



# TOWN CENTRE FRAMEWORK

PREPARED FOR THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL



Nathaniel Lichfield  
& Partners  
Planning. Design. Economics.





# GALLERY

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners (NLP) has been commissioned by Vale of Glamorgan Council (VoG) to prepare a Framework to guide the future of the following five town centres:

1. Holton Road, Barry;
2. High Street and Broad Street, Barry;
3. Cowbridge;
4. Llantwit Major; and,
5. Penarth.

This document seeks to identify the challenges facing the centres and establishes a vision and series of strategic priorities that will help to address existing challenges and ensure that they can become more attractive and successful destinations which are enjoyed by residents, workers and visitors.

To undertake the production of this Framework a range of relevant secondary data was reviewed to understand national and local trends, policies and strategies to regenerate these centres effectively. Detailed site visits to all town centre areas were also conducted to create a SWOT analysis of each centre. This was refined by the various different consultation events which engaged a range of stakeholders in each centre. By interpreting the information gathered a Framework was created with bespoke regeneration priorities and action plans for each centre.

This Framework presents an opportunity to enhance the way people use, experience and perceive these centres in the Vale of Glamorgan. Town centres are key community spaces and places that help define a town and provide a sense of identity. However, they are fluid entities which have to evolve over time if they are to withstand the increasingly strong competition of surrounding centres and emerging forms of retailing. This Framework provides a means by which the town centres might respond positively to the current challenges facing them, such as changing habits, recession, competition and social capital.

The five centres have individually been assessed to understand the context and background to each one of them. They vary in their diversity of uses, accessibility, connections and pedestrian count which creates individual town issues, visions and guiding objectives unique to each centre.

## Holton Road, Barry

Holton Road is a long street which accommodates a range of Barry's national multiple retailers and largely fulfils the day-to-day comparison good shopping needs of local residents.

Despite recent public realm improvements and the Centre's position at the top of the LDP retail hierarchy, Holton Road is considered to be lacking in vitality and viability as well as having a poor image.

The Framework's vision and objectives seek to address some of these concerns. It sets out steps to revitalise Holton Road's image by:

- diversifying the uses within the centre;
- flexible approach to expansion/contraction of commercial frontage
- bring about active uses of the upper floors;
- encourage 'ownership' and look to identify a champion
- promote events in the Centre;
- facilitate 'pop-up' uses in vacant units; and
- encourage improvements to properties in a poor state of repair.

This would be in tandem with a renewed focus on marketing in order to address negative preconceptions coupled with more visible celebration of previous successful public realm schemes and achieve a step change in image.

Future publicly funded public realm improvements should seek to enhance physical linkages between the railway station and the Barry Waterfront development which could have a considerable bearing on the future vitality and viability of Holton Road.

## High Street and Broad Street, Barry

High Street and Broad Street is a Centre, of variable quality and function. High Street has a vibrant independent trader feel, whilst Broad Street acts as a lower quality night-time economy hub.

Consultation highlighted concerns that High Street was a 'secret' and not well known beyond Barry. Concerns were also expressed over the appearance of Broad Street, as this street was perceived as a gateway into the Centre and therefore failing to entice visitors.

The concentration of takeaways and night-time economy uses, mostly on Broad Street, would benefit from diversification to encompass a wider variety of night-time economy uses. The vision and framework will seek to improve Broad Street as a entrance into this Centre, help attract visitors to stop, and raise awareness of High Street as Barry's independent shopping cluster.

## Cowbridge

Cowbridge is an elegant market town with a wealth of historic buildings. It is referred to as the Bond Street of Wales and boasts a wide range of unique independent shops. It provides a chic shopping destination and experience but in order to maintain this momentum it is considered that the centre needs to continue to widen its offer, potentially with extended opening hours.

Cowbridge benefits from a number of historical attractions, a very successful annual Food Festival and Parade as well as leisure facilities. However the centre does not cater that well for older children - something which could be encouraged. The provision of a tourist centre would also be an advantage.

To a large extent the challenge is to maintain the inherent character of the town and to ensure that its obvious success is preserved. Therefore any changes should be modest, gradual and very well considered.

The parking situation has been flagged as an issue for residents and visitors alike and a combination of additional provision with better enforcement in the medium term is needed.



# TOWN CENTRE FRAMEWORK

**Llantwit Major**

Llantwit Major benefits from some exceptional attributes being located at the gateway to the Glamorgan Heritage Coast, an intriguing historical association with Welsh Saints and attractive historical quarter, railway station and extensive car parking provision. However despite these attributes, the centre appears to be under performing.

Taking into account these findings the vision and framework seeks to help create one renewed image for Llantwit Major based upon what is unique about this centre. It seeks to improve the centre’s appeal to tourists, via diversification of uses and improvement in the appearance of the centre, as well as its linkages with the Heritage Coast. The implementation of the Llantwit Major Framework should seek to harness the views of the community in order to help focus efforts in a collaborative manner.

There were also some clearly conflicting opinions and anecdotal evidence of disparate groups - attempting to build consensus would focus the considerate enthusiasm that exists.

**Penarth**

Penarth is an attractive, successful historical centre located close to a wide range of interesting attractions. The majority of the Town Centre is designated as a Conservation Area which contains an attractive Listed Victorian arcade and 40 other Listed Buildings. Despite these attributes consultation suggested that the Centre had not fully exploited its appeal.

An essential component of a successful centre is a clear brand. In order to begin to appeal to those people visiting the Cardiff Bay Barrage, Penarth Pier and Penarth Esplanade, Penarth needs to build upon a coordinated brand and diversify its offer to cater for all. This diversification needs to encompass the Centre’s day-time and night-time offer in order to attract visitors into the Centre and thereby capture additional spending. Particular attention will need to be focused on ensuring that visitors are encouraged to access the Centre via sustainable transport means, although due consideration of car parking provision will also need to be addressed.

As with Cowbridge there is much in Penarth that works well and it is important to build on the positives - the range of independents, sufficient diversity and good occupancy rates. Clearer and more constantly applied design guidance in relation to shop fronts would also help to elevate the standards of renovation and improve overall quality and perceptions.





**Cross cutting themes**

The five centres examined have revealed that there are a number of cross-cutting issues that are common to all the centres. These cross-cutting issues, which are split into four themes, are explored in more detail in Chapter 9 highlighting what common actions and objectives are required to enhance the viability and vitality of all of the centres. Underpinning the four themes is the fundamental issue relating to the challenges of delivery.



**Creating and Marketing an image**

Each centre needs to create a distinct, coherent and positive image to attract future visitors and thereby ensuring future vitality and viability of the centres. A key action for each centre is to develop a marketing plan which is communicated through various innovative means to ensure centres keep pace with changing consumer needs and patterns. The identification and involvement of ‘champions’ in these town centres is crucial to the success of this - in other words a well supported bottom-up approach.



**Improving and maintaining the street scene and public realm**

Physical improvements to the public realm/street scene was highlighted as an issue in all centres and it is recommended that a public realm audit is completed for each centre. This would assist in understanding the on-going maintenance measures that need to be secured and the potential requirements for the reuse of vacant premises. In addition it is recommended that a review of shopfront and signage planning policy mechanisms and current approaches to planning enforcement is undertaken.



**Improving centre accessibility and legibility**

The style and quality of signage varied within and between the five centres. As such, it is recommended that a signage strategy is undertaken to identify potential improvements in orientation around the centres. This would help to enhance the sustainability and accessibility of each centre, whilst also improving the extent to which they cater for tourists and visitors.

It is also recommended that civil enforcement of car parking is introduced in all centres to ensure that there are adequate opportunities for car parking. This should be coupled with a transport strategy to consider improvements in sustainable transport linkages.

Mechanisms to encourage measures which offer extended opening hours should also be investigated.



**Making Cardiff’s proximity an opportunity**

Cardiff will continue to be an influence upon the context of these centres. This Framework recommends consideration of how these centres can positively respond to the opportunities offered by neighbouring larger commercial centres. The development of distinctive brands for each centre will be important in this regard.



**Challenges of delivery**

The importance of partnership working and overcoming economic challenges is key to meeting the challenges of delivery. The integration of different sectors and the coordination of strategies helps the implementation of any successful regeneration initiative. The question of how the implementation plan can be delivered is also equally important. Overcoming this challenge will require innovative thinking in fund sourcing, prioritisation of spending, involvement of key stakeholders, including the local community and third sector, and integration of interventions so that actions can be targeted and complementary.

The Implementation Plan in Chapter 10 uses the Objectives and Framework for each centre to identify specific actions that would help to realise the full potential of each location. The responsibility of these actions has been designated to various parties who need to work together to deliver them effectively. The Implementation Plan also sets out possible delivery mechanisms along with a cost (low, medium or high) and time (short, medium and long) indication which provides the basis for a monitoring mechanism.

Whilst there are a number of overlapping themes and issues that relate to all of the centres, they do vary in terms of their quality, function and success. The common aim should be to draw upon existing qualities and the identified potential of each centre so that they might serve existing residents, workers and visitors better and attract more people - and expenditure - and be widely regarded as strong attractive and vibrant locations.



# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners (NLP) has been commissioned by Vale of Glamorgan Council (VoG) to prepare a Framework to guide the future of the following five town centres:

- 1 Holton Road, Barry;
- 2 High Street and Broad Street, Barry;
- 3 Cowbridge;
- 4 Llantwit Major; and,
- 5 Penarth.

1.2 The key objective of the Framework is to:

**“ Assist in identifying future priorities and delivery responsibilities over the coming 5-10 years in respect of each centre ”**

1.3 This document seeks to identify the challenges facing the five centres in VoG. It provides a framework for VoG Council to work with Ward Members, the retail sector, property owners, investors, community groups, members of the public and, local and regional partners to respond to these challenges and develop a successful set of centres for residents, business and visitors to enjoy.





### Framework Aims

- 1.4 This Framework will:
- 1 Assess centres' current strengths, weaknesses, opportunities & threats;
  - 2 Identify a vision for each centre; and,
  - 3 Set out a series of guiding objectives and implementation plan for achieving the vision in respect of each centre.
- 1.5 The Framework is intended to be an expression of the Local Authority and local community's aspirations and place shaping objectives for each of the centres. It is intended to assist and stimulate economic prosperity and to protect and enhance the centres' future vitality and viability whilst seeking to maintain their inherent character and distinctiveness. It will not identify each individual action or measure, but rather will establish the strategic priorities for each town centre. In addition, it should also to be used as a tool to guide developers in formulating development proposals which will help to enable the visions for the town centres to be realised.

### Framework Structure

- 1.6 This document is structured as follows:
- **Section 2** - Method;
  - **Section 3** - Contextual Issues;
  - **Section 4 - 8** – Centre Frameworks; and
  - **Section 9** – Cross Cutting Themes
  - **Section 10** - Implementation Plan

### Framework Status

- 1.7 This future status of the Framework will be for the VoG Council to decide. The Framework could form an approved Council report or be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in the future, providing guidance to supplement the policies within the future VoG Local Development Plan (LDP).
- 1.8 It is envisaged that Cabinet will want to consider the Document in detail and potentially consult further prior to determining how it can be best utilised to achieve its objectives.



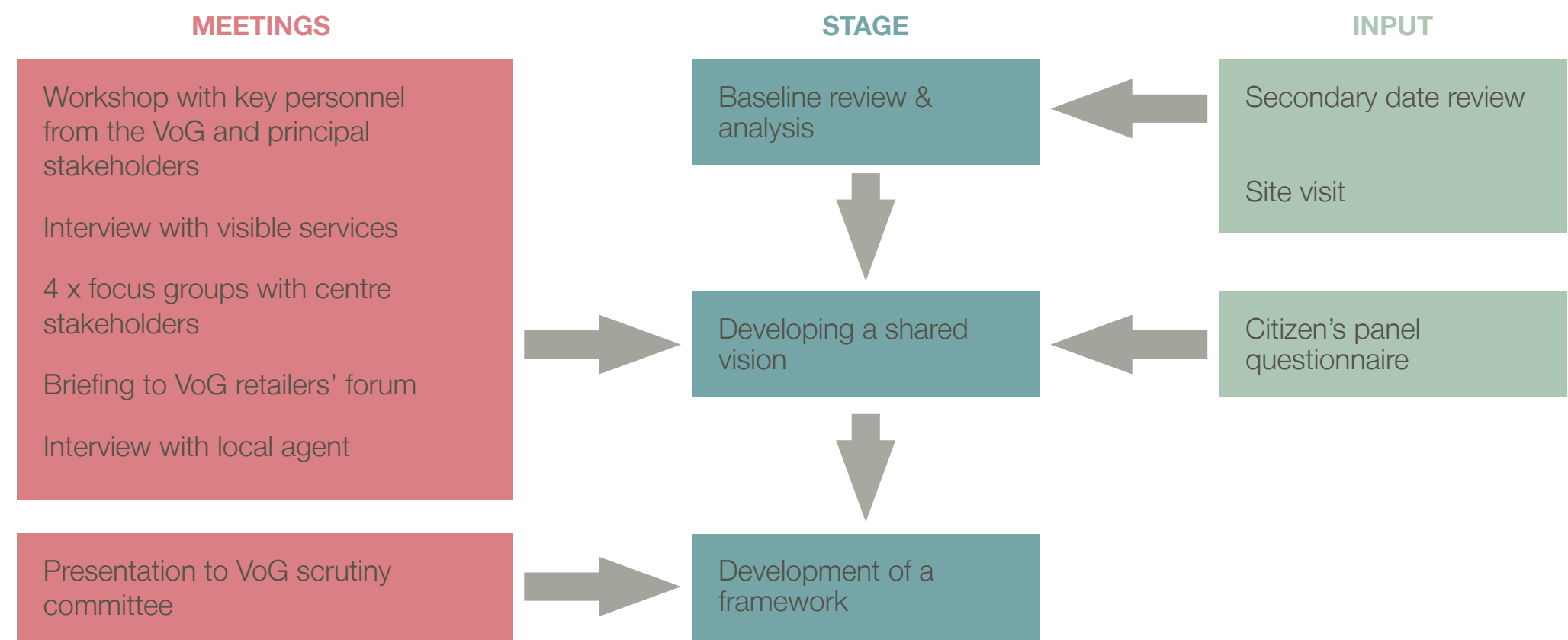


# 2.0 METHOD

2.1 This chapter describes the process undertaken to produce the framework. It summarises the commission methodology into three key stages.

Summary of Methodology

2.2 Detail on the 3 stage methodology is provided below.





1. Baseline Review and Analysis

Secondary data review

- 2.3 The First stage of the Framework reviewed all relevant secondary data to gain a comprehensive understanding of the national trends, different policy approaches and strategies to regenerating town centres as well as an examination of location specific documents relating to planning policies, regeneration strategies, transport and tourism strategies.
- 2.4 A comprehensive list of key documents that were reviewed can be found in Appendix 1.

Site visits to town centre areas

- 2.5 To supplement the secondary data review, detailed site visits to all town centre areas were conducted. All site visits were undertaken on a week-day, during working hours.
- 2.6 To assist with consistency across the centres, a detailed site proforma was completed as part of each site visit considering a wide variety of themes such as centre appearance and urban design, accessibility, car parking provision, diversity of uses and presence of multi-national retailers. These findings were presented in detailed SWOT analyses of each centre in relation to the following themes:
  - 1 Economic;
  - 2 Socio-economic; and,
  - 3 Environmental.
- 2.7 The key issues (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) identified at the evidence gathering stage are provided in Section 4-8 of this document. These SWOT analyses have been up-dated and refined in light of subsequent consultation stages.
- 2.8 The SWOT analysis identified the current state of the centre providing an initial bench-mark with which to help identify the ways in which these centres could be improved for the future. Given that each centre is unique, the SWOT analysis helped in developing regeneration priorities and action plans which are bespoke to each centre, even though certain actions may well be relevant to all centres.

2. Developing a Shared Vision

- 2.9 The important role that town centres play in community life is recognised, as is the value of community involvement. As such, following a detailed site visit and review of secondary data, consultation events were undertaken. This stage was key to informing the study and essential for developing a shared vision for the future of each centre.

Community and Stakeholder Involvement

- 2.10 In completing the Framework a range of stakeholders from private and public sectors were engaged. The following groups and stakeholders participated in formulating this Framework:
  - 1 Representatives from the VoG Visible Services Council Division;
  - 2 Local Councillors and Ward Members;
  - 3 Representatives from the VoG Planning, and Transportation Division;
  - 4 Representatives from Capital Region Tourism;
  - 5 Representatives from the Welsh Government;
  - 6 Representatives from individual Trading Associations, Cowbridge Chamber of Commerce and Penarth Retail Representatives;
  - 7 A local land and property agent;
  - 8 The VoG Citizen's Panel; and,
  - 9 The Vale Retailers' Forum.
- 2.11 Various methods were used to engage with the different stakeholders these included:
  - 1 A semi-structured interview with key personnel from the VoG Visible Services Department;
  - 2 A number of round-table workshops were held to engage with key stakeholders in each town centre, local councillors and representatives from key organisations;
  - 3 A questionnaire was sent to the VoG Citizen's Panel (400 responses were received);
  - 4 A presentation and question and answer session was held with the Vale Retailers' Forum; and,
  - 5 A semi-structured interview with a local agent.

- 2.12 Interviewees and participants in the workshops and questionnaires provided information on what is currently happening in the town centres and what they felt the centres should be striving towards in the future.
- 2.13 In the round-table workshops the groups were specifically asked to identify what they considered to be the future key issues for the town centre and where and how these could be addressed. These were then reviewed as part of group discussion and prioritised accordingly.
- 2.14 The findings from this engagement were then used to refine the SWOT analysis and develop a vision for each centre and the accompanying vision objectives.

3. Development of a Framework

- 2.15 By interpreting the information gathered during the previous stages, a framework was developed, including an Implementation Plan. This provides:
  - 1 A clear and practical framework which identifies priorities and objectives for each town centre area;
  - 2 A vision for each centre area; and,
  - 3 An implementation plan, complete with short term, medium term and long term actions and delivery mechanisms alongside a Monitoring mechanism.

## 3.0 CONTEXTUAL ISSUES



### Why are town centres important?

**“Vital, vibrant town centres are the heart of sustainable communities, and they are core to a healthy and prosperous Welsh Economy”**

National Assembly for Wales Enterprise and Business Committee, Regeneration of Town Centres, January 2012)

- 3.1 Town centres are key community spaces – locations for social integration and commerce. They are places that help define a town and give a sense of identity but are also fluid entities, evolving over time in response to external and internal influences.
- 3.2 These characteristics illustrate the importance of town centres. They also demonstrate the complex issues which are at play and highlight the challenges that exist in seeking to guide the effective management of town centres for the future.

### What are the challenges?

- 3.3 There are numerous challenges facing town centres which, have increased particularly in the last couple of decades. These are well-documented in recent literature published as part of the Mary Portas Review, the National Assembly for Wales' Inquiry in town centre regeneration and Action for Market Town publications, and relate to themes such as:
  - 1 Changing habits;
  - 2 Economic recovery;
  - 3 Competition; and,
  - 4 Social capital.
- 3.4 All of the above have changed the context within which town centres operate and have set the framework against which town centres need to respond.
- 3.5 Habits have radically changed over the last 20 years. In terms of retail, the rise of internet shopping, the increased role of supermarkets and impact of time-poor shoppers have changed the field of competition for town centres and also the things which shoppers value. Many shoppers now value convenience and benefit from a range of tools at their disposal with which to compare products and prices.



- 3.6 In addition to shopping, the increasing popularity of eating-out and drinking has seen town centres accommodate an increased number of these types of leisure services , as well acting as hubs for visitors/tourists and the town's working population. These changing habits have meant that town centres can no longer just be considered as retail centres and indeed their future viability is likely to depend on their ability to provide a greater diversification of functions in reaction to people's changing habits and expectations.

- 3.7 This accords with the approach advocated by Action for Market Towns (2011) which states that:

**“ High streets and town centres that are fit for the 21st century need to be multifunctional social centres, not simply competitors for stretched consumers. They must offer irresistible opportunities and experiences that do not exist elsewhere, are rooted in the interests and needs of local people, and will meet the demands of a rapidly changing world. ”**

Action for Market Towns (2011), Twenty-First Century Town Centre

- 3.8 The impact of the recent recession has meant that many town centre retailers are experiencing pressure from falling consumer spending (as people choose to save rather than spend) and rising costs, meaning retailer's margins are being squeezed. This has meant that vacancy rates have increased more quickly. Vacant floorspace in town centres in the UK in 2011 accounted for 12.02%, compared with 9.21% in 2006 (GOAD). In the Vale of Glamorgan, vacant floorspace within identified centres has remained close to 9% between 2007 and 2011, although this average figure disguises significant variations in vacancies between individual areas. For example, the vacancy rate at Upper Holton Road, Barry rose to 24.3% in 2007 and has since decreased to 18.3% in 2011. This highlights how some areas have been particularly badly hit by the recession.

- 3.9 In addition to this the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills recent report entitled 'Understanding High Street Performance' also references evidence that the economic downturn has particularly impacted upon comparison rather than convenience retailers, which have been impacted to a lesser extent .

- 3.10 As a result it is important to consider how businesses may be best supported in town centres, to ensure these centres remain vital and viable by being able to adapt to changing market conditions.

- 3.11 Increased competition from the internet, and now new guises such as mobile retailing whereby customers compare product prices via mobile phone apps, as well as new out-of-centre developments, have all contributed to the changing face of competition. Town centres are now finding that they need to capitalise on their retail unique shopping experience and offer in order to stay vital and viable.

- 3.12 The need for collaboration between all those involved and at all levels is also increasingly recognised as a prerequisite for successful town centres.

- 3.13 The recently published National Assembly for Wales' Enterprise and Business Committee's Inquiry recommendations into town centre regeneration requires close collaboration between public, private and voluntary sectors, although it acknowledges that the best vehicle for achieving those partnerships can vary from place to place.

- 3.14 Increased collaboration will aid the creation of social capital, which is defined as:

**“ the web of cooperative relationships between citizens that facilitate resolution of collective action problems ”**

(Brehm and Rahn 1997, p. 999)

- 3.15 Working collaboratively and creating social capital can help to realise new and better ways of responding to identified problems or challenges. New solutions, which are more efficient and solutions which can help to create a mutually positive resolution for everyone can arise as result of increased cooperation.

- 3.16 Mary Portas states her independent Review to the Government that:

**“ I also fundamentally believe that once we invest in and create social capital in the heart of our communities, the economic capital will follow ”**

- 3.17 These numerous challenges outline the acute need for our town centres to change and adapt if they are to continue to fulfil their potential.



## TOWN CENTRE FRAMEWORK

### Why is this Framework required?

- 3.18 This document seeks to provide a strategic Framework to help guide the future progression of five centres within the Vale of Glamorgan, over the next 5 to 10 years.
- 3.19 Based on our analysis of the identified town centres, which has been informed by consultation with key stakeholders, we have established a vision for each of the individual town centres and developed steps by which this vision can be achieved in reality.
- 3.20 Whilst this document may comprise Supplementary Planning Guidance accompanying the emerging Local Development Plan its scope extends beyond that of the town planning system and to measures for coordinating future resources in each of the identified town centres. In so doing it will provide a means by which the town centres might respond positively to the challenges ahead – rather than remaining static, or worse declining.
- 3.21 This Framework presents an opportunity to positively impact upon the way people use, experience and perceive these towns.





## 4.0 BARRY - HOLTON ROAD

### Vital Statistics

- Town Population 51,203 (ONS Mid Year Estimates 2010):
- Total number of units in centre: 18,143 sq.m/186 units in Holton Road (VoG, 2012)
- National Venuescore (2006) Ranked 406th
- Mix of 18,143 sq.m floorspace (VoG, 2011)
  - 60.7% A1 (shops);
  - 11.6% A2 (Financial and Professional);
  - 8.8% A3 (Restaurants & Cafes);
  - 4.0% B1 (Offices);
  - 0.0% D1 (Non-Residential Institutions);
  - 4.9% Other Uses;
  - 10.0% Vacant.
- 520m from Barry Docks Railway Station
- Not designated as a Conservation Area, although some Listed Buildings.





## TOWN CENTRE FRAMEWORK

### Background

- 4.1 Barry is the largest town in the Vale of Glamorgan, with a population of 51,203 (ONS Mid Year Estimates 2010). Its origins lie with the building of the town's dock in the late 19th century, which was used as a gateway for coal from the South Wales valleys to the rest of the world. At this time Barry was also famed as a seaside resort and accommodated excursion trains for thousands of people from the South Wales valleys who came to visit the beach.
- 4.2 Today Holton Road operates as a centre which predominantly serves the day-to-day needs of Barry's local residents and accommodates the vast majority of Barry's national multiple retailers such as Dorothy Perkins, Wilkinsons, Boots, Burtons and Tesco.
- 4.3 Part of the Centre is designated within the Castleland Renewal Area (2010-2022), which is a comprehensive housing and community regeneration investment programme. The Area was declared by the Council in April 2010 following the recommendations of a Neighbourhood Renewal Assessment and has led to improvements throughout the centre which have contributed to the long-term goal of improving the centre's image and perception. Some examples of this work are illustrated on the following pages.
- 4.4 The Barry Regeneration Area was also designated in March 2010 and is set to run until March 2014. This comprises a separate capital-investment programme which was launched by the Welsh Government. This funding has contributed to the public realm improvements in Castleland Renewal Area, as well wider public realm improvements in and around the Centre.

### Connections

- 4.5 Holton Road is located approximately 2.7 km from Barry Island, 1 km from High Street/Broad Street centre and 1.4 km from the identified Phase 2 Strategic Site at Barry Waterfront, which is set to accommodate some 2,000 dwellings, alongside new offices, shops and cafes.
- 4.6 Considering how best to respond to this changing context, especially that created by the Barry Waterfront development, will help to define the Framework approach.



**Top:** Holton Road

**Bottom:** Holton Road semi-pedestrianised area

**Right:** Town Hall



## TOWN CENTRE FRAMEWORK



**Left:** Public Square, Barry



**Middle:** Before and After photographs of the residential face-lift programme (Fryatt Street)

Source: VoG Council

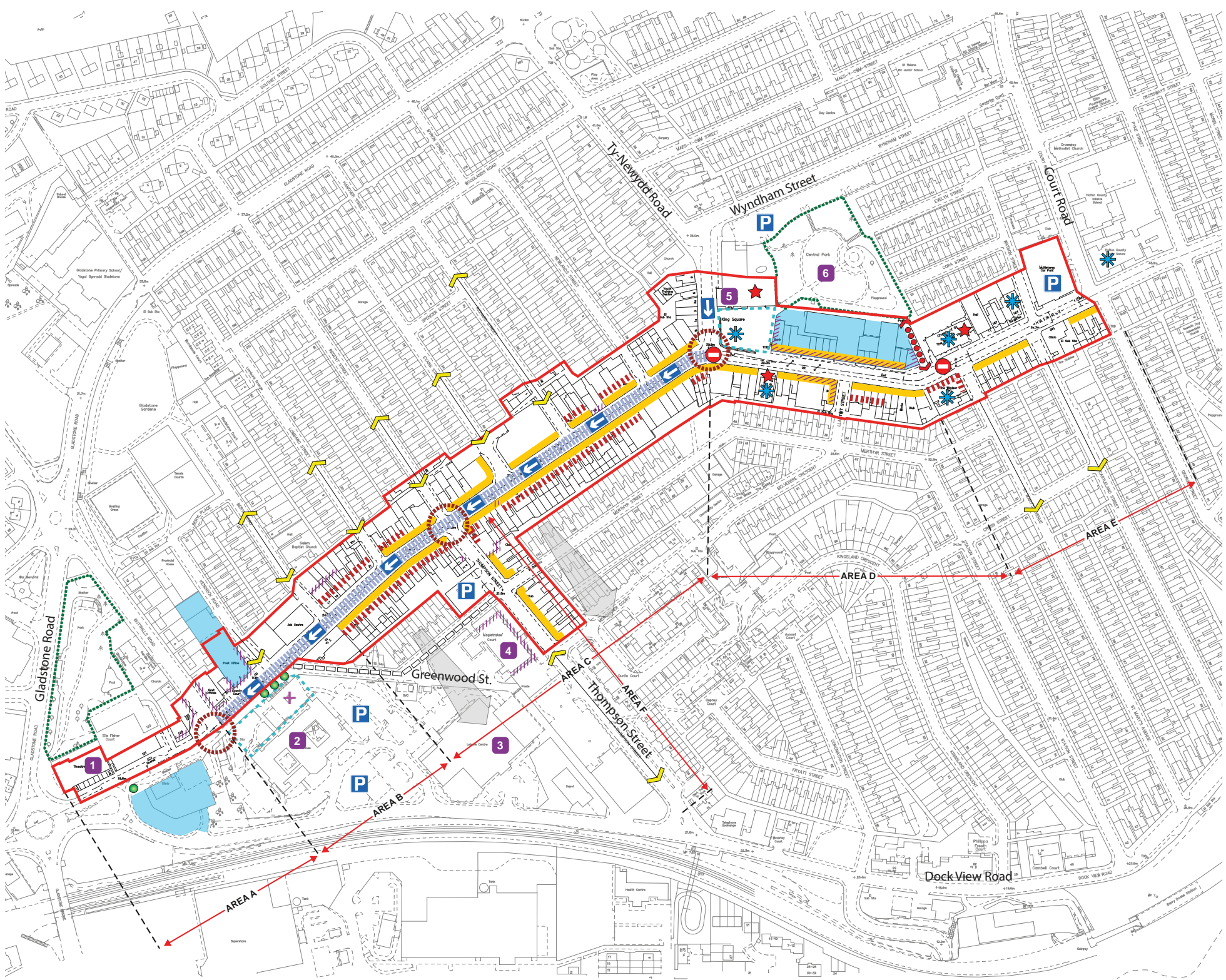


**Right:** Before and After Thompson Street footbridge/public realm improvements

Source: VoG Council



TOWN CENTRE FRAMEWORK



KEY:

- Retail boundary
- Conservation area boundary
- Listed building
- Local landmark
- Focal feature
- Parking
- One way system
- Pedestrianised zone
- Poor quality pedestrian route
- Trees
- Retail frontage
- Attractive townscape/ frontage (above GF)
- Detracting frontage
- Previous streetscape improvements
- Green public spaces
- Focal/ key junction
- Key public space
- Long views
- General fall
- Potential development site
- Change of grain
- Townscape areas
- Former Site of the Theatre Royal
- Civic Offices
- Leisure Centre
- Magistrates Court
- Library
- Central Park

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Project VoGlam Regeneration  
Title Holton Rd. Barry Appraisal Plan



## The Centre

4.7 The centre essentially comprises a one-way, linear traditional “high street” – Holton Road – and consists of six identifiable character areas (see map on the previous for details):

- a Broad Street to junction with Gladstone Road;
- b Holton Road, from Buttrills Road to Beryl Road;
- c Holton Road, from junction with Beryl Road to King Square;
- d Holton Road, from King Square to Windsor Public House;
- e Holton Road, from the Windsor Public House to Court Road; and,
- f Thompson Street.

### a. Broad Street to junction with Gladstone Road

4.8 Prior to its recent demolition, the Theatre Royal provided a landmark at the junction of Broad Street and Gladstone Road. Unfortunately underuse, poor additions to the southern side of the building, and a vehicular dominated streetscape resulted in a rather tired looking gateway at the south western corner of the study area. It is notable therefore that at the time of writing this report, the site is being redeveloped to provide a new extra care housing complex. This sense of low quality is exacerbated by many of the other buildings within the character area, including:

- 1 Two storey, flat roofed Clinic, electricity sub station, red brick Citizen’s Advice Bureau and Housing Association building, and furniture store; and,
- 2 Visually the area is dominated by palisade fencing, highway signage and an overcomplicated floorscape treatment.

### b. Holton Road, from Buttrills Road to Beryl Road

4.9 The second distinct character area is the southern end of Holton Road. The former gasworks is now the site of the Civic Offices, a five storey, red brick office development with public square addressing its northern side. This contains both hard and soft landscaping, with mature trees providing a welcome addition to the otherwise hard edged streetscene. On the opposite side of the road are two four storey, flat roofed office developments, including the main Post Office and associated Sorting Office. The area has recently been the subject of a comprehensive street works programme, including a suite of stainless steel furniture. Whilst this provides a degree of continuity, previous ‘Victoriana’ styled fingerposts now sit rather uncomfortably with their new neighbours.



**Top:** Uwantfurniture Unit, Holton Road

**Bottom:** Post Office, Holton Road



# TOWN CENTRE FRAMEWORK

## c. Holton Road, from junction with Beryl Road to King Square

- 4.10

The core of the study area runs north eastwards from the junction of Beryl Road to King Square. This middle section of Holton Road accommodates a range of shops (mostly focussed on comparison retail) with the Eastern section of the Road – closest to the public square around the Town Hall –accommodating the centre’s focus and a concentration of national multiple retailers.
- 4.11

It is characterised by three storey, red brick terraces sitting on the back edge of the footway, channelling the view and creating a strong sense of enclosure.
- 4.12

The three storey terraces provide an attractive frontage, with the regularity of plots creating a comfortable rhythm along the street. The quality of shopfronts is often poor, with ill considered designs and over sized, inappropriate signs with garish lettering. However, evidence of their past splendour is present on the first and second floors. The red brick canvas incorporates contrasting stone and brick detailing to string courses, window reveals and gables. Gables dominate the skyline, with an occasional subtle change created by a simple eaves detailing to two and three storey buildings. Finials are a key characteristic within this area, providing punctuation points along the gently curving street.
- 4.13

Whilst many of the timber windows have been replaced, the continuity of the openings generally remains, and the buildings can be read as a series of individual yet sympathetic neighbours. In terms of building fabric there are many examples of deterioration which, ultimately manifests itself with a loss of detail and apparent water ingress and plant growth, which can lead to irreparable damage.
- 4.14

The previously mentioned street works programme has been rolled out along much of the street, creating wider pavements and short term parking bays which, together with a change of materials at junctions and the use of bespoke features such as bollards, provides visual interest. The majority of street lighting appears to be attached to building frontages minimising pavement clutter, although some lampposts and CCTV posts do exist.



