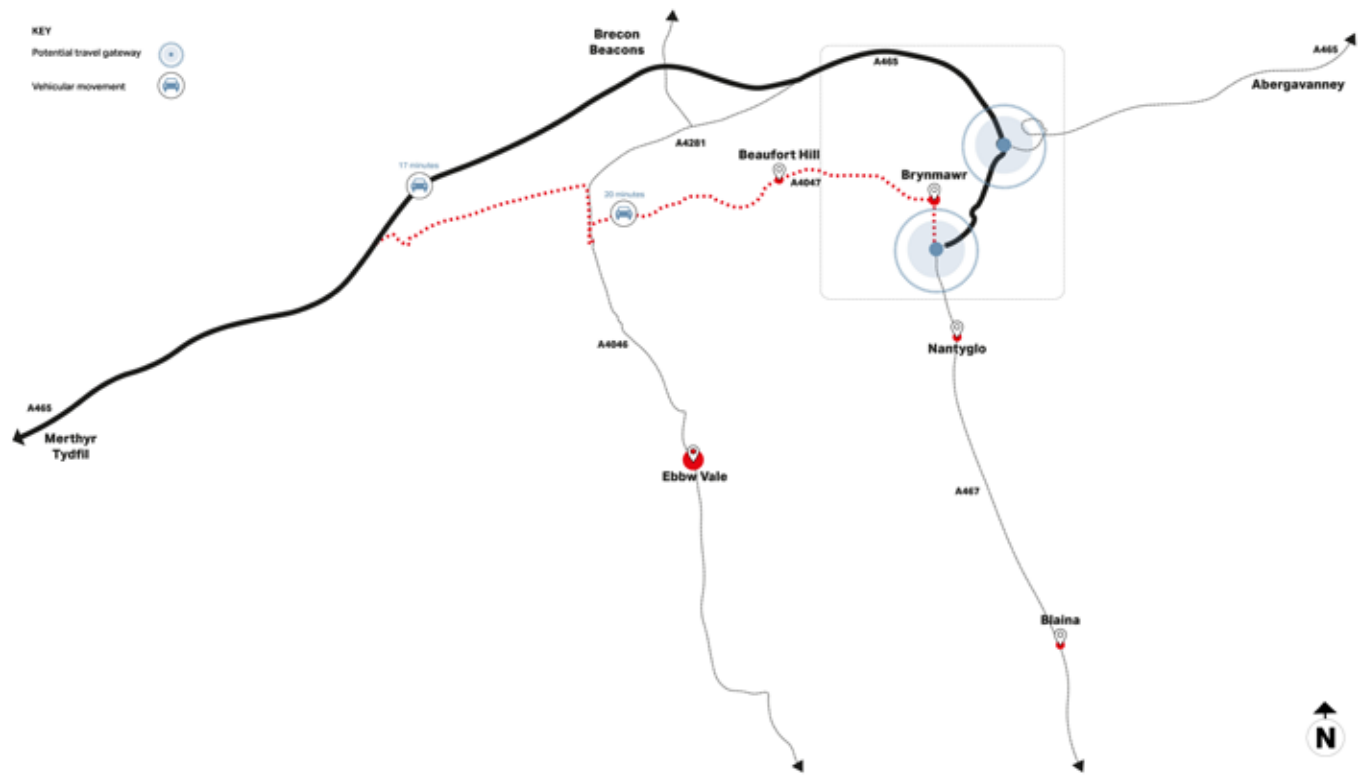
There are several ways to reduce traffic pressures within the town centre area. Some ideas include 20mph speed limits, pedestrian priority spaces, surface material changes, planting, and physical public realm features. Another bold, yet successful, method is bringing the town centre to life by planning temporary road closures for events throughout the year.

WelTag Stage 2 will work alongside this placemaking plan and both projects will be integrated with each other.





The A465 is perceived as the longer route when travelling to neighbouring towns. However, it can be seen in these diagrams that it has very similar duration times. To maximise the use of the A465, visitors and locals can be educated through potential travel gateways that consist of more prominent signage and wayfinding at key entry/exits into town.



3.5 Town centre Health check

The town centre health check is a study of the existing physical, social, and economic conditions and historic trends of Brynmawr town centre. It draws on both published data and findings from site visits and analysis including knowledge from the previous Brynmawr masterplan and WelTAG study.

The key findings and opportunities from the baseline study are detailed below.

BASELINE SUMMARY

- The current Blaenau Gwent Local Development Plan has identified sustainable growth and regeneration opportunities in Brynmawr, including sustainable economic growth, quality housing and complimentary roles around tourism and mixed-use development.
- The key interventions from the WelTag Stage 1 study (2021-2022) were to divert traffic away from town centre, reinforce active travel, enhance public transport, focusing on buses, and explore potential for meanwhile uses.
- The town centre and new Lakeside Retail Park are disconnected by roads physically and experientially. Businesses in the town centre face strong competition for footfall and trade from the new retail park. At present Lakeside Retail Park is a self-contained attraction with weak pedestrian links and little customer spill over to the town centre. It is a major draw to Brynmawr, but the challenge is to attract some of these customers into the town centre.
- There has been a sustained decrease in footfall in the town centre which presents a real challenge. There must therefore be a focus on projects and measures that will attract people into the centre.
- The Gross Value Added (GVA) for Blaenau Gwent has been increasing over the past 10 years with manufacturing constituting the largest proportion of GVA, followed by real estate activities. Yet the underlying economic performance lags behind large areas of Wales and the UK.
- Despite being surrounded by beautiful landscapes such as The Brecon Beacons and The Valleys, the relationship is peripheral, and the town centre lacks green spaces.
- The vacancy rate in the retail sub-market in Blaenau Gwent is low, compared to Cardiff and other towns in Blaenau Gwent. However, the drop off in business rates is a trigger for action to help town prosperity.
- The Market Hall Cinema, being one of the oldest in the UK, and the market square are some of Brynmawr's attractive features and play a significant role in its future.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Reducing car dominance and supporting active travel and public transport, principally by maximising new access to the A465.
- Adopting a 'one town' approach which links the old and new
- Bringing the landscape into the town and the town to the landscape. It is important to explore opportunities such as access to nature, tourism and ways in which both The Brecon Beacons and The Valleys are experienced.
- The town requires a real focus on initiatives to strengthen a culture in which the town centres are seen as the focal points for their communities and to develop those aspects in which the town centres are able to have

a competitive edge over out of town stores and on-line retailing and services. A principal advantage of the town centres is the sense of identity and pride they can offer in a shared 'community space'.

- Attracting people of all ages throughout the week and evenings and expand the Brynmawr events calendar.
- Support and celebrate the independents as a differentiator.
- Create destinations such as The Boiler House or a destination park.

- Build on Brynmawr's rich history of social enterprise.
- Take a health-led approach in determining the nature and location of change.
- Unlock land for new uses, such as the NMC Factory and Bus Depot.
- 'Cross-sell' Brynmawr with BGCBC's and other towns as an 'ecosystem of towns' rather than in isolation.
- Bring people on the journey through engagement and ambition.



3.6 Engagement Summary

Engagement was undertaken through one-to-one phone discussions with Brynmawr businesses, and virtual workshops with a range of stakeholders and community groups. This dialogue produced a great deal of local knowledge, suggestions for action and offers of help.

At the inception of the project a workshop was held with BGCBC councilors. The virtual workshop was held using an online whiteboard tool (Miro) where stakeholders were presented with an overview of the baseline data and the opportunity.

Through a swot exercise, stakeholder feedback from each session identified the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of

Brynmawr which helped create a summary of key themes and ideas to take forward as design principles. A summary of the common points that have emerged during the stakeholder engagement sessions is illustrated below. Overall, the stakeholders were able to ascertain the scale of opportunity and vision for Brynmawr with key themes evolving around connectivity and community. There was a clear consensus around the idea of rediscovering what Brynmawr has to offer and building on its rich history through a curation of events and destinations.

What is important and works well?

- There was a strong consensus around the sense of community where the locals are considered to be extremely loyal and actively engaged
- Brynmawr has a rich history as a market town and features the oldest cinema in Wales
- Brynmawr is part of an ecosystem of towns where it is strategically placed in the wider network with new road infrastructure and easy access to nature (Parc Nant Y Wan/ Brecon Beacons)
- The vast number of independent businesses and the variety Brynmawr town centre has to offer along the high street result in low vacancy rates

Comments by BGCBC noted during SWOT session 3rd February 2022

“Loyalty”

“Togetherness”

“Houses don’t have gardens” - What did people do in lockdown?

“Market is not used enough”

“You are able to take your time in Brynmawr”

Issues & concerns

- There is a lack of public transport with no rail connection and poor bus connections
- Heavy traffic and vehicle dominance roads with lack of public realm and green infrastructure
- Lack of connection between 'old' and 'new' town
- Maintenance of buildings and shop fronts need updating and modernising
- Lack of night-time economy
- There is the threat of not addressing the issues and lack of action as the town needs regeneration or will get left behind
- Competing with the neighbouring towns has led footfall to dramatically decrease
- There is a lack of developable space within the compact town
- Perception of Brynmawr is tainted with the increase of anti-social behaviour

Opportunities

- The cross-selling of towns within Blaenau Gwent would aid Brynmawr in having to compete with its neighbours
- Creating destinations/events which would increase footfall and revitalise town centre
- Encourage a community approach to get the local people onboard as well as upskilling through social enterprise
- Introducing sustainable travel with better transport links and access

"Town Centre doesn't reflect the landscape - very grey"

"It needs connectivity so old and new are stitched together - it needs a natural flow"

"Community Driven"

"Boiler house as main tourist attraction"

"What if there was green running through the town?"

3.7 Learning from elsewhere

One way of ensuring an effective approach for Brynmawr is to look at relevant case studies and learn from their success.

TREORCHY, WALES

Treorchy, a Welsh market town in the Rhondda Valley, won the UK's 'High Street of the Year' award in 2019. The former mining town was praised for its community led cultural events and the digital training offered to support local businesses. Where previously there was no online platform, a new Visit Treorchy website now gives local businesses a greater online presence, while a strategic partnership provides digital training and support to local entrepreneurs.

Year-round cultural events led by the community such as an outdoor cinema, an arts festival and an annual Christmas parade also increased footfall dramatically.

Another innovative initiative is their 'Hop, Shop and Save' scheme which offers advertising space on local buses in return for high street discounts to bus users. This not only encourages the use of public transport but also improves air quality in the town centre and increases footfall for the local businesses, most of which are independently owned.



7. Treorchy High Street, The Guardian

BLOQS, LONDON

BLOQS is an open access factory in London, transformed from an under used industrial shed into a flexible pay-as-you-go workshop. It is a professional makerspace for entrepreneurs and professional makers such as carpenters, furniture makers, designers, builders, tailors, and sculptors to name a few. It is a collaborative, creative space where people can fabricate products with on-site equipment. In addition to the space and equipment, it provides training of new skills, a café for social space, a place to network and a chance to be part of the makers community.

This example is relevant to the Stagecoach site highlighting opportunities for renovation. It is also linked to Brynmawr's history in furniture making and other crafts.



8. BLOQS, The Guardian

TY PAWB, WREXHAM

Ty Pawb is a cultural community space where arts and markets come together under one roof. This cohabitation is a celebration of Wrexham's cultural heritage and the importance of markets within its identity.

The building is a transformation of a failing covered market and multi-storey car park from the 1990s. Today it accommodates new facilities including art galleries, market stalls, performance space, learning centres, studios, offices, cafes and bars. Ty pawb has had a great impact on the community helping regenerate the town centre and provide an alternative to the out-of-town retail parks and ailing high street. With a diverse mix of spaces and activities, it attracts a wide audience including national and international visitors.

This example can also be applied to the Stagecoach building. This approach can provide a space for the community to come together and create a destination for visitors. It builds on the significance of markets in Brynmawr, its strong sense of community and offers a place for social, economic and leisure activities.

ALTRINCHAM MARKET, CHESHIRE

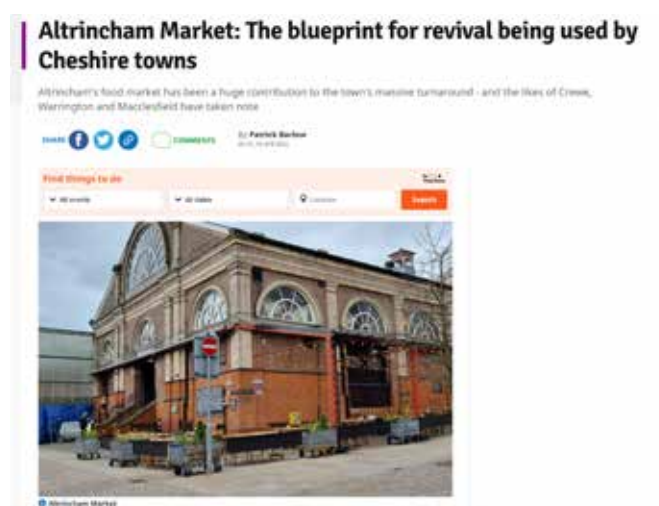
Altrincham is a traditional market town in Cheshire dating back to 1290. The new Trafford Shopping Centre nearby, increasing business rates and parking charges led to the decline of its high street. Businesses disappeared and Altrincham recorded the highest shop vacancy rates in the UK.

Today Altrincham has been reinvented into a modern market town and is one of the most sought-after places to live in the country. The catalyst for regeneration was the refurbishment of the Market House, which is now a lively food hall with some of the area's best local food vendors. The market also offers stalls selling clothes and crafts. The year-round activities and events offer a great variety for locals and visitors increasing footfall substantially.

The Boiler House is the perfect candidate to follow in Altrincham's footsteps. In the following chapters we will explore how The Boiler House can become a thriving food destination in The Valleys.



9. Ty Pawb, Wrexham Council News



10. Altrincham Market, Cheshire Live

3.8 Planning context

The traditional role of town centres as places to buy and sell, founded on attributes of the clustering of and access to goods and services has been eroded by online retailing and service provision and out of town shopping facilities. The future role of the town centres and the mix of services, facilities, and experiences they can provide is therefore a key issue.

PLANNING POLICY WALES

The key principles for the planning system in Wales are established by Planning Policy Wales (PPW). The key theme from PPW is People and Places: Achieving Well-being Through Placemaking – Using placemaking as a tool for the planning system to output sustainable Places which improve well-being of communities.

PPW has to be used in three stages.

1. Assessing plans or proposals against the Strategic and Spatial Choices issues and the national sustainable placemaking outcomes. This stage is to ensure that opportunities are correctly identified and any potentially required mitigation measures are included.
2. Assessing whether plans or proposals contribute to Active & Social Places, Productive and Enterprising Places and Distinctive & Natural Places. The merits of the proposal need to be considered whether they are in the public interest.
3. Ensuring the strategy or proposal aids in contributing to either sustaining or the creation of sustainable places.

PPW's raison d'être is to ensure good design which contributes to the viability and sustainability of places.

THE BLAENAU GWENT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (LDP)

The Blaenau Gwent Local Development Plan (LDP) was adopted in November 2012. Relevant policies for Brynmawr are as follows:

STRATEGIC POLICIES

- SP1 Northern Strategy Area – Sustainable Growth and Regeneration, where Brynmawr District Town Centre will explore opportunities to develop complementary roles around tourism; and support mixed-use development.
- SP4 Delivering Quality Housing – provision is made for the development of 3,907 new dwellings within the wider authority area by 2021.
- SP8 Sustainable Economic Growth – 50ha of employment land is allocated to meet the wider authority area's need by 2021.

POLICY DESIGNATIONS

- EMP2 Employment Area Protection – sites identified on the policy map are protected for employment use in line with their status in the employment hierarchy (EMP2.7; EMP2.8; EMP2.9; EMP2.17 and EMP2.19).
- ENV2 Special Landscape Areas – SLAs are located to the southeast, southwest and northeast of Brynmawr (Eastern Ridge and Mynydd James; Mynydd Carn-y-Cefn and Cefn yr Arail; and Beaufort Common).
- ENV3 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) – multiple SINC are

located around the settlement boundary of Brynmawr.

SITE ALLOCATIONS

- Housing Allocations are located within the settlement boundary of Brynmawr (H1.6; H1.7; H1.10, HC1.23, HC1.24, HC1.25) – these are for between 12 – 45 housing units respectively. An allocation exists within Brynmawr for Gypsy Traveller Accommodation (see GT1 – which is allocated to accommodate 6 pitches).
- MU3 NMC Factory and Bus Depot – land is allocated at the NMC factory for mixed-use development including 60no. New homes, and to act as an active link between the Town Centre and Lakeside Retail Park.
- T1 Cycle Routes – two cycle routes are located within Brynmawr, the HoV route linking Nine Arches Tredegar to Brynmawr (T1.1) and Brynmawr to Blaenavon (T1.8).
- T3 Safeguarding of Disused Railway Infrastructure – disused railway infrastructure east of Brynmawr will be protected from development that would compromise its future transport use.
- T4 Improvements to Bus Services – improvements are identified as part of a Bus Priority Scheme along the Brynmawr to Newport Bus Corridor (T4.1) and at the Brynmawr Bus Interchange (T4.2).
- T6 Regeneration Led Highway Improvements – land is allocated for the dualling of the A465 Heads of the Valleys Road (Tredegar to Brynmawr) (T6.1) to the east of Brynmawr settlement boundary.
- ENV4 Land Reclamation Schemes – a land reclamation scheme is proposed at Cwmcraehen, Brynmawr (ENV4.3).



11. Planning Policy Wales



12. Blaenau Gwent LDP





4. A Vision for Brynmawr

4.1 A Twenty First Century Valleys Market Town

The vision for Brynmawr will mark a new chapter in the rich history of social enterprise and community led change that has defined the Welsh valleys.

The retail centre will be rapidly diversified to attract new visitors across the day and week and make it a place people want to use and not just need to use. Brynmawr will become a 15-minute neighbourhood which will bring new services, destinations, jobs, leisure and parks to the centre of the community. It will embrace innovation to adapt existing buildings and spaces and become renowned for experimentation and creative reuse. At the centre of this will be a renewed focus on the role of Brynmawr as one of the few true market towns in the valleys by breathing new life into the Market Square.

In doing so Brynmawr will rediscover its place as one of the few true market towns within the Welsh Valleys.



4.2 A 15 Minute Neighbourhood

15 MINUTE NEIGHBOURHOOD

What if we could access our daily needs within a 15-minute walk from our front door? The concept which has been adopted across Paris is becoming an increasingly important one within the built environment industry.

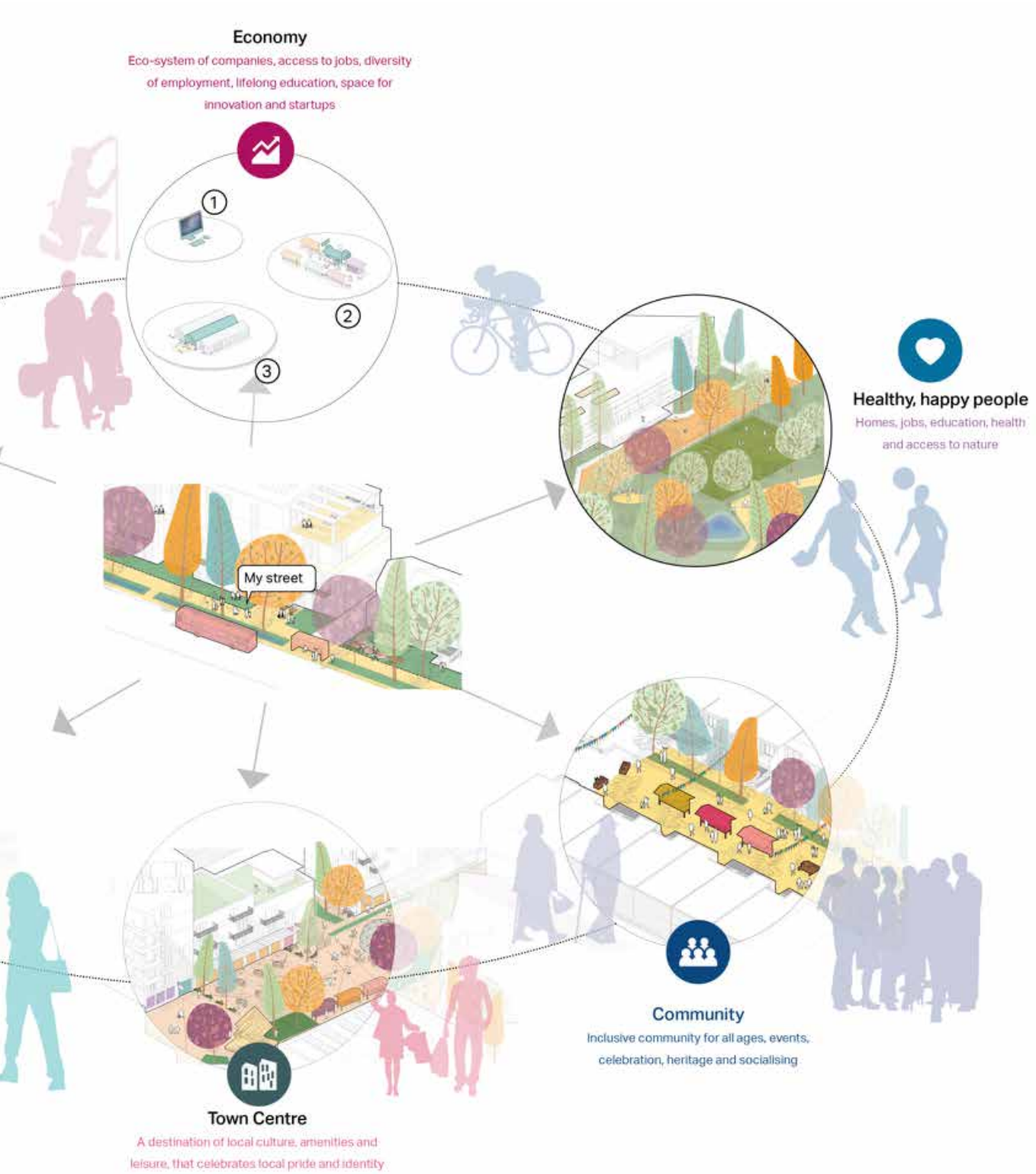
There are six principles which are the stepping stones for creating a self-sufficient town and a great place to live, work and visit. By providing improved access to open space and nature, improving the mix of employment types, encouraging a broader offer of amenities and services, reinforcing the strong sense of community, with a diverse offer of homes whilst supporting sustainable movement, a liveable, vibrant, and resilient town will be the outcome.

Living within a 15-minute neighbourhood means there is less car dependency, a more active community with an improved physical, social and economic life.

Brynmawr is a compact town surrounded by a residential area, making it an ideal candidate for the 15-minute town concept. With an enviable combination of urban and rural qualities, access to beautiful landscapes and a strong community, Brynmawr has some of the base ingredients to improve the life of residents and visitors alike, this is a core principle for the strategy for Brynmawr.



The 15-minute town



4.3 Objectives

Empowering
the local
community

Embedding
Circularity

Step Change
to Sustainable
mobility

WHATS DRIVING THE CHANGE?

Sense of community is a major strength in Brynmawr reflected in a cultural history of shared endeavour, expressed for example through the Market Hall Cinema. It's therefore essential the future evolution of the towns builds upon and nurtures local assets.

Circularity is a model based around the sharing, reusing and readaption of resources. The towns within the local area all grew on the basis of servicing carbon-based extraction and production, but now need to forge a new economy that is founded upon low carbon output and associated stewardship of the natural environment.

Improving the quality of the pedestrian and cycle environment within the locality improves connections to the town centre and reduces car dependency. Opportunities to improve not just routes but also facilities and services for active travel.

FACILITATING THE CHANGE

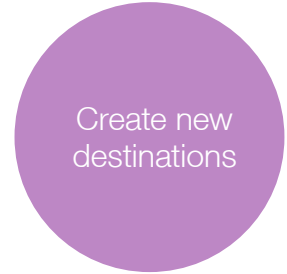
To diversify the centre and drive change there needs to be an ethos of enterprise. This entails enterprise as a creative endeavour, finding new and effective ways of doing things that bring improvements to the town centres and their contribution to wider well-being. There are already good examples of this approach such as social enterprises, Market Hall Cinema in Brynmawr and EVi in Ebbw Vale.

Involving young people in town centre projects will be important, ensuring that their concerns and aspirations are addressed and to help reduce vandalism and anti-social behaviour, an issue frequently raised throughout engagement.

