

DISTINCTIVE PAST – VIABLE FUTURE

Regeneration through Sense of Place

Findings from Sense of Place Immersion
and Barry Regeneration Forum Workshop



Report prepared for The Vale of Glamorgan Council

by

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report provides an account of the work undertaken by Angharad Wynne on behalf of Vale of Glamorgan Council with regards to the development of Barry's Sense of Place, as a tool for regeneration of the town. It includes findings from the Sense of Place Immersion activity, conducted on 4th May 2016, and an overview of that presented at the Forum held on 25th May at Memo Arts Centre in Barry. It also includes the results of workshop activities from that day and commentary on potential ways forward for the town with regards to development of Sense of Place as a tool for regeneration.

1.1 OVERVIEW

Barry has made significant progress in terms of regenerating the town's fabric over the past few years. Coupled with that, work within the community has facilitated a situation in which communal discussions regarding a way forward for the town are now possible, as was evidenced by the constructive discussions and comments made during the Forum.

However, there is still much to do, many fundamental issues to tackle in order to improve the impact the town and its environs make on visitors and residents alike. Many of these issues were identified during the Sense of Place Immersion Day and are discussed in detail below.

It is clear that Barry has a long history of regeneration projects, and as with all places, some have been more successful than others. Most have focused on the built environment such as the relatively recent developments around the Town Hall, Thompson Street, Gladstone Road/Broad Street, Barry Island Eastern Shelter/Promenade, The Innovation Quarter and The Quays.

In other places, there are positive examples of social redevelopment, such as housing improvement and the provision of colourful, engaging parks across community areas. Strong links seem to have been developed with the community through Communities First and other groups and activities over the past few years and the ground now seems well prepared to engage more fully with the community of Barry as a whole, and draw them into the discussion and process of regenerating their town. Moving forward, it will be important to consult broadly with the community, engage meaningfully, listen and then to deliver strategic and sustainable improvement and change in accordance with a vision created and owned by the people of Barry.

2.0 KEY SUCCESS FACTORS – What makes places work?

What follows is a list of key success factors identified as being practiced by places that are working well and thriving. They are factors that Sense of Place centred regeneration programmes aspire to emulate.

2.1 A CARE FOR THE PAST, A PRIDE IN STORY, A PASSIONATE, CLEAR VISION OF THE FUTURE, SHARED BY ALL.

Harnessing a places' story, all those things which caused it to be, to become great, that gave it a reason for being are important as foundation stones for envisioning a places' future. As much as a history, places need a story that connect its history and future and therefore articulate what it is , why it is, who it's for and how it is going to develop. Without this, a place is prey to the whims of developers and outsider views and plans. It is a sailing boat buffeted by winds from many directions, lacking a clear course, confused about its future and its role in the world.

2.2 INTEGRATED, COMMUNICATIVE GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT – PRIVATE, PUBLIC AND COMMUNITY WORKING AS ONE.

Places that are not working to their best typically have a fragmented governance and management structure. To an extent, all places have disparate organisational bodies in play, i.e. owners of private property, Council, civic groups, businesses, developers etc. The difference between a place not working well and a place that is working well is the way these different parties interact with each other.

In places that are not working well, there is always an excuse that it is 'someone else's problem'. *"The unsightly building is in private ownership, and nothing can be done", "the rubbish on the streets is the Council's problem, not an issue for any individual"* etc. Places that work well 'make the place the hero'. Everyone is engaged in making their place look, act and work in the best way possible, everyone makes it their business to look after their place. It's quite a different way of working, and thinking, but it works. And generating a sense of pride in that place is at the core of that change of perception and action.

2.3 A CORE STORY WELL TOLD, A SENSE OF PRIDE IN PLACE

The succinct and confident re-telling of a place's story and interaction with it that helps each individual find how they relate to it. It is that which builds connection, valuing and pride in place. Barry has a fantastic story to tell, it sits on a wealth of maritime and industrial history that connects it to the rest of south Wales and the world, and a medieval and prehistoric story that connects it to the rest of Glamorganshire. But, its story is all but invisible in the public realm. It can be easy to imagine that every resident grows up knowing their place's story, but this really isn't the case, and besides, sometimes our local story becomes too everyday, too

commonplace and it takes outsiders valuing the story to remind residents of how special a place their town actually is. So, any place's story has two key audiences, the local community and those on the outside looking in. It is the same story that needs to be told – though different aspects will appeal to different audiences, but ultimately it is one place, with one core story that needs to be made manifest.

2.4 STRONG, WELL MANAGED AND DEVELOPED SENSE OF PLACE IN THE PUBLIC REALM COMMUNICATES THE STORY AND VISION.

Places with strong stories that are communicated through its Sense of Place are appealing and engaging places to live and visit. Those who confuse the environment with mixed messages or completely lack a Sense of Place are often described as 'soulless' places or 'uneasy' spaces to spend time in. Barry has a great story, but currently the environment lacks a coherent sense of place, and the public realm actively undermines the impact Barry could make.

2.5 ONE STORY, ONE PLACE, MANY FLAVOURS.

Barry appears to be quite a fragmented place. Barry Island is a very different place to the Town, The Knap provides a very different atmosphere to the communities which address Skomer Road. Again, this is no different to any other town or city, the sense that districts have developed for different purposes and for differing socio-economic groups, but, there is a danger that places become split into 'spaces for visitors and outsiders' and places for 'locals', which begins to drive how we look at them, invest in them (or not) and work on developing them (or not).

