

WELSH LANGUAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT TOOL

This Welsh Language Impact Assessment (WLIS) tool enables RCT Council to consider the principles and requirements of the [Welsh Language Standards \(No.1\) Regulations 2015](#) to ensure compliance with the [Welsh Language \(Wales\) Measure 2011](#).

Stage 1 – Information Gathering

NOTE: As you complete this tool you will be asked for **evidence to support your views**. Please see [Welsh Language Impact Assessment Guidance](#) for more information on data sources.

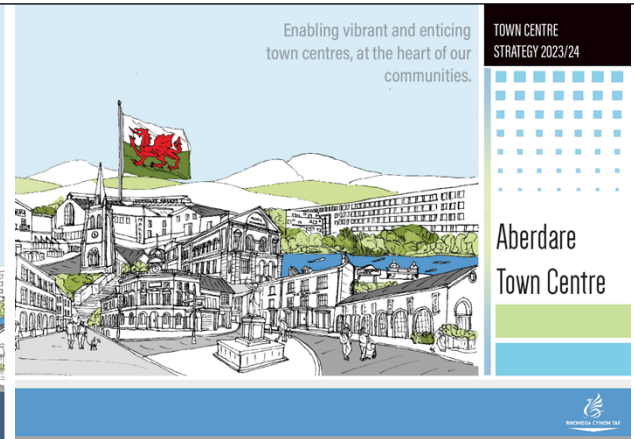
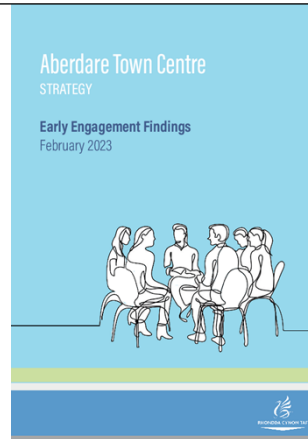
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| Proposal Name: | Aberdare Town Centre Strategy |
| Department | Prosperity and Development |
| Service Director | Derek James |
| Officer Completing the WLIA | Emma Halford |
| Email | Emma.halford@rctcbc.gov.uk |
| Phone | 01443 281120 |
| Brief Description | <p>The principal town of Aberdare acts as the focal point for numerous communities within northern RCT. However, the town centre has faced considerable challenges in recent years including the continued growth of online shopping, the lasting impact of COVID-19 and the current cost of living crisis.</p> <p>Significant investment, in excess of £100m to-date, within the town has supported the delivery of several key projects delivering new high-quality leisure, educational and light-industrial facilities. However, continued investment is vital if the town is to fully maximise opportunities associated with its proximity to nearby tourism attractions, strong history and heritage and resilient business and local community. It is therefore essential that all future investment is delivered via a co-ordinated and ‘joined-up’ approach to maximise potential benefits and ensure a clear contribution is made to establishing Aberdare Town Centre as a great place to live, work and visit.</p> |


A Town Centre Strategy has been prepared to act as a central framework through which coordination of future investment within the town centre can be delivered. It includes a series of investment themes from which potential projects may be identified to enable Aberdare Town Centre to strengthen its identity as a great place to live, work and visit. These themes respond to the range of challenges and opportunities identified via extensive early engagement with key stakeholder groups and robust socio-economic analysis.

Early engagement, with key stakeholder groups, was undertaken to inform the development of the Draft Town Centre Strategy from November 2022 to February 2023 and consisted of the following:

- A series of in-person workshops with local councillors, RCTCBC staff, the Our Aberdare BID Board and local primary and secondary school children. Tasks undertaken included the creation of a SWOT analysis of the town, prioritisation of a series of suggested investment themes and discussions around what more could be done to promote the Welsh language within the town.
- An online survey asked respondents to identify evident strengths, opportunities, weaknesses and threats within the town and to prioritise a series of investment themes. The survey also included key questions regarding equality and diversity and asked respondents to consider how well the Welsh Language is currently promoted within the town centre and whether more could be done to improve this.
- Findings from this early engagement can be found in the Early Engagement Findings Report, embedded below. Also embedded below is the Formal Consultation Findings Report, Aberdare Town Centre Strategy and Cabinet Report. Click on the image to access the document.

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF
 RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
 CABINET
 19 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 MORRIS)
 Author: Emma Mafford, Project Officer

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this report is to:

- 1.1 Advise Cabinet of the key findings from the formal consultation exercise undertaken in respect of the draft Aberdare Town Centre Strategy and supporting documents.
- 1.2 Provide detail of the revisions made to the draft Strategy following consideration of the formal consultation findings.
- 1.3 Seek approval from Cabinet to adopt the final Aberdare Town Centre Strategy and support the development of projects under the 'investment themes' included in 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.

Following completion of this early engagement, together with consideration of the findings, a Draft Strategy was produced. This Draft Strategy was developed by the Council's Regeneration team and took account of the range of challenges and opportunities identified in collaboration with the local and wider community, via early engagement, and provided detail of a series of proposed investment themes. Following submission of the Draft Strategy to Cabinet in June 2023, a phase of formal public consultation was undertaken from early August to the end of September 2023. 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.

Overview of 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.
- More than 77.5% of respondents supported each of the strategy's 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.
- 30 young people from 4 schools took part overall.
- 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.

Details of the findings from the formal consultation can be found in the Formal Consultation Findings Report embedded at the beginning of this document.

Following completion of the formal consultation, the findings were considered carefully, and revisions were made to the Draft Strategy. Key revisions include (but are not limited to):

- Increased specificity 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 Highstreet.
- Revision of the wording describing Aberdare as an accessible town. Whilst this was intended to refer to the flatter topography surround 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

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| | <p>will be considered during project development and implementation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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, reference to connections to the new Robertstown units has been included due to poor existing pedestrian connections identified. • 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. <p>Please see the following cabinet report, embedded at the start of this document, for full details of how the Draft Strategy was revised following the formal consultation.</p> |
| Date | 23.11.2023 |
| Please outline who this proposal affects? (Service Users, Employees, Wider Community) | The Aberdare Town Centre Strategy will affect Service Users, Employees and the Wider Community. |

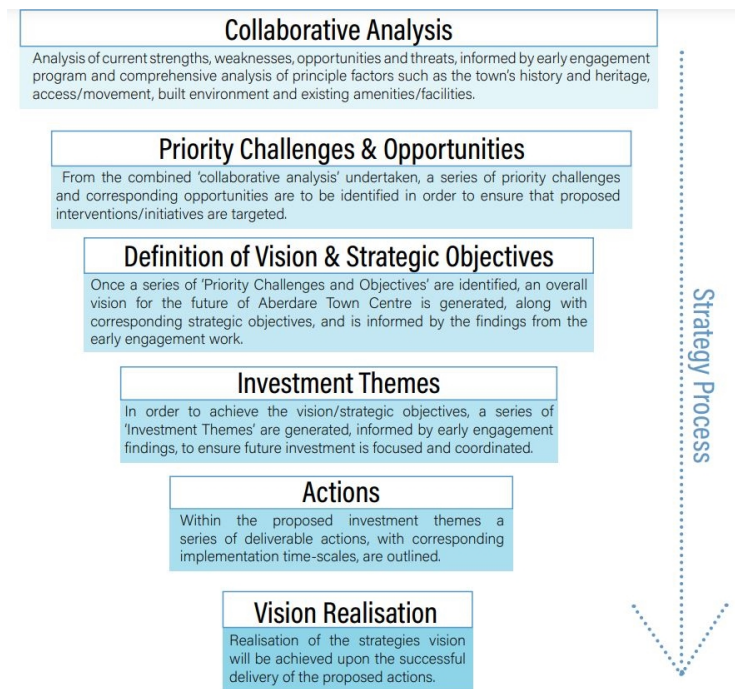
What are the aims of the policy, and how do these relate to the Welsh Language?

