

Committee: **Executive Committee**
Date of meeting: **22nd September 2021**
Report Subject: **Partnership Delivery Approach – Town Centres**
Portfolio Holder: **Councillor D. Davies, Executive Member for
Regeneration and Economic Development & Deputy
Leader**
Report Submitted by: **Amy Taylor, Team Manager Regeneration
Opportunities**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
15.06.21	x	07.09.21			15.09.21	22.09.21		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1. To seek approval for the formulation of Town Centre Advisory Boards across the Town Centres of Abertillery, Brynmawr and Ebbw Vale to support a partnership delivery approach for future project delivery.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1. In 2015, Members provided approval for the formulation of an Advisory Board to support delivery of the Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) and Vibrant and Viable Places (VVP) Programmes within the Town of Tredegar.
- 2.2. The establishment of an Advisory Board was an obligation under the funding terms and conditions of both the THI and VVP programmes. It was intended that the Board would oversee the delivery of projects for both funding programmes and it would be a consultative body who would advise on the control and management of the THI and VVP initiatives in Tredegar.
- 2.3. Since 2015, the Advisory Board has worked alongside Council Officers and Elected Members to deliver projects in Tredegar and this approach has received positive feedback from all stakeholders involved.
- 2.4. A placemaking approach is being developed across the Towns within Blaenau Gwent. These will establish key visions and projects to deliver across each of the Towns but there are some challenges we face in order to deliver on these plans.
- 2.5. The Council only has limited financial and human resources in order to deliver projects. Therefore, we need to look at ways we can involve other key stakeholders and partners to achieve our vision.

- 2.6. The Tredegar Advisory Board has provided a platform for both discussion, development and delivery of projects. Adopting a similar approach across each of the other towns could help the Council to support projects across each of the Towns supported by a wide range of stakeholders.
- 2.7. Stakeholders could include potential funders, project delivery partners, Elected Members, business forms and any other key groups.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

This report will be considered by the Regeneration Scrutiny Committee on 15th September 2021, and any feedback will be provided verbally to the Executive Committee.

Option One

- 3.1. That the Executive Committee provide approval for the formation of a series of Advisory Boards for the Town Centres of Abertillery, Brynmawr and Ebbw Vale based upon the Tredegar Advisory Board approach and acknowledge the draft Terms of Reference (**Appendix One**). The Advisory Board shall act as a consultative body to oversee development and delivery of Town Centre Strategies and Plans.
- 3.2. Each shall start with a small membership identified by members of the Town Centres Task and Finish Group alongside Officers. The membership can then be expanded and developed further as discussions develop.

Option Two

- 3.3. No action is taken and delivery continues using existing approaches and mechanisms for engagement and consultation.

Preferred Option

- 3.4. Option one is the preferred option and we propose that the Advisory Board is initially established with members for a one-year term up until the Welsh Local Government Elections in 2022.
- 3.5. If the initial one-year term is successful, the boards would continue and board members would serve for up to a 3-year period.
- 3.6. The Executive Member for Economic Development and Regeneration will be invited to chair the first meeting of each of the Boards. In their first meeting each Board will then nominate and select a chairperson to oversee the term of the Board (initially one-year, three years thereafter).

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

- 4.1. The report supports the following Corporate Plan priorities:

- To protect and enhance our environment and infrastructure to benefit our communities;
- To support a fairer sustainable economy and community; and
- An ambitious and innovative council delivering the quality services we know matter to our communities.

The Town Centre strategy will consider existing infrastructure within our town centres and explore ways that this can change to support regeneration activity.

4.2. 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 that they live, learn, work and play

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.

4.3. In supporting our statutory responsibilities towards the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act, the Town Centre Strategy will support in creating:

- A more prosperous Wales;
- A resilient Wales; and
- A Wales of cohesive communities

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

Cost

5.1. There are no direct cost implications associated with this report.

Risk including Mitigating Actions

5.2. There is a risk that new Advisory Boards are not as successful as the Board that has been operating in Tredegar. To mitigate this, we will adapt and refine the Advisory Board approach to ensure that it continues to support project delivery. Should the Advisory Board approach not be successful and cause barriers to project delivery we will review the approach and any further changes that may be required.

5.3. There is a risk that the Advisory Board does not support a proposed approach for a Town Centre. In these cases we will be able to utilise the feedback from

the Advisory Board to understand the issues/barriers and use this to adapt our approach to ensure a positive outcome.

- 5.4. There is a risk that we are unable to properly resource and support Advisory Board set up across all Towns identified in section 3.1. As a result of the placemaking work already carried out set up will start with the set-up of the Advisory Boards in Brynmawr and Ebbw Vale. Once these are fully set-up we will move onto Abertillery.

Legal

- 5.5. A terms of reference will be established for the members of the Advisory Board and these will be reviewed alongside the stakeholders and the Executive Member for Regeneration and Economic Development at each of the initial meetings of the Advisory Boards.

Human Resources

- 5.6. Overseeing projects approved by the Advisory Boards may have implications on existing staffing resources from Officers in Regeneration and where possible we will seek to perform a supporting role to the Advisory Boards. It will act as a key stakeholder for Projects in each of the respective areas.
- 5.7. Setting up advisory boards across all the Towns at the same time could have resourcing issues and so we are proposing to start with Brynmawr and Ebbw Vale followed by Abertillery.

6. Supporting Evidence

Performance Information and Data

- 6.1. Annual reports of the Advisory Boards will be prepared and reported to the Regeneration Scrutiny Committee and Executive Committee. This will enable monitoring of performance of the Advisory Boards and areas for further development.

Expected outcome for the public

- 6.2. It is hoped that by bringing Advisory Boards together we will be able to deliver projects that encourage future use of our Town Centres. Changing the way our Town Centres operate and offering a diverse range of uses would improve the variety of services that residents have access to.

Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)

- 6.3. Advisory Boards provide a mechanism for engagement with key stakeholders across each of the Towns. They can bring forward their own proposals / thoughts for projects for consultation with other Board Members and they can also provide their thoughts / feedback on proposals put forward by other Board Members or the Local Authority.

Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)

- 6.4. In the long term the Council needs to find ways to work with Stakeholders across Blaenau Gwent but with only limited resources we need to find ways of encouraging other stakeholders to develop and deliver projects. The Council can still support these projects but accountability and resourcing could be brought forward from other organisations. This could result in projects receiving greater local support and increase long term sustainability.

Preventative focus

- 6.5. By establishing Advisory Boards now, we hope to prevent further deterioration of our Town Centres. They all face significant challenges to survive but bringing groups of stakeholders who want to support and help could prevent them from facing even bigger challenges in the future.

Collaboration / partnership working

- 6.6. The Advisory Boards rely on collaboration / partnership working in order to be successful. By bringing local stakeholders together it is hoped that they can all work together to identify and support projects that will benefit their Towns.

Integration(across service areas)

- 6.7. The Advisory Boards will be utilised by the Regeneration Team and other service areas as a means of engaging with key stakeholders across the Town Centres. It will set up the means of contact for engagement about potential projects across the Towns.

7. Monitoring Arrangements

- 7.1. As advised in section 6.1 performance monitoring will be carried out annually and reported through the Scrutiny Forward Work Programme. It will also be reported on through the Regeneration Business Plan.

8. Background Documents /Electronic Links

- *Appendix One – Terms of Reference, Advisory Board*