

Meeting of:	Cabinet
Date of Meeting:	Thursday, 11 June 2026
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Place Scrutiny Committee
Item which the Chair has decided is urgent (Part I) (If yes, why)	Not applicable
Urgent Decision Procedure Used (15.14 of the Constitution) (If yes, why)	Not applicable
Item Type	Part I
Report Title:	Wilko Redevelopment Project
Portfolio Holder:	Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources
Strategic Leadership Team:	Director of Place
Lead Officer:	Major Projects Manager

1.0 What is this report about?

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the redevelopment of the former Wilko store and outlines proposals for its future use.
- 1.2 The ground floor is proposed to be redeveloped into a flexible indoor market concept to support town centre regeneration and economic activity.
- 1.3 The future use of upper floor continues to be explored as part of a wider business case.
- 1.4 This report seeks cabinet endorsement of the emerging scheme and approval to progress to the next delivery stage including funding applications, procurement and capital works delivery.

2.0 What are the Recommendations?

	Recommendations – What and How?	Reason for Recommendation – Why?
2.1	That Cabinet endorses a market-led ground floor scheme and agrees to the continued development of options for the upper floors, subject to completion of the business case, design and feasibility work.	To support a flexible, high footfall use that contributes to town centre regeneration and economic growth while ensuring financial viability is fully tested.
2.2	That authority is delegated to the Director of Place in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for sustainable Places, the Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources , the Chief Executive, Head of Corporate Landlord, Head of Finance/S151 Officer / Operational Manager Accountancy to agree design, business planning and operational arrangements relating to the building.	To enable timely progression of the project while maintaining appropriate governance and oversight.
2.3	That authority is delegated to the Director of Place in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for sustainable places, and Head of Finance/S151 Officer / Operational Manager Accountancy to progress to the next phase of the project, including the submission of funding applications and procurement of required professional services and contractors and the evaluation and award of contracts necessary to deliver the project.	To secure external funding opportunities and move the project towards implementation.
2.4	That authority is delegated to the Director of Place to progress the project following completion of the market concept feasibility work, including commencement of a tender process for the capital works, the procurement of contractors, and the evaluation and award of the capital works contract necessary to deliver scheme.	To enable delivery of the redevelopment and ensure compliance with procurement and financial regulations.
2.5	That Cabinet delegates authority to the Monitoring Officer/Head of Legal and Democratic Services to complete and execute capital works contracts, following a compliant tender exercise and all associated legal documentation relating to the occupation and use of property on behalf of the Council.	To authorise the Monitoring Officer/Head of Legal and Democratic Services to execute a capital works contract and associated occupation and other legal documentation on behalf of the Council in accordance with established governance arrangements.
2.6	That delegated authority be granted to the Head of Finance/Section 151 Officer (in consultation with the Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and	To obtain authority for the funding to be included within the capital programme 2026/27.

	Recommendations – What and How?	Reason for Recommendation – Why?
	Resources, Chief Executive, and Director of Place) to approve additions, deletions, or transfers to or from the capital programme for the Wilko Redevelopment Project where required.	

3.0 What is the background to this report?

- 3.1 The closure of the former Wilko store left a prominent vacant unit within Holton Road, Barry, and despite marketing since early 2024, the building remained unoccupied, presenting a challenge but also a significant regeneration opportunity for the town centre. The site occupies a key location and is well suited to uses that drive footfall, increase dwell time and diversify the high street offer. The property had been marketed for lease over several years, however Council officers kept in touch with the Landlords agents over that time. Eventually the opportunity came up for the purchase of the freehold following the Landlords abortive lease negotiation with a third party.
- 3.2 On 17th July 2025, Cabinet approved the use of a £1m Welsh Government Transforming Towns Programme Loan to acquire the building. Project development responsibility sits with the Vale and Barry Place Boards with final decisions being taken back to Cabinet in due course as business cases develop. Acquisition was finally completed in January 2026.
- 3.3 There has been ongoing dialogue with Welsh Government colleagues during the development of this proposal focusing on the strategic importance of safeguarding prominent town-centre buildings. Welsh Government has been supportive of the Council’s intention to stabilise the asset and bring it back into productive use. As the project moves into its next stage, the Transforming Towns programme is anticipated to be the primary mechanism through which external funding may be sought, subject to eligibility and the availability of programme resources. A variety of funding sources are being considered for the next stages of the project. Local Growth Funding has been secured in 2026/27 to progress with feasibility work, small capital works, business planning and design work for a market concept, pending Cabinet approval of this report.
- 3.4 The overall goal of the project is to support the regeneration and long-term viability of the town centre by bringing a key vacant property back into productive use, strengthening economic activity, community engagement, and local pride in place.