One of the key principles underpinning the strategy is that of ‘Placemaking’. Placemaking is a collaborative process for creating sustainable places whilst maximising well-being and is a key priority in Wales as outlined in Planning Policy Wales. Placemaking requires a place to be viewed in its entirety, rather than focus being placed on isolated components. In this way, consideration has been given to Aberdare Town Centre’s ‘sense of place’ and local and regional identity influenced by physical, social, cultural and historical factors. In this context, the Welsh language has a key role to play in contributing to the town’s sense of place via an enhanced connection to the historic language and associated cultural influences.

A robust spatial analysis of the town centre has been undertaken to analyse key placemaking factors such as the movement, built environment, public realm and existing amenities/facilities. Such analysis has been considered in conjunction with extensive findings from early engagement undertaken with key stakeholder groups. This engagement included discussions about how well the Welsh language is currently promoted within the town and whether more could be done. The findings from such spatial analysis and engagement have informed the creation of the draft strategy which will act as a central framework to help focus and co-ordinate future investment within the town centre to strengthen the town’s identity as a great place to live, work and visit.

A key aim for the strategy has been to ensure that the investment themes proposed respond effectively to current challenges and opportunities within the town centre. In order to achieve this, early engagement has been essential to provide an up-to-date, locally informed review of the full range of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing the town centre, in order to ensure that the proposed investment themes are both relevant and deliverable.

The process through which the draft strategy has been developed is outlined in the image below:



The Strategy focuses on a set of priority challenges and opportunities, informed by the findings from 'collaborative analysis', which are presented under the following broad headings:

- Overall Appearance and Identity
- Sustainable Towns and Communities
- Tourism and Visitor Economy
- Built Environment
- Business Development

A thorough evaluation of the identified priority challenges and opportunities is contained within the strategy and from this a vision and set of corresponding strategic objectives derived. In order to achieve the strategy's overall vision/strategic objectives, a series of investment themes are proposed for which future actions (i.e projects/interventions) will have to respond to.

The Strategy will act as a key, overarching document to coordinate future investment within the town centre. In this context, the strategy does not contain details of specific projects and interventions, to support the realisation of the overall vision/strategic objectives, but instead provides the framework for which these can be derived. Specific projects and interventions will be developed in collaboration with key stakeholders to most effectively respond to the full range of opportunities identified within the strategy.

However, whilst the strategy does not outline specific actions, it is committed to Welsh Language Policy, and does identify a number of opportunities, within the investment themes, to further support promotion of the language within the town centre. These include:

- Exploration of enhanced opportunities to learn and speak the Welsh Language within the town centre through adoption of a 'have a go' approach.
- Improvements to signage would make it easier for both English and Welsh speakers to navigate the town centre.
- Stronger partnership working with key Welsh language organisations to ensure better integration of the language into the development and delivery of projects.
- Enhanced programme of Welsh language events (maximising potential benefits associated with The National Eisteddfod coming to RCT in 2024).
- Celebration of Welsh culture, including a focus on the language, via signage/exhibitions at key locations within the town centre developed via collaborations with local community groups.
- Improvements to the town's digital and physical marketing.

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| <p>Who will benefit / Could the policy affect Welsh language groups? If so, list them here.</p> | <p>Successful development and delivery of projects that contribute positively to achieving the strategy’s overall vision and strategic objectives may provide potential benefits to a wide range of people including those who visit, live, study, work and own/manage businesses in Aberdare Town Centre.</p> <p>Implementation of the strategy will have an impact on Welsh language groups and any potential impact on these groups will be considered carefully as and when specific projects/interventions undergo further development and consultation.</p> <p>Clear opportunities exist, within the town, to explore opportunities to enhance the awareness of the Welsh Language and provide support to businesses to better integrate the language into day-to-day operations. Such opportunities will serve to increase the language’s visibility on the Highstreet and maximise the transfer of language skills from residents to visitors. It is in this context, that any impact on Welsh Language groups is anticipated to be positive.</p> <p>The National Eisteddfod, to be hosted in RCT in 2024, is also a strong opportunity to shine a light on the Welsh language within the town centre via an enhanced programme of events etc.</p> |
| <p>Current linguistic profile of the geographical area(s) concerned</p> | <p>The 2021 Census figures regarding the Welsh language show a decrease in the percentage of Welsh speakers across Wales to 17.8%. There was, however, a small increase in RCT – the percentage of the population of the county borough who can speak Welsh increased from 12.3% to 12.4%. Numerically, RCT saw a 2.8% increase in the number of Welsh speakers in the county borough, from 27,779 speakers to 28,556 speakers. RCT was also one of only four LAs in Wales to see an increase in the percentage of Welsh speakers – the others were Cardiff, the Vale of Glamorgan and Merthyr Tudful. All of these are neighbouring county boroughs, which could demonstrate that our region is seeing some positive trends in terms of increases in Welsh speakers, and that there may be a resulting increase in demand for services through the medium of Welsh. As further, more detailed, data from the Census becomes available for RCT (e.g. LSOA data), we will need to consider what impact it may have on the services we provide.</p> <p>The target Aberdare Settlement Area has a population of circa 32,000, which represents 13.46% of RCT’s overall population of 237,700. 187,137 people have no skills in Welsh, which represents 78.7% of the population. This compares with the Welsh average of 74.8%.</p> |

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| | <p>23,345 people can speak and read and write in Welsh, which represents 9.8% of the population. This compares with the Welsh average of 14.2%. 9,261 people are able to understand spoken Welsh, which represents 3.9% of the population. This compares with the Welsh average of 5.2%.</p> <p>(Source: Census 2021)</p> |
| <p>Other relevant data or research</p> | <p>Aberdare Town Centre - Early Engagement Findings</p> <p>Online Survey</p> <p>An online survey was published on the Council’s RCT Let’s Talk Website, between November 2022 and January 2023, and received 614 responses. Specific questions regarding the Welsh Language were included in the survey and the findings from these can be found below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The majority of those that engaged with the survey identified as having a Welsh National Identity. ○ Whilst the majority of those that responded do not speak Welsh, 27% said that they are learning Welsh and 7% of respondents stated that they are fluent. ○ 251 respondents felt that the Welsh Language was promoted ‘Well Enough’ within the town centre. However, 185 respondents felt that ‘More Could Be Done’ to improve the promotion of the Welsh Language. ○ Over 100 respondents input suggestions as to how the Welsh Language could be better promoted within the town centre and these included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “Capitalising on the 2024 Eisteddfod to raise the profile of the Welsh Language” ▪ “Encourage shop staff to converse in simple Welsh” ▪ “Provide businesses with bilingual orientation signs” ▪ “Create a Welsh speaking area/zone within the town where people can go to practice their Welsh” ▪ “Offer free courses in the town centre” ▪ “More Welsh themes days and events” ▪ “Build on the strong Welsh history” |

- However, it is important to note that a large percentage of those that responded felt that the promotion of the Welsh Language was not a priority, given the considerable economic challenges and uncertain future that the town faces.

