

PONTYPRIDD TOWN CENTRE PLACEMAKING PLAN

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OO CONTENTS

- 0.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
- 1.0 INTRODUCTION
- 2.0 PONTYPRIDD IN 2035
- 3.0 PLACEMAKING PLAN
- 4.0 KEY INTERVENTIONS
- 5.0 MOVEMENT & CONNECTIONS
- 6.0 CONCLUSION



0.0

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document has been prepared for Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, Welsh Government, the Valleys Task Force and Transport for Wales. It provides a placemaking plan for Pontypridd that is based on a shared ambition for the town and its role within the Capital City Region.

Town centres throughout the UK have faced a series of significant challenges to their economic viability over the past decade that have recently intensified further as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Pontypridd town centre is no different, but further pressure has been placed on the town and its businesses by the destructive flood incidents that occurred in the winter of 2020.

In spite of the challenges faced, there are grounds for optimism. Pontypridd town centre has proven to be incredibly resilient throughout this difficult period and is now well placed to respond and move beyond the challenges. The town centre will shortly have unheralded connectivity to the wider Capital City Region, and is already the focus of new commercial investment through the successful delivery of the Llys Cadwyn development. The placemaking plan seeks to build upon these foundations and provide a framework for delivering further new development and investment that can help improve the prosperity of the town, enhance the townscape and landscape setting and make it more resilient to future change.

The placemaking plan is a strategy document that has been informed by the existing local planning and regeneration policy context and develops many of the initiatives identified in the key documents.

The placemaking plan identifies a series of core ambitions to guide future investment to the town and design drivers to ensure new development meets the ambitions.

Core Ambitions:

- A business destination.
- 2. A great place to live.
- 3. Connected and accessible.
- 4. A green waterside town.
- 5. A unique townscape.
- 6. A cultural and social destination.
- 7. An inclusive and resilient town.

Design Drivers:

- Development.
- Connectivity.
- 3. Townscape.
- Green Infrastructure.
- 5. Cultural and social.
- 6. Public realm.

The plan also identifies a series of interventions in key spatial areas of the town that would deliver upon the ambitions and address the design drivers.

Five key spatial areas have been identified for the town centre that will act as areas of specific focus for investment. These areas have been identified as:

- 1. Southern Gateway.
- Town Centre Core.
- Market Quarter.
- Northern Gateway.
- 5. Ynysangharad War Memorial Park.

A placemaking analysis has been prepared to identify the core ambitions, design drivers, spatial areas and interventions. A summary of the key issues and opportunities identified from this analysis is included in the placemaking plan.

The placemaking plan will be actively used and implemented over the short, medium and long term. Phasing them in this way will ensure that the plan delivers immediate positive change but also delivers growth and investment consistently over a realistic delivery period.

The placemaking plan illustrates the scale of opportunity that exists in the town. To realise the opportunity it will be necessary to curate a successful residential, office, leisure, and retail market that is supplemented by strong placemaking and active town centre management. It will also be necessary to make the town resilient to future flood incidents. A coordinated effort between the public and private sector is required to realise the scale of opportunity in the town centre.

Transport is a key consideration for the town centre and a series of the projects identified in the placemaking plan either relate to transport enhancements or require adaptations to transport infrastructure to be fully realised. These projects shall be progressed in accord with Welsh Transport Appraisal Guidance.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This document has been prepared for Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, Welsh Government, the Valleys Task Force and Transport for Wales. It provides a placemaking plan for Pontypridd that is based on a shared ambition for the town and its role within the Capital City Region.

Pontypridd has an excellent strategic location at the core of the Capital City Region. It is located 12 miles north of Cardiff and is strategically perched on the A470 and three of the core valley rail lines. Pontypridd is also a town that is changing. Connectivity will be transformed through the South Wales Metro, which will result in 12 trains per hour in each direction between Pontypridd and Cardiff, while perceptions of the commercial property market will be overhauled by the completion of the Llys Cadwyn development.

With the planned investment the town centre has a bright future, and there are big ambitions for it. This plan provides the framework to deliver the ambition.

The placemaking plan provides a bold vision for the town centre, and identifies interventions that can be implemented consistently to unlock the town's potential and ensure that it is a key economic, social and cultural centre for the Capital City Region. A coordinated effort between public and private sector partners will be required to realise the opportunity.

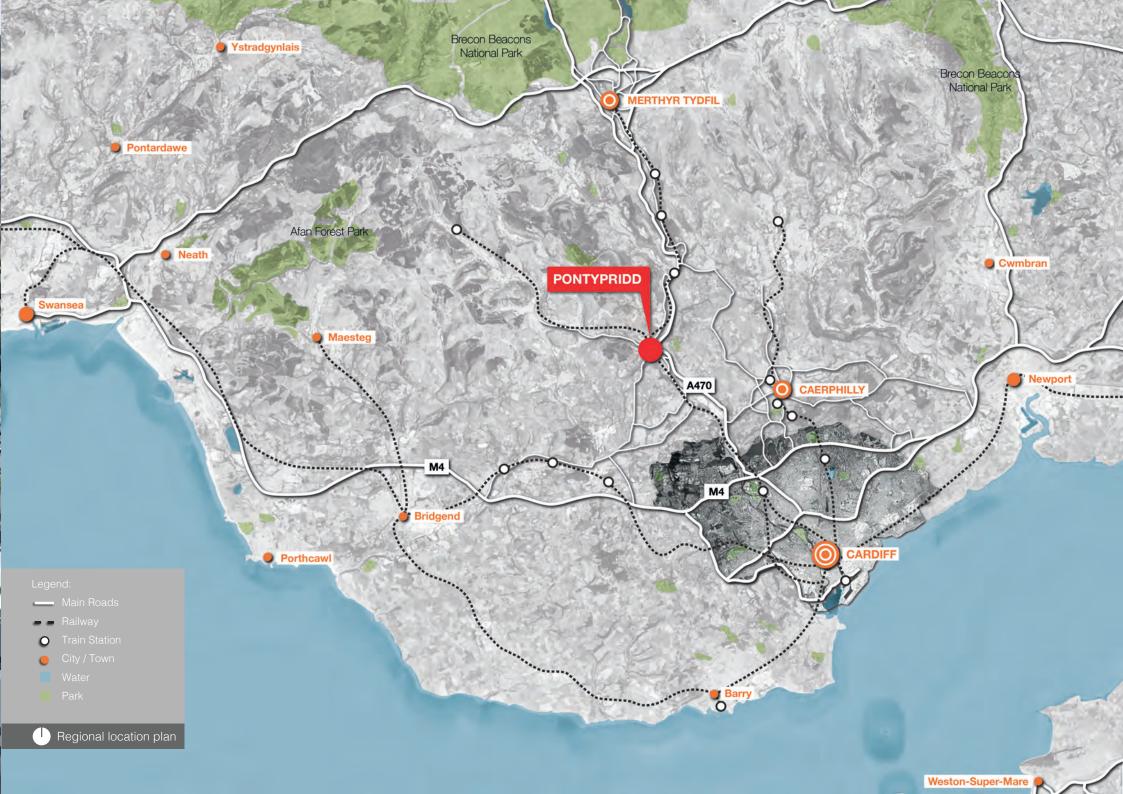
The upgrade of transport infrastructure is essential to deliver vision. A series of strategic transport projects have been identified in the plan and shall be progressed in accord with the Welsh Transport Appraisal Guidance.

