

Meeting of:	Place Scrutiny Committee
Date of Meeting:	Tuesday, 22 July 2025
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Place Scrutiny Committee
Report Title:	Placemaking Plans
Purpose of Report:	To update Scrutiny Committee on Placemaking in the Vale
Report Owner:	Director of Place
Responsible Officer:	OM Regeneration
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	Director of Environment & Housing Legal Committee Reports Finance
Policy Framework:	This is a matter for Executive decision by Cabinet
Executive Summary: This report sets out the background and work to date on Placemaking Plans for the Vale of Glamorgan. A presentation to scrutiny will accompany the report with an opportunity for discussion and question at the Place Scrutiny meeting. Nicola Sumner Smith from the Creative Communities Team and Phil Chappell the OM for Regeneration will present this report and presentation at the Place Scrutiny Committee and it will be available after the meeting.	

Recommendations

1. That Scrutiny Committee note the contents of the report and the placemaking plans.
2. That Scrutiny Committee provide comments for consideration by Cabinet and the Place Boards.
3. That Scrutiny Committee receive a future report on the Placemaking Plan for Barry.

Reasons for Recommendations

1. To ensure Members are informed of the progress and scope of placemaking activity across the Vale and how it aligns with wider regeneration and corporate priorities.
2. To allow Member feedback to help shape the development and delivery of the placemaking plans and ensure they reflect local priorities and needs.
3. To enable consideration of the Barry Placemaking Plan

1. Background

- 1.1 On June 19th, 2025, three Placemaking Plans developed for Cowbridge, Llantwit Major and Penarth were approved by Cabinet. The reports set out a locally driven vision and strategic framework for regeneration in each area. The plans have been prepared in line with the Placemaking Wales Charter and reflect the Council's commitment under Vale 2030 – Working Together for a Brighter Future to deliver inclusive, sustainable and community-led regeneration.
- 1.2 Each plan has been shaped through collaboration with residents, local businesses, stakeholders and elected members, and provides a platform for future investment, funding bids and partnership activity. They promote improvements to public space, economic vitality, heritage, active travel, access to services and decarbonisation, supporting the well-being objectives of the Council. Plans have been co-commissioned by the Council and each of the respective Town Councils.
- 1.3 As Cabinet and the relevant Town Councils have now approved three of the four plans, they will become the guiding documents that will inform future priorities, support funding applications, and underpin the Council's ongoing work to create more resilient, connected and distinctive places.
- 1.4 A fourth Placemaking Plan for Barry is still in development and will be presented to Cabinet for approval in Q2/3. It will also come to Scrutiny for comment.
- 1.5 All the plans are intended to be living documents that will continue to evolve. Placemaking is a way of working and these plans offer a starting point for discussion, project development and greater community involvement.

- 1.6** Placemaking is about creating better places by putting people at the heart of planning and design. It focuses on how spaces look, feel, and function. It brings together communities, local character, and practical needs to make towns and neighbourhoods more vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable. It is about making places work for people.
- 1.7** The Placemaking Wales Charter has been developed by Welsh Government and the Design Commission for Wales in collaboration with the Placemaking Wales Partnership – a multi-disciplinary group representing professions and organisations working within the built and natural environment.
- 1.8** The Charter builds on the strengthening focus on Placemaking in policy and practice in Wales and aims to provide a common understanding of the range of considerations that go into placemaking. The charter outlines six placemaking principles that cover the range of considerations that contribute to establishing and maintaining good places.

People – involving communities in shaping their places

Place – recognising the unique characteristics of each town

Movement – prioritising active travel and access

Public Realm – creating welcoming, safe and attractive spaces

Mix of Uses – promoting diversity of activity and function

Identity – building on heritage, culture and distinctiveness.

- 1.9** Welsh Government places strong importance on placemaking plans because they are seen as essential tools for delivering sustainable, people-focused places that improve wellbeing and respond to major societal challenges. Their importance stems from several key policy drivers:
- 1.10** Central to Policy Delivery: Placemaking is embedded in national planning policy (Planning Policy Wales), the Well-being of Future Generations Act, and programmes like Transforming Towns and Building Better Places. It is seen as a unifying approach that connects economic, environmental, social and cultural goals.
- 1.11** Focus on People and Place: Welsh Government advocates for development that puts people at the heart of decision-making—creating places that are inclusive, healthy, safe, and attractive to live, work and visit.
- 1.12** Supports Climate and Nature Goals: Placemaking enables local action on climate change by encouraging compact, walkable towns, reducing car use, promoting green infrastructure and protecting biodiversity.
- 1.13** Strengthens Local Investment: Having a clear, locally driven placemaking plan helps access funding and ensures that regeneration is focused, evidence-based and aligned with community priorities.
- 1.14** Delivers the Placemaking Charter Principles: Welsh Government encourages all public bodies and partners to adopt the six principles of the Placemaking Wales

Charter—people and community, location, movement, mix of uses, public realm, and identity.