Top: Holton Road, Barry  
Bottom: Semi-pedestrianised area, Holton Road

## Kings Square

- 4.15

King Square provides a welcome break in the tightly knitted urban fabric, and forms an attractive setting for the former Town Hall and Library to its northern side. Designed by Charles E. Hutchinson and E. Harding Payne, this two/ three storey Edwardian Baroque styled building consists of a library block and public offices, separated by a clock tower. A plinth of local stone supports red brick and Bath stone dressed upper storeys.
- 4.16

The square itself is a well considered public space with street furniture and trees providing a comfortable, attractive and popular pedestrian environment. Central Park which sits to the rear of the square, on the site of an old quarry, is poorly signed and could be missed by visitors to the area. This area provides a focus for the centre, presenting a large area of public realm and pedestrian access into Central Park – an area of green space which provides a ‘sanctuary’ from the centre’s shopping activity.
- 4.17

Unfortunately many of the buildings which form the other three sides to King Square do little to enhance it. The western side is formed by a Twentieth Century retail development of poor proportion and limited detailing. However, it does provide a sense of enclosure as does the block which forms the eastern boundary, a modest two storey, flat roofed 1960’s retail block. The south western corner is also formed by a Twentieth Century, red brick, two storey retail development which has few redeeming features. To the east of this the rhythm of the original street returns with a three storey terrace and Tabernacle Chapel, designed in the Sub-Classical style.



**d. Holton Road, from King Square to Windsor Public House**

- 4.18 The northern side of the fourth character area, from King Square to Windsor Public House, is dominated by a clumsily detailed two storey retail development. No doubt of its time, it is a somewhat jarring addition to the street overlooking the only pedestrianised section of Holton Road. This area also accommodates an open-air market on Tuesdays. Although pedestrianised at identified times kerbs and bollards still remain within the area, dividing the space. The Peacocks store and adjacent Lloyds Bank at the junction with Llantwit Street also detract from the potential visual quality of their neighbours. The terrace of buildings which wind up the hill towards the Windsor Public House, whilst not in the best of condition now provides an attractive streetscape in terms of height, form and detailing.

**e. Holton Road, from the Windsor Public House to Court Road**

- 4.19 The north eastern end of the study area contains a range of buildings of various style, quality and use are to an extent unified, as a result of their relationship to Holton Road. The multi-storey car park provides the major parking facility for the retail area, and is a typical red brick monolith with stair tower. An attractive terrace of three buildings on the corner of Watson Street creates a strong landmark. Beyond this lies an unremarkable red brick former Church Hall, now a children's play centre, and the Church of St. Mary The Blessed Virgin. Two and three storey buildings line the southern side of the study area, a mix of residential and retail frontages, which are largely unremarkable.





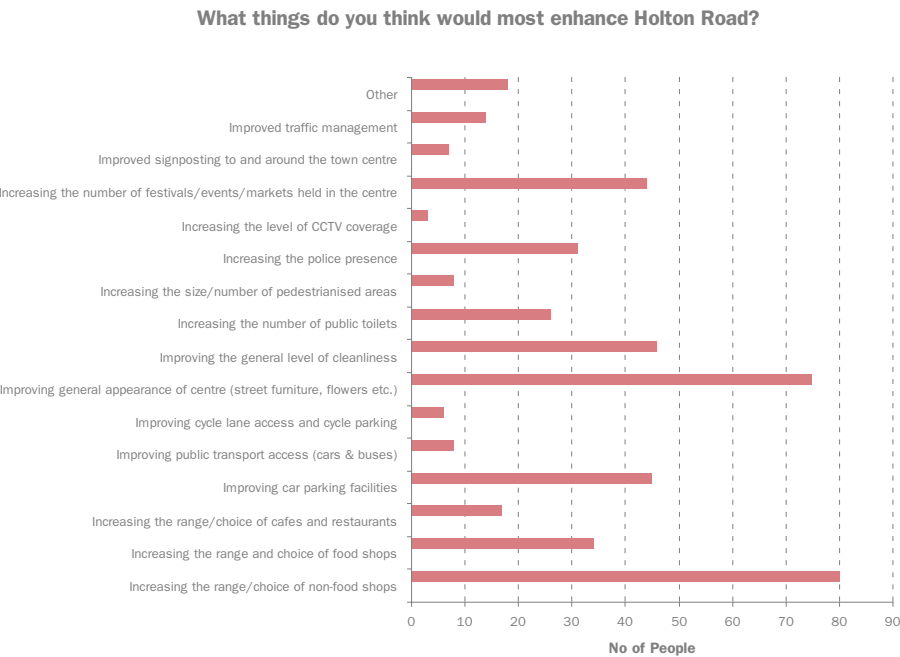
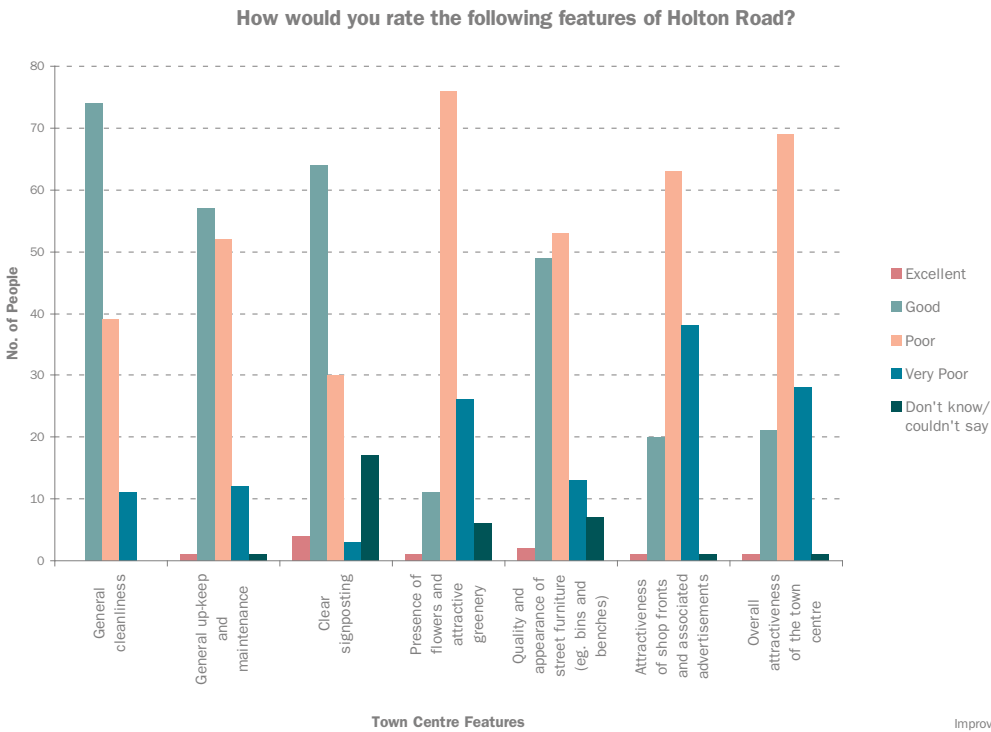
TOWN CENTRE FRAMEWORK

f. Thompson Street

- 4.20

The final character area comprises a disparate collection of buildings on Thompson Street, which provides a key link to Dock View Road and Barry Waterfront via the new footbridge beyond. The north eastern side of the road is formed by a typical terrace of two and three storey red brick and rendered buildings. Whilst they do display some interesting detailing, in terms of ornate pilasters to shopfronts and stone quoins to windows, they are not of particular architectural merit. A public car park sits to the rear of Holton Road properties, on the south western side of the street, and beyond this is the strong horizontal form of the concrete and brick former Magistrates Court which is due to be redeveloped into social housing and commercial floorspace. More parking areas, Home Bargains, the Leisure Centre and pattern book red brick social housing provide the context for the remainder of Thompson Street, resulting in an area lacking in any real distinct character, although recent public realm works to the street e.g. public art and bollards as well as the Castleland Renewal Area facelift have added interest to the street scene.
- 4.21

Issues relating to appearance were particularly highlighted by the results from the Citizen’s Panel Questionnaire. Responses rated Holton Road as being ‘poor’ in respect of presence of flowers and greenery (63%), quality and appearance of street furniture (42%), attractiveness of shopfronts and overall attractiveness of the town centre (51%). When respondents were asked to identify four things which would most improve Holton Road centre, the second most popular answer (16%) related to improving the general appearance of the centre. The most popular answer related to increasing the choice and range of non-food shops (17%).



Citizen’s Panel Questionnaire Results  
Source: Citizen’s Panel Questionnaire 2012



### Diversity of uses

- 4.22 The Town and District Retail Centre Appraisal prepared by Martin Tonks on behalf of the Council (2008) provides comments on the variety of uses in Holton Road.
- 4.23 The Report concluded that the centre lacks diversity and there is a limited range of uses other than retail in the centre. The Report considered that the potential capacity for growth in the immediate future is limited due to the unavailability of major sites. However, there are vacant units and changes of use are always possible.
- 4.24 Peripheral areas of the centre were found to include a number of vacant units and the limited choice and range of convenience goods outlets was also identified. Banks and financial services were well represented although the small unit sizes was shown to be a key issue which limited the attractiveness of this centre to multi-national operators.



Prominent Vacant Units



TOWN CENTRE FRAMEWORK

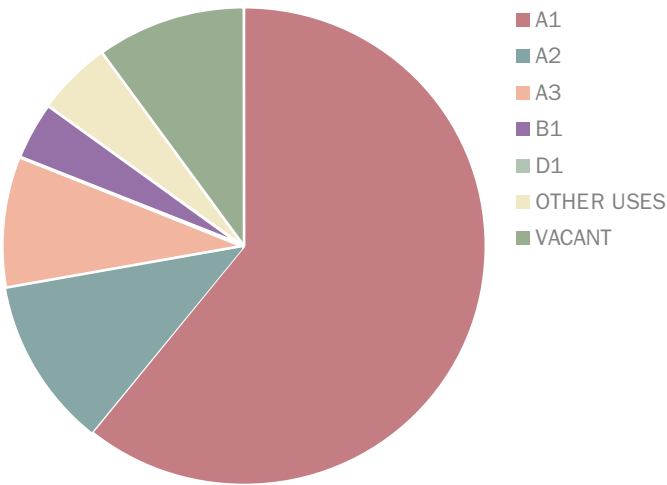
- 4.25 The centre predominantly serves the day-to-day comparison shopping needs of residents and includes limited provision for tourists/visitors.
- 4.26 By way of comparison, the Council’s annual monitoring data between 2007 and 2012, provides an insight into how the use classes in the centre have been changing over time.
- 4.27 The table clearly shows the consistent dominance of A1 use in the centre, which from the site visit undertaken almost exclusively relates to comparison goods retailing.

Food and drink uses have increased the most in percentage terms over this period, reflecting national trends. In 2007 11.3% of the centre’s floorspace was vacant and this has since slightly reduced to 10.0% (2012). In 2012 the average vacancy rate for UK floorspace was 12.02% (GOAD) which means that the vacancy rate is still just below the UK average. The slight change in these rates reflects the susceptibility of vacancy to the external forces related to the economy and consumer spending.

	2007	2012	% Change
A1 (Shops)	9,719 sq.m (61.5%)	11,018 sq.m (60.7%)	Actual increase of 1,299 sq.m Decrease floorspace share 0.8%
A2 (Financial and Professional)	1,702 sq.m (10.8%)	2,104sq.m (11.6%)	Actual increase of 402 sq.m Increase floorspace share 0.8%
A3 (Food and Drink)	1,106 sq.m (7.0%)	1,600 sq/m (8.8%)	Actual increase of 494 sq.m Increase floorspace share 1.8%
B1 (Business - Office)	886 sq.m (5.6%)	722 sq.m (4.0%)	Actual decrease of 164 sq.m Decrease floorspace share 1.6%
D1 (Non residential institutions)	0 (0%)	0 sq.m (0.0%)	No change
Other Uses	611 sq.m (3.9%)	881 sq.m (4.9%)	Actual increase of 270sq.m Increase floorspace share 1.0%
Vacant	1779 sq.m (11.3%)	1818 sq/m (10%)	Actual Increase of 39 sq.m Decrease floorspace share 1.3%
	15,803 sq.m	18,143 sq.m	Actual increase of 2,340 sq.m Increase floorspace share 13%

Holton Road, Floorspace breakdown between 2007-2012  
Source:VoG Council Annual Monitoring (2007 and 2012)

- 4.28 The pie-chart below shows the breakdown of floorspace within Holton Road in 2012. It shows the strong dominance of A1 uses, as well as the presence of class A2 (Financial and Professional Services) and use class A3 (food and drink) within the centre. Collectively, these account for 81% of total floorspace within Holton Road.



Barry Holton Road Floorspace Breakdown (2012)

Floorspace Split in Holton Road, Barry  
Source: VoG Council, 2012

Pedestrian count

- 4.29 Pedestrian counts around Holton Road are undertaken bi-annually by the Council and the area around King Square is shown to benefit from the highest pedestrian count of the two areas monitored in Holton Road. This distribution of pedestrians reflects the premise that the King Square area provides a focus for the centre.
- 4.30 It would be useful to monitor how these pedestrian levels change over time, as well as across the week (weekdays and weekends) and at different times of the day and night.



Location (2011)		Count	Day	Time
Barry, Holton Road	King Square/ Holton Road/ Tynewydd Road	431	Mon	11:45
Barry, Holton Road	Thompson St / Regent Street / Holton Road	299	Mon	12.30

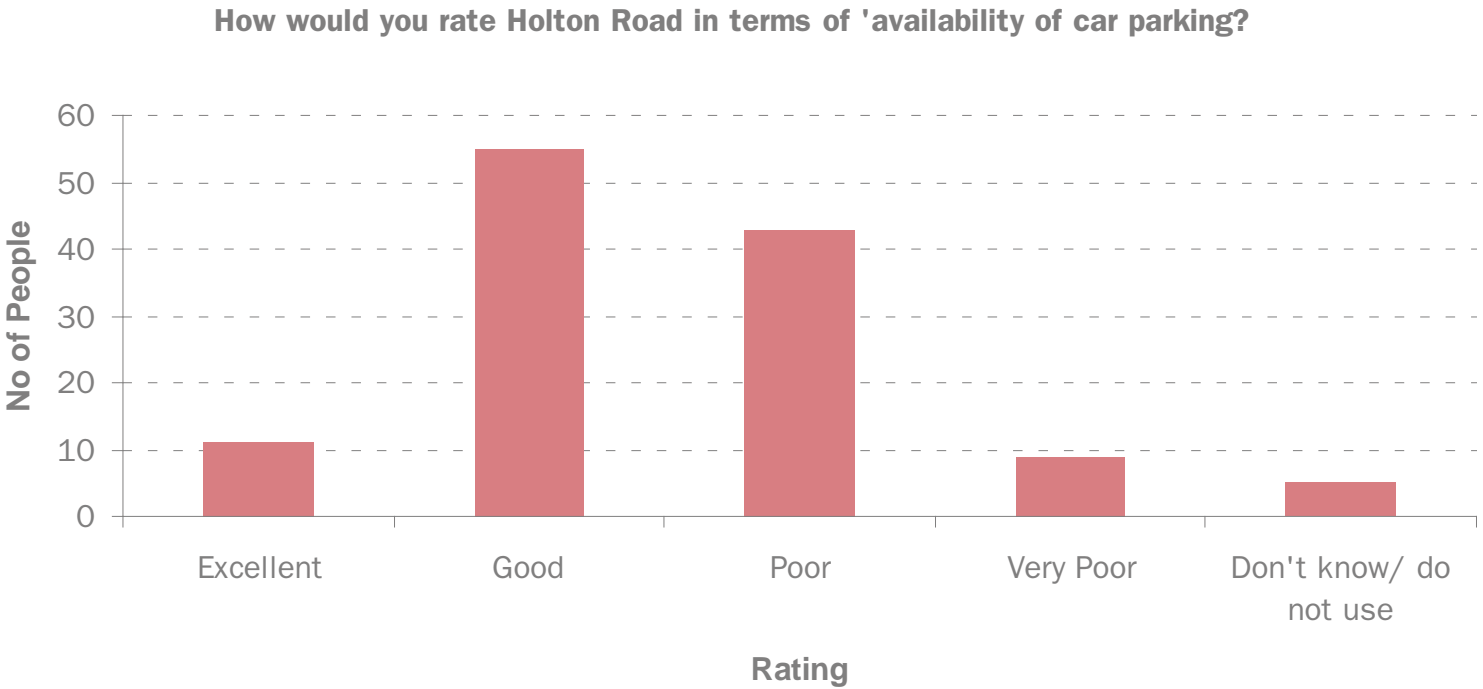
Pedestrian Count (2011)  
Source: VoG Council, Pedestrian Count 2011

Accessibility

- 4.31

Holton Road is categorised as a B-road (B4294) and is accessible via the A4055, which provides a road link between Barry Island and Penarth. It is a one-way street with on-street parking, loading bays and bus stops along it. The centre has benefited from some recent public realm improvements (see ‘Barry Town Centre – Framework for Future Public Realm Improvements’ (June 2010) for details of the street design principles which guide this public realm intervention) and elements of the centre are pedestrianised. In response to the Citizen’s Panel questionnaire on how you would rate Holton Road in terms of access/ease of getting around for pedestrians the vast majority (81%) said ‘good’.
- 4.32

There is a large multi-storey car park at the northern end of Holton Road, with a number of smaller car parks and parking along the side streets neighbouring Holton Road. The Court Road multi-storey car park holds 236 free car parking spaces however a number of consultation respondents raised a view that this car park is under-used because it is difficult for cars to manoeuvre within it. There are also a few parking spaces available along Holton Road have a time limit of 2 hours. The respondents to the Citizens Panel have mixed views on the parking with 45% stating the availability of parking is ‘good’ while 35% consider it to be ‘bad’.



Citizen's Panel Questionnaire Results  
Source: Citizen's Panel Questionnaire 2012

- 4.33

Barry has three railway stations – Barry Docks, Barry Island and Barry. Holton Road centre is located closest to Barry Docks Railway Station. This is located 520m from the centre and provides frequent services - every 20 minutes to Barry Island, Cardiff and Penarth and every hour to Bridgend (at the time of writing). The responses from the Citizen’s Panel were varied when asked to rate access to train services. 33% responded that access was ‘good’, while 30% responded that the access was ‘poor’ and 24% saying ‘don’t know/do not use’. A clear link from the centre to the railway station is not established which could explain the mixed results.
- 4.34

In terms of buses, at the time of writing, the centre is extremely well-served with 17 bus services. All bus stops are located along and around Holton Road. These services provide linkages to neighbouring settlements such as Dinas Powys, Rhooose, Wenvoe, Culverhouse Cross and Penarth, as well as services to Cardiff and around Barry town. The Citizen’s Panel Questionnaire results indicated that 76% of respondents answered ‘excellent’ or ‘good’ when asked to rate the centre in terms of accessibility to bus services.
- 4.35

Details of the bus linkages are included overleaf.
- 4.36

The centre does not accommodate a national cycle route; the closest route is approximately 300m away (No. 88). Some cycle parking provision was noted in the centre. The Citizen’s Panel Questionnaire results indicated that 57% of respondents answered ‘don’t know’ when asked to rate the centre in terms of accessibility for cycling.



TOWN CENTRE FRAMEWORK

Bus Service No.	Route	Frequency
86	Culverhouse Cross	Thursday and Saturday only once a day
88	Penarth	Hourly Monday – Saturday
90	Culverhouse Cross	Hourly Monday - Saturday
94	Cardiff – Barry	Every half an hour Monday – Saturday hourly on Sunday
95	Llantwit Major and Cardiff including Heath Hospital	Every half an hour Monday – Saturday, reduced service Sunday
96 and 96A	Cardiff – Barry	Every half an hour Monday – Saturday, hourly service Sunday
97 and 97A	Colcot	Every half an hour Monday - Saturday
100 and B3	Round Barry	Hourly Monday – Sunday
322	Cardiff	4 times daily
M1	Llantwit Major - Barry Tesco's and Morrisons	3 times a day every Wednesday
V5	Cowbridge	4 times daily
X5	Bridgend, Llantwit Major and Cardiff	Every 2 hours daily
X45	Llantwit Major	Hourly Monday to Saturday
X91	Llantwit Major and Cardiff	Hourly Monday – Saturday and every 2 hours Sunday

Bus Linkages for Holton Road, Barry  
Source: Vale of Glamorgan Council June 2012





SWOT analysis

Strengths

- 1 Historical buildings - many retained features at first floor level.
- 2 Very attractive public square (King Square) and the Town Hall building creates a key focal point.
- 3 Central Park creates a sanctuary away from the shopping street.
- 4 Striking public realm improvements including bespoke bollard design.

Weaknesses

- 1 Poor (direct) linkage to Barry Docks railway station and Waterfront.
- 2 New public realm improvements reinforces the need for further improvements.
- 3 Negative perception/image of Barry
- 4 Lacking broader appeal - Town centre appears to mostly cater for the residents of the town.
- 5 Poor building maintenance and apparent neglect of prominent vacant units which negatively impacts on the centre's appearance.

Opportunities

- 1 Potential redevelopment of the Magistrates Court.
- 2 Consideration of how best to respond to the Barry Waterfront – for example through the creation of linkages with the Barry Waterfront development which will help to ensure that the centre benefits from spin-off trade generated by the waterfront development.
- 3 Changing the image/perception of Barry.
- 4 Increasing tourism/visitor provision or events.
- 5 Improved links to Barry Docks railway station.
- 6 Work with other Centres in the Vale.

Threats

- 1 Further economic decline – leading to the loss of retailers from the town centre.
- 2 Further reduction in shop front quality.
- 3 Deterioration of historic fabric.
- 4 Lost opportunities – ignoring Barry Waterfront, insensitive redevelopment (of, for example, Magistrates Court).
- 5 How to ensure both Holton Road and High Street/Broad Street compete in a complementary manner.
- 6 Competition from Cardiff's retail offer and out of town retail centres.
- 7 Poor on-going maintenance of new public realm improvements.

Visioning

- 4.37 In developing this Vision and Framework the following consultation events were undertaken:
- 1 Barry Holton Road workshop evening – attended by around 7 people including Vale of Glamorgan Councillors representing Barry.
  - 2 A meeting was held with representatives from the Council's Visible Services Department;
  - 3 A Citizen's Panel Questionnaire was carried out and of the 400 responses received, 124 related to Holton Road;
  - 4 A short meeting was held with a local agent to gain an insight into market perceptions and demand in the local area;
  - 5 A meeting was held with the Vale Retailers Forum; and,
  - 6 A workshop was held with key representatives from e.g. the VoG Directorate of Development services and the Welsh Government.



## TOWN CENTRE FRAMEWORK

### Visioning



4.38 The word cloud above gives an indication of the responses received from consultation with key stakeholders. Common phrases/words for Holton Road related to a poor image, concern over the closure of shops and references to a possible planned retraction of the centre derived from concerns over the on-going viability of the existing centre.

4.39 These words reflect the themes expressed at the workshops and by the Citizen's Panel Questionnaire.

#### Vision origins

4.40 Holton Road is a long street (around 800m is included within the defined LDP centre boundary). Whilst it accommodates a range of Barry's national multiple retailers and largely fulfils the day-to-day comparison good shopping needs of local residents, consultation raised local concern about the appearance of the centre. In addition, its perceived poor image and on-going questions about its long-term viability were also a cause for concern. Despite recent public realm improvements and the centre's position at the top of the LDP retail hierarchy, Holton Road was considered by respondents to be lacking in vitality and viability.

4.41 The centre accommodates a number of attractive buildings but many are in a poor state of repair and a number of prominent/unattractive vacant units are present in peripheral areas of the centre.

4.42 Consultees repeatedly highlighted the need for a coordinated effort for improving Holton Road. Although a Traders Association exists respondents felt this was not particularly proactive. Respondents also identified Barry Waterfront as a key opportunity which, if capitalised upon effectively, could help boost the centre's appeal.

4.43 The Framework's vision seeks to start by addressing some of these concerns. It sets out steps to revitalise Holton Road's image by diversifying the uses within the centre – to incorporate more leisure, food and drink and convenience retail uses. This aims to ensure Holton Road appeals to a wider range of people – visitors as well as residents. In addition, there is a clear need to try to:

- 1 Bring about active use above ground and the Framework aims to encourage the use of upper floors for housing;
- 2 Promote new events at the centre's focal point (King Square and Central Park); and,
- 3 Make it easier for interim 'pop-up' uses to be created during periods of vacancy.

4.44 We recommend these interim uses should be focussed on supporting local start-up businesses – as this would be appropriate to the smaller unit sizes available in the centre but will also help to develop an indigenous (and unique) shopping/visitor experience on Holton Road. These changes need to be undertaken in tandem with a renewed focus on marketing - publicising the measures being taken to revitalise the centre to achieve a step change in image and to begin addressing negative preconceptions.

4.45 Alongside this, the Framework suggests building upon recent public realm improvements and encouraging/enforcing landowners or occupants to improve their properties and shop frontages. Future publically funded public realm improvements should consider the improvement of physical linkages between the railway station and the Barry Waterfront development which could have a considerable bearing on the future vitality and viability of Holton Road.



**Vision**

- 4.46 Taking into account the above these elements are distilled in the following vision for Holton Road centre:

### Holton Road – managing change for a viable 21st Century centre.

“A diverse town centre which supports business start-up and embraces new opportunities such as Barry Waterfront”

**Guiding Change: Key Features**

- 4.47 The vision will be used to steer manageable and achievable change over the next 5-10 years in Holton Road centre in order to secure a viable future:
- 1 **Enabling Linkages** – Encouraging clear linkages between surrounding areas including Barry Waterfront and Barry Docks railway station.
  - 2 **Activity and focus** – A ‘whole building’ Strategy – dealing with vacancy rates, bringing empty buildings into use coupled with a pragmatic approach to focussing commercial activity around a commercial core.
  - 3 **Diversifying Holton Road** – Encouraging a better mix of uses and new reasons to visit Holton Road.
  - 4 **Improved street scene** – Improvements to shop-fronts and building fabric.
  - 5 **Revitalising Holton Road’s image** – Marketing/ advertising a vital and viable centre which supports business start-ups.

**Framework**

- 4.48 Further detail on the above is provided below and as a tabulated Implementation Plan at Chapter 9.
1. **Enabling linkages** – Encouraging clear linkages between surrounding areas including Barry Waterfront and Barry Docks railway station.
- 4.49 Holton Road is within a reasonable walking distance of the Barry Waterfront Strategic Site and Barry Docks railway station (500m).
- 4.50 Phase 2 of the Barry Waterfront development is set to accommodate some 2,000 dwellings alongside new retail floorspace, offices and an hotel. This development presents a key opportunity for Holton Road. Capturing this potential market and increasing footfall (and associated expenditure) will require clear linkages between the two areas. It is recommended that work is undertaken as soon as possible to investigate the feasibility of such linkages (predominantly pedestrian and cycle) allied to a proactive shop local campaign.
- 4.51 Despite Barry Docks Railway Station only being located 500m from the Centre, consultation highlighted a very mixed response when asked to rate the Centre in terms of its accessibility to train services. 33% said ‘good’ whilst 30% said ‘poor’ and 24% said ‘don’t know’. Improved linkages to the railway station from the Centre will help to encourage visitors to choose more sustainable forms of transport and potentially stop off en-route to Barry Island.
- 4.52 In tandem with improving these linkages, it is important to establish reasons to visit the Centre. Objectives 2 - 5 aim to address this point and create new reasons for people to visit Holton Road.

2. **Activity and focus** – A ‘whole Building’ Strategy – dealing with vacancy rates, bringing empty buildings into use coupled with a pragmatic approach to focussing business activity around a commercial core.

- 4.53 Consultation highlighted the presence of a number of prominent vacant units in the centre, which were considered to negatively impact upon the appearance and, hence, perception of the centre. Opportunities for re-using these properties on a temporary basis, during interim periods of vacancy, should be investigated to help create a more lively and diverse street scene.
- 4.54 It is apparent that any attempt to improve the Holton Road Centre will need to address the problem of vacant shop units and under used upper floors. The ‘Living above the Shop’ initiative of the mid 1980s sought to encourage residential use above commercial properties. It was often backed up by considerable grant aid. There is unlikely to be public sector subsidy towards this kind of programme for the foreseeable future so property owners need to see the potential value of investing in their vacant units. In some ways this is a Catch 22 situation – if Holton Road is not viewed as an attractive proposition then investors are not likely to spend money on their properties. However, conversely if the Managing Change Initiative can gather momentum it is possible for speculative investment to follow.
- 4.55 The aim would be to create a centre that supports indigenous new businesses which contribute to the vitality of the centre. Focusing on celebrating and supporting local business and talent will help to engender a sense of ownership, place and civic pride for Holton Road and Barry as a whole.



## TOWN CENTRE FRAMEWORK

4.56 This will also hinge on the success of the other objectives but key to it will be the need to deal with vacancy – even if this means encouraging vacant commercial properties to be converted into residential use. This would require an acceptance that, in order for the Centre to grow, economically, it may firstly need to shrink, physically. It may also mean the Council adopting a relaxed view to “pop up” and “meanwhile” uses which tend to signify the first green shoots of revival. Starter businesses referred to above are a good example of this.

4.57 In the medium to long term, as and when the fortunes of the centre begin to improve, the Council will need to be ready to respond to proposals for change of use – either by maintaining a more concentrated centre or by adopting a more flexible approach to the changing Centre as its success improves.

### 3. Diversifying Holton Road – Encouraging a better mix of uses and therefore new reasons to visit Holton Road.

4.58 Holton Road accommodates largely comparison retail uses, with limited convenience provision, leisure related uses e.g. cafés and restaurants and housing. This relatively narrow focus of uses limits the function and success of the Centre and the reasons people choose to use it.

4.59 The recent Mary Portas Review and the National Assembly’s Inquiry into Town Centre Regeneration confirms that high streets and town centres should aim to be multi-functional, offering irresistible opportunities and experiences that do not exist elsewhere. In line with this approach, this objective seeks to promote a multi-functional centre which encourages new diversified uses within Holton Road.

4.60 We recommend that new uses should be encouraged. Specific focus should be placed upon vacant units and upper floors for housing; encouraging new convenience floorspace (to service people living in the centre); and the introduction of leisure, tourism, cultural and community related uses (to service new residents living in the centre, and visitors looking for more than just shops). Such leisure uses could include more cafes and restaurants as

well as art galleries and possibly community space. To achieve this, the Council will need to be flexible in land use planning terms as the encouragement of new business may generate its own small niche areas.

4.61 Further opportunities for permitting temporary uses, which contribute positively to the vibrancy and viability of the Centre, particularly those located within the King Square or Central Park area, should also be encouraged. An idea which was raised during consultation related to a temporary ice-skating rink on King Square (for example as a “Winter Wonderland” facility). Other new uses could relate to e.g. outdoor theatre productions, outdoor cinema/travelling cinema or new types of outdoor markets (for example Christmas markets).

### 4. Improved street scene – Improvements to shop-fronts and building fabric.

4.62 Improvements to Holton Road’s street-scene should primarily be spearheaded by re-use. The re-use of properties will deliver improvement to the Centre’s vibrancy, vitality and viability. This will in turn have a positive impact on the street scene which in turn will help to bolster numbers and generate business.

4.63 In particular some shopfronts are in a poor state of repair and detract from the street-scene. Identifying ways in which traders and landowners may be incentivised (or potentially forced) to maintain the up-keep of their property should be considered.

4.64 The centre has benefited from some recent public realm improvements – including new paving and bollards. The Castleland Renewal Area regeneration programme has provided a facelift to areas in Barry town centre including Thompson Street and these measures have improved the general appearance of the centre and are encouraged. However it will be important that such improvements are well maintained into the future. This will ensure a momentum for change is maintained for the future and also that the maximum benefit is achieved from these improvements.

4.65 The results from the Citizen’s Panel questionnaire rated Holton Road poorly on the basis of a lack of greenery

and flowers. Opportunities where new greenery can be introduced into the centre should therefore be a particular aim for Holton Road. In particular, opportunities for engaging more innovative community-led schemes in respect of this should be investigated. This is would also generate a feeling of local ownership and responsibility thereby addressing comments in consultation which stated there was a lack of community spirit. This may also help to ensure these improvements remain maintained into the future as local ownership of these assets is assumed.

### 5. Revitalising Holton Road’s image – Marketing/ advertising a vital and viable centre which supports business start-ups

4.66 Consultation suggested that Holton Road is perceived to be a rather unattractive centre. Some consultees considered that this image represents a key weakness of the centre and acts to discourage people from visiting.

4.67 Changing this perception will not be easy and will not happen overnight. It will certainly be interlinked with the achievement of the other objectives highlighted above. As the centre becomes more diverse and vibrant, its appearance improves, and linkages are provided to the Waterfront and the railway station, it is anticipated that the centre’s image will begin to improve too.