Initial project goals include:

- Revitalising the town centre: Transforming a prominent vacant building into a vibrant, functional asset that drives footfall, serves the community and enhances the attractiveness of the town centre.
- Stimulating economic growth: Providing space and opportunities for local businesses, start-ups, and social enterprises to thrive, supporting job creation and economic resilience.

- Enhancing community value: Repurposing the property to include uses that meet local needs (e.g. cultural, creative, social, or educational spaces) and encourage greater community use of the town centre.
- Demonstrating public sector leadership: Showing a visible and genuine Local Authority commitment to the regeneration of the town centre, helping to build investor confidence and attract further private sector investment.
- Ensuring long-term financial sustainability: Operating the building on a sustainable basis, generating sufficient income to cover maintenance and management costs while delivering social and economic value.

3.5 Cabinet have confirmed that the property is not intended to be used in whole, or part, for housing.

3.6 The project has been structured across three key phases:

- Phase 1 – Asset acquisition/activation (completed/near completion)
- Phase 2 – Meanwhile uses on the ground floor (mid to late 2026) to activate the building and test ideas
- Phase 3 – Long-term redevelopment (from mid to late 2026 onwards)

3.7 This report provides Cabinet with an update on progress within each of the phases of work and seeks approval to proceed with further activity as described in the body of the report and recommendations.

4.0 What issues are there to be considered?

Phase 1: Asset Acquisition and Activation

4.1 The Council finally completed the purchase of the building in January 2026, with works commencing in late 2025 under a licence following exchange of contracts. These works included securing, maintaining and starting to make the building compliant with required safety/operational standards. Since the acquisition, a programme of works has been undertaken including:

- Updating signage
- Building security, insurance and compliance works
- Initial cleansing and maintenance
- Utilities and servicing arrangements

4.2 As a visible symbol to the community and with the consent of the then owners, over Christmas the windows of the store were decorated in seasonal artwork by local artists providing both an attractive street scene and acting as a way of engaging with residents on the future direction of the building.

4.3 A regular and prominent communications and stakeholder engagement programme has been run with the public, young people, local businesses and stakeholders and this

continues. Feedback via a Participate Vale webpage and in-person sessions, including over seven hundred social media responses has consistently indicated that the preferred uses would be for a market-style operation, as youth provision and/or family-focussed activities (see Appendix A - Wilko redevelopment project engagement summary).

- 4.4 In parallel with and responsive to the engagement activity, initial feasibility and concept development work has also been undertaken. Early soft market testing of similar schemes indicates the demand for smaller, flexible spaces suitable for independent traders, food operators and start-up businesses. The proposed ground floor market aligns with wider regeneration and placemaking objectives, supporting a vibrant and resilient town centre.
- 4.5 Benchmarking and site visits to comparable local schemes such as Pontypridd and Merthyr Markets, have reinforced the viability and success of market-led regeneration models in similar towns.