In-person Workshops

As part of the Early Engagement work, a series of in-person workshops were delivered at Sobell Leisure Centre, Aberdare between November 2022 and February 2023. Over 40 different stakeholders were engaged in these workshops including local Councillors, members of the 'Our Aberdare' BID Board, RCTCBC staff, young people from both Welsh and English-speaking primary and secondary schools. An open discussion was held at each workshop in relation to 'How well the Welsh Language is currently promoted within the town' and 'What could be done to improve this?'. The findings from these discussions are summarised below:

Younger Generation:

- All groups felt that more could be done to promote the Welsh Language within the town centre. Students from the Welsh speaking school would welcome more opportunities to speak Welsh within the town and students from the non-welsh speaking school explained that they are all learning Welsh but would not currently attempt to speak it outside of school.
- Suggestions for improvements included making a more friendly atmosphere around 'having a go' at speaking the language which may include younger people acting as champions for the language within the town centre.

All other workshops:

- All attendees, from all workshops, agreed that 'more could be done' to promote the Welsh Language within the town centre. Suggestions for how this might be achieved included:
 - "Encouraging basic Welsh signage in shops/facilities within the town to integrate the language into everyday life"
 - "Address negativity around not speaking Welsh 'correctly' and try to foster a more inclusive environment within which Welsh is spoken"
 - "Introduce more 'give it a go' activities in the town that provide accessible opportunities for people to learn small amounts of Welsh, frequently."
 - "Signage throughout the town could be improved."
 - "Could the BID support promotion of the Welsh Language in the town?"

In addition to early engagement, formal consultation was also undertaken between August and November 2023. 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.
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Key Findings:

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- A high majority of respondents 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' with the strategy's five main strategic objectives.
- More than 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.
- 30 young people from 4 schools took part overall.
- 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.

Stage 2 – Impact Assessment

In this section you need to consider the impact, the evidence and any action you are taking for improvement. This is to ensure that the opportunities for people who choose to live their lives and access services through the medium of Welsh are not inferior to what is afforded to those choosing to do so in English, in accordance with the requirement of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

Please note there is a separate impact assessment for Equality and Socio-Economic duty that must also be completed for policy proposals.

Remember that effects that are positive for some groups could be detrimental to others - even among Welsh language groups. Consider the effects on different groups. For example, a proposal may be beneficial to Welsh learners, but not to Welsh speakers.

Will the proposed action affect any or all of the following?

| | Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts? | Describe why it will have a positive/negative or neutral impact on the Welsh language. | What evidence do you have to support this view? | What action(s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts? |
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| <p>Opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language</p> <p>e.g. staff, residents and visitors</p> <p>The rights of Welsh speakers and learners to use Welsh when dealing with the council and for staff to use Welsh at Work</p> | <p>Positive</p> | <p>Theme 1: Redevelopment and re-use of existing underutilised, vacant or derelict buildings to accommodate a new, diverse offering.</p> <p>Several large-scale properties within the town centre remain vacant and/or underutilised and have the potential to be redeveloped to provide a mix of amenities to help diversity the town's offering. A key priority, under this theme, is to reduce the size of current large-scale retail units to provide smaller, more affordable spaces for local businesses to let. Increasing the number of smaller, locally-owned businesses can subsequently increase opportunities for increased use of the Welsh Language within the town centre. Locally-owned businesses, in comparison to large multi-national companies, are more committed to the place in which they become established. In this context, all opportunities to support the use of the Welsh Language, by existing and new businesses, will be explored fully. This ties into key priorities under Theme 6.</p> <p>Theme 2: Bringing the history and heritage of Aberdare to life.</p> | <p>Aberdare Town Centre Strategy</p> <p>The Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Well-Being Goal - A Wales of Vibrant Culture & Thriving Welsh Language.</i> <p>Planning Policy Wales – Edition 11</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>The Welsh Language and Placemaking.</i> <p>Welsh Language Promotion Strategy 2022-2017 (RCTCBC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Theme 2 – Increasing the Use of Welsh</i> ▪ <i>Aims: Social Use of Welsh</i> ▪ <i>Theme 3 - Creating favourable conditions for the Welsh language</i> ▪ <i>Aims – Community & Economy / Culture & Media</i> | <p>Whilst the Town Centre Strategy does not provide detail of specific projects/interventions, due to these being the subject of further development, mitigation to prevent any negative impacts will be carefully considered. Conversely, where opportunities are identified to strengthen potential positive impacts on the Welsh Language, during the development of projects/initiatives, these will also be explored fully.</p> <p>Examples of how this can be achieved include:</p> <p>Identifying spaces, either indoor or outside, that can provide opportunities to deliver projects that ensure that the Welsh Language can thrive.</p> <p>Exploring opportunities for the Welsh Language to be given prominence and promoted as part of the delivery of targeted</p> |
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| | Positive | <p>Working with Aberdare’s local business and wider community, the town’s unique story, of which the Welsh Language is part of, will be brought to life through enhance interpretation, creative story-telling and physical improvements to key elements of the townscape. All interpretation signage will be produced in Welsh and English and all opportunities to enhance the ability of residents and visitors to use the language as part of the creative storey-telling will be explored fully. Collaboration with local creative groups, including Welsh Speaking Groups, will be explored to ensure that the new interpretation optimises the use of the Welsh Language. Events, as part of projects under this theme, will provide enhanced opportunities for the use of the Welsh Language within the town centre.</p> <p>Theme 3: Enhancing the visitor experience and building on the existing and growing tourism offer.</p> <p>Projects delivered under this theme will provide enhanced visitor infrastructure within Aberdare Town Centre to ensure that visitors are aware of the full range of attraction and activities on</p> | | <p>interventions within the town centre. This will present opportunities such as including prominent larger Welsh language font on signage and giving Welsh-only names to new places.</p> <p>Both the town’s cultural and social offer will be a major consideration with the National Eisteddfod is hosted in RCT, in 2024, and any opportunities to maximise potential benefits from this event will be explored.</p> <p>However, Specific projects and interventions that provide enhanced opportunities to use the Welsh Language within the Town Centre will be subject to further development and consultation.</p> <p>As part of the project development process, opportunities for persons to use Welsh Language will be fully explored in line with the Council’s Welsh Language</p> |
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| | Positive | <p>offer. Enhanced marketing and promotional material will integrate the Welsh Language more prominently within the town's overall brand. Findings from early engagement and the formal consultation show that key stakeholder groups feel that more could be done to promote the use of the language within the town centre. In this context, a 'have a go' programme will be explored, working with local Welsh Language groups, with the aim of increasing the use of simple, basic welsh within the town centre on a daily basis. As part of this theme, projects that create dedicated spaces for people to practice conversational welsh will be explored. This will further increase the presence of the language on the high street which in turn will enhance opportunities, for everyone, to learn and speak the language on a day-to-day basis.</p> <p>Theme 4: Improvement/promotion of active travel and enhanced wayfinding signage.</p> <p>Improvement and promotion of existing and new key routes between the town centre and nearby destinations will encourage visitors and residents to explore what Aberdare has to offer!</p> | | <p>Promotion Strategy and other policy objectives.</p> <p>During the development of individual projects, engagement with appropriate welsh language organisations/groups (such as Menter Iaith RCT and Dysgu Cymraeg) will be sought to ensure that projects fully maximise all opportunities to support and promote the Welsh Language. Those developing such projects will also get in touch with the council's Welsh Language service to assist in this process.</p> |
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Projects delivered under this theme will aim to make it easier for residents and visitors to choose sustainable modes of transport reducing Aberdare's carbon footprint. All new signage will be in Welsh and English, to ensure that those who speak Welsh are able to explore the town in the same way as those who speak English.

