

25 NOVEMBER 2014

# FEEDBACK REPORT



Barry Regeneration Annual Forum

## Shaping the Future of Barry

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# Barry Regeneration Annual Forum

## Shaping the Future of Barry

### Aims and Format of the Event

The Vale of Glamorgan Council held the inaugural Forum on 25th November 2014 at the Memo Arts Centre, Barry. The aim of the event was to consider the next steps for Barry following the close of the Regeneration Area programme earlier in 2014; and, to examine the emerging challenges and opportunities for Barry and its communities.

The theme of the event was *Shaping the Future of Barry* by strengthening communication and engagement. This is a key element of the emerging approach to meeting the challenge of regeneration in Barry. In the course of time it is hoped this approach will generate greater community capacity to create and access opportunities in Barry and the wider area.

The event was attended by more than eighty delegates from the public, private and third sector along with local residents and representatives from community groups in Barry.

The event was opened by Councillor Lis Burnett, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Innovation, Planning and Transportation, Vale of Glamorgan Council and Chair of the Barry Regeneration Advisory Group. Chair for the day was Mike James, Chief Executive and Principal, Cardiff and Vale College and also a member of the Barry Regeneration Advisory Group.

The programme for the day was spread over three sessions.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=utJ\\_fZaovdw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=utJ_fZaovdw)

**Sessions 1 - Perspectives** included a presentation *This is Barry...the story so far* by Rob Thomas, Director of Development Services, Vale of Glamorgan Council. The presentation ended with a first play of the *This is Barry* regeneration video produced for the Vale of Glamorgan Council by Digital Media Enterprise at Barry YMCA.

The video was followed by facilitated discussion at the tables and open floor discussion and debate.



Session 2 - Ways Forward consisted of four thematic Workshops which were then repeated to give delegates a choice of attending two Workshops. The titles of the Workshops were as follows:

**Workshop 1:** The scope and role of the arts and other creative industries in Barry's economy.

**Workshop 2:** Creating a sense of place for Barry – does Barry have/need a unique identity?

**Workshop 3:** Housing-led regeneration and involving the community in assessing outcomes.

**Workshop 4:** Town centre regeneration -housing/retail- how to create the conditions for improvement and investment.

Session 2 concluded with feedback from Workshop facilitators; further open floor discussion; and a play of the Every Idea Needs a Friend video commissioned by the Barry IdeasBank.

Session 3 - Future Agenda was a Panel Discussion, Chaired by Keith Thomas of perConsulting Ltd and also a member of the Barry Regeneration Advisory Group. The discussion topic was *Barry of the Future – our role in the City Region*. The insights of the Panellists were interspersed with open floor discussion and debate.

The Chair for the day then brought the event to a close and thanked the facilitators, note takers, helpers and all the delegates who gave their time to attend and for their contributions to the day.

Comments made during the event have been captured in this report and will be reported to the Cabinet meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2015 and Scrutiny Committee (Economy and Environment) meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2015.

For more information about this and future events please contact Dave Williams, Principal Regeneration Officer, on 01446 704753 or email [dcwilliams@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk](mailto:dcwilliams@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk).



## Session 1 - Perspectives

Presentation: This is Barry...the story so far

**Rob Thomas, Director of Development Services, Vale of Glamorgan Council**

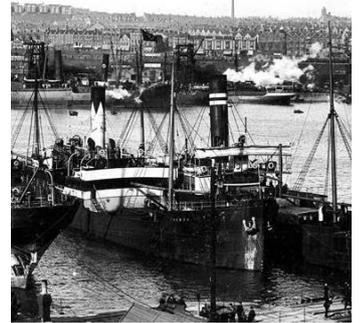
The aim of the presentation was to give a recap of regeneration activity in Barry and provide a sense of where we have come from. The presentation began by explaining the origins of the town; the rapid expansion of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; the legacy of that expansion in terms of the railway, the docks, Barry Island and the size of the settlement; the diminishing role of the town in the second half of the twentieth century; and, the public policy response -both national and local- over the past twenty years.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=utJ\\_fZaovdw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=utJ_fZaovdw)

The final part of the presentation incorporated the current thrust of regeneration policy as it has evolved over recent years.