4.68 However a revised marketing strategy should be undertaken in order to help reinforce this proposed step-change. High profile events and new ways of raising awareness of the changes being made in Holton Road should be embarked upon to begin to change people’s perceptions.

4.69 One of the key findings emerging out of the recent Mary Portas Review and the National Assembly’s Inquiry into town centre regeneration is the value and importance of leadership in town centre regeneration. Recognising this, the Council needs to identify a key individual or group (Pride in Barry or a newly formed group), who should be given the remit of spearheading this change for Holton Road. It is important that this group works collaboratively with the Council and all other parties to help to develop ideas and deliver and manage change.



## 5.0 BARRY - HIGH STREET AND BROAD STREET

### Vital Statistics

- Town Population: 51,203 (ONS Mid Year Estimates 2010):
- Total number of units in centre: 10,613 sq.m/166 units (VoG, 2012)
- Not featured in National Venuescore ranking (2006)
- Mix of 10,613 sq.m floorspace (VoG, 2012)
  - 38.8% A1 (shops);
  - 10.9% A2 (Financial and Professional);
  - 21.1% A3 (Restaurants & Cafes);
  - 0.4% B1 (Offices);
  - 3.1% D1 (non-residential institutions);
  - 14.5% Other Uses;
  - 11.1% Vacant.
- 400m from Barry Railway Station
- Not a designated Conservation Area but 5 x Grade II Listed Buildings





# TOWN CENTRE FRAMEWORK

## Background

- 5.1 The Town and District Retail Centre Appraisal Report (2008) prepared on behalf of the Council confirms that the High Street and Broad Street Centre was one of the first to be built in Barry at the time of Dock development in the 19th century. However today it operates as Barry's district retail Centre, positioned below that of Barry's main Town Centre at Holton Road in the retail hierarchy.



High Street, Barry

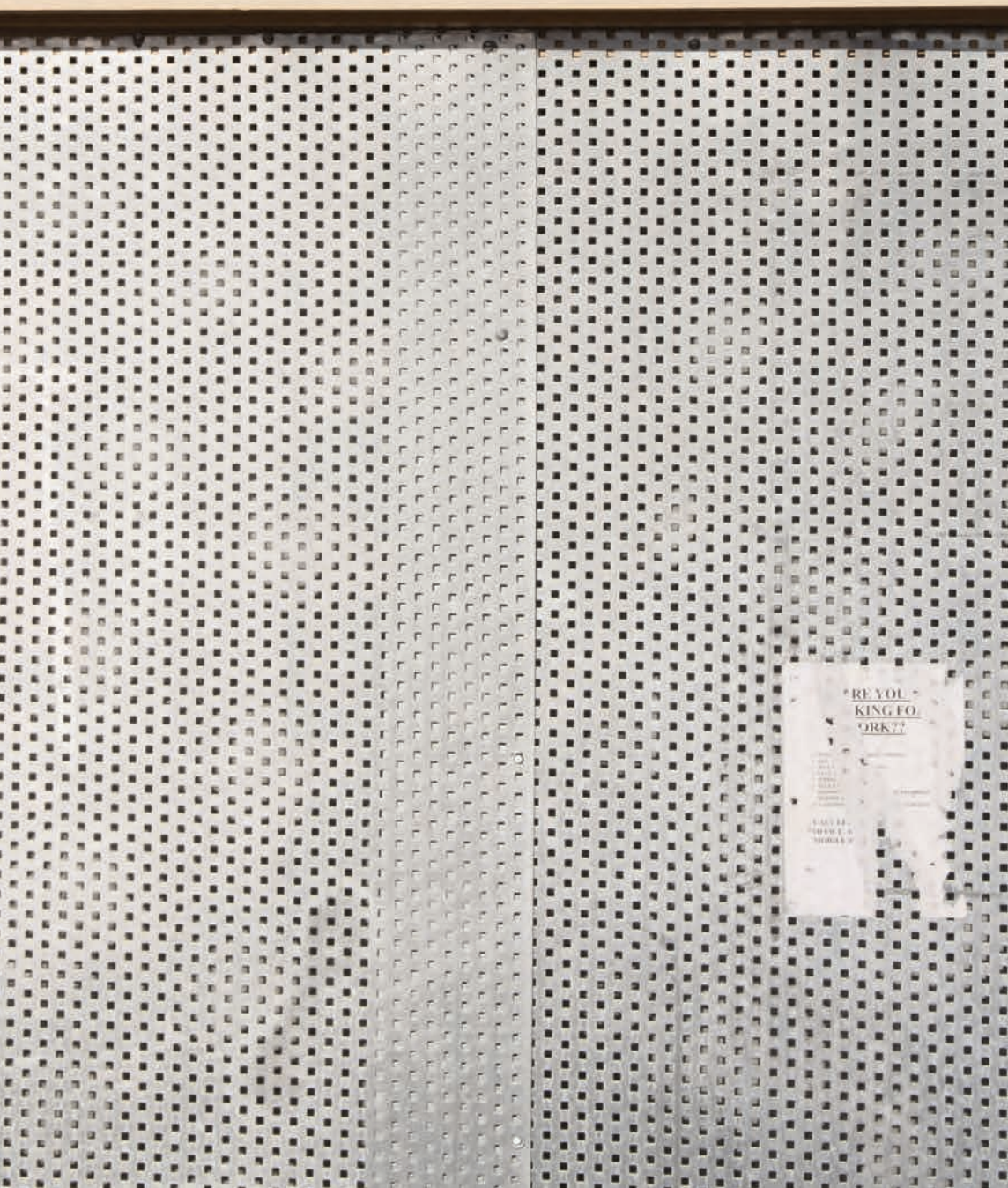
## Connections

- 5.2 High Street and Broad Street is located approximately 1.7 km from Barry Island, 1 km from Holton Road town centre and 400m from the identified Phase 2 Strategic Site at Barry Waterfront.
- 5.3 Considering how best to respond to this changing context, especially that created by the Barry Waterfront redevelopment will help to define the Framework approach.



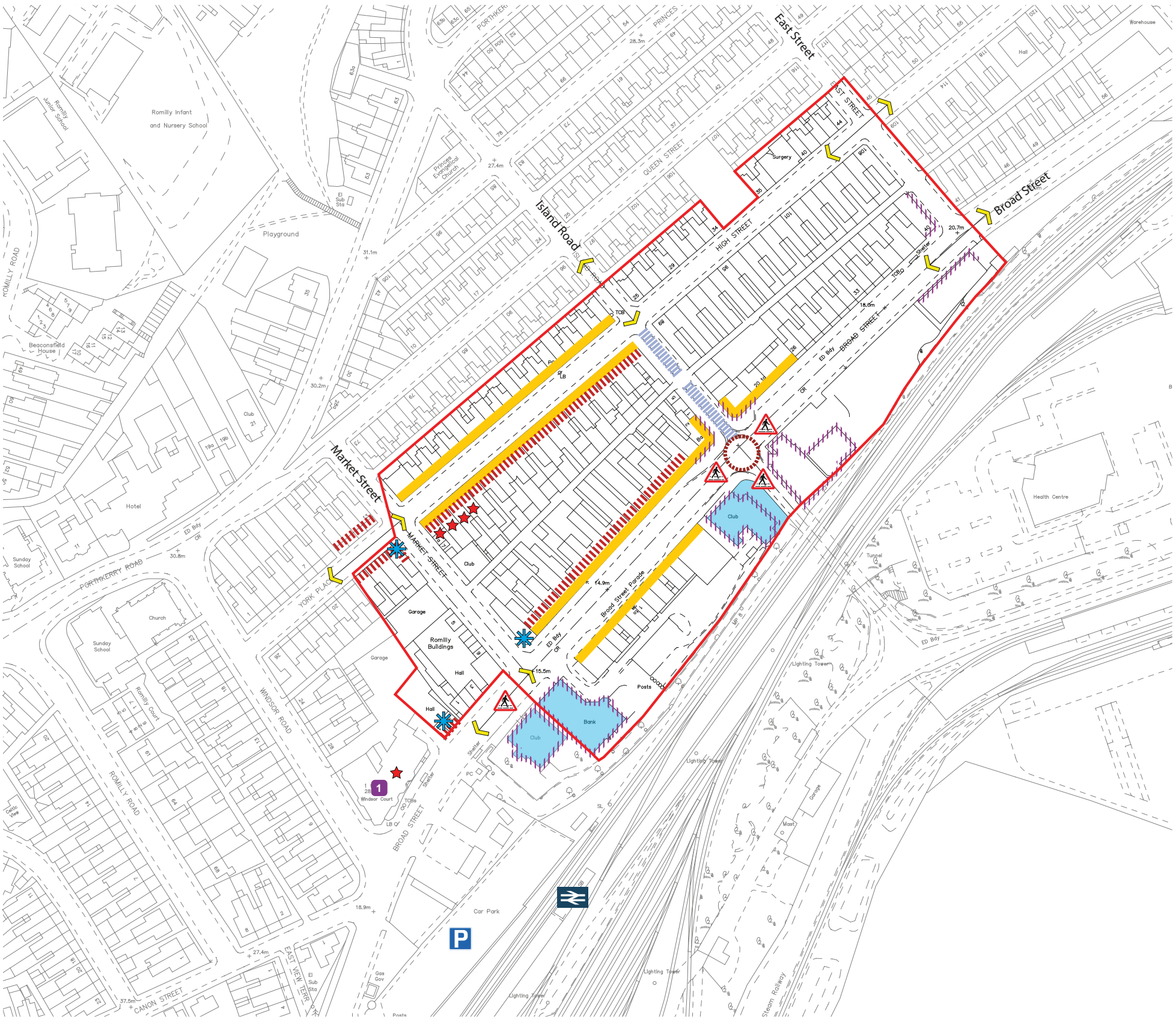
Broad Street, Barry

3 Broad Street





TOWN CENTRE FRAMEWORK



**KEY:**

- Retail boundary
- Listed building
- Local landmark
- Pedestrian crossing point
- Parking
- Railway station
- Retail frontage
- Attractive townscape/ frontage (above GF)
- Detracting frontage
- Previous streetscape improvements
- Focal/ key junction
- Potential development site
- Long views
- Former Barry Court Hotel

**nlp** Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners  
Planning, Design, Economics.

Project	VoGlam Regeneration
Title	High St. Barry Appraisal Plan



# TOWN CENTRE FRAMEWORK

## The Centre

- 5.4 The centre is made up of two parallel streets (High Street and Broad Street) with three roads running between the two streets (Market Street, Island Street and East Street).
- 5.5 High Street comprises a linear cluster of mainly independent specialist retailers selling a wide range of largely comparison (specialist) goods, including cakes, shoes, clothes and gifts. It also accommodates a number of independent restaurants and cafes and estate agents but very few national multiples. It is a one-way street and accommodates a smaller volume of traffic than Broad Street.
- 5.6 By contrast, High Street is an intimate street, of similar proportion and scale to the surrounding terraced streets. The roadway is narrow with parking to either side. Together with the general building height, this results in a strong sense of enclosure. Looking eastwards the tower of the Holy Trinity Church provides a focal landmark at the end of the vista.
- 5.7 The southern side of the street is typified by three storey brick terraces, interspersed with two storey blocks. Roofs are varied, some with parapets and others dormers, resulting in a fluid eaves line. Buildings sit to the back edge of the pavement on both sides of the street. Numbers 69-72 are Grade II listed buildings, having particularly fine detailing with ornate stone brackets to sills and intricate detailing to window heads and pilasters at ground floor. There are several examples of key buildings which turn corners and successfully address both streets.
- 5.8 The northern side of the street is characterised by two storey stone and brick terraces. In contrast to the buildings opposite, the roofscape is punctuated by gables addressing the street, resulting in a more articulated, less formal frontage. More recent infill development has tried to echo this approach retaining the regular alignment of buildings to the back of the pavement.



**Top:** Island Road between High Street and Broad Street  
**Bottom:** High Street. Barry



High Street. Barry



- 5.9 As with the Broad Street properties, many of the shopfronts are let down by poor detailing, over-sized signage and unattractive security structures. There are, however, still a number of fine examples of more traditional shopfronts remaining within the Centre.
- 5.10 The floor treatment within High Street is generally poor with a mix of paving, concrete and access covers creating a patchwork of finishes. Traffic dominates the street although this has to be set against the sterility that can be found on pedestrianised streets, particularly during the evening. However, the one way flows result in vehicles travelling at high speeds which can make it difficult to cross the street safely.
- 5.11 Market Street provides a link between High Street and Broad Street, comprising a variety of buildings of various style, age and quality. The corners provide the more interesting features, whilst the architecture in between is more utilitarian in approach.
- 5.12 Island Road has benefited from previous public realm enhancement works including a palette of materials used across road and pavement surfaces, together with extended pavements at junctions forming parking bays within the street. Although the scheme is reasonably standardised in terms of design and materials, the introduction of trees is important and the resultant streetscape is more coherent, tying together the diverse collection of buildings.
- 5.13 Broad Street is one of Barry's main through-routes and continues to Cadoxton, Dinas Powys, Eastbrook and Penarth. It runs parallel to the railway line and is the main thoroughfare for buses.



Broad Street, Barry

- 5.14 Broad Street is a wide road with parking to either side. It is enclosed to the northern side by a three storey terrace, the majority of which is red brick enhanced by contrasting brick and stone detailing. Towards the northern end three gables address the street and for the rest of its length, ridgelines run parallel to the street. Unfortunately some detailing has been lost as a result of insensitive alteration but the overall effect above ground floor level is generally coherent. The quality of shop front design varies greatly, with no consistent approach to size, type or quality of signage.
- 5.15 This area accommodates a concentration of takeaways, public houses and restaurants and as such is an obvious hub for evening economy activities.
- 5.16 The southern side of Broad Street is characterised by poor quality, incohesive development. This area accommodates a number of dry-cleaners, hairdressers and takeaways. There are also several vacant buildings which are in a poor state of repair, including the former Buffs RAOB Club, the British Railway Staff Association building and the former Barclays Bank unit. The closure of Barclays Bank now means there is no bank within the District Centre.
- 5.17 The majority of the southern side of Broad Street is characterised by a two storey flat roofed development and corrugated/profiled metal sheds, comprising a terrace of shops, carpet warehouse, club and garage. All of the buildings are unattractive and detract from the character of the area.
- 5.18 Whilst not within the retail boundary, the former Barry Hotel provides a key focus at the western end of the centre. This impressive red brick and Bath stone four storey building was constructed in 1890, and is now Grade II listed. It is crowned by a polygonal tower and turns the corner into Windsor Road. Adjacent to this is an imposing redbrick and stone Masonic Hall with triangular pediment and oriel windows.



TOWN CENTRE FRAMEWORK

- 5.19 An asymmetrical building, which was once a cinema and now accommodates a J.D. Wetherspoon public house, completes the block, turning the corner into Market Street. Whilst this may once have had some architectural integrity, it has been destroyed over time with the insertion of uncharacteristic frontage and inappropriate signage.
- 5.20 The character of Broad Street changes beyond its junction with Island Road. A simple three storey, red brick, hipped roofed building steps down to a much altered art deco styled building which now accommodates three individual commercial units. The main structure of this building is still in evidence but the aluminium shop fronts, signage and security shutters detract from its attractiveness and the character of the area as a whole. Beyond this, running up to the junction with East Street is an attractive two storey residential terrace adjacent to a three storey block. This length of road terminates in a rather eccentric weatherboard and rendered building.

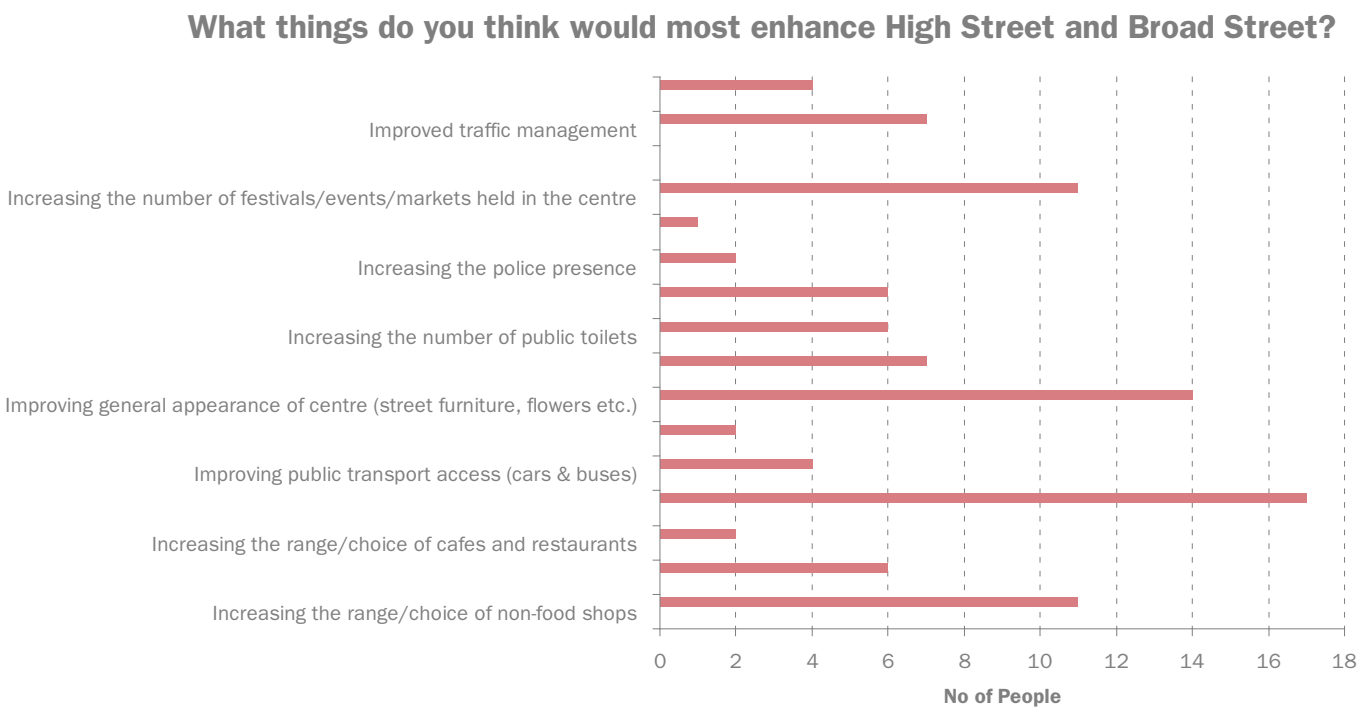
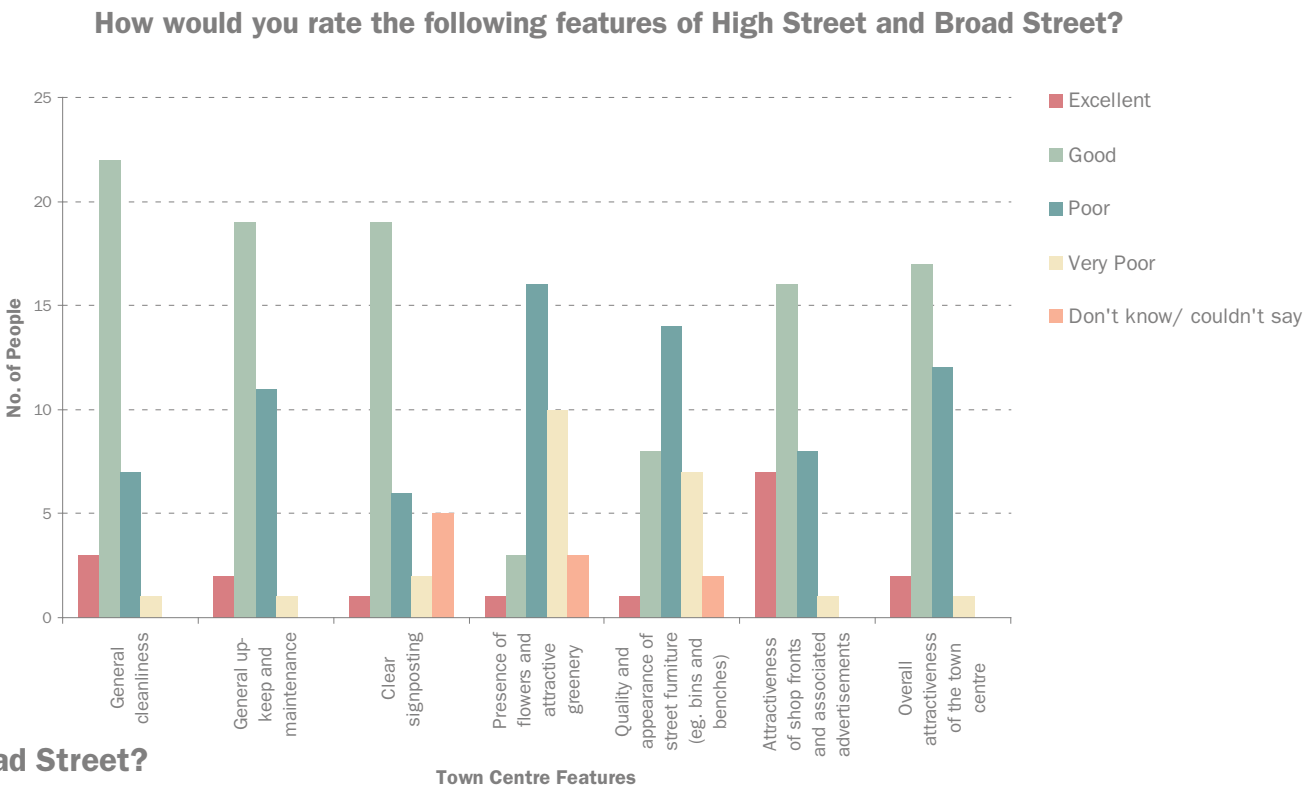


**Top:** Vacant Units on Broad Street, Barry  
**Middle:** Former Barry Hotel, Broad Street, Barry  
**Bottom:** Carpet shop and signage, Broad Street





5.21 When the Citizen’s Panel was asked to rate certain attributes of this Centre, respondents most frequently rated it as being poor in respect of the presence of flowers and attractive greenery, as well as the quality and appearance of street furniture (see graph below). Respondents were evenly split in respect of the centre's overall attractiveness, with 47% describing it as poor but 53% describing it as good.



Citizen’s Panel Questionnaire Results  
Source: Citizen's Panel Questionnaire 2012



TOWN CENTRE FRAMEWORK

5.22 Reflecting this pattern, the second most popular answer given by respondents when asked to identify four things which they think would most enhance High Street and Broad Street related to improving its general appearance.

Diversity of uses

5.23 The Martin Tonks Report provides an account of the centre’s diversity of uses and retailer representation. It concludes that High Street and Broad Street performs a particularly specialist retail offer, but considers that this more than compensates for the absence of a national multiple offer and instead gives a strong offer and sense of place.

5.24 By way of comparison, using the Council’s annual monitoring data between 2007 and 2012, we include a table below which provides an insight into how the uses classes in High Street and Broad Street have changed over time.

5.25 The table below shows the prominence of the A1 uses within the Centre, followed by A3 uses, which have increased by 5% between 2007 and 2012. This change may be attributed by the high number of takeaways on Broad Street. Vacant floorspace have also increased in this period by 4.5%.

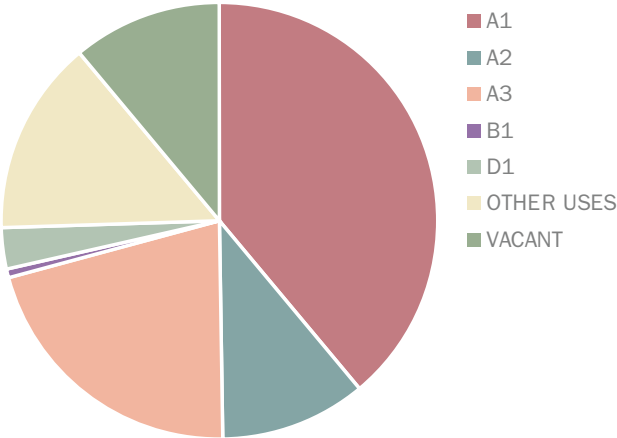
	2007	2012	% Change
A1 (Shops)	4,399 sq.m (40.7%)	4,123 sq.m (38.8%)	Actual decrease 276 sqm Decrease floorspace share 1.9%
A2 (Financial and Professional)	1,470 sq.m (13.6%)	1,157 sq.m (10.9%)	Actual decrease 313 sqm Decrease floorspace share 2.7%
A3 (Food and Drink)	1,739 sq.m (16.1%)	2,240sq.m (21.1%)	Actual increase 501 sqm Increase floorspace share 5%
B1 (Business - Office)	113 sq.m (1.0%)	45 sq.m (0.4%)	Actual decrease 68 sqm decrease floorspace share 0.6%
D1 (Non residential institutions)	376 sq.m (3.5%)	330 sq.m (3.1%)	Actual decrease 46 sqm decrease floorspace share 0.4%
Other Uses	1,932 sq.m (17.9%)	1,544sq.m (14.5%)	Actual decrease 388 sqm Decrease floorspace share 3.4%
Vacant	769 sq.m (7.1%)	1,174 sq.m (11.1%)	Actual increase 405 sqm Increase floorspace share 4.0%
	10,798 sq.m	10,613 sq.m	Actual decrease 155 sqm decrease floorspace 1.0%

High Street and Broad Street, Floorspace breakdown between 2007-2012  
VoG Council Annual Monitoring (2007 and 2012)



5.26 The pie-chart below illustrates the floorspace breakdown within High Street and Broad Street in 2012. This clearly demonstrates the prominence of A1 and A3 uses in the Centre.

High Street and Broad Street Floorspace Breakdown (2012)



High Street and Broad Street Floorspace Breakdown (2012)

Floorspace Split in High Street and Broad Street, Barry  
Source: VoG Council, 2012

**Pedestrian Count**

- 5.27 Pedestrian counts on both High Street and Broad Street are undertaken biannually by the Council. Despite public concerns highlighting that High Street is hidden from view, daytime footfall on High Street has consistently been double that shown on Broad Street, although it is expected that this would change at different times of day.
- 5.28 It would be useful to monitor pedestrian count at different times in the day and night, and also on weekends to gain a better insight into the dynamics of the Centre.

	High Street	Broad Street
	Main section near Post Office around mid-day on a week-day	In front of shop Parade - around mid-day on a week-day
Year	Footfall	Footfall
2007	96	24
2008	90	52
2009	127	55
2010	104	44
2011	92	46

Pedestrian Count (2011)  
Source: VoG Council, Pedestrian Count 2011





# TOWN CENTRE FRAMEWORK

## Accessibility

- 5.29

Pedestrian access around the centre appears to be adequate and this is supported by the Citizen’s Panel questionnaire findings which found that 81% of people rated the centre as being ‘excellent’ or ‘good’ in terms of ease of access for pedestrians.
- 5.30

Pedestrian access across Broad Street is provided via zebra crossings and a traffic-light controlled pedestrian crossing around Island Road. Island Road provides a key pedestrian linkage under the railway to Hood Road and Barry Waterfront.
- 5.31

Paving is functional although tired in areas on both High Street and Broad Street.
- 5.32

The centre does not accommodate a national cycle route; the nearest route is approximately 500m away (No. 88). The Citizen’s Panel Questionnaire results indicated that 40% of respondents answered ‘don’t know’ when asked to rate the Centre in terms of accessible for cycling.
- 5.33

Broad Street accommodates the Centre’s bus linkages. A bus-stop is located either side of the road opposite the former Barry Hotel just outside the Centre boundary.



**Top:** Island Street Junction with Broad Street  
**Bottom:** Tired area of paving on High Street

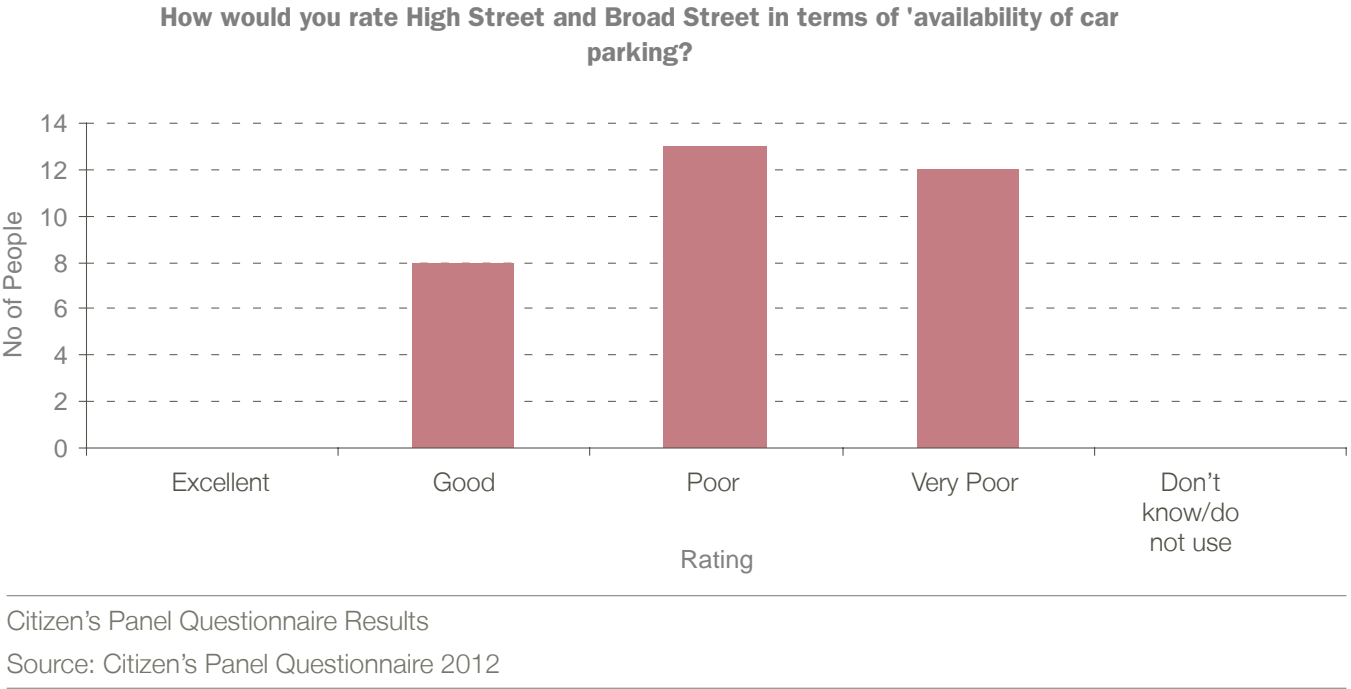
- 5.34

At the time of writing this bus stop is serviced by 9 bus services (X5, X45, 86, 94, 95, 97, 97A, 100 and B3) which provide hourly linkages to areas such as Holton Road, Cardiff, Wenvoe, Culverhouse Cross and Llantwit Major. Services are more frequent during on-peak times. Bus services are as follows:

Bus Service No.	Route	Frequency
86	Culverhouse Cross	Thursday and Saturday only once a day
94	Cardiff – Barry	Every half an hour Monday – Saturday hourly on Sunday
95	Llantwit Major and Cardiff including Heath Hospital	Every half an hour Monday – Saturday, reduced service Sunday
97 and 97A	Colcot	Every half an hour Monday - Saturday
100 and B3	Round Barry	Hourly Monday – Sunday
X5	Bridgend, Llantwit Major and Cardiff	Every 2 hours daily
X45	Llantwit Major	Hourly Monday to Saturday



- 5.35 67% of respondents to the Citizen Panel Questionnaire rated the centre's access to bus services as being 'excellent' or 'good'.
- 5.36 Barry has three railway stations – Barry Docks, Barry Island and Barry. The High Street and Broad Street centre is located closest to Barry Railway Station (approximately 400m away). The railway provides frequent links (every 20 minutes) to Barry Island, Cardiff and Penarth and every hour to Bridgend (at the time of writing).
- 5.37 The Centre does not have a designated public car park, but both Broad Street and High Street accommodate (time-limited) on-street car parking. A car park for rail passengers is also provided at the station (110 spaces).
- 5.38 The Citizen's Panel respondents were asked to rate the centre in terms of availability of car parking and 75% described it as being poor or very poor. This issue was also raised during other forms of consultation, where respondents suggested that the problem of car parking was exacerbated by inadequate enforcement of shop-workers parking in the spaces, although concerns were also raised over the quantum of car parking.
- 5.39 The importance of this car parking issue was clearly shown in the Citizen's Panel questionnaire. When respondents were asked to identify four potential improvements which would most enhance the High Street and Broad Street centre, the most popular answer related to improvements in car parking facilities (17%).





# TOWN CENTRE FRAMEWORK



## SWOT analysis

### Strengths

- 1 Attractive historical centre characterised by historical corner features.
- 2 High Street provides a unique independent cluster in Barry characterised by period shop-fronts and canopies.
- 3 Close to public transport – buses and railway station
- 4 A number of potential development sites mainly on southern side of Broad Street e.g. car sales, MOT Centre, British Railway Public House, former Barclays Bank etc (although some of these appear to be currently occupied).
- 5 Night time economy location.
- 6 On street parking all around centre.

### Weaknesses

- 1 Limited convenience provision.
- 2 Lack of public toilets.
- 3 No public car park/lack of car parking capacity.
- 4 Poor quality shop frontages and fascias on Broad Street.
- 5 Large number of periphery vacancies.
- 6 Insufficient number of visitors.