Pontypridd town centre was subject to significant flooding in February 2020, and the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in the winter of 2020 presented unforeseen challenges to town centres across the UK. This placemaking plan has accounted for these events and will help ensure that Pontypridd becomes more resilient to future challenges.

Pontypridd has a unique townscape and unrivalled landscape setting that includes two iconic rivers and a historic park. These unique attributes will be utilised to establish a destination that is a great place to work, live and visit.

The placemaking plan has been prepared in accord with the national Town Centres First principle: "Ensuring a thriving future for our town/city centre[s] must be a key driver. We can increase footfall and accessibility and make a vital contribution to the vibrancy and sustainability of our town centres by locating public bodies, partner organisations and associated services/facilities in them. This should be the default option for any new investment and decisions to locate elsewhere should only be made where there is compelling evidence that this is necessary/justified. Proportionate and best value decision making regarding location should include consideration of the impact on town centres, social cohesion, accessibility by public transport, the environment and climate change".





1 INTRODUCTION: EXISTING MOMENTUM

The Council has previously completed a range of significant regeneration activity in the town including:

The flagship scheme **Llys Cadwyn**, supported through Welsh Governments Transforming Towns programme, completed in 2020. Replacing the former 1960's Taff Vale shopping centre and revitalising a derelict site at the northern gateway to the town, the mixed-use development comprises Grade A office accommodation, restaurant/café facilities and a community hub incorporating a 21 st Century library, access to Council services, state of the art gym and leisure studios.

The development also comprises a riverside promenade linking to a new footbridge which connects the site over the River Taff to Ynysangharad War Memorial Park.

The National Lido of Wales, Lido Ponty involved the restoration of a derelict and dilapidated Grade II listed 1920's lido into a regional visitor attraction. Completed in 2015 with support from the European Regional Development Fund through the Welsh Government, Heritage Lottery Fund and Cadw, the scheme expertly balanced sympathetic restoration and conservation alongside stylish and contemporary new build in an art deco style.

Original features such as the timber changing cubicles and entrance buildings including iron turnstiles and the original ticket office have been restored and complemented with a new build café and visitor centre. The original pool has been remodelled to form three new pools, further enhanced through the provision of a high quality adventure dry play facility.

Targeted regeneration investment through the Welsh Government's **Vibrant and Viable Places Programme** awarded between 2014 and 2017 assisted the Council

and its partners to deliver a focussed set of sustainable physical and social improvements aimed at improving economic viability, enhancing the town's role in the local and regional economy and reducing levels of deprivation in the communities it serves. Key projects included –

The Townscape Enhancement Programme which contributed to the regeneration of 10 town centre properties by working with owners and businesses to deliver high quality, viable and attractive business premises. The scheme focused on internal and external improvements and bringing 1900 sqm of vacant floor space back into use to accommodate new and existing businesses and jobs.

The Vacant to Viable: Homes Above Retail Premises initiative enabled Registered Social Landlords to lease and renovate vacant space above retail premises to provide 24 new affordable homes in the previously untapped housing market.

In 2013 the Council completed a **major public realm improvement scheme** throughout the town centre which included new highway surfaces, high quality paving, street furniture and architectural lighting throughout the main shopping thoroughfare.

Further regeneration projects underway include:

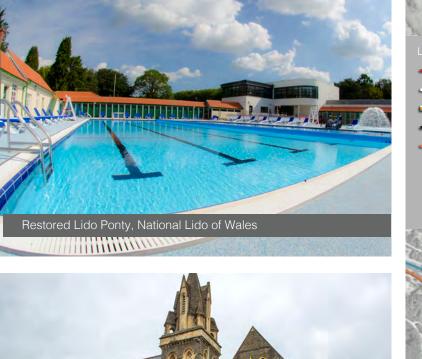
The ambitious **Pontypridd YMCA** redevelopment project which will bring the historic 1910 venue back into use by creating a state-of-the-art mixed-use facility. A major redesign of the building will make if fully accessible, rationalising the use of internal spaces, creating new and improved facilities including offices and workspace for social enterprises and businesses and a suite of dedicated arts facilities.

With the support of Transforming Towns funding via the Welsh Government, the Council acquired the former Bingo Hall and Angharad's nightclub and the former M&S and Dorothy Perkins/Burtons buildings, all of which were vacant and in a dilapidated state of repair and having a hugely negative impact on the townscape and character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Redevelopment of these sites is fundamental to the future growth and success of the town and how this is realised could involve various forms and uses. All viable options will be explored to ensure the best outcome for the town.

The Muni Arts Centre redevelopment project will secure the building's heritage, establishing it as a unique regional arts and cultural venue for the 21st century. The Grade II listed building of architectural and historical significance which has been closed since late 2018 will be transformed into a fully accessible mixed-use cultural venue offering music, cinema and theatre with new and flexible facilities to maximise the use of space, enabling a wide range of arts, culture, events and community activities.

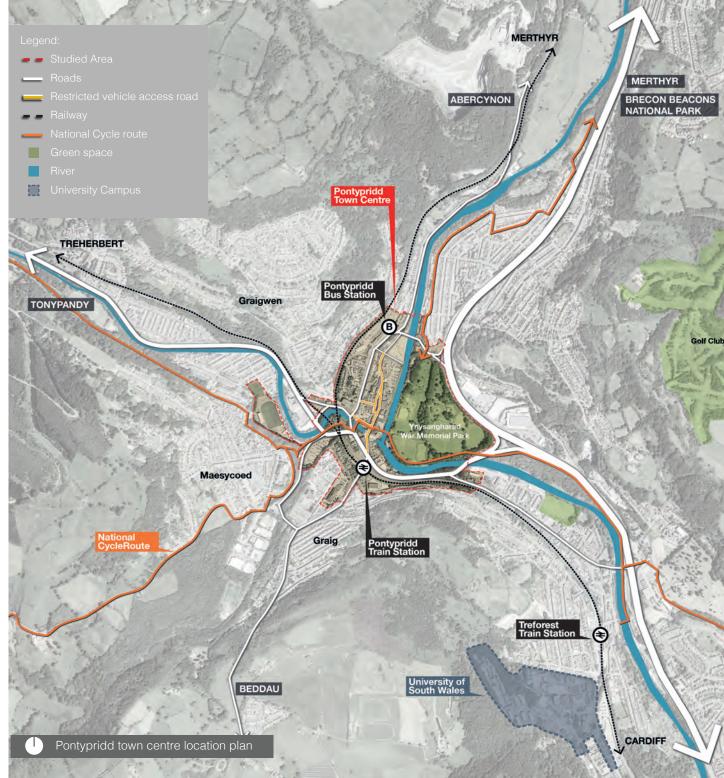
With support from the Valleys Regional Park programme, works have progressed in the Grade II listed **Ynysangharad War Memorial Park** to deliver a full refurbishment of all the main footways and paths across the park together with the installation of upgraded LED street lighting via new lighting columns, providing a secure and comfortable environment for all park users.

Further improvements are planned with the support of the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Welsh Government to improve and rejuvenate the heritage features of the historic park. Improvements include refurbishment of key areas including the bandstand, sunken garden and rock outcrop area, new signage and interpretation and the delivery of a new training and activity centre.