Adaptive re-use of the Boiler House and its renovation to a beneficial use is important to safeguard an element of the town's identity and because of the opportunities it presents for a use that can help bring people to the town. The use should be one that can be run as a community initiative.

The Circular economy theme also looks towards better utilisation of local supply chains and supporting local businesses to promote themselves, and also reduce waste such as plastic. Improving the quality of the offering within the local area reduces the need to travel and improves the local economy of Brynmawr.

Active travel connectivity and, connectivity of the community and local businesses. Soft interventions such as supporting local businesses to improve their social and digital media presence, providing outlets to publicise positive stories and events are cost effective ways at improving the local economy and connecting businesses with customers beyond the passing trade, creating a destination of the town centre.



WHATS DRIVING THE CHANGE?

There is the opportunity to upskill the local population and provide new types of spaces to entice more business to town centre.

Brynmawr like many areas of Wales suffers from significant levels of chronic illness often associated with sedentary lifestyles and poor diet. Placemaking has a significant role to play in improving health and well-being by reshaping the physical environment to encourage more active lifestyles and positive community interaction.

Creating a sense of place that is unique to Brynmawr needs to be facilitated further than physical interventions, there is a need for a greater number of uses and activities.

FACILITATING THE CHANGE

There is potential for a work hub to capitalise on this creative energy and sense of independence to enable existing residents to live and work in the town. A work hub enables this, and can support start-ups, provide training space and create jobs.

Flexible space allows opportunities for other uses such as street markets showcasing local traders selling local goods and produce. Such markets can cater for the local demographic and attract new custom from beyond the town. Re-establishing Brynmawr as a true market town.

A major positive asset to the area is the green corridors and abundance of landscape surrounding the town, including the Brecon Beacons. These landscape features are highly valued by the community and is a striking feature for visitors unfamiliar with these valley towns. There are opportunities to improve this further. Connections to nature are proven to be significant to well-being.

Developing a programme of events and a social calendar which caters for social activity, family attractions and places for young people will prove transformative for the town centres social character. Other opportunities such as a 24-hour economy, and deregulation to allow for outdoor dining are interventions worthy of investigation to create a distinct sense of place.

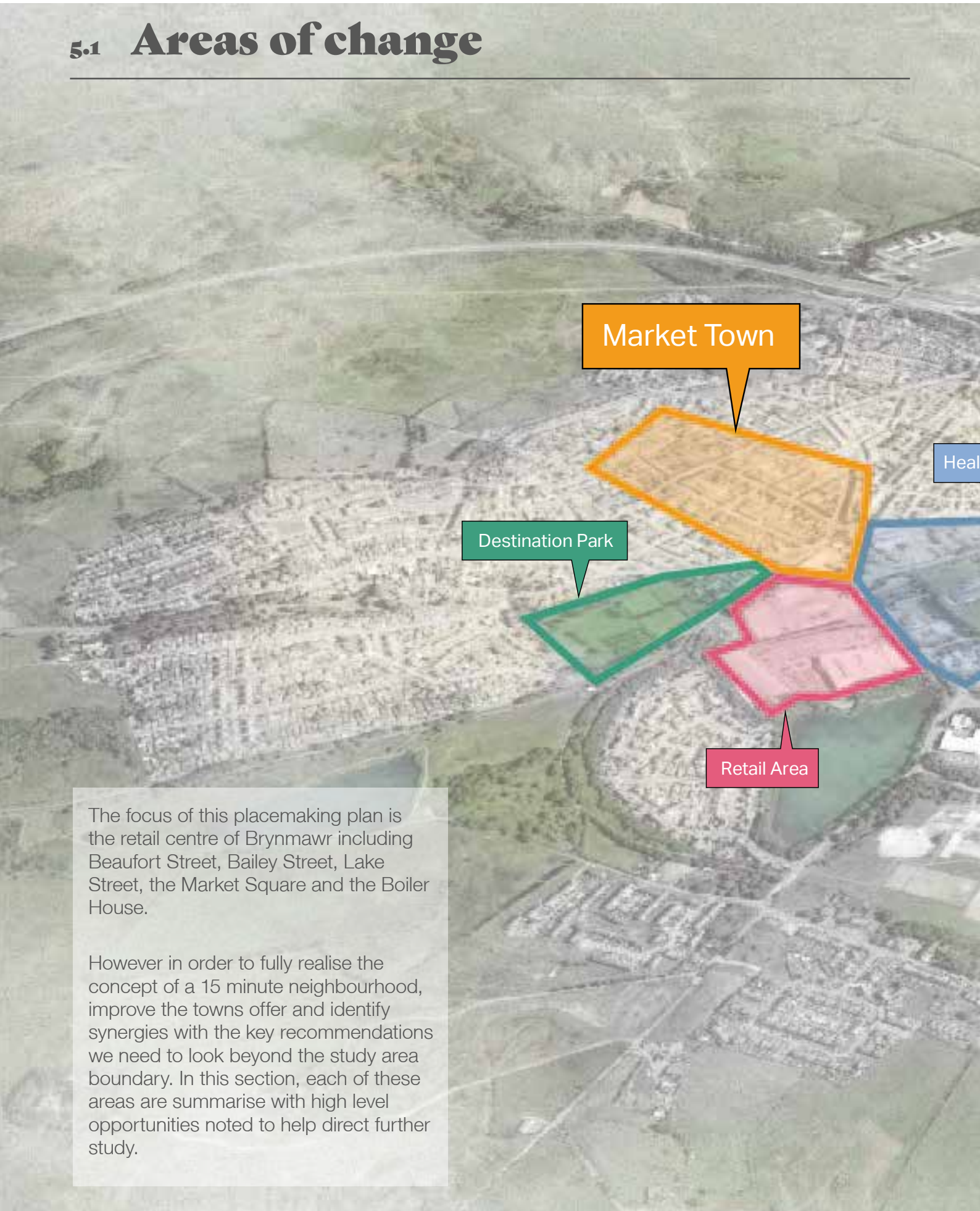
By galvanising the community, raising town centre profiles, and attracting people to use the centres. This in turn can build confidence and, over-time, enhance the prospects for some of the larger scale investments where these are needed.



An aerial architectural rendering of a city street. The street is shown in a light yellow color, with a green bike lane running along its length. The bike lane has a white dashed line on its left side and a white solid line on its right side. A person is riding a bicycle on the bike lane. The street is flanked by buildings of various heights and colors, including white, grey, and purple. There are trees and green spaces along the street, including a small park area with a blue pond and a tree. A dashed black line runs across the middle of the street, possibly indicating a boundary or a specific area of interest. The overall style is clean and modern, with a focus on urban planning and green infrastructure.

5. The Placemaking Plan

5.1 Areas of change



The focus of this placemaking plan is the retail centre of Brynmawr including Beaufort Street, Bailey Street, Lake Street, the Market Square and the Boiler House.

However in order to fully realise the concept of a 15 minute neighbourhood, improve the towns offer and identify synergies with the key recommendations we need to look beyond the study area boundary. In this section, each of these areas are summarise with high level opportunities noted to help direct further study.



thy/Happy People

MARKET TOWN

The traditional heart of the town and the primary concern for this placemaking plan. The future viability of this area is dependent on providing new destinations, new spaces and places that transform people's perceptions and draw a far wider audience of people to use it. At the heart of this plan is a circular economy approach to innovatively reuse the town's buildings and spaces including the Stage Coach site and Boiler House rather than demolish and rebuild where possible. To ensure change can be realised quickly to maintain public support and demonstrate intent, trial projects including the pedestrianisation of Market Square for events will engender a spirit of innovation.



PARK

The lack of green space in the centre of Brynmawr was cited during the engagement process and the transfer of this asset to community groups has inevitably led to challenges around financing and potential conflict between groups. Park spaces are vital in keeping people active, offering children invaluable outdoor time and providing a place to meet and talk away from the confines of your home.

Two levels of improvement have been identified to help maximise the potential of the Welfare Park. The first is to consider the operation and governance of the park in order to improve what exists. Parks Foundations for example (<https://www.nesta.org.uk/toolkit/how-set-parks-foundation/>) are an alternative way of running public parks by transforming parks into charitable trusts with a board of trustees which have a focus on income generation and entrepreneurialism. Whilst this approach tends to be focused on larger urban parks, there are many aspects that could be applicable to the Welfare Park. In line with proposal for the health and well-being cluster there is scope to decant uses from the Welfare Park to the area around the Well-being Hub and Blaenycwm Primary to reduce pressure on what is ultimately a limited space.



The second level of intervention involves a far more ambitious overhaul of the park into a destination park that would serve both Brynmawr and nearby towns such as Abertillery. Such a proposal would need to be subject to a full business case strategy but has the potential to add to the rich mix of destinations proposed in the town centre as part of a town-wide approach. Careful coordination with town centre proposals would be needed to avoid potential duplication if the proposal to create a central park in Brynmawr are pursued.

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING CLUSTER

The Bromley By Bow model of community and health integration in London (<https://www.bbhc.org.uk/>) has demonstrated how blurring the boundaries between community groups/services and health can achieve far reaching benefits for local people. Inspired by this approach, there is significant potential to maximise the use of land adjacent to the Blaenycwm Primary and the Brynmawr Well-being Centre as part of a broader integration of these facilities with the boiler house proposal. It is recommended that the land around these sites is used to improve local biodiversity, provide natural play for children, create community allotments and recreational space. Each of these has a natural custodian either via the school, well-being hub or potentially the boiler house.



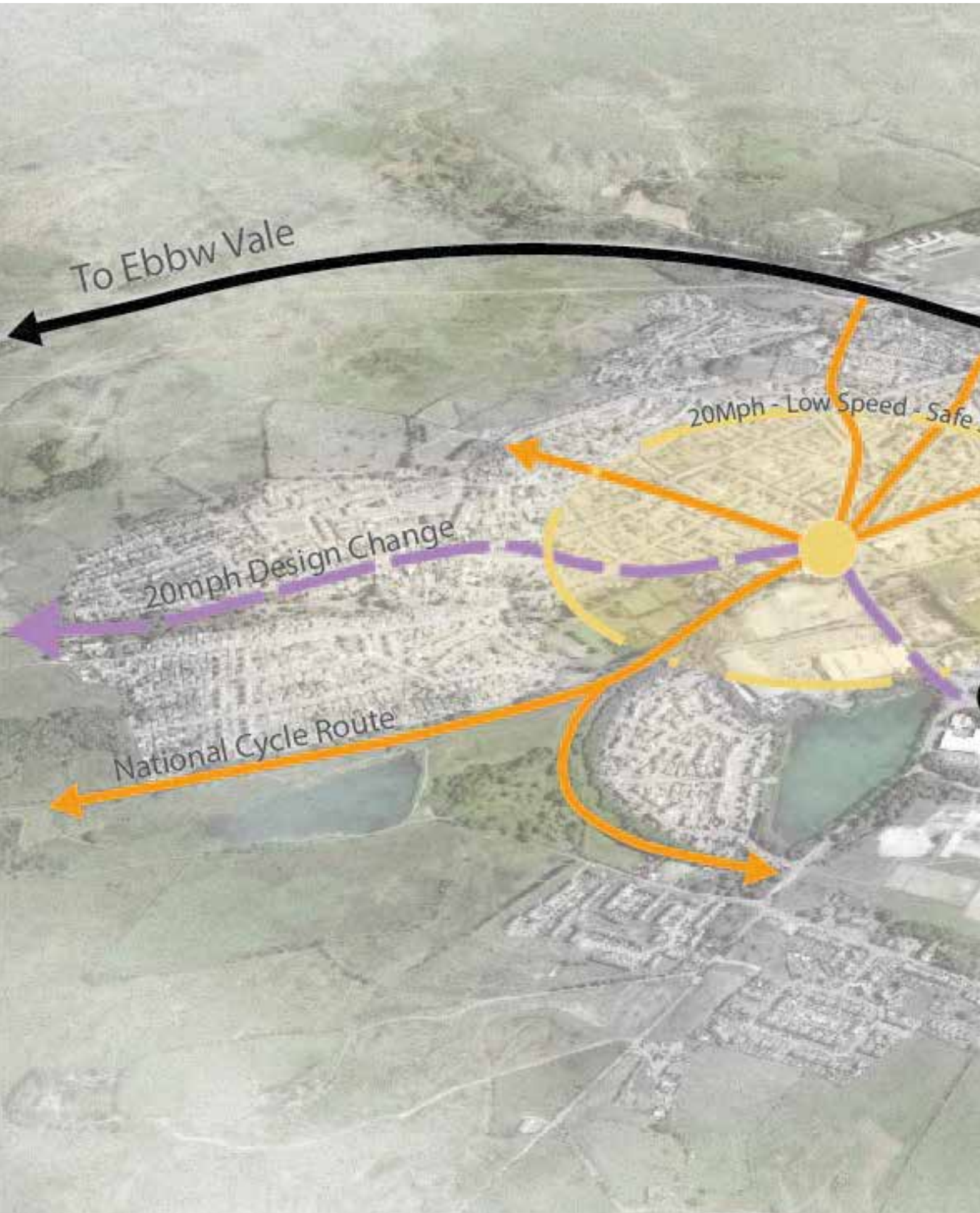
This simple-joined up approach offers numerous, wider benefits including increasing access to open space. Social prescribing from the well-being hub could see people suffering from isolation or inactivity involved in the community allotments. For the school there is the potential to engage early years children in community led habitat creation and natural play. The synergies with the boiler house proposals present the chance to create a wider 'eco-system' of health and well-being. This could be by supporting health literacy at the school through food production and healthy food preparation or by linking social services with the well-being hub to offer meaningful work for vulnerable adults.

RETAIL PARK

The existing retail park is currently expanding to the north with the arrival of a number of new outlets to add to the established area to the south. Whilst this has and will continue to bring new trade and visitors to the Brynmawr it has had a negative impact on footfall in the traditional retail area to the south. Throughout the engagement process it was evident that resolving the disconnect between the two needs to be addressed. Trying to replicate or compete with the retail park offer within the study area is not recommended, instead the focus should be on offering destinations, uses and services that cannot be provided here such as independent retail, community uses and open space.

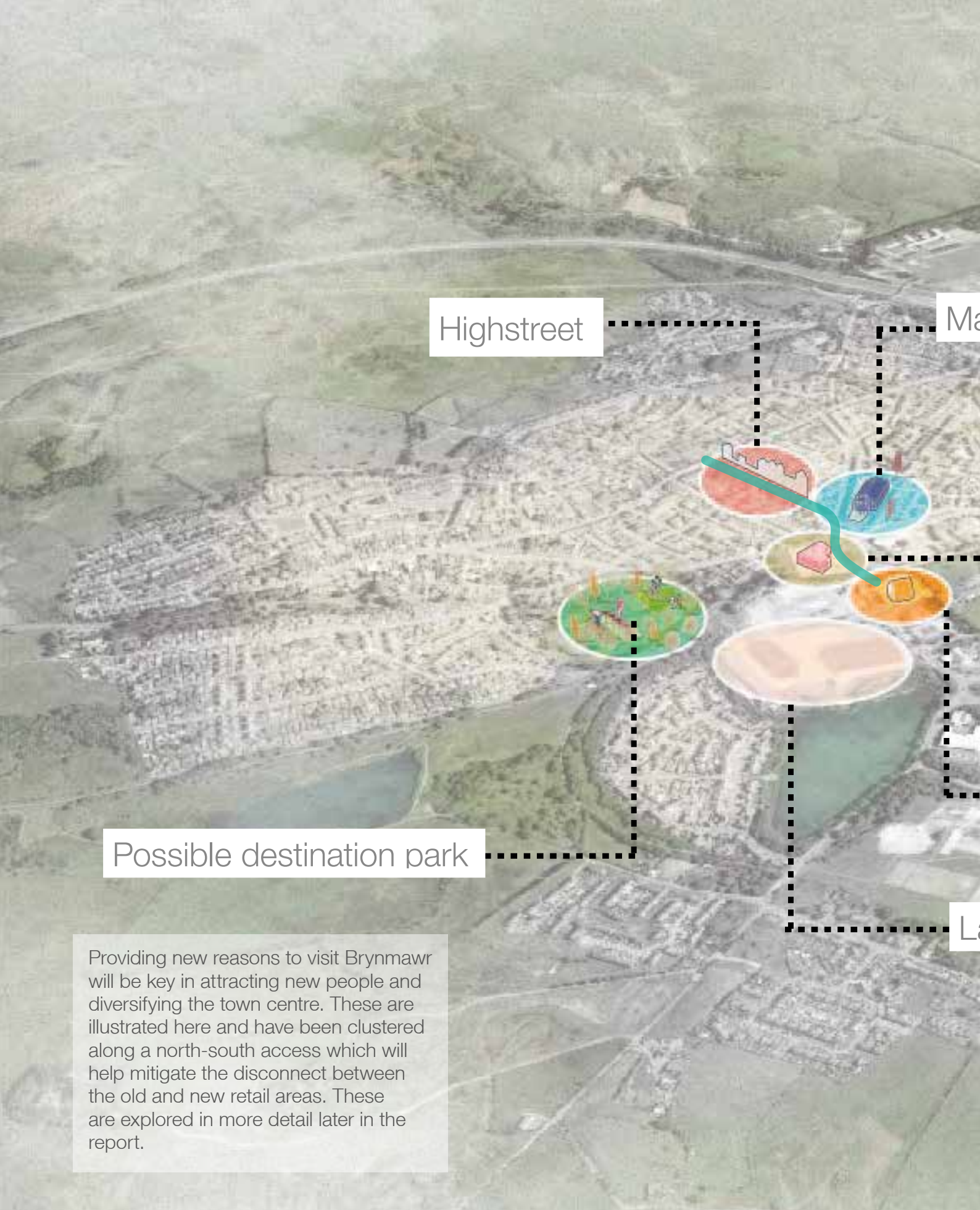


IMPROVE CONNECTIVITY





This placemaking plan will need to align with the emerging WelTAG work. Resolving traffic conflict and congestion in the central area is a key challenge. It is recommended that in order to achieve a better outcome for the town with greater pedestrian priority reduced car dominance that there is a rethink on the movement system. The concept illustrated here sees the town centre become a 20mph zone with priority for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport. This is achieved primarily by redirecting traffic moving east out onto the Heads of Valleys road and away from the pinch point at Bailey Street. Lessons can be learned from the concept of 'Mini Holland' which are being trialed across England. In these areas, rerouting of roads are complimented by changes to the street design to improve the function and appearance of public spaces and streets toward pedestrians and cyclists.



Highstreet

Ma

Possible destination park

Providing new reasons to visit Brynmawr will be key in attracting new people and diversifying the town centre. These are illustrated here and have been clustered along a north-south access which will help mitigate the disconnect between the old and new retail areas. These are explored in more detail later in the report.



Market Hall

Stagecoach Depot/Park

The Boiler House

Lakeside Retail Park

A GREEN CORE

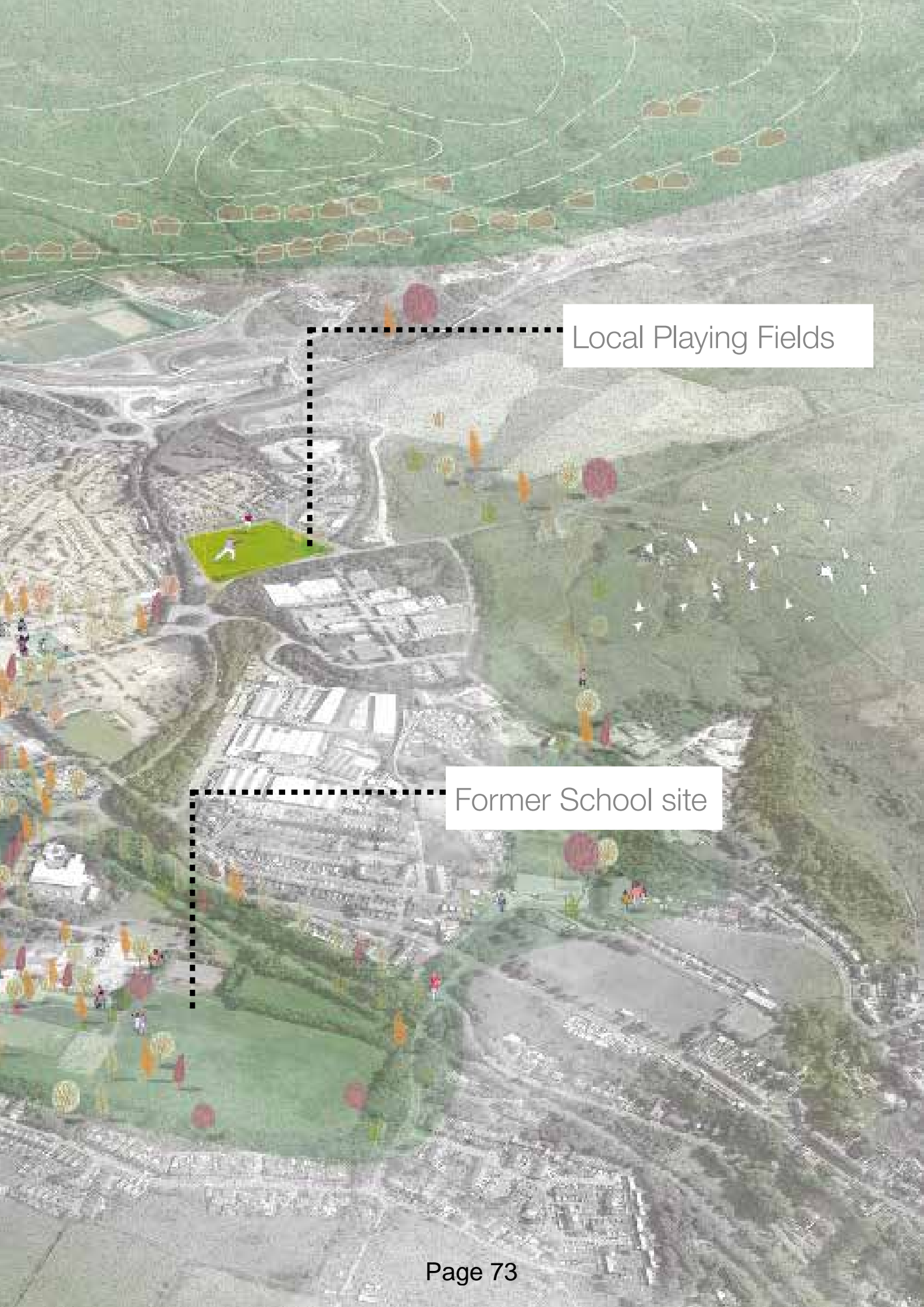
An aerial photograph of a town, Brynmawr, with a green core. The town is built on a hillside, and the Brecon Beacons are visible in the background. A dashed black line outlines the green core area. Three white boxes with black text are overlaid on the image, pointing to specific areas: 'Brecon Beacons' points to the hills in the background, 'Possible destination park' points to a large green area in the middle of the town, and 'Parc Nant Y Waun' points to a smaller green area in the foreground. A semi-transparent grey box with white text is also present in the lower-left quadrant.

Brecon Beacons

Possible destination park

Parc Nant Y Waun

The natural setting of Brynmawr will be drawn into the town centre through a combination of new SuDS features, landscape and the enhancement of Welfare Park. This will be a vital means of improving local resilience to flooding, improving biodiversity and enhancing health and well-being.



Local Playing Fields

Former School site

5.2 Key projects

This section outlines the proposed projects within the study area. These have been identified to unlock Brynmawr's future as a 21st Century Valleys market town. Two options with different levels of intervention have been explored and will be explained in more detail in the following pages.

KEY PROJECTS:

- The Boiler House
- Beaufort Street
- Stagecoach
- A new park (In Longer Term Scenario)
- Market Square and bus station
- Public Realm Route - Improvements to the north-south connection between Beaufort Street and Lake side retail park are integrated within the above projects and for the purpose of this plan are not presented as a separate project

Option 1 considers the potential of each of these projects in the short to medium timescale, as an intermediary state whereas Option 2 is more ambitious and proposes a long term end state. These are explored on the following pages.

PUBLIC ART

Whilst a specific strategy is not included here, public art has a prominent and important role to play in delivering change. Traditional public art has often taken the form of permanent sculpture or murals. It is recommended that a more creative and dynamic approach to public art is adopted to help demonstrate early in the process how change can be achieved.

A temporary installation within or around the Boiler House for example will begin to build interest and excitement in the building's future and change public perception of a redundant structure. Similarly, an external art work would rapidly change the appearance of the Stage Coach building and deliver an early landmark. In each instance, involving the community within the process will engender stewardship and draw local people directly into the placemaking plan.

