



**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**15 NOVEMBER 2021**

**PROGRESS UPDATE ON THE DELIVERY OF REGENERATION IN  
PONTYPRIDD TOWN CENTRE**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR FOR PROSPERITY AND DEVELOPMENT IN  
DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER  
(COUNCILLOR ROBERT BEVAN)**

**1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to update Members on progress made since September 2017 when Cabinet considered and approved the Strategic Opportunity Areas report and 'Pivotal Pontypridd – Delivering Growth' - the Regeneration Framework for Pontypridd Town centre 2017 – 2022.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended Members:

- 2.1 Note progress made since September 2017 in the development and delivery of projects and investment opportunities within Pontypridd Town Centre.
- 2.2 Note progress made in the development of the Pontypridd Town Centre Placemaking Plan which builds upon the 2017 – 2022 Regeneration Framework. The draft placemaking plan has been developed with Welsh Government and Transport for Wales and provides a bold vision for Pontypridd that is based on a shared ambition for the town and its role within the Capital City Region.
- 2.3 Consider a further report in the new year which seeking approval of the placemaking plan for consultation and public engagement alongside further updates on progress of the Muni Arts Centre redevelopment, the former Bingo Hall site and the former M&S store and associated buildings.

### 3. **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 Town centres throughout the UK have faced significant challenges to their economic viability over the past decade and this has intensified further due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Pontypridd town centre is no different, but here, further pressure has been placed on the town and its businesses by the destructive flood events in the winter of 2020.
- 3.2 Despite the challenges faced, Pontypridd town centre has proven to be incredibly resilient, and this report sets out the significant progress that has been made in the delivery of major regeneration projects and initiatives within the town.

### 4. **BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 The Regeneration Framework for Pontypridd 2017 – 2022 ‘Pivotal Pontypridd – Delivering Growth’ was intended to build on and grow the successful regeneration momentum already established through significant investment in the town centre such as:
  - **Pontypridd Town Centre Regeneration Programme** – A major investment of £12m provided by the Council, EU, Welsh Government and private sector finance. Completed in May 2013, the scheme transformed the townscape and supported local businesses to improve their premises and to bring disused buildings back into use.
  - **LIDO Pontypridd: The National Lido of Wales** – The ambitious restoration and redevelopment of the historic grade II listed lido was completed in 2015 with £6.3m investment from the Council, EU and Heritage Lottery Fund.
  - **Pontypridd Railway Station Improvements** – An investment of £14m led by Railtrack and supported by Welsh Government and the EU resulted in a complete upgrading of the station facilities, improving the station forecourt area leading into the town centre and modernising the rail infrastructure in 2015.
  - **Townscape Enhancement Programme** – Delivered with £1.8m investment from Welsh Government and the private sector and completed in 2017, this initiative supported the renovation and refurbishment of 10 commercial properties resulting in high quality, viable and attractive business premises in the town centre.

- **From Vacant to Viable** – Supported by the Council, Welsh Government and Registered Social Landlords, £2.3m investment resulted in the renovation of vacant spaces above retail premises to provide 24 new affordable homes in the previously untapped housing market in the town centre.

## 5. **PROGRESS UPDATE**

5.1 To maintain the momentum already evidenced by the significant investment and successful delivery of the schemes in section 4, the Framework sets out a range of projects and investment opportunities that could be developed and delivered over a five year period.

5.2 Four years into the Framework, impressive results have been achieved, evidenced by investment of nearly £115m in the following schemes:

- **Llys Cadwyn** – Completed in October 2020 and funded by the Council and Welsh Government through its 'Building for the Future' initiative, this £51m ambitious and transformational mixed-use development has provided a huge boost to the town centre. After many false dawns and the continued failure of the private sector to develop the site, the development is providing a significant contribution to the growth, vibrancy and sustainability of the town.
- **Llys Cadwyn – Park Bridge** – The Llys Cadwyn development presented a new and exciting opportunity for a pedestrian link bridge spanning from Llys Cadwyn over the River Taf and into the north western corner of Ynysangharad War Memorial Park. With £2m funding provided by the Council and Welsh Government, the bridge, completed in August 2020, significantly improves the connectivity between the town centre and the attractions of the park whilst also improving the use of the River Taf as an asset to the town and its growth potential.
- **Ynysangharad War Memorial Park** – Works have progressed throughout 2021 to deliver a £1.2m package of improvements funded from the Council and Welsh Government via the Valleys Regional Park initiative. Improvements have included a full refurbishment of all the main footways, the installation of upgraded LED streetlighting and a new changing place facility at the Lido.

A further £1.9m has been secured from Welsh Government and the Heritage Lottery Fund for the design and restoration of the sunken garden, bandstand area, rock outcrop area and the provision of a new training/activity centre. Completion is scheduled for early 2023.