Theme 5: Enhancement of public open space, biodiversity and programme of events within the town centre.

Further enhancement of public spaces within the town centre will enable a wider range of activities take place in these areas. As part of this theme, on-street dining opportunities will be explored to strengthen both daytime and night-time activity within the town centre. Such enhanced public spaces will also enable the delivery of a more diverse programme of events, building on the town's existing strong calendar of events and activities, within which specific Welsh Language events may be developed to provide enhancement opportunities for both learners and speakers of Welsh to use the language within the town centre.

Theme 6: Support businesses to make the best of emerging opportunities via partnership working.

New initiatives, established via partnership approaches, will aim to support local businesses to make the best of emerging opportunities, such as the growing local and regional tourism offer, associated visitor economy and 'Digital Business Agenda'. Opportunities to support the town centre's business community to better integrate the Welsh Language into their operations may be explored under this theme. Appropriate mitigation measures will be explored to ensure such an initiative does not negatively impact the town's business community. Partnerships between Welsh and non-Welsh speaking businesses may be explored, under this theme, to investigate ways in which the Welsh Language has successfully been integrated by existing business both at their physical premises and online platforms.

Stage 2 – Impact Assessment

Will the proposed action affect any or all of the following?

| | Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts? | Describe why it will have a positive/negative or neutral impact on the Welsh language. | What evidence do you have to support this view? | What action(s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts? |
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| <p>Numbers and / or percentages of Welsh speakers e.g Welsh Medium Education / Study Opportunities. Links with the Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 Strategy / RCTCBC Five Year Welsh Language Strategy</p> | <p>Neutral</p> | <p>The Aberdare Town Centre Strategy is a long-term strategy and is not directly aimed at specific projects or interventions that would increase numbers of Welsh speakers through Welsh Medium Education and Study Opportunities.</p> <p>However, the series of investment themes outlined in the strategy have been informed by findings of early engagement activities and formal consultation. During which, specific questions about the Welsh Language were explored, with many feeling that more could be done to promote the Welsh Language within Aberdare town centre. The strategy does therefore support the promotion of the Welsh Language within the town and opportunities to increase the use</p> | <p>Aberdare Town Centre Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Objective 5 (pg.30) • Investment Theme 3 (pg. 31) • Evaluation of Strategy against Well-Being of Future Generations Goals (pg. 35/36) | <p>When the Town Centre Strategy enters its delivery phase, the opportunity to increase numbers of Welsh speakers will be assessed through the development and consultation for specific projects and interventions.</p> <p>Opportunities to mitigate any negative impacts and increase potential benefits from specific projects will be identified by working with and involving representatives from local Welsh Speaking organisations in the development and delivery of specific projects.</p> <p>By working with the existing Welsh speaking community,</p> |

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| | | <p>of Welsh will be supported, as and when specific projects/interventions are delivered.</p> | | <p>opportunities may be generated to identify key locations/spaces within the town centre to promote the language and increase the number of Welsh speakers.</p> <p>Wider opportunities to raise the profile of the language may also be explored as part of RCT hosting the National Eisteddfod in 2024. Clear opportunities exist to develop smaller, town centre focused events, whilst the National Eisteddfod is in RCT, to create a ‘buzz’ around the language and increase numbers of Welsh learners and speakers.</p> <p>During the development of individual projects, engagement with appropriate Welsh language organisations/groups (such as Menter Iaith RCT and Dysgu Cymraeg) will be sought to ensure that projects fully maximise all opportunities to support and promote the Welsh Language. Those developing such projects will also get in touch with the council’s Welsh</p> |
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| | | | | Language service to assist in this process. |
| <p>Opportunities to promote the Welsh language e.g. status, use of Welsh language services, use of Welsh in everyday life in work and in the community</p> <p>Actively encourage and promote the use of our services in Welsh to see an increase in demand over time</p> | Positive | <p><u>Arrival Experience & Legibility of Town's Offer</u></p> <p>The Town Centre Strategy identifies the need to improve the sense of arrival at key gateways into the town. Due to Aberdare's unique oval form, there are multiple points at which residents/visitors enter the town centre. Another key weakness identified via the collaborative SWOT analysis produced (can be seen on pg. 20/21 of the Strategy) is the lack of clear, engaging information about the town's offer at key gateways. This makes it more difficult for residents/visitors to find out about the range of existing amenities and activities within the town. Key sites such as Cynon Valley Museum and Aberdare Park are only a short walking distance from the Town Centre and yet many visitors, visiting for the first time, can't navigate their way to them.</p> <p>Theme 2: Bringing the history and heritage of Aberdare to life.</p> | <p>Aberdare Town Centre Strategy</p> <p>The Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 Well-Being Goal - A Wales of Vibrant Culture & Thriving Welsh Language.</p> <p>Planning Policy Wales, Edition 11 The Welsh Language and Placemaking.</p> <p>Welsh Language Promotion Strategy (RCTCBC) 2022-2027 Theme 2 – Increasing the Use of Welsh Aims: Services / Social Use of Welsh Theme 3 -Creating favourable conditions for the Welsh language Aims – Community & Economy/ Culture and Media/ Wales and the wider world / Digital</p> | <p>Specific projects and interventions that improve the sense of arrival and legibility in the town will be subject to further development and consultation.</p> <p>As part of the project development process, opportunities to promote the Welsh Language will be fully explored in line with the Council's Welsh Language Promotion Strategy, Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015 and other policy objectives.</p> <p>Examples of how this may be achieved include - Exploring opportunities for the Welsh Language to be given prominence and promoted at key gateways to the town and at all design stages of the development of wayfinding and signage. The Council will work in partnership with key</p> |

