

Committee: **Regeneration Scrutiny Committee**
Date of meeting: **24th March 2021**
Report Subject: **Tredegar Townscape Heritage Initiative Progress Report**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr D. Davies, Executive Member Regeneration and Economic Development**
Report Submitted by: **Richard Crook, Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services**

Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
2 nd March 2021	4 th March 2021	11.03.21			24.03.21	14.04.21		

1. **Purpose of the Report**
The purpose of this report is to update Scrutiny on the current position regarding the Tredegar Townscape Heritage Initiative, also providing Members with a snapshot of projects completed to date.
2. **Scope and Background**
 - 2.1 The report outlines progress against projects delivered under the Heritage Lottery funded 'Townscape Heritage Initiative' to date. A detailed closure report will be submitted to Scrutiny on conclusion of the programme in December 2021.
 - 2.2 In December 2013 the Council secured £1,550,000 from the Heritage Lottery Funding (HLF) under the Tredegar Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) towards the restoration of all properties contained within the Historical Core 'The Circle' of the Tredegar Southern Conservation Area.
 - 2.3 The HLF funding has been matched from the following sources: -

Welsh Government VVP	£550,000
Blaenau Gwent CBC	£486,000
Welsh Government TRI	£350,000
Cadw	£60,000
Private Sector	£2.670,000
 - 2.4 The projects require a project specific amount of private sector investment. There is no set rate of intervention, projects are either funded via the 'Conservation Deficit' gap funding approach where projects include vacant floor space and external works; or they will be determined using the intervention rates for re-instating authentic details (up to 90%) and appropriate structural works (up-to 70%).
 - 2.5 Complementary Initiatives were also integral to the THI Programme, with funds contributing to the delivery of the following schemes:
 - Free Town Centre Wifi

- QR Codes for heritage trails (integral school curriculum)
- Heritage Centre interpretation panels
- Heritage Filming Project

2.6 The heritage filming project saw a team of professional's work on a project guiding young people to research local history and produce a series of small films based on their findings. Each team of young people learned how to investigate, document and research local history that is largely unknown. This project linked to pupils from local schools across Tredegar. Their findings will then be included in a digital gallery for the community to view.

2.7 The programme was initially scheduled to be concluded in July 2020, although as a consequence of the current Covid-19 pandemic, the HLF have now agreed to extend the programme until December 2021.

2.8 The following schemes have been completed to date, and Appendix 1 provides a pictorial snapshot of how the grant intervention has provided the opportunity to redevelop the following properties:

- The Tredegar Arms
- No. 10 The Circle
- No. 4 Morgan Street
- No's 4-5 The Circle

2.9 The Coalfields Regeneration Trust have just completed works to No.10 The Circle, the original birthplace of the National Health Service. For decades prior to the setting up of the National Health Service in July 1948. The Medical Aid society was famously the blueprint from which Aneurin Bevan, born in the town and its representative in Parliament as MP for Ebbw Vale – developed the idea of the NHS, as minister of health in Labour's post-Second World War government. No 10, The Circle was the society's office for much of its 105-year existence, the place where subscriptions were paid and claims were made, enabling people to be able to access medical care that for many would otherwise have been unaffordable. The restoration works took nearly 2 years, with the building being used as an open access multi-functional space for educational classes, training, seminars, meetings, and include a heritage centre which will tell the story of the building.