Global and national picture

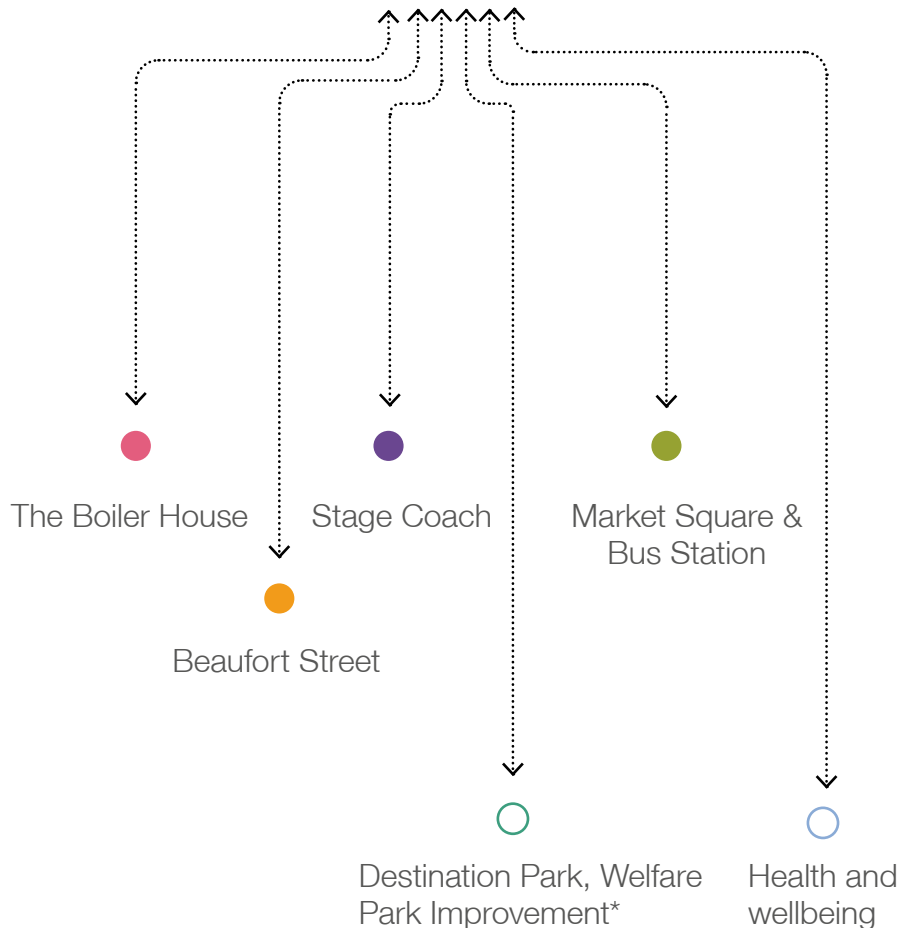


Planning Policy Wales
Environment Act (Wales) 2016

The vision for Brynmawr

Global to Local. The proposed change for Brynmawr as it relates to global and national agendas and the vision

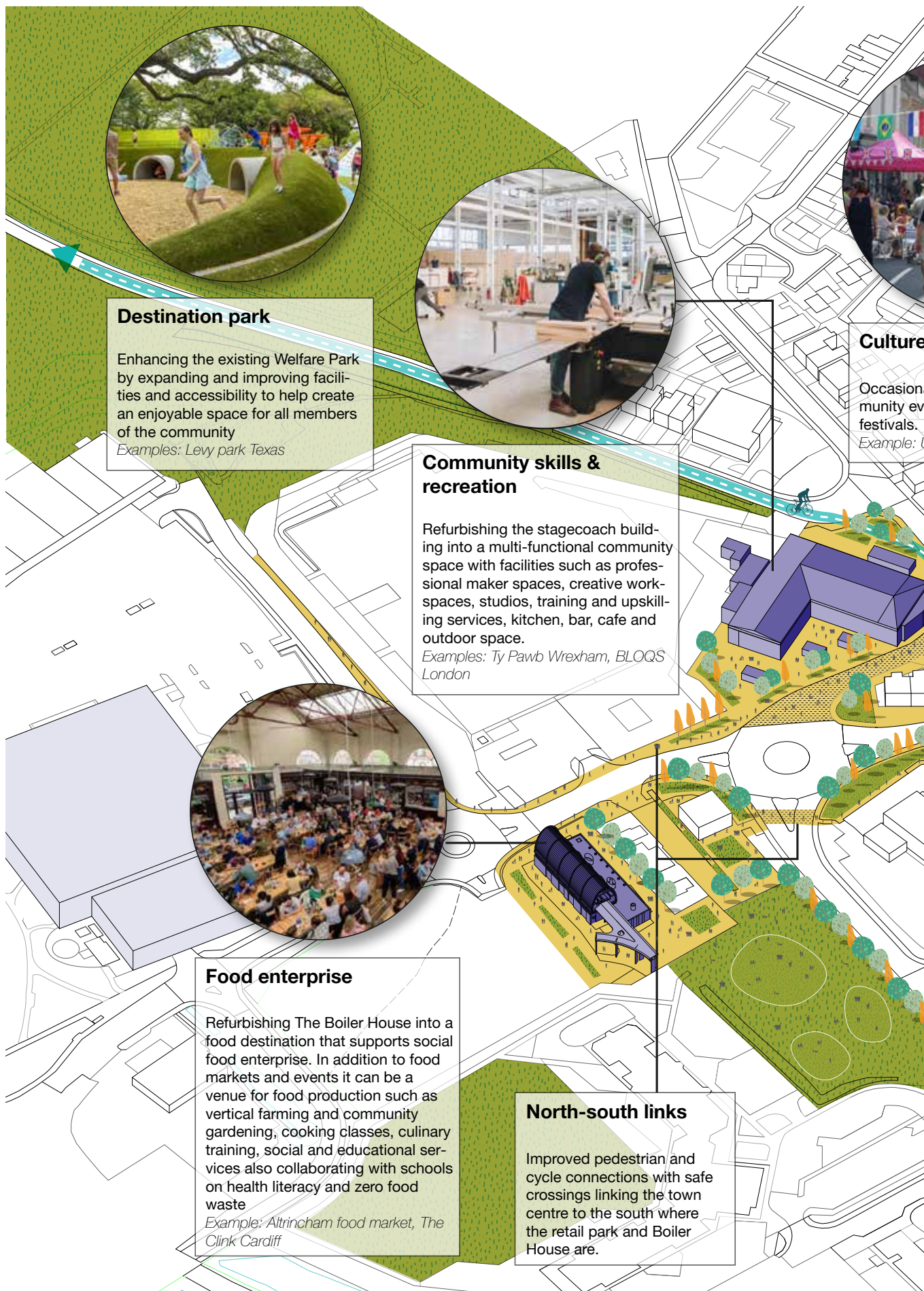
A 15 minute town and a C21st Market Town in the Welsh Valleys



Projects

*Within Longer Term Scenario this is within the Town Centre

Placemaking Proposed Plan



Destination park

Enhancing the existing Welfare Park by expanding and improving facilities and accessibility to help create an enjoyable space for all members of the community

Examples: Levy park Texas

Community skills & recreation

Refurbishing the stagecoach building into a multi-functional community space with facilities such as professional maker spaces, creative work-spaces, studios, training and upskilling services, kitchen, bar, cafe and outdoor space.

Examples: Ty Pawb Wrexham, BLOQS London



Food enterprise

Refurbishing The Boiler House into a food destination that supports social food enterprise. In addition to food markets and events it can be a venue for food production such as vertical farming and community gardening, cooking classes, culinary training, social and educational services also collaborating with schools on health literacy and zero food waste

Example: Altrincham food market, The Clink Cardiff

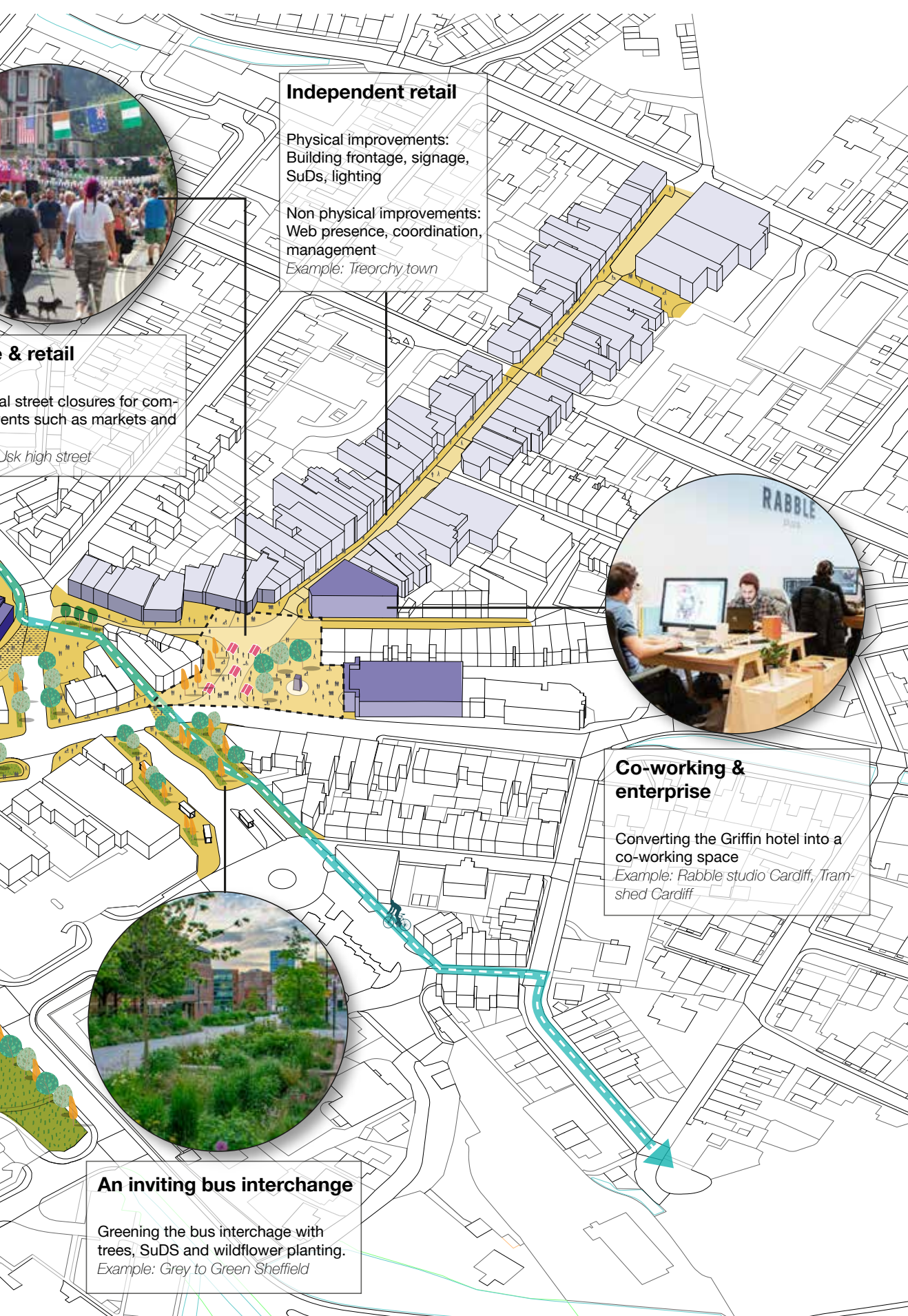
North-south links

Improved pedestrian and cycle connections with safe crossings linking the town centre to the south where the retail park and Boiler House are.

Culture

Occasional community events, festivals.

Example: ...



Independent retail

Physical improvements:
Building frontage, signage,
SuDs, lighting

Non physical improvements:
Web presence, coordination,
management
Example: Treorchy town

Street & retail

Partial street closures for com-
munity events such as markets and
festivals

Example: High street



Co-working & enterprise

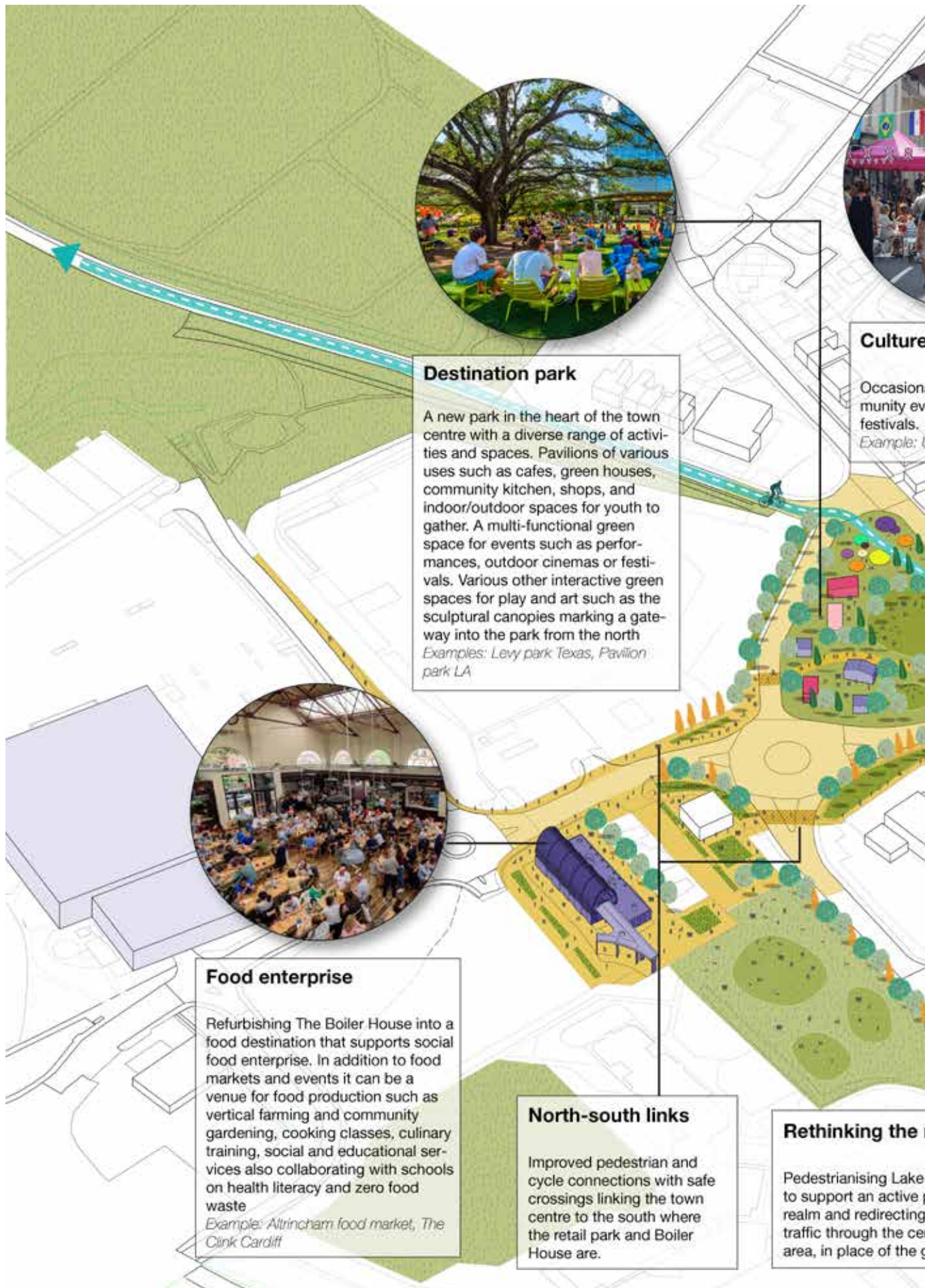
Converting the Griffin hotel into a
co-working space
*Example: Rabble studio Cardiff, Tram-
shed Cardiff*

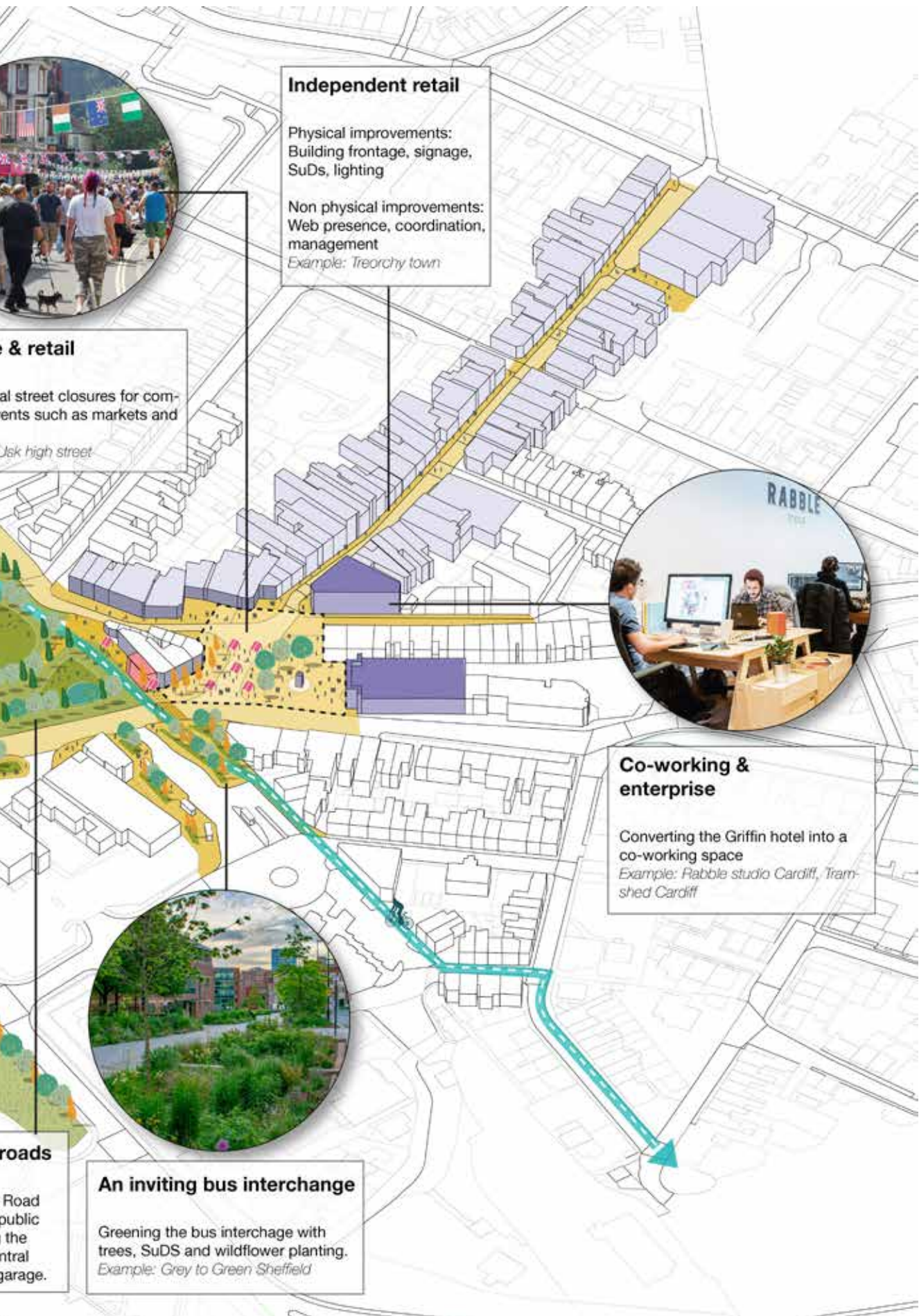


An inviting bus interchange

Greening the bus interchange with
trees, SuDS and wildflower planting.
Example: Grey to Green Sheffield

Potential Longer Term Scenario





Independent retail

Physical improvements:
Building frontage, signage,
SuDs, lighting

Non physical improvements:
Web presence, coordination,
management
Example: Treorchy town



Co-working & enterprise

Converting the Griffin hotel into a
co-working space
Example: Rabble studio Cardiff, Tramshed Cardiff



An inviting bus interchange

Greening the bus interchange with
trees, SuDS and wildflower planting.
Example: Gray to Green Sheffield

Markets & retail

Temporary street closures for com-
munity events such as markets and
festivals
Example: High Street

Streets & roads

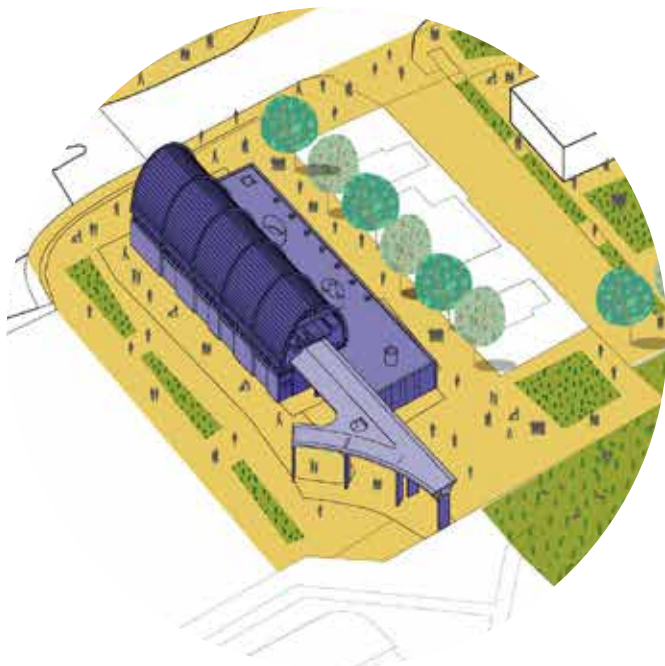
Improving the public realm
with trees, SuDS and wildflower
planting.
Example: Gray to Green Sheffield

THE BOILER HOUSE

The Boiler House was the first part of the rubber factory complex built at Brynmawr between 1946 and 1951. The main factory building was demolished in 2001, with the Boiler House and pump house the last remaining buildings. The Boiler House is Grade II listed but has been unused and derelict for many years.

It is located near the retail park, on the southern edge of the town centre and is within easy walking distance to the town centre and bus interchange. Being on the edge allows it to act as a gateway building into Brynmawr town centre and its proximity to the new retail park can help create a spatial link between the retail park and the town centre. Currently, pedestrian and cycle movement between The Boiler House and the town centre is poor. However, with improved access and public realm, there can be an active connection between the two.

The Boiler House is a major asset to the town due to its historical and architectural significance and could be a catalyst to wider town centre improvement therefore with the right approach, it can put Brynmawr on the map. Given the potential costs of repurposing the structure it is likely that any future use of the structure will need public sector investment. During the collation of this study, The most beneficial reuse would be a community-focused use that addresses gaps in the current town offer and is complimentary to the existing facilities and activities. Social Services have expressed an interest in creating a food based social enterprise to provide meaningful employment for vulnerable adults by adapting the building. The food prepared would be used to feed the elderly and infirm in the wider area. Using this initial proposition Building on Brynmawr's history in social enterprise The Boiler House has potential to become a food destination where food, health, education, employment, and tourism come together for community benefit.





14. The Boiler House, Brynmawr

As a food destination it could provide various integrated initiatives including:

- On site food production such as community gardens and innovative production methods such as vertical farming.
- Health literacy and awareness. This can involve collaborations with schools encouraging their participation in learning about healthy eating and introducing projects such as the farm-to-table concept and healthy school lunches.
- A food market celebrating local produce which can also be linked to the markets in the Market Square.
- Food festivals, guest chefs, micro-breweries and eateries that can boost the evening economy in Brynmawr
- Social spaces for events such as cooking classes
- Training and upskilling in the hospitality and culinary sector for local people potentially linked to Coleg Y Gwent.
- Adding social value through social services including employment opportunities for vulnerable adults
- Promoting zero food waste and adopting a circular model where food waste from local supermarkets are made use of.
- Meals on Wheels
- Care for the elderly by reducing isolation by transitioning from meals on wheels to communal dining at the boiler house.

There are various examples we can draw inspiration from some of which are shown in the images on the next page. The diagram shows an indicative spatial arrangement of some of the suggested activities within the building.