Strategies that contribute towards enhancing divisions and differences in spaces and their communities of use will ultimately lead to widening the socio-economic gaps between communities and place users. Strategies that look at a place with a view to it as an integrated place, albeit with 'villages' or areas with their own personalities, will help to fuse a place together and get the whole community working behind and utilising a place they can be proud of, a place that is the hero. The key to this is the core story and the vision, the manifestation of it is an integrated approach to public realm development and detailing, e.g. bringing a splash of Barry Island to the town centre, thinking about it in the same way, with the same playful approach to colour and vibrancy. Likewise it could be bringing elements of Barry's industrial story to Barry Island, as has already been done a little with the names and elements of Barry's story included in the climbing wall installation. Essentially, it is about including reference points that connect places to the core story, to each other, rather than developing unique personalities of place for each geographical area. It can be done through public realm furnishings, through messaging and interpretation, through architecture and landscaping, naming of streets and many other ways, and should not cost the earth. The greatest investment is creative thought and time to pause now, consult, engage and consider, then divert and adjust funds and spending pots to align behind a vision for the town and its identity.

2.6 APPEALING, ACTIVE PLACES ATTRACT BUSINESS, INVESTMENT AND PROSPER

This work does not happen overnight. It needs a sustained commitment to the story, the vision and the place as hero. It is possible, and in most cases it is important to create 'quick wins', things that rapidly transform and demonstrate constructive action towards an agreed end. It lifts the energy of a place and its community to see positive transformation occurring, and generates more positive energy and commitment towards improvement. Stagnation, wavering, inability to act upon promises, to whip up enthusiasm and let it dissipate creates a void, a vacuum from which disparate ideas and agendas arise to the fore and begin to drive their own course forward.

3.0 FINDINGS FROM THE SENSE OF PLACE IMMERSION DAY

3.1 THE STORY SO FAR....

Barry grew from a small fishing village that had at one time been a holding of the De Barri family who established themselves here following the Norman incursion into Wales in 1093. Prior to that it was noted for St Baruc's a holy establishment and shrine to the 6th Century St Baruc, who according to legend was a pupil of St Cadfan, and following misadventure and being drowned at sea, was washed ashore near the point of his well and church. This became a potent pilgrim site during the medieval period, with four visits to the shrine being equated by the Catholic Church to one visit to Rome. Before that, the land upon which Barry sits today had been part of the territory of the Silures, demonstrated by a number of forts in the area, and back into prehistory, it seems to have supported a thriving population of Bronze Age and Neolithic Farmers who have left their mark across Glamorganshire and its coast, with evidence of human habitation in the area dating back to the Paleolithic.

Before the industrial revolution transformed the fishing village into a thriving port town, the coastline here was a mecca for pirates, smugglers and wreckers, and so the area's maritime history is as layered as the Liassic limestone rock that defines much of the coastline to the west of the town.

The central character in the town's transformation is undoubtedly David Davies of Llandinam who built the docks in order to secure a sea channel for the coal from his mines inland in the Rhondda Valleys. This not only saw the town explode in terms of size, building and population but also in the diversity of its peoples, with mariners, sailors and dockers visiting, relocating and intermarrying with the native population. This formed the diverse community and injected the grit in Barry's soul which has seen it become a cradle for world famous activists, politicians, artists and sporting heroes.

Later, the railway that dissects the town, built to carry coal also brought day-trippers from the industrial communities to the seaside, and so the local tourism industry was born. A fair and leisure amenities were developed along the Barry Island coastal strip and Butlins arrived. These days, Barry has exchanged pilgrims en route to St Baruc's for those walking in the footsteps of Gavin and Stacey, but with visitor's needs and expectations changing, with increased competition for the visitor pound and with areas of Gibbonsdown, Cadoc, Court, Castlelend and Buttrills retaining higher levels of unemployment compared to their wider geographic counterparts, the town needs a clear vision of how it can capitalise on existing assets while attracting and developing new propositions for its community and for businesses and investors.

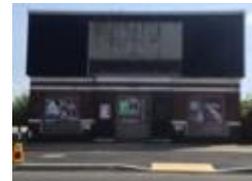
As already discussed, the urban environment is owned, managed and cared for by a huge variety of different people, organisations and businesses. This makes for a complex set of demands and constraints in achieving a consensus in terms of place management, but successful places do pull together to

ensure that the impact they make on residents and visitors is positive and in line with their place values. This is a snapshot of the impressions that undermined Barry's appeal on the 4th of May 2016. There will be a number of reasons why it was this way, nevertheless, this is what it presented on that day. What follows is a digest of issues that came to the fore during the Sense of Place Immersion day:

3.2 BARRY'S GATEWAYS AND ARRIVAL ROUTES MAKE A POOR IMPRESSION AND LACK A SENSE OF ARRIVAL

The entry points to the town are marked by relatively 'corporate' name boards, saying 'Welcome To Barry'. They are easily missed and communicate nothing about the personality of this town. Moreover, they are in relatively cluttered signage environments and have to compete for attention.

Barry was designed as a railway town with the focus on railways taking goods to the sea. As a result, the road network into the town, crossing the town area and linking it with Barry Island and the new 'Innovation Quarter' are neither easy nor obvious in terms of navigation. This is made all the worse by the poor quality environment along a number of these core roadway corridors and junctions. Broad Street and Dock View Road appear particularly down at heel with shabby building frontages,



poorly maintained derelict or empty buildings, tatty railings and street signs that are bent, litter and a plethora of betting shops and used car sales vendors as well as empty advertising boards. Behind these lie the 'boutique' shopping street of High Street and further east, the main town centre itself.



The tunnels, which are the main routes beneath the dissecting railway line, to connect the town with the emerging new leisure, retail, business and residential areas of The Quays/Innovation Quarter appear more as gateways to industrial 'no go zones' (as of course they once were) rather than gateways to an exciting leisure offer, the coast and marina strip. They repel rather than attract, and the plethora

of advertising signage that clusters around some of them pointing to used car sales, mechanics etc. does not help matters, and actively confuses and detracts from road signage. In terms of Sense of Place, it is at odds with that which is promised beyond them and does nothing to entice or

encourage.