In terms of national policy the main driver of change is the Welsh Governments *Vibrant and Viable Places – New Regeneration Framework*, which was launched in March 2013. The Council's response *Barry: a centre of growth and opportunity* was published in July 2013 and sets out the strategic case for future investment in the town for the year 2014/15 onwards. Moving forward -following the close of the Barry Regeneration Area programme at the end of March 2014- it was explained that the Council is now responsible for leading the regeneration process in terms of governance, with the core objective of enhancing the process by encouraging more partnership working and community engagement. Noteworthy developments include the formation of the cross-sector Barry Regeneration Advisory Group, which held its first meeting in July 2014 and the inaugural Forum. As a backdrop to the rest of the event delegates were asked to consider the importance of the following key issues:

- a) Barry's place in the City Region;**
- b) Harnessing and adding value to private sector interest and investment;**
- c) Building relationships and partnerships; and,**
- d) A flexible and adaptable policy direction.**



The presentation ended with a first play of the *This is Barry* regeneration video produced for the Vale of Glamorgan Council by Digital Media Enterprise at Barry YMCA.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d9wTXEaryk4>

Roundtable Discussion (Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats)

The aim of the discussion was to seek views on the town. Delegates were asked to define the local characteristics, challenges and opportunities. From the feedback session a number of common themes emerged:

## Strengths

- Barry has a profile and is in the consciousness of people.
- Marine and lifestyle assets i.e. No.1 Dock, Porthkerry Country Park, the Knap, Barry Island, Victoria Park, Romilly Park, Pencoedre Splash Pad etc.
- Facilities for infants and juniors.
- Community spirit, passion and a willingness to work in partnership.
- Presence of Cardiff and Vale College in the town.
- Rail links.
- Proximity to Cardiff.
- Capacity to grow sustainably.
- Value for money market housing.

## Weakness

- Limited facilities for teenagers.
- Limited visitor accommodation.
- Accessing EU Programmes 2014-2020.
- Limited town centre (Holton Road) appeal/offer.
- Barry has the potential to be more than just a commuter town and tourist destination.
- Funfair site (Barry Island).
- No cinema or museum.
- Local leadership (in the past).
- Visitor numbers are dependent on weather and bathing water quality.
- Inherent problem of disadvantaged areas in the town.



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- Car parking capacity on Barry Island.
- Limited evening and night-time economy.
- Air of neglect and decline vis-à-vis signage and gateways.

### Opportunities

- Proximity to Cardiff Airport.
- Challenge perceptions and raise awareness by improving the physical quality of the area e.g. Eastern Promenade, Barry Island.
- The Quays - Waterfront Barry and the link road to Barry Island.
- Focus on developing Barry Island into a year-round resort.
- Employment opportunities vis-à-vis St Athan - Cardiff Airport Enterprise Zone.
- Focus on developing and promoting activity based tourism.
- Focus on growing indigenous employment in line with housing growth with an emphasis on higher grade employment not just tourism.
- Build capacity by developing a programme of tailored engagement events.
- Existing partnerships and relationships to scale-up from.
- Good relationships and communications between partners can create opportunities for local people e.g. training and recruitment.



### Threats

- Becoming assimilated into the Cardiff Capital Region
- Cardiff Bay Beach.
- Road traffic congestion.
- Car parking and movement around traditional shopping areas.
- Impact of Cardiff, out-of-town and edge of town retail centres on traditional shopping areas.
- Public spending cuts with austerity measures continuing into the next UK parliament and the knock-on effects in terms of services and infrastructure.
- Perception that Barry -due to the demography of the Vale of Glamorgan- does not warrant the scale and scope of regeneration activity witnessed in areas such as West Wales and Valleys.

## Session 2 - Ways Forward

WORKSHOP 1: The scope and role of the arts and other creative industries in Barry's economy.

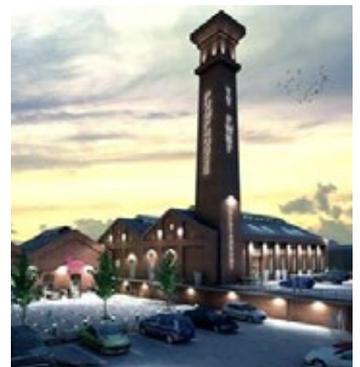
**Facilitators: Mark White, Chapter (Cardiff) Ltd and Bob Guy, Vale of Glamorgan Council**

Delegates at both workshops were given an overview of two successful projects in Cardiff, namely Chapter Arts Centre and No Fit State touring circus. Delegates were asked to consider how a similar scheme based around the arts and creative industries could come to fruition in Barry.