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| | <p>In this context, Theme 2 within the strategy aims to “<i>bring the story of Aberdare to life, making the town’s heritage and offering more visible and strengthening its Conservation area</i>” (pg.31). Creative storytelling/visual techniques will be used, developed in partnership with local creative businesses and educational institutions, to make targeted improvements to the arrival experience at key gateways to the town. Projects delivered under this theme will provide key opportunities to better integrate the Welsh Language into physical and digital signage/information boards etc making it easier for learners and speakers to explore the town.</p> <p><u>Routes & Connections</u></p> <p>Theme 4: Improvement/promotion of active travel and enhanced wayfinding signage.</p> <p>Exploration of targeted improvements to key routes in and around the town centre will improve connectivity to key sites such as Cynon Valley Museum, Dare Valley Country Park and Robertstown Industrial Units. Opportunities to enhance the</p> | <p>Technology / Linguistic Infrastructure</p> <p>Welsh Language Standards (NO.1) Regulations 2015</p> <p>Welcome to Wales: Priorities for the Visitor Economy 2020 – 2025</p> <p>RCT Tourism Strategy</p> | <p>stakeholders such as the ‘Our Aberdare’ Business Improvement District (BID) regarding key town centre projects. The initiative is one the BIDs priorities, to “improve signage in and around the town”, as outlined on their website. within their “Welcome and Access” theme.</p> <p>The sense of arrival and legibility will be a major consideration when the National Eisteddfod will be hosted by RCT in 2024 due to a potential increase of visitors to the town centre.</p> <p>During the development of individual projects, engagement with appropriate welsh language organisations/groups (such as Menter Iaith RCT and Dysgu Cymraeg) will be sought to ensure that projects fully maximise all opportunities to support and promote the Welsh Language. Those developing such projects will also get in touch with the council’s Welsh Language service to assist in this process.</p> |
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| | Positive | <p>integration of the Welsh Language into such improvements will be fully explored to ensure that all opportunities to promote the language are supported.</p> <p>There are also opportunities to improve wayfinding and signage in the town centre, to make it easier for welsh and non-welsh speakers to navigate the town centre. Better integration between transport modes will be explored and may be supported by an active travel campaign to raise awareness. This may include improvements to mapping and signage to the formal and informal cycle routes that connect to the wider region.</p> <p><u>Tourism & Visitor Experience</u></p> <p>Theme 3: Enhancing the visitor experience and building on the existing and growing tourism offer.</p> <p>A key opportunity, identified during the production of a collaborative SOWT analysis of the town centre, is the growing adventure-based tourism offer with key attractions such as Zip World at Tower Colliery and Dare Valley Country Park located only a</p> | | <p>Specific projects and interventions that support visitor accommodation and</p> |
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| | Positive | <p>short distance from the town centre. This presents a real opportunity to establish Aberdare Town Centre as a visitor hub with high-quality visitor accommodation and amenities. Opportunities to strengthen the promotion of the Welsh Language via enhancements to physical and digital marketing of the town's offer will be explored during the development of individual projects.</p> <p>Exploration of enhanced opportunities to learn and speak the Welsh Language within the town through a 'have a go' approach will aim to make it easier and more conformable for residents and visitors to use the language on a day-to-day basis. Projects delivered via working with local groups and organisations, specifically the younger generation, will ensure that the improvements delivered fully address current weaknesses and maximise potential benefits associated with partnership working, such as the generation of creative/unique ideas that are also achievable. This will ensure that any projects that promote the Welsh language, delivered under this theme, provide maximum potential benefits to all.</p> | | <p>amenities in the town will be subject to further development and consultation.</p> <p>As part of the project development process, opportunities to promote the Welsh Language will be fully explored in line with the Council's Welsh Language Promotion Strategy, and other policy objectives.</p> <p>The Regeneration Team will work collaboratively with the Councils Tourism, Marketing and Communication Teams to identify opportunities for the promotion of Tourism and the Welsh Language in the town. This could include the development of a specific marketing strategy for the town, in addition to existing strategies and initiatives such as the Tourism Strategy and Shop Local.</p> <p>During the development of individual projects, engagement with appropriate Welsh language organisations/groups (such as Menter Iaith RCT and</p> |
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| | | <p>The Town Centre Strategy and its investment themes will support the ambitions of RCTs Tourism Strategy and Visit Wales. The strategy has clearly identified that town would benefit from enhanced marketing and promotion. This would strengthen the town's local and regional identity, via consistent and high-quality promotion of the leisure, tourism, retail and experience offer available. Promotion of the existing strong programme of annual events is also required to increase attendance and awareness.</p> <p><u>Visit Wales</u> Welcome to Wales: Priorities for the visitor economy 2020-2025 states - <i>The ambition is to grow tourism for the good of Wales, aiming for skills development, equitable economic growth, environmental sustainability, social and cultural enrichment and health benefits.</i> Thriving Welsh Language and Culture – <i>'The distinctive culture and living language of Wales are a source of strength to the people of Wales. We want visitors to feel this energy, and for Welsh culture and language to enrich their experiences.'</i></p> | | <p>Dysgu Cymraeg) will be sought to ensure that projects fully maximise all opportunities to support and promote the Welsh Language. Those developing such projects will also get in touch with the council's Welsh Language service to assist in this process.</p> |
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RCT Tourism Strategy

Aberdare is identified as a key town and the use of Welsh Language is promoted throughout the Strategy. Skills and Employment – *As a unique selling point, there are opportunities to promote the use of the Welsh Language within the hospitality and accommodation sectors and provide Welsh Language skills to the local workforce.*

Experience – *The potential of packages which promote the Welsh Language and local culture should also be investigated.*

Digital

The town centre would benefit from digital brand and smart town strategy, including -
Developing a stronger digital presence and brand.
Delivering complementary projects that are digital, non-physical and located just outside of the town centre, but would help revitalise the centre. Creating existing digital resources (online maps/council website/ app) to aid wayfinding for the cycle and walking opportunities around Aberdare. Improving digital

infrastructure in the town to encourage new development. Creating a digital high street through development of an app that promotes the town centre and its businesses.

Enhancement & Diversification of the Town's Offer

Theme 1: Redevelopment and re-use of existing underutilised, vacant or derelict buildings to accommodate a new, diverse offering.

There are several vacant or underutilised properties within the town centre, particularly along Cardiff Street and at other key locations, such as those looking out onto Victoria square, that provide opportunities to explore mixed-use developments. Such redevelopment of larger commercial properties would also provide opportunities for the creation of smaller, more affordable commercial units. This will make it easier for local 'home-grown' businesses to establish themselves within the town centre and in turn this will help to diversify the town's offer. Reduced dependency on predominantly retail activities will increase the town's resilience to

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| | | <p>external shock and strengthen the town's sustainability. Such enhancement of available commercial accommodation within the town centre will hopefully attract a greater variety and diversity of businesses to set up within the town. Opportunities to support Welsh speaking groups and organisations to gain a great presence on the Highstreet will be explored. This, in turn, will support the promotion of the Welsh Language.</p> <p><u>Bio-diversity & Sustainability</u></p> <p>Theme 5: Enhancement of public open space, biodiversity and programme of events within the town centre.</p> <p>Promotion of the Welsh Language will also be explored as part of potential further enhancement of public open spaces, in and around the town centre, to raise awareness of the town's bio-diversity and ways that visitors/residents can support/get involved in sustainable initiatives. Easy to read bilingual signage/interaction stations will inform people about the habitats within the town centre and provide</p> | | |
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| | | <p>opportunities to use the Welsh Language to identify different flowers and fauna. Such projects will be developed in collaboration with local groups and organisations and will aim to support young Welsh speakers to become sustainable ambassadors for the town.</p> | | <p>Such projects, to promote the town's bio-diversity and sustainable initiatives, will be subject to further development and engagement. The council will work with active local groups and organisations to ensure that initiatives/interventions developed are both deliverable and maximise opportunities to promote the welsh language.</p> |
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Stage 2 – Impact Assessment

Will the proposed action affect any or all of the following?

| | Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts? | Describe why it will have a positive/negative or neutral impact on the Welsh language. | What evidence do you have to support this view? | What action(s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts? |
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| <p>Compliance with the Council's Statutory Welsh Language Standards</p> <p>e.g. increasing or reducing the Council's ability to deliver services through the Medium of Welsh.</p> <p>Consider the rights of Welsh speakers to use Welsh when dealing with the Council and for staff to use Welsh at Work</p> | Positive | <p>The Aberdare Town Centre Strategy identifies a series of strategic objectives which include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To Improve the sustainability of the town centre through increasing visitor footfall and capturing a great share of visitor spend. 2. To Maximise 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. 3. To Improve utilisation and safe use of public spaces and amenities through enhancing street-level activity and the provision of better connections with nearby destinations. 4. To Support the development of a greater variety of businesses | <p>Aberdare Town Centre Strategy</p> <p>The Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Well-Being Goal - A Wales of Vibrant Culture & Thriving Welsh Language.</p> <p>Planning Policy Wales – Edition 11 The Welsh Language and Placemaking.</p> <p>Welsh Language Promotion Strategy 2022-2027 Theme 2 – Increasing the Use of Welsh Aims: Workplace / Services / Social Use of Welsh Theme 3 - Creating favourable conditions for the Welsh language Aims – Community & Economy/ Culture and Media/ Wales and</p> | <p>Specific projects and interventions will be subject to further development and consultation and will comply with the Councils Statutory Welsh Language Standards.</p> <p>As part of the project development process, opportunities to increase the Councils ability to deliver services through the Medium of Welsh will be fully explored in line with the Council's Statutory Welsh Language Standards and other policy objectives.</p> <p>Examples of how this may be achieved include</p> |

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| | | <p>within the town that satisfy emerging opportunities from both growing visitor demands and local needs.</p> <p>5. To Enhance the town centre's overall appearance and identity as a great place to live, work and visit.</p> <p>Realisation of these strategic objectives, via the development and delivery of targeted and 'joined-up' future investment, will positively impact on the Welsh Language, as outlined previously. The promotion of the Welsh Language is identified, within the Strategy, as a key consideration for all themes, early engagement work and formal consultation has already shown where and how such promotion may be achieved.</p> <p>The development of the Strategy has been informed by the findings from early engagement work, during which key questions about promotion of the Welsh Language were discussed. The same collaborative approach will be adopted for the development and delivery of specific projects, in order to ensure that proposed investment address the needs of the town centre in the most effective way.</p> | <p>the wider world / Digital Technology / Linguistic Infrastructure</p> <p>Welsh Language Standards (NO.1) Regulations 2015</p> | <p>Delivering infrastructure and assessing where space/ locations can be secured for the Welsh Language to thrive. This will be an important factor in supporting the Eisteddfod, its legacy and also the existing strong programme of annual events hosted within the town.</p> <p>Exploring opportunities for the Welsh Language to be given prominence and promoted as part of the redevelopment of key sites and premises within the town centre, will enable opportunities to be sought to include prominent, more clear Welsh language font on signage and potentially giving Welsh-only names etc.</p> <p>Exploring opportunities for the Welsh Language to be given prominence and promoted through a</p> |
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| | | | | stronger digital presence in the town. |
| Treating the Welsh language, no less favourably than the English language | Positive | <p>The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 gives legal effect to the official status of the Welsh language by enabling the imposition of Welsh language standards ('standards') on bodies.</p> <p>The Council as a public service is required to meet certain Standards in terms of the Welsh language.</p> <p>The standards are listed in the Council's Compliance Notice which is drawn up under Section 44 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure, 2011 which was issued to the Council on 30th September 2015.</p> <p>The following standards set out in the Compliance Notice will apply to a number of the interventions in the Town Centre Strategy.</p> <p><u>Signage/Wayfinding/Information Boards</u> Class of Standard – <i>Service Delivery Standard - When you erect a new sign or renew a sign (including temporary signs), any text displayed on the sign must be displayed in Welsh (whether on the same sign as you display corresponding English language text or on a separate sign); and</i></p> | <p>Aberdare Town Centre Strategy</p> <p>Compliance Notice – Section 44 Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011</p> | <p>Specific projects and interventions will be subject to further development and consultation and will comply with the Councils Compliance Notice – Section 44 Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.</p> <p>During the development of individual projects, engagement with appropriate welsh language organisations/groups (such as Menter Iaith RCT and Dysgu Cymraeg) will be sought to ensure that projects fully maximise all opportunities to support and promote the Welsh Language. Those developing such projects will also get in touch with the council's Welsh Language service to assist in this process.</p> |

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| | | <p><i>if the same text is displayed in Welsh and in English, you must not treat the Welsh language text less favourably than the English language text.</i></p> <p>Class of Standard – <i>Service Delivery Standard - When you erect a new sign or renew a sign (including temporary signs) which conveys the same information in Welsh and in English, the Welsh language text must be positioned so that it is likely to be read first.</i></p> <p>Class of Standard – <i>Service Delivery Standard - You must ensure that the Welsh language text on signs is accurate in terms of meaning and expression.</i></p> <p><u>Branding & Marketing</u></p> <p>Class of Standard – <i>Service Delivery Standard - All apps that you publish must function fully in Welsh, and the Welsh language must be treated no less favourably than the English language in relation to that app.</i></p> <p>Class of Standard – <i>Service Delivery Standard - When you use social media you must not treat the Welsh language less favourably than the English language.</i></p> | | |
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Stage 3 - Strengthening the proposal

Having listed actions in section 2 which may mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts – please record below which ones you will imbed into the policy proposal and who will be responsible for them.

Also consider is the proposal necessary? Would it be possible to meet demand without any new developments? Could other existing provision be used? Where should the development be?

| What are you going to do? | When are you going to do it? | Who is responsible? |
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| <p>Theme 1: Redevelopment and re-use of existing underutilised, vacant or derelict buildings to accommodate a new, diverse offering.</p> <p>Identify underutilised, vacant or derelict properties/sites within the town centre and assess opportunities for redevelopment/refurbishment via working with property owners and local developers to explore options. Evaluate re-use of properties within the Council’s ownership to assess whether such properties/sites could contribute more strongly to the diversity of offer within the town centre whilst maximising opportunities associated with the visitor economy.</p> <p>As part of this, opportunities to promote and give prominence to the Welsh Language will be explored as part of the re-development/refurbishment of key sites within the town centre. This may include working with local Welsh language groups and organisations to design hoardings/temporary displays whilst construction work is ongoing to give prominence to the Welsh Language on the Highstreet.</p> <p>Explore opportunities in preparation for the National Eisteddfod.</p> <p>During the development of individual projects, engagement with appropriate welsh language organisations/groups (such as Menter Iaith RCT and Dysgu Cymraeg) will be sought to ensure that projects fully</p> | <p>The Town Centre Strategy is a long-term strategy, of which its outputs will be reviewed on a more frequent basis. This will enable effective evaluation of whether the Strategies strategic objectives are being achieve or whether more needs to be done.</p> <p>Timescales for specific projects and interventions will be confirmed throughout the development and consultation process.</p> <p>RCT will host the National Eisteddfod in 2024.</p> | <p>RCT Council Regeneration Team</p> <p>RCT Council Regeneration Team (with the assistance of Tourism, Marketing, Communication Teams and Welsh Language Services)</p> |