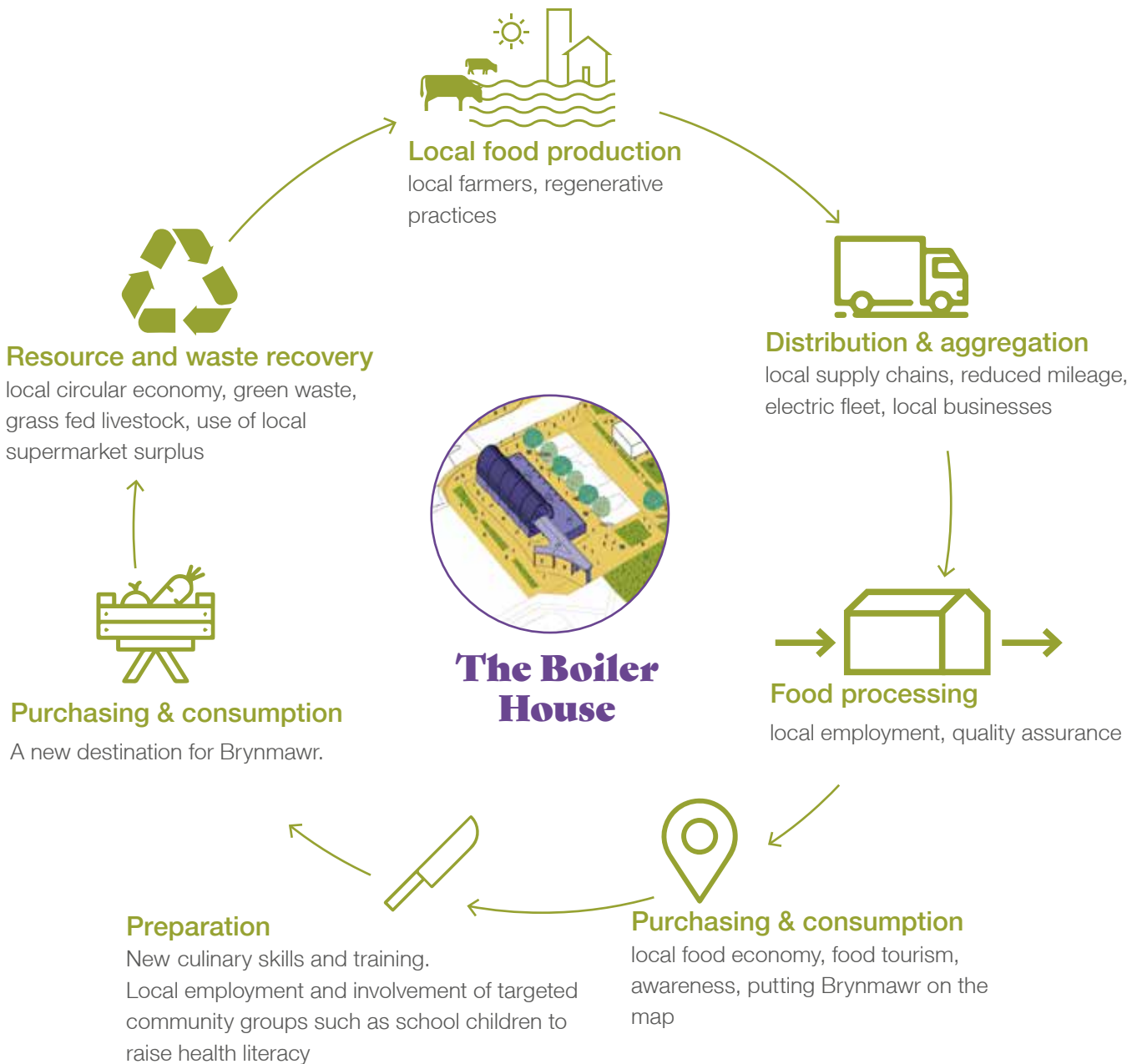


Social influences

Climate change sentiment, possible changing attitudes to animal produce, awareness of the value of local produce

Political influences

UN SDGs, Well-being of Future Generations Act, Declaration of a Climate Emergency, Brexit



Economic influences

Farming subsidies, market value of produce, target markets and their spending power

Contextual/environmental influences

The quality of the surrounding landscape, the iconic Boiler House building

How a circular economy of food production and consumption at the Boiler House can benefit the town and respond to global challenges such as climate change.



Potager Garden, Falmouth

Once a market garden in the 1950's, the site closed down in 1980 only to be completely consumed by nature. Potager Garden now plays host to a number of events and workshops.



Neighborhood Farm, Amsterdam

People with a distance to the labor market are offered a safe and pleasant environment, under the guidance of the permanent employees, in which to gain experience and build self-confidence.



Bioaqua Farm, Somerset

Research and development of aquaponic methods, education, and services with their aquaponics courses to deliver highly productive systems that are, efficient and sustainable for all.



Production/kitchen & storage area

100 sq.m



Service bar area

70 sq.m



Urban farming installation



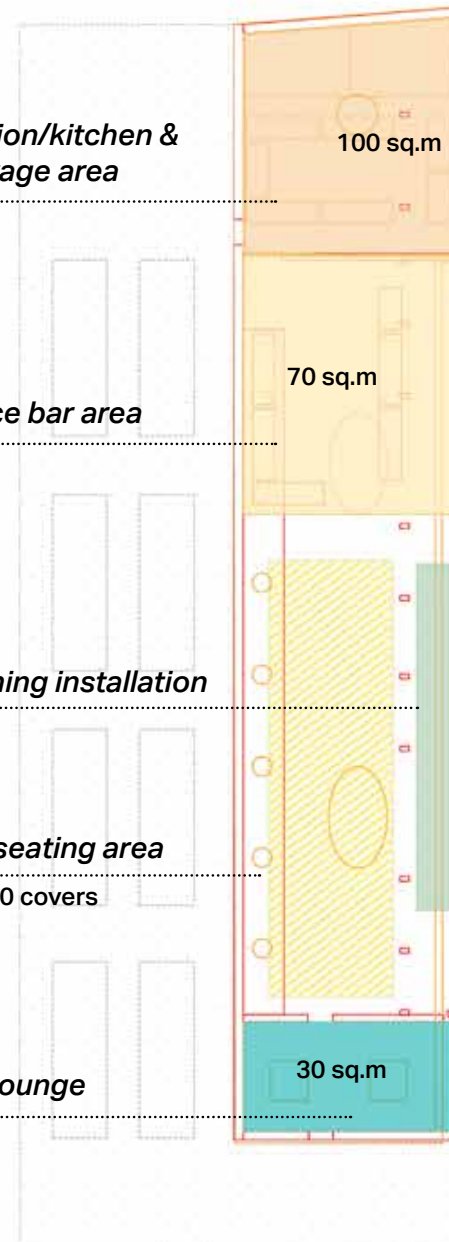
Flexible seating area

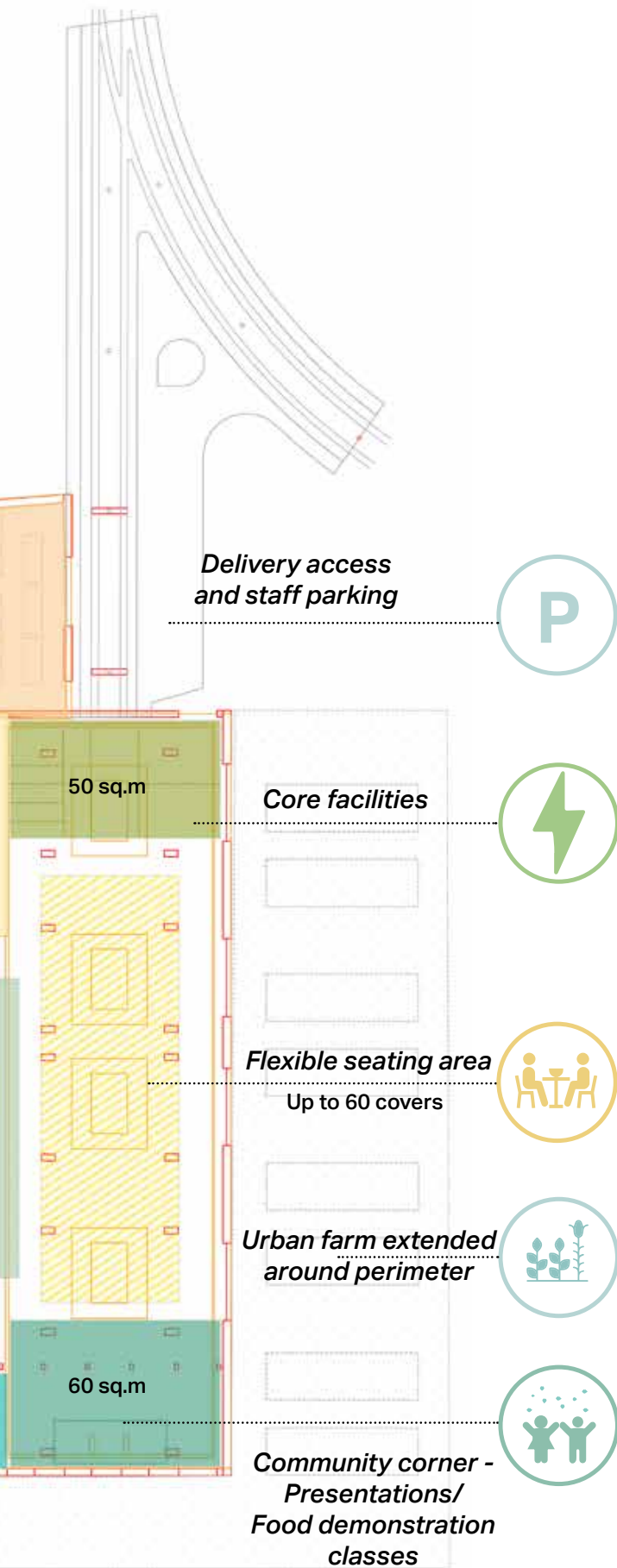
Up to 40 covers



Arrival lounge

30 sq.m





Market Hall Victoria, London

Repurposed into a food hall with space for over 450 people. This historical space brought back to life across 3 floors consists of a coffee shop, 10 creative kitchens and 3 bars ready to serve food and drink from London's most exciting brands.



Borough Market, London

The latest redevelopment has opened a new education centre which will be used as a classroom and kitchen to help visitors learn more about the Market and the food it sells.



The Clink Charity, Cardiff

The high-quality meals at The Clink Restaurant at HMP Cardiff are cooked and served by the prisoners in training who are working towards gaining their City & Guilds NVQs in Food & Beverage Service, Professional Cookery and Food Hygiene.

STAGECOACH

The stagecoach site is in a key location between the town centre and the new retail park making it a strategic spatial link between the two. The stagecoach building is an industrial building with a large L-shaped footprint. Our approach is to explore two scenarios, one where the stagecoach building is repurposed and one where it is demolished. Although the structure is not architecturally beautiful has limited architectural appeal, the potential to refurbish it is worth exploring. This would be a positive step towards sustainability goals and adopting a circular economy model.

Option 1 – Refurbishment

The stagecoach building can be an ideal location for a multi-functional space with facilities that cater to the needs of all members of the community. Taking inspiration from Brynmawr’s history in furniture making and feedback from adult services and an incentive to support employment opportunities and upskilling within the community, this new community building may provide facilities

such as professional makerspaces, flexible workspaces, creative workspaces, studios, training, and adult learning facilities. Based on feedback from the community youth council, it could also provide a recreation and entertainment space for younger members of the community who currently do not have a space to come together. Additional uses such as kitchen, bar, café and an outdoor seating and play area can also compliment the primary uses. By pedestrianising Lake Road and redirecting traffic through the central area, the public realm surrounding the new community building can be activated with outdoor seating, planting, play areas, pop-ups and various other activities. There are a number of successful case studies we can learn from including Ty Pawb in Wrexham and BLOQS in London.

Option 2 – Destination Park

This scenario looks at demolishing the existing stagecoach building to make space for a destination park in the heart of the town centre. This allows Lake Road to be redirected to the edge of the new retail park creating a larger uninterrupted space for the park. In such a scenario the uses proposed for the Stage Coach site should be incorporated into the park design as a series of structures or single structures that define the park





15. Stagecoach Depot, Brynmawr



16. BLOQS, London



17. Ty Pawb, Wrexham



HIGH STREET

Beaufort Street presents potentially the most challenging aspect of this plan. Numerous concerns have been raised during the engagement process from difficulties accessing the street, a perceived over supply of take-aways to the loss of national chains. The future prosperity of Beaufort Street is intrinsically linked with the delivery of projects outlined in this report, each of which will be integral in improving the baseline economic performance and footfall of Brynmawr.

Despite this at the time of writing, vacancy levels were low and there is still a strong sense of character to the street despite the need for physical improvement to improve the overall appearance. Coordinated action with the business owners will be needed to deliver meaningful change. A Business Improvement District (BID) model may be applicable albeit at a smaller scale. It is recommended that an initial feasibility study into a BID or similar model is undertaken.

Physical improvements can help improve the functionality and appearance of the street but disruption caused during construction needs careful consideration to avoid losing the support of local business. Trial projects that include temporary landscape installations is one way of assessing the potential risk/reward of changes to the movement and parking system.

Building improvements will deliver short to medium term benefits but without a plan for long term maintenance and overall uplift in economic performance are likely to revert to their current state. Improvements to Beaufort Street should be a combination of physical and non-physical interventions.

PHYSICAL IMPROVEMENTS INCLUDE:

- Targeted building improvements, including the refurbishment of building frontages. Please note that in isolation these measures are deemed insufficient to transform the patronage and vitality of Beaufort Street and should be focused on buildings where a longer term maintenance plan can be evidenced.
- A coordinated and consistent approach to Signage and wayfinding including decluttering
- A landscape strategy that incorporates Sustainable Urban Drainage, planting and potentially temporary and permanent parklets
- Improvements to lighting to ensure both a sense of safety and spectacle
- Improvements to pavements and crossings to enable inclusive access for all irrespective of physical ability.
- The potential relocation of public uses such as service centres or skills centres
- Encouraging the activation of the 'space above the shop' for residential or office use.
- Encouraging uses that align with the objectives of this report such as repair shops. Such uses can deliver multiple benefits from supporting a circular economy approach but can also provide invaluable opportunities for people suffering from isolation or in need of meaningful employment.
- Coordinating proposed events and changes

NON-PHYSICAL IMPROVEMENTS INCLUDE:

- An improved web presence and digital support and training for businesses on the high street
- Marketing and advertising to draw people into the town centre.
- A Hop, Shop and Save scheme similar to Treorchy
- Expanding the year round events calendar and creating a 'defining' annual event for Brynmawr



18. Example of Sustainable Drainage System in Sheffield



19. Treorchy High Street, The Guardian



20. Engine Shed Co-working Hub, Bristol

A NEW PARK

The lack of green space within the town centre was noted as a common theme within the engagement process. Two scenarios have been explored for the new park.

Option 1 – Welfare Park as the destination park

The first option proposes opportunities to revitalise Welfare Park by improving its facilities, expanding activities, and diversifying the types of green spaces making it more accessible and enjoyable for the whole community. This will require a plan to coordinate interests between the various community groups currently involved in the maintenance of the park.



21. Welfare Park, Brynmawr

Option 2 – A new park in the centre

The more ambitious option is to create a new destination park in the heart of the town centre. The new park can be designed to provide different types of green spaces such as a multi-functional gathering space for events and performances, a play area for kids, gardens and community growing spaces and an interactive art or sculpture garden. It may also have pavilions with different uses and activities such as cafe, greenhouse, shops, community kitchen, classroom and recreational spaces for youth to gather. The new park also creates an active travel link between north and south of the town, connecting the town centre to the retail park and the Boiler House. Signed pedestrian and cycle paths and pedestrian crossings provide safe movement across the town.

The new destination park can be a major asset to the town providing leisure and entertainment not only to the local community but potentially to neighbouring towns as well. Its location in the centre is beneficial as it stitches the old and new parts of town helping increase footfall on the high street and activate the town centre.

There are many case studies to draw inspiration from such as Levy Park in Texas, Julia Reserve Youth Park in Sydney and Pavilion Park in LA.

The following pages provided further context on this concept.



24. Natural play areas



22. Pavilion Park, LA



23. Levy Park, Texas

A NEW GREEN HEART FOR BRYNMAWR

There are numerous reasons for the location of a new park within the town centre of Brynmawr in lieu of another land use.

Throughout engagement there was a clear theme that the local population felt that there is a distinct lack of green space within the town centre. The option of a park also looks to solve the severance between the town centre and the retail park by creating a high quality and distinct link.

The creation of a park within the town centre also makes the town more attractive to a wider audience, giving more reasons to visit Brynmawr town centre, increasing the footfall within the town centre.

The location on the old depot also looks towards a potential realignment of the road which changes traffic conditions leading to reduced traffic and congestion. This provides greater alignment to tackling climate change at a local level and greater alignment to Welsh Government policy.

KEY ISSUES TO ADDRESS

Lack of green space within the town

Drop in footfall

Lack of activities within the town

Drop in business rate income

Traffic and congestion through town

Severance between north and south of the town



WIDER GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE LINKS



WELFARE PARK

PARC NANT Y WAUN

BRECON BEACONS

FORMER SCHOOL SITE

A new green space in the centre of Brynmawr would become part of a wider green infrastructure network. This will add to network of green walking and cycling routes and habitat corridors to enhance both human and environmental health.

FOUR KEY COMPONENTS

The park has the size and location support people of all ages and abilities and deliver wider social and environmental benefits.

A LANDSCAPE ENGINE

Providing a space to connect with nature that also responds to climate change and flood resilience and habitat creation at a local level through planting (carbon sequestration and habitat) and water filtration and storage through SuDS strategies.

A CENTRAL DESTINATION

Creating a new heart within Brynmawr that focuses on turning the negative into a positive and provide a new destination within the town centre, and a link between the severed north and south.

A COMMUNITIES HOME

The park as a place for all different types of groups and people to meet, interact and partake in hobbies and activities that improve their lives.

A PLACE WHERE IT HAPPENS

Different events around the year which change the perception and image of the town, whilst boosting footfall into the town centre and showing new visitors and business what Brynmawr can be.





A Landscape Engine

A PLACE FOR PEOPLE AND NATURE

The early vision for the park centres around 4 distinct landscape area. These landscape areas have distinctly different uses but all work towards creating an improved environment based around the nature.



41%



Percent of species to have declined since 1970

Source: State of Nature Report 2019

Long-term contact with nature is linked to longer lives.

Source: The Lancet Planetary Health



NATURE BASED PLAY

- benefits of nature and natural environment
- natural play for education



27. Mayfield Park, Manchester

BIODIVERSITY

Blaina Gwent Bio diversity net gain requirements
Requirements around national BNG



28. Wildflower Biodiversity Fitz Park London

SUDS

SuDS and SABS requirements



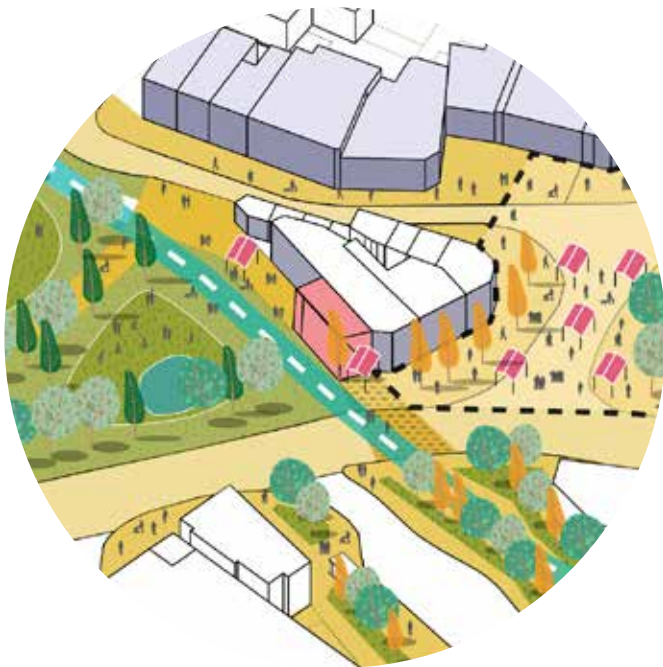
26. Sheffield SuDs Streets

A Central Destination

A NEW HEART

Turning the negative areas into positive creates new activity and vibrancy within the town. The park is south facing and screens the back of existing buildings, giving the area life.

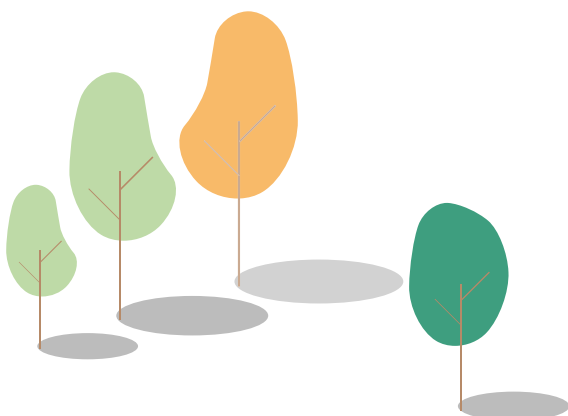
This is facilitated through the use of lightweight modular buildings to create new uses such as a new park cafe within the area which creates a new destination that also gives the park life and eyes on the street.



30. Urban Coffee Farm, Melbourne



29. Frau Gerolds Garten, Zurich





A Communities Home

A PLACE FOR EVERYONE

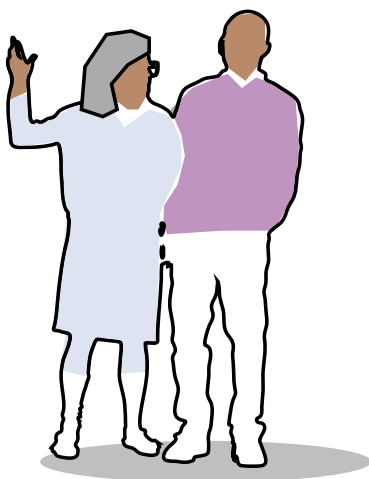
Creating a space that can cater for all ages and different types of people allows a greater sense of belonging within the park. It gives people stewardship and a sense of ownership of the area.

There is an opportunity to also provide for people through initiatives such as youth clubs, men sheds, female health support group, allotments for urban farming.

The park would need to become a place for all ages where the whole community is welcome. Circular economies could be showcased through the construction of these spaces.



32. 'Mens sheds' in action



33. Youth Club, East London



A Place Where It Happens

A PLACE FOR EVERYONE

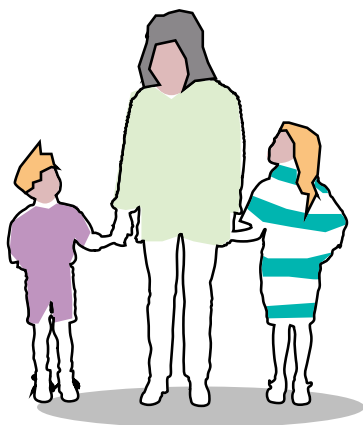
Creating a multi-functioning multi-use park within this location offers the opportunity to change the initial perception and visitors image of the town.

A place for new events, in a unique location will create buzz, and excitement about visiting Brynmawr.

High quality events offer the opportunity to “sell” the town to new visitors and new potential business.



35. 'Canal side' Regents Tow Path, London



36. Frau Gerolds Garten, Zurich

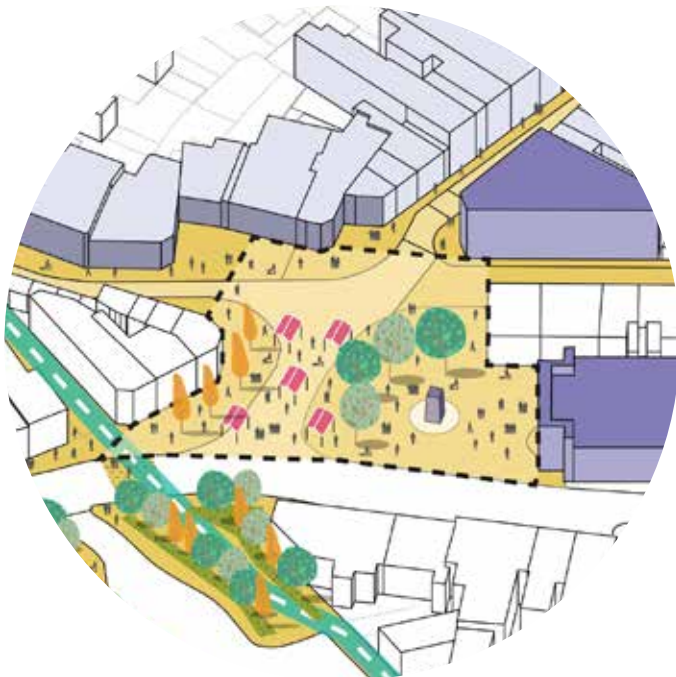


MARKET SQUARE AND BUS STATION

Markets are a significant part of Brynmawr's identity and to become a successful 21st Century Valleys market town it will need an appropriate civic space to conduct these events. The best location is at Market Square as it is the town's focal point and where the community currently congregates. However, in its current state, the space is constrained and inadequate for large scale events. One way to approach is to organise occasional street closures around Market Square for these community events such as markets and festivals. As it is a temporary measure, it will have minimal impact on traffic. This, in turn, will increase footfall, boosting business, and will enliven the public realm in the town centre.