3.3 POOR SIGNAGE

Navigation around Barry, unless you are familiar with the town, is not easy. There is no sense of arrival into the centre, as it is hidden behind buildings. There are few clues in the urban environment as to whether one is drawing near to a shopping centre or moving towards a newly developed dining and innovation quarter. Brown signs to Barry Island, Porthkerry Park and the Knap are clear, in fact they dominate the signage environment along the routes towards the town and coast. They funnel day-trippers away from the town, which might be a positive in terms of traffic, but it does not support the town centre economy.

Signage pointing towards the Town centre and other local amenities such as the Memo Arts Centre, are far less clear. The inference is that these facilities are for those in the know or just for locals.

Most of the roads towards the town and the coast take passengers through largely residential areas, which can be bewildering for those unfamiliar with the area. There needs to be far clearer signage towards the town centre all the way from the main thoroughfares approaching Barry until the centre, as well as to other distinctive leisure and cultural assets. It would aid the sense of Barry as a resort destination not just a day-trip option, a town in which people play by the sea, stay near to the centre, dine in the developing maritime leisure quarter and enjoy some culture in and around the town's theatre and arts / cultural venues.

Around the town, the leisure districts and coastal strip, there is a need for interpretative signposting aimed at pedestrians to encourage movement between these spaces and support a deeper engagement with the story of Barry. These can help create a sense of Barry as 'one place' and will be important for both residents and visitors alike.

Work is also needed at key visitation sites such as the castle, Jackson's Bay and St Baruc's to blend health and safety information with positive and informative interpretation to help generate a sense of welcome and engagement. Further details are outlined below.

3.4 CLEANLINESS OF THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT

While there is an understanding that cutbacks to local government budgets have had an impact on refuse collection and street cleaning, Barry does seem to have a greater dog mess issue than most. This speaks volumes about the local people's lack of civic pride and sense of responsibility, and perhaps too, a lack of action on implementing fines for owners who do not clear up after their pets. Likewise, on the day of the immersion exercise, there was quite a bit of litter clustered about the town area and its environs and areas within the residential and development area of Barry Island, namely Clive Road Steps the important walkway that connects Barry



Island to the town across what is currently land under development (The Quays).



Dog mess was also prevalent in the Jacksons Bay area of the Island, but not at the main Barry Island tourism area. This suggests that either there is more regulation in the main visitor hot spots or that visitors to the area are more respectful with their dogs than locals, or both. It reinforces the well-documented phenomenon that places that are well maintained and have clearly been invested in are generally respected by users. Littered, down at heel, somewhat shabby environments are not thus respected and users tend to add to the problem by acting in ways that are attuned to the quality of the environment.



3.5 BARRY'S STORY IS ALMOST INVISIBLE

Barry's story is not very visible within the public realm. While we are aware that there is public art on Thompson Street (bespoke cog & flower bollards), wall art on the Home Bargains store, references on the Thompson Street footbridge and a Merchant Navy Memorial with inscription by Gillian Clarke outside the Civic Offices, they are relatively few and far between, and do not together tell a coherent narrative. There was no interpretation of the place's history, nor an expression of what future developments held in store seen within the environments visited during the Immersion Day.

3.6 ASSETS ARE UNDERVALUED AND OVERLOOKED



Barry's historic assets are undervalued and overlooked. During the Immersion day, Angharad Wynne visited Barry Castle and St Baruc's, both of historic, touristic and cultural value to the town. Neither had any interpretation – not even an explanation of what they were. The only signage present at the castle was a warning sign. It would take very little to turn these into attractive points of interest, perfect for summer picnics, and the focus for small annual events e.g. pageants, parades and pilgrimages. St Baruc's could easily be turned into a small sensory garden, a place for contemplation that people could visit to find out more about Barry's illustrious sacred past and about the rich saintly stories of the area.



Likewise, Jackson's Bay, another asset is poorly presented on arrival, with railings cordoning off the Yacht Club, forcing users to squeeze around a toilet block. Again, the

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main signage and interpretation was a set of rules, mostly 'Do not's'.

3.7 THE TOWN'S PUBLIC REALM IS A MIXED BAG AND LACKS SENSE OF PLACE



While much of Barry's industrial era architecture has been maintained, it suffers from insensitive modifications around the town centre in terms of haphazard and poorly maintained shop facades and a mixed bag of town centre furniture from gates to benches, fingerposts, bus shelters and lampposts. Some of these are off the peg and modern other's hint towards Victoriana and can be found along most high streets in the UK. This hotchpotch does nothing to provide a sense of place, in fact it undermines it.

Add to that poor maintenance of many of the elements, along with a boarded up iconic building (former Windsor Hotel/PH) at the multistory car park end of Holton Road, and an impression is created of a somewhat down at heel town centre. It does nothing to draw people into the centre itself around the town hall and square which have received investment and attention in recent years, and provide a very attractive focal point to the town, albeit the large square area could do with some animation and colour when not in use for events.



Barry Island beachfront on the other hand is well maintained, pristine actually. The street furniture has a uniformity and speaks of a historic seaside resort. The colour scheme around Nell's point and the investment there in colourful beach huts and public art have worked well to imbue a sense of distinctiveness and a new 'iconic picture' for Barry Island.

4.0 SOLUTIONS PROPOSED

Based on experience of working with other towns and cities on successful place making and regeneration projects, Angharad Wynne outlined a number of methods and solutions that would support the improvement of Barry's Sense of Place and drive regeneration and place making in the town.

Here's an outline of the solutions mentioned:

4.1 SERIES OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WORKSHOPS TO REFINE AND DEFINE BARRY'S STORY, SENSE OF PLACE AND INSPIRE A FORWARD VISION FOR THE TOWN.

