



**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**18 DECEMBER 2023**

**ABERDARE TOWN CENTRE STRATEGY – FORMAL CONSULTATION  
FEEDBACK AND REVISED STRATEGY.**

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

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Appendices:

Appendix 1: Aberdare Town Centre Strategy (2023/24)

Appendix 2: Early Engagement Findings Report (February 2023)

Appendix 3: Let's Talk Aberdare – Consultation Findings Report (November 2023)

Appendix 4: Equality and Socio-Economic Impact Assessment

Appendix 5: Welsh Language Impact Assessment

**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to update Members on the response to the formal consultation exercise undertaken on the draft Aberdare Town Centre Strategy as agreed by Cabinet on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2023 and to highlight the changes made to the document in light of the responses received. The report also seeks approval from Cabinet to formally adopt the Strategy.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 2.1 Considers the findings from the formal consultation exercise undertaken in respect of the draft Aberdare Town Centre Strategy and supporting documents.

- 2.2 Reviews and approves the range of revisions made to the Strategy following completion of the formal consultation.
- 2.3 Approves the final Aberdare Town Centre Strategy (**Appendix 1**) and supports the development of projects under the 'investment themes' included in the Strategy.

### **3.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 Town centres continue to face unprecedented challenges following the global COVID-19 pandemic and the current cost of living crisis. Aberdare Town Centre is no exception and whilst it benefits from the activities of its strong independent business community it nonetheless has seen the departure of a number of important service providers, including banks and large retail operations.
- 3.2 The town has been the recipient of significant investment over the last decade including the redevelopment of several prominent town centre buildings, the creation of high quality secondary and higher education facilities, new industrial floorspace and 'state-of-the-art' leisure and recreational provision. This investment has assisted Aberdare in repositioning itself in the context of significant local and regional opportunities including those associated with the Cardiff Capital Region, the South Wales Metro and the emerging adventure tourism economy.
- 3.3 The Aberdare Town Centre Strategy seeks to build upon this investment momentum, providing a focused and coordinated investment framework which seeks to establish Aberdare Town Centre as a vibrant, dynamic and attractive destination for both residents and visitors to the area. Following a meeting of the Cabinet on **28<sup>th</sup> June 2023**, it was agreed that formal consultation on the draft Strategy and supporting documents should be undertaken following consideration of the findings from an early phase of engagement.

### **4.0 BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 The Council's Corporate Plan, 'Making A Difference' 2020-2024, highlights the Council's commitment to investing in town centres, increasing jobs and homes, to create vibrant, thriving places in which people wish to live, work and socialise. To this end, the Council has committed to the creation of a series of town centre strategies/plans to guide future investment in RCT towns, drawing on each town's unique characteristics. Such documents have already been produced for Mountain Ash, Porth and Pontypridd.
- 4.2 Aberdare has been the recipient of in excess of £100m in investment since 2010 with key investments including:

- New modern industrial units in Robertstown.
- Upgraded facilities at Dare Valley Country Park.
- The Coleg Y Cymoedd Campus.
- Aberdare Community School.
- Aberdare Town Centre Regeneration Project.

4.3 Additionally, several prominent town centre properties have been redeveloped and brought back into use, through a combination of public grant funding and significant private investment, such as the Boot, Old Town Hall and Black Lion. These have delivered a mixture of residential and commercial outcomes, bringing new homes and high-quality hospitality businesses to Aberdare, improving the town's overall offer.

4.4 If the town is to fulfil its potential whilst simultaneously addressing the significant challenges it faces following the COVID 19 pandemic and the current economic downturn, it is vital that a strong strategic approach to future investment is identified and adopted. Future investment needs to be focused and coordinated if the town is to take full advantage of emerging opportunities, such as the South Wales Metro and growing nearby tourism offer, in order to strengthen its regional identity as a great place to visit, work, explore and invest. It is therefore proposed that the Strategy for Aberdare Town Centre will provide an investment framework that builds on Aberdare's considerable strengths and opportunities, whilst acknowledging the challenges it faces.