1 7 INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS PLACEMAKING?

WHAT IS PLACEMAKING?

Placemaking is an overarching approach to improving how a place looks, functions and is experienced. Placemaking requires a place to be viewed in its entirety, rather than focus being on isolated components. In this way placemaking opens up how a place is viewed and prevents a place being considered through a single lens.

In Wales placemaking is critical in planning for development and places, with Planning Policy Wales identifying it as the process for creating sustainable places and maximising wellbeing.

"Placemaking" is a holistic approach to the planning and design of development and spaces, focused on positive outcomes. It draws upon an area's potential to create high quality development and public spaces that promote people's prosperity, health, happiness, and well being in the widest sense".

Planning Policy Wales. Edition 11

Wales also has a Placemaking Charter which sets out six principles to promote through placemaking. These include: people and community; location; movement; mix of uses; public realm; and identity.

The placemaking plan embraces the policy approach of Planning Policy Wales and the Placemaking Charter.

WHAT IS THE PLACEMAKING PLAN?

The placemaking plan is a tool that will be used to guide decision making. This will cover: development, building enhancement, infrastructure and place management.

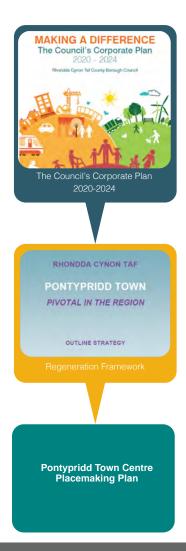
The placemaking plan identifies a means to deliver new investment to Pontypridd town centre that responds to the unique character of the town and the issues and opportunities that are present. The plan takes an overarching view of the key places that make up the town centre and proposes a series of bespoke projects that would strengthen the sense of place in each and combine to revitalise the town as a whole.

The placemaking plan has been prepared by The Urbanists, Mott MacDonald and Alder King. As client's Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, Welsh Government and Transport for Wales have also shaped the plan through the collective expertise and knowledge of its officers.

The placemaking plan has therefore been prepared collaboratively and the proposals reflect a multi-dimensional approach to planning, designing and managing development and spaces.

A delivery plan will be prepared to help further shape the ideas and opportunities presented in the placemaking plan and attract the investment that is required to deliver them.

In addition to responding to national policy, the placemaking plan builds upon the local development and regeneration policy context. An overview of where the placemaking plan sits within the local policy framework is illustrated opposite.



Local policy framework



1 3 INTRODUCTION: PONTYPRIDD TOWN CENTRE TODAY

To help identify the ambitions and projects for the town centre, a baseline review was undertaken to identify the issues and opportunities that Pontypridd town centre currently faces. The analysis undertaken is included as an appendix to the placemaking plan through the themes of development and investment, movement, built environment and natural environment. A summary of the key matters identified is summarised below.

Movement

- The bus station and railway station are located at opposite ends of the town. Better integration between modes is required and improved wayfinding between the two stations.
- Traffic movement currently dominates key entrances to the town centre and key routes within the centre.
- The connections from the town into Ynysangharad War Memorial park have been enhanced with the new bridge from Llys Cadwyn and reinstatement of the old bridge access. West-east pedestrian connections through the town could be improved to build on these improvements.
- There is limited active travel facilities in the town and active travel connections to the surrounding landscape are poor.
- Existing car park sites are not strategically located to serve the town centre.

Built Environment

- There is limited sense of arrival and legibility at the southern gateway to the town centre that needs to be addressed through any future redevelopment.
- There are poor quality buildings at the entrances to the town and at key locations within the town that weaken the sense of arrival and place, and which need to be addressed through any future redevelopment.
- The town centre has a hierarchy of streets and spaces that could be revitalised to deliver a better environment for pedestrians and cyclists.

- The town centre has numerous heritage buildings, which
 if refurbished could become distinctive features within
 the townscape.
- Limited visual and physical access to the river front could be overcome through the delivery of new development.
- The river edge environment is poor due to roads, service yards and car parking occupying strategic positions, but this could be improved gradually through redevelopment of key premises on Taff Street and new development at key locations onto the rivers.

Natural Environment

- The recent damaging flooding event caused by Storm Dennis confirms that the flood risk from the rivers Taff and Rhondda across large parts of Pontypridd, are tangible and significant. This requires the prompt development of a comprehensive flood mitigation strategy to prevent future damages.
- The green setting of the Ynysangharad War Memorial Park and the rivers Taff and Rhondda need to be exploited.
- More tree planting and green infrastructure is required in the town centre and could be utilised to deliver Sustainable drainage systems that mitigate flood risk and improve climate resilience.
- The green infrastructure in Ynysangharad War Memorial Park could be better managed to improve its riverside setting.

Development and Investment

- The southern gateway to the town centre is currently poor, but could be redeveloped to create new commercial opportunities and a distinctive and welcoming entrance into the town centre from the railway station.
- There is an opportunity to establish a northern gateway that integrates to the Llys Cadwyn development, and which provides for an integration of transport modes.
- Pontypridd Indoor Market is a key opportunity. Key investment has been delivered in the last 18 months that can be built on to create a diverse leisure and retail destination.
- There are key heritage buildings within the town that could be reused to become cultural and social destinations.
- There is an opportunity to diversify land uses through the centre by utilising the upper floors of buildings for new commercial and mixed use spaces.
- Significant development could be delivered through redevelopment of car parks in key locations.
- The town has a waterside setting that is under-utilised, but which could be activated to accommodate new leisure opportunities that can diversify the night time economy.
- The town centre would benefit from digital brand and smart town strategy.

1.4

INTRODUCTION: STRATEGIC TRANSPORT AND ACCESS

Pontypridd's strategic location in the Capital City Region is a key advantage and planned investment will enhance its connectivity. A summary of the strategic transport and access opportunities for Pontypridd is identified below.

Pontypridd is part of the Cardiff Capital Region, which is currently benefiting from significant rail service improvements as a result of the South Wales Metro proposal and the City Deal. As a result of the programmed investment Pontypridd will be highly connected by train (there will be 12 in each direction every hour) and will benefit from improved rolling stock and shorter journey times to Cardiff and the wider region.

Improved rail connectivity to Pontypridd will provide a catalyst for the town centre to receive positive economic, social, cultural and environmental impacts by making areas of land more accessible to external investors. Increasing the integration of the town centre and railway station is therefore critical to the placemaking plan.

Pontypridd also benefits from direct access to strategic highway connections to the wider region via the A470, A4058, A4223 and A473. However, the presence of some of these routes within and adjacent to the town centre does present challenges to the functionality of the town centre.

The A4058 in particular requires consideration, since the route is the strategic connection into the Rhondda valleys and passes through the southern gateway to the town centre. At this location the route serves local highway connections and as such consists of a considerable area of highway infrastructure. It is also heavily trafficked during peak times. Combined these factors disconnect the railway station from the town centre, create a poor sense of arrival into the town and poor pedestrian environment.

A poor pedestrian environment and sense of arrival is also present on the A4223 (Gelliwastad Road, Morgan Street and Bridge Street), in the west and north of the town.

Addressing the impact that these strategic routes are having on the town is therefore a key requirement of the placemaking plan and a number of interventions have been identified to address this. Further transport modelling and assessment of the town highway network will be required to inform the detailed proposals to be taken forward.