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| <p>maximise all opportunities to support and promote the Welsh Language. Those developing such projects will also get in touch with the council's Welsh Language service to assist in this process.</p> | | |
| <p>Theme 2: Bringing the history and heritage of Aberdare to life.</p> <p>Identify targeted projects that aim to contribute to bringing the history and heritage of Aberdare Town Centre to life by working with local groups and organisations. Opportunities to support existing/ongoing programmes/projects will be thoroughly explored to ensure that investment and potential benefits are maximised. Identification of key sites for intervention will be based on assessment of deliverability and contribution to achievement of the strategy's strategic objectives. Work with internal departments (such as planning) and town centre business owners to identify actions to strengthen the town centre's conservation area and improve the town's overall appearance.</p> <p>Creative, engaging and visual storytelling methods will be explored to animate the high street, and this will involve strong integration and promotion of the Welsh Language.</p> <p>During the development of individual projects, engagement with appropriate welsh language organisations/groups (such as Menter Iaith RCT and Dysgu Cymraeg) will be sought to ensure that projects fully maximise all opportunities to support and promote the Welsh Language. Those developing such projects will also get in touch with the council's Welsh Language service to assist in this process.</p> | <p>The Town Centre Strategy is a long-term strategy, of which its outputs will be reviewed on a more frequent basis. This will enable effective evaluation of whether the Strategies strategic objectives are being achieve or whether more needs to be done.</p> <p>Timescales for specific projects and interventions will be confirmed throughout the development and consultation process.</p> | <p>RCT Council Regeneration Team</p> <p>RCT Council Regeneration Team (with the assistance of Planning, Tourism, Marketing, Communication Teams and Welsh Language Services)</p> |
| <p>Theme 3: Enhancing the visitor experience and building on the existing and growing tourism offer.</p> <p>Explore the creation of enhanced marketing/promotion campaign to showcase what the town has to offer and the existing strong, annual</p> | <p>The Town Centre Strategy is a long-term strategy, of which its outputs will be reviewed on a more frequent basis. This will enable effective</p> | <p>RCT Council Regeneration Team (with the assistance of</p> |

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| <p>programme of events. Identification of key sites for intervention, within the town centre, to create 'visitor information points. Development of such information points will be supported by creation of new, up-to-date and engaging physical and digital information, with full integration and promotion of the Welsh Language, to boost the towns local and regional identity as a great place to live, work and visit. Explore partnership opportunities with local groups and organisations to develop and deliver such enhanced marketing/promotion and specifically engage with Aberdare's younger generation to ensure that projects utilise digital technology effectively to engage will new visitors and existing residents alike.</p> <p>Explore opportunities to promote Tourism and the Welsh Language in the town. This could include the development of a specific marketing strategy for the town, in addition to existing strategies and initiatives such as the Tourism Strategy and Shop Local. Explore opportunities for in preparation for the National Eisteddfod.</p> <p>During the development of individual projects, engagement with appropriate welsh language organisations/groups (such as Menter Iaith RCT and Dysgu Cymraeg) will be sought to ensure that projects fully maximise all opportunities to support and promote the Welsh Language. Those developing such projects will also get in touch with the council's Welsh Language service to assist in this process.</p> | <p>evaluation of whether the Strategies strategic objectives are being achieve or whether more needs to be done.</p> <p>Timescales for specific projects and interventions will be confirmed throughout the development and consultation process.</p> | <p>Tourism, Marketing, Communication Teams and Welsh Language Services)</p> |
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| <p>Theme 4: Improvement/promotion of active travel and enhanced wayfinding signage.</p> <p>Identification of opportunities to improve existing routes and connections between different transport modes, as well as assessment of opportunities to introduced new, enhance provision for pedestrians and cyclists.</p> <p>Assessment of opportunities to invest in sustainable transport infrastructure, working with the Transport department, combined with development of clearer, more visible wayfinding signage to make it easier for visitors and residents to explore the town’s full offering. Ensure that the Welsh Language is integrated better to improved signage and work with local groups and organisations to develop a bilingual signage strategy for the town centre.</p> <p>Raise profile of existing network of cycling and walking routes in and around the town to promote active travel. Explore opportunities to enhance usability of Aberdare’s rail and road infrastructure, including opportunities associated with delivery of the South Wales Metro.</p> <p>Boost the awareness of nearby sites such as Dare Valley Country Park and Cynon Valley Museums by developing enhanced visitor information, in both Welsh and English, with clear identification of active travel routes to and from such destinations. Opportunities to explore ‘Welsh Walking Tours’ in and around the town centre to provide enhanced opportunities for resident and visitors to learn/speak Welsh whilst exploring what the town has to offer.</p> <p>During the development of individual projects, engagement with appropriate welsh language organisations/groups (such as Menter Iaith RCT and Dysgu Cymraeg) will be sought to ensure that projects fully maximise all opportunities to support and promote the Welsh Language. Those developing such projects will also get in touch with the council’s Welsh Language service to assist in this process.</p> | <p>The Town Centre Strategy is a long-term strategy, of which its outputs will be reviewed on a more frequent basis. This will enable effective evaluation of whether the Strategies strategic objectives are being achieve or whether more needs to be done.</p> <p>Timescales for specific projects and interventions will be confirmed throughout the development and consultation process.</p> | <p>RCT Council Regeneration Team (with the assistance of Planning, Transport, Tourism, Marketing, Communication Teams and Welsh Language Services, Our Aberdare BID, Key Local Groups and Organisations)</p> |
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| <p>Theme 5: Enhancement of public open space, biodiversity and programme of events within the town centre.</p> <p>Exploration of opportunities to create enhanced outside dining and recreational use in targeted locations within the town centre, to increase on-street activity. Identification of public open spaces, at key locations, for further enhancement combined with development of programme to raise awareness about the towns bio-diversity and sustainability initiatives. Identify opportunities to work with existing groups and organisations to develop such a programme and support any appropriate existing sustainable initiatives. Integrate the Welsh Language more strongly into such programmes/projects to create enhanced opportunities for visitors and residents to learn Welsh when exploring the town centre.</p> <p>Work with Aberdare’s communities, particularly the younger generation of which a significant amount of Welsh learners/speakers, to identify opportunities to generate local solutions to global challenges, such as climate change.</p> <p>During the development of individual projects, engagement with appropriate welsh language organisations/groups (such as Menter Iaith RCT and Dysgu Cymraeg) will be sought to ensure that projects fully maximise all opportunities to support and promote the Welsh Language. Those developing such projects will also get in touch with the council’s Welsh Language service to assist in this process.</p> | <p>The Town Centre Strategy is a long-term strategy, of which its outputs will be reviewed on a more frequent basis. This will enable effective evaluation of whether the Strategies strategic objectives are being achieve or whether more needs to be done.</p> <p>Timescales for specific projects and interventions will be confirmed throughout the development and consultation process.</p> | <p>RCT Council Regeneration Team (with the assistance of Planning, Transport, Tourism, Marketing, Communication Teams and Welsh Language Services, Our Aberdare BID, Key Local Groups and Organisations)</p> |
| <p>Theme 6: Support businesses to make the best of emerging opportunities via partnership working.</p> <p>Identify and pursue opportunities to deliver partnership working with local businesses, public sector organisations and community groups to deliver aims of overall strategy. Develop, in partnership, enhanced local business</p> | <p>The Town Centre Strategy is a long-term strategy, of which its outputs will be reviewed on a more frequent basis. This will enable effective evaluation of whether the</p> | <p>RCT Council Regeneration Team (with the assistance of Planning, Transport, Tourism, Marketing, Communication Teams and Welsh Language Services, Our</p> |