### Opportunities

- 1 Maintaining and enhancing the independent retail offer in High Street
- 2 Improvement to public realm especially on Broad Street.
- 3 Making more of the historical buildings on Broad Street and High Street.
- 4 Redevelopment of Broad Street, south (area between railway line and Broad Street).

### Threats

- 1 Further economic decline – leading to the loss of retailers from the town centre
- 2 Further reduction in shop front quality.
- 3 Deterioration of historic fabric.
- 4 Increased number of takeaways and uses associated with the night-time economy, which may cause conflicts with near-by uses e.g. residential uses.
- 5 Changes in car parking restrictions/charging.
- 6 Competition from Cardiff's retail, out of town retail centres and Barry Waterfront



# Visioning



- 5.40 In developing this Vision and Framework the following consultation events were undertaken:
- 1 Barry Broad Street and High Street workshop evening – attended by around 7 people including Vale of Glamorgan Councillors representing Barry;
  - 2 A meeting was held with representatives from the Council’s Visible Services Department;
  - 3 A Citizen’s Panel Questionnaire was carried out and of the 400 responses received, 33 related to High Street and Broad Street;
  - 4 A short meeting was held with a local agent to gain an insight into market demand in the local area;
  - 5 A meeting was held with the Vale Retailers Forum; and,
  - 6 A workshop was held with key representatives from the VoG Development Services Directorate and the Welsh Government.

5.41 The word cloud above gives an indication of the responses received from consultation with key stakeholders. Common themes for High Street and Broad Street related to car parking, an observed difficulty in locating the centre and poor appearance of Broad Street.

## Vision origins

5.42 High Street and Broad Street is a centre, of variable quality and function. One street is an independent cluster, whilst the other is a lower quality night-time economy hub, predominantly centred on takeaway uses and drinking establishments. Establishing a consolidated vision for this Centre therefore requires consideration of how these two streets can mutually support each other’s vitality and viability.

- 5.43 Consultation highlighted concerns that High Street was a ‘secret’ and not well known beyond Barry. Consultation responses also highlighted concern over the appearance of Broad Street. This latter point was also supported by the results from the Citizen’s Panel Questionnaire which showed respondents rating the centre very low in terms of presence of greenery and flowers, as well as the quality and appearance of street furniture. Improving the appearance of the Centre was also the second most popular answer (14%) when questioned about potential improvements which may best enhance it. The most common suggestions of potential improvements included enhancing car parking facilities (17%), increasing the number of events in the centre was joint third position (11%) alongside increasing the range and choice of non-food shops (11%).
- 5.44 Concerns over the appearance of Broad Street were identified as a particular shortcoming for the centre as whole, as this street was viewed to act as an entrance feature into the Centre and therefore its reported poor appearance is considered to be failing to entice visitors to the Centre.
- 5.45 Consultees also raised concerns about the concentration of takeaways and night-time economy uses which were focussed on drinking, mostly on Broad Street. Respondents felt these uses acted to degrade the appearance of the Street and considered the street would benefit from diversification to encompass a wider variety of night-time economy uses.
- 5.46 The vision and framework will seek to improve Broad Street as an entrance feature into this Centre, help entice visitors to stop and raise awareness of High Street as Barry’s independent shopping cluster.



**Vision**

5.47 Taking into account the above these elements are distilled in the following vision for High Street and Broad Street centre:

**High Street and Broad Street – Barry’s independent cluster and night-time destination.**

“ **A coherent and functional centre. High Street being Barry’s independent cluster and Broad Street being the gateway, providing an attractive and safe evening destination.** ”

**Guiding Objectives**

5.48 The vision will be used to guide stakeholder efforts over the next 5-10 years in High Street and Broad Street centre and the following objectives will be used to help guide the town centre over this period in order to achieve the identified vision:

- 1 **Improve Broad Street** – Creating a more enticing place to stop and more attractive entrance into the Centre
- 2 **Increasing awareness of centre** – High Street as Barry’s independent cluster and Broad Street as an attractive night-time destination
- 3 **Diversifying Broad Street** – Encouraging a more diverse family orientated night-time economy not just based on drinking.

**Framework**

5.49 Using the above objectives we set out a framework which provides some detail on the recommended next steps applicable to each of the above guiding objectives. The Implementation Plan at Chapter 9 translates this Framework into a workable action plan:

- 1 **Improve Broad Street** – Creating a more enticing place to stop and more attractive entrance into the Centre

5.50 Broad Street and High Street need to work together in order to ensure this centre remains vital and viable. Broad Street’s prominence and function as the main thoroughfare, twinned with its poor appearance, does not encourage visitors to stop and explore this centre. Southern Broad Street (the area between the railway line and Broad Street) is likely to be a barrier to achieving meaningful change or improvement. Whilst this would need to be market led, the preparation of a design brief may help to signal intent and attract interest (in redevelopment). The Council may need to help broker solutions, particularly in relation to land assembly to kick-start the redevelopment of this area.

5.51 Creating a more attractive street-scene on Broad Street, with a consistent approach to signage and shop-front design will also help to create a coherent appearance. In addition, identifying opportunities for incorporating greenery into the centre should be considered – proper resilient street trees such as London Planes should be introduced, rather than transient containerised planting. Consideration of the scope for physical public realm improvements (e.g. less clutter, well considered paving, signage and street furniture) will also help improve the general appearance of the Street as would enhanced efforts to ensure that maintenance of the public realm is undertaken regularly and consistently throughout the Centre.

5.52 Instances of poor building maintenance was evidenced on the site visits and so opportunities whereby building maintenance can be incentivised or poor building maintenance penalised should be investigated.

5.53 Broad Street contains a number of vacant units which adversely impact upon the appearance of the streetscene. Considering opportunities for ‘pop-up’ shops or other temporary uses would therefore help to re-vitalise and enliven the area.

5.54 Measures to improve Broad Street and help persuade visitors to stop will require consideration of accessibility particularly in relation to improvement in existing car parking facilities and consideration of new physical linkages between this Centre and Barry Waterfront.

- 2 **Increasing awareness of centre** – High Street as Barry’s independent cluster and Broad Street as an attractive night-time destination

5.55 Recent evidence gathered as part of the National Assembly’s Inquiry into town centre regeneration and the Mary Portas Review highlights the need for centres to carve out a niche and specialism in order to continue to flourish. Individual centres are advised to build upon the uniqueness and ambience that sets them apart from other centres and out-of-centre locations.



5.56 In the case of High Street, this is Barry's independent shopping cluster which accommodates comparison goods shopping but has potential for some complementary high quality café/restaurants. However this needs to be more widely marketed beyond Barry. This marketing could be in the form of events or festivals and should aim to clearly identify High Street as an independent retail destination.

5.57 Once the night-time economy uses are diversified on Broad Street, this area should be marketed as a (complementary) location where shoppers visiting High Street can eat in a restaurant or have a drink. Increasing awareness of this diversified night-time economy could be undertaken via schemes such as the Purple Flag Initiative (see page 29 of the Inquiry into Town Centre Regeneration) which was a scheme which sought to showcase town centres at night, by encouraging people who may not normally venture into the centre at night to do so.

**3 Diversifying Broad Street** – Encouraging a more diverse family orientated night-time economy not just based on drinking.

5.58 Broad Street contains a concentration of night-time economy uses which centre on drinking and takeaways. Whilst it is recognised that the night-time economy is an important wealth generator for any centre, the recent Town Centre Regeneration Inquiry highlighted that:

**“a narrowly focussed night-time offer, concentrated on a drinking culture can lead to the centre proving unattractive”**

5.59 With this in mind, a more diverse night-time economy offer including sit-down restaurants, late opening cafes etc should be encouraged and further concentration of takeaways and public houses should be discouraged. Redevelopment of the area to the south of Broad Street for these diversified uses represents a key opportunity by which this objective may be achieved.



## 6.0 COWBRIDGE

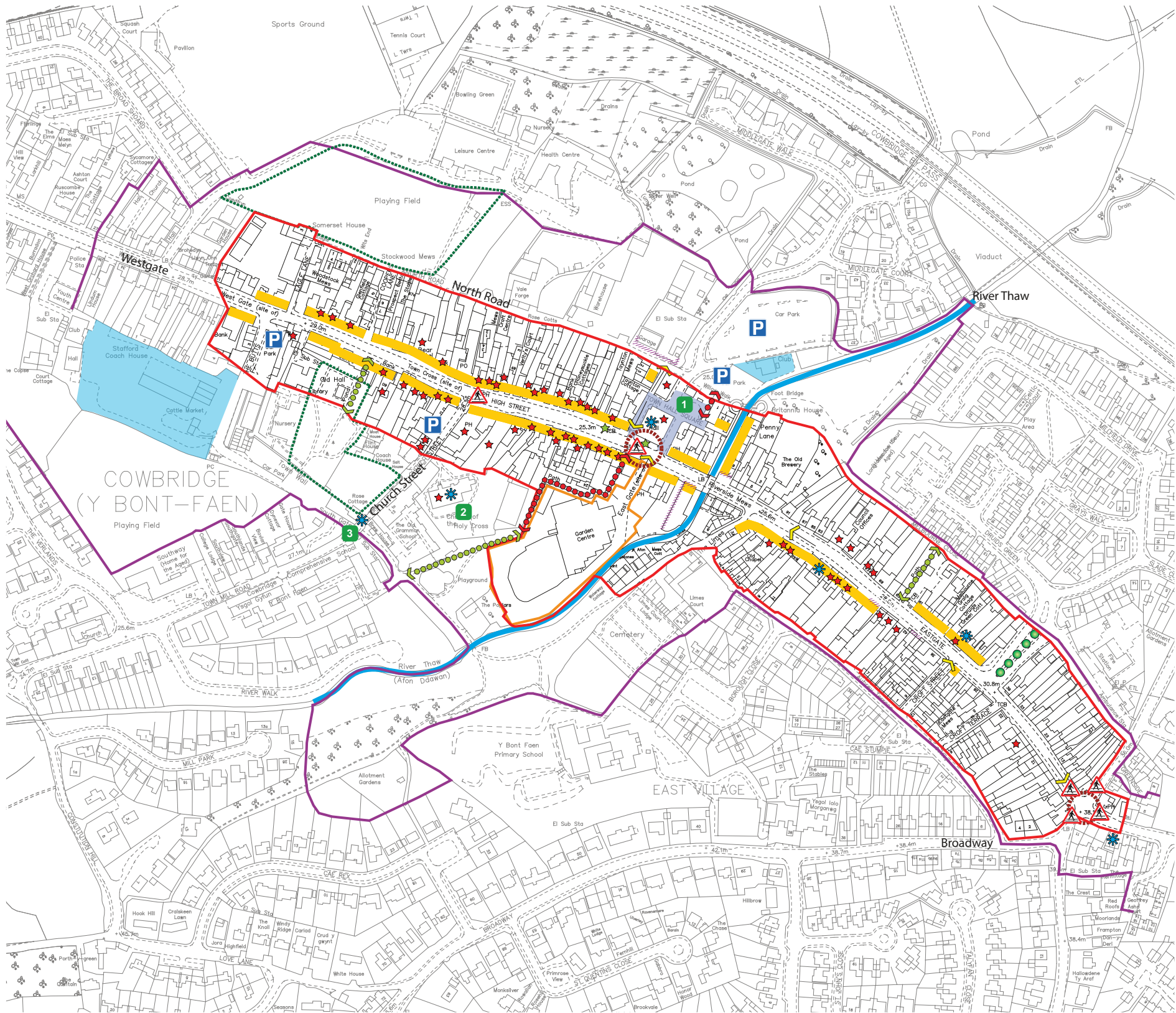
### Vital Statistics

- Town Population 6,133 (ONS Mid Year Estimates 2010):
- Total number of units in centre: 13,613.m/200 units (VoG, 2012)
- Not featured in National Venuescore ranking (2006)
- Mix of 13,613 sq.m floorspace (VoG, 2012)
  - 47.7% A1 (shops);
  - 16.2% A2 (Financial and Professional);
  - 26.7% A3 (Restaurants & Cafes);
  - 4.5% B1 (Offices);
  - 2.9% D1 (non-residential institutions);
  - 0.1% Other Uses;
  - 2.0% Vacant.
- No Railway Station
- Designated Conservation Area






TOWN CENTRE FRAMEWORK



**KEY:**

- Retail boundary
- Conservation area boundary
- Listed building
- Listed feature
- Local landmark
- Parking
- Pedestrian route
- Poor quality pedestrian route
- Pedestrian crossing point
- Significant tree(s)
- Retail frontage
- Detracting frontage
- Poor quality streetscape or space
- Green public spaces
- Focal/ key junction
- Key public space
- River
- Potential development site
- Waitrose site
- Town Hall Square
- Church of the Holy Cross
- South Gate



Nathaniel Lichfield  
& Partners  
Planning, Design, Economics.

Project

VoGlam Regeneration

Title

Cowbridge Appraisal Plan



## TOWN CENTRE FRAMEWORK

### Background

- 6.1 Cowbridge, although one of the smaller towns in the Vale of Glamorgan, with a population of 6,133 people (ONS Mid Year Estimates 2010) is an important settlement serving a wider rural catchment. A busy market town in medieval times, Cowbridge was once one of the stops on the main London to Swansea stage coach route, and central to the farming community in this part of Glamorgan. Today it continues to be a busy market town which is often referred to as the Bond Street of Wales and has numerous high quality, family-owned shops.

### Connections

- 6.2 Cowbridge is located in the heart of the Vale of Glamorgan on the A48 and historically owes its location as a bridging point over the River Thaw. Bridgend is 7 miles to the west, Llantwit Major to the south 5.5 miles away and Cardiff 13 miles to the east.
- 6.3 Cowbridge acts as a service centre for the surrounding rural area as well as having a range of quality/specialist independents. A new Waitrose supermarket has recently opened on the former Birds Garden Centre site.



**Top:** Town Hall Square  
**Bottom:** Cowbridge High Street



**Top:** Redundant Old British Legion Club  
**Bottom:** Physic Garden



The Centre

Key characteristics

- 6.4 The town centre was originally built on a Norman grid system, visible in its mile-long High Street that runs east to west. It is focused on the High Street and is home to most of the main shops including a mix of national multiples and independents. Cowbridge is considered an up-market centre but also a centre that offers other attractions.
- 6.5 Cowbridge offers a real shopping experience with a number a boutiques, clothes shops, cafes and restaurants. It also provides for everyday needs, and evening activities.
- 6.6 The centre lies within the wider Cowbridge Conservation Area with Llanblethian, once a separate village to the south west. Cowbridge is considered to be one of the most significant small historic towns of Wales with its medieval roots based around the Grade I listed Church of the Holy Cross. The strong east/ west alignment of the town is based along the A4222, a former Roman Road which provided the focus for the town’s linear development.
- 6.7 Historic and quaint looking units are located alongside the High Street and a number of small courtyards off the High Street create additional interest for pedestrians. The small covered Willow Walk / Penny Lane Mall is located next to the bridge over the River Thaw and adds variety to the shopping experience.
- 6.8 The small Town Hall Square is used as a bus station, which is located behind the attractive former Town Hall building.
- 6.9 Cowbridge’s main car park for the centre is adjacent to the Town Hall Square and the now redundant Old British Legion Club. There is no railway station located within or near the centre.

- 6.10 To the south of the High Street is the library and the ‘Physic Garden’ which is one of the main visitor attractions in the town. The only surviving gateway, South Gate, of the original walled town is also located to the south of the High Street on Town Mill Road.

Urban Design/Character Analysis

- 6.11 The centre consists of five key areas:
  - 1 The main thoroughfare comprising High Street and Westgate, and Eastgate, separated by the River Thaw which flows from the southwest to north east through the centre of the town;
  - 2 Development to the southern side of North Road, to the rear of High Street, comprising a mix of boundary walls, outbuildings and former coaching buildings;
  - 3 Whilst not within the retail boundary the area to the south of High Street, including Old Hall Gardens, the Physic Garden and Church of the Holy Cross provides an attractive setting to the southern side of the centre, accessed via a series of narrow alleys and lanes;
  - 4 Part of the centre is formed by the site of the former Hurrans Garden Centre to the southern side of High Street. A Waitrose foodstore has now been developed on this site, and recently opened; and,
  - 5 Opposite this, to the northern side of High Street is the Town Hall and associated square, a key public building and focal space.
- 6.12 Architecturally the town exhibits a rich mixture ranging from medieval, through sixteenth and century styles, to Georgian, Victorian, Edwardian and the more modern Twentieth Century development. Over the centuries buildings have been restored and amended and this process, together with general redevelopment, has resulted in numerous listed buildings of various grades being located through out the town. The original burgage plots are still very much in evidence, stretching back to North Road and providing a rhythmic street frontage.

- Historic courtyards including Verity’s Court and Coopers Lane can be found to the northern side of High Street and have provided precedent to newer developments such as Penny Lane.
- 6.13 High Street is characterised by its prime historic frontage. Sitting to the back of pavement it provides an ever changing frame to the street, due to the variety of building styles and ages. Buildings are generally two and three storey in height, but differing storey heights have resulted in a wide range of building scales. Some have simple pitched roofs with ridgelines running parallel to the street, whilst others present gables or parapets. Chimneys punctuate the skyline. There are numerous examples of various forms and styles of dormer windows to upper storeys, and projecting bays to both ground and first floors.
- 6.14 Local limestone is very much in evidence, although the palette of materials found within High Street is as varied as its architecture. Lime wash, lime render and stucco can be seen, as can rough cast render and pebbledash. Bath stone has been used to decorative effect around some windows and doors and within coursing and copings. Slate predominates as a roofing material.
- 6.15 There are many attractive shop fronts within the town centre, incorporating traditional detailing and signage. Canopies and awnings are also typical, protecting and defining additional display areas on the pavement. Conversely, however, there are also some poor examples of frontages incorporating ill-considered signage and unsympathetic shop front design.
- 6.16 The floorscape of High Street is variable. To the front of Old Hall there is an area of dated street furniture, uneven surfacing and raised tree grilles which detract from the overall quality and character of the area. Elsewhere small paving slabs, crossed by drainage channels, and laid in a staggered brickwork pattern creates a patchwork pavement. Stonework to road gutters is an attractive detail and in keeping with the historic character of the Town Centre.



TOWN CENTRE FRAMEWORK

- 6.17

The High Street is dominated by vehicles, associated markings, signalling and furniture. This serves to detract from the overall character of the Town Centre and competes with the historic townscape. This is particularly true of Town Hall Square, a poor quality space at the heart of the town, adjacent to the Georgian Grade 2\* Listed Town Hall whose clock tower and cupola provides a key landmark. This area provides an unattractive gateway from the Town Centre’s primary car park to the north.
- 6.18

Whilst the Penny Lane development provides public access to the River Thaw access to the riverside is otherwise limited. The effect of this is to minimise the potential amenity value of this key natural resource.
- 6.19

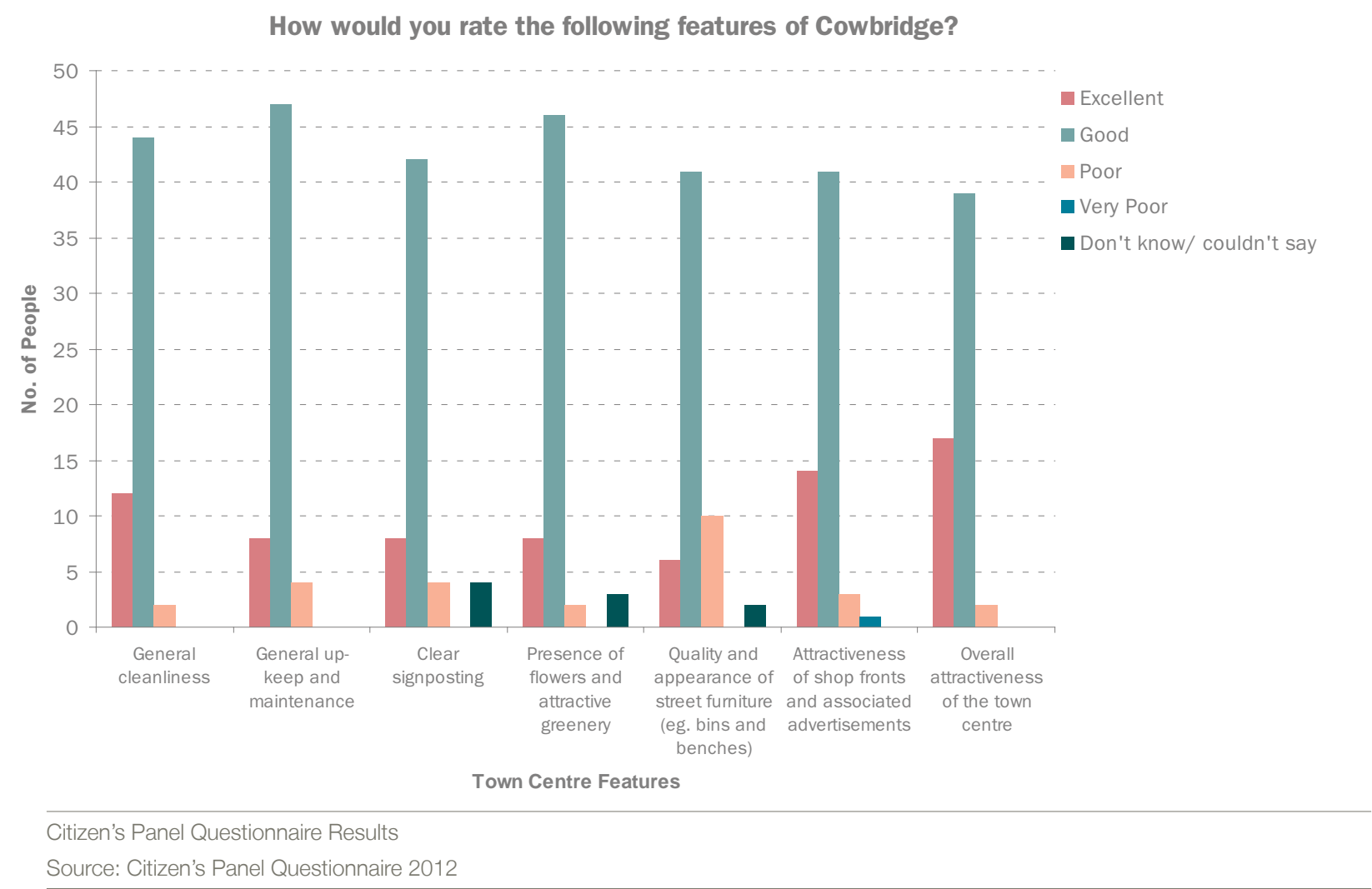
The south eastern end of Eastgate is characterised by residential development, some with small gardens to the front (mainly to the southern side) and others which sit to the back of pavement. The floorscape appears tired, with evidence of service providers backfilling excavations with inappropriate materials.
- 6.20

Approaching the western end of the study area the characteristic two storey residential properties give way to more impressively scaled buildings, heralding entry into the Town Centre. The Cattle Market lies to the south of Westgate, accessed from The Butts.

Diversity of Uses

- 6.21

The Town and District Retail Centre Appraisal prepared by Martin Tonks provides an expansive account of the town’s diversity of uses and retailer representation. It concluded that Cowbridge provides an excellent range of non-food shops for a small suburban district centre and that it has a good diversity of uses – particularly in respect of financial services, cafés and restaurants, and specialist fashion and clothes shops. Although some visitors criticised the town for its lack of a swimming pool and cinema, the report noted that just over half of the visitors to Cowbridge could not think of any missing facilities. It is unclear how many visitors were questioned as part of this survey.



- 6.22

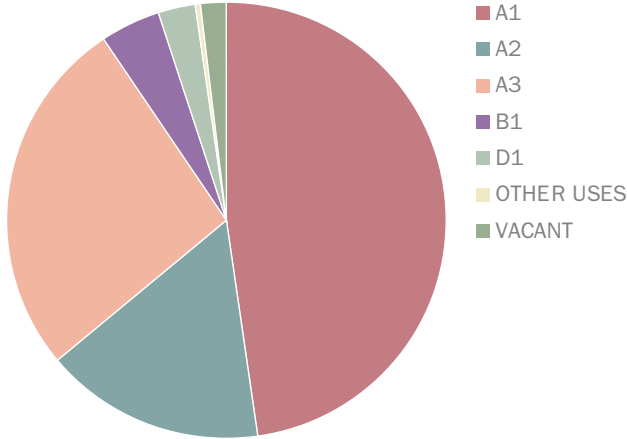
By way of comparison, using the Council’s annual monitoring data between 2007 and 2012, we include a table below which provides an insight into how the uses classes in the town centre have changed over this period.
- 6.23

This illustrates the continued prominence of the A1 use within the centre which has increased in actual terms but decreased in terms of its proportional share of floorspace. The nature of Cowbridge’s offer and destination appeal has meant through the recession the centre has seen a decrease in vacant floorspace and proportional share of floorspace.



	2007	2012	% Change
A1 (Shops)	6,570 (52.4%)	6,488sq.m (47.7%)	Actual floorspace decrease 82sqm Decrease floorspace share 4.7%
A2 (Financial and Professional)	1,841 (14.7%)	2,203 sq.m (16.2%)	Actual floorspace increase 362 sqm Increase floorspace share 1.5%
A3 (Food and Drink)	3,347 (26.7%)	3,636 sq.m (26.7%)	Actual floorspace increase 289 sqm Same floorspace share 0%
B1 (Business - Office)	306 (2.4%)	606 sq.m (4.5%)	Actual floorspace increase 300 sq.m Increase floorspace share 2.1%
D1 (Non residential institutions)	124 (1.0%)	389 sq.m (2.9%)	Actual floorspace increase 265 sq.m Increase floorspace share 1.9%
Other Uses	19sq.m (0.2%)	19sq.m (0.1%)	No change in actual floorspace Decrease floorspace share 0.1%
Vacant	322 (2.6 %)	272 sq.m (2.0%)	Actual floorspace decrease 50 sqm Decrease floorspace share 0.6%
	12,529 sq.m	13,613 sq.m	Actual floorspace increase 1,084sq.m Increase floorspace share 8%

Cowbridge, Floorspace breakdown between 2007-2012  
Source:VoG Council Annual Monitoring (2007 and 2012)



Cowbridge Floorspace Breakdown (2012)

Floorspace Split in Cowbridge  
Source: VoG Council, 2012



TOWN CENTRE FRAMEWORK

Pedestrian Count

- 6.24

Pedestrian counts around Cowbridge are undertaken by the Council on a biannual basis. These have shown that the area at the front of the Town Hall benefits from the highest pedestrian count of those areas monitored.
- 6.25

In the future, it would be useful to monitor how these pedestrian counts change on the weekend and also during different times in the day and night.

Accessibility

- 6.26

The centre is accessible off the A48, via the A4222 which runs parallel. This road is the main thoroughfare with on-street parking as well as car parks off this road. Consultation highlighted some concern about congestion on this road during peak times and problems associated with car parking enforcement. The Citizen’s Panel questionnaire revealed a real division of opinion in relation to car parking - 59% of respondents rated availability of parking as ‘excellent’ or ‘good’ whilst 41% found it to be ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’. In addition, an issue raised verbally during consultation was in relation to the lack of coach parking and an observed lack of signage helping to guide people into the available car parks. A potential solution to these concerns may be to make better use of the available car (and coach) parking at Cowbridge Comprehensive School.

Location (2011)		Count	Day	Time
Cowbridge town centre (Front of Town Hall)	Near pedestrian crossing	197	Thursday	14:00
Cowbridge town centre (High Street/ Church Street)	Near pedestrian crossing	159	Thursday	13:30

CowbridgePedestrian Count (2011)  
Source: VoG Council, Pedestrian Count 2011

- 6.27

Pedestrian access within Cowbridge centre is considered to be effective and this is supported by the Citizen’s Panel responses which show that 95% of the Citizen’s Panel respondents rated the centre as being ‘excellent’ or ‘good’ in regards to ease of access for pedestrians.
- 6.28

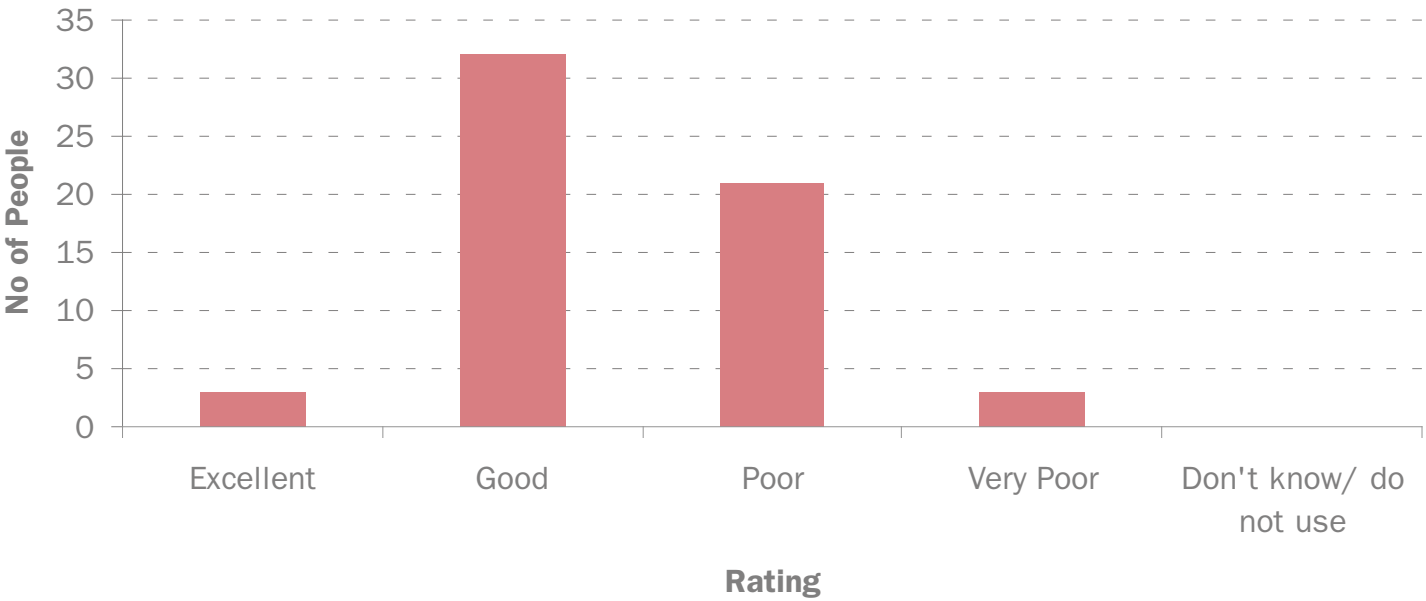
Pedestrian access across High Street is provided by two zebra crossings with pavements either side that are large enough for two people to pass. Some goods from the shops are displayed on the pavement and although this reduces access in places, it adds to the street scene and does not have an unacceptable impact upon accessibility.

- 6.29

The Centre does not accommodate a national cycle route nor are cycle lanes provided on the existing road network. The nearest national cycle route finishes in Rhoose and is eventually proposed to travel through Llantwit Major. The absence of a cycle route reflects the Citizen’s Panel results which saw 50% of respondents saying they did not know how to rate Cowbridge in respect of access for cyclists, whilst a further 27% of respondents described it as ‘poor’.
- 6.30

Cowbridge is not served by a railway line. The nearest stations are located at Llantwit Major, 5.5 miles away and Pontyclun approximately 5.7 miles away. 62% of respondents to the Citizen’s Panel Questionnaire rated Cowbridge centre as being ‘very poor’ in terms of access to railway services which is unsurprising.

How would you rate Cowbridge in terms of 'availability of car parking?