Given the importance of transit and movement networks in realising the potential of Pontypridd town centre, the placemaking plan has identified key transport related problems and opportunities through a review of local and national policy documents and stakeholder engagement.

Issues identified include disconnected cycle routes, roads causing severance in the town centre and opportunities to enhance the river front and leisure offer in Ynysangharad War Memorial Park.

The stakeholder engagement process generated a set of agreed transport objectives for the town. These are:

- Objective 1 Establish a positive 'sense of arrival' at Pontypridd Rail Station which links the station to the town centre:
- Objective 2 Enhance the links between Pontypridd town centre and Ynysangharad War Memorial Park to reinforce the Park's role as a 'green heart' to the town;
- Objective 3 Support the development of the night-time economy and town centre residential development to make Pontypridd a vibrant place to live; and
- Objective 4 Provide commercial space to support a diverse range of uses in order to create a town centre economy resilient to future changes.

A long-list of potential options were then assessed against each of the objectives to identify standalone and packaged transport projects, comprising low and medium impact schemes which can be implemented piecemeal or phased over time. Each project is identified as part of the placemaking plan (refer to section 3).

The interventions identified address the following key themes: pedestrian connectivity between the rail station and the town; improvements to station facilities and forecourt; rail and bus interchange improvements; wayfinding and signage; bus and Train service extension; refurbishment of key public spaces and pedestrian connections; refurbish and promote cultural / heritage assets; Active Travel infrastructure alongside the river; enhance existing river crossings; support residential and commercial development

PONTYPRIDD IN 2035: CORE AMBITIONS

To agree the core requirements and outcomes that the placemaking plan must address and deliver, a series of **core ambitions and design drivers** were identified for the town centre. These were identified to respond to the key issues and opportunities identified during the analysis, and were agreed iteratively through two workshops with key officers and personnel from Welsh Government, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council and Transport for Wales.

During the workshops the transport objectives for the town were also agreed. Improved transport infrastructure is key to delivering new development and placemaking initiatives in Pontypridd. The transport objectives were therefore identified alongside the core ambitions and key design drivers to ensure that the placemaking plan is underpinned by a robust transport approach that will help to deliver the key projects.

The core ambitions and design drivers are presented below.

1. A BUSINESS DESTINATION

.... with established development areas that provide **striking gateways to the town** and a series of **flexible workspace** that combine to make Pontypridd an attractive **place to invest and work**.

4. A GREEN WATERSIDE TOWN

.... with a **unique outlook** over the River Taff and the historic Ynysangharad War Memorial Park that provide an **unrivalled leisure and recreational setting and distinctive landscape.**

7. AN INCLUSIVE AND RESILIENT TOWN

.... with a network of unique streets and spaces that are safe and accessible, resilient and adaptable to future challenges, optimise views of the unique townscape and riverside setting and provide space for outdoor activity.

2. A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE

.... with a choice of high quality new homes, accessible jobs and a bespoke leisure offer delivered in an unique riverside setting.

5. A UNIQUE TOWNSCAPE

.... with iconic heritage buildings that are celebrated and have been reused to accommodate a mix of vibrant modern uses.

3. CONNECTED AND ACCESSIBLE

.... with **excellent pedestrian connections** between the town centre and the railway and bus stations and **high-quality cycle infrastructure** that establishes the town as **base to explore the wider valleys landscape.**

6. A CULTURAL AND SOCIAL DESTINATION

.... with an annual programme of events for Pontypridd that **attract visitors**, and establish the centre as **a unique cultural and social destination**.









DEVELOPMENT

- Unlock new development sites that will build on the Llys Cadwyn scheme and provide more work space, homes and leisure opportunities.
- Focus new development around key transport modes to create new gateways into Pontypridd.
- Redevelop the upper storeys of existing units to deliver new homes and workspaces.

CONNECTIVITY

- Improve pedestrian connectivity between the railway station and the town.
- Establish a better integration between transport modes at the railway station.
- Provide a new train halt adjacent to the bus station that will create a new interchange.
- Improve west/east pedestrian connectivity through the town.
- Retain suitable parking capacity while facilitating new development.
- Improve cycle connectivity across the town centre and Ynysangharad War Memorial Park.

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

- Establish a unique waterside setting for the town.
- Use planting to integrate Ynysangharad War Memorial Park into the town centre.
- Incorporate more soft landscaping into road infrastructure and public realm areas to soften the landscape.
- Introduce new green spaces and planting that can help to reduce surface water runoff and help mitigate future flood incidents.

7 1 PONTYPRIDD IN 2035:DESIGN DRIVERS







TOWNSCAPE

- Establish new gateways into the town.
- Create new frontages onto the river.
- Restore the town's historic architecture, including the grade II listed market building.
- Increase building heights around key nodal locations to create new iconic landmarks enclosure.

CULTURAL AND SOCIAL

- Establish Ynysangharad War Memorial Park as a social and cultural beacon and destination.
- Create a varied leisure offer that has riverside presence.
- Diversify the retail and leisure offer provided in Pontypridd Market.
- Establish an annual programme of events to be held throughout the town.

PUBLIC REALM

- Create new plazas on the riverside and gateways into the town.
- Improve links to Ynysangharad War Memorial Park.
- Improve interaction with the River Taff and River Rhondda.

3.0 THE PLACEMAKING PLAN

The ambitions, design drivers and transport objectives have led to the identification of a series of projects for the town centre. Each of these would work towards achieving the core ambitions and addressing the design drivers; collectively they will transform Pontypridd town centre.

Delivery of the projects would:

- Establish new gateways into the town.
- Unlock large-scale commercial development opportunities.
- Deliver improved integration between public transport modes.
- Restore traditional buildings with new active land uses.
- Revitalise Pontypridd Market.
- Revive the town's traditional townscape.
- Create a new riverside and parkland setting.
- Make the town centre more resilient to future flood events that might occur.
- Create spaces for social and cultural events.
- Develop a stronger digital presence and brand.

The projects are grouped into two distinct areas:

- Projects associated with key areas of the town centre.
- 2. Complementary projects that are digital, non physical and located just outside of the town centre, but would help revitalise the centre.

More detail on each of these project areas is provided over the following pages.

The majority of the placemaking plan projects can be grouped into the key action areas in the town centre. These are outlined below.

Town Centre Core

provide a selection of unique

with a riverside setting, new

riverside walkway and better

Southern Gateway

A new gateway to the town that has a range of commercial uses in the railway station, better integration of transport modes, significant redevelopment of the key development blocks, a direct pedestrian connection across the A4058 and an improved public realm that opens the entrance to the town and establishes a riverside plaza.

A new northern gateway to the town that includes a redeveloped bus station, new train halt, town centre car park, further workspace development, art and culture park and better pedestrian routes

Northern Gateway

Ynysangharad War Memorial Park

A heritage park that has a natural riverside setting, diverse sport and recreational offer, is a hub for cultural and social events and base from which to explore the Valleys Regional Park.