Phase 2 – Meanwhile uses on the ground floor

- 4.6 To allow for meanwhile use to take place, the surplus fixtures and fittings have been removed, with the aim to reuse and recycle as much of these as possible, in-line with the Council's Financial Regulations and Project Zero objectives. The initial process has involved donating surplus fixtures and fittings to Council services, Schools, Community organisations and businesses in the direct vicinity of the building (Holton Road and Thompson Street). Within these groups, priority was given to both community and educational uses. The Council received over 40 requests from a variety of services and organisations, with 29 of these benefitting from donations in the following categories:
- Council Services - 6
 - Schools and colleges - 6
 - Charities - 3
 - Community organisations - 7
 - Local businesses on Holton Road / Thompson Street – 7
- 4.7 All remaining fixtures, which has included over 95% metal, have been recycled formally with a metal recycling firm. Other means of recycling have included WEEE and cardboard. This has generated a small income for the project which will be used towards the next steps.
- 4.8 The future use of the upper floor, which remains under development and will form part of a subsequent report. The fire safety considerations as well as accessibility are far more complex for the upper floor and limits short-term activation options. To ensure the building is activated through meanwhile use, the focus will therefore initially be on the ground floor.
- 4.9 There are currently no public conveniences on the ground floor and whilst there are some on the upper floor, they are not currently suitable for public use without investment. Permanent public conveniences will be installed on the ground floor as part of the long-term development of the project. In the meantime, to allow for meanwhile uses to take place, temporary options are being actively progressed.

- 4.10 A programme of meanwhile uses has been developed and will continue to emerge in the coming months. The meanwhile uses are consistent with the project goals outlined above.
- 4.11 The programme will feature a range of activities for various age demographics, including:
- Pop-up events
 - Workshops
 - Engagement activities
 - Evening events
- 4.12 This programme is currently in development and is not yet exhaustive. There is flexibility to expand the offer, with additional activities incorporated in response to feedback and demand.
- 4.13 Subject to the installation of temporary toilet facilities, the programme is anticipated to launch in the Summer

Phase 3 – Long-term redevelopment

- 4.14 There is a need to ensure the long-term financial sustainability of the market offer through a robust business plan and operating model. A detailed business plan is required to confirm the type of market that is most appropriate and to ensure the market can operate sustainably, including income generation, operating costs and occupancy levels. Demand for small units can fluctuate however, this will be mitigated through the business plan, through early engagement, flexible tenancy models, competitive rents and phased delivery.
- 4.15 The building has been vacant since 2023 but was constructed in the early 2000s and whilst structurally sound, requires investment in key areas such as mechanical and electrical systems, accessibility and internal fit-out.
- 4.16 Procurement considerations need to be considered in all phases, including compliance with legislation and achieving value for money.
- 4.17 To avoid risk of programme slippage, delay due to compliance works, procurement timelines and planning requirements, a realistic programme and phased approach is being adopted. Delivery risks include programme, construction, cost inflation, and contractor availability.
- 4.18 A planning application for change of use will be required to allow for mixed use within the space. An interim change of use planning application is being submitted to allow for meanwhile use to take place.
- 4.19 It is proposed that the development of the business case be progressed as a matter of priority and this report contains a series of recommendations delegating authority to officers to progress matters.
- 4.20 It is anticipated that this process will be completed by December 2026 and that a further report to Cabinet will be presented in due course outlining progress. Business case

development will include designs, spatial plans, architects plans to RIBA stage 2, operational and financial models, soft market testing.

- 4.21 As a very visible regeneration scheme in one of the County's main high streets, it is important that the project delivers a high-quality, attractive offer to ensure sufficient trader uptake and public engagement. Throughout the project's delivery, the Council will continue to communicate progress and maintain active dialogue with traders, residents and visitors to the town centre in recognition of the importance to the community that has been shown to date.

5.0 How evidence has been used to inform the report, including the views of others?

- 5.1 Best practice research and benchmarking have been reviewed from similar market-led, regeneration schemes in comparable towns. Benchmarking and site visits to successful market schemes has provided insight into:
- Design principles and layout requirements
 - Operational models and licensing approaches
 - The importance of "anchor traders" and curated offers
- 5.2 Extensive public engagement has taken place to date and continues throughout the project. Public engagement has been completed via digital platforms, surveys, workshops and face-to-face sessions, with strong levels of participation and feedback. This has been instrumental in understanding local need and opportunity (see Appendix A- Wilko redevelopment project engagement summary).
- 5.3 The project approach reflects wider national trends in repurposing large retail units into mixed-use multipurpose sites creating long term sustainability and generating regular footfall.