## **5.0 ABERDARE TOWN CENTRE STRATEGY – SUMMARY**

5.1 The Aberdare Town Centre Strategy has been developed following extensive engagement and consultation with the local and wider community. Early engagement was undertaken by Regeneration officers, between November 2022 and February 2023, to inform the development of a draft Strategy. Details of the findings from the early engagement are presented in **Appendix 2**.

5.2 The resultant draft Strategy was the subject of a period of formal consultation between August and November 2023. The headline findings from the consultation exercise are summarised in paragraphs 6.4 to 6.19 of this report with detailed analysis and the range of comments received presented in **Appendix 3**.

5.3 This early and comprehensive approach to engagement and consultation has ensured that the Strategy is suitably focused, drawing upon local knowledge to ensure that the 'investment themes' included in the Strategy identify and address the issues affecting local people most. This approach has also strengthened existing relationships with the community and stimulated the creation of new relationships with public, private and third sector organisations.

- 5.4 The Aberdare Town Centre Strategy takes account of and responds to a range of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats identified via early engagement and detailed socio-economic analysis. It is set within the context of the Council's Corporate Plan and reflects the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 and the Welsh Government's National Plan 2040 which identified the need to adopt a placemaking approach when considering the creation of such strategies and plans.
- 5.5 The primary focus of the Strategy is that of the Town Centre area of Aberdare, broadly concurrent with the Town Centre Conservation Area, reflecting the Welsh Government's *Town Centres First* Principle. However, the strategy also recognises the inter-relationship between investments within the town centre itself and those within its hinterland as both being of key significance to the town's future.
- 5.6 Section one of the Strategy highlights the role the town centre can play in the local, regional and national context. Exploration of the town's history and heritage is also contained together with mapping of the abundance of listed buildings located within the town centre conservation area. Detail of the placemaking approach adopted and what this means in practice is also contained within this section. Most importantly, this section provides detail of the collaborative SWOT analysis produced, informed by findings from the early engagement, from which a series of priority challenges and opportunities are discussed. These include:
- Overall Appearance and Identity
  - Sustainable Towns and Communities
  - Tourism and Visitor Economy
  - Built Environment
  - Business Development
- 5.7 Analysis and discussion around these priority challenges and opportunities informed the creation of an overall vision and corresponding set of strategic objectives for the strategy.
- 5.8 In section two, a vision for the future of Aberdare Town Centre is clearly set out, which is: ***"To build upon Aberdare's unique heritage and strategic location to create a more vibrant, dynamic and attractive destination for both local residents and visitors to the area"***.

To realise this vision, the following strategic objectives are outlined within the strategy:

- Improving the sustainability of Aberdare town centre through increasing visitor footfall and capturing a greater share of visitor spend.

- Maximising the utilisation of sites and premises within the town centre to diversify and intensify the range of services and amenities available to local people and visitors.
- Improving utilisation and safe use of public spaces and amenities through enhancing street-level activity and the provision of better connections with nearby destinations.
- Supporting the development of a greater variety of businesses within the town that satisfy emerging opportunities from both growing visitor demands and local needs.
- Enhancing Aberdare Town Centre's overall appearance and identity as a great place to live, work and visit.

5.9 Following this, the strategy then proposes six investment themes focused upon realising these strategic objectives. They are:

1. The redevelopment and re-use of existing under-utilised, vacant or derelict buildings within the town centre to accommodate high quality restaurants, visitor accommodation, workspaces and a unique retail offering.
2. Working with Aberdare's local businesses and wider community to bring the story of Aberdare to life, making the town's heritage and offering more visible and strengthening its conservation area.
3. Strengthening Aberdare town centre's identity as a desirable place to live, work and visit through enhancing the visitor experience, building on the existing and growing tourism offer and enhancing marketing and promotion.
4. Improvement and promotion of active travel routes, including provision of enhanced wayfinding signage, within the town centre and to nearby destinations, such as Dare Valley Country Park, Aberdare Park and Cynon Valley Museum.
5. Further enhancement of public open spaces in the town centre, including supporting bio-diversity, to create high quality outdoor spaces capable of supporting new business and leisure opportunities and hosting events to animate the town.
6. Exploration of partnerships between public, private, educational and community actors, building on the good work of the 'Our Aberdare' Bid to establish new initiatives to support local businesses to make the best of emerging opportunities, such as the growing tourism and visitor economy.