Engaging broadly with Barry's community, a series of workshops would target different sectors of the community. From local residents to business leaders, Council teams to tourism operators in the area. These kinds of workshops have a number of aims:



- To gather a wealth of deep information about a place's story and sense of place
- To engage with these communities about their place, ensuring that their voice is heard and that they are included in the place making process
- To engender pride in place and stimulate a stronger sense of guardianship, to draw them towards a positive, common vision for their town.
- To identify individuals from each community who would be excellent representatives on a steering group / place board.

4.2 USE BARRY'S STORY TO INFORM AND INSPIRE A NEW BRAND PROPOSITION FOR THE TOWN, TO INCLUDE AN AGREED SET OF VALUES, TONE, IMAGING AND VISUAL LANGUAGE.

Once the story is clear and the vision is agreed, it then becomes communicated through brand and associate visual language. This is the most immediate manifestation of positive change and informs all communications work and public realm development as well as becoming a distinctive and visible manifestation of a new vision, and a fresh aspiration for the town.



4.3 A STORY AND STRATEGY DOCUMENT THAT WILL INFORM ALL DECISIONS AND DEVELOPMENT PLANS FOR BARRY FOR THE NEXT 5 – 10 YEARS.



This core, strategic document expresses Barry's story and aspirations. It powerfully communicates the sense of place and vision for the town and becomes a key tool in terms of branding, marketing, inward investment and briefing

developers. It lays out not just the story that informs what Barry is today, but how that story is guiding its future. It becomes the core document given to those wishing to invest, develop and promote Barry in any way. This document usually exists in printed and online form so that those interacting with the town can lift the content and use it. It is broadly disseminated, used by anyone communicating and creating Barry, from estate agents to the tourism team, planning officers to town centre managers.

The document uses the visual language developed for the town and the copywriting tone of voice that is aligned to the Town's brand.

4.4 DEVELOP A 'PLACE BOARD' TO DRIVE FORWARD THE VISION FOR BARRY AND WORK TO DELIVER THE ASPIRATIONS OF THE TOWN.



This panel / advisory group / board, act as vision-keepers for the place. Members are drawn from a broad spectrum of the place community: from local police, to press, Councillors to residents, business leaders to retailers, school teachers and in some cases pupils too, to

community workers and entrepreneurs. They provide a litmus test for decisions, they learn about place making during the process and provide a team who can support and champion the changes necessary during this process.

This is the forum at which matters such as 'should we have a maritime museum' can be discussed broadly. How it fits in to the place's vision, where is it in terms of priorities etc. Importantly, it provides the Council with a broad consultation base that understands the process of place making and stands ultimately for what is right for the town.

They usually stay together long after the initial process, though their remit often

changes. It is one place where a range of real issues facing all users of the town are discussed and the work of continually managing and developing the place is driven forwards.

Usually they meet monthly or bi-monthly during the initial phases, gradually evening out to quarterly or bi-annual meetings.

4.5 IMBUE PUBLIC REALM WITH SENSE OF PLACE E.G. STREET FURNITURE, SIGNAGE AND INTERPRETATION



There are many ways of telling a story and of manifesting sense of place in the public realm. Elements from fingerposts to interpretation or guidance boards, street furniture, paving and railings can all help to bring the place's story alive and imbue the public realm with strong Sense of Place. Often, great outcomes have been achieved as investment in public realm furniture, regeneration funds, street maintenance and a pot for public art have been strategically aligned. This way of working across silos and sharing a vision for redeveloping space can have significantly positive impacts, injecting colour, interest and personality into somewhat bland places, turning them into interesting spaces, destinations in their own rights. Likewise it can mean working with existing developers to help them understand what the place is about and how their investment in public realm can be used to support the vision for the place, and infuse new developments with suitable features, palette of colours etc.

4.6 INVEST IN HOARDINGS TO COVER UNSIGHTLY ELEMENTS ALONG KEY ROADS AND GATEWAYS, TO PROMOTE POSITIVE IMAGES AND MESSAGES ABOUT BARRY

This is a quick win that makes a big impact. Hoardings are made which use the brand graphics, language, messaging and visual language developed to add a splash of interest, colour and positive messaging to key areas which are currently dragging down the appearance of a place or street. It's a way of using prime advertising space to



communicate positive things about the future of a place.

4.7 IMPROVE WORK ACROSS SILOS SO THAT BARRY BECOMES ONE PLACE, MAKING THE PLACE THE FOCUS RATHER THAN THE PROCESS

It is clear that this is already beginning to happen in Barry, but more needs to be done, more aligning and re-focusing of strategies and available funds behind a vision and clear way forward. Of course, it depends entirely on creating, agreeing and signing up to delivering that vision.

Working across Barry's geographical areas to connect them in terms of sense of place is also important, bringing some of the values developed around Barry Island in terms of look, feel, cleanliness and commerce into the town area to both regenerate and create sensory connections, would do much to create a sense of unity for Barry as a whole.

4.8 IMPROVE SIGNAGE AND SENSE OF ARRIVAL AT GATEWAYS

Barry needs a new signage strategy and a visual language that helps to communicate Barry's story, brand and aspirations. Making a statement at the arrival points into the town is a great way of getting first impressions off on the right foot. It speaks volumes about the confidence and identity of a place. There are many ways of doing so, from public art through to designed arrival boards that carry through the visual language and brand values of a place. These should subtly but powerfully communicate the town's Sense of Place, its promise of the experience that awaits as well as providing a welcome.



4.9 IDENTIFY AND MOBILISE CHAMPIONS / AMBASSADORS FOR BARRY, INCLUDING TOURISM, CIVIC, CULTURAL, BUSINESS AND INVESTMENT CHAMPIONS.