6.0 Next Steps

- 6.1 Subject to cabinet approval, the following activities will be progressed:

Short term (0-6 months)

- Complete compliance works and enable safe public access
- Deliver a programme of meanwhile uses to activate the ground floor space
- Continue stakeholder engagement and market testing
- Procure and develop concept designs and spatial layouts to RIBA stage 2
- Progress interim change of use application for planning permission
- Finalise the business case and operating model for the market
- Work up and submit funding applications to support capital development
- Soft market engagement with businesses who could operate in a market concept

Medium term (6-12 months)

- Progress full planning permission for change of use

- Continue engagement activity
- Procure and appoint contractors
- Progress small capital works such as a new heating system
- Progress with RIBA stages 3-4 and full planning permission
- Continue to deliver a programme of meanwhile uses to activate the ground floor space
- Progress concepts for top floor including confirmed use and subsequent design and development options subject to Cabinet approval.

Long term (12-24 months)

- Deliver capital works and fit-out
- Develop operational models and tenant onboarding
- Launch market and monitor performance
- Launch upper floor concept

7.0 How does this report support the Vale 2030 and Reshaping?

- 7.1 The project supports a thriving town centre and economic resilience by bringing a vacant unit back into active use.
- 7.2 The market concept encourages local enterprise, supporting small businesses and start-ups.
- 7.3 The project in its entirety contributes to Placemaking and community wellbeing by creating a vibrant destination.

8.0 How does this support the Five Ways of Working?

- 8.1 Long-term: creates a sustainable and flexible use that can adapt to future retail trends.
- 8.2 Prevention: Addresses vacancy and decline in the town centre before further deterioration.
- 8.3 Integration: Links economic development, regeneration and community wellbeing objectives.
- 8.4 Collaboration: Involves stakeholders, traders and the local community in shaping the offer.
- 8.5 Involvement: Provides opportunities for local businesses, the community and residents to engage with the space.

Resources

9.0 Finance

- 9.1 The building was acquired via a five-year Welsh Government Transforming Towns loan of £1m with an interest rate of 2.15%.
- 9.2 Revenue costs incurred to 31st March 2026 (including borrowing costs) totalled £86k and were funded from the Place reserve. Total Capital costs on the scheme to 31st March 2026

£942k which include acquisition costs of £900k and £42k land tax on the purchase and were funded from the Transforming Towns Loan of £1m, the initial capital budget was £958k with the balance requested to be slipped into 2026/27 to support the delivery of the scheme. The balance of the loan will be utilised in the development of the project.

- 9.3 An initial standalone operating budget of £119,360 from Place Reserves was secured to cover business rates; initial compliance works and utilities for year 1
- 9.4 £50,000 of Place Reserves has been approved to support the next stages of the project development, including meanwhile uses. The split between capital and revenue expenditure will be confirmed once detailed costs have been established.
- 9.5 A £265,000 grant has been secured in 2026/27 made up of £235,000 Capital and £30,000 Revenue funding through the Local Growth Fund to carry out development of a flexible market concept on the ground floor to include design and feasibility work as well as minor capital works required within the space and to support meanwhile uses
- 9.6 Full scheme capital costs will be developed as part of the business plan.
- 9.7 External funding opportunities will be pursued in all phases of the project to minimise the Council's financial exposure.
- 9.8 A long-term revenue model will be developed to ensure operational sustainability.

10.0 Workforce

- 10.1 Internal officer resource is supporting the project development and delivery. The project is being managed by the Council's Project Management Unit on a day-to-day basis. Project team meetings are held every four weeks which include officer input from across the Council in specialist areas such as estates, economic development, youth services and community development. In addition, and as required, advice from the Council's legal services and financial teams is sought.
- 10.2 Additional specialist support will be procured as required and as grant funding enables.