## **6.0 FORMAL PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

6.1 Following approval from Cabinet on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2023, a period of formal consultation was undertaken in respect of the draft Strategy and supporting documents between August 2023 and November 2023.

6.2 A range of methods were used to consult with the local and wider community including:

- **An online survey** with interactive quick polls, made available on the RCT Let's Talk website. Digital copies of the Draft Strategy and supporting documents were also made available online in both Welsh and English.
- **A series of in-person events** at various locations in and around the town centre where paper copies of the survey, Draft Strategy and supporting documents were available to take away.
- **Leaflets and posters** were delivered to businesses and organisations within the town centre to promote the consultation.
- **A physical exhibition**, held at Aberdare Library, with detailed information about the development of the Draft Strategy and previous early engagement. Paper copies of the Draft Strategy, online survey and supporting documents were available for collection.
- **Social media posts and emails** were also published throughout the consultation to promote all methods of consultation. A press release outlining key information about the consultation was published on the Council's website and circulated via social media platforms and news outlets such as Wales online and GTFM. Our Aberdare Business Improvement District (BID) sent electronic newsletters and social media posts raising awareness of the consultation.

6.3 Summary of online consultation findings

6.4 Online consultation used the Let's Talk online engagement platform, which provides a user friendly and interactive form of engagement. The "Let's Talk Aberdare" project provided key information, including dates, documents, and graphics to outline the background to the Aberdare Town Centre Strategy, engagement tools including online polls and a survey were also used. The online consultation activities ran from the 7<sup>th</sup> August to the 18<sup>th</sup> September.

6.5 A total of 142 completed surveys were received, including the results from a number of paper copies which were available in Aberdare Library for people to pick up, fill in and then post into a secure box. Freepost envelopes were also provided at the library. For the purposes of this report, any blank responses to individual questions have been discounted. Therefore, all percentages quoted are a percentage of the total responses for that individual question.

6.6 Hard copies of the survey and summary version of the Draft strategy were also shared with several groups of students at Aberdare Community School, Aberdare Park Primary School, Aberdare Town Church in Wales Primary School and YGG Aberdar. Overall, 30 young people took part in the survey from the schools listed above.

6.7 Summary of online consultation key findings:

- 142 survey responses were received, with a further 17 responses to the "Quick Poll" function on the website.

- 63.8% said that the strategy accurately describes the town's strengths.
- 80.4% said that the strategy accurately describes the town's key threats and challenges.
- 69.3% agreed with the different opportunities that could be explored in and around the Town Centre.
- 86.4% of respondents 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' with the strategy's overall vision for Aberdare town centre.
- A high majority of respondents 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' with the strategy's five main strategic objectives.
- 77.5% of respondents supported each of the strategies investment themes.
- 17 respondents took part in Poll 1 on the Let's Talk website. 64.7% agreed that the draft strategy accurately captures the range of key opportunities and challenges facing Aberdare town centre.
- 65.5% of young people surveyed, agreed that the Draft Strategy accurately described the town's strengths.
- The majority of young people strongly agreed or agreed with the strategic objectives.
- The majority of young people surveyed, supported the investment themes.

See **Appendix 3** for more detailed findings from the formal consultation.

#### 6.8 Summary of in-person findings

- 6.9 In addition to online consultation activities, a series of in-person events took place in and around the town centre. These events were spread over the period the online survey was live, providing people with an opportunity to speak with Council regeneration officers to share their views on the Draft Strategy and/or ask questions.
- 6.10 At the same time, targeted feedback was sought from key stakeholders who engaged in the early engagement exercise undertaken between November and February 2023. This feedback has been included in the findings outlined in this section.
- 6.11 The in-person events took place on the following dates and times:
- Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> August - 10am-1pm at Aberdare Library, Aberdare.
  - Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> August - 10am-1pm at Hirwaun Library, Hirwaun.
  - Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> August - 4pm-7pm at Sobell Leisure Centre, Aberdare.
  - Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> August - 10am-1pm at Cynon Linc, Aberdare.
  - Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> September - 10am – 1pm at Llwydcoed Community Centre.
  - Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> September - 10am – 1pm at ASDA Carpark Cwmbach.
- 6.12 Paper copies of the draft strategy, supporting documents and online survey were available to take away at each event together with freepost envelopes to enable the survey to be posted back to the Council. A QR code was also available to enable attendees to access the online survey.

