

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO COMBINED MEETING OF SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 3 AND CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

26 APRIL 2021

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR - COMMUNITIES

BRIDGEND TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION MASTERPLAN AND CONSULTATION

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Combined meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committees of the development of the Bridgend Town Centre Masterplan and of the outcome of the public consultation process concluded on 1st March 2021.
- 1.2 The outcome of the consultation will be reported to Cabinet and any additional views of the Committees will form part of that report.

2. Connection to corporate well-being objectives/other corporate priorities

- 2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate well-being objectives:-
 - **Supporting a successful sustainable economy** – taking steps to make the county borough a great place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focussed on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions for all people in the county borough.
 - **Helping people and communities to be more healthy and resilient** – taking steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services. Supporting individuals and communities to build resilience, and enable them to develop solutions to have active, healthy and independent lives.
 - **Smarter use of resources** – ensuring that all resources (financial, physical, ecological, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the creation of resources throughout the community that can help deliver the Council's well-being objectives.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Bridgend Town Centre Masterplan was commissioned in February 2020 with the purpose of it being a key strategic document to create a coherent basis for attracting investors and investment, delivering a comprehensive range of economic and regeneration projects and to support the Authority's ability to secure future funding for the town.
- 3.2 Following a competitive tender process, BDP Consultants and a wider sub-consultant team consisting of Asbri Planning, Cooke and Arkwright and Phil Jones Associates were appointed by Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) to prepare a Regeneration Masterplan for, and on behalf of, BCBC for the Bridgend town centre.

- 3.3 The previous Masterplan for the town was commissioned over 10 years ago, with the focus on the development of key retail sites. The landscape for towns has changed dramatically in the interim and continues to change at pace. Therefore the need for the Authority to identify new and sustainable ways to encourage and retain footfall, and how to direct investment in the town, is vital.
- 3.4 The Masterplan purpose is to be a dynamic long-term planning document that offers a theoretical layout building on the town's many strengths to guide future regeneration and growth. It also provides analysis, recommendations, and proposals for the town centre. It complements the Local Development Plan (LDP) and work within the LDP review, and also ensures that it accounts for national Planning Policy in its recommendations.
- 3.5 As part of the development of the Masterplan, BCBC conducted an extensive stakeholder engagement process during the early stages of the project, the findings of which are represented / incorporated into the Masterplan. An invite was extended to numerous external stakeholders including traders, local organisations, landowners, the Bridgend Town Council, other governmental authorities and relevant working groups. BDP subsequently conducted a visioning workshop with a range of external stakeholders.
- 3.6 Within the Authority there are many departments delivering or working on specific proposals impacting the town. Equally there are government policies which guide and influence how development should take place. They both equally have to be brought together to understand how they can best positively impact on the town.
- 3.7 In December 2020 a draft Masterplan was finalised for public consultation. The consultation started on 6th December 2020 and finished on 1st March 2021.

4. Current situation/proposal

- 4.1 The Bridgend Town Centre Masterplan will remain draft until it is presented to Cabinet for final endorsement. The Executive Summary, shared as part of the consultation process can be found in **Appendix A**.
- 4.2 The formal public consultation process has concluded, and the responses reviewed and considered in relation to any corrections, omissions and strengthening of the document.
- 4.3 The vision brings together enterprise, employment, education, in-town living, shopping, culture, tourism and well-being within a historic setting.
- 4.4 The plan is deliberately ambitious, and sets out a series of deliverable and aspirational projects over the short, medium and long term. To achieve the overall vision and regenerate Bridgend Town Centre over the next ten years, four broad themes have been identified:
- Growth
 - Resilience
 - Well-being
 - Identity

4.5 Bridgend town centre is used for a variety of purposes which have enabled eight development zones to be formed, within which 23 relevant projects have been identified, plus a number of site wide projects. A map of the development zones can be seen in **Appendix B**.

The development zones include:

- The Railway Station Area
- Brackla, Nolton and Oldcastle
- The Retail Core
- Café and Cultural Quarter
- The Northern Gateway
- Riverside
- Newcastle
- Sunnyside

4.6 Key overarching projects in the Masterplan are:

- A new entrance to the railway station from Tremains Road and Llynfi Lane
- Improvements to the Northern Gateway - to create a legible and attractive gateway to the town centre
- The relocation of Bridgend College to the town centre
- To create a culture hub as an indoor event space
- A new town square
- More in-town living
- Better access to the town centre
- Strengthen the retail core
- Improvements in and along the Ogmore River

4.7 The Masterplan also sets out the key drivers, partners and financial tools available to be able to bring many of the projects and aims to fruition.

4.8 The consultation survey aimed to gain views from as many different people and businesses about what their preferred projects, options and priorities are.

4.9 The consultation took place over a 12 week period from 7th December 2020 to 1st March 2021. 1402 interactions were received from a combination of survey completions, social media engagements, emails and letters and engagement sessions. Specific sessions were held with the Bridgend Youth Council, Penybont Primary School, the Town and Community Council Forum and local members.