11.0 Legal

- 11.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment will be undertaken as part of the detailed design and business planning stage to inform and shape the project to allow for inclusivity of protected groups and physical accessibility of the space.
- 11.2 All procurement exercises will be undertaken in accordance with relevant legislation and when a tender is required, advice and support will be utilised through Ardal, the Council's procurement advisory body.
- 11.3 Contractual arrangements will be put in place for design, and construction of the concept.

11.4 Governance arrangements for the project include regular updates to the Vale Place Board to ensure senior management and the Leader and Cabinet are sighted on progress and risks are identified early.

12.0 **Key Contacts**

12.1 **Who are the primary officers to contact with any comments and/or queries on the report?**

Lead Officer: Natasha Davies Major Projects Manager natd Davies@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk	Democratic Services Officer Matt Swindell Cabinet and Committee Services Officer. mlswindell@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk
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Appendix

Appendix A – Wilko redevelopment project engagement summary.

Background Documents

Cabinet report [Acquisition of Regeneration Asset](#)

Barry Placemaking Plan [Barry Placemaking Plan](#)

Welsh Government Transforming Towns [Transforming Towns: support to improve town centres | GOV.WALES](#)

Appendix A

Overview of Engagement Activity

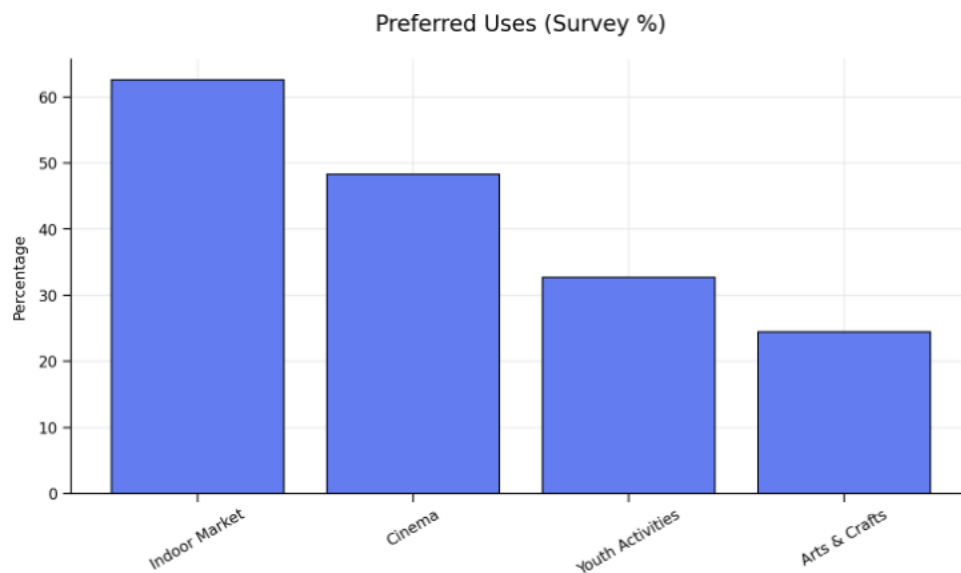
Engagement has been undertaken through multiple channels including:

- Online public survey (147 responses)
- Social media engagement and comment analysis of over 700 comments
- In-person engagement sessions at Barry Library
- Sessions with young people including YMCA youth club, Schools network meeting, and Youth Council meetings.
- Stakeholder engagement with local traders