- 6.13 Approximately 50 people attended the in-person events. Attendees ranged in demographic and represented a range of communities in and around Aberdare town centre. Many younger adults attended the event at the Sobell Leisure Centre on 15<sup>th</sup> August, 4pm to 7pm.
- 6.14 The following key themes were identified within the verbal feedback received at the in-person events:
- 6.15 **Strong support for improving the overall appearance of the town centre and improving the promotion of the town's existing offer, including:**
- Vacant shop windows identified as an opportunity
  - Need for better, more interactive visitor information identified
  - Ideas shared about enhanced promotion of the town's offer, specifically events.
  - Enforcement of conservation area rules highlighted as key challenge together with celebration of the old buildings.
- 6.16 **Strong support for focusing on the town's identity as an Adventure Tourism destination, to convert day visitors to weekend stays:**
- Via improving links with ZIP World / Bike Park Wales to be explored.
  - Opportunities identified to introduce unique experience-based businesses to new Robertstown industrial units.
  - More to be made of abundance of walking and cycling routes to and from the town.
- 6.17 **Strong support for 'Diversifying the Offer' and building on the growing programme of events held locally:**
- Need for different offer for different generations identified, particularly more things for the younger generation.
  - Opportunity to build on recent successful events to establish a strong annual programme.
  - More vibrancy needed on the streets within the town centre, maybe by outdoor markets/activities.
- 6.18 **Strong support for collaboration and partnership working, with a focus on the strong existing network of community groups already doing great work:**
- Need identified for a joined-up approach where the Council acts in a facilitation/enabling role.
  - Discussions had about the challenges that young people are encountering with finding local groups to join with similar interests to them.
  - Suggestion of a bigger community presence on the high street to create a space where people can go to find out about activities in and around the town centre, available grants/funding, how to book community facilities, local groups to join etc.



Please see **Appendix 3** for more detail about the findings from the formal consultation.

## **7.0 STRATEGY REVISIONS POST FORMAL CONSULTATION**

7.1 As can be seen from the summary of formal consultation findings, overall there is strong support for the vision, strategic objectives and investment themes contained within the Aberdare Town Centre Strategy. Positively, most felt the strategy captured the full range of opportunities and challenges evident within the town and agreed that the strategy is suitably focused and relevant.

7.2 In this context, the draft Strategy has undergone a final review to identify opportunities to further strengthen the document via integration of key points raised by the local and wider community during the formal consultation. The resulting final Strategy incorporates the following revisions:

- More specific about the type of tourism referred to in the strategy. Adventure tourism was identified as a key opportunity together with building on the town's green credentials and making more of the opportunities to enjoy the natural landscape. Therefore, these aspects have been strengthened in the strategy.
- More acknowledgement of the need to support and encourage the Welsh Language through locally led initiatives, including how the younger generation can get involved particularly given that they are learning the language at school.
- Strengthen focus on opportunities for new development in and around the 'Market Quarter', building on the considerable asset that the market represents to the town. This includes identification of opportunities to increase support for small businesses/start-ups.
- Integrate consideration of how greater representation of under-represented ethnic groups is facilitated on the High street.
- Revision of the wording describing Aberdare as an accessible town. Whilst this was intended to refer to the flatter topography surrounding Aberdare Town Centre, the use of language isn't clear. Clear concerns about the accessibility for those with disabilities were identified during the formal consultation and these will be considered during project development and implementation.
- Inclusion of reference to the nearby Wetlands and the great work that the group there have been doing. Identification of this work could tie into other initiatives mentioned in the strategy.
- Increase acknowledgement of the opportunity to utilise vacant shop

windows to promote the town's offer and tell the story of Aberdare.

- As part of the investment theme focused on routes and connection, identification of improvements to existing routes will be considered.
- Strengthening the description of the location of the town centre, including the outstanding natural landscape, and acknowledge the considerable strength and opportunity this presents.
- Inclusion of reference to the existing strong network of local groups and organisation in the Strategy which includes identification of the considerable strength that this network presents.
- Acknowledgement of the recent positive momentum in the town including the range of events and activities delivered.