This usually happens a little later on when improvements are in place and the town is ready to really make some impact. Often, those identified have already been part of Barry's journey, sat on advisory / place boards and/or been members of workshop groups.

There are a number of different ways of setting these up, from straight ‘ambassadors’, i.e. well known or ‘leader’ individuals in different sectors of business and society who speak actively and positively about Barry in public, within business / social contexts etc. There are also business and investment orientated ‘Champions’ who have a stake in Barry’s future and choose to invest to create a pot of money used for strategic profile raising projects on behalf of the town. What is appropriate and possible becomes apparent during the processes mentioned above.

4.10 INVEST IN COMMUNICATIONS AND PR WORK TO RAISE THE PROFILE OF BARRY AS A BUSINESS, LEISURE, RESIDENTIAL AND TOURISM DESTINATION.

Different types of PR happen at different stages of the process, usually led by business and investment focused PR, but in Barry’s case tourism orientated media communications too. Retail and more general consumer focused PR regarding the town centre would come on line once some improvements have been made.

4.11 DO NOTHING.

This is never really a viable option and only leads to a vacuum that will inevitably be filled by disparate voices aiming to create projects, drive strategy and build new assets, that in many cases fail, as they are not supported by a vision and the mechanisms that drive success. Even great places have to keep working to stay great.

5.0 BARRY ANNUAL REGENERATION DAY WORKSHOP RESPONSES

As part of the Barry Annual Regeneration Day, Angharad Wynne devised and ran a workshop to ascertain current thoughts and attitudes towards Barry, capture issues, highlight possibilities and gauge the appetite for, and priorities for change.

Workshop participants were asked to prioritise activity to support redevelopment and regeneration of Barry, based on the solutions presented during the presentation. Here are the results:

5.1 PRIORITISING SOLUTIONS



**There seems to have been some confusion and misunderstanding around the issue of 'Place Board', with some thinking that it was a physical board or placard rather than a group of people, therefore this response is not considered a reliable indication of the group's views on this matter.*

This exercise gives a good indication of where workshop participants felt priorities in terms of regeneration and Sense of Place development should lie.

Solutions that improved the physical environment scored highest across the board, including the improvement of signage, gateway points, arrival thoroughfares and investment in hoardings to cover unsightly areas needing development. There is also a clear call to improve public realm furnishings and interpretation.

There is an understanding of the importance of clarifying the story and communicating it through branding and communication tools to improve perceptions of Barry and project a more positive, forward looking face to the world.

PR and developing ambassadors to communicate positively about Barry scored well, but is not seen as an immediate priority. That is probably correct at this moment in time, in that improvements need to be made so that the town has something new to shout about.

Improving management of place was not a key priority for respondents at present. It may be that it is felt that things are already working pretty well, or that in fact there is little understanding of the importance of this important 'behind the scenes' organisational work and structures upon the regeneration of the town. In addition, as noted above, there seems to have been a lack of understanding regarding what 'place board' meant, and so this response is likely to be unreliable.

Do nothing scored lowest. Somebody added in blue pen '*+ generally let the community get involved...*'. It is unclear how many of the 30 dots were placed in support of that comment rather than the option of 'doing nothing.' Again, therefore, this response is a little unreliable.

5.2 ADDITIONAL IDEAS FOR REGENERATING AND IMPROVING BARRY

Participants were asked to stick 'post it' notes with additional ideas to aid regeneration of the town onto a sheet of paper during the workshop. Here are the results.

Café quarter on King Square with nightlife to bring the town together please.
Engage with young people @their Barry today and in the future!
Increase cultural activity
Use the Mayor's Parlour at the Library / Art Central as a permanent Heritage Centre (get rid of the unnecessary role of Vale Mayor)
Waterfront Sports
Multi generation community planning engagement
Become Dementia friendly with Disabled Access

(Responding to the above)Yes to this, did you know that Memo is a member of the National Access Scheme for Theatre and Arts Centres. But YES, let's become a dementia friendly town.
Live music – more professional youth arts training (so don't have to go to Cardiff)
Better links with groups trying to develop water activities for young and old in dock development and local clubs and groups
Street theatre
Geocaching
Tourism Business Improvement District (TBID)
"Proud of My Patch" action groups working at a 'micro' level – streets, parks, etc.
A museum of technology would bring young people
Tell the maritime story. A museum?
Approaching Barry from east we need to make roadway from McDonalds to Millennium Way attractive – flower beds on roundabout, 'welcome to Barry', public art, signage to town. Work with Waitrose and other businesses in east to fund improvements.
We also need a permitted / designated naturist beach in / near Barry. £buff works!
More 'treat' places to eat / drink by the sea – somewhere to go of an evening date, not just with the dogs and kids.
Where can tourists stay now? Closest camping / caravan / chalets?
Encourage more businesses and shops – so many have been turned into ugly flats on Vere Street and Main Street – let's find a way of developing entrepreneurs and innovation in areas like Cadoxton as well as the 'Quarters'.
Put up canopies over shops in Holton Road to keep people dry and allow full use of wide pavements and encourage browsing in shops. They would make a big difference.
Need a cinema complex with public transport (not like Nantgarw).
Business Improvement District (BID)
Some parts of Barry like Lower Barry Road need street furniture and vandal proof benches.
Barry tales - stories by local writers, which reflect history and memories.
We need a Tourist Info Centre in Barry Community Library and good quality souvenirs and centralise community organisations e.g. C.A.B, Atal y Fro.
Encourage more learners to study / live in Barry
Looking into the possibility of developing a 'Community Hub' located at Barry Athletic Cricket Club (BAC Ltd)
Sense of Place: I am an MA documentary photography student and would be interested in engaging with an art project. I have been in engagement with the Danters Fun Fair. I am also a mental health service user and resident and become a part of the community. Jody_powell1@hotmail.co.uk
Memory wall of photos of the fairground over the years.
Encourage some department stores to come to Barry.
Release capital in under performing and under utilized physical assets. Ring fence funds to reinvest in town centre development
Identify a suitable site for a good camping / tourist caravan site by west end of BI