Some of the key issues which arose at both workshops, were that:

### Strengths / Opportunities

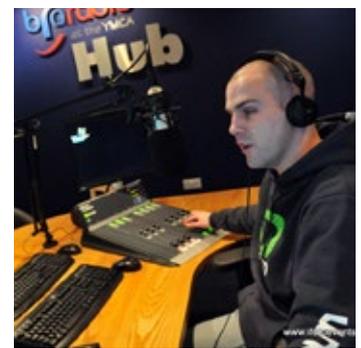
- We should embrace living on the doorstep of Cardiff and encourage people to come from outside of Barry.
- Many towns have the capacity to be creative, but Barry has huge potential.
- We should be celebrating and developing what Barry already has i.e. the Memorial Hall, rather than creating new arts developments.
- The independent and community cinemas in Barry offer a different experience to the main cinema chains, and would not be threatened or preventative to a new cinema complex.
- The arts have the power to regenerate an area, and can improve the tourism offer and tap into the local economy.
- Arts events held in Barry will give local artists a chance to sell their crafts.
- We need vision, open-mindedness and a willingness to work together to regenerate Barry.
- We need to identify a way to get the word out to people about what is happening in Barry.
- The arts provide opportunities for targeted groups such as NEETS. For example, people are becoming more aware of the media facilities at the Barry YMCA.
- Bro Radio based at Barry YMCA has a huge following on social media, which is an effective way to shout about Barry.



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- There is a lot of disused space and buildings in Barry, which could provide a creative platform for local people.
- There is already a venue Arts Forum in the Vale of Glamorgan, which promotes partnership working and brand development.
- Community facilities like the Barry YMCA are already supporting local creative businesses and the recently refurbished internet café will be an additional creative platform for local people.
- The arts give-back to the community through employment and training opportunities as well as through positive experience.



### Weaknesses / Barriers

- Is there the cultural/creative capacity in Barry to deliver and sustain an arts venue?
- There is currently no platform in the local media for the Memo Arts Centre -for example- to publicise its events or support and raise the profile of local creative people. This is important as people often do not understand the role of an artist, and they can often become underappreciated.
- Barry has passion, but it is stuck in the past and has become a disenfranchised town.
- Residents are loyal to Barry but tend to fear any kind of change to their town.
- Better use should be made of the local media to publicise future engagement events.
- People are generally positive about regeneration and the end results but do not understand the true costs (budget/time invested).
- Based on the Cardiff examples, the local authority contribution is more likely to be one of providing the opportunity and offering support rather than making things happen in the first place.

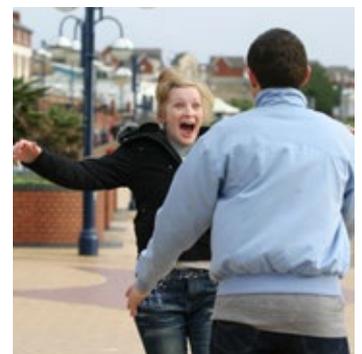


## WORKSHOP 2: Creating a sense of place for Barry – does Barry have/need a unique identity?

**Facilitators: Peter Cole, Capital Region Tourism and Rob Thomas, Vale of Glamorgan Council**

Delegates at both workshops were asked to sit the So What test for Barry. A number of key points emerged from the discussions, which are that:

- The town itself is a confusion of neighbourhoods. Human scale e.g. High Street versus locale e.g. Barry Island.
- What is the pitch? Is it based around Barry Island in its heyday and the traditional strapline of *Playground of the South Wales Coast...Sun and Fun...Varied Enjoyment* etc. or a modernised version to reflect the social media age of Gavin and Stacey and Barrybados or is it based around heritage and the historic role of Barry as a Valleys Port. Which has the upward trajectory?
- In terms of investment does the town need a key project -the silver bullet- and would it necessarily bring higher grade employment to the town.
- Creating a sense of place is about challenging historic perceptions/ misconceptions and accepting responsibility for the poor condition of key gateway sites/routes.
- The town has a non-conforming persona which distinguishes it from the rest of the Vale. In the social media age creativity is coming to the fore, laced with humour in the form of Barrybados and Glastonbarry.
- Future plans for Barry Island must not overlook the need to maintain the connection to local residents.
- The overall coastal setting of the Dock, Barry Island, Old Harbour, the Knap and Porthkerry Country Park is a family friendly asset but is this unique to South Wales or the rest of the UK for that matter?



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WORKSHOP 3: Housing-led regeneration and involving the community in assessing outcomes.