7.3 Incorporation of these revisions serves to further strengthen the relevancy and focus of the strategy both as a formal policy document and as a framework to coordinate future investment within the town centre.

## **8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY**

8.1 The Council must satisfy its public sector duties under the Equalities Act 2010 (including specific Welsh public sector duties). Pursuant to these legal duties, Council's must in making decisions, have due regard to the need to (1) eliminate unlawful discrimination, (2) advance equality of opportunity and (3) foster good relations based on protected characteristics.

8.2 The impact and potential benefits that the strategy may have on a diverse variety of different socio-economic groups has been a key consideration during the preparation of the strategy. Key questions about how the town centre currently works for such groups were included in early engagement to enable generation of a baseline review of what currently works well and what could be improved. The findings from these early questions greatly informed the content of the Strategy to ensure that the proposed 'investment themes' acknowledge the most pressing issued identified.

8.3 Preparation of the Equality and Socio-Economic Impact Assessment has been an iterative, transparent process through which feedback and input has been sought from various key stakeholders. Importantly, a 'working draft' of the assessment was shared online via the Council's 'Let's Talk' page as part of the formal consultation, to provide a key opportunity for scrutiny and review. Positively, no comments were received in relation to the 'working draft' but key points were discussed during in-person formal consultation events the detail of which can be seen at **Appendix 3**.

- 8.4 Following completion of the formal consultation, the 'working draft' impact assessment has been subject to detailed review and revision to incorporate the findings from the formal consultation and feedback from internal departments. The final Equality and Socio-Economic Impact Assessment can be seen at **Appendix 4** and has been subjected to review at the internal review panel undertaken on the 28<sup>th</sup> November 2023.
- 8.5 Overall, the Equality and Socio-Economic Impact of the strategy is anticipated to be positive given that the quality of life for everyone will be improved if realisation of the Strategy's vision and strategic objectives is achieved.

## **9.0 WELSH LANGUAGE IMPACT ASSESMENT**

- 9.1 The impact and potential benefits that the strategy may have on the Welsh Language has been a key consideration during the preparation of the strategy. Key questions about how the town centre currently works for such groups were included in early engagement to enable generation of a baseline review of how the Welsh Language is currently supported and promoted within the town centre. The findings from these early questions greatly informed the content of the Strategy to ensure that the proposed 'investment themes' acknowledge the most pressing issued identified.
- 9.2 Adopting the same approach to the Equality and Socio-Economic Impact Assessment, a 'working draft' of the Welsh Language Impact Assessment was shared online via the Council's 'Let's Talk' page as part of the formal consultation, to provide a key opportunity for scrutiny and review. Positively, no comments were received in relation to the 'working draft' but key points were discussed during in-person formal consultation events the detail of which can be seen at **Appendix 3**.
- 9.3 Following completion of the formal consultation, the 'working draft' impact assessment has been subject to detailed review and revision to incorporate the findings from the formal consultation and feedback from internal departments. The final Equality and Socio-Economic Impact Assessment can be seen at **Appendix 4** and has been subjected to review at the internal review panel undertaken on the 28<sup>th</sup> November 2023.
- 9.4 It is anticipated that the overall impact of the Strategy on the Welsh Language, within Aberdare Town Centre, will be positive if the overall vision and strategic objectives are realised.

## **10.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 There are no financial implications in respect of the development of the Aberdare Town Centre Strategy but as actions/projects are developed, the financial implications will be fully assessed and reported as appropriate.

## **11.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

- 11.1 There are no current legal implications, but as the opportunities are developed, the legal implications will be fully assessed.