Market Quarter The town action areas

SOUTHERN GATEWAY

- Utilise existing under-utilised spaces in Pontypridd Railway Station for supporting office space and retail.
- Reconfigure railway station forecourt to enhance the sense
 of arrival at the station and provide public space (with new
 hard landscape, planting, street furniture and lighting) that
 provides space for retail units and work space.
- Deliver bus bays, disabled parking and taxi waiting area outside the station as part of the reconfiguration of the station forecourt.
- Improve the pedestrian crossing route over the A4058 to provide a direct connection for pedestrian and cyclists between High Street and the railway station. Any future crossing to be designed as part of new station forecourt space.
- Redevelopment of key existing urban blocks opposite the railway station, including the former Bingo Hall, M&S and Dorothy Perkins / Burtons buildings, to provide a distinctive southern gateway into the town and improve the interface between the town centre and the rivers Rhondda and Taff and Ynysangharad War Memorial Park. New floorspace created to provide office, residential, retail, leisure and hotel uses that stimulate the night time economy.
- Redevelop Sardis House to provide new office space with a direct access to the railway station platform.
- Redevelop Sardis Road car park to provide new office / mixed use space with direct access to the railway station.
 Element of existing car parking capacity to be retained.
 Existing connection to the station to be refurbished to provide a suitable pedestrian access.

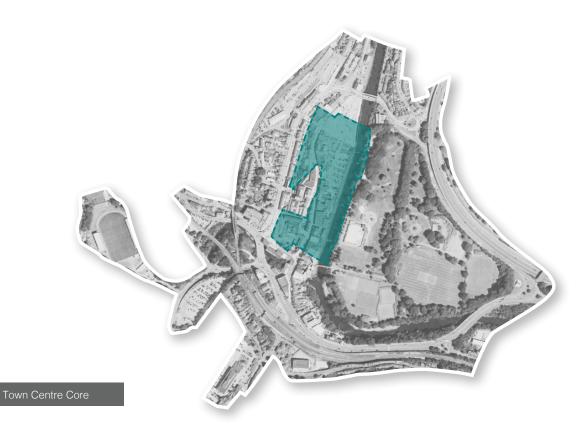


Southern Gateway

TOWN CENTRE CORE

- Improve the interaction between the town centre, the River Taff and Ynysangharad War Memorial Park by providing active edges to the rear elevations of properties on Taff Street. New uses could include retail at ground level with residential and / or small scale office space on upper floors. Refurbish rear facades where no redevelopment proposed.
- Reintroduce waterfront paths and spaces along the rear of Taff Street to connect the Llys Cadwyn development and Gas Road car park site with the commercial uses that could be delivered on High Street.
- Redevelop upper floors of properties on Taff Street to deliver new apartments and small-scale work spaces. Such spaces will diversify the land uses in the town centre and increase activity in the town beyond traditional retail hours.
- Improve the townscape through redevelopment of poor quality buildings, and restoration of heritage buildings so that their architectural style is celebrated and prominent in the centre's townscape.
- Address inconsistencies in storey heights throughout the town centre by redeveloping of small-scale low quality buildings
- Integrate flexible event spaces into the town centre streets.
- Increase extent of green infrastructure along Taff Street, Crossbrook Street, Gelliwastad Road and Penuel Lane. This could include trees, plants, greenwalls and open spaces.
- Improve the aesthetic appearance of the alleyways connecting the town centre to the River Taff and bridge access to the Ynysangharad War Memorial Park.
- Improve the quality and connectivity of national cycle route 4 & 8 through the town centre and Ynysangharad War Memorial Park.
- Reduce extent of road infrastructure on Gelliwastad Road (while retaining its role as a key service route) to reduce dominance of vehicle movement and reconnect the core of the town centre with the

- architectural heritage and community services located there (the Muni Arts Centre and St Catherine's Church).
- Redesign the Gas Road Car Park to create a more attractive space that is pedestrian friendly and better integrated to the proposed riverside
 walkway and adjacent Llys Cadwyn development. Existing car parking function to be retained along with the servicing arrangements to
 the properties on Taff Street.



MARKET QUARTER

- Restore and sensitively redevelop the grade II listed Pontypridd Indoor Market to create a distinctive cultural and leisure destination that forms a heart to the town centre. The proposal would include sensitively refurbishing and enhancing the building and revitalising the existing retail offer to provide excellent quality local produce and more diverse leisure uses in a unique setting.
- Redevelop upper floors of properties on Market Street / Church Street to deliver new apartments and small scale work spaces. Such spaces will diversify the land uses in the Market Quarter and increase activity in the Market Quarter beyond traditional retail hours.
- Improve the townscape through redevelopment of poor quality buildings and restoration of heritage buildings so that their architectural style is celebrated and prominent in the Market Quarter townscape.
- Address inconsistencies in storey heights throughout the Market Quarter by redeveloping of small scale low quality buildings.
- Increase extent of green infrastructure along Market Street / Church Street. This could include trees, plants, greenwalls, and open spaces.
- Refurbish and reuse the Old Town Hall building as a key and distinctive event space.



Market Quarter

NORTHERN GATEWAY

- Redevelop and restore the Pontypridd YMCA to create a fully accessible multi-purpose facility including offices and workspace for social enterprises and businesses and a suite of dedicated arts facilities.
- Redevelop and refurbish properties adjacent to the YMCA on Taff Street to provide a more appropriate frontage to the Llys Cadwyn development.
- Enhance the existing bus station and exploit adjacent opportunities to deliver further office space development.
- Explore options and viability to deliver a South Wales Metro enhancement adjacent to the bus station that would establish a new interchange.
- Rationalise parking arrangements in the area to serve a new interchange, meet town centre demand and transition to include electric charging facilities and low carbon technologies.
- Provide new public realm around enhanced bus station and future office space that provides high quality pedestrian connections to the Llys Cadwyn development and provide an appropriate sense of arrival to the town centre.
- Create cultural park where temporary exhibitions can be held to the rear of Pontypridd Museum with views over the William Edwards Bridge.
- Redevelop the Muni Arts Centre for cultural uses.
- Explore redevelopment opportunities on Berw Road to provide office / mixed use space.



Northern Gateway

YNYSANGHARAD WAR MEMORIAL PARK

- Develop leisure use at the northern entrance to the Park that offers a riverside setting.
- Provide an improved northern access into the Ynysangharad War Memorial Park that is integrated to a new public space that provides improved access to the River Taff and could act as an event space.
- Enhance and encourage interaction with the River Taff through the introduction of water sport and recreation offer.
- Enhance visual and physical connectivity along the eastern bank of the river through better management and maintenance of existing green infrastructure.
- Create a flexible indoor/outdoor space in the Park where leisure and cultural events can be held.
- Establish a cycle hub that would be a key base from which to explore the Taff Trail and wider Valleys Regional Park.
 Facilities could include rental facilities, trail and destination information, a workshop and light refreshment.
- Enhance the infrastructure at the cricket ground to provide opportunities for Glamorgan Cricket Club to play fixture at the ground.
- Development of new changing place facilities and enhancements to access throughout the Park so that it performs its role as a Valleys Regional Park destination gateway site.
- Development of a Training and Activity Centre.