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| <p>support to ensure that all of Aberdare's businesses can take full advantage of available financial, organisational and digital support. Explore creation of a 'buy local initiative', with the Our Aberdare BID, to capture a greater share of spend within the town centre.</p> <p>During the development of individual projects, engagement with appropriate welsh language organisations/groups (such as Menter Iaith RCT and Dysgu Cymraeg) will be sought to ensure that projects fully maximise all opportunities to support and promote the Welsh Language. Those developing such projects will also get in touch with the council's Welsh Language service to assist in this process.</p> | <p>Strategies strategic objectives are being achieve or whether more needs to be done.</p> <p>Timescales for specific projects and interventions will be confirmed throughout the development and consultation process.</p> | <p>Aberdare BID, Key Local Groups and Organisations)</p> |
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| <p>If ways of reducing the impact have been identified but are not possible to implement, please explain why. Give sufficient detail of data or research that has led to your reasoning.</p> | |
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| <p>What was identified?</p> | <p>Why is it not possible?</p> |
| <p>N/A</p> | <p>N/A</p> |
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Stage 4 – Review

As part of the Welsh Language, Equalities and Socio Economic Duty Impact Assessment Process all proposals that fall within the definition of Significant Key Decision should present at the Officer Review Panel. This panel is made up of officers from across Council Services and acts as a critical friend before your report is finalised and published for SLT/Cabinet approval.

If this proposal is a Key Strategic Decision please forward your impact assessment to CouncilBusiness@rctcbc.gov.uk for an Officer Review Panel to be organised to discuss your proposal. [See our guidance document](#) for more information on what a Significant Key Decision is.

For all policy proposals, whether it is a Significant Key Decision or not you are required to forward this assessment to Welsh Language services in the first instance for some initial guidance and feedback.

It is important to keep a record of this process so that we can demonstrate how we have considered and built in sustainable Welsh language considerations wherever possible. Please ensure you update the relevant sections below

| Welsh Language Services Comments | Date Considered | Brief description of any amendments made following Welsh Language Services feedback |
|--|------------------------|--|
| Represented on Officer Review Panel – comments included below. | 28/11/2023 | See below |
| Officer Review Panel Comments | Date Considered | Brief description of any amendments made following Officer Review Panel considerations |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A comprehensive document and very strong in its current form;• The Impact Assessment outlines a range of opportunities to promote the Welsh Language;• The use of different themes is positive as each can promote the Welsh Language;• Further detail in specific areas could strengthen the document. For example, it is mentioned throughout | 28/11.2023 | <p>As individual projects are developed further consideration will be given to ensuring future Impact Assessments associated with those projects take account of the comments made by the Officer Review Panel.</p> <p>Current linguistic profile – Impact Assessment amended to include recommended standard statement.</p> |

the document that work will be undertaken with local groups but there is an opportunity to reference Menter Iaith and further opportunity to build upon the working relationship with them. It would also strengthen the document if Council initiatives such as the 'start every conversation in Welsh in towns' or the recent pamphlet to promote the Welsh Language were included;

- It would be useful to be more specific around the work to be undertaken in relation to the upcoming Eisteddfod. There is an opportunity to note the work officers undertake in relation to the RCT wide community work stream for the Eisteddfod;
- Current Linguistic profile – There is a standard sentence to include here which references data.
- There is reference to a new app. It would be useful to explore the possibility of including a dedicated section to local Welsh Language Businesses. It was explained that although the Council must not treat the Welsh Language any less favourably than the English Language, the Welsh Language can be promoted even further with the possibility of introducing some Welsh only named buildings or Welsh only app sections etc; and
- Treorchy High Street was promoted as an excellent example of a town with a strong Welsh identity, which officers could replicate the work for Aberdare.

| Consultation Comments | Date Considered | Brief description of any amendments made following consultation |
|---|-------------------|---|
| <p>Formal consultation on the Draft Strategy and supporting documents was undertaken between August and November 2023. A range of methods were used to consult with the local and wider community including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. <p>Overview of Key Findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 142 survey responses were received, with a further 17 responses to the "Quick Poll" function on the website. | <p>01.11.2023</p> | <p>Following completion of the formal consultation, the findings were considered carefully, and revisions were made to the Draft Strategy. Key revisions include (but are not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased specificity 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 Highstreet. • Revision of the wording describing Aberdare as an accessible town. Whilst this was intended to refer to the flatter topography surround 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. |

- 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.
- More than 77.5% of respondents supported each of the strategy's 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.
- 30 young people from 4 schools took part overall.
- 65.5% of young people surveyed, agreed that the Draft Strategy accurately described the town's strengths.

- 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, reference to connections to the new Robertstown units has been included due to poor existing pedestrian connections identified.
- 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.

- The majority of young people strongly agreed or agreed with the strategic objectives.
- The majority of young people surveyed, supported the investment themes.

The key objectives of the strategy aim to improve the town centre for all to make it a more desirable place to live, work and visit. Overall, there has been an overwhelmingly positive response to the contents in the Draft Strategy and strong support for the overall vision, strategic objectives and investment themes.

Stage 5 – Monitoring, Evaluating and Reviewing

How and who will you monitor the impact and effectiveness of the proposal?

The Aberdare Town Centre Strategy is to be submitted to Cabinet on the 6th December 2023, following the revision of the Draft strategy following the formal consultation process. Detail of the findings from the formal consultation together with the range of revisions made to the Draft strategy as a result will be submitted to the Cabinet. Approval will be sought to adopt the strategy.

On receipt of approval from Cabinet to adopt the Aberdare Town Centre Strategy, governance arrangements will be established to take responsibility for the strategic direction and management of the Strategy and to represent the interests of the Council, stakeholders and the wider community, ensuring an appropriate reporting structure and lines of accountability.

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

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RCT Regeneration Team will be responsible developing a monitoring, evaluation and review framework as part of the agreed governance arrangements.

The ongoing monitoring and implementation of the overall Strategy will result in a number of component interventions and projects to deliver its objectives. Each intervention and project will be subject to their own development and consultation process and will develop their own individual action plan and establish their own Project Board.

Stage 6 – Summary of Impacts for the Proposal

Provide below a summary of the impact assessment. This summary should be included in the Welsh Language Considerations section of the SLT/Cabinet report template. The impact assessment should be published alongside the report.

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.

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.

Following completion of the formal consultation, the ‘working draft’ impact assessment has been subject to detailed review and revision to incorporate the findings form the formal consultation and feedback from internal departments.

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.

Stage 7 – Sign Off

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| Name of Officer completing the WLIA | Emma Halford | Service Director Name: | Derek James |
| Position | Regeneration Project Office | I recommend that the proposal: (Highlight decision) | Is implemented with no amendments |
| Signature | EHALFORD | | Derek James |
| Date | 28.11.2023 | Date | 11/12/2023 |