Citizen's Panel Questionnaire Results  
Source: Citizen’s Panel Questionnaire 2012



- 6.31 The Town Hall Square and High Street accommodates Cowbridge's bus linkages. At the time of writing the centre is well-served by 6 bus services (Nos.E11, V1, V2, V5, V6 and X2) which provide linkages to neighbouring villages as well as larger settlements such as Barry, Bridgend, Porthcawl and Cardiff. The service frequency varies and are as follows:

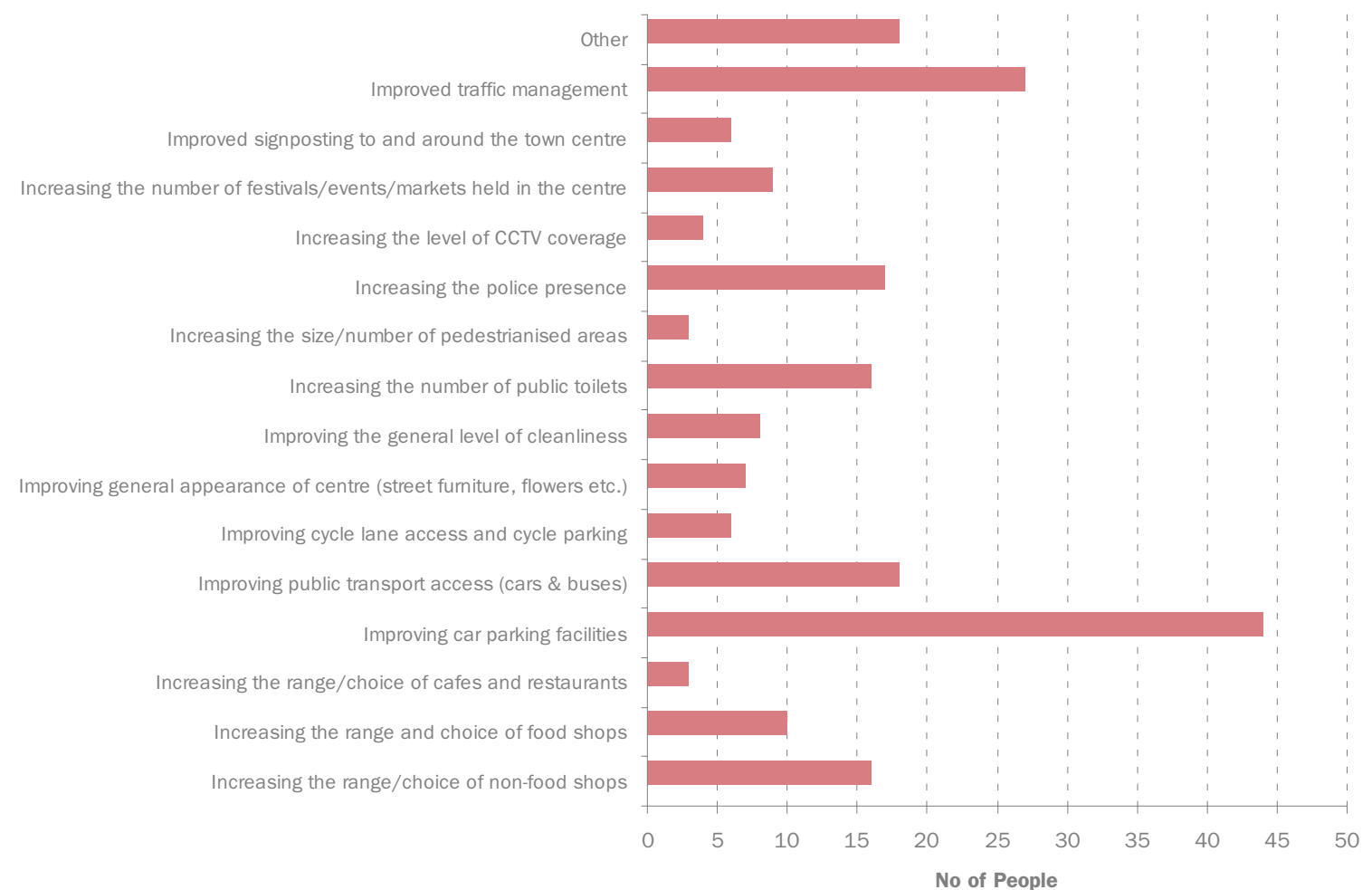
Bus Service No.	Route	Frequency
E11	Cowbridge to Talbot Green	Hourly Monday - Saturday
V1	Cowbridge to Llantwit Major and Bridgend	Every 2 hours Monday - Saturday
V2	Cowbridge to Llantwit Major and Bridgend	Every 2 hours Monday - Saturday
V5	Cowbridge to Barry	4 times daily
V6	Cowbridge to Llandough	On request
X2	Porthcawl to Bridgend and Cardiff	Half-hourly Monday – Saturday and hourly Sunday

Bus linkages for Cowbridge

Source: Vale of Glamorgan Council June 2012

- 6.32 67% of respondents to the Citizen Panel Questionnaire rated the centre's access to bus services as being 'excellent' or 'good'.
- 6.33 The issue of accessibility was raised by respondents to the Citizen's Panel Questionnaire and the most pressing enhancements to Cowbridge were identified as improving car parking facilities, improving public transport access and improving traffic management. The popularity of improving car parking facilities is quite surprising considering the real division of opinion when respondents were asked to rate the centre in this respect.

### What things do you think would most enhance Cowbridge?



Citizen's Panel Questionnaire results

Source: Citizen's Panel Questionnaire 2012



# TOWN CENTRE FRAMEWORK

## SWOT analysis

### Strengths

- 1 Established and very attractive historic town centre.
- 2 Presence of numerous high end independent retailers.
- 3 An excellent number and variety of complimentary leisure uses to retail.
- 4 Architectural heritage and townscape.
- 5 Low vacancy rate.
- 6 A number of historical attractions such as the Physic Garden and Manor House close to the town centre.
- 7 Buoyant local market/demand.
- 8 Affluent and well established catchment.
- 9 Strong identity and quality centre with few, if any, major problems.

### Weaknesses

- 1 Traffic congestion through town.
- 2 Conflict between people and cars on main thoroughfare.
- 3 No footway on North Road.
- 4 Street furniture sometimes tired.
- 5 Lack of large units.
- 6 Lack of natural surveillance and lighting in some car parking areas.
- 7 No parking available for coaches.
- 8 Insufficient tourist information.

### Opportunities

- 1 A number of development opportunities.
- 2 Improving the quality of the public realm – high-end materials, detailing, paving.
- 3 Improvement to highway design on the public/ pedestrian realm.
- 4 Making more of the historical heritage of the town and its tourism offer.
- 5 Making the most of the ‘exciting’ and varied shopping experience in Cowbridge which is characterised by interesting court-yards off the main street, a covered parade of shops, as well as on-street units.

### Threats

- 1 Change – too much and too quickly.
- 2 Loss of the livestock market could lose the town’s cultural identity as a market town.
- 3 Inappropriate development of key sites e.g. livestock market.
- 4 Further economic decline – leading to the loss of retailers from the town centre and decreased consumer confidence.
- 5 Reduction in shop front quality.
- 6 Deterioration of historic fabric.
- 7 Retaining mix and quality of units within the centre.
- 8 Ensuring a balance is made between an active street-frontage, which also ensures ease of access for pedestrians – some instances of shop displays on the street impeding movement.



## Visioning



- 6.34 In developing this Vision and Framework the following consultation events were undertaken:
- 1 Cowbridge workshop evening – attended by around 7 people including Councillors, members of the Cowbridge Charter Trust, Local History Society, the Town Council and Cowbridge Resident's Association;
  - 2 A meeting was held with representatives from the Council's Visible Services Department;
  - 3 A Citizen's Panel Questionnaire was carried out and of the 400 responses received, 59 related to Cowbridge;
  - 4 A short meeting was held with a local agent to gain an insight into market demand in the local area;
  - 5 A meeting was held with the Vale Retailers Forum; and,
  - 6 A workshop was held with key representatives from the VoG Development Services Directorate, the Welsh Assembly and Creative Rural Communities.

- 6.35 The word cloud above gives an indication of the responses received from consultation with key stakeholders. Common themes for Cowbridge relate to marketing, improving the leisure offer and car parking.

### Vision origins

- 6.36 Cowbridge is an elegant market town with a wealth of historic buildings. It is also referred to as the Bond Street of Wales and boasts a wide range of unique, independent shops selling clothing, jewellery, leather goods, shoes, crafts, furniture, books, antiques and unusual gifts. Cowbridge provides a chic shopping destination and experience with the numerous places to eat, pass away a few hours in a cafe or stay overnight.
- 6.37 However in order to maintain Cowbridge as a shopping destination it is considered that the centre needs to continue to widen its offer by opening later (including on Sundays). The Inquiry by the National Assembly for Wales confirmed that:

**“ if town centres are to survive and thrive, 9am to 5pm is no longer enough ”**

- 6.38 In addition to this, the centre should be encouraged to provide a diversity of uses to maximise the reasons to visit Cowbridge, in particular the provision for tourists in the centre could be improved. The recent opening of a new Waitrose store could play an important role in diversifying the retail offer in Cowbridge and in further enhancing its quality and appeal as a retail centre. Indeed it noteworthy that since the opening of Waitrose some other shops in the centre have altered opening times so they open later into the evening. This is important in broadening the attractiveness of the centre to visitors.
- 6.39 Cowbridge benefits from a historical past and is a designated conservation area with a number of historical attractions and the Physic gardens. An annual food festival is also held in the town every October as well as an annual Reindeer Parade every November. The centre also benefits from a leisure centre but it has been reported that the centre does not cater for all leisure needs, including those of older children.
- 6.40 To promote and enhance this destination with its abundant attractions, improvements to the parking situation are necessary to enable residents and visitors alike to enjoy the Centre. The current parking situation is reducing access to the centre and the destination is therefore not able to capitalise on the demand.



## TOWN CENTRE FRAMEWORK

6.41 In addition, marketing is vital to entice visitors to the centre to not only partake in festivals, but explore Cowbridge's offer and secure spin-off trade from its impressive day-time and night-time offer.

### Vision

6.42 Taking into account the above these elements are distilled in the following vision for Cowbridge centre:-

### Destination Cowbridge!

“Continuing momentum for destination Cowbridge!  
An historic shopping town”

### Guiding objectives

6.43 The vision will be used to guide stakeholder efforts over the next 5-10 years in Cowbridge and the following objectives will be used to help guide the town centre over this period in order to achieve the identified vision:

- 1 **Improve the tourism and leisure offer** – Capitalise on Cowbridge's historic built environment and increase leisure and tourist offer
- 2 **Develop the transport strategy** – Establishment of a parking strategy to alleviate parking problems in Cowbridge.
- 3 **Marketing** – Promote Cowbridge's festivals, retail identity and leisure offer.

### Framework

6.44 Using the above guiding objectives we set out a framework which provides some detail on the recommended next steps applicable to each of the above guiding objectives. The Implementation Plan at Chapter 9 translates this Framework into a workable action plan:-

#### 1. Improve the tourism and leisure offer – Capitalise on Cowbridge's historic built environment and increase leisure and tourist offer

6.45 Cowbridge is a unique shopping destination, but also benefits from a wealth of historic buildings. The town currently offers a limited range of leisure activities, and has no tourist information centre. These types of new uses would add to the attractiveness of Cowbridge and would complement the existing uses within the town. These should therefore be encouraged. In particular the redundant British Legion building could represent an ideal location for a tourism centre, although it is understood this has planning permission for residential development.

6.46 The town benefits from a very active community, with third sector organisations taking the lead on many of the current leisure activities. A small community cinema operates once a month from the Town Hall. The larger events attracting thousands of visitors to the town are largely led by volunteers. (E.g. Food & Drink Festival, Book Festival and Reindeer Parade). This demonstrates the important role the community can play in local economic activities.

6.47 Furthermore the existing retail, service and leisure uses within the centre should be encouraged to open later and / or on Sundays to increase the attraction for people to visit the centre outside normal hours. With the new Waitrose now bringing in a significant number of shoppers on a Sunday, this may present an opportunity for other traders. This will help to begin to create an alternative to other out of centre destinations such as Culverhouse Cross and strengthen Cowbridge's position.

6.48 A key selling point of Cowbridge is its history and in addition to improving the tourism offer, good shop front design should be encouraged through clear guidance. Efforts to ensure historical buildings are well maintained and that development continues to be sympathetic to this historical setting will also be important in ensuring that the quality of the urban environment can be maintained and enhanced.

#### 2. Develop the transport strategy – Establishment of a parking strategy to alleviate parking problems in Cowbridge.

6.49 Car parking is available at both Council owned car parks in Cowbridge. 149 parking spaces are available at the Town Hall car park and 21 spaces at The Butts car park. A number of on-street parking spaces are also available on the High Street which are time limited to an hour.

6.50 The livestock market is used every Tuesday but is opened up the rest of the time as an unofficial public car park. It contains 200 car parking spaces but there is a risk that this could be developed in the future. Whilst appropriate development on this site could be beneficial in terms of improving the town's offer, it would have an obvious impact upon its car parking capacity.

6.51 Whilst there are a number of free parking spaces in Cowbridge, car parking was identified a key issue. A variety of problems were raised in relation to a lack of signage to the town's car parks, workers and commuters parking at the start of the day making it difficult for shoppers/tourists to park, inadequate parking enforcement and a lack of coach parking in the centre. Some people also considered there was a need for more car parking and one consultee stated that restaurants in Cowbridge have had people cancel their reservations, saying they cannot park.

- 6.52 In light of these observed issues, a parking strategy combined with the proposed Civil Parking Enforcement is urgently needed to improve parking provision and management in Cowbridge. It need not be the case that this Strategy outlines complicated solutions as potential measures may be fairly cheap or simple. This Strategy should also seek to investigate scope to improve cycle access into the centre, primarily focusing on provision of leisure routes for tourists. This will also in turn help tourists to visit Cowbridge and the surrounding area, whilst also improving the sustainability of the Centre.

**3. Marketing – Promote Cowbridge's festivals, retail identity and leisure offer.**

- 6.53 To continue to make the town a success, a marketing campaign should be considered to continue to promote Cowbridge's historical assets, first class shopping offer, festivals and new tourism/leisure facilities. A successful marketing document could draw together the proposed objectives to enhance and build on Cowbridge's success as a centre. If shops were to open later during the week or on Sundays then marketing this significant offer is vital to maintaining and building on the success of the Town.
- 6.54 Mixed feelings were provided in consultation to whether Cowbridge should dispel the image that it is a place for the affluent, or retain the existing perception which is part of the attraction for some. Marketing will have to be carefully thought through to encourage broad consensus, support and buy in. It is crucial that the Town's trades people are united in the approach. The Centre should also be marketed for its other attractions, such as the rich heritage, which contributes to the shopping experience. In particular, a greater emphasis could be placed on 'selling' these assets in order to encourage tourists into the centre.



## 7.0 LLANTWIT MAJOR

### Vital Statistics

- Town Population 10,673 (ONS Mid Year Estimates 2010):
- Total number of units in centre: 7,000 sq.m/97 units (VoG, 2012)
- National Venuescore (2006) not Ranked
- Mix of 7,000 sq.m floorspace (VoG, 2012)
  - 64.5% A1 (shops);
  - 10.9% A2 (Financial and Professional);
  - 19.3% A3 (Restaurants & Cafes);
  - 2.0% B1 (Offices);
  - 0.6% D1 (non-residential institutions);
  - 0.2% Other Uses;
  - 2.6% Vacant.
- Llantwit Major Railway Station 50 m away from town
- Designated Conservation Area





## Background

- 7.1 Llantwit Major is the third largest town in the Vale of Glamorgan, after Barry and Penarth, with a population of 10,673 people (ONS Mid Year Estimates 2010). The town has an historic image as an ancient seat of learning for the Welsh saints and is a key gateway town to the Glamorgan Heritage Coast which stretches for 14 miles, from Aberthaw to Porthcawl and is visited predominantly by walkers all year round.

## Connections

- 7.2 Llantwit Major is located approximately 1km north of Llantwit Major Beach, which links onto the Glamorgan Heritage Coast. Access to the Beach is reasonably well sign-posted from the Centre although this linkage is predominantly for vehicles. Pedestrian access is accessible via the same road, but there are no pavements. No direct bus linkages are available.
- 7.3 The Heritage Coast footpath (now part of the Wales Coastal Path) runs along the coastline and links neighbouring attractions such as the St Donats Arts Centre (arts venue accommodating exhibition, cinema, dance, theatre and music) which is located approximately 1.5km west.
- 7.4 2km east of Llantwit Major is the St Athan MoD Base, which has been identified as a Strategic Opportunity Area set to accommodate an Aerospace Business Park and new housing. Elements of this development benefits from outline planning permission and considering how Llantwit Major can best link with this development and capture expenditure from these new residents will be important in sustaining the town centre.
- 7.5 In addition to the Centre's physical connections, Llantwit Major's historical associations with Welsh Saints – St David, St Patrick and St Illtud are noteworthy. This is complemented by an ancient church (St Illtud's Church), old characterful inns such as the Swan Inn and listed buildings such as the Town Hall, which are set amongst a maze of narrow lanes. This 'historical quarter' is a key selling point for the centre and should be capitalised upon for the future.

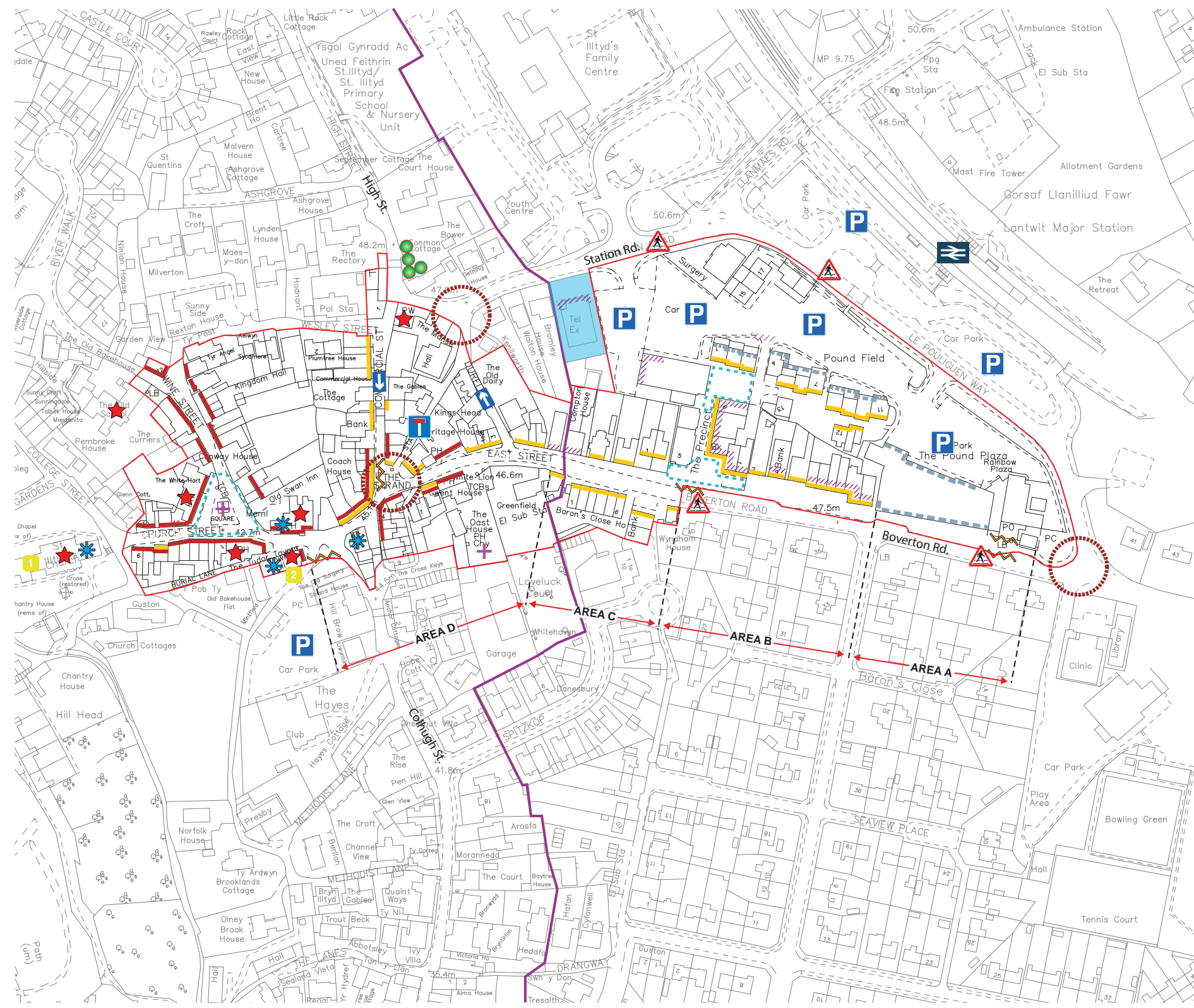


**Top:** The Glamorgan Heritage Coast

**Bottom:** St Illtud's Church, Llantwit Major



# TOWN CENTRE FRAMEWORK



## KEY:

- Retail boundary
- Conservation area boundary
- Listed building
- Focal feature
- Local landmark
- Pedestrian crossing point
- Parking
- One way system
- No through road
- Railway station
- Significant tree(s)
- Retail frontage
- Attractive townscape/ frontage
- Dead frontage
- Detracting frontage
- Visually intrusive road markings
- Area dominated by parking
- Potential for streetscape improvements
- Focal/ key junction
- Key public space
- Significant view
- Potential development site
- Townscape areas
- St. Illtyd's Church
- Town Hall

**nlp** Nathaniel Lichfield  
& Partners  
Planning, Design, Economics.

Project VoGlam Regeneration

Title Llantwit Major Appraisal Plan



The Centre

Key Characteristics

- 7.6
- The Town and District Retail Centre Appraisal identifies the settlement as occupying a role as a dormitory village for commuters to Cardiff, Bridgend and Barry. The settlement is also noted to be a minor tourist destination, close to Llantwit Major beach which is part of the Glamorgan Heritage Coast. Our analysis supports this conclusion, although consultation responses have highlighted the perception suggested that the Centre has failed to make the most of opportunities offered by tourism.
- 7.7
- The centre of Llantwit Major is relatively compact and concentrated around East Street/Boverton Road which runs in an east-west direction. To the north of this road is Poundfield Shopping Precinct, a 1960s, partially covered shopping precinct, which accommodates the majority of Llantwit Major’s shops. This Precinct is gated and is open between 8am and 8.30pm (Monday and Saturday) and between 9am and 8pm (Sunday). Beyond this area is the Town’s main car parking area, railway station and bus station. To the west is the Centre’s historical quarter which contains some 54 listed and 22 locally listed buildings, together with 5 scheduled ancient monuments.
- 7.8
- There are a number of poorly maintained properties throughout the Centre, including those located on East Street and opposite the War Memorial which are particularly prominent and serve to detract from the attractiveness of the centre. However, it is understood that these are soon to be redeveloped for retail purposes.
- 7.9
- The Centre also contains a number of prominent vacant units within the Poundfield Precinct and at the War Memorial.
- 7.10
- Another recurrent theme raised by respondents related to Llantwit Major’s night-time economy, which is almost exclusively based upon drinking. This narrowly focussed night-time economy yielded some concern from respondents in relation to safety and security at night.

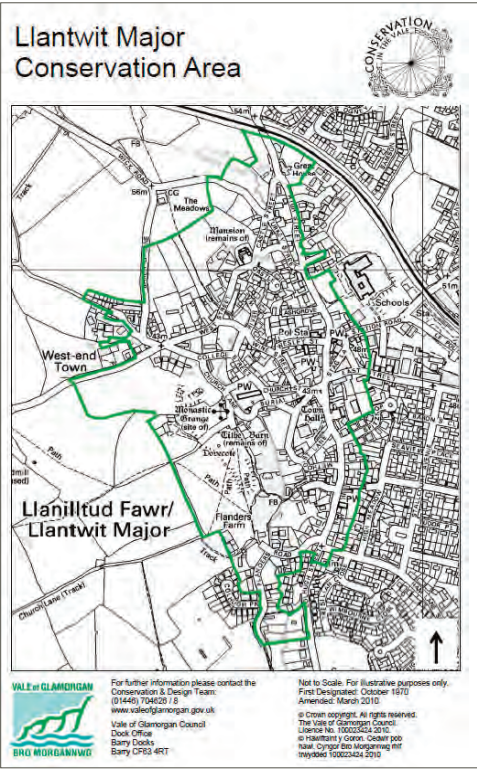


**Top:** Example of Maintenance Issues on some historical properties, Llantwit Major

**Bottom:** Vacant unit within Poundfield Precinct, Llantwit Major

Urban Design/Character Analysis

- 7.11
- The Centre’s character and appearance is split largely along the boundary of the town’s Conservation Area. As shown in Figure 7.5 the Conservation Area extends beyond the Town Centre and includes the western half of the settlement.



Llantwit Major Conservation Area



# TOWN CENTRE FRAMEWORK

## Historic Quarter

- 7.12 The historic quarter comprises the western half of Llantwit Major's Centre. It is characterised by a network of narrow one-way lanes, which contain listed buildings. The Grade II\* Listed Town Hall, along with the Square (a triangular war memorial area, provides a focal point for this part of the town.
- 7.13 This area also contains a number of public houses (Swan Inn, Old White Hart and Tudor Tavern), independent shops and services (hairdressers and cafes). The parish church of St. Illtud lies to the western end of Church Street and provides a key landmark which is clearly visible from this key public space. A project is currently underway to convert the Galilee Chapel of St Illtuds into an education and visitors centre providing information on the history of this key landmark.
- 7.14 The Town Hall currently acts as a seasonal Visitor Centre and also venue for local events. This part of the town also contains a series of blue plaques which help explain the history behind some of the historic buildings.
- 7.15 Buildings within this historic quarter define the streets, sitting to the back of pavement or to the back of the roadway itself. This form results in a strong sense of enclosure which is heightened by continuous building frontages and a propensity for significant boundary walls. Winding streets provide a series of unfolding views which are terminated by either buildings or intriguing changes in direction.
- 7.16 Buildings within the historic quarter are generally two storey in height. This modest scale reflects their roots as simple workers cottages serving the original agricultural community.
- 7.17 The roofscape is generally one of simple, slated pitches with minimal eaves depths. The majority of ridgelines run parallel to the road, some with double pitches to the rear. Some key buildings do have more ornate detailing including the hipped roof and finial of The Tudor Tavern.

- 7.18 Building materials are limited to local limestone and render, with some brick and stone detailing. Openings are a mix of simple, utilitarian detailing – timber casement windows with stone sills - and more ornate stone mullioned examples on buildings including the Old Swan Inn and the Town Hall. Chimneys are generally of local stone or brick, with examples of multi-coloured brick detailing to some nineteenth century buildings. Stone sills and quoins can be found throughout the western half of the study area.
- 7.19 The Strand, a triangular space at the junction of Commercial Street, East Street and Stag Lane is enclosed by buildings which cling to the side of the road, creating a pinchpoint at this key junction in the town. Vehicles dominate the space and compete with pedestrians. As the road travels eastwards the relationship between the buildings and the road loosens, with irregular footpaths eventually giving way to the formality of wider expanses of paving to the front of properties on Boverton Road.



Grade II\* Listed Town Hall, Llantwit Major



Top: Narrow Lanes, Llantwit Major

Bottom: War Memorial, Llantwit Major



### Modern Quarter

- 7.20 The eastern half of the centre is not designated within the Conservation Area and is more modern in character and appearance. This area accommodates the town's national operators including HSBC, Co-operative, Lloyds Pharmacy, Greggs and Principality.
- 7.21 This area contains a mix of unattractive, utilitarian Twentieth Century two storey retail developments based around an 'arcade' and courtyard. Architecturally the buildings range from flat roofed, brown brick structures with aluminium shop fronts to slightly newer gable fronted rendered development of an oversized, residential scale.
- 7.22 Whilst providing some frontage onto Boverton Road the majority of the Pound Field complex turns its back on this key route, whilst still only presenting limited frontage onto the expansive parking areas to the north. The remainder of elevations provide for servicing and refuse storage, resulting in an unattractive and incoherent street scene.
- 7.23 To the southern side of Boverton Road the terrace of shops at Barons Close have a better relationship with the street, and is sympathetic in scale and massing with the adjacent properties in East Street. However the mix of half stone/ half render is a poor interpretation of the local vernacular, and there is a distinct lack of continuity with regard to signage across this terrace and the wider Boverton Road/ Pound Field development.

- 7.24 Pound Plaza presents a blank façade for much of its length at ground floor, resulting in a deadening effect upon the north eastern end of Boverton Road. This seems at odds with the overcomplicated roofscape of half hips and dormer windows which have little precedence within the local vernacular. The result is that the building is divorced from the street scene, providing no visual interest for or surveillance by passing pedestrians.
- 7.25 Some public realm improvements have been made on East Street on the approach into the Poundfield Shopping Precinct. A natural stone entrance feature, complete with new areas of greenery and new street furniture provides a welcome improvement to this area, but this is undermined by the blank frontage on East Street, created by the Filco supermarket, which does not make a positive contribution to this street-scene. This is reflected in the ratings of the town centre features and what would most enhance Llantwit Major as seen in below.



Poundfield Shopping Precinct



**Top:** Entrances into Poundfield Shopping Precinct off East Street/ Boverton Road

**Bottom:** Shops along East Street. Llantwit Major

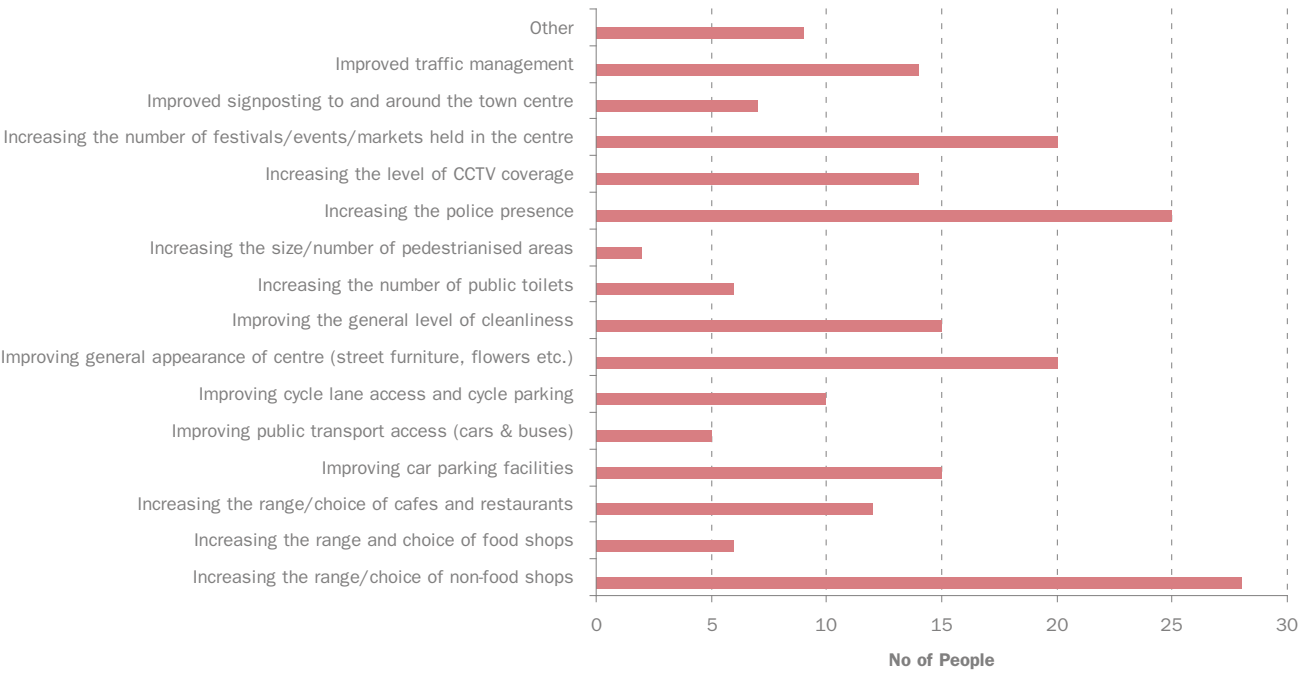


# TOWN CENTRE FRAMEWORK

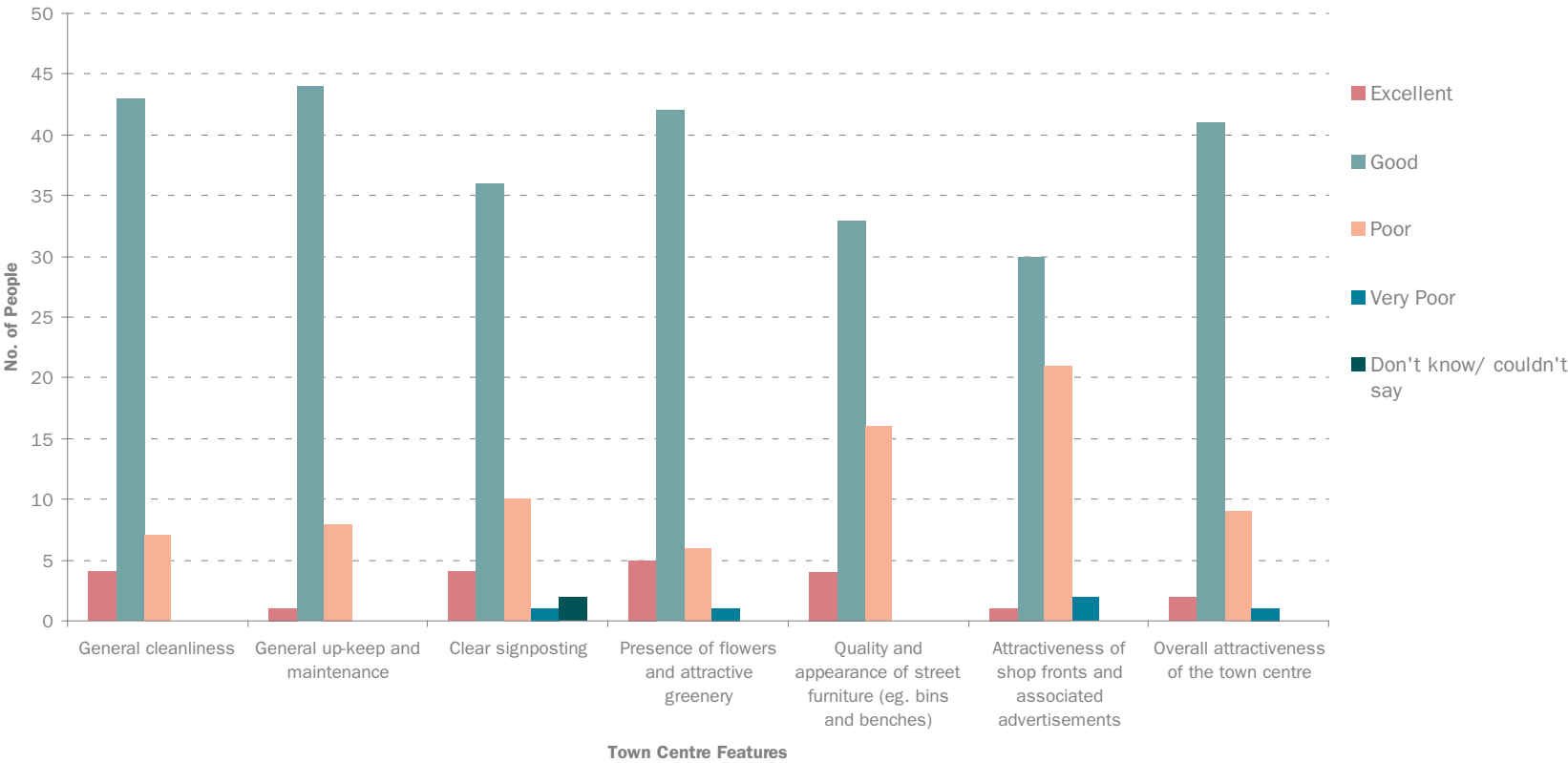


**Top:** Narrow Lanes, Llantwit Major  
**Bottom:** War Memorial, Llantwit Major

What things do you think would most enhance Llantwit Major?