**Facilitators: Tamsin Stirling, Tamsin Stirling Associates Ltd and Hayley Selway / Elen Probert, Vale of Glamorgan Council**

Throughout both workshops a number of key points emerged, which are that:

- There is a need to tell the story more effectively, of what housing investment can achieve for example localising supply chains.
- Housing organisations and their partners can also link the physical improvement of an area to training and engagement with local people and an array of other community activities e.g. improving career prospects for people in the community by offering taster days, apprenticeships and jobs in all areas of construction.
- Housing-led regeneration has many faces e.g. market housing, council housing, social rented sector, supported housing, private rented sector etc. There are therefore several answers -often opposing- to the question who is housing-led regeneration for?
- It is up to local partners to make the most out of the investment available as is the case with WHQS, Barry Magistrate's Court redevelopment, Golau Caredig - extra care facility and Castleland Renewal Area.
- Local partners need to be open to making external comparisons and learning from elsewhere and be prepared to implement what they learn.
- Participation and communication e.g. between landlord and tenant(s) will shape how outcomes are assessed.
- A range of outcomes could be assessed, for example the mix of tenure or ages; accessible housing; flexible/future proofed design vis-à-vis welfare changes; links to infrastructure and services; places for children to play and places for people to meet etc.



WORKSHOP 4: Town centre regeneration - housing/retail - how to create the conditions for improvement and investment.

**Facilitators: Paul Roberts, Newydd Housing Association and Dave Williams, Vale of Glamorgan Council**

Delegates at both workshops were asked to debate the following propositions:  
The town centre of tomorrow – How is the use of our town centres changing?  
What do the best town centres do differently? What does Barry town centre need to look like?

Ensuring Barry town centre survives and thrives – What are the challenges, constraints and obstacles? How can we create the right conditions for change?

For clarity it was explained that Holton Road would be the backdrop for the discussion by virtue of its standing in the retail hierarchy of the town.

In summary a number of common themes emerged from both of the workshops:

- Accessibility and Parking – overall it was felt there is a need to support schemes which balance the needs of pedestrians, motorists and bus passengers. A number of delegates stated that they found the on-street parking arrangements, particularly in the one-way system, confusing.
- Business Rates – overall it was felt there is a need to ease the burden of business rates to sustain businesses through periods of hardship and to incentivise businesses to start-up.
- Range and Quality of Uses – there was discussion about trends and restructuring taking place in Barry and countless other town centres across the UK. Many delegates bemoaned the fact that there are now fewer multiples and in particular the lack of major fashion retailers. Others were concerned about the rise in number of charity shops and low value goods shops and for some -more worryingly- the increasing number of takeaway outlets, pawnbrokers and high street betting shops. That said the range and quality of uses in the town centre fits the characteristics of the local area it serves.



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Other points to emerge from the discussions, were that:

- Campaigns such as Shop Local and local currency schemes were seen as a good way of getting businesses to work together for the benefit of themselves as well as the communities they serve.
- Successful town centres broaden their appeal and generate footfall by hosting a calendar of themed events throughout the year, as well as facilitating a range of community and other activities.
- Schemes to locate homes and public facilities in empty commercial properties can broaden the mix and appeal of the town centre.

Session 2 concluded with a play of the Every Idea Needs a Friend video commissioned by the Barry IdeasBank.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cgHnm-jbqvQ>



## Session 3 - Future Agenda

### **Panel Discussion: Barry of the Future – our role in the City Region**

Chair: Keith Thomas, perConsulting Ltd

Panel: Professor Terry Stevens, Managing Director, Stevens & Associates  
Kate Long, General Manager, Memo Arts Centre  
Mike James, Chief Executive and Principal, Cardiff and Vale College  
Debra Barber, Managing Director, Cardiff Airport  
Rachel Connor, Executive Director, Vale Centre for Voluntary Services

Keith Thomas set the scene by explaining that in autumn 2011 the Minister for Business, Enterprise, Technology and Science appointed a Task and Finish Group to consider the evidence for city regions as economic drivers, and to identify potential city regions in Wales. The final report in July 2012 recommended that a city region be recognised in south east Wales. In November 2013 Welsh Rugby Union chief executive Roger Lewis was appointed chairman of the south east Wales city region - now known as the Cardiff Capital Region - board. A prioritisation framework for the Cardiff Capital Region is expected in the near future and this is therefore a formative time for the City Region approach. Two fundamental questions were asked, firstly what's in it for Barry? and secondly, what can we do to contribute?

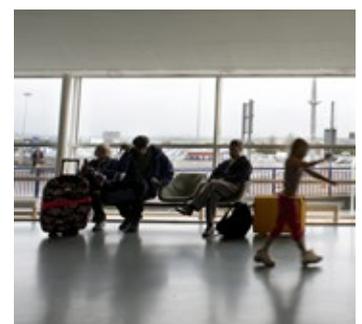
#### **Professor Terry Stevens, expressed the following views:**

In tourism terms he drew an analogy between the Cardiff Capital Region and the Basque Region. The latter offers a cohesive and coherent understanding of its tourism offer with each destination in the region having a complementary role and relationship.