Quick win: Identify/market top 10 key assets of Barry – tourism / culture / heritage.
Use social media sites to interact with people – not Vale Council sites, sites set up by local people.
Maritime public art not staid museum to voice the story
Rebuild Barry railway station to make it more welcoming – even to the residents! Excellent signposting from my area and Broad Street
Open up the pedestrianised area of Holton Road to bus services to improve accessibility.
Provide funds to SME's to invest in their own environment and create community investment hubs – Broad Street, Holton Road, High Street.
Land train linking Barry Island, Cold Knap and Town – fun thing to do.
Celebrate the free car parking in town centre
Cadog's Corner: we're working on a new community hub to be developed in Cadoxton and build on existing work. Yes we're in these little separate communities but we can celebrate this sort of hutzpah Barry-wide!
Work with communities through Artist Residencies (Golau Caredig development by Hafod Care, for example, do this).
Look at Copenhagen – use the waterside. Health and wellbeing through water.
Art, Architecture and Design Centre – no museum
More leisure and cultural facilities AWAY from Barry Island
Knock down south side shops in Broad Street and build an attractive (see Newport) multi-storey car park – better access for High Street, Broad Street cafes and restaurants + Barry Island (increase railway use)
Agreed, need better gateways / visually / aesthetics / culture, cool places to go.
Need a museum please
Work with the creative sector to help shape social engagement.
Marina development
Encourage more department stores not supermarkets.
Boat trips from docks and 'rib' trips in docks. Build on watersports, make available for public use.
Barry – the town built by the sea (2 meanings – both valid)
Holton Road needs a facelift and better shops

While some of these ideas relate to individual focus or projects and are not necessarily useful in the broader, strategic scheme, there are good ideas here, and it provides a further insight into the thoughts and considerations of a broad swathe of Barry's community. What is also clear is that there is a passion and a commitment towards improvement.

This list of comments will be worth re-visiting later in the project when the vision has been agreed and it is time to implement change and community based projects, but for now, we can group them into 'concern and idea clusters' that appear time and time again, and re-confirm the priorities of the participants as already noted above. Here's a summary:

- Physical regeneration of the town area and approaches is important.

- The town needs to be enlivened and animated – nightlife, street theatre, culture, cafes etc.
- Access to the town via rail and busses is an issue – bus access through pedestrianized Holton Road.
- Engaging the young people of Barry is seen as important, as is listening to a broad cross section of the town’s community so that the future of Barry is created with young and old and everyone in between in mind.
- Waterfront development is raised by a few with ideas ranging from leisure district / marina, watersports, boat trips etc.
- Stimulating business, entrepreneurship and learning here is seen as important by some, with Business Districts receiving a few mentions.
- Some want a museum, others do not, and there are a number of ideas for museum subjects ranging from maritime history to architecture and design.
- A more sophisticated seaside offer in terms of food and drink are requested.
- There are calls to create more accommodation spaces for visitors, camping and caravan sites in particular.
- There are quite a few mentions of community led initiatives, activities and the creation of community hubs – it appears as an appetite to stimulate civic pride and action.
- A call for department stores to be attracted to the town, rather than supermarkets and a general yearning for an improved town centre retail offer.
- A number of times, the value of arts and creativity in terms of community engagement are raised.
- A few call for more focus on improving the town area now rather than Barry Island, a sense that it has already had significant investment.

5.3 ISSUES / COMPLAINTS / COMMENTS

Participants were asked to park any specific ‘gripes’, complaints or issues that they wanted to air, so that the focus could be maintained on the ongoing and future regeneration of Barry. It was suggested that any issues they wanted to raise should be written on a ‘post it’ note and placed on a large sheet of paper. Quite a few were actually ideas that should have been placed on the above sheet, and so for the purposes of this report and clarity those comments have been included above. Here are the results that appear more as issues or complaints.

Lack of engagement with place through heritage, but also through other means such as ‘Digital Storytelling’
Lack of corporate recognition and promotion of arts in their broadest sense
Can’t get off train in Cadoxton, Barry Town if in wheelchair or with pushchair. Have to go all way to Island to come back
More private (to buy) sheltered housing (Cardiff and Penarth have) would release

houses.
Angharad described the old offices next to the bus depot on Broad Street as very run down. The CTPG would like to use it as an office / museum.
Concern that the 2 mixed gender high schools will split admissions east / west, i.e. the 'haves' and the 'have nots'.
One problem needs addressing is Barry Dock Station and Dock view road.
Car park charges in Barry Island £1 up to an hour £5 thereafter. Should be up to 2 hours – not enough time for a visit or coffee.
Use school car parks during school holidays for a Park & Ride Service (Boys Comp, Bryn Hafren, Bro Morgannwg, maybe Memo Car Park too.)
A friend parked in Civic Centre and walked to library. She felt threatened by youth hanging around in lower Holton Road and would never come back. Youth need to be engaged in this process so protect changes and value the town.
More VoG Council support for Barry Community Water Activity Centre development on The Dock.
Put lids on green recycling bin to stop rubbish blowing around the streets.
<i>Ymdeimlad o gynfein yn ddiddorol / bwysig ond dw i'n poeni NA fydd y gwaith terfynol yn adlewyrchu hunaniaeth pobl cyffredinol y dre. Anghen sicrhau bod 'buy-in' ar draws Barri, nid dim ond y 'great and good' sydd yma heddiw. Sense of Place is interesting / important, but I fear that the final work will not represent the views of the common people of the town. Need to ensure that there is 'buy-in' across Barry, not only from the 'great and the good' here today.</i>

Some of these reinforce the ideas for regeneration summarised above.