This method has been proven effective in many places such as Usk High Street.

The central location of the bus station is very convenient and can be a good incentive to use public transport. Improvements to the bus timetables to increase frequency and accessibility are needed. However, there needs to be some spatial interventions to the bus station as well. The bus station is currently oversized for its purpose, undefined and surrounded by blank facades. Lack of suitable shelter and surveillance can also result in an uncomfortable and unsafe experience. Greening this space with trees, SuDS and wildflower planting with improved seating areas, shelter and lighting can enhance the waiting experience and create a safer environment for its users.





39. Brynmawr Town Centre



38. Usk Town Centre, Monmouthshire

5.3 Phasing and delivery summary

DELIVERY AND PHASING

A Delivery Plan has been developed, as a separate document, to support this Placemaking Plan. This articulates the case for investment in Brynmawr town centre, and sets out clear and deliverable actions to move the plan forward. For each identified project, a set of key actions and overall delivery plans has been developed. These are summarised in Table overleaf. For further detail, see the Delivery Plan.

To support delivery of the projects, and the next step actions associated with each, there are several potential sources of funding available. These are summarised in the Delivery Plan, and include:

- Shared prosperity fund (UK Government): £585 million of funding allocated to help spread opportunity and level up Wales, with three investment priorities – Community & Place, Supporting Local Business, and People & Skills (approx. £28M of which is ringfenced for Blaenau Gwent).
- Levelling Up Fund: £4.8 billion fund supporting town centre and high street regeneration, local transport projects, and cultural and heritage assets. Bids for funding are required by 6 July 2022.
- Transforming Towns: supports projects to redevelop and improve town centres. This includes several funding programmes, including the Targeted Regeneration Programme (between 2018 and 2021, £100 million).
- Cardiff Capital Region City Deal: a £495M Wider Investment Fund aimed at priority investment areas of innovation, infrastructure and challenge.
- Active Travel Fund: funds projects which seek to achieve objectives of model shift, improved active transport accessibility and improved community connections. In 2022/3 £60M of funding is available, for projects which demonstrate alignment with WeITAG.
- National Lottery Heritage Fund: provides funding for heritage projects at range of scales (from £3,000 to £5M), prioritising projects that meet outcomes of involving people; resilience; wellbeing; skills; local economy; and creating better places.

Alongside seeking grant funding support, there are several other sources of funding for delivery of the identified projects, including private investor funding using key partners to support delivery of specific projects e.g. Boiler House. There could be an opportunity to consider a Business Improvement District (BID) in Brynmawr, as has been developed in Ebbw Vale. This would need further investigation, and exploration with the business community before implementation.

Project	Phasing	Overall cost*	Project partners	Key next steps
The Boiler House	Planning & feasibility (1-2 years) Delivery (2-5 years).	£3M to £5M	Blaenau Gwent CBC, Aneurin Bevan health board, Coleg y Gwent, local business	1.1 Feasibility study 1.2 Engagement with partners (soft market testing) 1.3 Engage with local community
Beaufort Street	Planning & strategy (6-12 months) Delivery (1-2years)	£100,000 to £250,000	Blaenau Gwent CBC, local community & businesses	2.1 High street improvement strategy 2.2 Community website 2.3 Local business engagement
Stagecoach Site	Planning & feasibility (6-12 months) Delivery of stagecoach (1-2 years) Delivery of Lake Road (2-3 years)	£250,000 - £1M <i>Excludes any costs of site acquisition</i>	Blaenau Gwent CBC, Youth Forum, Coleg y Gwent	3.1 Site acquisition 3.2 Stagecoach refurbishment feasibility and plan 3.3 Lake Road transport strategy 3.4 Skills, employment and youth services review 3.5 Engagement and soft market testing with partners
Market square and bus interchange	Trial (3-6months) Strategy (6-12months) Delivery (1-2 years)	£100,000 to £250,000	Blaenau Gwent CBC, local businesses, Youth services	4.1 Trial Events 4.2 Events strategy and programme 4.3 SuDs / Public realm improvements plan 4.4 Engagement and soft market testing with partners
Welfare Park	Identify management models (12 months) Park improvements (1-2 years)	up to £100,000	Blaenau Gwent CBC, local community groups	5.1 Stewardship & management models 5.2 Engagement with local community groups
North-south connection	Planning (6-12 months) Delivery (1-2 years)	up to £100,000	Blaenau Gwent CBC, local community	6.1 North-south corridor active transport plan

*Costs are approximate, and are based on professional judgement and benchmarks. They should be subjected to further investigation and testing.

6.1 CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

There is a clear need for an ambitious and innovative placemaking plan for Brynmawr. Without intervention it is likely that a continual decline of the long standing town centre will occur. In addressing this issue and to shape a prosperous future for the town centre the following conclusions are offered:

INNOVATION WILL BE KEY

Simply trying to respond to the pressures the town centre faces from Covid, online retail to competing centres with traditional approaches such as building improvements alone is unlikely to bear fruit. There is an urgent need to test, trial and explore new ideas to generate as yet unknown but positive outcomes. The approach to the Stage Coach site is one such example where it is recommended to test ideas related to skills development, employment, youth involvement and community use.

SUSTAINABILITY NEEDS TO BE THE BEDROCK OF ALL CHANGE

The policy, legislative, scientific and moral case for a plan based on sustainability is irrefutable. This does not mean a more expensive plan instead this placemaking plan is an opportunity to raise awareness of sustainability amongst the community and demonstrate in real time how we can move to a circular economy which makes best use of existing assets such as the boiler house.

THE PLAN NEEDS TO BE 'OWNED' BY THE COMMUNITY

There is a prominent role for the community to play in driving change in Brynmawr. Local 'ownership' can be realised through social enterprise models such as the concept for the Boiler House or community led initiatives recommended for land around the Brynmawr Well-being centre. This is how growing numbers of people will be drawn to the common aim of this placemaking plan and will be the custodians of positive change.

EARLY, VISIBLE CHANGE IS ESSENTIAL

For the community and business fraternity to embrace this plan, early success will be vital. The plan recommends a number of projects such as the Market Square and Stage Coach site where meaningful and impactful change can be realised within a short period of time. These early phases will be critical in changing the perception and function of Brynmawr to enable later stages of change

NEXT STEPS

Momentum is an important part of this process. Outlined below are a number of recommended next steps to ensure that the enthusiasm generate during engagement is translated into change on the ground

FURTHER ENGAGEMENT

There will be a need to re-engage with the public and key stakeholders on the plan to understanding any key areas of concerns and conversely to understand where there is a consensus on proposed projects. Keeping people on board will build trust and will positively shape the plan.

PRIORITISATION AND PHASING

It is recommended that there is an early decision on where the emphasis should be in terms of funding applications and the delivery of projects. This should be extracted from further engagement work and availability of resource from within the council. Priority projects should be those where it is felt that there is a greater chance of securing funding and delivering within a shorter timescale

FEASIBILITY STUDIES

The next stage of work for projects including the Boiler House and Stage Coach site will be to undertake full feasibility studies. These could be aligned with a Business Case approach to understand for example the full costs of such projects, future operational strategies and to begin the process of securing funding.

DELIVER TEMPORARY PROJECTS

The Market Square presents an opportunity to quickly put into place the recommendations of this report. An early win here would involve the temporary redirection of traffic and a community led event. Temporary installations/uses should be considered for the Boiler House and Stage Coach case as a precursor to a permanent use. These help change perception of these buildings, demonstrate commitment from the council and can be invaluable test-beds for 'end-state' use.

CELEBRATE THE PLAN

It is important to generate excitement and enthusiasm around the work undertaken. Taking the time to convey the positivity surrounding the proposals and the benefit to the community via different communication channels helps to shift public perception and draw people into the process.





ARUP

Agenda Item 7

Cabinet and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer:

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer:

Committee: **Place Scrutiny Committee**

Date of meeting: **14th March 2023**

Report Subject: **Shared Prosperity Fund**

Portfolio Holder: **Cllr John C Morgan, Cabinet Member Place and Regeneration**

Report Submitted by: **Owen Ashton – Service Manager Business & Regeneration**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Governance Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Cabinet	Council	Other (please state)
21.02.23	23.02.23	03.03.23			14.03.23	19.04.23		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update for Members and seek support to agree the Service Level Agreement between Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council (BGCBC) and Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council (RCTCBC) regarding the implementation of the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF).

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 The SPF is the UK Government replacement for European funding (European Structural Investment Fund ESIF) following the withdrawal of the UK from the European Union in 2020.

2.2 SPF

The SPF is a key part of the UK's Levelling Up agenda, forming part of complementary funding, including the Levelling Up Fund and Community Ownership Fund. The primary aim of the fund is to build pride in place and increase life chances across the UK. Underpinning this aim are three investment priorities: communities and place; supporting local business and people and skills.

- The **Communities and Place** investment priority will enable places to invest to restore their community spaces and relationships and create the foundations for economic development at the neighbourhood-level. The intention of this is to strengthen the social fabric of communities, supporting in building pride in place.
- The **Supporting Local Business** investment priority will enable places to fund interventions that support local businesses to thrive, innovate and grow.

- The **People and Skills** investment priority will help reduce the barriers some people face to employment and support them to move towards employment and education. Places can also target funding into skills for local areas to support employment and local growth.

2.3 As part of the People and Skills priority there is a dedicated and ring-fenced element of the UKSPF called **Multiply** which seeks to improve adult numeracy skills.

2.4 BGCBC submitted its Local Investment Plan to RCTCBC as the Lead Authority. The Local Investment Plan contained project proposals against each of the above investment priorities which then formed part of the wider Regional Investment Plan.

2.5 BGCBC's SPF allocation over the 3-year programme against each priority is as follows:

Community and Place -	£7,837,618
Supporting Local Businesses -	£6,682,246
People and Skills -	£8,599,836
Multiply -	£3,874,171
Total -	£26,993,871*

*The above total figure is inclusive of the contribution to RCTCBC as the Lead Authority and includes the 4% Administrative Costs allocation which has been applied proportionately across each of the three priorities.

2.6 BGCBC is currently awaiting clarification from RCTCBC as Lead Authority regarding the scope and ability to carry over funding from 2022-23 to 2023-24 and other financial years in addition to when RCTCBC is able to issue Grant Determination Letters and other matters in relation to financial elements of the SPF.

2.7 Despite this, officers are progressing with establishing the relevant programmes across the three priorities of investment and engaging with stakeholder organisations.

2.8 **Governance**

RCTCBC is the Lead Authority representing the 10 Local Authorities across the Cardiff Capital Region. The relationship between UK Gov and RCTCBC is outlined within the MoU which is attached as an appendix to this report.

2.9 The relationship between RCTCBC and Blaenau Gwent CBC is outlined within a Service Level Agreement which is also attached as an appendix to this report. This SLA is currently in Draft form, and we have requested clarification on some points including details around the to the Local Partnership Group which is required to be set up to oversee the delivery of the SPF.

2.10 Should the clarifications be received from RCTCBC, officers recommend that Members endorse the SLA between BGCBC and RCTCBC to allow the SPF to formally start. It is also recommended that the Director of Regeneration and Community Services alongside the S151 Officer are given delegated powers to accept revisions to the SLA to facilitate the implementation of the SPF within Blaenau Gwent.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 Option 1 – Members not to support the SLA between BGCBC and RCTCBC

Option 2 – Members to support and recommend that Cabinet endorse the SLA between BGCBC and RCTCBC subject to clarification received from RCTCBC and for the Director of Regeneration and Community Services alongside the S151 Officer to be given delegated authority to accept revisions to the SLA to facilitate the implementation of the SPF within Blaenau Gwent

4. **Evidence of how this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 ***Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)***

Option 1 – BGCBC would not be able to benefit from SPF funding

Option 2 – BGCBC would be able to access up to £25,914,116 of SPF funding via RCTCBC acting as Lead Authority. There is also no requirement for match funding to be provided by BGCBC

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

Option 1 – Reputational damage to BGCBC in being unable to utilise SPF funding

Option 2- BGCBC will be entering into a binding agreement with RCTCBC via the SLA once finalised. Although the SLA contains inherent risks in terms of performance measures and reclaiming funding, BGCBC has significant experience in successfully managing investment programmes similar to SPF and has a robust control environment in place to reduce and mitigate the risks to BGCBC.

5.3 ***Legal***

Option 1 – None

Option 2 – BGCBC will be tied to conditions contained within the SLA however BGCBC Legal Department have confirmed that they have no concerns with the SLA from a legal perspective.

5.4 **Human Resources**

Option 1 – Loss of opportunity to secure fee income against officers' time in delivering the SPF

Option 2 – Recruitment has commenced for some posts funded via SPF and will enable fees to be generated against officers' time. We are awaiting clarification regarding the potential for continuing SPF beyond 2024-25 and the implications of this in terms of potential redundancy costs, which are an eligible cost within SPF.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

The process has made use of existing performance information and data to put together evidence for the Local IP. This has been used to evidence need in BG.

Performance will be managed through the programme administration. This is yet to be supplied with the detailed guidance. We have assurances that UK Govt will be using a lighter touch than previous EU funding.

6.2 **Expected outcome for the public**

The Shared Prosperity Fund is a central pillar of the UK government's Levelling Up agenda and a component of its support for places across the UK. It provides new funding for local investment by March 2025, with all areas receiving an allocation from SPF via a funding formula rather than a competition.

The SPF aims to invest in local priorities and targets funding where it is needed most: building pride in place, supporting high quality skills training, supporting growth in pay, employment and productivity and increasing life chances. It will enable local decision making and better target the priorities of places within the UK. It is anticipated that it will lead to visible, tangible improvements to the places where people work and live, alongside investment in human capital, giving communities more reasons to be proud of their area.

6.3 **Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)**

Consultation and engagement is continuing with the ten local authorities in the CCR. Further consultation has been undertaken with other public sector partners and a series of workshops have been held with Third Sector partners and within the regional frameworks established for the People and Skills priority. Likewise support for local businesses priority has worked closely with the Welsh Government to ensure complementarity and integration with other business support programmes.

6.4 **Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)**

The current SPF has only identified three years but we have been advised that the programme will continue for longer and are waiting for clarification on this.

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

The SPF is by its nature funding to help prevent social and economic deprivation. This theme continues throughout the Local IP and process.

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

We are working in partnership with the ten local authorities across the CCR, the Cardiff City Region team and the Welsh Government civil servants. Regionally and locally we are also working in close contact with the UK Govt civil servants and through RCTCBC as the Lead Authority.

6.7 ***Integration (across service areas)***

Internally the SPF can benefit a number of different Departments. The working group is made up of staff from Education, Community Services, Policy and Performance, Regeneration and Finance.

6.8 ***Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions***

The decarbonisation agenda will be considered when putting the individual projects together. Some of the interventions in Community and Place support work within the Community around decarbonisation and could support locally owned renewable energy projects to come forward. Likewise, the support for local business will look to support businesses in decarbonising their activities.

6.9 ***Integrated Impact Assessment (IAA)***

An Integrated Impact Assessment has been completed.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 The programme will be monitored through UK Govt and RCT as lead partner at a CCR level and an annual update on progress will be provided to Members in the form of a Members Briefing or via Scrutiny should any decisions be required.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- Appendix 1 – MoU
- Appendix 2 – SLA
- Appendix 3 – Integrated Impact Assessment

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MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Between

The Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

-and-

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council

1. Purpose

- 1.1. This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) sets out the terms that will apply to the relationship between the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (the Secretary of State) and Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (the Lead Local Authority) regarding the administration and delivery of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF).
- 1.2. This MOU will be for the period April 2022 to March 2025. Changes will be made only where signatories deem it necessary. If necessary the MOU will be amended for the period April 2023 to March 2025 to accommodate the inclusion of the Rural England Prosperity Fund, this will not apply in Scotland and Wales.
- 1.3. The MOU sets out the universal fund wide conditions and expectations for appropriate spend of the UKSPF core allocations in England Scotland and Wales and Multiply allocations in Scotland and Wales.
- 1.4. This MOU is not intended to create legal or binding obligations. It describes the understanding between both parties for the use of funding specified in section 3 of this agreement.

2. Background

- 2.1. The UKSPF was launched on the 13 April 2022. The Secretary of State has signed-off the Lead Local Authority's investment plan.
- 2.2. This MOU covers the funding commitments from the Secretary of State and the delivery, financial expenditure, agreed milestones, reporting and evaluation, communications and branding expectations between the Parties and the steps the Secretary of State could take in the event of underperformance if required.
- 2.3. The Secretary of State has published guidance on the delivery of the UKSPF. Referred to in this document as the [UKSPF Additional Information](#). References to the UKSPF Additional Information includes any updates that may be published from time to time. The Secretary of

State will notify the Lead Local Authority of any changes to the Additional Information and, if necessary, provide guidance on how changes are to be managed.

3. Purpose of the Funding

- 3.1. The UKSPF allocation remains as set out in the published [UKSPF allocations](#) and is being provided to deliver the Fund's priorities, outputs and outcomes as set out in the investment plan and accompanying expenditure and deliverables spreadsheets agreed by the Secretary of State or subsequently agreed by the Secretary of State as per section 9.
- 3.2. Funding should be used to meet the costs of implementing your investment plan. The Lead Local Authority can make changes to the investment plan agreed by the Secretary of State. The scale, type and process for making changes is set out in published guidance.
- 3.3. Details of the annual funding allocation, broken down into capital and revenue funding, will be confirmed in the annual grant determinations.

4. Reporting

- 4.1 As part of the delegated delivery model, the Lead Local Authority will provide 'light touch' reporting, as set out in the [UKSPF Additional Information](#).

5. Financial Arrangements

- 5.1. The agreed funds will be issued to the Lead Local Authority as grant payments under Section 50 of the United Kingdom Internal Markets Act 2020 ('UKIM').
- 5.2. Payment of the funding for 2022-2023 will be made after investment plans have been agreed and this MoU is signed.
- 5.3. Grant Determination Letters (GDL) will be provided following confirmation of the annual payment for each year until 2025.
- 5.4. The Lead Local Authority will provide regular reporting using the process established by the Secretary of State and set out in the UKSPF Additional Information demonstrating expenditure and that outputs and outcomes are being met in line with the original investment plan, or investment plan amended under section 9. Or failing that, there is a realistic plan to address underperformance.

- 5.5. Funding for the years 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 will be paid annually, provided that the information provided under paragraph 5.4 demonstrates delivery of forecast outputs, outcomes and spend for the previous financial year have been met, or failing that, there is a realistic plan to address underperformance.
- 5.6. UKSPF capital grant funding, as set out in grant determinations, may be used only for capital expenditure.
- 5.7. UKSPF revenue grant funding may be used for revenue or capital expenditure, in line with the Lead Local Authority's accounting practices
- 5.8. Release of payments for the financial year 2023-24 and 2024-2025 is dependent on the submission of a Statement of Grant Usage for 2022-23 and 2023-2024 spend and corresponding reporting and monitoring returns, signed by a S151 Officer (appointed under the Local Government Act 1972) or S95 Officer (appointed under the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973)
- 5.9. This information will be taken into consideration by the Secretary of State before subsequent payments to the Lead Local Authority are finalised and paid. The Secretary of State reserves the right to reduce payments or withhold payments where there are concerns over delivery.
- 5.10. The Secretary of State retains the right to withhold annual instalments until receipt of credible plans demonstrating revised delivery to achieve expected targets. This might include requirements that set out how the Lead Local Authority will utilise underspends in the next year and/or appropriate milestones and spend have been achieved for the previous year.
- 5.11. Further to this, if the Secretary of State has concerns around future spending plans based on the experience of local delivery to date, or wider financial issues or governance affecting delivery then the Secretary of State may pay in instalments, or withhold future funding.
- 5.12. In the circumstance that the Lead Local Authority is a Combined Authority or is managing the distribution of UKSPF funding to a group of other local authorities, where a member of the Combined Authority or the local authority group becomes subject to a S114 Notice of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 or Statutory Commissioner Intervention of the Local Government Act 1999, the Lead Local Authority will be

responsible for decisions on how funds aligned to such a member Authority are controlled and utilised.

- 5.13. No funding will be provided for activity after 31 March 2025. The Lead Local Authority must have spent all grant funding i.e. be able to include funding within the 2024-2025 accounts by the end of the funding period, 31 March 2025. Underspends in the final year of the programme will need to be repaid to the Secretary of State.
- 5.14. In accordance with the declaration signed by the Lead Local Authority's Section 151 (appointed under the Local Government Act 1972) or S95 Officer (appointed under the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973) as part of the investment plan, the Lead Local Authority accepts responsibility for meeting any costs over and above the Secretary of State's contribution, agreed in the annual grant determination. This includes potential cost overruns and the underwriting of any funding contributions expected from third parties.

6. Branding and Communication

- 6.1. The Secretary of State has provided the Lead Local Authority with guidance on the Branding and Communication associated with UKSPF projects in the [UKSPF Additional Information](#).
- 6.2. The Parties agree to adhere to the guidance and any updates. subsequently released by the Secretary of State or HMG on communications linked to UKSPF or wider Levelling Up Funding.
- 6.3. The Lead Local Authority should publish information regarding the delivery of the UKSPF in its area e.g. by publishing a summary of the investment plan and activities being funded in the area.

7. Evaluation

- 7.1. Monitoring and Evaluation will be carried out as set out in [UKSPF Additional Information](#).
- 7.2. The Lead Local Authority will support evaluation through capturing and providing relevant data and engaging with place and intervention level evaluations as stated within the [UKSPF Additional Information](#).

This will include but is not exclusive to the following main evaluation requirements:

- 7.2.1 Continuous monitoring and evaluation of progress aligned to the deliverables stated within the UKSPF Investment Plan submitted by the Lead Local Authority and approved by the Secretary of State;
- 7.2.2 Engaging with our evaluation partners to collect and provide additional quantitative data as required to support, where relevant, intervention and place-specific evaluations
- 7.3 As set out in the [UKSPF Additional Information](#) the Lead Local Authority is encouraged to undertake its own place-based evaluations of how the UKSPF has worked in their area, particularly process evaluation on individual projects, alongside any place-based case studies commissioned by DLUHC. For those lead local authorities with large allocations, DLUHC require a robust evaluation to support the centrally coordinated evaluation.
- 7.4 The Lead Local Authority agrees to undertake these activities using the administration costs for the Fund.

8. Assurance

- 8.1. The Secretary of State has set out the approach to assurance for the UKSPF in the [UKSPF Additional Information](#).
- 8.2. The Lead Local Authority is expected to have the necessary governance and assurance arrangements in place and that all legal and other statutory obligations and consents will be adhered to. The Lead Local Authority will provide the Secretary of State with the following via UKSPF reporting:
- 8.2.1. Details of the checks that the Chief Finance Officer has taken to assure themselves that the Lead Local Authority has in place the processes that ensure proper administration of financial affairs relating to their UKSPF allocation.
- 8.2.2. Confirmation that the lead local authority has applied management controls that:
- mitigate the risk of fraud;
 - ensure funding has been used in accordance with UK subsidy control legislation;
 - ensure that any procurement undertaken by a Contracting Authority using UKSPF funds has complied with public procurement rules;
 - ensure compliance with its statutory obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty; and

- ensure that any personal data obtained in connection with UKSPF activities is handled in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

8.3 As part of the first monitoring return the Lead Local Authority will provide a summary statement of how it is:

- mitigating the risk of fraud;
- ensuring funding has been used in accordance with UK subsidy control legislation; and
- ensuring that any procurement undertaken by a Contracting Authority using UKSPF funds has complied with public procurement rules.

8.4. The Lead Local Authority will respond directly to questions addressing the local delivery of UKSPF and cooperate with the Secretary of State in any inquiries regarding the delivery of the UKSPF.

8.5. On an annual basis the Lead Local Authority will complete and return the templated Statement of Grant Usage letter.

9. Changes to agreed Investment Plan

9.1. The Lead Local Authority will notify the Secretary of State of any proposed non-material changes to the investment plan through the regular monitoring returns.