- **Pontypridd YMCA** – Funded by the Council, Welsh Government and the Arts Council for Wales, this £4.5 million project is creating a state of the art, multi-purpose facility within a prominent position in the town centre, opposite the Llys Cadwyn development. Scheduled for completion in late 2021, the building has undergone a major redesign to make it fully accessible and to provide new and improved facilities including offices and workspace available for rent to social enterprises and business and a suite of dedicated arts facilities.
- **Muni Arts Centre** – Plans are underway for the refurbishment of this prominent art, music and theatre venue to bring it back into productive use and realise its potential as a key arts and cultural asset in the town centre and wider region. Funded by the Council and Welsh Government, a £500K package of enabling works are currently underway, and nearing completion, with the outcome of a £5.4m funding bid to the Levelling Up Fund expected to be announced shortly.
- **Former Bingo Hall / Angharads Nightclub** – Funded by £2.2m investment from the Council and Welsh Government, these vacant and dilapidated buildings were acquired in March 2020 and subsequently demolished in August 2021 leaving the site development ready. Discussions are taking place with the commercial sector, Welsh Government and advice is being sought from Urban Designers and commercial experts. These redevelopment options are currently being considered with a further report coming forward setting these out in the new year.
- **96-99a and 100-102 Taff Street** – In March 2021, formerly occupied by Marks & Spencer, Dorothy Perkins and Burtons, these vacant buildings were acquired with £390k investment from the Council and Welsh Government. In a prime location in the heart of the commercial core of the town, adjacent to Ynysangharad War Memorial Park and opposite the former bingo hall site, these buildings provide an exciting development opportunity. As above, development options are currently being considered with a further report coming forward setting these out in the new year.
- **Town Centre Property Improvement Programme** – Funded by Welsh Government and the private sector, this initiative is aimed at revitalising vacant or underutilised premises for beneficial business use or for residential purposes within the town centre. Since February 2020, 6 properties have been improved to the value of £855k and subject to availability of further funding from Welsh Government, interest has been received from a further 7 businesses to date.

- **Cwrt yr Orsaf** – Working in partnership with Linc Cymru, construction of this new Extra Care facility was completed earlier this month. The facility will assist older people to live as active and independent lives as possible, with 24/7 on-site support available if needed. Built on the former Pontypridd Magistrates' Court site, this £50m state-of-the-art development includes 60 apartments, dining and lounge areas, a communal kitchen, a hair salon, a car park, communal landscaped gardens and a day care unit.
- **Pretty Ponty** – A sustainable drainage solution has been successfully implemented in the form of a rain garden that tackles the issue of surface water collecting at Mill Street in heavy rainfall. The £55k investment from Welsh Government has funded a solution that will reduce the amount of surface water that ponds and sheds across the pedestrian area, improving the effectiveness of the drainage network and increasing the flooding resilience of the area whilst improving the aesthetics this part of the town.
- **Enterprise Investment Fund** – aimed at supporting sustainable economic growth across Rhondda Cynon Taf by investing in enterprises which contribute to creating a vibrant and strong local economy. The scheme provides financial assistance for Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) and Start Ups and in Pontypridd town centre, ten businesses have been supported, receiving £57k in grant.
- **Flood Resilience Grant** – in response to the devastating impact of Storm Dennis in February 2020, businesses within the town centre received financial support totalling £24k to implement flood defence measures to improve business resilience in dealing with any such events in the future.
- **COVID Recovery Fund** - The funding from Welsh Government was available to support businesses with external interventions which will facilitate social distancing and a lower density of occupation in places where customers and members of the public will meet, be served food or drink or rest. In Pontypridd town centre, ten businesses received financial support totalling £58k.
- **Restrictions Business Fund NDR and Discretionary Grants** - targeted as businesses directly impacted by the COVID-19 restrictions, the Council distributed £15.29m emergency support to businesses within Pontypridd and there was also £4M of rate relief awarded in respect of Retail, Leisure and Hospitality businesses.

## 6. PONTYPRIDD PLACEMAKING PLAN

- 6.1 Section 5 highlights the significant progress made since the Regeneration Framework was reported to Cabinet in September 2017. To maintain that momentum, considerable work has been undertaken in partnership with Welsh Government and Transport for Wales to develop a masterplan for Pontypridd town centre.
- 6.2 This draft placemaking plan seeks to build upon the foundations of what has already been delivered and provide a framework for delivering further new development and investment that can help improve the prosperity of Pontypridd, enhance the townscape and make it even more resilient to future change. A report setting out the final detail of the placemaking plan will be brought forward in the new year.

## **7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY**

- 7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not required because the contents of the report are for information purposes only.

## **8. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 There are no Welsh Language implications as the contents of the report are for information purposes only.

## **9. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT**

- 9.1 There is no requirement for consultation in respect of this report.

## **10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)**

- 10.1 There are no financial implications as the contents of this report are for information purposes only. The financial resources to deliver these projects and initiatives came from funding provided by external sources such as Welsh Government and from approved RCTCBC budgets.

## **11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

- 11.1 There are no legal implications as the contents of this report are for information purposes only.

## **12. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT**

- 12.1 The regeneration projects and initiatives detailed in the report will collectively boost the local economy and provide job opportunities for local people.
- 12.2 All developments will directly contribute to the goals of the Well Being of Future Generations Act. In particular, the economic and environmental well-being of Wales, supporting the delivery of a prosperous Wales, a more resilient Wales and a Wales of cohesive communities.

## **13. CONCLUSION**

- 13.1 The 2017 – 2022 Regeneration Framework provided a focus for the delivery of an ambitious programme of regeneration projects and initiatives in Pontypridd aimed at delivering real results in terms of job creation, growing and attracting new businesses, providing homes for people and greater connectivity.
- 13.2 The achievements outlined in sections 4 and 5, is testament to what can be achieved in Pontypridd town centre through vision, drive and ambition.
- 13.3 Further evidence of the positive impact of investment to date and proof that Pontypridd is becoming a more resilient town, is demonstrated by the recovery in footfall. The recorded figures for the months July to September 2021 of 805,114 is an increase of 3,161 on the same 3 month period in 2019 which was recorded prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 13.4 With further investment and a coordinated approach between the public, private and third sectors, the scale of the opportunity in Pontypridd can continue to be realised resulting in a dynamic, diverse and sustainable town centre where people want to live, work and visit.

### **Other Information:-**

***Relevant Scrutiny Committee***  
**Finance & Performance**

***Contact Officer***  
***Simon Gale, Director of Prosperity and Development***  
***01443 281114***

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

**AS AMENDED BY**

**THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

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**Item:**

**Background Papers**

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