How would you rate the following features of Holton Road?



Citizen's Panel Questionnaire Results  
Source: Citizen's Panel Questionnaire 2012



Diversity of Uses

7.26 The Town and District Retail Centre Appraisal provides an account of the town's diversity of uses and retailer representation. It concludes that for a small town centre, Llantwit Major displays good indicators of diversity. The report considers that the retail offer is influenced by the dormitory /tourism role of the centre but recognises that there are some specialist medical services and specialist shops that draw trade from a wider catchment than the immediate rural area. The Report did not identify any major gaps in local provision, with a good range of banks/financial services, pubs, cafés, restaurants and takeaways.

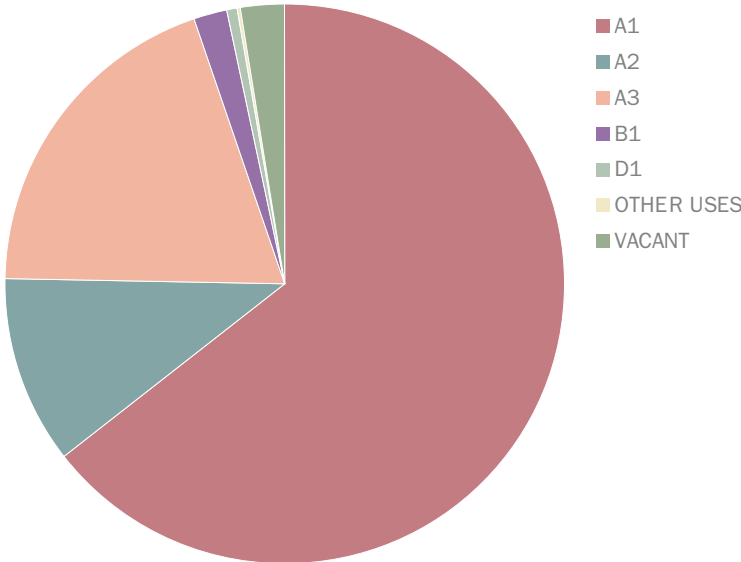
7.27 By way of comparison, using the Council's annual monitoring date between 2007 and 2012, we include a table below which provides an insight into how the use classes in the town centre are changing over time.

7.28 The table clearly shows the continued prominence of the A1 use within the centre (occupying 64.5% of floorspace in 2012), but the biggest change relates to the decrease of A2 (Finanacial and Professional services within the centre (1.7%) – the other use classes have seen very little change or no change at all.

	2007	2012	% Change
A1 (Shops)	4,448 sq.m (64.4%)	4,513 sq.m (64.5%)	Actual decrease 65 sqm Increase floorspace share 0.1%
A2 (Financial and Professional)	872 sq.m (12.6%)	761 sq.m (10.9%)	Actual decrease 111sq.m Decrease floorspace share 1.7%
A3 (Food and Drink)	1,233 sq.m (17.8%)	1,349 sq.m (19.3%)	Actual increase 116 sq.m Increase floorspace share 1.5%
B1 (Business - Office)	142 sq.m (2.1%)	142 sq.m (2.0%)	No change in actual floorspace Decrease 0.1%
D1 (Non residential institutions)	42 sq.m (0.6%)	42 sq.m (0.6%)	No change in actual floorspace No change in floorspace share
Other Uses	12sq.m (0.2%)	12 sq.m (0.2%)	No change in actual floorspace No change in floorspace share
Vacant	161 sq.m (2.3%)	181 sq.m (2.6%)	Actual increase 20 sq.m Increase floorspace share 0.3%
	6,910 sq.m	7,000 sq.m	Actual increase 90 sq.m Increase floorspace share 1.0%

Llantwit Major, Floorspace breakdown between 2007-2012  
Source:VoG Council Annual Monitoring (2007 and 2012)

7.29 The issue of diversity of uses in Llantwit Major was raised by respondents to the Citizen's Panel Questionnaire. The most common aspiration for the Centre was an increased range of non-food shops. Responding to this demand would be important in helping to enhance the profile and perception of the town centre.



Llantwit Major Floorspace Breakdown (2012)

Floorspace Split in Llantwit Major  
Source: VoG Council, 2012

TOWN CENTRE FRAMEWORK

Pedestrian count

7.30 Pedestrian counts around Llantwit Major are undertaken bi-annually by the Council. Pound Plaza, opposite The Precinct (HSBC) is shown to benefit from the highest pedestrian count, whilst the older part of the town, around the Strand has a much lower pedestrian count during the day (see table below):-

Location (2011)		Count	Day	Time
Llantwit Major Town Centre	Pound Plaza,opposite The Precinct (HSBC)	150	Fri	12:45
Llantwit Major Town Centre	Old part of town near The Strand	45	Fri	13.15

Llantwit Major Pedestrian Count (2011)

Source: VoG Council, Pedestrian Count 2011

7.31 In the future, it would be useful to monitor how these pedestrian counts change on the weekend and also during different times in the day and night.

Accessibility

7.32 Llantwit Major is accessible by road via either B4270 off the A48 or along B4265. The railway station is located in the centre of Llantwit Major on the edge of the town centre opposite the main car park. The railway provides reasonably frequent links (every hour Monday – Saturday and every 2 hours Sunday) to Bridgend, Barry, Penarth and Cardiff.

How would you rate Llantwit Major in terms of 'availability of car parking?



Citizen's Panel Questionnaire Results

Source: Citizen's Panel Questionnaire 2012

7.33 Llantwit Major benefits from a number of car parking areas, including a park and ride car park by the railway station, a large car park serving the Poundfield Shopping Precinct and a car park near the Town Hall. There are also a number of on-street parking spaces along east-street. 83% of the responses to the Citizen's Panel Questionnaire rated Llantwit Major as being 'excellent' or 'good' in terms of accessibility to and availability of parking.

7.34 An unmarked and partially lit route into the town centre is provided through the car park into the shopping precinct area of Llantwit Major. Whilst the access and ease of getting around the town was judged very favourably by the Citizen's Panel (96% 'excellent' or 'good') a number of narrow pavements create conflict between pedestrians and cars within the historic centre.



7.35 At the time of writing Llantwit Major is well-served by 9 bus services (95, 145, 146, M1, V1, V2, X5, X45 and X91) from Llantwit Major Bus and Rail Interchange to Barry and Cardiff.

Bus Service No.	Route	Frequency
95	Llantwit Major – Barry and Cardiff including Heath Hospital	Every half an hour Monday – Saturday, hourly service Sunday
145	Llantwit Major – Bridgend	Hourly Monday – Saturday every 2 hours Sunday
245	Llantwit Major - Bridgend College	Once a day
M1	Llantwit Major – Barry Tesco’s, Town Centre and Morrisons	3 times a day every Wednesdays
V1	Cowbridge to Llantwit Major and Bridgend	Every 2 hours Monday - Saturday
V2	Cowbridge to Llantwit Major and Bridgend	Every 2 hours Monday - Saturday
X5	Bridgend, Llantwit Major and Cardiff	Every 2 hours daily
X45	Llantwit Major – Barry Town Centre	Hourly Monday - Saturday
X91	Llantwit Major – Cardiff	Hourly Monday – Friday and every 2 hours Sunday

Bus linkages for Llantwit Majot

Source: Vale of Glamorgan Council June 2012

7.36 The town centre does not currently accommodate a national cycle route but the continuation of Route No. 88 is proposed to run through the centre of Llantwit Major. When asked to rate Llantwit Major in terms of access for cyclists, responses were varied. 39% of respondents described it as good but 30% said that they did not know or did not cycle. This raises a question regarding the attractiveness of the centre to cyclists.

# TOWN CENTRE FRAMEWORK

## SWOT analysis

### Strengths

- 1 Proximity to beach and the Heritage Coast.
- 2 Recent improvements to public realm.
- 3 Architectural heritage and landmark buildings in the attractive older part of town.
- 4 Ancient history relating to the Church and Welsh Saints.
- 5 Free and large quantum of car parking.
- 6 Good accessibility to centre by train, bus, foot and car.
- 7 High amount of convenience and service offer.
- 8 Representation by a number of national multiple retailers.
- 9 Pedestrianisation of the precinct area.
- 10 Potential to market the town as the walking hub of the Vale.

### Weaknesses

- 1 Limited comparison retail offer.
- 2 A significant number of vacancies on prominent frontages and within the older part of town.
- 3 Limited leisure or tourism provision.
- 4 An 'identity crisis' – with an uncertain function/identity of the centre.
- 5 Poor physical quality of some shop frontages and shops.
- 6 Unregulated approach to servicing to rear of retail/commercial/business properties, especially with regard to the historical part of the town.
- 7 Poor signage to get to the town centre and within the town centre.

- 8 Secure by design problems at the main car park and new development.
- 9 Conflict between car and people in the older part of town.
- 10 Approach into the centre from the car park is unattractive – the rear of most units faces the car park.
- 11 Limited linkages to Heritage Coast – via foot, bicycle or bus.
- 12 Poor marketing relating to the Town's history and heritage.

### Opportunities

- 1 A number of development opportunities, including the row of vacant shops in Poundfield Precinct and the Telephone Exchange.
- 2 Potential to market the town as the walking hub of the Vale of Glamorgan by engendering links with Heritage Coastal Path and Wales Coastal Path
- 3 Re-branding of the town to focus to jointly focus on shopping, history and the Heritage Coast.
- 4 Strengthen linkages to the beach and try to capture passing trade from visitors to the Heritage Coast by increased provision for tourists.
- 5 Potential to create a double frontage onto large car park (adjacent to Poundfield Precinct).
- 6 Creation of a better 'line of sight' to railway and bus station.
- 7 Continue the public realm improvements.
- 8 More events such as markets and summer activities within the centre.

- 9 Make more of the historical features of the old part of the town.
- 10 Potential growth in St Athan bringing additional footfall and expenditure.
- 11 Potential for town expansion to support/sustain shops.

### Threats

- 1 Further economic decline – leading to the loss of retailers from the town centre.
- 2 Further reduction in shop front quality.
- 3 Deterioration of historical old part of town.
- 4 Potential for ownership issues to constrain scope of improvements.
- 5 Impact of growth/expansion of character of Town.



Visioning



- 7.37 In developing this Vision and Framework the following consultation events were undertaken:
- 1 Llantwit Major workshop evening – attended by around 26 people including Councillors, members of the Chamber of Trade, Llantwit Major History Society, Llantwit major Town Council and traders;
  - 2 A meeting was held with Councillor Gwyn John;
  - 3 A meeting was held with representatives from the Council’s Visible Services Department;
  - 4 A Citizen’s Panel Questionnaire was carried out and of the 400 responses received, 54 related to Llantwit Major;
  - 5 A short meeting was held with a local agent to gain an insight into market demand in the local area;
  - 6 A meeting was held with the Vale Retailers Forum; and,
  - 7 A workshop was held with key representatives from e.g. the VoG Development Services Directorate, the Welsh Assembly and Creative Rural Communities etc.

- 7.38 The word cloud above gives an indication of the responses received from consultation with key stakeholders. Common themes for Llantwit Major relate to increasing tourism, publicising the Town’s history and heritage, promoting the coastal offer and providing better links to the beach and distilling an identity.
- Vision origins**
- 7.39 Llantwit Major benefits from some exceptional attributes – being located on the gateway into the Glamorgan Heritage Coast, an intriguing historical association with Welsh Saints and attractive historical quarter, railway station and extensive car parking provision. However despite these attributes, the centre does not appear to be thriving. Respondents reported a feeling of missed opportunity in fully capturing spin-off trade from tourists and visitors to the Glamorgan Heritage Coast and the neighbouring beach. The centre was found to require maintenance in areas and to be lacking in its offer (and therefore appeal) to tourists and visitors, with a narrowly focused evening economy. Furthermore the physical linkage between the

- centre and the Glamorgan Heritage Coast and Beach is based primarily on vehicular access only and limited bus or cycle access provision appeared to be available to encourage/enable visitors to use Llantwit Major as a base for accessing the Heritage Coast.
- 7.40 Taking into account these findings the vision and framework seeks to help create one renewed image for Llantwit Major based upon what is unique about this centre – i.e. its history and gateway position to the Glamorgan Heritage Coast. Twinned with this, the vision and framework should seek to improve the centre’s appeal to tourists, via diversification of uses and improvement in the appearance of the centre, as well as its linkages with the Heritage Coast.
- 7.41 The consultation meeting for Llantwit Major was the best attended of all the town centre meetings held to inform this Study. This highlights a local appetite and ‘local will’ to improve Llantwit Major’s centre and therefore the implementation of this Framework should seek to harness this community spirit to help focus efforts in a collaborative manner to improve Llantwit Major centre for the future.

## TOWN CENTRE FRAMEWORK

### Vision

7.42 Taking into account the above these elements are distilled in the following vision for Llantwit Major centre:

### **Llantwit Major – historical gateway to Glamorgan Heritage Coast**

“ **Developing the tourism potential of the historical gateway to the Heritage Coast and ensuring that the historical and modern elements of the centre complement one another to reinforce the town’s function and to raise its profile** ”

### Guiding objectives

7.43 The vision will be used to guide stakeholder efforts over the next 5-10 years in Llantwit Major and the following objectives will be used to help guide the town centre over this period in order to achieve the identified vision:

- 1 **A new image for Llantwit Major – Creating one brand for the town.**
- 2 **Harnessing the coastal attraction and town’s heritage to provide a cohesive offer – Exploiting Llantwit Major’s unique surroundings to capture benefits of increased visitor numbers**
- 3 **Improving the street-scene – Ensuring good management, maintenance and stewardship of the towns built fabric with consistently good shopfront design.**
- 4 **Creating a destination – Diversifying Llantwit Major’s offer so that it creates a destination and caters for visitors as well as residents.**

### Framework

7.44 Using the above guiding objectives we set out a framework which provides some detail on the recommended next steps applicable to each of the above guiding objectives. The Implementation Plan at Chapter 9 translates this Framework into a workable action plan:

#### 1. **A new image for Llantwit Major – Creating one brand for the town.**

7.45 Consultation highlighted a widespread feeling that Llantwit Major was missing out on capturing benefits from tourists and visitors. In addition to this anecdotal evidence the Martin Tonks Report has suggested that residents feel the railway station is used more for people leaving the centre than visiting Llantwit – reinforcing its perceived dormitory town role.

7.46 Reversing this trend will not be easy, and is unlikely to be instantaneous. It is likely to be most effectively achieved via a collaborative effort between the Council, traders and residents. Whilst there is clear evidence of a consistent desire amongst the community and businesses to improve Llantwit Major, there is also a range of opinion as to how this might be achieved. Therefore, before embarking on a programme of action consideration needs to be given to how the various views and approaches can be unified – the Town’s Independent Councillors would seem well placed to begin this process. Although compromises will need to be made, the wide ranging views of different local interests should be taken into consideration.

7.47 We recommend the centre’s image needs to be rejuvenated and related to the settlement’s ancient historical connections and proximity to the Glamorgan Heritage Coast. Re-presenting this image (and simultaneously raising the profile of the town) could be effectively undertaken using a platform such as a large event or a new tourist attraction (e.g. a new satellite or relocated Glamorgan Heritage Coast Centre at Llantwit Major to help complement the town’s image as a gateway to the Heritage Coast).

7.48 This image should be consistently marketed / branded via bespoke literature targeted at tourists and day-trippers to help raise awareness of the town, its ancient history and other key attractions. This image will be supported by, and will also support the achievement of other objectives – e.g. diversifying Llantwit Major, broadening the retail offer, and improving its street-scene.

#### 2. **Harnessing the coastal attraction and town’s heritage to provide a cohesive offer – Exploiting Llantwit Major’s unique surroundings to capture benefits of increased visitor numbers**

7.49 Llantwit Major’s image should be based around its gateway position to the Glamorgan Heritage Coast and its historical connections. However consultation highlighted some concern with the current physical access to the coast from the centre and also the limited wider knowledge (beyond the immediate population) of the centre’s historical connections.

7.50 Further work should be undertaken to improve (physical) sustainable transport linkages to the coast – primarily improvements to the on-road pedestrian access, cycle and/or bus linkages. This work also needs to be dovetailed with measures to encourage visitors to stop-off in the centre of Llantwit Major. This can be achieved by undertaking the measures set out in objective 3 and 4 in order to help encourage visitors to stop-off. However other measures which seek to incentivise/ encourage visits to the centre from the Heritage Coast should be investigated to create a beneficial two-way connection. One possibility would be the careful and sensitive placement of information about the Town Centre (history, shops, cafés pubs) at key locations on the coast, together with an indication of distance (e.g. 5 minutes walk etc). This will help to encourage patronage and thereby improve the vitality and viability of the centre. It is important to note that to improve linkages to the coast in isolation of encouraging visitors to stop-off in the centre should be avoided as it will only seek to prolong this missed opportunity. Therefore we recommend that future measures need to be two-pronged.



- 7.51 Llantwit Major benefits from a historical quarter which contains a concentration of attractive listed buildings. Whilst some efforts have been made to celebrate this history (via blue plaques around the town) these historical connections need to be more widely celebrated and advertised. This will complement the revitalised image of Llantwit Major which is to be partly based upon the centre's history. This wider celebration of history could be via events, festivals, walking history tours, open (historical) house events or more innovative forms of media – such as mobile phone walking tours etc.
- 7.52 History is a key distinguishing future of Llantwit Major and therefore any future development in the town will need to protect and enhance the special architectural and historic interest of the town centre.
- 3. Improving the street-scene** – Ensuring good management, maintenance and stewardship of the towns built fabric with consistently good shopfront design.
- 7.53 Consultation highlighted a widespread feeling that Llantwit Major's street-scene requires a revamp and a view that this poor appearance was discouraging people from choosing to visit the centre. Inconsistent approaches to shopfront design and other instances of poor design approaches, in conjunction with poor maintenance were cited as key aspects which required improvement.
- 7.54 Consultation highlighted a requirement for simple and consistent shop-front guidance to help improve shopfront design in the future. In terms of existing shopfronts, it is recommended that ways in which physical street-scene improvements can be encouraged might include:
- 1 Grant provision especially for the refurbishment of historical buildings;
  - 2 A collective community effort both in the preparation of guidance and the implementation of improvements; and,
  - 3 An active response to instances of bad maintenance or poor design.
- 7.55 These improvements should also be twinned with a continuation of recent public realm improvements incorporating new street furniture (where necessary and appropriate), new green-spaces and undertaking an exploration of opportunities for improving Llantwit Major's approach into the centre from the railway station. This was also identified as a key opportunity for the future.
- 7.56 In addition to this, a number of prominent vacant units were noted and were considered to negatively impact upon the vibrancy of the street-scene. Particularly noteworthy vacant units are located around the War Memorial on Church Street and within the Poundfield Shopping Precinct. Investigating opportunities whereby these vacant units can be re-used, even if only during interim periods, and for alternative uses, should be considered.
- 4. Creating a destination** – Diversifying Llantwit Major's offer so that it creates a destination and caters for visitors as well as residents.
- 7.57 Aside from acting as a key gateway location to the Heritage Coast and its undeniable, though often overlooked, historical associations, Llantwit Major was felt to undersell itself as a tourist attraction or destination. It is therefore recommended that feasibility work is undertaken to consider the scope for raising the Town's tourist profile and improving the existing offer. This work could include consideration of the potential for relocating, or creating a satellite centre of the Heritage Coast Visitor Centre at Llantwit Major, which would fulfil a general information and tourism role for the area. A new centre such as this would help to reinforce Llantwit Major's image and role as the gateway to the Heritage Coast. It would also provide a key destination, which could help to kick-start the revitalisation of the town centre.
- 7.58 Further to this, Llantwit Major's offer needs to be diversified so it encompasses day-time and night-time uses, in order to encourage visitors to visit the centre on their way to/from the Glamorgan Heritage Coast. This will allow the centre to capture spin-off trade which will positively contribute to its vitality and viability – and in the future will help to gradually affirm Llantwit Major as a destination in its own right.
- 7.59 New uses such as cafés/restaurants, gift shops, independent and speciality shops and leisure/tourist attractions are likely to be particularly attractive to visitors and should be encouraged within Llantwit Major Centre. In addition, support for more non-food retailers could also help to improve the attractiveness and character of the town, especially if they serve the leisure/visitor/tourist market. However, serving local people is also important and so an improved range of non-food retailing to meet local needs should also be encouraged and will enhance the viability and vitality of the town. In addition to this, extended opening hours for existing uses should be encouraged. Opportunities for new temporary uses such as markets (day or night) or pop-up uses in vacant units should be explored and encouraged to help create a revitalised and diversified centre which appeals to and encourages visits from both tourists and residents. New diversified night-time uses including new restaurants or later opening cafés, which do not focus on drinking, are viewed as particularly important in the contribution they can make to the Town's success.
- 7.60 A key future opportunity for Llantwit Major will be the re-development of the Strategic Site at St Athan. The possible development of an extension to the Town could also present opportunities. Implementation of the objectives will help to ensure a share of the expenditure arising from these key developments is captured within Llantwit Major.



## 8.0 PENARTH

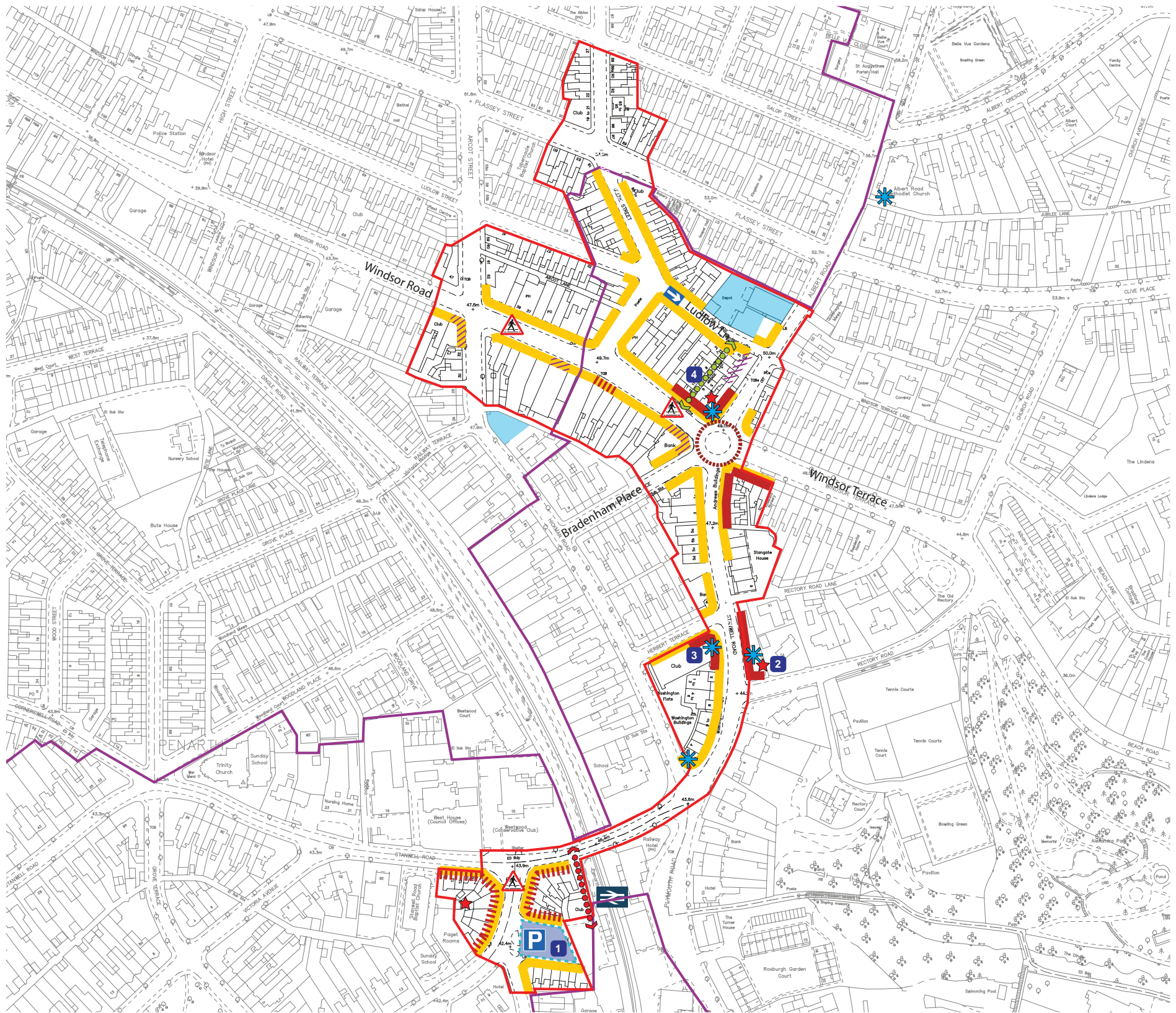
### Vital Statistics

- Town Population 21,456 (ONS Mid Year Estimates 2010):
- Total number of units in centre: 14,177 sq.m/179 units (VoG Annual Monitoring, 2012)
- National Venuescore (2008) Ranked 1,538th
- Mix of 14,177 sq.m floorspace (VoG, 2012)
  - 61.9% A1 (shops);
  - 16.5% A2 (Financial and Professional);
  - 16.6% A3 (Restaurants & Cafes);
  - 1.1% B1 (Offices);
  - 0% D1 (non-residential institutions);
  - 1.5% Other Uses;
  - 2.5% Vacant.
- Lower Penarth Railway Station 600m away from town centre
- Designated Conservation Area





TOWN CENTRE FRAMEWORK



KEY:

- Retail boundary
- Conservation area boundary
- Listed building
- Listed feature
- Local landmark
- Parking
- Pedestrian crossing point
- Pedestrian route
- Poor quality pedestrian route
- Retail frontage
- Detracting frontage
- Poor quality streetscape or space
- Focal/ key junction
- Key public space
- Potential development site
- Station Approach
- Library
- text
- Windsor Arcade
- Attractive townscape/ frontage
- Attractive townscape/ frontage (above GF)
- Railway Station

nlp Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners  
Planning, Design, Economics.

Project VoGlam Regeneration

Title Penarth Appraisal Plan

## TOWN CENTRE FRAMEWORK

### Background

- 8.1 Penarth is the second largest town in the Vale of Glamorgan, after Barry, with a population of 21,456 people (ONS Mid Year Estimates 2010). Its origins were as a seaside resort, which catered for holiday-makers and day visitors mostly from the surrounding area.

### Connections

- 8.2 Penarth is a multi-nodal settlement which, as well as a vibrant centre, offers a Marina, Esplanade, attractive seafront and Pier. The Cardiff Bay Barrage is also located adjacent to Penarth Marina which provides cycle and pedestrian linkages to Cardiff. Currently the centre is linked to the Esplanade and Pier via Beach Road, which accommodates a bus route. Some pedestrian linkages are provided to the Esplanade and Pier via Alexandra Park (during Park opening hours) and along the park edge.
- 8.3 This unique setting is one of Penarth's key selling points and linking the centre more successfully with these other elements of the town would help to support a vital and viable town centre, by capturing spin-off trade from these edge of town centre areas.



**Top:** View of Penarth Pier from Esplanade

**Bottom:** View out to Bristol Channel from Penarth Esplanade



## The Centre

### Key characteristics

- 8.4 The centre has a distinct Victorian character with many buildings retaining their period detailing. It also accommodates a number of art galleries (Washington Gallery and Turner House Gallery), which help to establish a creative/artistic ambience.
- 8.5 The significant number of independent specialist retailers, including green grocers, cafés, cobblers, toy and bookshops provides the town with a distinct sense of place. Whilst these are a destination in their own right, national multiple retailers (including Starbucks, Sainsburys, Tesco, Boots and Spar) are also well represented providing healthy competition between a number of retailers at the heart of the town and a decent range and choice of goods.
- 8.6 The centre is relatively compact and is focused around Windsor Road (A4180) - a busy thoroughfare that links Penarth with Cardiff. This road contains many of the national multiples and main shops and is the busiest area of the centre although there has been an increase in commercial properties from Ludlow Lane, around into Glebe Street which seems to be an increasingly vibrant and successful part of the town.
- 8.7 Pedestrian access across Windsor Road is provided via a number of zebra crossings, one of which connects with Windsor Arcade – an attractive, Victorian shopping arcade housing a variety of independent retailers.
- 8.8 The eastern section of Windsor Road is terminated by a roundabout which provides the boundary to the centre, beyond which the road descends down to the Pier and Esplanade.



**Top:** Windsor Arcade & Windsor Road

**Bottom:** Stanwell Road and roundabout

**Top:** Examples of Penarth's independent retailers

**Bottom left:** Lloyds Bank building, Penarth

**Bottom right:** Historic building frontages on Windsor Road, Penarth

TOWN CENTRE FRAMEWORK

Urban Design Analysis/Character Analysis

- 8.9

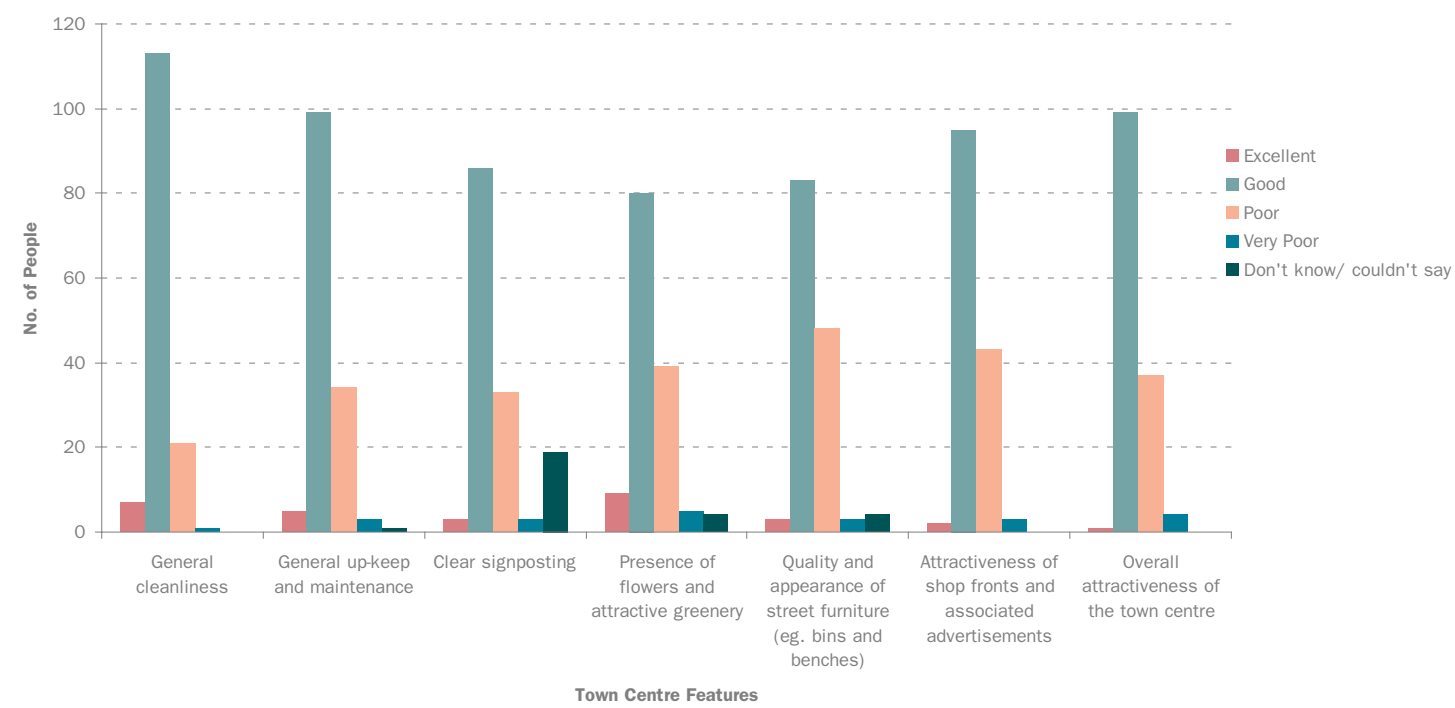
The majority of the study area lies within the Town Centre character zone of the Penarth Conservation Area, with a small area to the south western corner lying within the All Saints character zone. Two residential areas, Windsor Road to the north west and Glebe Street north of the study area are outside the Conservation Area boundary. Three listed buildings lie within the study area, with a further three adjacent to its boundary.
- 8.10

The study area is based around the commercial centre of Windsor Road and links through to the railway station via the sweeping curve of Stanwell Road. The junction of these two key routes together with Windsor Terrace, Albert Road and Bradenham Place are heralded by a raised roundabout surmounted by an ornate clock tower. Buildings which surround this key junction vary from the residential properties on Windsor Terrace and Bradenham Place, to the former dwellings, now commercial properties, on southern side of Windsor Road.
- 8.11

The northern corner of the junction is formed by the impressive Windsor Arcade Building and Lloyds Bank, an attractive three storey ashlar fronted building with rusticated base which wraps around the corner into Albert Road providing height and a visual interest. A glazed, barrel vaulted arcade runs through the Grade II listed block, accessing a number of independent stores and linking Windsor Road to Ludlow Lane at the rear.
- 8.12

Opposite is the distinctive three storey Andrews Building with seemingly Dutch inspired gables echoing that above Windsor Arcade, white oriel windows and projecting first floor bays above a commercial ground floor. It too provides height and focus at a key junction dominated by vehicular traffic.
- 8.13

Ludlow Lane, Ludlow Street and Glebe Street are all much less significant in scale than Windsor Road, with shops incorporated into two storey residential scaled properties. Generally roofs are pitched with ridgelines running parallel to the road.