9.2. The Lead Local Authority will submit a change request if a change constitutes “A Material Change” as set out in the [UKSPF Additional Information](#).

9.3. Requests for material changes can be made to the Secretary of State as and when required. A template will be provided for the Lead Local Authority to use.

9.4. The Secretary of State recognises that not all change will meet the materiality threshold for a change request. However, the Lead Local Authority should report any change affecting the delivery of the funding as part of the usual reporting cycle. If the Lead Local Authority is not sure on whether a change meets the materiality threshold they should consult with the Secretary of State for guidance.

9.5. All change requests must be signed off by the Lead Local Authority’s Section 151 (appointed under the Local Government Act 1972) or S95

Officer (appointed under the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973) to testify that they are necessary and deliverable.

10. Compliance with the MOU

10.1 The Parties to this MOU are responsible for ensuring that they have the necessary systems and appropriate resources in place within their respective organisations to comply fully with the requirements of this MOU.

11. Changes to the MOU

11.1 The arrangements under this MOU will be kept under review. Amendments to this MOU may only be made upon written agreement between the Parties.

12. Resolution of Disputes

12.1 Any dispute that may arise as to the interpretation or application of this MOU will be settled by consultation between the parties

Signed on Behalf of the Lead Local Authority (by Chief Executive / Section 151/95 Officer):



Name: Barrie Davies

Job Title: Director of Finance & Digital Services

Date: 16 December 2022

Signed on Behalf of Secretary of State:



Name: Jessica Blakely/Carmen Suarez Garcia

Job Title: Directors: Levelling Up: Major Programmes

Date: 5 December 2022

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DATED

[]

and

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

AGREEMENT

REGARDING UK SHARED PROSPERITY GRANT FUND

THIS AGREEMENT is made the []

BETWEEN

- (1) [](Project Deliverer”) and
- (2) **RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL** of The Pavilions, Cambrian Park, Clydach Vale CF40 2XX (“Lead Authority”) and together referred to in this Agreement as the “parties”.

BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The SECRETARY OF STATE FOR LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES has allocated the UK Shared Prosperity Fund in respect of projects to be undertaken within the geographical area of the Partner Authorities.
- 1.2 The UK Government will provide funds to the Partner Authorities to build pride in place and increasing life chances by three investment priorities (1) community and place (2) supporting local business and (3) people and skills.
- 1.3 The Lead Authority will enter into funding agreements with the Partner Authorities and administer the distribution of funds and thereafter monitor to ensure the funds are used to deliver and meet local needs.
- 1.4 The Lead Authority is required to accept the terms and conditions of the Grant and will be liable to the Secretary of State, if the conditions of the Grant are not complied with or breached.
- 1.5 In order to ensure that the Partner Authorities comply with the conditions of the Grant, and to indemnify the Lead Authority in respect of non compliance and/or breaches which are not attributable to the Lead

Authority, the Project Deliverer, as one of the Partner Authorities entitled to the Grant, has entered into this Agreement.

1.6 The Project Deliverer enters into this Agreement for the purposes of obtaining funding for, and for managing and delivering the various elements of the Project which are within its administrative area.

1.7 It will be the Project Deliverer's responsibility to determine their route to market based upon the most appropriate, cost effective and compliant delivery route taking into account subsidy control regulations and public procurement rules.

OPERATIVE PROVISIONS

2. INTERPRETATION

2.1 In this Agreement the following terms have the following meanings:

"Agreement" means this Agreement including all Schedules;

"Application Form" means the UK Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan Questions submitted by the Lead Authority on behalf of the Partner Authorities and attached at Schedule 4

"Business Day" means a day (other than a Saturday or Sunday or public holiday in Wales) on which banks are open for domestic business in the City of London;

"CCR Programme

Board" means the Chief Executives of the 10 South East Wales local authorities that form the Cardiff Capital Region.

"Change" means any change to the terms of this Agreement;

“Change Note” the written record of Change agreed by the parties pursuant to the Change Procedure;

“Change Procedure” the procedure for changing this Agreement as set out in Schedule 8

“Claim” means a claim for Funding submitted by the Project Deliverer to the Lead Authority in accordance with the Claim Process and Reporting Requirements.

“Claim Process” means the forms and spreadsheets attached at Schedule 5.

“Conditions” means the terms, conditions and obligations set out in the Memorandum of Understanding dated 5th December 2022 attached at Schedule 1, the UKSPF Prospectus, the UKSPF Additional Guidance, the General Conditions attached at Schedule 2, the Financial Conditions attached at Schedule 3 and Data Protection Legislation;

“Default Notice” means a notice served by the Lead Authority or the CCR Programme Board in accordance with Clause 5;

“Data Protection

Legislation” means all legislation and regulatory requirements in force from time to time relating to the use of Personal Data, including, without limitation (i) any data protection legislation from time to time in force in the UK including the Data Protection Act 2018 or any

successor legislation, as well as (ii) the General Data Protection Regulation ((EU) 2016/679) and any other directly applicable European Union regulation relating to data protection and privacy (for so long as and to the extent that the law of the European Union has legal effect in the UK) and any formal guidance or Codes of Conduct issued by the Information Commissioner (or other competent data protection authority) in each case as amended, superseded or replaced from time to time

“Delivery Profile” means the financial and participant profile agreed or any later version submitted by the Project and approved by the Secretary of State. A summary of the Delivery Profile for each Partner Authority is included as Schedule 7.

“Financial Conditions” means the financial conditions in respect of payment of Funding from the Grant by the Lead Authority to the Project Deliverer set out in the Schedule 3;

“Funding” means any payment of funding from the Grant by the Lead Authority to the Project Deliverer;

“General Conditions” means the general conditions set out in Schedule 2;

“Grant” means the total sum from the UKSPF (including funding for Multiply) payable by the Secretary of

State through the Lead Authority in respect of the Project issued in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding and UKSPF Additional Conditions and detailed in the Grant Determination Letters for the relevant year;

“Grant Determination

Letters”

means the letters issued by the Secretary of State confirming the annual payment for each year until 2025.

“Grant Termination

Date”

means 31st March 2025 unless or until any later date is agreed by the Secretary of State and accepted by the Lead Authority.

“Information

Commissioner”

has the meaning set out in section 114 of the Data Protection Act 2018 and for the avoidance of doubt is the UK’s independent body set up to uphold and enforce information rights

“Intellectual Property”

means copyright and neighbouring and related rights, trade marks and service marks, business names and domain names, rights in get-up and trade dress, goodwill and the right to sue for passing off or unfair competition, rights in design, database rights, rights to use, and protect the confidentiality of, confidential information (including know-how and

trade secrets) and all other intellectual property rights, in each case whether registered or unregistered.

“Lead Authority” means Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council and should be read to mean the team responsible for the monitoring, reporting and administering the claim process for all UKSPF Projects approved for delivery within the administrative areas of the Partner Authorities by the Secretary of State;

“Legislation” means any statutory or case-law obligation (whether under criminal or civil law) from time to time which relates to the Grant or the payment of Funding in so far as applicable in England and Wales, or in Wales alone

“Local Partnership Group” means a group that meets the requirements of the UKSPF Prospectus.

“Match Funding” means an agreement to match, or partially match the funding pledged.

“Memorandum of Understanding” means the Memorandum of Understanding dated 5th December 2022 between The Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council

setting out the terms that will apply regarding the administration and delivery of the UKSPF attached at Schedule 1;

“Multiply” means the program to help transform the lives of adults by improving their functional numeracy skills through free personal tutoring, digital training and flexible courses.

“Non-Compliance” means failing to comply with the terms of this Agreement or the Conditions;

“Operative Date” means the date of this Agreement;

“Partner Authorities” means Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, Bridgend County Borough Council, Caerphilly County Borough Council, Cardiff Council, Cardiff Capital Region, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, Monmouthshire County Council, Newport City Council, Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council, Torfaen County Borough and The Vale of Glamorgan Council and any successor Councils or Authorities that may result from any Local Government reorganisation or any other reason;

“Personal Data” has the meaning ascribed to it in the Data Protection Legislation.

“Process” has the meaning ascribed to it in the Data Protection Legislation and **Processing** shall be construed accordingly

“Project” means building pride in place and increasing life chances by three investment priorities (1) community and place (2) supporting local business and (3) people and skills. which is the subject of the Grant;

“Reporting Requirements” means the reporting and monitoring requirements for the consideration of and subsequent award of Funding from the Grant as summarised in Schedule 6

“Regional Directors Group” means the group set up and administered in accordance with Schedule 8.

“Secretary of State” means The Secretary of State for Levelling up, Housing and Communities of 2 Marsham Street, London SW1P 4DF;

“Subsidy” means any direct or indirect financial assistance which arises from the resources of the United Kingdom Government, devolved government, other public authority in the United Kingdom or an emanation of any of these including:

- a. A direct or contingent transfer of funds such as direct grants, loans or loan guarantees;
- b. The forgoing of revenue that is otherwise due;

c. The provision of goods or services, or the purchase of goods or services; or

d. a measure analogous to these

which is subject to any Subsidy Control Rules.

“Subsidy Control Rules” means:

a. the Subsidy Control Act 2022 and any regulations made under or pursuant to it;

and

b. any Legislation which is in force and/or in effect and/or applies (in Wales) which regulates the granting of subsidies;

including the Statutory Guidance for the Subsidy Control Act 2022 produced by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, in each case as amended from time to time.

“Termination Date” means the date of the final payment of Funding from the Lead Authority to the Project Deliverer. ;

“UK Government” means the central government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Island.

“UK Shared Prosperity

Fund” (UKSPF) means a sum of money made available by the UK Government which is to be used to build pride in place and increasing life chances by three investment priorities (1) community and place (2) supporting local business and (3) people and skills;

“UKSPF Additional

Guidance” means the guidance published by the Secretary of State or UK Government on the delivery of the UKSPF as may be updated and published from time to time;

“UKSPF Prospectus” means the UK Shared Prosperity Prospectus published on the UK Government website by the Secretary of State as updated from time to time.

“Unlawful Subsidy” means any Subsidy which has from time to time been found to contravene the Subsidy Control Rules.

2.2 Any reference to the Secretary of State will also include reference to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, an Administrative Division of the UK Government serving the Secretary of State;

2.3 Clause headings in this Agreement are for convenience only and shall have no contractual effect.

2.4 Any reference to a clause is a reference to a clause of this Agreement.

2.5 Words importing one gender shall include the other genders and words importing the singular include the plural and vice-versa.

2.6 Reference to “individual” or “person” shall include bodies corporate unincorporated associations and partnerships.

2.7 Any reference to any enactment or statutory instrument shall be deemed to include reference to such enactment or statutory instrument as re-enacted amended or extended.

2.8 An obligation not to do, or omit to do, something shall be deemed to include an obligation not to permit or (so far as is reasonably practicable) suffer that thing to be done, or omitted to be done.

2.9 An obligation to do something shall include an obligation to seek to procure that it is done.

3. WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

3.1 This Agreement is entered into by the Lead Authority and Project Deliverer on a basis of co-operation and good faith.

3.2 Signature of this Agreement by the parties includes agreement to:

3.2.1 Work jointly, including across the Partner Authorities, where possible or appropriate, to ensure the best outcomes for the Project's participants and to ensure the mutual success of the Project;

3.2.2 Share such project information between Partner Authorities as is necessary for the smooth and cooperative running of the Project, including, but not limited to:

3.2.2.1 cross-project risks or issues;

3.2.2.2 problem or dispute resolution;

3.2.2.3 identified best practice;

3.2.2.4 financial or Grant information; and

3.2.2.5 any other information deemed to be relevant by the Regional Directors Group or CCR Programme Board.

3.2.3 Develop and utilise a communication plan for:

3.2.3.1 the dissemination of the information described in 3.2.2; and

3.2.7.2 such information as may be beneficial to participants, potential participants, the Lead Authority, the Secretary of State and any other group / organisation as may be determined from time to time..

3.2.4 Discuss with each other, as soon as possible, any problems or disputes which arise, attempting to resolve any difficulties through negotiation at an early stage and ensuring appropriate officers are available upon reasonable notice to discuss any issues under dispute.

4. AGREEMENT

4.1 The Project Deliverer agrees that the Lead Authority will accept the offer of Grant on behalf of the Project Deliverer.

4.2 The Project Deliverer acknowledges that the payment of Funding by the Lead Authority to the Project Deliverer will not take place until the Project Deliverer has satisfied the requirements of the Claim Process and Reporting Requirements.

4.3 The Project Deliverer undertakes that they will adhere to the terms of this Agreement and comply in all material respects with the Conditions including acting in accordance with any Legislation or guidance linked to UKSPF or wider Levelling Up Funding (or any re-enactment or amendment thereof) and provisions in respect of eligibility, monitoring, audit, record retention, match funding and clawback. The Project

Deliverer further agrees that it will accept sole responsibility for any compliance failure and / or breach of Conditions caused by the Project Deliverer or any third party that they have procured to deliver the Project and shall fully indemnify the Lead Authority for any losses whatsoever resulting from that compliance failure and / or breach, suffered by the Lead Authority.

- 4.4 The Project Deliverer shall ensure that any Funding paid contributes to the social, economic and environmental well-being of the wider community and where appropriate sustainability and green measures align to UK Governments net zero strategy, social value goals and guidance issued by the UK Government.
- 4.5 The Project Deliverer shall be responsible for ensuring that Funding is spent in accordance with all applicable Legislation. This includes the subsidy control rules and public procurement rules.
- 4.6 The Project Deliverer warrants to the Lead Authority that it will observe and perform the Conditions. The Project Deliverer also agrees that, upon receipt of reasonable notice, it will permit rights of access to the Lead Authority (and the other bodies specified in the Conditions) for audit, compliance and any other purposes set out therein, undertaking to provide in a timely manner information requested by the Lead Authority to enable all relevant deadlines to be met.
- 4.7 The Project Deliverer shall set up a Local Partnership Group to oversee the delivery of any Funding received. A copy of the terms of reference of the Local Partnership Group has been supplied to the Lead Authority.

The Local Partnership Group shall remain in place until the Termination Date.

- 4.8 The Lead Authority shall monitor compliance by the Project Deliverer against the minimum standards and legal obligations set out in the Agreement and should non-compliance be identified mechanisms to recover Funding will be instigated.
- 4.9 Without prejudice to the generality of Clause 4.1 to 4.6 if the Project Deliverer receives notification of any financial clawback, financial imposition, or deduction of Funding as a result of any non-compliant procurement process by the Project Deliverer, they will be solely responsible for reporting the notification to the Lead Authority as soon as possible and indemnify the Lead Authority in respect thereof.
- 4.10 The Project Deliverer undertakes to provide in a timely manner information required by the Lead Authority to enable any claim deadline to be met.
- 4.11 The Project Deliverer is encouraged to provide Match Funding per award of Funding however for the avoidance of doubt the provision of Match Funding is not a requirement for UKSPF.
- 4.12 Notwithstanding the termination of the Agreement the parties shall remain liable for any Conditions they have not complied with and in respect of any liability arising from Non-Compliance or breach of a Condition.
- 4.13 The parties agree that the Regional Directors Group will provide a strategic consultative and advisory role to ensure the successful delivery of the UKSPF at both a regional and local level.

4.14 The parties agree that where necessary decision making will be escalated to the CCR Programme Board.

5. DEFAULT

5.1 Without prejudice to any other right or remedy, upon the discovery of evidence which on the balance of probabilities indicates Non-Compliance, a party to this Agreement may serve a Default Notice upon the defaulting party. Any such Default Notice shall set out the nature of the alleged default and require the defaulting party to remedy the default within such reasonable time as may be specified in the Default Notice.

5.2 Any dispute as to Default Notices, and / or the service thereof, under this clause, shall be referred to the CCR Programme Board to make a decision at the earliest opportunity.

5.3 If any Default Notice served under this clause 5 is not complied with within the timescale set out in the Default Notice, then the Lead Authority may, in respect of default by the Project Deliverer, or the CCR Chief Programme Board may, in respect of default by the Lead Authority:

5.3.1 Terminate this agreement in accordance with clause 10.2;
and / or

5.3.2 Deduct, or request the Lead Authority to deduct, from any amount then due, or to become due to the defaulting party such amount as is reasonable;

5.4 Any disputes over the deduction of any sums under this clause shall be referred to the CCR Programme Board.

5.5 A Default Notice must be communicated in writing and subject to Clause 16.

6. SUBSIDY CONTROL

6.1 The Project Deliverer shall ensure that the spend of any Funding shall be in accordance with the Subsidy Control Rules.

6.2 If and to the extent that any Funding is found to constitute or include an Unlawful Subsidy (or is under investigation or subject to judicial proceedings in relation to compliance with the Subsidy Control Rules) then the Project Deliverer:

6.2.1 acting in good faith will seek to restructure the arrangements surrounding the Funding to the extent necessary to ensure compliance with the Subsidy Control Rules; and/or

6.2.2 promptly cooperate in good faith to provide evidence that the Funding payment (or the restructured Funding payment) is or will be compliant with the Subsidy Control Rules.

6.3 If and to the extent that any Funding is found to constitute or include an Unlawful Subsidy and/or the arrangements are not capable of being restructured so as to be compliant then the Project Deliverer must repay any Unlawful Subsidy plus such interest as is prescribed by Subsidy Control Rules within fifteen (15) Business Days of the Lead Authority raising a written demand for payment.

7. PROCUREMENT

7.1 The Project Deliverer must ensure that any goods, services or works procured in respect of the Grant shall be in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (as amended) and the principles of non-discrimination, transparency and fairness.

7.2 Where the procurement falls outside of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 the Project Deliverer must follow its own contract procedure rules and demonstrate value for money.

8. ADMINISTRATION FEE

8.1 An administration fee of up to 4% of the Grant can be utilised by the Partner Authorities for the administration of the Project.

8.2 Having considered the accountability and responsibilities of administering the Grant, the parties agree that the 4% administration fee is to be split with 60% being retained by the Partner Authorities for local administration costs and the remaining 40% being retained by the Lead Authority for their key role and responsibility in administering the Grant and acting as the Lead Authority.

9. DISPUTE RESOLUTION

9.1 If there is a dispute between the parties concerning the interpretation or operation of this Agreement then either party may notify the other in writing that it wishes the dispute to be referred to a meeting of the CCR Programme Board to resolve, all parties negotiating on the basis of good faith.

9.2 If, after 28 days from the date of notice referred to above (or such longer period as the parties may agree), the dispute has not been resolved the parties will agree to enter into mediation in good faith to settle such dispute and will do so in accordance with the Centre for Effective dispute Resolution (CEDR) Model Mediation Procedure. Unless otherwise agreed between the parties, the mediator shall be nominated by the CEDR.

9.3 If the mediation does not resolve the dispute, the CCR Programme Board may refer the matter to Arbitration on the following basis:

9.3.1 Referral shall be to a single Arbitrator selected by the CCR Programme Board or, in the absence of agreement, to be nominated by the President of the Chartered Institute of Arbitration

9.3.2 Such arbitration shall be conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Arbitration Act 1996 and the Arbitrator appointed shall have the power to:

9.3.2.1 Obtain the assistance of such experts as he or she shall think fit and to adopt any statement or report that is obtained;

9.3.2.2 Order and direct what he or she shall think to be done by any of the parties respectively in relation to the matters in dispute; and

9.3.2.3 Apportion the costs of arbitration to be split between the parties in a manner that he or she sees fit;

9.3.3 The decision of the Arbitrator shall be final and binding.

10. TERMINATION

10.1 Either party may give no less than 3 months notice in writing to terminate this agreement.

10.2 If a Default Notice is served under clause 5 and not complied with within the timescales set out in the Default Notice the Lead Authority or the CCR Programme Board as appropriate may give no less than one months notice in writing to terminate this Agreement.

10.3 In the event of this Agreement being terminated:-

10.3.1 the Project Deliverer shall immediately pay to the Lead Authority the balance of any payments made to the Project Deliverer less any legitimate, eligible and claimable expenditure incurred by the Project Deliverer at that time.

10.3.2 either the Lead Authority or Project Deliverer shall be entitled to exercise any one or more of the rights and remedies given to it under the terms of this Agreement and the termination of this Agreement shall not affect or prejudice such rights and remedies. Each party shall, and shall remain liable to, perform all of their outstanding liabilities and indemnities under this Agreement, notwithstanding that the other may have exercised one or more of the rights and remedies against it; and

10.3.3 Any right or remedy to which either the Lead Authority or Project Deliverer is or may become entitled under this Agreement or in consequence of the other's conduct may be enforced from time to time separately or concurrently with any right or remedy given by this Agreement or now or afterwards provided for and arising by operation of law so that such rights and remedies are not exclusive of the other or others but are cumulative

11. COMMENCEMENT AND DURATION

11.1 This Agreement shall extend from the Operative Date until the Termination Date but shall not prejudice or affect any right of action or

remedy which shall have accrued, or which may thereafter accrue, to anybody under the Conditions.

12. DATA PROTECTION

12.1 The parties will co-operate with one another in order to enable each party to fulfil its statutory obligations under the Data Protection Legislation.

12.2 Without prejudice to the generality of Clause 1.1, the parties warrant and represent that it they have obtained all and any necessary registrations, notifications and consents required by the Data Protection Legislation to Process Personal Data for the purposes of performing their obligations under this Agreement. The parties undertake at all times during the term of this Agreement to comply with the Data Protection Legislation (and the data protection principles contained therein) in Processing all Personal Data in connection with this Agreement and shall not perform its obligations under this Agreement in such a way as to cause the party to breach any of its applicable obligations under the Data Protection Legislation

13. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

13.1 Any Intellectual Property created through the establishment and running of this Agreement shall vest in the Lead Authority. The Intellectual Property shall be held by the Lead Authority. This shall include but is not limited to processes, procedures, methodology and manuals.

13.2 The Lead Authority shall grant to the Project Deliverer an irrevocable licence to use that Intellectual Property for the purpose of this Agreement.

13.3 Where a party develops Intellectual Property in relation to the delivery of the Project that Intellectual Property shall belong to that party alone.

13.4 Nothing in this clause 13 shall operate to prevent or make difficult the sharing of good practice between the parties.

14. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

14.1 The parties agree that they will co-operate with one another to enable any party receiving a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 to respond to that request promptly and within statutory timescales. This co-operation shall include, but not be limited to, finding, retrieving and supplying information held and directing requests to other parties as appropriate and responding to any requests by a party receiving a request for comments or other assistance.

15. WAIVER

15.1 Failure by a party, or any other body so entitled, at any time to:

15.1.1 enforce any of the provisions of this Agreement; or

15.1.2 to require the performance of any of the provisions of this Agreement,

shall not be construed as a waiver of any such provision and shall not affect the validity of the Agreement or any part thereof, or of the right of the Lead Authority, or any other body, to enforce any provision in accordance with its terms.

16. NOTICES

16.1 Any notice, demand or communication in connection with this Agreement will be in writing and may be delivered by hand, post or e-

mail addressed to the recipient as set out in Schedule 10 or any other address notified to the other party in writing in accordance with this clause as an address to which notices, invoices and other documents may be sent. The notice, demand or communication will be deemed to have been duly served:

- (a) if delivered by hand during business hours, at the time of delivery;
- (b) if delivered by post, 48 hours after being posted (excluding Saturdays, Sundays and a non Business Day);

If delivered by e-mail or other electronic form of communication during business hours, at the time of transmission provided that a confirming copy is sent by first class post to the other party within 24 hours after transmission.

16.2 Where notice is served by hand or e-mail outside business hours, it will be deemed to have been served on the next Business Day.

17. CHANGE

17.1 Any requirement for a Change to this Agreement shall be subject to the Change Procedure.

18. THIRD PARTY RIGHTS

18.1 The parties to this Agreement confirm and agree that they do not intend any provision of it to be enforceable by any other person pursuant to the Contract (Rights of Third Parties) Act 1999 save as set out in this Agreement.

19. NO PARTNERSHIP

19.1 The Project Deliverer and Lead Authority are independent from each other and save as set out in this Agreement nothing contained in this

Agreement shall be construed as implying that there is any relationship between the Project Deliverer and Lead Authority of partnership or of principal / agent or of employer / employee.

20 COUNTERPART

20.1 This Agreement may be executed in any number of counterparts and by the parties to it on separate counterparts each of which when executed and delivered shall be an original but all the counterparts shall together constitute one and the same instrument.

21. JURISDICTION

21.1 This Agreement shall be governed and constituted in accordance with English and Welsh law as applied in Wales and the parties shall submit to the jurisdiction of the English and Welsh courts.