- 1.15** The Vale of Glamorgan Council's Vale 2030: Working Together for a Brighter Future Corporate Plan sets out the Council's vision to improve the economic, environmental, social and cultural wellbeing of its communities. It commits to working in partnership and delivering place-based regeneration that reflects local needs, reduces inequalities and strengthens resilience.
- 1.16** It was agreed at a meeting of the Council's cabinet on 25 May 2023 that the Authority would become a signatory to the Placemaking Wales Charter, and in doing so, gain access to funding from the Welsh Government Transforming Towns Programme. This has been used to strengthen how the Council works with local communities to identify priorities in the various towns.
- 1.17** It was also agreed at a meeting of the Council's Cabinet on 18 July 2024 to implement new governance structures for regeneration programmes and projects being delivered by the Council to support the placemaking approach. These projects compose most of the projects to be progressed within the Economic Resilience theme of the Reshaping Programme. These new boards will oversee the implementation of the four Placemaking Plans for each of the Vale of Glamorgan's towns.
- 1.18** Each plan has been shaped through engagement with residents, businesses, voluntary sector partners, elected members and town councils. Public consultation on emerging ideas has been undertaken, and this feedback has informed the final versions of the plans. This reflects the Council's commitment to working collaboratively and ensuring communities shape the future of their towns.

2. Key Issues for Consideration

- 2.1** The plans identify specific local opportunities around themes such as public realm improvements, reimagining underused spaces, enhancing heritage and culture, supporting independent business, and promoting sustainable transport.
- 2.2** While each town has a distinct identity and focus, all three plans promote integrated, people-centred approaches to place development that will support local resilience, wellbeing, and economic vitality.
- 2.3** The adoption of these plans will also support funding bids and partnership working, strengthening the case for investment through UK and Welsh Government programmes. They will also act as a tool to lever private sector investment in town centres.

- 2.4** The approach taken in the Vale of Glamorgan has ensured that meaningful community engagement and consultation has taken place over a longer period of time to ensure that solutions meet the needs of the town and its residents.
- 2.5** Each plan has been co-commissioned with the Town Councils which is also a unique approach in Wales. The Council feels strongly that Town Councils should be a major partner in the delivery and evolution of the plans with the intention that communities feel ownership of the plans. This is why so many different groups have been engaged as part of the process with sports clubs, churches, traders and history societies all being involved in the process.
- 2.6** The plans will also act as a way of informing better use of Section 106 and other external grant funding with data and need forming part of the decision-making process. We have already seen S106 funding being targeted to meet a need in a town identified via the placemaking process. This not only allows the funding to go further but ensures that the intervention is right for the town and its residents.

3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?

- 3.1** The placemaking plans for Llantwit Major, Penarth and Cowbridge have been developed in line with the sustainable development principle of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, and demonstrate the five ways of working:

Long Term: The plans set out a clear vision for each town, focused on creating resilient, vibrant and sustainable places over the next decade.

Prevention: They seek to support struggling town centres, underused assets and limited public space, helping avoid future economic and social challenges.

Integration: The plans align with the Vale 2030 Corporate Plan, Project Zero, and Welsh Government placemaking policy, supporting economic, social, environmental and cultural goals.

Collaboration: Developed with town councils, local groups and stakeholders, the plans reflect shared priorities and collective input.

Involvement: Each plan was shaped through community engagement to ensure local needs and ambitions are at the heart of delivery.

- 3.2** They directly support the Council's well-being objectives by enhancing communities, supporting economic growth, improving access and transport, and valuing both natural and built environments.

4. Climate Change and Nature Implications

- 4.1** The placemaking plans contribute positively to the Council's climate and nature commitments by:

Supporting active travel through better walking and cycling infrastructure, reducing car dependency and emissions.

Greening urban areas by introducing more planting, trees, and green spaces, which improve air quality, support biodiversity, and help manage surface water.

Repurposing existing buildings and spaces, which reduces carbon impacts linked to demolition and new construction.

Creating more resilient public spaces that respond to changing climate conditions such as extreme heat or heavy rainfall.

- 4.2** **Aligning with Project Zero** and the declaration of nature and climate emergencies by embedding low-carbon, nature-positive design in local regeneration.
- 4.3** These actions help reduce the environmental footprint of the towns while enhancing quality of life and resilience for communities.

5. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

- 5.1** Placemaking Plans were developed using Welsh Government Funding that was made available to all towns in Wales. Match funding from the Council was provided in the form of staff time working on the plan development within the Regeneration team.
- 5.2** The placemaking plans set out a framework for investment but do not commit the Council to specific funding at this stage. Delivery will be phased and dependent on available resources, including external funding opportunities such as Welsh Government's Transforming Towns programme. The plans help strengthen future funding bids by demonstrating clear local priorities, strong community backing, and alignment with strategic policy.
- 5.3** Initial project development costs may be met through grant funding or ring-fenced funding, but capital delivery will require further financial planning, including consideration of match funding, borrowing, or partnership contributions.

- 5.4** Placemaking need not be about a large-scale investment in public realm but rather doing the right thing in the right places.

Employment

- 5.5** Implementation and evolution of the approved plans will be led by the Regeneration team, with involvement from all Council Departments.
- 5.6** The Council operates an internal Placemaking group with membership from every department to ensure that ideas are sense checked, challenged and implemented effectively. It acts as a place for discussion on solutions and looks at best practice elsewhere.
- 5.7** There are no direct employment implications for Council staff as a result of adopting the plans.

Legal (Including Equalities)

- 5.8** There are no immediate legal implications arising from the adoption of the plans. However, individual projects may require legal input relating to land ownership, planning permissions, procurement, highways, or statutory consents. These will be addressed on a case-by-case basis as part of project delivery. The Council will ensure compliance with all relevant legislation and duties, including public sector equality, environmental, and procurement regulations.

6. Background Papers

Each Plan is now available for download on the Vale of Glamorgan website.