In addition to focussed town centre area projects, a series of complementary projects have been identified that will help to revitalise the town centre. These include digital connectivity and infrastructure projects, non physical; projects like events and physical projects located just outside of the town centre. Such projects include:

- Establish a health campus at Dewi Sant Hospital.
- Establish a modern diverse sporting destination at Sardis Road that is both an elite regional facility and resource for local sporting clubs and community groups.
- Enhance legibility throughout the town by rationalising signage, maintaining visual connections through town and using hard landscape treatments, planting and lighting to direct movement at key junctions.
- Expand on the existing programme of events to develop a consistent calendar of activity that includes heritage, food, music and recreation. (1).
- Implement a series of temporary placemaking measures that can create interest and activity in the town centre. (2).
- Coordinate lighting throughout the town to enhance key buildings and public spaces. (3).
- Deliver later evening train and bus services with integrated ticketing.
- Incorporate bike hire facilities in key gateways to the town and at central locations.
- Improve mapping and signage to the formal and informal cycle routes that connect to the wider region.

- Improve marketing and communications with the University of South Wales to attract students to visit and live in the town.
- Introduce free wifi across the town.
- Improve digital infrastructure in the town to encourage new development.
- Create a digital high street through development of an app that promotes the town centre and its businesses.
- Create existing digital resources (online maps/council website/ app) to aid wayfinding for the cycle and walking opportunities around Pontypridd and the wider Valleys Regional Park.
- Establish a brand and marketing strategy for the town, that consistently promotes the leisure, tourism and retail offer.





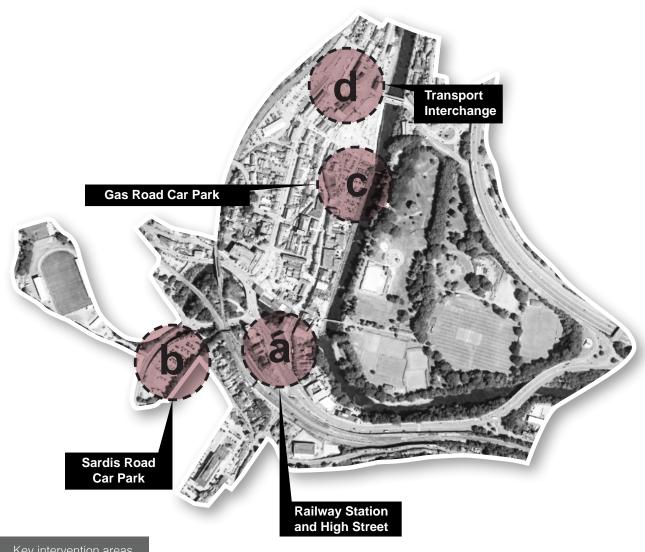


KEY INTERVENTIONS

Within each of the key spatial areas, there are sites of particular opportunity and importance to the placemaking plan. These sites can accommodate interventions that are of significant scale and would have substantial impact in transforming the town centre and the role that it performs in the Capital City Region. These sites include:

- Railway Station and High Street in the Southern Gateway (A).
- Sardis Road Car Park in the Southern Gateway (B).
- Gas Road Car Park in the Town Centre Core (C).
- Bus Station in the Northern Gateway (D).

Further detail on the interventions that can be delivered on these sites is provided below.











4.1 KEY INTERVENTIONS RAILWAY STATION & HIGH STREET





The Railway Station and High Street provide the Southern Gateway to the town. This is the first area that people experience when entering the town and is therefore the key place to establish an inspiring entrance and make visual connections to the town's river and parkland setting.

A series of redevelopment proposals could be delivered in this area to provide a distinctive sense of arrival and new floorspace that could provide new workspace, leisure uses and a hotel.

The redevelopment of the former Bingo Hall site presents a key opportunity as the property is prominently located and is vacant. Redevelopment could transform the site into a distinctive mixed use development that defines the southern entrance into the town centre and provide new homes, hotel, workspace or retail uses. Redevelopment of the site is therefore a key priority. (1).

New development delivered in this area would be of high architectural quality to provide the statement entrance required, exploit opportunities to create a distinctive interface with the River Taff and River Rhondda, establish views over Ynysangharad War Memorial Park and create excellent quality spaces for people by redeveloping the site of the former M&S and Dorothy Perkins/Burtons buildings. The scale of development would be agreed through the detailed design process. (2, 3,4 and 7). More detailed proposals can be found in the accompanying Southern Gateway Masterplan Report.

New commercial uses could also be delivered within the railway station, where there is significant amounts of under utilised space that could be used for retail, leisure uses and flexible workspace (5, 6 and 8). New development delivered would need to be appropriate to the historical character of the station and contribute to its restoration.









4.1 KEY INTERVENTIONS: RAILWAY STATION & HIGH STREET





In this area, there is also an opportunity to improve the pedestrian connectivity between the railway station, the town centre and adjacent residential areas, introduce more active travel infrastructure and better integrate the railway station to local bus and taxi services.

To improve pedestrian connectivity between the railway station and High Street improved pedestrian options to cross the A4058 is required. This could be achieved by a new single span crossing directly from the station entrance to the top of High Street via new plazas outside the station and at the top of High Street. (9). A footbridge that provides direct access between the railway station platform and High Street could also be considered. (10). Any footbridge would need to be of the highest architectural quality.

In order to inform a crossing at grade further transport modelling would be required to inform the viability of the design and amendments required to the highway network and signal operation.

To improve connectivity between the station and the residential area to the south of the station enhancements are required to the High Street bridge.

More active travel infrastructure in the form of cycle storage and rental facilities could be accommodated in the new station plaza, which could be serviced by a variety of cycle routes that connect to the wider local area.

Better integration of transport modes could be achieved through incorporation of bus and taxi waiting areas into the exterior of the station plaza. Drop off areas for disabled passengers could also be accommodated in this location. (11 and 12).









KEY INTERVENTIONS RAILWAY STATION & HIGH STREET

FULFILLED CORE AMBITIONS:

- A Business Destination Modern workspaces with excellent access to the railway station would be provided as part of the new floorspace to be created.
- A Great Place to Live A section of new homes with river or park views and new leisure and retail uses with access to unique riverside plazas would be provided.
- Connected and Accessible The proposed pedestrian crossing across the A4058 would improve connectivity between the town centre and the railway station while the new plaza would include space for better integration of transport modes.
- A Green Waterside Town The majority of the developments proposed would have views of the River Rhondda or Taff while Taff Street would accommodate more soft landscape features.
- A Unique Townscape The development would add a contemporary design to the town's traditional townscape.
- A Cultural and Social Destination The leisure and retail offer included in the new development would enhance the town's reputation as a social destination.
- An Inclusive and Resilient Town The new pedestrian routes across the A4058 would create a safe and accessible route into the town, while the plazas would provide unique outdoor settings and entrance spaces to sustain safe social activity and local businesses.

FULFILLED DESIGN DRIVERS:



DEVELOPMENT

- Unlock new development sites that will build on the Llys Cadwyn scheme and provide more work space, homes and leisure opportunities.
- Focus new development around key transport modes to create new gateway's into Pontypridd.



CONNECTIVITY

- Improve pedestrian connectivity between the railway station and the town.
- Establish a better integration between transport modes at the railway station.



GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

- Establish a unique waterside setting for the town.
- Incorporate more soft landscaping into road infrastructure and public realm areas.
- Introduce new green spaces and planting that can help to reduce surface water runoff and help mitigate future flood incidents.



TOWNSCAPE

- · Establish new gateways into the town.
- Create new frontages onto the river.