SCHEDULE 1

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

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SCHEDULE 2
GENERAL CONDITIONS

1 APPRAISAL AND MONITORING

- 1.1 The parties acknowledges that it is fundamentally important to them and to the Secretary of State that the Project shall be properly monitored to ensure value for money and a satisfactory standard of delivery and the Project Deliverer will assist the Lead Authority to demonstrate these objectives have been achieved.
- 1.2 Delivery of the Project must be consistent with the details specified in the Application Form, Memorandum of Understanding and Delivery Profile. The Lead Authority will monitor progress and performance of the Project against those outputs detailed within the Delivery Profile and any Conditions and regular review meetings will be held with the Lead Authority and Project Deliverer to assess progress against participant delivery and financial targets.
- 1.3 The Project Deliverer will use their reasonable endeavours to work to a management system which enables the Project to satisfy 1.4 and 1.5 below and for delivery and finances to be effectively monitored and controlled. The Lead Authority will work with the Project Deliverer to ensure systems are adequate and capable of providing relevant information.
- 1.3.1 The Project Deliverer will provide the Lead Authority with quarterly and six monthly monitoring reports (in a format prescribed by the Lead Authority) showing progress against targets. Where necessary, the

Project Deliverer will provide explanations of any deviation from the agreed Delivery Profile, targets or outcomes.

- 1.4 The Project Deliverer shall maintain full and proper accounts and records concerning all aspects of its involvement in the Project that enable it to demonstrate:
 - 1.4.1 Amounts received by the Project Deliverer from the Lead Authority.
 - 1.4.2 What these amounts have been spent on.
 - 1.4.3 Full disclosure of asset purchases and sales.
 - 1.4.4 Whether the original targets have been met and reasons for any variances.
 - 1.4.5 That amounts spent and received by all partners of the Project Deliverer have been used wholly and exclusively for the purpose of the Project.
- 1.5 All accounts and records shall be maintained in a manner which clearly identifies it as accounts for the Project and no other purpose and all accounts and records kept by the Project Deliverer shall be retained for the period, as specified by the Funding Agreement, for a minimum of 7 years after the end of the Funding Agreement.
- 1.6 The Project Deliverer must contact the Lead Authority as soon as reasonably practicable if it becomes aware that, for whatever reason, the approved targets as stated in the Delivery Profile and Conditions are not going to be materially met.
 - 1.6.1 If in its reasonable opinion the Lead Authority considers the standards of any one or more of the periodic monitoring reports is inadequate the Lead Authority may require the Project Deliverer:

1.6.1.1 to supply reports to the Lead Authority more frequently until such time as the standard of reports improves:

1.6.1.2 to take such reasonable remedial action at the Project Deliverer's cost as the Lead Authority may reasonably require to improve the standard of the reports.

2 RIGHT OF ACCESS

2.1 The Project Deliverer will allow authorised employees of the Lead Authority, upon receipt of reasonable written notice, access to all financial and monitoring records relating to the Project.

2.2 Such access shall include the right to audit, review and take copies of all such documentation and where necessary in the reasonable opinion of the Lead Authority, take custody of the original accounts and records, but in the case of the Lead Authority taking custody of any original accounts or records, the Lead Authority will immediately provide to the Project Deliverer certified copies and fully indemnify the Project Deliverer if such accounts or records are lost or destroyed.

2.3 The right of access shall endure whilst the project accounts are maintained as set out in 1.5

2.4 The persons having by virtue of this Agreement a right of access to such accounts and records are:

2.4.1 Lead Authority

2.4.2 the Secretary of State

2.4.3 Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and the Ministry for Housing, Communities, and Local Government (MHCLG)

- 2.4.4 National Audit Office
- 2.4.5 Audit Wales
- 2.4.6 Any Government Agency who has a right to review expenditure by the Council or Government Ministers
- 2.4.7 Any other auditor whose functions include the audit of expenditure by the Project Deliverers.

3 ASSISTANCE TO THE LEAD AUTHORITY

- 3.1 If at any time the Lead Authority is required by its own auditors, or any other body, to provide any information to such bodies concerning the Project the Project Deliverer shall use all best endeavours to assist the Lead Authority to comply with any such requirement and such assistance shall include, but is not limited to, the provision of copies of all documentation held by the Project Deliverer that is relevant to the Project.

4 RETENTION OF DOCUMENTATION

- 4.1 The Project Deliverer shall retain all financial and participant related records, accounts and original documentation including invoices relating to the Project until the Secretary of State informs the Lead Authority in writing, who will accordingly communicate with the Project Deliverer, that the documents may be disposed of.
- 4.2 The Lead Authority will reclaim any grant funding from the Project Deliverer where, after receipt of reasonable written notice, the Project Deliverer is unable to provide original supporting documentation.

5 RIGHT TO WITHHOLD PAYMENT

- 5.1 The Lead Authority shall be entitled to withhold or suspend payment of all or part of the Funding to the Project Deliverer if:
- 5.1.1 The Project Deliverer fails to materially comply with any requirement which any of the Conditions states must be met before the Lead Authority is obliged to make a payment, or
- 5.1.2 In the Lead Authority's reasonable opinion, which must be based on evidence, it considers that because of any act or omission on the part of the Project Deliverer, part of the Funding has been applied other than wholly and exclusively for the purpose of the Project, or
- 5.1.3 The Lead Authority or Project Deliverer becomes entitled to terminate this Agreement.
- 5.1.4 The Lead Authority has lawfully served upon the Project Deliverer either a Notice of Default or Termination under Clauses 5 or 8 of the Agreement and the Project Deliverer has not materially complied with such notice.

6 RIGHT TO RECOVER PAYMENT

- 6.1 The Lead Authority may require that a Project Deliverer repay to the Lead Authority in full or part the Funding paid by the Lead Authority to the Project Deliverer if, in its reasonable opinion:
- 6.1.1 All or part of the Funding paid to the Project Deliverer is applied otherwise than wholly and exclusively for the purposes of the Project;
- 6.1.2 There has been an overpayment of the Funding to the Project Deliverer by reason of an error made by either party; or
- 6.1.3 Any part of the Funding to be paid to the Project Deliverer is held by the Secretary of State due to breach of any of the Conditions.

- 6.2 If the Project Deliverer becomes aware of any circumstances which, in its reasonable opinion, entitles the Lead Authority to exercise any of its rights under paragraph 6.1 above, it shall inform the Lead Authority immediately in writing detailing the circumstances and the evidence on which the Project Deliverer's reasonable opinion is based.
- 6.3 The Project Deliverer, upon receipt of a reasonable written demand from the Lead Authority, shall repay any sum that becomes repayable by virtue of paragraph 6 to the Lead Authority.
- 6.4 Wherever under this Agreement any sum of money is recoverable from or payable by the Project Deliverer to the Lead Authority, the Lead Authority may deduct from any further sum due to the Project Deliverer under this Agreement such amount as is due to the Lead Authority.

7 INSUFFICIENT TAKE UP OF GRANT

- 7.1 Should there be insufficient take up of the Grant by the Project Deliverer, the Project Deliverer shall indemnify the Lead Authority against any reasonable fees, costs or expenses not recoverable from the Secretary of State directly incurred due to such insufficient take up.

SCHEDULE 3

FINANCIAL CONDITIONS

1 Payment of Grant to the Project Deliverer

- 1.1 Subject to the performance by the Project Deliverer of its obligations under this Agreement and achievement of the indicators set out in the Delivery Profile, the Lead Authority shall reimburse the Project Deliverer as set out in the Funding Agreement and Delivery Profile, unless the Lead Authority agrees changes within the limits of the overall approval level.
- 1.2 The Project Deliverer shall submit any Claims for Funding to the Lead Authority in accordance with the Claim Process and Reporting Requirements and must ensure all information is submitted by the relevant claim date.
- 1.3 Claims submitted by the Project Deliverers shall be submitted to the Lead Authority for payment.
- 1.4 The final Claim will become payable following approval of the Claim by the Lead Authority in the month following the Grant Termination Date.
- 1.5 The parties assume no VAT is payable by the Lead Authority in respect of the Grant. If that assumption is incorrect the amounts of the reimbursement of Grant shall be deemed to be inclusive of VAT.
- 1.6 The Project Deliverer is responsible for their own VAT accounting and all Claims should be exclusive of recoverable VAT. If the Project Deliverer includes non-recoverable VAT elements the Project Deliverer will be required to provide appropriate additional evidence to justify this decision at audit.

- 1.7 Payments arising from Claims shall become due and be payable by the Lead Authority upon each and every one of the following conditions being met:
- 1.7.1 The Project Deliverer has complied in all material respects with its obligations under this Agreement.
 - 1.7.2 The Project Deliverer has submitted their Claim, to the Lead Authority, which complies in all material respects with the requirements of this Schedule.
 - 1.7.3 The Claim shall be in the format agreed and provided by the Lead Authority and shall clearly identify eligible amounts claimed in relation to the Project. The Claim shall be accompanied by such supporting evidence as required by the Secretary of State or other relevant guidance documents in order to satisfy the Secretary of State that the amount claimed has actually and properly been incurred by the Project Deliverer in respect of delivering the Project.
 - 1.7.4 The Lead Authority has reviewed the Claim and agreed that expenditure is eligible for the purpose of the Project.
- 1.8 The late submission of a Claim by the Project Deliverer outside of the timeframe required for submission to the Lead Authority will result in a delay in payment. A late claim will be omitted from the respective claim round and be included in the next claim cycle (if any). The late submission of the final Claim may result in non-payment and loss of Funding..
- 1.9 The Lead Authority will reimburse the Project Deliverer within 15 Business Days of approval of the Claim by the Lead Authority.

1.10 In the event that there are any changes to the Claim Process or Reporting Requirements as a result of further guidance, the Lead Authority will notify the Project Deliverer of the change as soon as is practicable and will, where required, provide detailed instruction to Project Deliverer within 28 days of the change imposed.

2 Audit

2.1 The Funding Agreement outlines the rights of Auditors and Government bodies and the Lead Authority in regard to audit requirements.

2.2 The Project Deliverer must maintain an accounting system, which will uniquely identify Project expenditure from all other activities of the partners' e.g. unique cost centres. The system should be capable of identifying eligible and ineligible costs and any Match Funding provided.

2.3 The Project Deliverer must provide all reasonable assistance to the Lead Authority in providing the necessary evidence to demonstrate compliance for the purpose of monitoring, review and audit.

SCHEDULE 4
APPLICATION FORM

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SCHEDULE 5

CLAIM PROCESS

Subject to the performance by the Project Deliverer of their obligations under this Funding Agreement and their successful delivery of the Project Interventions, Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC will reimburse each Project Deliverer in line with the requirements set out in this schedule.

Project Deliverers can claim quarterly in arrears from Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC. Subject to Rhondda Cynon Taf being in receipt of, and holding, sufficient funds from DLUHC, payments will be made to Project Deliverers within 15 working days of Rhondda Cynon Taf receiving a correctly completed claim form accompanied with evidence of expenditure and quarterly reporting information set out in Schedule 6 of this Funding Agreement. This arrangement may be varied by Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC.

Partner Authority Shared Prosperity Fund Claim Periods	Financial Year	Deadline for Submission to RCT CBC SPF Lead Team	Deadline for Submission to DLUHC
April - December 2022	2022/23	13/01/2023	01/02/2023
Quarter 4	2022/23	14/04/2023	01/05/2023
Quarter 1	2023/24	14/07/2023	01/08/2023
Quarter 2	2023/24	13/10/2023	01/11/2023
Quarter 3	2023/24	12/01/2024	01/02/2024
Quarter 4	2023/24	12/04/2024	01/05/2024
Quarter 1	2024/25	12/07/2024	01/08/2024
Quarter 2	2024/25	11/10/2024	01/11/2024
Quarter 3	2024/25	10/01/2025	01/02/2025
Quarter 4	2024/25	11/04/2025	01/05/2025

Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC will not accept interim claims outside of the claim periods noted above. Late claims will be omitted from the respective claim round and included in the next claim cycle.

**Further claim guidance and templates will be provided.*

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SCHEDULE 6 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

As per the UK Shared Prosperity Fund Prospectus, DLUHC will require lead authorities to report on a quarterly and a six monthly basis. This is further detailed within the reporting and performance management section on the GOV.UK Shared Prosperity Fund website - [UK Shared Prosperity Fund: reporting and performance management \(3\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-reporting-and-performance-management-3)

To enable Rhondda Cynon Taff CBC to comply with DLUHC reporting requirements, Project Deliverers will be required to submit reporting information to Rhondda Cynon Taff CBC on a quarterly basis. Submission dates are in line with the claim periods set out in Schedule 5 of this Funding Agreement. Further reporting guidance and templates will be provided.

Please note that DLUHC will require separate reporting and monitoring for the Multiply allocation and further guidance will be provided.

Rhondda Cynon Taff CBC will be required to provide the following information to DLUHC –

Qualitative Updates

- Spend to date and forecast against each of the three UKSPF investment priorities.
- Progress summary of the programme including an overall Red, Amber, Green (RAG) rating.
- Details of forecast underspend and how/when this will be addressed.
- Information on any upcoming projects, events, case studies and opportunities for Ministerial visits.

Project level

- The UKSPF intervention the project has been set up to support
- Start date
- The Project's projected spend
- The Project's actual spend to date
- Value of match funding against the project
- Postcode(s) where funded activity is being delivered?
- Parliamentary Constituency / Constituencies benefiting from project
- Has UKSPF been used to complement an existing project?
- Is the project live, finished, or abandoned?
- Projected end date (when it will cease to be supported by UKSPF) if live, or confirmed end date if finished / abandoned.

Pipeline Projects

- Upcoming Project(s) planned in the next 6 months
- The UKSPF intervention(s) the upcoming project has been set up to support
- Projected spend

Investment Priority Level

- Headline expenditure in year on management and administration.
- Details of slippage / delay in delivering projects against the investment priority and how/when this will be resolved.

Outputs and Outcomes Reporting

- Intervention number
- Output name
- Output target to be achieved
- Output delivered to date
- % of output delivered
- Forecast output in next 6 months
- Forecast to meet output target (Y / N)
- Outcome name
- Outcome target
- Outcome delivered to date
- % of outcome delivered
- Forecast outcome in next 6 months
- Forecast to meet outcome target (Y / N)

Project Deliverers are required to collect and store evidence that will substantiate Outputs and Outcomes, prior to reporting to Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC. Evidence will be subject to routine compliance checks by Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC.

Project Deliverers should also collect baseline data (i.e. a recording of the output or outcome before the intervention has taken place). Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC will not provide baseline data. Project Deliverers will be expected to source and identify such data themselves. For many Outputs it will not be possible to provide a baseline recording. However, for Outcomes it is important to record a baseline where possible, as these metrics are aiming to measure change caused through the programme.

Further information is detailed within the Output and Outcomes section on the GOV.UK Shared Prosperity Fund website - [UK Shared Prosperity Fund: outputs and outcomes definitions \(2\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-outputs-and-outcomes-definitions-2). The updated list of Outputs and Outcomes within this section provide the indicator definition and unit of measurement that corresponds to each output and outcome title. These definitions will continue to be refined and improved as the programme continues. Any amendments to the definitions will be managed, with the input of lead local authorities, to minimise their impact on delivery.

Further information on how Outputs and Outcomes correspond to SPF Interventions and Objectives is detailed on the GOV.UK Shared Prosperity Fund website - [Interventions, Objectives, Outcomes and Outputs – Wales \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/guidance/interventions-objectives-outcomes-and-outputs-wales)

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SCHEDULE 7
DELIVERY PROFILE

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SCHEDULE 8

REGIONAL DIRECTORS GROUP

SPF TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The successful delivery of the South East Wales Regional Investment Plan requires robust governance arrangements and the continued commitment and active involvement of all partner authorities and key stakeholders.
- 1.2 The Regional Directors Group will provide a strategic consultative and advisory role to ensure the successful delivery of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund at a local and regional level.
- 1.3 Working with Rhondda Cynon Taf Council as lead authority, the Group will ensure effective lines of accountability and responsibility are established and maintained and that appropriate delivery mechanisms, performance monitoring and effective stakeholder management arrangements are established.

2. Status of this Document

- 2.1 This document is not a binding legal arrangement but is designed to complement the UKSPF Agreement between Rhondda Cynon Taf Council as lead authority and each partner authority.
- 2.2 This document relates solely to the implementation of the UK SPF and not the wider remit of the Regional Directors Group.

3. Membership

- 3.1 Membership will consist of the South East Wales Region Local Authority Directors with supporting officers, representatives from the Lead Authority SPF Team, Cardiff Capital Region Team and from the Welsh Local Government Association.

4. Lead Authority and Implementation

- 4.1 As lead authority and grant recipient, Rhondda Cynon Taf Council will provide high level leadership and direction and will manage the UKSPF in collaboration with partner authorities and key stakeholders.
- 4.2 Rhondda Cynon Taf Council will be supported by partner authorities in its lead authority role in ensuring that:
 - i. There are effective lines of accountability and responsibility.
 - ii. Adequate resources are committed to delivering the programme successfully.
 - iii. Individual components of the regional investment plan are delivered on time and to budget.
 - iv. Performance is monitored against headline outcomes, outputs and financial progress.

- v. Key stakeholders are kept informed and consulted with as appropriate.

5. Meetings

- 5.1 Rhondda Cynon Taf Council will act as secretariat and meetings are proposed to initially be held monthly, with the frequency subject to regular review.

6. Decision Making

- 6.1 Rhondda Cynon Taf Council will undertake its role as lead authority and exercise its decision making powers in accordance with the UK Government funding agreement and in conjunction with the Senior Responsible Officer and the Chief Finance officer for the Council.

- 6.2 Where decisions are required relating to SPF funded delivery and are within the remit of the agreement between the lead authority and UK Government, Rhondda Cynon Taf Council will work bilaterally with partner authorities to reach a consensus agreement.

- 6.3 UK Government approval will need to be sought when “material changes” are made to the Regional Investment Plan. Such changes will be discussed in advance with the Regional Directors Group and escalated to the South East Wales Chief Executives Group where necessary.

For the purposes of the UKSPF a ‘material change’ will constitute any of the following:

- i. **Material Change 1:**

A post investment plan approval request for administration costs to exceed the percentage agreed in the lead local authority’s investment plan.

- ii. **Material Change 2:**

Moving funding between investment priorities if the change involves moving 30% of the total funding allocation over the three years or £5m whichever is lower. Any funding moved from an existing intervention to fund a bespoke intervention would also require approval.

- iii. **Material Change 3:**

If the indicative outputs are expected to drop from what had been set out in the original investment plan submitted, within the following parameters:

- If the total outputs set out in the investment plan were forecast to drop by 20% or more against an investment intervention.
- If the outputs forecasted have dropped by more than 40% against an investment intervention since the original investment plan was submitted.

- 6.4 Any decisions that cannot be made by the lead authority will be discussed with the Regional Directors Group in advance of being escalated to the South East Wales Chief Executives Group and/or UK Government as

appropriate. Issues requiring an urgent decision may be circulated via written procedure.

7. Risk Management

- 7.1 Rhondda Cynon Taf Council as lead authority will develop a risk management plan for the management and delivery of the programme and report any emerging issues or high level risks to the Regional Directors Group.
- 7.2 Any risks that cannot be resolved between Rhondda Cynon Taf Council as lead authority and the partner authorities will be escalated to the South East Wales Chief Executives Group.

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SCHEDULE 9
CHANGE PROCEDURE

1. General Principles

- 1.1 Where the Lead Authority and the Project Deliverer see a need to change this Agreement, such Change shall be made only in accordance with the Change Procedure set out in paragraph 2 of this Schedule 7.
- 1.2 Until such time as a Change is made in accordance with the Change Procedure, the Lead Authority and the Project Deliverer shall, unless otherwise agreed in writing, continue to perform this Agreement in compliance with its terms before such Change.

2. Procedure

- 2.1 Where a Change is agreed between the parties the Lead Authority shall prepare a Change Note.
- 2.2 A Change Note shall contain:-
- 2.2.1 the title of the Change;
 - 2.2.2 the reason for the Change;
 - 2.2.3 full details of the Change; and
 - 2.2.4 provision for signature by the Lead Authority and the Project Deliverer.
- 2.3 A Change Note signed by the Lead Authority and the Project Deliverer shall constitute an amendment to this Agreement.

SCHEDULE 10

CONTACT DETAILS

Party	Address	Contact Details
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council		

DRAFT

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the parties have executed this Agreement as a Deed
the day and year first above written:-

Attestation as applicable to relevant Project Deliverer

EXECUTED as a Deed

by affixing the Common Seal of

TORFAEN COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

in the presence of:

DRAFT

.....

Authorised Officer

THE COMMON SEAL of)

BLAENAU GWENT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL)

was hereto affixed in the presence of:)

Name:

Position:

DRAFT

THE COMMON SEAL of)

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL)

was hereto affixed in the presence of:)

Name:

Position:

THE COMMON SEAL of)

CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL)

was hereto affixed in the presence of:)

Name:

Position:

THE COMMON SEAL of)

CARDIFF COUNCIL)

was hereto affixed in the presence of:)

Name:

Position:

DRAFT

THE COMMON SEAL of)

MERTHYR TYDFIL COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL)

was hereto affixed in the presence of:)

Name:

Position:

THE COMMON SEAL of)

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL)

was hereto affixed in the presence of:)

Name:

Position:

THE COMMON SEAL of)
NEWPORT CITY COUNCIL)
was hereto affixed in the presence of:)

Name:

Position:

DRAFT

THE COMMON SEAL of)
RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL)

was hereto affixed in the presence of:)

Name:

Position:

THE COMMON SEAL of)
THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL)
was hereto affixed in the presence of:)

Name:

Position:

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Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council - Integrated Impact Assessment

All decisions, policy reviews or policy implementation will now require a completed Integrated Impact Assessment.

- Section 1-Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011
- Section 2-Socio-economic Duty – Sections 1 to 3 of the Equality Act 2010
- Section 3-Corporate Plan
- Section 4-Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- Section 5-Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011
- Section 6-Children’s Right “The Right Way”
- Section 7-Community Safety
- Section 8 Armed Forces
- Section 9-Data
- Section 10-Consultations Statutory Consultation Doctrine of Legitimate Expectation and Gunning Principles
- Section 11-Monitoring
- Section 12-Decision of proposal

Lead Officer	Head of Service/Director	Service Area & Department	Date
Owen Ashton	Ellie Fry	Regeneration and Development	17.02.23

Briefly outline the proposal indicating what change or decision is to be made, also provide any documentation that may be used to support this.

What is the proposal that needs to be assessed?

The Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) is a key part of the UK's Levelling Up agenda, forming part of complementary funding, including the Levelling Up Fund and Community Ownership Fund. The primary aim of the fund is to build pride in place and increase life chances across the UK. Underpinning this aim are three investment Pillars: communities and place; supporting local business and people and skills.