5.4 GROUP ACTIVITIES

The workshop participants were split into ten groups. Each group was given three questions to answer. The responses are clustered under subject headings below, rather than as per group.

5.4.1 BARRY'S STORY:

If Barry could tell the world only one of its stories, which story would that be?

"Maritime / Docks – cross cutting throughout all our stories, where we came from – past / present / future." (Bassett)

"A place of opportunity.

Story of:

A – Docks: people came in and developed, took opportunities.

B – Barry is developing again, a new generation: people are again coming in, wanting to live by the waterfront, Pumhouse and Hang Fire." (Pencoedtre)

"Diversity, cosmopolitan, population growth. Barry grew very quickly when the docks were established, but what's important to note is

such a wide range of people have come to live here and have stayed. Second largest town in Wales. A place to play and a place to stay.”

(Jenner)

“The Docks is an episode within a story. The story is the natural wonder, the geology, the landscape. What is Barry’s forward looking story, what is it becoming?”

(Porthkerry)

“Largest exporter of coal, maritime industries, rapid growth of the town, Butlin’s heritage, industrial heritage, BP and Dow Corning, multiculturalism, iconic buildings. Focus the story on maritime and the change to meet new demands – cultural wealth developed from maritime history.”

(Victoria)

“Human story of industrial past.”

- *Davies sisters and art school*
- *St Baruc*
- *Coal Heritage and rail*
- *History of Cadoxton*
- *Town of two halves*
- *No rail = no tourism*
- *Story of the people: Dockers – international incomers*

(Central)

“Port – coal: reaching the world; airport opportunity, multicultural town, 29 different nationalities, more integration. Ships and the world – first came to Barry. Story needs to inspire young people about what has been achieved in Barry.

Lack of Blue Plaques – our famous are not celebrated (or ‘crime capital’ of west Europe!). Covert prestige, current disconnect with the past.

Story needs to encompass Barry past, Barry present. Town Council – celebrate with Freeman of the Town. First Black Mayor UK? There’s a need to raise confidence and aspiration in schools. Create a story, show achievement is possible”

(Alexandra)

“The town’s relationship with the sea: Docks / Beach / Maritime History.”

(Romilly)

- *Maritime History (seafaring)*
- *Attraction of its seaside*
- *Acknowledge that there are chapters within the story*
- *Heyday of tourism*
- *East / west divide*

(Maslin)

- *1913 – high water mark re. the Docks*
- *St Baruc*
- *David Davies Llandinam*
- *Maritime History*
- *Barry Island*
- *125 years, 20th Century town.*

(Gladstone)

The town's relationship with the sea, its seafaring and industrial docks history are a constant theme within these responses, as is the town's later tourism story. Other aspects of its history include the spiritual history of St Baruc and aspects of cultural history. There is a high degree of consistency in terms of the core aspects of the story.

5.4.2 BARRY'S ISSUES / PROBLEMS / THINGS TO TACKLE

What is Barry's biggest problem?

"Lack of holistic vision. Everyone needs to have input, therefore ownership...then pride in the output."
(Bassett)

If you could do one thing to improve Barry, what would it be?

"Mainly improve town centre and public realm."

Priorities listed:

1. *Town centre regeneration*
2. *Signage / legibility*
3. *Public realm*
4. *Branding*
5. *Programme of street art*
6. *Link town centre and Island*
7. *Improve gateways*

(Victoria)

If you could do one thing to improve Barry, what would it be?

"Improve Town Centre."

- *Town hall square – more events?*
- *Increase vitality of town centre*

(Romilly)

What needs to be done to make Barry great again?

- *Defining 'our' home, making it unique!!*

- *Visitors joining a community that already exists – sustainability*
- *Sense of pride in the place you live*
- *Raising the profile of Barry*
- *Cinema / leisure facility*
- *Café quarter on King Square – get communities together*
- *Museum to celebrate maritime history*
- *Utilise waterfront for marina*
- *A one stop ‘community hub’ for all members of the community (similar to the Jasmine Hub in Ely)*
- *Better signage*
- *Develop walking routes*
- *Better transport system (integrated)*
- *Better usage of empty buildings (town centre, social enterprises)*
- *Common theme, strong boards, sense of unique.*

(Maslin)

The key issues identified focus on five main aspects which are worth noting:

- *Improvements to the town’s environment – particularly the town centre*
- *The need to bring the community together to create a cohesive vision for the town*
- *Animation of the town, a wish to enliven it with activity from watersports to cultural events.*
- *Promotion, outward facing impressions of Barry in terms of branding and the impression it gives to visitors.*
- *Uniting the town’s disparate areas as a whole.*

5.4.3 BEST THINGS / ASSETS / POSITIVES

What is Barry’s greatest Asset?

“Our people.”

(Bassett)

What do you love most about Barry?

- *Great town for Children*
- *Large enough, lots to do*
- *Small enough to get around*
- *Proximity to coastline*
- *Access*
- *In the heart of the green Vale – fantastic landscape*
- *Attitude*
- *Sense of fun*
- *Unreleased potential*
- *Porthkerry*

- *Lots of beaches*
- *Green spaces*
- *Pride within communities.*

(Alexandra)

This is a great list of positive and loved things about living in Barry. The people and community are identified as central, as is the sense of Barry's location at the epicenter of coastal and countryside assets.

5.4.4 BARRY'S PHYSICAL ASSETS

Which of Barry's buildings best represents its story?

Pumphouse, Memo, Bay 5 Coffee, Porthkerry Viaduct, Beach Huts, Climbing Wall."