Citizen's Panel Questionnaire Results  
Source: Citizen's Panel Questionnaire 2012

- 8.14

To the west and south of Windsor Arcade the residential origins of the area are clearly visible. Houses with gardens to the front were extended and converted into shops at the beginning of the twentieth century, establishing a commercial core between Arcot Street and Windsor Terrace.
- 8.15

Generally buildings on the southern side of Windsor Road are more ornate, with gables behind flat roofed shopfronts, detailed stone pediments providing continuity along the street. To the northern side roofscapes are more reserved, the majority being simple pitches with the ridgeline parallel to the road.
- 8.16

Whilst signage generally lies within a predefined height zone within the Conservation Area, the design of commercial frontages outside this area is loose. A variety of signage styles, heights and depths has resulted in a non-cohesive, poor quality visual environment.
- 8.17

Recent streetscape improvements on Windsor Road and adjacent side streets has resulted in on-street chevron parking bays and extended pavements. Unfortunately road markings still dominate. Street trees soften the streetscene.
- 8.18

Stanwell Road runs southwards from Windsor Terrace. The northern end of the road is enclosed by a three storey terrace extending from the Andrews Building. Shopfronts are a mix of traditional glazing with fine timber mullions and standardised aluminium replacements. Twentieth century brick development to either side of Stanwell Road provides both commercial and residential accommodation over two and three storeys. Whilst its intention was obviously to follow the local precedent in terms of form, the choice of materials and detailing has not been a success, detracting from the overall character of the Conservation Area and resulting in a visual disconnect between the upper and lower ends of Stanwell Road.



8.19 Looking southwards along Stanwell Road two key buildings are clearly visible. The copper cupola of the Grade II listed Jacobean style library and smooth lines of the art deco styled Washington Gallery sit to either side of an expanse of green provided by the trees beyond the Rectory Road junction.

8.20 The four storey Washington Building addresses the junction of Hickman Road and Stanwell Road. Its cruise liner aesthetic aims to complement the smooth lines of its neighbour, the art deco Washington Gallery. Weak shopfront design and poor detailing has detracted from the intent to be a landmark building in its own right.

8.21 The southern most end of the study area is centred upon Station Approach. The access from Stanwell Road is framed to either side by the Royal Buildings, a three storey Victorian parade style commercial development, which wraps around the corner. The ground floor is characterised in the main by attractive shopfronts, whilst the upper storeys have ornate windows and gabled dormers. Station Approach itself is dominated by parking and has little in the way of attractive features, with the exception of some of the surrounding buildings.

Diversity of Uses

8.22 The Martin Tonks Report provides detailed account of the town’s diversity of uses and retailer representation. It concludes that Penarth accommodates a good range of non-food shops and town centre uses and that the diversity of uses is very good for a small suburban district centre, especially in respect of banks and financial services and specialist fashion and clothes shops. However, the Report found that some visitors complained about the lack of a cinema and also facilities and activities for young people.

8.23 By way of comparison, using the Council’s annual monitoring data between 2007 and 2012, we include a table below which provides an insight into how the use classes in the town centre have changed over this period.

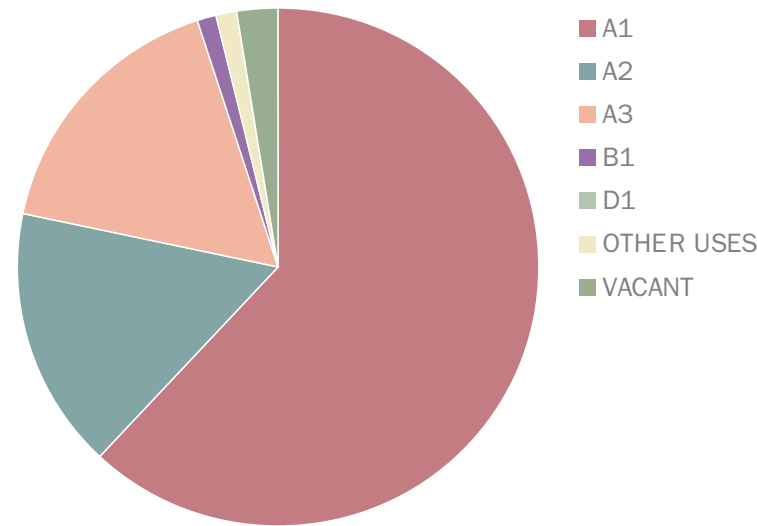
8.24 The table clearly shows the prominence of the A1 use within the centre, but the biggest change relates to the increase of A3 uses within the centre. This reflects to a certain extent national trends and the changing nature of town centres. Interestingly, bucking the national trend, Penarth’s vacant floorspace decreased by 3.4%over this period, a clear testimony to its popularity and attractiveness.

	2007	2012	% Change
A1 (Shops)	8,513 (62.2%)	8,769 sq.m (61.9%)	Actual increase 256sqm Decrease floorspace share 0.3%
A2 (Financial and Professional)	2,300 (16.8%)	2,338 sq.m (16.5%)	Actual increase 38 sqm Decrease floorspace share 0.3%
A3 (Food and Drink)	1,571 (11.5%)	2,355 sq.m (16.6%)	Actual increase 784 sqm Increase floorspace share 5.1%
B1 (Business - Office)	256 (1.9%)	156 sq.m (1.1%)	Actual floorspace decrease 100 sq.m Decrease floorspace share 0.8%
D1 (Non residential institutions)	0 (0%)	0 sq.m (0%)	No change in actual floorspace No change in floorspace share
Other Uses	250sq.m (1.8%)	210sq.m (1.5%)	Actual floorspace decrease 40 sqm Decrease floorspace share 0.3%
Vacant	804 (5.9%)	349 sq.m (2.5%)	Actual floorspace decrease 455 sqm Decrease floorspace share 3.4%
	13,694 sq.m	14,177 sq.m	Actual floorspace increase 483sq.m Increase floorspace share 3.0%

Penarth, Floorspace breakdown between 2007-2012  
Source:VoG Council Annual Monitoring (2007 and 2012)

TOWN CENTRE FRAMEWORK

8.25 The pie-chart below shows the floorspace breakdown in Penarth in 2012. The prominence of A1 uses is clearly shown, along with contribution of both A2 and A3 uses.

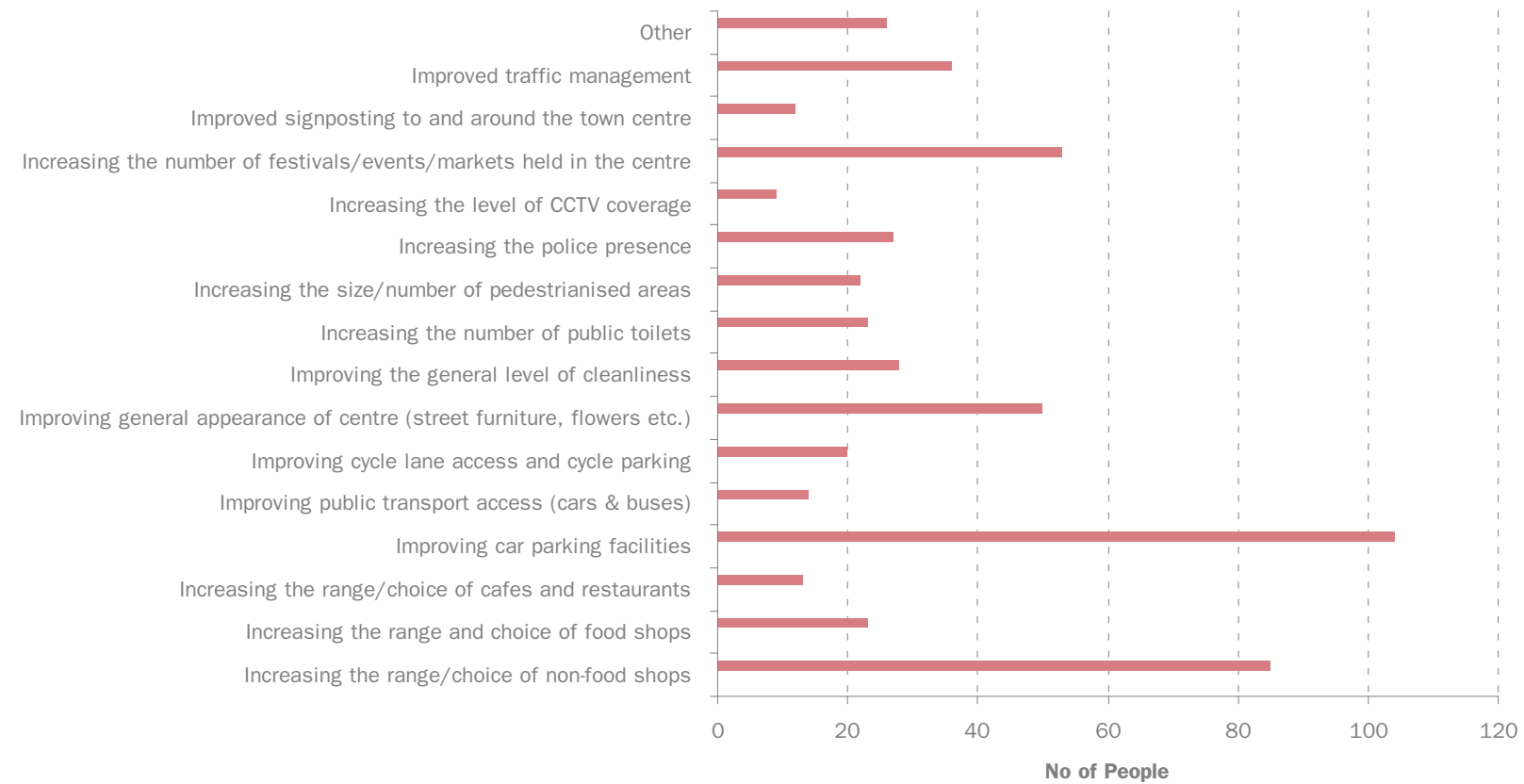


Penarth Floorspace Breakdown (2012)

Floorspace Split in Penarth  
Source: VoG Council, 2012

8.26 In considering the range of local services, it is noteworthy that 58% of respondents to the Citizen's Panel Questionnaire identified increasing the range of non-food shops within the centre as one of four potential improvements they consider would most enhance the centre of Penarth.

What things do you think would most enhance Penarth?



Citizen's Panel Questionnaire Results  
Source: Citizen's Panel Questionnaire 2012



Pedestrian count

- 8.27
- Pedestrian counts around Penarth are undertaken bi-annually by the Council and Windsor Road is shown to benefit from the highest pedestrian count of those areas monitored:
- 8.28
- In the future, it would be useful to monitor how these pedestrian counts change on the weekend and also during different times in the day and night.

Location (2011)		Count	Day	Time
Penarth town centre (Windsor road)	Near arcade crossing - Windsor Road	439	Tues	12:10
Tesco, Penarth Marina	Entrance to store	153	Tues	12:45
Station Approach, Penarth	Pedestrians near the pedestrian crossing	67	Mon	12:00
The Esplanade, Penarth	Centre of parade of shops / rabaiottis	85	Mon	13:15

Penarth Pedestrian Count (2011)  
Source: VoG Council, Pedestrian Count 2011

Accessibility

- 8.29
- The centre is accessible via the A4180 (Windsor Road), which is the main road between Cardiff and Penarth. This road is the thoroughfare around which the centre has benefited from recent public realm improvements. When the Citizen's Panel was questioned on how they would rate Penarth in terms of ease of pedestrian access, the vast majority (80%) said 'good'.
- 8.30
- Penarth railway station is located 400m from the centre and provides services every 15 minutes (at peak times, Monday to Saturday) to key settlements such as Cardiff and Bridgend. 76% of the responses to the Citizen's Panel Questionnaire rated Penarth centre as being 'excellent' or 'good' in terms of access to train services.
- 8.31
- A reasonably clear pedestrian link is provided from the centre to the railway station, via Stanwell Road although the route between the station and Stanwell Road is unlit and potentially unappealing particularly at night.
- 8.32
- At the time of writing the town centre is well-served by 6 bus services which provide linkages to neighbouring settlements such as Dinas Powys, Llandough and Barry as well as different areas of Penarth such as the Marina, Esplanade and Pier. Most buses stop on Windsor Terrace, in Penarth town centre. A P1 seasonal service has operated previously linking the marina with the town centre and other areas within Penarth.



**Top:** Recent investment in cycle lanes in Penarth town centre  
**Bottom:** Pedestrian approach into Railway Station

## TOWN CENTRE FRAMEWORK

8.33 Details of the bus linkages are included below:

Bus Service No.	Route	Frequency
88	Barry – Penarth	Hourly Monday to Saturday
89A	Dinas Powys – Cardiff	Hourly Monday to Saturday
89B	Llandough – Cardiff	Hourly Monday to Saturday
92	Penarth – Cardiff	Every quarter of an hour Monday – Saturday and hourly on Sunday
93	Barry – Penarth – Cardiff	Every half an hour Monday - Saturday
94	Barry – Cardiff	Every half an hour Monday – Saturday and hourly on Sunday

Bus linkages for Penarth

Source: Vale of Glamorgan Council June 2012

8.34 The Town Centre is not served by a national cycle route, although in recent years considerable investment has been made in providing safe walking and cycling links to Cardiff Bay via the Barrage and the recently constructed Pont-y-Werin cycle bridge that links Penarth Marina with the Sports Village. Working in partnership with Sustrans and local cyclists, residents associations and the Town Council, VoG has sought to provide new cycling infrastructure (on and off road) to link Pont-y-Werin and the Marina with the Town Centre. This has resulted in on road improvements in areas such as the Marina, Paget Road, the Dingle Park and Arcot Street. The redevelopment of Penarth Heights also includes a proposed off-road route from Terra Nova Way (the Marina) to the development site and onwards to the Town Centre. At the time of writing this link was under construction.

8.35 When asked to rate Penarth centre in terms of access for cyclists, responses were varied. The largest number of responses stated ‘don’t know/do not use’ (41%), again suggesting that the town centre is not particularly well used by cyclists. Of those that did respond, there was a clear split with 30% of all respondents saying that cycle access is good and 22% saying it is poor.

8.36 Consultation with stakeholders and the Citizen’s Panel identified car parking to be a major issue in Penarth. 74% of respondents thought the current situation was ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’.

8.37 The centre has a park and ride car park located adjacent to the Penarth railway station (accommodates approximately 50 car parking spaces), but car parking provision elsewhere in the centre is time limited. Problems were identified with the availability of car parking, which was reported to be made worst by inadequate parking enforcement.

How would you rate Penarth in terms of 'availability of car parking'?



Citizen's Panel Questionnaire Results

Source: Citizen's Panel Questionnaire 2012



## SWOT analysis

### Strengths

- 1 Well established district retail centre.
- 2 Protection afforded by Conservation Area status – presumption of ‘preservation and enhancement’ of the quality of the area.
- 3 Presence of numerous independent retailers.
- 4 Representation by multiple retailers – indication of recent investment, for example by Tesco and Sainsbury’s.
- 5 Architectural heritage & richness of townscape.
- 6 Focus created by key buildings such as the Grade II listed Lloyds Bank building.
- 7 Diversity of uses and activity.
- 8 Presence of mature street trees providing individual and group value.
- 9 Strong locational benefits – proximity to Barrage, railway station, esplanade, Marina and Pier.
- 10 Strong sense of community.

### Weaknesses

- 1 Inappropriate alterations or repair to existing (unlisted) buildings.
- 2 Evidence of sporadic approach with regard to implementing design principles and ‘sensitive development test’ as laid out within the adopted Penarth Conservation Area SPG.
- 3 Key gateway areas into Penarth could be improved e.g. entrance into Penarth from Barrage and railway bridge on Windsor Road.
- 4 Lack of accessible visitor information.
- 5 Lack of coherent image or marketing strategy for the town.

- 6 Fragmented public realm design.
- 7 Poor contextual analysis resulting in a few cases of inappropriate new development.
- 8 Car parking problems – divergent views from participants. Some people report a perception of lack of car parking provision caused by absence of parking enforcement. Others view there to be a lack of car parking provision in reality.
- 9 Traffic congestion at peak times.
- 10 Severe congestion at Barons Court junction acts as a deterrent to car borne visitors.
- 11 Highways biased design of junction of Windsor Road, Windsor Terrace, Albert Road, Stanwell Road and Bradenham Place.
- 12 Over engineered public realm works and visual clutter created by highway signage and road marking.
- 13 Somewhat unregulated approach to parking/ servicing/bin storage to rear of retail/commercial/ business properties.
- 14 Lack of night-time economy activities.
- 15 Absence of cycle routes.

### Opportunities

- 1 Improve appearance of gateway features into Penarth such as the railway bridge on Windsor Road and entrance via Barrage.
- 2 Identify under provision in terms of retail/ business/services.
- 3 Identify measures for new or improved car parking provision and enforcement.
- 4 Improve quality of public realm through a public realm strategy – continuity of materials/ detailing.

- 5 Strengthen linkages particularly to esplanade and railway station.
- 6 Improve way-marking, signage and legibility.
- 7 Create cycling routes.
- 8 Improve visitor information.
- 9 Reduce visual clutter.
- 10 Minimise impact of highway design over pedestrian and public realm.
- 11 Enhance quality of conservation area.
- 12 Build upon existing community spirit and social capital.
- 13 Define and market a clear image for Penarth.

### Threats

- 1 Complacency.
- 2 Further economic decline resulting in increased vacancy and reduced vitality.
- 3 Deterioration of historic fabric.
- 4 Further reduction in shop front and building quality due to poor signage detailing.
- 5 Limited funding resulting in loss of quality.
- 6 Loss of street trees resulting in a loss of character.
- 7 Leakage of expenditure to other centres.
- 8 Competition from Cardiff’s retail offer and out of town retail centres.
- 9 Inconsistent marketing and image for Penarth.
- 10 Lost opportunity if community is not involved.
- 11 Increasing congestion.

## TOWN CENTRE FRAMEWORK

### Visioning



- 8.38 In developing this Vision and Framework the following consultation events were undertaken:
- 1 Penarth workshop evening – attended by around 10 people including Councillors, Penarth History Society, Penarth Town Council and traders;
  - 2 A meeting was held with representatives from the Council's Visible Services Department;
  - 3 A Citizen's Panel Questionnaire was carried out and of the 400 responses received, 145 related to Penarth;
  - 4 A short meeting was held with a local agent to gain an insight into market demand in the local area;
  - 5 A meeting was held with the Vale Retailers Forum; and,
  - 6 A workshop was held with key representatives from the VoG Directorate of Development Services and the Welsh Assembly.

8.39 The word cloud above gives an indication of the responses received via consultation with key stakeholders. Common themes for Penarth relate to improving linkages, car parking issues and considering how Penarth responds to its close proximity to Cardiff. Comments were also made regarding the need for the vision to maintain the town's historic quality.

### Vision origins

- 8.40 Understanding what is unique about Penarth is the starting point for setting this vision. Penarth is an attractive, successful historical centre located close to a wide range of interesting attractions including the Barrage, Pier and Esplanade and, further afield, Cosmeston Lakes County Park, the Vale of Glamorgan coastline and Cardiff City Centre. These attributes are unique to Penarth although anecdotal evidence collected during consultation suggested that the Centre had not fully exploited its appeal and therefore failed to maximise the footfall from surrounding areas (and the associated potential expenditure).
- 8.41 In order to begin to appeal to those people visiting the Cardiff Bay Barrage, Penarth Pier and Penarth Esplanade, an essential component of a successful centre is a clear brand. Conversely, respondents considered that the town's marketing/branding had not been coordinated or targeted. In order to broaden its appeal Penarth needs a consolidated brand. This brand should be easily understood, clear and built upon the centre's unique qualities – its history, diverse and vibrant offer and the creative and artistic sector.

- 8.42 In order to increase the appeal of Penarth centre to visitors, it is now widely recognised that town centres need to widen their offer beyond just retail in order to compete effectively. Penarth therefore needs to build upon a coordinated brand and diversify its offer to cater for visitors and residents alike. A key opportunity being visitors from near-by Cardiff. This diversification needs to encompass the Centre's day-time and night-time offer in order to attract visitors into the Centre and thereby capture spin-off trade. Particular attention will need to be focused on ensuring that visitors are encouraged to access the Centre via sustainable transport means although due consideration of car parking provision will also need to be addressed - especially as this was a particular issue for Penarth consultees.

### Vision

- 8.43 Taking into account the above these elements are distilled in the following vision for Penarth centre:

### Penarth – the Vale's artistic and cultural hub

“An artistic, historical and sustainable town centre which is well connected with its surrounding area and has real potential as a cultural and artistic hub”



**Guiding objectives**

- 8.44 The vision will be used to guide stakeholder efforts over the next 5-10 years in Penarth and the following objectives will be used to help guide the town centre over this period in order to achieve the identified vision:

- 1 **Imagine Penarth – Creating one brand for the town.**
- 2 **Fostering connections – Exploiting Penarth's unique surroundings and other attractions to capture benefits for the centre by encouraging internal and sustainable connections.**
- 3 **Widening Penarth's offer – Diversifying Penarth's daytime and night-time offer so that it caters for visitors and supports the brand.**
- 4 **Building upon the centre's heritage – Building upon Penarth's unique qualities stemming from its role as a historic seaside resort.**

**Framework**

- 8.45 Using the above guiding objectives we set out a framework which provides some detail on the recommended next steps applicable to each of the above guiding objectives. The Implementation Plan at Chapter 9 translates this Framework into a workable action plan:-

1. **Imagine Penarth – Creating one brand for the town**

- 8.46 Consultation highlighted the widespread need for Penarth to be branded / marketed consistently, especially to day-trippers. Increasing awareness of the town and its key attractions such as the Pier, the promenade, various art galleries and attractive shopping environment were identified as key selling points which need to be better marketed.
- 8.47 There is a need for this marketing and image to be consistent and developed in a coordinated way to ensure clarity of vision and message and to effective and efficient use of resources.

- 8.48 Considering that Penarth's creative atmosphere is generated largely by the presence of independent shops, art galleries and historical buildings, this image should be based around an artistic/artisan theme. It should be reinforced through associated events (e.g. festivals similar to the 'Made in Roath' event), continued protection, enhancement and education of the centre's historical buildings, and encouragement of uses which support this brand such as new independent shops, art galleries and associated leisure uses. The Pier Project might be a key driver in helping to kick-start this new image for Penarth and creating a new destination for the town. Exploring other opportunities for creating new destinations or improving existing attractions should also be encouraged.

- 8.49 This new image would be best achieved through a collaborative approach involving traders, key local groups such as Penarth Greening and the Council – but clear leadership will be required.

2. **Fostering connections – Exploiting Penarth's unique surroundings and other attractions to capture benefits for the centre by encouraging internal and sustainable connections.**

- 8.50 This objective can be split into two themes relating to fostering internal connections as well as improving other sustainable connections.

**Internal connections**

- 8.51 Penarth benefits from unique locational attributes - close to sea-front, access to Esplanade, Pier and Penarth Marina, as well as a close proximity to Cardiff Bay Barrage, Cardiff City and the Vale of Glamorgan coastline. This strategic location is regarded as a significant opportunity for Penarth, although in order to take advantage of this setting there is a need to address:

- 1 **How best to encourage and attract visitors to the centre from these areas; and,**
- 2 **How physical linkages between the town centre and these areas can be improved.**

- 8.52 Incentivising visits to the Centre from the surrounding area and making the centre a destination in its own right, by providing facilities which visitors want is crucial to encouraging people into the Centre. The Centre already meets the needs of many visitors, although improved leisure facilities would be beneficial. The key is therefore to improve awareness of what is on offer through better education/training of existing attractions or uses. Consideration should be given to identifying other innovative forms of incentivising visits to the Centre. This might include the provision of vouchers to spend in the Centre e.g. a free coffee with a train ticket or the provision of a tourist information hub in the Centre.

- 8.53 In terms of physical linkages, existing routes are of a reasonable standard, although pedestrians and cyclists are reported to be discouraged by the steep gradient between the Town Centre and places such as the Esplanade, the Marina and the Barrage and Pont-y-Werin that provide access to Cardiff Bay and the Sports Village. The Council has worked with partners to deliver improvements in walking and cycling between the Marina and the Town Centre. In this regard, such improvements and the continued provision of improved walkways and cycle paths and more cycle/pedestrian friendly roads will improve perceptions. In addition the Council has worked with the Town Council in the recent past to provide a seasonal shuttle bus service between the Marina and the Town Centre. The shuttle bus (referred to as P1 service) was introduced as a subsidised fare paying service to encourage visitors to the Barrage and the Marina to access the Town Centre and other attractions and destinations such as Cosmeston Country Park and the Esplanade. This service was piloted in 2010 on a temporary basis for 7 days a week throughout the summer season. Due to resourcing issues, the service operated seasonally in 2011 on a Friday to Sunday and Bank holiday basis only, albeit with a simplified fare structure. The service did not operate in 2012 for cost reasons.

## TOWN CENTRE FRAMEWORK

8.54 However, it is now worth considering whether such a service could be reintroduced in partnership with the Town Council, with the links between the Marina (the Barrage/ Pont-y-Werin) being extended to serve the Esplanade and other attractions in Penarth. The arrangement would have the best chances of success in the summer months when the visitors to the Marina and the Esplanade would be higher. A shuttle service with a simple fare and timetable between the Esplanade, Marina and the Town Centre may well be an effective mechanism for increasing footfall in the Town Centre.

8.55 Consultation also raised concern over the congestion problems associated with the vehicular approach into Penarth from Cardiff and a particular bottle-neck was observed around the mini-roundabout on Cogan Hill. This trafficked approach was therefore considered to discourage visitors. In addition to this, the physical appearance of key entrance features such as the railway bridge on Windsor Road was also considered to miss an opportunity to create a more attractive (or more celebrated) entrance feature into the Centre. The feasibility of improving these key linkages should be explored as part of the Framework's Implementation Plan.

### Sustainable connections

8.56 Penarth benefits from a number of existing sustainable transport connections, including Penarth railway station, good bus-linkages and some cycle provision. However many people raised provision of car parking as a particular issue in the Centre. Some observers felt that this issue was a perception of a car parking shortage, created by poor parking enforcement, whilst others considered that Penarth has a genuine shortage of car parking.

8.57 Encouraging new and enhanced sustainable transport links within the town, as well as between the town and neighbouring areas, will be an important way in which reliance on the car can be reduced. This should sit alongside a concerted effort to enforce current car parking regulations. The efficacy of this should be monitored and

subject to its success, opportunities for new car parking provision within the centre may need to be explored, though it is acknowledged that there is no cheap quick fix to this as it requires land, and cost of acquiring this and the associated implementation costs may be prohibitive.

8.58 With the suggested ongoing improvements in cycling and walking infrastructure, the scope to provide shuttle linkages between the coast and the Town Centre and the need to enhance gateways into the Town Centre, there is also the scope to look at a comprehensive approach to traffic management in the Town Centre to ensure pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles can co-exist.

### 3. Widening Penarth's offer – Diversifying Penarth's daytime and night-time offer so that it caters for visitors and supports the brand

8.59 Diversification of Penarth's offer needs to encompass day-time and night-time uses, in order to attract and retain day time visitors.

8.60 Uses such as cafés/restaurants, gift shops, independent and speciality shops, leisure uses such as art galleries, cinemas, theatre spaces and parks are examples of the type of uses which are likely to be particularly attractive to visitors and should be encouraged within Penarth. New uses which help to reinforce Penarth's artistic/artisan image should also be particularly encouraged together with themed festivals (arts and crafts, for example).

8.61 An emphasis on the night-time economy in Penarth centre should be promoted, to improve the viability and vitality of Penarth town centre, although this should not be narrowly focussed on a drinking culture. The recent Inquiry in Town Centre Regeneration highlighted schemes such as the Purple Flag Initiative, which seeks to showcase town centres and encourage people who may not normally venture into the centre at night to do so. This type of initiative may be useful to promote in Penarth, coupled with encouragement of existing traders to consider alteration of opening hours.

### 4. Building upon the centre's heritage – Building upon Penarth's unique qualities stemming from its role as a historic seaside resort.

8.62 The majority of the Town Centre is designated as a Conservation Area and Penarth contains an attractive Listed Victorian arcade and 40 other Listed Buildings. This historical environment offers an attractive streetscape for visitors and contributes positively to the unique shopping experience, which is distinct to Penarth.

8.63 As this is a key selling point, any future development in the town will need to protect and enhance the special architectural and historic interest of town. This should be twinned with better education of the historical significance of Penarth's built heritage, to reinforce an appreciation and knowledge of this important aspect of the centre. The importance of undertaking on-going maintenance is also emphasised.



# 9.0 CROSS CUTTING THEMES

9.1 In completing this Framework a number of cross-cutting themes emerged which are common to all the centres examined in this Study. These relate to:

- 1 Creating and Marketing an image;**
- 2 Improving and maintaining the street scene and public realm;**
- 3 Improving centre accessibility and legibility;**
- 4 Making Cardiff's proximity an opportunity.**

9.2 These cross-cutting themes are explored in more detail below. The Implementation Plan in Chapter 10 then translates these themes into a workable action plan.

## 1. Creating and Marketing an image

- 9.3 Many of the centres were reported to not have a distinct (or in some circumstances positive) image. Creating a positive and clear image was considered by respondents to be important in attracting future visitors into the centre and thereby ensuring the future vitality and viability of the centres.
- 9.4 Creating a coherent and positive image was found to be heavily influenced by effective marketing of the distinctive characteristics of each centre, which is in turn defined by factors such as the uses in the centre, its appearance and its geographic location etc.
- 9.5 Consultation raised concern that previous centre marketing campaigns were not coordinated, relied heavily on traditional marketing methods such as leaflets and did not potentially reach the most beneficial target audiences.
- 9.6 Therefore developing a marketing plan for each centre has been identified as a key action. In establishing such a plan, it will be important to ensure that more innovative means of communicating it can be established so that its potential benefits might be maximised. Coupled with this it was recommended that each individual centre should seek to evaluate existing promotional documentation and techniques with a view to considering the role for using more modern forms of technology in order to ensure centres keep pace with changing consumer needs and patterns.

## 2. Improving and maintaining the street scene and public realm

- 9.7 Whilst the quality and appearance of individual elements such as individual buildings, shopfronts, pavements etc was found to vary considerably between centres, the need to undertake physical improvements to the public realm/street scene was continually highlighted as an issue in all centres.
- 9.8 The role of the planning system is a key method by which the centre's appearance can be controlled. Consultation raised an issue that planning policy could be clearer and enforcement measures more consistently applied. In order to address this important issue, it is recommended that a review is undertaken of shopfront and signage planning policy mechanisms and current approaches to planning enforcement, with a view to helping to deliver physical improvements to the centre street scene.
- 9.9 The Council has undertaken some recent public realm improvements in some of the centres which have served a good purpose. However, in order to ensure future money is coordinated and spent in the areas which will yield most benefit to the centre in question, it is recommended that a public realm audit is completed in each centre. This audit should seek to undertake a detailed review of the public realm/street scene and identify potential areas for improvement in each centre. Such improvements could relate to upgrading poor areas of paving, improving connectivity by removing potential barriers (where appropriate and possible), and creating/improving key street-scene nodes or gateways etc.
- 9.10 Whilst the delivery of improvements in the public realm is important, a commitment should be made to on-going maintenance. Instances of poor maintenance regimes were noted in all of the centres, both in relation to individual buildings but also within the public realm specifically. The presence of vacant units, particularly those located in a prominent positions within the centre, were also noted to negatively impact on the centre's appearance and vitality.

9.11 Discussions with the Council's Visible Services department highlighted the importance of considering maintenance requirements when considering and planning improvement works. For example, when choosing new materials for new public realm improvements, consideration should be given to ensure these improvements 'stand the test of time' and therefore deliver best value over the longer term.

9.12 Providing and encouraging on-going maintenance, as well as securing the re-use of vacant spaces can help to improve the appearance of the centre, which in turn may help to boost civic pride and encourage future investment and future visitors. As a result it is recommended that further thought is given to the means by which on-going maintenance measures may be secured. This will require further investigation into potential grants to help improve building maintenance particularly in relation to existing historic buildings. It should also be set alongside further examination into the potential for the reuse of vacant premises on a temporary or permanent basis. This way improvement to the street scene may be secured through re-use and enlivenment of an area, as well as through physical public realm improvements.