The proposal to be assessed is the potential impact on introducing the SPF in Blaenau Gwent

Section 1 Outline how the proposal will impact on any people or groups of people with protected characteristics, please refer to the Equalities Act 2010 (Wales) for further information Equality Act 2010: guidance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) and the EHRC guidance The Essential Guide to the Public Sector Equality Duty: EHRC Briefly outline below if there will be any positive or negative impacts as a result of the proposal being considered.			
Protected characteristics	Will the proposal have any positive impacts on those with a protected characteristics?	Will the proposal have any negative impacts on those with a protected characteristics?	Outline how the proposal could maximise any positive impacts or minimise any negative impact. Please indicate any views evidence you have that supports this.
<i>Age (people of all ages)</i>	Yes	No	<p>The primary aim of the fund is to build pride in place and increase life chances across the UK. Underpinning this aim are three investment Pillars: communities and place; supporting local business and people and skills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Communities and Place investment pillar will enable places to invest to restore their community spaces and relationships and create the foundations for economic development at the neighbourhood-level. The intention of

			<p>this is to strengthen the social fabric of communities, supporting in building pride in place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Supporting Local Business investment pillar will enable places to fund interventions that support local businesses to thrive, innovate and grow. • The People and Skills investment priority will help reduce the barriers some people face to employment and support them to move towards employment and education. Places can also target funding into skills for local areas to support employment and local growth.
Disability (<i>people with disabilities/ long term conditions</i>)	Yes	No	<p>The primary aim of the fund is to build pride in place and increase life chances across the UK. Underpinning this aim are three investment Pillars: communities and place; supporting local business and people and skills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Communities and Place investment pillar will enable places to invest to restore their community spaces and relationships and create the foundations for economic development at the neighbourhood-level. The intention of

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<p>Gender Reassignment <i>(anybody who's gender identity or gender expression is different to the sex they were assigned at birth)</i></p>	Yes	No	<p>The primary aim of the fund is to build pride in place and increase life chances across the UK. Underpinning this aim are three investment Pillars: communities and place; supporting local business and people and skills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Communities and Place investment pillar will enable places to invest to restore their community spaces and relationships and create the foundations for economic development at the neighbourhood-level. The intention of

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<p>Marriage or Civil Partnership (<i>people who are married or in a civil partnership</i>)</p>	Yes	No	<p>The primary aim of the fund is to build pride in place and increase life chances across the UK. Underpinning this aim are three investment Pillars: communities and place; supporting local business and people and skills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Communities and Place investment pillar will enable places to invest to restore their community spaces and relationships and create the foundations for economic development at the neighbourhood-level. The intention of

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<p>Pregnancy and Maternity (<i>women who are pregnant and/or on maternity leave</i>)</p>	Yes	No	<p>The primary aim of the fund is to build pride in place and increase life chances across the UK. Underpinning this aim are three investment Pillars: communities and place; supporting local business and people and skills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Communities and Place investment pillar will enable places to invest to restore their community spaces and relationships and create the foundations for economic development at the neighbourhood-level. The intention of

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<p>Race (<i>people from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and different racial backgrounds</i>)</p>	Yes	No	<p>The primary aim of the fund is to build pride in place and increase life chances across the UK irrespective of their race. Underpinning this aim are three investment Pillars: communities and place; supporting local business and people and skills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Communities and Place investment pillar will enable places to invest to restore their community spaces and relationships and create the foundations for economic development at the neighbourhood-level. The intention of

			<p>this is to strengthen the social fabric of communities, supporting in building pride in place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Supporting Local Business investment pillar will enable places to fund interventions that support local businesses to thrive, innovate and grow. • The People and Skills investment priority will help reduce the barriers some people face to employment and support them to move towards employment and education. Places can also target funding into skills for local areas to support employment and local growth.
<p>Religion or Belief <i>(people with different religions and beliefs including people with no beliefs)</i></p>	Yes	No	<p>The primary aim of the fund is to build pride in place and increase life chances across the UK for people, irrespective of their religion or belief. Underpinning this aim are three investment Pillars: communities and place; supporting local business and people and skills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Communities and Place investment pillar will enable places to invest to restore their community spaces and relationships and create the foundations for economic development at the neighbourhood-level. The intention of

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<p>Sex (<i>women and men, girls and boys and those who self-identify their gender</i>)</p>	Yes	No	<p>The primary aim of the fund is to build pride in place and increase life chances across the UK for people whatever their sex/gender. Underpinning this aim are three investment Pillars: communities and place; supporting local business and people and skills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Communities and Place investment pillar will enable places to invest to restore their community spaces and relationships and create the foundations for economic development at the neighbourhood-level. The intention of

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<p>Sexual Orientation <i>(lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual, other)</i></p>	Yes	No	<p>The primary aim of the fund is to build pride in place and increase life chances across the UK for people whatever their sexual orientation. Underpinning this aim are three investment Pillars: communities and place; supporting local business and people and skills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Communities and Place investment pillar will enable places to invest to restore their community spaces and relationships and create the foundations for economic development at the neighbourhood-level. The intention of

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NOTE: Section 2 only needs to be completed if proposals are of a strategic nature or when reviewing previous strategic decisions. See page 6 of the [Preparing for the Commencement of the Socio-economic Duty Welsh Government Guidance](#).

Section 2
Socio-economic Duty (Strategic Decisions Only)
The Welsh Governments [Socio-economic Duty](#) provides a framework in order to ensure tackling inequality is at the forefront of decision making.

.Please consider the below vulnerable groups and consider how the proposal could affect them:

- Single parents and vulnerable families
- People with low literacy/numeracy
- Pensioners
- Looked after children
- Homeless people
- Carers
- Armed Forces Community
- Students
- Single adult households
- People misusing substances
- People who have experienced the asylum system
- People of all ages leaving a care setting
- People living in the most deprived areas in Wales (WIMD)
- People involved in the criminal justice system

Socio Economic disadvantage definitions.	Will the proposal have a positive, negative or neutral impacts on the below?	How could you mitigate the negative impacts outlined?	Please highlight any evidence that has been considered.
<p>Low Income / Income Poverty <i>(cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food, clothing, transport etc.)</i></p>	<p>Positive</p>	<p>SPF is specifically targeted at interventions that support and create improved conditions for individuals on low income/income poverty</p>	<p>In developing the Local Investment Plan a detailed evidence analysis of Census and other data was undertaken to identify the most impactful interventions within Blaenau Gwent.</p>
<p>Low and/or No Wealth <i>(enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provisions for the future)</i></p>	<p>Positive</p>	<p>SPF is specifically targeted at interventions that support and create improved conditions for individuals with low and/or no wealth</p>	<p>In developing the Local Investment Plan a detailed evidence analysis of Census and other data was undertaken to identify the most impactful interventions within Blaenau Gwent.</p>


<p>Material Deprivation (<i>unable to access basic goods and services i.e. financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, hobbies etc.</i>)</p>	<p>Positive</p>	<p>SPF is specifically targeted at interventions that support and create improved conditions for individuals experiencing material deprivation</p>	<p>In developing the Local Investment Plan a detailed evidence analysis of Census and other data was undertaken to identify the most impactful interventions within Blaenau Gwent.</p>
<p>Area Deprivation (<i>where you live (rural areas), where you work (accessibility of public transport) Impact on the environment?</i>)</p>	<p>Positive</p>	<p>SPF is specifically targeted at interventions that address deprivation across Blaenau Gwent</p>	<p>In developing the Local Investment Plan a detailed evidence analysis of Census and other data was undertaken to identify the most impactful interventions within Blaenau Gwent.</p>
<p>Socio-economic Background (<i>social class i.e. parents education, employment and income</i>)</p>	<p>Positive</p>	<p>SPF is specifically targeted at interventions that support and create improved conditions for individuals irrespective of their socio-economic backgrounds</p>	<p>In developing the Local Investment Plan a detailed evidence analysis of Census and other data was undertaken to identify the most impactful interventions within Blaenau Gwent.</p>





<p>Socio-economic Disadvantage <i>(What cumulative impact will the proposal have on people or groups because of their protected characteristic(s) or vulnerability or because they are already disadvantaged)</i></p>	<p>Positive</p>	<p>SPF is specifically targeted at interventions that support and create improved conditions for individuals irrespective of their socio-economic backgrounds</p>	<p>In developing the Local Investment Plan a detailed evidence analysis of Census and other data was undertaken to identify the most impactful interventions within Blaenau Gwent.</p>

Section 3-Corporate Plan

Please outline any Corporate Plan linkages of the proposal - [BG Corporate Plan 22-27](#)

<p>Priority 1 - Maximise learning and skills for all to create a prosperous, thriving, resilient Blaenau Gwent</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Supporting Local Business investment pillar will enable places to fund interventions that support local businesses to thrive, innovate and grow. • The People and Skills investment priority will help reduce the barriers some people face to employment and support them to move towards employment and education. Places can also target funding into skills for local areas to support employment and local growth.
<p>Priority 2 - Respond to the nature and climate crisis and enable connected communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Communities and Place investment pillar will enable places to invest to restore their community spaces and relationships and create the foundations for economic development at the neighbourhood-level. The intention of this is to strengthen the social fabric of communities, supporting in building pride in place.
<p>Priority 3 - An ambitious and innovative council delivering quality services at the right time and in the right place</p>	<p>The SPF will provide funding to enable the Council to add value to the services it currently provides, through innovative activities</p>
<p>Priority 4 - Empowering and supporting communities to be safe, independent and resilient</p>	<p>The Communities and Place investment pillar will enable places to invest to restore their community spaces and relationships and create the foundations for economic development at the neighbourhood level.</p>

<p>Section 4-Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 – The Five Ways of Working (ICLIP) <i>Sustainable development principles. The WCFG Act requires the Council to consider how any proposal improves the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales using the five ways of working as a baseline)</i></p>	
<p>Five Ways of Working</p>	<p>How have you used the Sustainable Development Principles in forming the proposal?</p>
<p>Long Tern</p> 	<p>Consider the long-term impact of the proposal on the ability of communities to secure their well-being. The SPF has the potential to support the long term sustainability of communities through upskilling and providing communities with the support they need to prosper and thrive beyond the period of the Local Investment Plan</p>

<p>Prevention</p> 	<p>Consider how the proposal is preventing problems from occurring or getting worse</p> <p>The SPF is the UK Governments replacement of EU Structural Funds through its Levelling Up Programme. With the loss of significant EU funding from the area, the funding provides opportunities for communities and businesses to address challenges they face with the loss of EU funds</p>
<p>Integration</p> 	<p>Consider how your proposal will impact on other services provided in our communities (these might be Council services or services delivered by other organisations or groups)</p> <p>The cross-cutting nature of the SPF enables an integrated and holistic approach to support communities and business. It also provides opportunities for Council services to be enhanced during a challenging economic climate.</p>
<p>Collaboration</p> 	<p>Consider how you are working with Council services or services delivered by other organisations or groups in our communities.</p> <p>There are significant opportunities for collaborative delivery, not only across various Council services but also across different sectors, for example by working with Third Sector partners on the delivery of services and activities</p>
<p>Involvement</p> 	<p>Consider how you involve people who have an interest in this proposal and ensure that they represent the diversity of our communities.</p> <p>Despite the challenges with tight timeframes in developing the SPF Local Investment Plan, local consultation and engagement has taken place across the three pillars; this collaborative work will continue through the delivery phase of SPF ensuring that the fund is able to adapt to the needs of local communities.</p>

How does your proposal link to the Welsh Governments Priorities for Wales? Please indicate below.

1. **A PROSPEROUS WALES** ... an innovative, productive and low carbon society which recognises the limits of the global environment and therefore uses resources efficiently and proportionately (including acting on climate change); and which develops a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work.

- The **Supporting Local Business** investment pillar will enable places to fund interventions that support local businesses to thrive, innovate and grow.

2. **A RESILIENT WALES ...** a nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change). Think about how your activity will have regard to protecting and enhancing biodiversity.

- The **Communities and Place** investment pillar will enable places to invest to restore their community spaces and relationships and create the foundations for economic development at the neighbourhood-level. The intention of this is to strengthen the social fabric of communities, supporting in building pride in place and undertaking environmental enhancements.

3. **A HEALTHIER WALES ...** a society in which people's physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.

- The **Communities and Place** investment pillar will enable places to invest to restore their community spaces and relationships and create the foundations for economic development at the neighbourhood-level. The intention of this is to strengthen the social fabric of communities, supporting in building pride in place and create conditions for healthier communities

4. **A MORE EQUAL WALES ...** A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio economic background and circumstances).

The **Communities and Place** investment pillar will enable places to invest to restore their community spaces and relationships and create the foundations for economic development at the neighbourhood-level. The intention of this is to strengthen the social fabric of communities, supporting in building pride in place and undertaking environmental enhancements

The **People and Skills** investment priority will help reduce the barriers some people face to employment and support them to move towards employment and education. Places can also target funding into skills for local areas to support employment and local growth.

5. A WALES OF COHESIVE COMMUNITIES ... attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities.

The **Communities and Place** investment pillar will enable places to invest to restore their community spaces and relationships and create the foundations for economic development at the neighbourhood-level. The intention of this is to strengthen the social fabric of communities, supporting in building pride in place and undertaking environmental enhancements

The **People and Skills** investment priority will help reduce the barriers some people face to employment and support them to move towards employment and education. Places can also target funding into skills for local areas to support employment and local growth.


6. A WALES OF VIBRANT CULTURE AND THRIVING ... a society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation.

The **Communities and Place** investment pillar will enable places to invest to restore their community spaces and relationships and create the foundations for economic development at the neighbourhood-level. The intention of this is to strengthen the social fabric of communities, supporting in building pride in place and undertaking environmental enhancements

The **People and Skills** investment priority will help reduce the barriers some people face to employment and support them to move towards employment and education. Places can also target funding into skills for local areas to support employment and local growth.

7. **A GLOBALLY RESPONSIBLE WALES ...** a nation which, when doing anything to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, takes account of whether doing such a thing may make a positive contribution to global well-being.

The **Communities and Place** investment pillar will enable places to invest to restore their community spaces and relationships and create the foundations for economic development at the neighbourhood-level. The intention of this is to strengthen the social fabric of communities, supporting in building pride in place.

Section 5-Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and Welsh Language Standards			
<i>(The Welsh Language Measure 2011 and the Welsh Language Standards require the Council to have 'due regard' for the positive or negative impact that any proposal may have on opportunities to use the Welsh language. Welsh Language Standards)</i>			
Requirement	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts in regards to the below?	What can be done to mitigate any negative impacts?	Please demonstrate any evidence used to form this opinion.
Compliance with the Welsh Language Standards. <i>Specifically Standards 88 - 93</i>	Positive	All promotional material will be provided in Welsh and English and any requests for information will be available in Welsh and English	The Census data indicates a growing proportion of Welsh language users in Blaenau Gwent. The ability of residents to use and engage through the medium of Welsh will form a key part of the SPF implementation.

<p>What opportunities are there to promote the Welsh Language? <i>e.g. status, use of Welsh language services, use of Welsh in everyday life in work / community</i></p>	Positive	There will be a range of opportunities to promote the Welsh language, through promotional material and courses available in Welsh and English	The Census data indicates a growing proportion of Welsh language users in Blaenau Gwent. The ability of residents to use and engage through the medium of Welsh will form a key part of the SPF implementation.
<p>What opportunities are there for a person or person to use the Welsh Language? <i>e.g. staff, residents and visitors</i></p>	Positive	All persons will be able to use the Welsh language through engagement with the SPF	The Census data indicates a growing proportion of Welsh language users in Blaenau Gwent. The ability of residents to use and engage through the medium of Welsh will form a key part of the SPF implementation.
<p>Has the Welsh Language been considered in order to treat the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language?</p>	Positive	All persons will be able to use the Welsh language through engagement with the SPF	The Census data indicates a growing proportion of Welsh language users in Blaenau Gwent. The ability of residents to use and engage through

			the medium of Welsh will form a key part of the SPF implementation.
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Section 6 – Children’s Rights Approach - [The Right Way](#)

The Children’s Rights Approach – The Right Way is a framework for working with children, grounded in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). It places the UNCRC at the core of planning and service delivery and integrates children’s rights into every aspect of decision-making, policy and practice. The Right Way focuses on three main them Participation, Provision and Protection.

Protected characteristics	Will the proposal have any positive impacts on the Children’s Rights Approach?	Will the proposal have any negative impacts on the Children’s Rights Approach?	Outline how the proposal could maximise any positive impacts or minimise any negative impact. Please indicate any views evidence you have that supports this.
Participation (child or young person as someone who actively contributes to society as a citizen)	Positive	No	Children and young people will be actively encouraged to participate in and benefit from the SPF programme

Provision (the basic rights of children and young people to survive and develop)	Positive	No	Children and young people will be actively encouraged to participate in and benefit from the SPF programme
Protection (children and young people are protected against exploitation, abuse or discrimination)	Positive	No	Children and young people will be actively encouraged to participate in and benefit from the SPF programme

Section 7– Community Safety

Duty to Consider Crime and Disorder Implications

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 places a duty on the local authority to exercise its various functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder, anti-social and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment, the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances, re-offending and serious violence.

Impacts	Will the proposal have any positive impacts on crime and disorder?	Will the proposal have any negative impacts on crime and disorder?	Outline how the proposal could maximise any positive impacts or minimise any negative impact. Please indicate any views evidence you have that supports this.
Crime	Positive	No	SPF will provide opportunities for greater engagement with communities to target the root causes of crime and support for communities to 'design out' crime.

(consider impact on each: victims, offenders and neighbourhoods)			
Anti-Social Behaviour and behaviour adversely affecting the local environment (consider impact on each: victims, offenders, neighbourhoods and green spaces)	Positive	No	SPF will provide opportunities for greater engagement with communities to target the root causes of anti social behaviour and behaviour adversely affecting the local environment
Misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances (Think vulnerable children, adults, families and communities)	Positive	No	SPF will provide opportunities for greater engagement with communities to target the root causes of misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances
Re-offending (Think young people and adults, victims, families, communities)	Positive	No	SPF will provide opportunities for greater engagement with communities to target the root causes of re-offending
Serious Violence (Think vulnerable young people, vulnerable adults, victims, families, communities)	Positive	No	SPF will provide opportunities for greater engagement with communities to target the root causes of serious violence

Counter Terrorism (People and places that are vulnerable to terrorism or violent extremism)	Positive	No	SPF will provide opportunities for greater engagement with communities to target the root causes of disengagement and support those vulnerable to terrorism or violent extremism
Community Cohesion (Asylum seekers, Migrants, Victims or Hate Crime, Community tensions)	Positive	No	SPF will provide opportunities for greater engagement with communities to build social cohesion

Section 8- Armed Forces Covenant Duty AFC Draft Statutory Guidance - Final.pdf			
Impacts	Will the proposal have any positive impacts on the armed forces community?	Will the proposal have any negative impacts on the armed forces community?	Outline how the proposal could maximise any positive impacts or minimise any negative impact. Please indicate any views evidence you have that supports this.
Health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of services • Planning and funding • Co-operation between bodies and professionals 	Positive	No	SPF provides a range of opportunities to support the armed forces community through enhancing the provision of services and improved cooperation between partner organisations

<p>These healthcare functions are within scope of the Duty in the following settings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NHS Primary Care services, including general practice, community pharmacies, NHS dental, NHS optometry services and public health screening services. • NHS Secondary Care services, including urgent and emergency care, hospital and community services, specialist care, mental health services, and additional needs services (as applicable). • Local authority-delivered healthcare services, including sexual health services and drug and alcohol misuse services 			
<p>Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admissions • Educational attainment and curriculum • Child wellbeing 	<p>Positive</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>SPF provides a range of opportunities to support the armed forces community through enhancing the provision of services and improved cooperation between partner organisations</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport • Attendance • Additional needs support • Use of Service Pupil Premium funding (England only) <p>These education functions are within scope of the Duty in compulsory education settings, that is, primary, secondary, and, for England only, compulsory further education. The Duty does not cover nursery (early years education), higher education, or other voluntary adult education settings</p>			
<p>Housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocations policy for social housing • Tenancy strategies (England only) • Homelessness • Disabled Facilities Grants 	<p>Positive</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>SPF provides a range of opportunities to support the armed forces community through enhancing the provision of services and improved cooperation between partner organisations</p>

Section 9-Data-Please outline any data or evidence that has been used to develop the proposal, this can be previous consultations, local/national data, pilot projects, reports, feedback from clients etc.

Data/evidence –What data/evidence was used? - provide any links.	What were the key findings?	How has the data/evidence informed this proposal?
<p>A range of data has been used to help shape and inform the SPF proposals, including Census data and data from the Wellbeing Assessments.</p>	<p>The findings reinforced the socio-economic challenges facing communities in Blaenau Gwent and the need to create improved conditions for residents, through sustainable accessible employment, training and employment pathways and measures to support the creation of sustainable attractive communities.</p>	<p>The evidence has identified a range of key interventions to support various areas for example through tailoring business support to target local businesses and the specific challenges they face and continuing elements of ESI funded projects that have worked well.</p>

Are there any data or information gaps and if so what are they and how do you intend to address them?

Some of the challenges with the data is that it may not penetrate or be able to access some of the more nuance challenges that communities face. The role of agencies and officers and research institutes could play a key role in this, through gaining a more detailed understanding of the personal challenges people face, gained through face-to-face interactions with people direct involvement in shaping services and projects. This could be achieved through the ongoing work of the CoL Working Group, the roll out of the ‘Hubs’ and creating feedback loops through this work.

Section 10-Consultation. Please provide details of consultation undertaken to support the proposal. Please consider the Gunning Principles: -

Principle 1: Consultation must take place when the proposals are still at a formative stage. You must not have already made up your mind.

Principle 2: Sufficient reasons must be put forward to allow for intelligent consideration and response. Have people been given the information and opportunity to influence?

Principle 3: Adequate time must be given for consideration and response. Is the consultation long enough bearing in mind the circumstances?

Principle 4: The product of consultation must be conscientiously taken into account when finalising the decision

Briefly describe any planned consultations or consultations that have been carried out to date. Please consider the above principles.

Please consider the following questions; -

- 1. Who did you consult?**
- 2. When did the consultation take place and was adequate time given for a response?**
- 3. Was there enough information provided to respond effectively?**
- 4. What were the findings?**
- 5. Have the findings been considered in regards to the decision?**

As noted above, the guiding principles of the SPF were shaped and informed through data analysis of key Census data. This was added to through the Wellbeing Assessment and through working closely with partners and agencies such as the Wellbeing Group, the CoL working group and a range of workshops with stakeholders and partners such as Third Sector organisations.

This work has shaped and will continue to shape proposals, in terms of what is delivered through SPF and how it's delivered.

Section 11-Monitoring and Review	
How will the implementation of the proposal be monitored, including the impacts or changes made?	The SPF will be continually reviewed and monitored by taking on board feedback from various groups and organisations to ensure that it responds to existing and emerging challenges.
What monitoring tools will be used?	Direct feedback through groups and partner organisations
How will the results be used for future development?	The results will inform any changes that need to be made to improve the interventions
How and when will it be reviewed?	Continually through feedback loops, for example working closely with businesses to understand what additional support is required.
Who is responsible for ensuring this happens?	The Local Partnership Group which is due to be established once details are received from SPF Lead Authority

Page 213

Section 12 - Decision

Using the information you have gathered from sections 1-9 please state in the table below whether you are able to proceed with the proposal.

Continue with the proposal in its current form Yes No

Continue with proposal but take into account reasonable steps to mitigate any negative impacts of the proposal	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
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Name of person completing the IIA	
Name:	Owen Ashton
Job Title:	Service Manager – Business & Regeneration
Date:	17.02.23

Head of Service / Director Approval			
Name:	Ellie Fry		
Job Title:	Corporate Director – Regeneration and Community Services		
Signature:		Date:	23.02.23

Please contact Policy & Partnerships should you require any further advice or guidance on completing your assessment via lissa.friel@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk or emma.scherptong@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk.

Agenda Item 8

Cabinet and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: N/A

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: N/A

Committee: **Place Scrutiny Committee**
Date of meeting: **14th March 2023**
Report Subject: **Forward Work Programme: 28th April 2023**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr Helen Cunningham, Deputy Leader / Cabinet Member Place and Environment**
Cllr John C Morgan, Cabinet Member Place and Regeneration
Report Submitted by: **Scrutiny and Democratic Officer**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Cabinet	Council	Other (please state)
x	x	03.03.23			14.03.23			

1. **Purpose of the Report**
 - 1.1 To present to Members the Place Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme for the Meeting on 25th April 2023 for discussion and agreement.
2. **Scope and Background**
 - 2.1 The Scrutiny Work Programmes are key aspects of the Council's planning and governance arrangements and support the requirements of the Constitution.
 - 2.2 The topics set out in the Forward Work Programme link to the strategic work of the Council as identified by the Council's revised Corporate Plan, corporate documents and supporting business plans.
 - 2.3 Effective work programmes are essential to ensure that the work of scrutiny makes a positive impact upon the Council's delivery of services.
 - 2.4 The Committee's Forward Work Programme was agreed in September 2022, recognising the fluidity of the document to enable the Committee to respond to urgent and emerging issues, and included timescales when reports will be considered by the Committee. The work programme is managed and implemented by the Scrutiny and Democratic Officer under the direction of the Chair and Committee.
 - 2.5 The forward work programme for the forthcoming meeting will be presented to Committee on a 6 weekly cycle in order that Members can consider the programme of work; request information is included within the reports, as appropriate and / or make amendments to the work programme.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 **Option 1:** The Scrutiny Committee consider the Forward Work Programme for the meeting 25th April 2023, and

- Make any amendments to the topics scheduled for the meetings;
- Suggest any additional invitees that the committee requires to fully consider the reports; and
- Request any additional information to be included with regards to the topics to be discussed.

3.2 **Option 2:** The Scrutiny Committee agree the Forward Programme for the meeting 25th April 2023, as presented.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- Appendix 1 – Forward Work Programme – Meeting on 25th April 2023

Place Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme

Dates	Scrutiny Topic	Purpose	Lead Officer	Cabinet / Council
Tuesday 25 th April 2023	Highways Maintenance Plan	Pre-Decision To consider the Highways Maintenance Plan.	Clive Rogers	Cabinet – 2023/24 FWP

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