(Porthkerry)

If you could save just one building in Barry from destruction, which building would it be?

1. *Memo*
2. *Library*
3. *Pump House*
4. *Porthkerry Viaduct*
5. *Island Shelters*
6. *St Baruc's*
7. *Post Office*
8. *Beach Huts*

(Victoria)

What is Barry's hidden gem?

- *Arts central and park*
- *Architecture – look up!*
- *Jackson's Bay*
- *St Baruc*
- *Castle*
- *Porthkerry and Viaduct*
- *Barry at war museum*
- *Island – hidden to many.*

(Central)

If aliens landed and you could show them just one photo of Barry to represent the whole town, what would that photo be? Describe what it would include, how it would look etc.?

“Aerial view of the Pumphouse (lit) with perhaps a panorama of the sea in the background and terraces beyond.” (Romilly)

What is your favorite view of Barry, from where do you see it?

- Dock View Road / Station Road
- The Knap (sunset hill)
- Victoria Park
- Trinity Street
- Redbrink Crescent.

(Gladstone)

Lots of concurring responses are evident here. It is clear that Barry has a number of well loved ‘iconic places’ and distinctive spaces’ that are valued by the community, and they are well spread across the town area.

5.4.5 CURRENT IMPRESSIONS / VALUES OF BARRY

Which famous person would Barry be, now?

Tom Jones: industrial background, went out of fashion.

(Pencoedtre)

“Tom Jones / Nessa / Simon Cowell (he’s like Marmite, you either love him or hate him)”

(Porthkerry)

If Barry was a car, what car would it be currently?

“An old, silver Volvo, it keeps going, there’s life in it yet but seen better days.”

(Jenner)

If you created a playlist for Barry, what would those songs be?

- Steely Dan – Barry Town
- Tom Jones - Green, Green Grass of Home
- I Love this Town
- My Home Town
- Oh! I do Like to be Beside the Seaside.

(Alexandra)

Down at heel, well loved, out of fashion, still going, seen better days. There’s a sense of weariness coupled with a good degree of pride here. It’s a realistic and tender view of Barry, which speaks volumes for the community’s love and perhaps about their resigned exasperation with the place.

5.4.6 ASPIRATIONS, LOOKING FORWARD

Barry aspires to be....?

"One Town, a whole. No divides, no separate identities, linked in." (Pencoedtre)

Which famous person would Barry be in the future?

"Tom Jones: He's a chameleon, reinvented himself and collaborates a lot, he's always on people's minds." (Pencoedtre)

"Nessa's Child"

The group suggested that Barry might also be like Dr Who, an eccentric time traveller. (Porthkerry)

If Barry was a car, what car would it be in the future?

Bright red mini – it has character but is modest. (Jenner)

If Barry was a dish (food), what would you like it to be in the future?

A dish representing cultural diversity, style more like that of Hang Fire Gallery. (Gladstone)

One town, reinvention, full of character but modest, diversity and style; there's a lot of realism, hope and pride here. It reflects work already done and more that needs to be done to achieve this tomorrow. Perhaps Barry will have to learn to be less modest in the future.

5.4.7 PERSONALITY / PEOPLE OF BARRY

What defines the personality of the people of Barry?

"Lack of aspiration / motivation but with a self depreciating sense of humour." (Jenner)

Who is Barry for?

- *Transitory community: commuters and day-trippers.*
 - *People who live here love Barry*
 - *Kids and young people*
 - *Aspirational people* (Central)
-
- *Tourism (Barry Island)*
 - *Commuters (suburb of Cardiff – in and out)*

The group also raised some issues in this discussion and jotted these notes:

- *Barry is a shadow of Cardiff (need to create a sense of identity)*

Housing?

- *Need something for the residents*

- *Need to generate a sense of pride in where we live*

- *Look beyond Barry Island*

- *Identity – feel for the area (a common theme)*

- *It's a diverse place.*

(Maslin)

Again, that sense of modesty, self depreciation and perhaps a little demotivation here, coupled with a strong statement of love for the town and a will to ensure that it becomes a town with a future, a town for young people. There's a clear realisation that much of Barry's 'market' is transitory – commuters, visitors etc.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

The Forum on 25th May drew together a hundred individuals from across the community, ranging from residents to Vale of Glamorgan Council members and staff, business people, transport and housing operators, developers, citizens action groups, community and youth workers, leisure and tourism providers, restaurateurs and retailers, schools, college and youth group representatives, arts and health sector professionals. Overwhelmingly, this demonstrates an appetite for change. Passion and commitment to place was shown by participants time and time again during the morning.

It is clear that there is a good deal of energy, though at present, lacking a clear and agreed vision, it manifests in project obsessions that threaten to pull the agenda for Barry's future in challenging and potentially unsustainable directions.

The workshop provided a taste of engagement work that needs to be done across the communities of Barry to inform a clear understanding and expression of Barry's story and its future aspirations. This work is about communicating, engaging, consulting with and connecting communities. It creates the story and the vision, which in turn should inform all future developments and adjustments to the regeneration programme already in train.

Those present showed a high degree of agreement regarding what the priorities are, as has been discussed. Now 'Barry Town' has to take ownership of action to implement this change. It is not work that the Council can, nor should do alone. This form of regeneration requires a united effort across many organisations, groups and communities. It is difficult to do, solely from within. We all get used to the way things are, stop seeing the deficiencies, learn to overlook and normalise negative aspects of our place. That is why, external eyes and experts are valuable in terms of guidance, experience, context and their ability to impart valuable place making skills within the town team.

Angharad Wynne would be happy to discuss the order and priority of projects, activity and advise on experts in the field that might have a valuable role to play in supporting the delivery of Sense of Place led regeneration in Barry.