4.10 The consultation survey was available to complete through a variety of formats and was coordinated by the Consultation and Engagement Team. The primary electronic link was on the Council's website. Paper copies of the consultation were made available via request, also including large print, standard, easy read and a youth version. All were available in English and Welsh. An explainer video was designed to help people understand what was being asked of them, with examples of questions that were included in the consultation. The video was featured on the webpage and the council's social media channels, including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

4.11 In total, there were 51 questions. All questions were optional, so participants could choose to answer all or some of the questions. However, comments and opinions were also welcomed via social media. The Webpage received 1,549 total link clicks,

with the explainer video being viewed 10,673 times. **Appendix C** is the full Consultation Report, detailing all responses to all questions. It also records all comments and themes of engagement from social media and the engagement sessions.

4.12 Headline responses are as follows:

- 84% of respondents agreed with the overall vision for the town centre;
- 76% of respondents agreed with all the proposals in Development zone A – the railway station area;
- 83% of respondents agreed with the proposal to make a new entrance to the station from Tremains road;
- 71% of respondents agreed with all the proposals in Development zone B – Brackla, Nolton and Oldcastle;
- 65% of respondents agreed that moving part of the Bridgend College Campus and other educational institutions to the town centre would help to improve town centre footfall and improve its growth;
- 75% of respondents agreed with all the proposals in Development zone C – the retail core;
- 79% of respondents agreed with all the proposals in Development zone D – the café and cultural quarter;
- 74% of respondents agreed with all the proposals in Development zone E – the Northern Gateway;
- 69% of respondents agreed with all the proposals in Development zone F – Riverside;
- 71% of respondents agreed with all the proposals in Development zone G – Newcastle;
- 77% of respondents agreed with all the proposals in Development zone H – Sunnyside;
- 61% of respondents stated that they would like to see Bridgend town centre as a place with more in-town living opportunities;
- 44% of respondents selected partial reopening to traffic as the best option for access to Bridgend town centre, 35% selected for access to remain unchanged and 21% selected to reopen all roads to traffic;
- 41% of respondents stated that the current provision for public transport to Bridgend town centre is adequate;
- 75% of respondents stated that the town centre would benefit from improved active travel links;
- 87% of respondents stated that they supported the creation of a new Town Square and more green space in the town centre;
- 81% of respondents stated that they thought the town suffered from anti-social behaviour;
- 60% of respondents felt that there were aspects of the Masterplan that could help young people have a greater connection with their town centre;
- 78% of respondents felt that the town would benefit from a heritage trail linking up all the historic assets of the town centre.

4.13 Officers have thoroughly reviewed the report and are confident in progressing to deliver against the projects and themes within the Masterplan.

- 4.14 The vast majority of responses were positive and saw the opportunities presented as constructive for the town centre. Notable additional comments included the need to incorporate greater support to business and retail; the desire for greater information on the financing of proposals and the need to incorporate greater improvements around travel, highway infrastructure and parking.
- 4.15 Officers are already delivering a variety of projects identified within the plan and where relevant have begun work on bringing together key partners required to deliver against the plan. Other actions for officers have been to ensure that the consultation responses are shared with other departments to which the comments are relevant.

5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules

- 5.1 There is no effect upon the policy framework and procedure rules.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

- 6.1 A full EIA is attached in **Appendix D**.
- 6.2 The assessment has taken account of the consultation responses and the equalities responses from consultees.

7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 implications

- 7.1 The Wellbeing and Future Generations Act Assessment is attached in **Appendix E**.
- 7.2 The following is a summary of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 Assessment:
- Long-term
The masterplan provides a framework as to what opportunities there are to deliver meaningful short, medium and long term projects in the Town Centre. Whilst there is an imperative to support town centre activity in the short term when investing significant time and money in the infrastructure and redevelopment of sites and premises it has to be done with a long term vision and in collaboration with partners to ensure the investment is supporting future needs of those, living in, working in, and visiting the town.
 - Prevention
Bridgend Town Centre has an economic, social and environmental role to play for the residents of Bridgend. It is the Authority's responsibility to safeguard and enhance those roles and ensure that services, buildings and public realm are fit for purpose and inspiring. The decline in both the offer and infrastructure will continue to deteriorate if the Authority doesn't intervene by setting out its ambitions and intentions for how to invest and revive the Town.
 - Integration
The overarching themes for the Masterplan have been set out as Growth, Resilience, Well-being and Identity.
There are 10 key objectives which bring together economic, educational, social, environmental & cultural projects to create an integrated community within the town.

- **Collaboration**
The Masterplan has been developed in collaboration with strategic partners operating within the town, including Police, local organisations, Bridgend College, social landlords and major landowners. Its objectives will need to be delivered in partnership with the public and private sector.
- **Involvement**
The collaborative process of developing the plan and the thorough consultation process has ensured that a diverse cross section of the population have been involved in putting it together and have considered its potential impact on the town and the outcomes promoted. The Authority will require the leadership and engagement of all partners and stakeholders to deliver the various projects within the Masterplan.

8. Financial implications

- 8.1 There are no direct financial implications arising for the authority from this report. All financial considerations will need to be considered on a project by project basis and further reports will be brought back to Cabinet and/or Council as appropriate.

9. Recommendation

- 9.1 It is recommended that the Committees consider and comment on the consultation responses with any recommendations being reported to Cabinet along with the final Masterplan and outcome of the consultation report.

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Background papers:

[Bridgend Town Centre Masterplan full version](#)