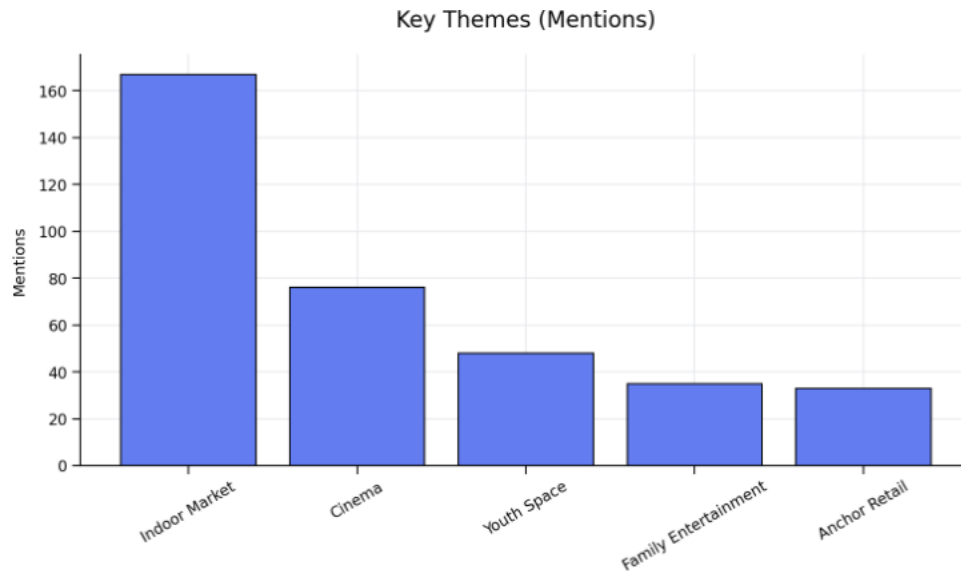
The findings demonstrate a high level of public interest and strong alignment across engagement channels, providing a robust evidence base for the proposed direction of travel.

Engagement will continue through the project with plans to continue conversations with traders and engage directly with primary schools.

Survey results high level summary



Wider Engagement Themes



Key findings

Top priorities identified include:

- Indoor market concept (strongest support)
- Entertainment and cinema uses
- Youth provision and safe social spaces
- Community hub and wellbeing space

There is consistent demand for a flexible, mixed-use approach combining retail, social, and leisure uses.

Indoor market concepts were the most dominant theme across all platforms (167 mentions online, 62.6% survey support)

There is clear overlap between retail, community and social uses, indicating support for a mixed-use, flexible model rather than a single-use scheme

Strong demand exists for uses that increase footfall, dwell time, and evening activity

84.1% support opening in the evening, this highlights clear demand for a day-to-evening destination, supporting a vibrant town Centre.

The indoor market concept is more than double any other suggestion, showing strong and repeated support.

Requests for anchor retail brands (e.g. Primark) highlight desire for footfall-driving uses, but not necessarily as a standalone solution.

In-person Engagement (Qualitative summary)

Top 3 priorities identified

- 27%** – Indoor market / “place that sells a bit of everything”
- 14%** – Youth provision and activities
- 12%** – Community, wellbeing and social space

Residents are seeking:

“A practical, welcoming and socially valuable town Centre – not just a transactional retail space.”

What is missing from the Town Centre

Most identified gaps:

- Lack of everyday retail (clothing, DIY, household goods)
- Limited activities for young people
- Lack of safe, inclusive social spaces
- Poor variety and quality of shops
- Limited evening and leisure offer

The Wilko site is widely seen as an opportunity to address multiple gaps through one intervention.

Key concerns raised

The most frequently raised risks include:

- Building remaining empty or unused
- Being converted to housing or low value uses
- Delivery of a scheme that does not reflect community needs
- Long-term financial sustainability

Overall conclusion from Engagement

The findings demonstrate a clear and consistent public mandate for:

- A market-led, mixed-use concept
- Incorporating retail, food, community and youth provision
- Acting as a destination that drives footfall and town centre regeneration
- Operating as a flexible and evolving space rather than a single fixed use

There is strong alignment between:

- Quantitative survey data
- Qualitative engagement feedback
- Social media sentiment

This provides a robust evidence base to support progression of the proposed market-led redevelopment.