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## 3. Improving centre accessibility and legibility

- 9.13 Another common topic observed in many of the centres related to improving centre accessibility and legibility.
- 9.14 In relation to legibility the role of clear directional and information signage was considered important. However, at present, the signage approach in centres varied in style, was sometimes absent and did not always provide the fullest information to help orientate people around the centre.
- 9.15 A good signage regime can assist a centre in various ways by:
- 1 **Sustainability and accessibility** – helping to illustrate key transport nodes e.g. railway station, bus station etc as well as available car or cycle parking areas; and,
  - 2 **Tourism and interpretation** – highlighting historical centre features or help interpret key points of interest within the centre or immediately surrounding areas to the centre.
- 9.16 Therefore a key recommendation is that a signage strategy should be undertaken in all of the centres. This should seek to identify potential improvements which might help visitors orientate themselves around the centre and thereby deliver wider social, economic and environmental benefits.
- 9.17 The issue of legibility is very closely related to that of accessibility. The success of the individual centres rests upon their being accessible by sustainable modes of transport. However, whilst maintaining or enhancing the centre’s sustainable transport linkages should remain the priority in all centres, their success also depends upon ensuring adequate opportunities for car parking and enforcing against unauthorised car parking.

- 9.18 In response to this issue, it is recommended that civil enforcement of car parking provision is introduced in all centres to help ensure the available car parking can maximise its potential without there being an issue of people ignoring waiting limits. In order to enhance accessibility more generally, it is important to undertake a travel plan/transport strategy for each of the centres in order to consider the ways in which sustainable transport linkages can be improved for the future. This will provide for a more holistic consideration of the centre’s accessibility, based upon a clear understanding of the issues that exist in each location.
- 9.19 A second element of accessibility relates to ensuring the centre’s services and offer is available during different times of the day and week. Consumer expectations regarding opening hours has shifted as lifestyle has changed and larger retailers are able to offer extended/ evening opening hours. In order to ensure centres maximise their accessibility to visitors, it is recommended that mechanisms to encourage extended opening hours for existing uses be investigated.

## 4. Making Cardiff’s proximity an opportunity

- 9.20 Cardiff comprises a key constituent of the geographic context of all five centres. Penarth is located approximately 4 miles from Cardiff whilst Llantwit Major is the furthest away at 18 miles. The presence of Cardiff acts to affect migration and commuting flows but also influences the shape of competition for these centres.
- 9.21 The views of consultees to this study regarding the role of Cardiff varied considerably; some people viewed Cardiff as a threat to the centres whilst others an opportunity to be exploited.

- 9.22 Despite the obvious division in opinion about the role and impact of Cardiff, it is clear that Cardiff will continue to exert a heavy influence upon the context of these centres, as well as to the actual centres themselves. Any framework which seeks to plan for the future of near-by centres should not ignore the potential (positive and negative) impact of Cardiff.
- 9.23 Consequently this Framework recommends a specific action to consider the ways in which these centres can positively respond to the opportunities offered by Cardiff. How this action is interpreted in practice will be specific to the given centre, although in each location, consideration should be given to the ways that its profile might be enhanced amongst residents in or visitors to Cardiff. The development of a distinctive image for each centre will be important in this regard.

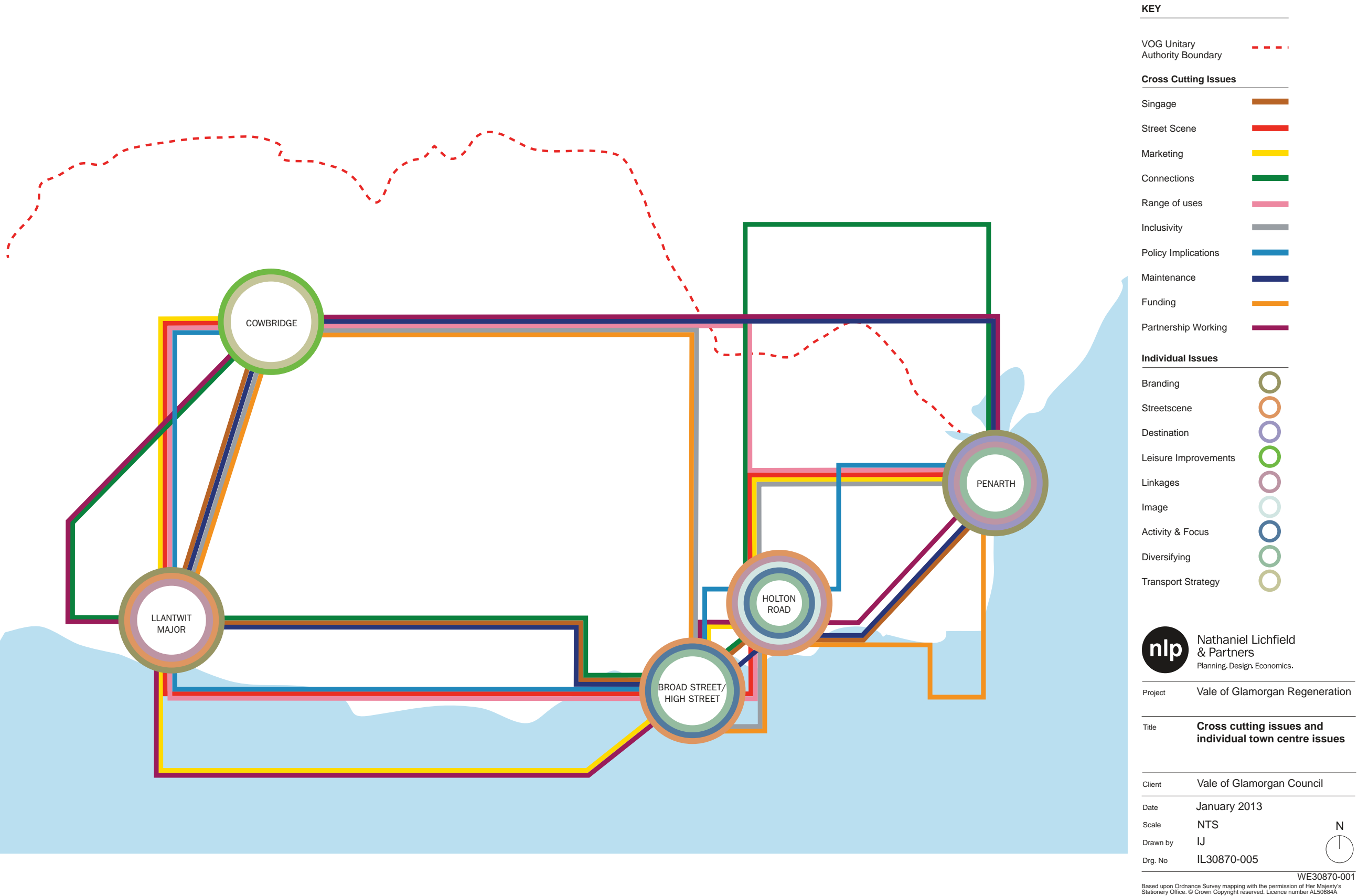
## Challenges of delivery

- 9.24 Another common matter which permeates through all of the above themes relates to meeting the challenges of delivery. In particular, through completing this Study the importance of partnership working and overcoming economic challenges was highlighted.
- 9.25 Firstly, in relation to partnership working, in completing this Study it has become clear that the integration of different sectors and the coordination of strategies through partnership is a key factor in the implementation of any successful regeneration initiative. Such partnership might be vertical (via different levels of government) or horizontal (with varying sectors, stakeholders and interest groups); both are recognised as being essential in bridging the gaps between policy and implementation.



- 9.26 The consultation process that we undertook as part of this study raised a sense that local authorities should be at the heart of, but not necessarily always leading town centre regeneration partnerships. Indeed the role of the community and the third sector was highlighted as a crucial means by which some regeneration objectives could be implemented. This grass-roots approach was also recognised as helping to ensure the community assume ownership and pride in their centre.
- 9.27 In light of the observed importance of partnership working, the implementation plan in Chapter 10 identifies the various parties who need to liaise together. This includes a number of objectives which should be community-led, with help from local authorities.
- 9.28 Secondly, in addition to defining who may deliver the implementation plan, the question of how this can be delivered is also equally important. Public sector intervention will be essential to stimulate investor growth and confidence and thereby maintain the vitality of the centres in the future. Overcoming these challenges will therefore require innovative thinking regarding:
- 1 Potential sources of funding – these should be streamlined and simplified. Innovative financial instruments should be investigated and trialled as appropriate;
  - 2 The prioritisation of spending to ensure most benefit is achieved from investment (i.e. ensuring that more can be achieved with less);
  - 3 The integration of interventions so that action can be targeted and complementary in order to work together to achieve the long term regeneration of the centres; and,
  - 4 The identification of ways in which the local community and the third sector can be engaged to deliver action in the most efficient manner. Community groups and enterprises and other third sector partners have an important contribution to make to regeneration initiatives and need to be involved in decision-making and in delivery in their areas. They may be empowered through the use of Creative Rural Communities which can also help to develop innovative projects and ideas that will benefit the long term social and economic wellbeing of the area.
- 9.29 The centres examined in this study have revealed that there are individual issues which are relevant to one or a number of the centres as well as cross-cutting issues that are common to all the centres. These have been diagramised below to summarise the Frameworks findings, written about in Chapters 4 to 9.

TOWN CENTRE FRAMEWORK





10.0 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

<div>All Centres</div> <div>1. Creating and marketing an image.</div> <div>2. Improving and maintaining the street scene and public realm.</div> <div>3. Ensuring centre legibility and accessibility.</div> <div>4. Making Cardiff's proximity an opportunity.</div>					
Framework and objectives	Action	Responsibility	Delivery Mechanisms	Estimated Costs Low (below £10,000) Medium (£10,000-£100,000) High (£100,000+)	Time Short <6mth Med 6mth -2 yr Long>2 yrs +
1. Creating and marketing an image	Seek to undertake an evaluation of existing promotional documentation and techniques and identify key lessons for the future in order to improve future promotional documentation for the centres.	VoG – tourism unit in conjunction with local groups within each centre	Schedule of lessons learnt and guidelines for future promotional documentation	Low	Medium
	Seek to investigate new ways of marketing and engaging with centre visitors/shoppers e.g. social media, mobile phone apps.	VoG – tourism and economic development department Trading Association Town/Parish Councils	Innovation Marketing Strategy to feed into the overarching Marketing campaign for the centre	Low	Medium
	Seek to plan a marketing campaign/ Strategy (to lead actions for the next year or two) to raise awareness of the centre's offer.	This campaign should be spearheaded by local community groups but aided/ enabled via VoG departments such as tourism and economic development departments.	Marketing campaign/Strategy	Medium	Medium

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<b>2. Improving and maintaining the street scene and public realm</b>	Seek to review shop front design and signage policy and potential policy mechanisms or planning enforcement approaches which might be used to improve existing signage and shop front in centres.	VoG – planning department in conjunction with shop owners	Supplementary Planning Policy	Medium	Short/Medium
	Seek to undertake a public realm audit to set out individual/specific recommendations for improving each centre street-scenes. These recommendations should consider the associated maintenance requirements and ways in which maintenance can be ensured in perpetuity.	VoG Council Town Council	Public Realm Audit	Medium	Short/Medium
	Seek to investigate the potential for grants to help improve building maintenance issues within centres particularly in relation to existing historic buildings. Improve awareness of any such opportunities,	Cadw VoG departments	Review of grants	Low	Short/Medium
	Seek to instigate the potential for a vacant unit re-use scheme to enable vacant units to be re-used on a temporary/interim basis.	VoG – economic development	Vacant unit re-use scheme	Low	Short/Medium
	Seek to protect and enhance historical buildings and their settings from inappropriate development	VoG – planning department	LDP SPG Conservation Area Management Plan Conservation Area Design Guide	Low	Medium
	Investigate legal options available for encouraging landlords to address instances of poor building maintenance.	VoG – Legal & Planning Department	Legal enforcement e.g. fines	Medium	Medium
	Seek to ensure on-going maintenance of the public realm is achieved and future choices of materials take into account maintenance issues to ensure maximum.	VoG visible services, economic development, planning department.	Maintenance Plan	Low	Medium



## TOWN CENTRE FRAMEWORK

<b>3. Ensuring centre legibility and accessibility</b>	Seek to undertake a review of signage strategy:  - to guide visitors within centre to key transport nodes (railway station, bus stops and car parking provision) and to key points of interest (beach, heritage coast and walks);  - to aid interpretation; and,  - to guide visitors into the centre from surrounding areas.	VoG – Visible services, planning and tourism and economic development department.	Signage Strategy	Low Implementation – medium	Short/Medium
	Implement civil enforcement of car parking provision in the town centre.	Visible Services	Civil enforcement	Medium	Medium
	Investigate mechanisms for encouraging extended opening hours for existing uses. (Sunday opening is key for day-trippers/tourists)	Chamber of Trade VoG – planning department and economic development department	Extended opening hours guidance? SPG Revised licenses	Medium	Medium
	Consider scope for preparing a transport strategy/travel plan for each centre. This strategy/plan should seek to identify potential accessibility improvements.	VoG – planning and highways department.	Town Centre Travel Plans and Transport Strategy	Medium	Medium
<b>4. Making Cardiff's proximity an opportunity</b>	Consider the ways in which the centre's proximity to Cardiff can be used as an advantage.	Partnership working between VoG Council (tourism and economic development department) and Cardiff Council  VoG Economic Development Departments e.g. Creative Rural Communities via Village Renewal / Axis 4.	Partnership Centre Strategy	Medium	Short

TOWN CENTRE FRAMEWORK

<div>Holton Road, Barry</div> <div><div>1. <b>Enabling Linkages</b> – Encouraging clear linkages between surrounding areas including Barry Waterfront and Barry Docks railway station.</div><div>2. <b>Activity and focus</b> – A ‘whole Building’ Strategy – dealing with vacancy rates, bringing empty buildings into use coupled with a pragmatic approach to focussing commercial activity around a commerical core.</div><div>3. <b>Diversifying Holton Road</b> – Encouraging a better mix of uses and new reasons to visit Holton Road.</div><div>4. <b>Improved street scene</b> – Improvements to shop-fronts and building fabric.</div><div>5. <b>Revitalising Holton Road’s image</b> – Marketing/advertising a vital and viable centre which supports business start-ups.</div></div>					
Framework and objectives	Action	Responsibility	Delivery Mechanisms	Estimated Costs	Time
<div>1. <b>Enabling Linkages</b></div> <div>Encouraging clear linkages between surrounding areas including Barry Waterfront and Barry Docks railway station</div>	Investigate the feasibility of implementing improvements to sustainable transport linkages to Barry Dock railway station and Barry Waterfront development which could include signage, new footpaths or cycle paths etc.	VoG – (lead) Arriva Trains Network Rail Sewta Sustrans WG	Centre Linkages Strategy	Medium	Short/ medium
	Seek to devise new marketing literature (a key element of which should be on-line) targeted at tourists and day-trippers to help raise awareness of what the town has to offer and how to access the centre via train, bus, walking and cycling.	VoG – tourism department Pride in Barry Trade Association	Plan for new marketing literature	Medium	Short/ Medium
<div>2. <b>Activity and focus</b></div> <div>A ‘whole Building’ Strategy – Dealing with vacancy rates, bringing empty buildings into use coupled with a pragmatic approach to focussing commercial activity around a commercial core</div>	Seek to actively encourage, through planning policy, the re-use of upper floors within the centre for residential development (where appropriate).	VoG Planning department	Planning Permissions	Low	Short



## TOWN CENTRE FRAMEWORK

<b>3. Diversifying Holton Road</b> Encouraging a better mix of uses and new reasons to visit Holton Road.	Seek to encourage new convenience goods shops, housing and leisure related uses (cafés, restaurants and housing) through planning policy – either through positive planning policies or restrictive policies on other uses (which are focussed on drinking and takeaways).	VoG – Planning Department Trading Association	LDP SPG	Medium	Medium
	Seek to introduce positive planning policies for encouraging appropriate night-time economy uses (those not focussed on drinking and takeaways). To include temporary (e.g. night market, innovative pop-up vacant uses) and permanent uses (e.g. new restaurants, late night cafés).	VoG – planning and economic development departments Barry Town Council	LDP SPG External funding and grant bids Purple Flag Initiative	Medium	Medium
	Investigate options for a ‘shop local’ campaign for Barry Holton Road.  Potentially seek to share lessons learnt from the equivalent campaign undertaken currently in Penarth.	Local Community Group – Pride in Barry  Traders	‘Shop local’ campaign	Low	Medium
	Seek to agree an events schedule for the centre to best advertise and raise awareness of Holton Road centre.	VoG – tourism department Trading Association	Events Schedule	Low	Short/ Medium
	Seek to continue lobbying for business rate relief for particular uses/ instances where the Council wish to promote/support business development.	Assembly Members/Members of Parliament  County Councillors	Political lobbying	Medium	Long
<b>4. Improved street scene</b> Improvements to shop fronts and building fabric	Potentially as part of the Public Realm Audit, seek to undertake a review of existing green space within the centre (as well as action plan to implement any identified opportunities for new green spaces). Seek to implement recommendations. This should ideally be a local community led scheme.	Community-led group e.g. Pride in Barry  Aided by VoG – Visible services and Planning.	Public Realm Audit which incorporates a Greenspace Review and Action Plan  Planting plan for Holton Road	Low/Medium	Short/ Medium
	Seek to complete the planned programme of public realm improvements (as set out in the Barry Town Centre Framework for Future Public Realm Improvements (2010), as well as scheduled further improvements in the Castleland Renewal Area and Barry Regeneration Area). In completing these improvements an emphasis should be placed upon ensuring on-going maintenance in order to maintain the momentum of these associated improvements.	VoG – planning, visible services and economic development departments	Public Realm Improvements WG Funding	High	Long

TOWN CENTRE FRAMEWORK

<b>5. Revitalising Holton Road's image</b> Marketing/advertising a new vital and viable centre which supports business start-ups	Seek to hold a 'reimage' event which highlights/raises awareness of the change in Holton Road. This could be a large festival or other similar event, ideally led by community groups.	Holton Road Traders Association Barry Town Council VoG – Tourism and economic department	Re-image event planned	Low	Short
	Identify a key community group who will lead the revitalisation of Holton Road.  However this group should work in collaboration with the Council and other parties to develop ideas and deliver change.	Identified Community Group VoG- Tourism department	Community Group with remit to revitalise Holton Road.	Low	Short



<p><b>High Street and Broad Street, Barry</b></p> <p><b>1. Improve Broad Street</b> – Creating a more enticing place to stop and more attractive entrance into the centre.</p> <p><b>2. Increasing awareness of centre</b> – High Street as Barry's independent cluster and Broad Street as an attractive night-time destination.</p> <p><b>3. Diversifying Broad Street</b> – Encouraging a more diverse family orientated night-time economy not just based on drinking.</p>					
Framework and objectives	Action	Responsibility	Delivery Mechanism	Estimated Costs	Time
<p><b>1 Improve Broad Street</b></p> <p>Creating a more enticing place to stop and more attractive entrance feature into the centre</p>	Seek to assume a zero-tolerance approach towards breaches of planning regulation in respect of new signage and shop front design specifically	VoG - Planning & Enforcement Departments	Enforcement notices etc	Low	Short
	Seek to undertake a review of existing pedestrian and cycle linkages between the Centre and Barry Waterfront. This should include an Action Plan for recommended improvements.	VoG – planning & highways departments External Consultants on behalf of VoG.	Access/Linkages Strategy to include delivery mechanisms e.g. Section 106 Agreements, VoG investment etc.	Medium	Long
	Investigate and identify opportunities in order to provide new car parking provision in/on the edge of the centre or stimulate the redevelopment of areas to the south of Broad Street.	VoG – Highways & Planning Departments WG	Negotiation and regeneration proposals.	High	Long
<p><b>2. Increasing awareness of centre</b></p> <p>High Street as Barry's independent cluster and Broad Street as an attractive night-time destination</p>	Seek to agree an events schedule for the centre based around the town's independent and night-time economy function (e.g. day or night markets, shop local events, shop local festivals).	Led by VoG – tourism and economic departments In collaboration with:- Trading Association Pride of Barry Barry Town Council	Events Schedule to form part of the overarching Marketing campaign for the centre.	Medium-High	Medium

TOWN CENTRE FRAMEWORK

<b>3. Diversifying Broad Street</b> Encouraging a more diverse family orientated night-time economy not just based on drinking.	Seek to investigate the potential for new planning policies/ mechanisms which seek to restrict the number of takeaway uses on Broad Street particularly, and encourage different night-time economy uses instead.	VoG – planning department	New LDP Planning Policy Local Development Order (LDO) Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)	Low	Short
	Seek to relax restrictions on opening hours for certain business types e.g. uses not focussed on drinking and takeaway uses within Broad Street and High Street.	VoG – licensing and planning departments	Revised Licences.	Low	Short
	Investigate potential grants which can be used to encourage alternate evening economy uses (other than takeaway and drinking) in the centre	Barry Town Council Trading Association Pride of Barry VoG – tourism and economic departments	Review of grants	Medium	Medium
	Continue to lobby for business rate relief for particular uses/ instances where the Council wish to promote/support business development.	Assembly Members/Members of Parliament County Councillors	Political lobbying	Medium	Long



<div>Cowbridge</div> <div>1. Improve the tourism and leisure offer – Capitalise on Cowbridge’s historic built environment and increase leisure and tourist offer.</div> <div>2. Develop the transport strategy – Establishment of a parking strategy to alleviate parking problems in Cowbridge.</div> <div>3. Marketing – Promote Cowbridge’s festivals, retail identity and leisure offer.</div>					
Framework and objectives	Action	Responsibility	Delivery Mechanisms	Estimated Costs	Time
<div>1. Improve the tourism and leisure offer</div> <div>Capitalise on Cowbridge’s historic built environment and increase leisure and tourist offer.</div>	Seek to promote and develop the Town’s strong schedule of events possibly developing events around the town’s independent and night-time economy function (e.g. day or night markets, shop local, key tourist events). This should include consideration of a strategy for event marketing and signage.	VoG – tourism department Cowbridge Chamber of Trade and other organisations such as Hub Cowbridge and the Charter Trust	Events Schedule	Low	Short/ Medium
	Seek to investigate potential opportunity sites for a potential Tourist Information Centre/outpost. This should seek to advertise Cowbridge and provide interpretation of these but also key attractions in the surrounding area.	VoG –Planning & tourism department Cowbridge Town Council Cowbridge Chamber of Trade Cowbridge Hub / Charter Trust. Wales Tourist Board	New Tourist Information Centre/ Outpost	Low	Medium
	Seek to introduce positive planning policies which seek to allow for (appropriate) diversified uses within the centre. New uses could be leisure, retail and service uses.	VoG – planning department	LDP SPG	Medium	Short/ Medium
	Seek to introduce positive planning policies which continue to ensure upper floors within the centre are used.	VoG – planning department	LDP SPG	Medium	Short/ Medium
	Seek to relax restrictions on opening hours for certain business types.	VoG – licensing and planning departments	Revised Licences.	Low	Short
	Consider the capacity of existing community facilities to be used for new uses (e.g. ad-hoc theatre, more frequent community cinema etc). An emphasis should be placed upon using existing facilities to full effect.	VoG – planning department, Economic Development department and Town Council.	Community Facility Review	Low	Medium
	Develop a ‘destination management plan’ for the town which will: Ensure that visitors experience Cowbridge in the best possible way. That they are able to find; Key transport nodes (bus stops and car parking provision) Key points of interest (Local walks, Physic Garden); Car parks; Retail areas; and, Areas of interest outside the town such as St Quentin’s Castle and nearby Villages.	VoG – Visible services, planning and tourism.  Economic Development Departments e.g. Creative Rural Communities via Village Renewal / Axis 4.	‘Destination Management Plan’	Low	Short
	Continue to lobby for business rate relief for particular uses.	Assembly Members Members of Parliament	Political lobbying	Medium	Long

TOWN CENTRE FRAMEWORK

<b>2. Develop the transport strategy</b> Establishment of a parking strategy to alleviate parking problems in Cowbridge	Seek to undertake a comprehensive review of transport provision and car parking within Cowbridge centre currently. An assessment of sign-posting to these key transport linkages (with particular reference to car parks) should be included within this review. This Assessment should identify a set of prioritised improvements and should consider the future impact of potentially developing the cattle market site, in terms of car parking provision.	VoG – highways, visible services and planning.	Transport Strategy	Medium	Medium
<b>3. Marketing</b> Promote Cowbridge's festivals, retail identity and leisure offer.	The Marketing Plan for Cowbrige should be focussed on advertising Cowbridge's historical assets and shopping provision targeting tourists in particular. It should be community-led but undertaken in collaboration with the Council	This campaign should be spearheaded by local community groups but aided/enabled via VoG departments such as tourism and economic development departments.	Marketing Campaign/ Strategy	Medium	Medium



<div>Llantwit Major</div> <div><div>1. A new image for Llantwit Major – Creating one brand for the town.</div><div>2. Harnessing the coastal attraction and town’s heritage to provide a cohesive offer – Exploiting Llantwit Major’s unique surroundings to capture benefits of increased visitor numbers.</div><div>3. Improving the street-scene – Ensuring good management, maintenance and stewardship of the towns built fabric with consistently good shop front design.</div><div>4. Creating a destination – Diversifying Llantwit Major’s offer so that it creates a destination and caters for visitors as well as residents.</div></div>					
Framework and objectives	Action	Responsibility	Delivery Mechanisms	Estimated Costs	Time
<div>1. A new image for Llantwit Major</div> <div>Creating one brand for the town.</div>	<div>Seek to agree an events schedule for the centre based around the town’s historical and coastal links targeted at tourists.</div> <div>This should seek to include a large-scale event in order to begin to create a ‘destination’.</div>	<div>VoG – tourism unit</div> <div>Chamber of Trade</div> <div>Local groups</div> <div>Llantwit Major Town Council</div> <div>Visit Wales</div>	<div>Events Schedule</div>	<div>Low</div> <div>Implementation – Medium/High</div>	<div>Medium</div>
<div>2. Harnessing the coastal attraction and town’s heritage to provide a cohesive offer</div> <div>Exploiting Llantwit Major’s unique surroundings to capture benefits of increased visitor numbers.</div>	<div>Investigate the feasibility of improving sustainable transport linkages to the coast. Recommended improvements should focus on providing new on-road pedestrian access, cycle and/or bus linkages.</div>	<div>VoG – Visible services Highways</div> <div>External Consultants on behalf of Council</div>	<div>List of prioritised, recommended improvements to existing transport linkages.</div>	<div>Medium</div> <div>Implementation – Medium/High</div>	<div>Medium</div>
	<div>Investigate new ways to encourage people to use sustainable transport linkages between the centre and the coast (e.g. bus shuttle service between town and beach, cycle hire for patrons of centre businesses, ‘gimics’ such as tuc-tucs etc).</div>	<div>VoG – tourism department</div>	<div>New ways of encouraging sustainable transport linkages between the centre and the Coast.</div>	<div>Low</div> <div>Implementation –Medium/High</div>	<div>Medium</div>
<div>3. Improving the street-scene</div> <div>Ensuring good management, maintenance and stewardship of the towns built fabric with consistently good shopfront design.</div>	<div>The Public Realm audit for Llantwit Major should focus on improving the approach into the town from the Railway Station specifically as well ensuring clear links between the new and old parts of the Centre.</div>	<div>VoG - Planning and Highways Departments</div> <div>Town Council</div>	<div>Public realm audit and corresponding action plan</div>	<div>Low</div> <div>Implementation –Medium</div>	<div>Medium</div>

TOWN CENTRE FRAMEWORK

<b>4. Creating a destination</b> Diversifying Llantwit Major's offer so that it creates a destination and caters for visitors as well as residents.	Consider the feasibility of and opportunities to attract a new tourist attraction to help complement the town's image as a gateway to the Heritage Coast. This could be a Heritage Coast centre, museum etc.	VoG – tourism department and economic development Llantwit Major Local History Society Visit Wales Town Council	New tourist attraction	Low Implementation of opportunities – High	Medium/Long
	Investigate the potential mechanisms which could help encourage uses which make a positive contribution to the town's tourist vision. (e.g. new tourist shops, gift shops, surf shops, restaurants/cafés or other key tourist attractions such as a satellite centre of the Heritage Coast Visitors Centre).	VoG – Planning department and Economic Development department Town Council	LDP SPG Local Development Orders	Medium	Medium
	Investigate potential mechanisms for encouraging appropriate night-time economy uses (those not focussed on drinking and takeaways) – temporary e.g. night market, outdoor theatre – permanent (e.g. later opening cafes/restaurants).	VoG – Economic Development Department Llantwit Major Town Council	LDP SPG Funding (?) /Grants (?) Purple Flag Initiative	Medium	Medium



<div>Penarth</div> <div>1. <b>Imagine Penarth</b> – Creating one brand for the town.</div> <div>2. <b>Fostering connections</b> – Exploiting Penarth’s unique surroundings and other attractions to capture benefits for the centre by encouraging internal and sustainable connections.</div> <div>3. <b>Widening Penarth’s offer</b> – Diversifying Penarth’s daytime and night-time offer so that it caters for visitors and supports the brand.</div> <div>4. <b>Building upon the centre’s heritage</b> – Building upon Penarth’s unique qualities stemming from its role as a historic seaside resort.</div>					
Framework and objectives	Action	Responsibility	Delivery Mechanisms	Costs	
1. <b>Imagine Penarth</b> Creating one brand for the town	Seek to investigate potential for setting up a community group/ steering group with the remit of seeking to better market Penarth as an artistic/artisan centre. A key target audience should be Cardiff day-trippers.	VoG – regeneration and planning departments Penarth Society Penarth Town Council Penarth Traders Association	Image Steering Group actions	Low	Short
	Seek to agree an events schedule for the town centred around the town’s historic and artistic vision. E.g. markets (food, crafts etc), historical festival, ghost trails etc. This should be spearheaded by a new community group/steering group with the remit of seeking to better market Penarth’s Image	New Penarth Community Group/ Steering Group Aided by:- VoG – tourism department Penarth Society Penarth Town Council Penarth Traders Association	Events Schedule	Low	Medium
	Seek to investigate potential mechanisms which could help encourage (temporary or permanent) uses which make a positive contribution to the town’s image and vision. (e.g. new art galleries, restaurants/café’s).	VoG – planning and economic development departments	LDP SPG Local Development Orders (LDOs)	Medium	Medium

## TOWN CENTRE FRAMEWORK

<b>2. Fostering connections -</b> Exploiting Penarth's unique surroundings and other attractions to capture benefits for the centre by encouraging internal and sustainable connections.	Review of sustainable (cycling, bus and pedestrian) connections between centre and neighbouring areas - Pier, Cardiff Barrage, Penarth Marina and Esplanade – with identified recommendations/ improvements. Tuc-Tuc system or similar to aid accessibility between the Esplanade and the centre.	VoG – highways and planning departments Penarth Greening Penarth Town Council	Sustainability Transport Review	Low-Medium	Medium
	Review of gateway approaches into the centre from neighbouring areas with a view to considering how these may be improved - e.g. approach along Windsor Road, approach along Beach Road etc.	VoG – highways and planning departments Penarth Town Council	Penarth Gateway Review	Low-Medium	Medium
	Car parking provision should be identified as a key consideration to inform future planning applications in Penarth centre.	VoG - planning department Penarth Town Council	Car Parking SPG	Low	Medium
	Tourist Information Hub – explore opportunities for locating this in the centre – could be in addition to Esplanade centre or a replacement.	VoG – tourism and planning departments Visit Wales	New Tourist Information Hub	Medium-High	Long
	Seek to investigate and identify opportunities for new car parking provision in/on the edge of the centre.	VoG – highways department.	Car Park Site Search	Medium –High	Medium
<b>3. Widening Penarth's offer</b> Diversifying Penarth's daytime and night-time offer so that it caters for visitors and supports the brand.	Seek to investigate mechanisms for encouraging appropriate temporary night-time economy uses –e.g. night market, outdoor theatre etc – which support the artisan/artistic image for Penarth – as well as appropriate new permanent uses.	VoG – planning and economic development departments Penarth Town Council	LDP SPG Funding (?) /Grants (?)	Medium	Medium
	Seek to relax restrictions on opening hours for certain business types (i.e. those uses not just focussed on drinking or takeaway uses) within Penarth – particularly in relation to Sunday trading as this represents a key time for visitors/tourists to Penarth.	VoG – licensing and planning departments	Revised Licences	Low	Short
	Seek to investigate potential grants which can be used to encourage new evening economy uses in the centre	Penarth Town Council Trading Association VoG – tourism and economic departments	Review of grants	Medium	Medium
	Continue to lobby for business rate relief for particular uses/instances where the Council wish to promote/support business development.	Assembly Members/Members of Parliament County Councillors	Political lobbying	Medium	Long
<b>4. Building upon the centre's heritage</b> Building upon Penarth's unique qualities stemming from its role as a historic seaside resort.	Seek to investigate opportunities for the education of Penarth's built heritage and centre history. Target audience should be potential day-trippers from near-by area including Cardiff.	This should be led by the Penarth Society.  To be aided by VoG – regeneration, conservation and planning departments	Historic Education Plan	Low -Medium	Short





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