## **12.0 THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT**

- 12.1 The development of the Town Centre Strategy for Aberdare greatly contributes to achieving the Council's corporate commitment, as outlined within the Council's Corporate Plan 'Making A Difference' 2020-2024. This includes developing town centre strategies for all principal town centres, within RCT, which value the uniqueness of each town whilst optimising potential benefits from emerging opportunities. Therefore, the series of proposed investment themes, contained within the Draft Strategy, have been developed to help focus and coordinate future investment within the town centre. This ensures that corporate priorities including supporting new and existing businesses to expand, tackling empty or rundown sites/premises and enhancing visitor infrastructure to support a growing local tourism offer are realised.
- 12.2 The Strategy also strongly supports the realisation of the Council's key objective of 'Making Rhondda Cynon Taf Carbon Neutral by 2030', as outlined within the RCTCBC Think Climate Strategy (2022-2025) through:
- Supporting the diversification and expansion of the range of facilities and amenities available within the town centre to increase the town's self-sufficiency and to reduce the need for people to travel elsewhere.
  - Enhancement of active travel connectivity to and from the town centre to make it easier for people to choose sustainable modes of transport.
  - Working with local and wider community groups to develop local sustainable solutions to global problems, such as climate change.
  - Raising awareness of the Council's Net Zero ambition via local-level action planning with a focus on the role that the younger generation may play in championing sustainable initiatives.
  - Ensuring that all new physical developments utilise energy-efficient technologies whilst working with existing local business and property

owners to retrofit energy-efficient technologies to reduce the town centre's reliance on non-renewable energy sources.

- 12.3 Such a focus on town centres is also strongly supported by the Welsh Government's 'Town Centre First' policy within its Future Wales National Plan 2040. The policy advocates for a town centre first approach via which the health and vibrancy of town centres is the starting point of locational decision-making. The policy also highlights the important multi-functional role that town centres are increasingly playing within communities, providing a diverse range of facilities and amenities, and therefore the growth and regeneration of such centres is a key national priority.
- 12.4 Additionally, the Strategy is synonymous with the principles of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (2015) as evidenced by a thorough evaluation of the proposed investment themes against the Act's 'Severn Social Wellbeing Goals' (see page 36 and 37 of the Draft Strategy). Importantly, the younger generation have been involved in the development of the Draft Strategy, via early engagement, and therefore the focus of the draft strategy reflects the views and ideas of future generations. Importantly, the design and development of local level projects will be subject to further comprehensive evaluation to ensure that the potential contribution of all future investment, within the town centre, to realisation of the Act's Seven Social Wellbeing Goals is maximised.
- 12.5 Finally, the Strategy strongly supports the Welsh Government's Sustainable Development approach and the way in which the Draft Strategy has been developed reflects the 'five ways of working' which include:
- **Involvement:** As outlined in section 5 of this report, a wide range of internal and external stakeholders, including local residents, organisations and businesses, have been involved in the development of the Draft Strategy, strengthening the relevance and quality of the Draft Strategy and supporting the development of a sense of local ownership.
  - **Long-term:** The Draft Strategy provides a long-term sustainable vision for the future, more diverse role that Aberdare Town Centre can play for local and wider communities and outlines how this will be achieved via a series of strategic objectives and corresponding investment themes.
  - **Prevention:** The Draft Strategy aims to help prevent any decline of the Town Centre by providing a framework via which targeted future investment can be focused and coordinated to address existing and future challenges combined with optimising potential benefits from taking full advantage of existing and emerging opportunities. The diversification of the town centre's offer is critical to further strengthening the multi-faceted role that the town centre can play as a focal point for local and wider communities.

- **Integration:** The Draft Strategy is synonymous with corporate and national priorities including those associated with town centre first approaches, tourism and sustainability. It is important to note that the Draft Town Centre Strategy provides a framework via which achievement of corporate and national priorities can be achieved at a 'local-level'.
- **Collaboration:** The Draft strategy promotes a collaborative way of working and the way in which the Draft Strategy has been developed reflects the Council's commitment to working with public, private and third sector partners to ensure that future investment, within the town centre, maximises benefits for all. Partnership working is a key priority, within the draft strategy, and is the focus of Investment Theme Six which promotes the development of new initiatives via working with the local actors, for example the BID, social enterprises, Aberdare market company.

### **13.0 CONCLUSIONS & NEXT STEPS**

- 13.1 The Aberdare Town Centre Strategy provides a clear framework through which future investment within the town can be coordinated. The findings from the formal public consultation clearly indicate strong support for the vision, strategic objectives and investment themes contained within the Strategy. It is therefore recommended that Cabinet approve and adopt the Strategy.

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