<https://youtu.be/ewoKhYilkAQ>

2.10 Works to the former Town Hall (NCB Club) continue and remains the only scheme uncompleted within the programme. The scheme has experienced significant delays as a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic with the contractor furloughing staff through the months of March to September 2021. The HLF have agreed a revised programme of works and are currently considering a request for additional financial support to cover costs associated with the delayed programme.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

- 3.1 To note the extension to the THI Programme originally planned for closure in July 2020 and the revised completion date of December 2021.
- 3.2 To acknowledge progress made to date with the refurbishment of properties outlined in 2.4 above and also highlighted within Appendix 1 of this report.
- 3.3 To note the involvement of the THI Advisory Board who are responsible for the continued management of the Tredegar THI Programme and ensure the following key principles are applied to the methodology of the programmes delivery:
 - a) To hold the vision for the Historical Core.
 - b) To assist in designing, programming and delivering events.
 - c) To assist the selection process.
 - d) To ensure the emergent interpretive and access proposals in accord with the underlying vision for the project.
 - e) To develop further the interpretive ideas and links with relevant audiences.
 - f) To develop further detailed briefs on:
 - g) Educational delivery
 - h) Community involvement
- 3.4 The Council continue to rollout a Building Enhancement Grant Programme, which is a thematic of the Welsh Government funded Targeted Regeneration Investment Programme (TRI). The programme provides an opportunity to continue refurbishing properties located in the Historical Core now all the HLF funds has been fully allocated.

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

- 4.1 The project supports the Corporate Plan Outcome to support a fairer sustainable economy and community. Through these projects will work with partners to develop a new vision for our town centres ensuring their long term future.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

There are no direct cost implications associated with this report, only acknowledgement of the grant process administered by Officers of the Regeneration Department.

5.1 ***Impact on Budget***

Should the NCB Club not be finished within the extended deadline, the outstanding funds may be lost to the programme and subsequently the applicant.

5.2 *Risk*

Although there is an identified risk that the former NCB Club is completed within the extended deadline imposed by the HLF, the ramifications of not finishing will have financial implications for the applicant.

5.3 *Legal*

In order to administer grants, work has been undertaken with the Councils property solicitor to establish a process for grant applications, due diligence and terms and conditions which enable a full audit trail to be put in place.

5.4 *Human Resources*

The projects are currently project managed within the Regeneration Opportunities Team. This supported service areas including Resources, Community Services, Estates and Asset Management and Planning.

6. Supporting Evidence

In order to secure the funding through under the THI umbrella, projects were required to identify how they contributed towards meeting the outputs identified in the original THI business plan. Details of the outputs already achieved and those associated with the NCB Club refurbishment will be documented in the closure report.

6.1 *Expected outcome for the public*

The funding opportunities provided through the THI grant intervention will contribute towards the overall regeneration of Blaenau Gwent by improving the viability of our town centre and also providing a more attractive environment for tourists.

6.2 *Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)*

Consultation and engagement activity was undertaken on numerous occasions throughout the THI programme. Member engagement will continue, with a closure report being planned on conclusion of the programme.

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

The projects and work carried out through the Tredegar THI programme are aimed at improving and upgrading the physical infrastructure of Tredegar that will help us to meet requirements in terms of creating a more pleasant environment to live and work. The programmes will also assist in improving the long term viability of the town centre. It will enable us to bring derelict / vacant buildings back in to use for the benefit of our businesses, residents and visitors.

6.4 *Preventative focus*

Derelict or vacant buildings if left to further deteriorate will require greater works to bring them back into use and in cases of listed buildings the liabilities for building owners will only increase more and more until works are undertaken.

6.5 *Collaboration / partnership working*

The THI Advisory Board is a strategic working group with key partners delivering the vision of the Tredegar heritage ethos. The group comprises of the likes of Coalfields Regeneration Trust, Museum Society, Business Forum, Ward Members, Town Council, Cymru Creations, Tredegar Comprehensive.

6.6 *Integration (across service areas)*

The projects being delivered cut across a number of service areas and as they are developed appropriate governance and project management arrangements across the multi-disciplinary teams.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 A number of monitoring arrangements are in place to monitor performance of the projects. These include

- Quarterly monitoring reports submitted to the Heritage Lottery.
- Risk register
- Progress reports submitted to the THI Advisory Board, Management Team and Scrutiny Committees.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- Appendix 1 – photographic evidence of schemes completed to date