CULTURAL AND SOCIAL

 Create a varied leisure offer that has riverside presence.



PUBLIC REALM

- Create new plazas on the riverside and gateways into the town.
- Improve interaction with the River Taff and River Rhondda.

1 KEY INTERVENTIONS: RAILWAY STATION & HIGH STREET



Sketch showing new development and pedestrian crossing

4.2 KEY INTERVENTIONS: SARDIS ROAD CAR PARK

Sardis Road Car Park has a direct access into Pontypridd railway station, which has excellent connectivity by rail, and is served by a strategic highway connection. It is also in public sector ownership. Each of these attributes make the site a key future opportunity, and subject to market demand, part of the site could brought forward for mixed use development or new workspaces. (1.

The site currently performs an important role in providing car parking provision for the town. An element of parking would need to be safeguarded in any future redevelopment if demand for its use remains.

As part of any redevelopment, high quality public space and amenity space should be provided for future occupants. (2 and 3).

The redevelopment proposals should also enhance the existing footbridge access to the railway station to make the route safer and more pleasant. As part of the upgrade of the footbridge consideration should be given to establishing a strong landscape infrastructure along the route and connecting the route to Sardis House (3, 5 and 6.

Redevelopment of Sardis House presents an additional opportunity in this area. The premises is also in public sector ownership and could have a direct access to the railway station. The site therefore presents another opportunity to deliver an exemplar transport orientated development that provides office / mixed use space (4).

The redevelopment proposals should work in synergy with the interventions of the Railway Station and High Street.













4 2 KEY INTERVENTIONS: SARDIS ROAD CAR PARK

FULFILLED CORE AMBITIONS:

- A Business Destination Modern workspaces with direct access to the railway station would be provided.
- Connected and Accessible An upgrade to the existing footbridge would improve access into the railway station and town centre, while other enhancements to adjacent pedestrian infrastructure would further strengthen the site's accessibility.
- A Green Waterside Town Soft landscape features incorporated into the footbridge would provide a unique green feature for the town, while planting in new public areas would increase the volume of green infrastructure in the town.
- A Unique Townscape The development would add a contemporary design to the town's traditional townscape
- A Cultural and Social Destination The new enhanced space could be a setting for cultural and social activities.
- An Inclusive and Resilient Town The public realm, outdoor recreational space and linear park access to the railway station would provide a unique outdoor setting.

FULFILLED DESIGN DRIVERS:



DEVELOPMENT

- Unlock new development sites that will build on the Llys Cadwyn scheme and provide more work space, homes and leisure opportunities
- Focus new development around key transport modes to create new gateway's into Pontypridd.



CONNECTIVITY

 Improve pedestrian connectivity between the railway station and the town.



GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

- Incorporate more soft landscaping into road infrastructure and public realm areas.
- Introduce new green spaces and planting that can help to reduce surface water runoff and help mitigate future flood incidents.



TOWNSCAPE

· Establish new gateways into the town.



PUBLIC REALM

• Create new plazas on the riverside and gateways into the town.

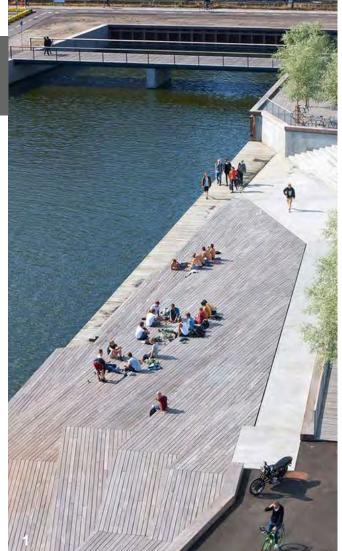
4.3 KEY INTERVENTIONS: GAS ROAD CAR PARK

The Gas Road Car Park site is located centrally within the placemaking plan area and has a prime position adjacent to the River Taff and the Llys Cadwyn development. The site is also in public sector ownership.

The space is currently used as a town centre car park, that is well-used, but detracts from the amenity of this part of the town centre and prevents opportunities to exploit the riverside setting. With thoughtful design, the site could be transformed into a new multifunctional space that retains town centre car parking provision, but also provides a new green outdoor space for residents and visitors to the town.

Initially it is anticipated that car parking provision will likely need to remain as currently provided, but over time as car usage reduces and more people use an enhanced public transport network there may be opportunities to reduce the parking provision to create more public green space.

The location of the Gas Road Car Park site means that it is perfectly located to better integrate the town centre to the river and Ynysangharad War Memorial Park, provide a distinctive outdoor setting to Llys Cadwyn and connect the redevelopment site with the proposed river walkway (5) that would be located to the rear of Taff Street and connect Llys Cadwyn with new development proposed on High Street. The design of the new space would require close coordination with Natural Resources Wales, but the key focus shall be on greening a site with plenty of green infrastructure and Sustainable Drainage Systems that could contribute to improving the flood resilience of the town centre. (6, 7, 8, 9 & 10). The space should also be designed to provide distinctive features that would make the area a great place to socialise. (1, 2, 3, 4 & 9).











4.3 KEY INTERVENTIONS: GAS ROAD CAR PARK

Any commercial development on the site would likely be moderate in nature, in recognition of the flood risk, with uses limited to a flexible cafe type use that could be designed so that it would not be greatly impacted by a flood incident. (12 & 13).

Any future proposals for redevelopment of buildings on Taff Street adjacent to Gas Road Car Park should consider opportunities to overlook the new space. (11).

As part of the redevelopment of the site, pedestrian access to Taff Street and access for businesses on Penuel Lane would need to be safeguarded. A portion of the town centre car park should also be retained for use by disabled visitors to the town centre.

















4.3 KEY INTERVENTIONS: GAS ROAD CAR PARK

FULFILLED CORE AMBITIONS:

- A Business Destination An enhanced public space with (retention of some town centre parking) would benefit existing businesses and encourage new investment. The space could also help facilitate the proposed riverside walkway to the rear of Taff Street.
- Connected and Accessible Enhancement of the car park would create a better arrival point into the town by car and improve the pedestrian connection to Taff Street. Car park spaces for disabled visitors would be kept to ensure accessibility is maintained.
- A Green Waterside Town Enhancement of the car park would provide an improved setting and connection between the town centre and the River Taff and the Ynysangharad War Memorial Park. It would also provide an opportunity to deliver new areas of planting.
- A Unique Townscape The new space could add a contemporary design to the town's traditional townscape and transform a poor public realm into a new engaging space for people to use.
- A Cultural and Social Destination The new enhanced space could be a setting for cultural and social activities.
- An Inclusive and Resilient Town Enhancement of the car park would create a more engaging pedestrian environment, and create an opportunity to establish the unique riverside walkway. A new public space would provide outdoor areas designed to sustain safe social activity. Through careful design it could also help to mitigate flooding in this part of the town.

FULFILLED DESIGN DRIVERS:



DEVELOPMENT

- Unlock new development sites that will build on the Llys Cadwyn scheme and provide more work space, homes and leisure opportunities.
- Focus new development around key transport modes to create new gateway's into Pontypridd.



TOWNSCAPE

· Create new frontages onto the river.



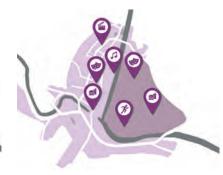
CONNECTIVITY

- Improve west/east pedestrian connectivity through the town.
- Retain suitable parking capacity while facilitating new development.



GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

- Establish a unique waterside setting for the town.
- Introduce new green spaces and planting that can help to reduce surface water runoff and help mitigate future flood incidents.



CULTURAL AND SOCIAL

 Create a varied leisure offer that has riverside presence.



PUBLIC REALM

- Create new plazas on the riverside and gateways into the town.
- Improve interaction with the River Taff and River Rhondda.



4.4 KEY INTERVENTIONS TRANSPORT INTERCHANGE





Pontypridd bus station is located at the northern extent of the town centre adjacent to the Aberdare and Merthyr railway lines. It is also located in close proximity to a town centre car park and Llys Cadwyn. There is a long-term opportunity to better integrate transport modes in this location, increase the connectivity of the town and its key development sites by public transport and through high quality design create a new northern gateway to the town. (1 and 3).

As part of enhancements to the transport infrastructure, opportunities to deliver new commercial floorspace for some retail uses and workspace might be unlocked. Any new development delivered should establish a great sense of arrival and consist of landscape pedestrian routes and plazas that provide clear connections into the town and provide space for people and businesses to use (2 and 4).

As part of the proposals, strong visual connections to the William Edwards Bridge should be established, where there are opportunities to establish an external cultural and art park with views over the river. (5, 6 and 7).









4.4

KEY INTERVENTIONS: TRANSPORT INTERCHANGE

FULFILLED CORE AMBITIONS:

- A Business Destination Provision of workspace would continue to provide for demand created by improved connectivity by public transport and development of key town centre sites.
- A Great Place to Live Better integration of transport modes would improve connectivity to the north of the town and make it easier for residents of the town and surrounding settlements to travel.
- Connected and Accessible An interchange would improve the accessibility into the north of the town and connect transport modes, while the new routes and plaza would improve pedestrian connectivity into the town.
- A Green Waterside Town Soft landscape would be delivered in the new pedestrian routes and square to soften the public realm and assimilate the new development to Pontypridd Museum and the River Taff.
- A Unique Townscape The development would create a new gateway into the town and add a contemporary design to the town's traditional townscape.
- A Cultural and Social Destination Retail uses would be delivered as part of the bus station that would activate the new pedestrian routes and square.
- An Inclusive and Resilient Town New pedestrian routes and spaces provide the opportunity to establish streets and places for people and a new gateway that offers a great sense of arrival. The presence of the Pontypridd Museum and Williams Edwards Bridge provides an opportunity to incorporate the heritage of the town into the new gateway.

FULFILLED DESIGN DRIVERS:



DEVELOPMENT

- Unlock new development sites that will build on the Llys Cadwyn scheme and provide more work space, homes and leisure opportunities.
- Focus new development around key transport modes to create new gateway's into Pontypridd.



TOWNSCAPE

· Establish new gateways into the town.



CONNECTIVITY

- Provide a new train halt adjacent to the bus station that will create a new interchange.
- Improve the west / east pedestrian connectivity through the town.
- Retain suitable parking capacity while facilitating new development.



GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

- Incorporate more soft landscaping into road infrastructure and public realm areas.
- Introduce new green spaces and planting that can help to reduce surface water runoff and help mitigate future flood incidents.



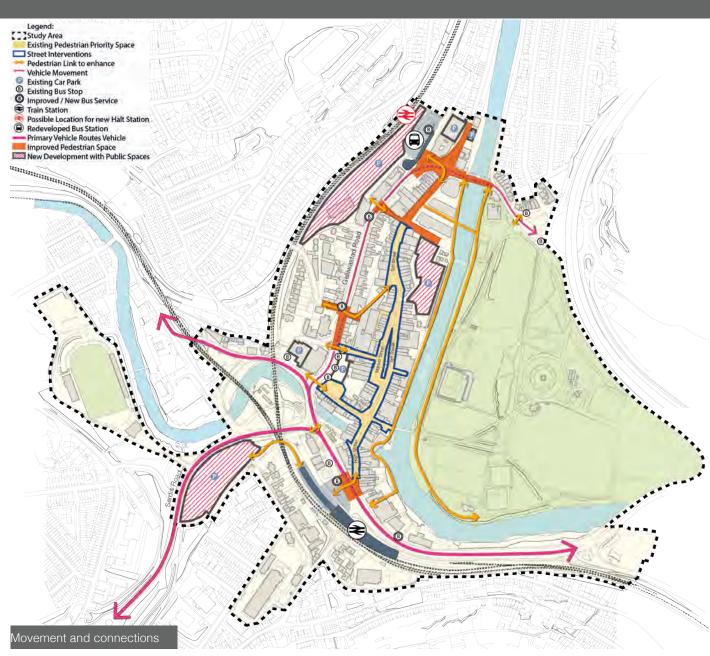
PUBLIC REALM

- Create new plazas on the riverside and gateways into the town.
- Improve interaction with the River Taff and River Rhondda.

5.0 MOVEMENT & CONNECTIONS

Each of the key areas of intervention provide opportunities to enhance the pedestrian environment and create safe and attractive spaces that benefit visitors and businesses. The diagram opposite visualises how each of the key areas could work together to create a better connected town with streets and spaces that are great places for people to spend time in.

- Railway Station and High Street: New gateway to the town centre and better pedestrian and cycle connections and environment between the railway station, town centre and adjacent residential areas. New development opportunities on High Street provide an opportunity to establish new spaces that overlook the rivers Taff and Rhondda.
- Sardis Road Car Park and Sardis House: Improved connections could be delivered between the sites, the railway station and town centre via a new footbridge that is integrated into a distinctive soft and hard landscape. There are also other opportunities to enhance other key the pedestrian routes on Sardis Road.
- Gas Road Car Park: A distinctive riverside public space that creates a new entrance point into the town and softens the existing car park, which could be retained. It would also serve to create an enhanced setting for Llys Cadwyn and could integrate it to a new riverside pedestrian connection to the rear of Taff Street and High Street.
- Northern Interchange: New transport development would provide the opportunity for a new gateway to the north of the town that is integrated to new development, accentuates the historical fabric and prioritises the movement and experience of pedestrians.



6.0 CONCLUSION

Pontypridd town centre has faced significant challenges in recent yeas; first navigating the challenges presented to the retail sector and then experiencing flooding that damaged large areas of the town and endangered the businesses and employees. Most recently the town like others across the UK has also had to navigate the socio-economic challenges posed by COVID-19. While the challenges associated with the pandemic are not yet over, there are reasons for optimism as throughout this period, the town centre and its community has demonstrated incredible sustained resilience.

This placemaking plan is founded on the town's unique setting and attributes and provides the basis for establishing Pontypridd as a unique place to work, live and visit. The vision set by this placemaking plan is ambitious in the current context, but it is also realistic and can be delivered by private and public stakeholders working collectively over a phased basis.

Investment into Pontypridd is already underway at the Llys Cadwyn development and the Metro will transform the connectivity of the town. The new development and placemaking opportunities identified in this plan respond directly to this exciting and changing context, and collectively they can enable Pontypridd to once again become a key economic, social and cultural centre that provides for the needs of its residents and also acts as a catalysts for spreading growth and prosperity through the wider Capital City Region.