The broad-offer approach to tourism would make sense in the Cardiff Capital Region but there needs to be a shared vision and clarity regarding who is doing what e.g. Barry / Barry Island as the antidote to the capital city.

#### **Debra Barber, expressed the following views:**

Cardiff Airport is both a local and national economic driver. At what is a challenging time for all regional airports the key objective is to increase



passenger numbers and in doing so to maximise the wider economic benefits.

Passenger footfall is needed to attract airlines and improve connectivity. This is a chicken and egg situation and it is impossible to say which causes the other. That said the Airport is consulting passengers and is taking action to upgrade the facilities.

**Rachel Connor, expressed the following views:**

Tourism is part of the history of the town particularly as a family friendly destination. From a third sector perspective attention to detail such as the adequacy of the community infrastructure and play facilities is important, as is proper community engagement.

**Kate Long, expressed the following views:**

There is a parallel which can be drawn between the Memo Arts Centre in Barry and Chapter Arts Centre in Cardiff. The Memo project is about partnership and harnessing the passion that exists in the town and improving what the town already has. It has the potential to integrate with the community and tap into the local economy.

**Mike James, expressed the following views:**

Action needs to happen at the right spatial level. For example, strategic intervention to create the right connections to get around easily. Wider connectivity will be part of how Barry is presented as a compelling location. If there are opportunities to deliver impacts on targeted areas or groups such that their prospects are enhanced then this needs to be factored into the proposition. If the proposition is to focus on creating wealth, increasing GDP and breaking the poverty cycle then we will have to substantiate this.

Open floor discussion and debate focused on the following points:

- The town is not punching its weight. It is more than just a commuter town and tourist destination. Barry is in danger of becoming assimilated into the Cardiff Capital Region.
- Greater emphasis on nurturing projects and activities which draw in the local community and tap into the local economy.





- The potential benefits of the Enterprise Zone in bringing freight trade to Cardiff Airport.
- The potential role of the Barry Waterfront Activity Centre in broadening the appeal of Barry as a family friendly destination and making the marine setting more productive for activity based tourism.
- The status of the Knap and key sites at Barry Island.
- The importance of co-ordination and communication after this event in order to build momentum and develop relationships.
- Delegates with a knowledge of and passion for Barry could link up with the Vale of Glamorgan Ambassador Scheme.



## Conclusions

The event brought different elements together and confirmed that there is an appetite to get involved in regeneration projects and activities. One of the key themes to emerge from the day was that more can be achieved by working together and that the right people need to be involved.

That said the event confirmed that the regeneration challenge in Barry is about different things. There is the inherent problem of disadvantaged areas in the town and the challenge of breaking the cycle of deprivation. But there is also the opportunity to improve and raise the quality of the towns marine and lifestyle assets and in doing so enhance the strategic positioning of the town in the Cardiff Capital Region. Furthermore, there is also the opportunity to harness and add value to private sector interest and investment in the town.

In terms of governance and local leadership, concerted action is needed to align schemes with the wider priorities for the area as set out in *Barry: a centre of growth and opportunity*.

For the promoters of nationally / regionally significant projects such as Cardiff Capital Region, St Athan - Cardiff Airport Enterprise Zone and The Quays - Waterfront Barry, there is a need to engage proactively with local leaders to set out how these schemes will drive forward plans to improve the lives and opportunities of local people and unlock growth.

Overall it was felt that the event marked a turning point in terms of engagement and capacity building. That said it was also felt that from here on communication and coordination will be key in determining whether momentum is lost or gained.

Moving forward, the local policy direction will need to continue to be flexible and adaptable with austerity measures continuing into the next UK parliament. It is now up to local partners and service providers to think creatively, corral resources and work collaboratively.



# Barry Regeneration Annual Forum Shaping the Future of Barry

## Feedback

Delegates were issued with feedback forms and overall the responses were favourable. The Forum was seen as worthwhile by the majority of those who provided feedback with many indicating that they would welcome the opportunity to attend a follow up event. Many delegates also highlighted the opportunity to network and build new contacts as one of the main benefits of the day.

## Next Steps

The workshops and the panel discussion focused on areas of work within *Barry: a centre of growth and opportunity*. The observations and contributions captured in this report will be used by the Council; the relevant partnerships; and, partner organisations and assist them in taking forward their priorities.

In response to specific feedback further consideration will be given to:

- broadening the demographic of delegates for future events;
- making better use of the local media to publicise future events;
- making better use of social media to share information and coordinate activities;
- reviewing the format, frequency and scale of future events; and,
- tailored future engagement events with an emphasis on targeted spatial areas and/or groups.





25 NOVEMBER 2014

# FEEDBACK REPORT



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