

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CABINET

22 JUNE 2021

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR - COMMUNITIES

BRIDGEND TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION MASTERPLAN AND CONSULTATION BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Cabinet of the development of the Bridgend Town Centre Masterplan and of the outcome of the public consultation process which concluded on 1st March 2021.
- 1.2 Cabinet is also requested to agree the proposed next steps in approving the final plan.

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 BCBC 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 to BCBC'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 Centre 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 BCBC 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, 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 BCBC 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 7th December 2020 and finished on 1st March 2021.

4. Current situation/proposal

- 4.1 The 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 Officers will need to ensure that the policy section of the Masterplan aligns with the of the review of the new LDP.
- 4.3 The Masterplan vision brings together enterprise, employment, education, in-town living, shopping, culture, tourism and well-being within a historic setting.
- 4.4 The Masterplan 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 to 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 (Zones A to H) include:

- The Railway Station Area (Zone A);
- Brackla, Nolton and Oldcastle (Zone B);
- The Retail Core (Zone C);
- Café and Cultural Quarter (Zone D);
- The Northern Gateway (Zone E);
- Riverside (Zone F);
- Newcastle (Zone G);
- Sunnyside (Zone H).

4.6 The 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;
- The creation of a culture hub as an indoor event space;
- A new Town Square;
- More in-town living;
- Better access to the Town Centre
- Strengthening the retail core;
- Improvements in and along the Ogmore River.

4.7 The Masterplan also sets out the key drivers, partners and financial tools that are 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 BCBC 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 both English and in 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 BCBC webpage and BCBC'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 the existing 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 Masterplan and where relevant have begun work on bringing together key partners required to deliver against the plan. The first transformational project being driven by officers is the relocation of Bridgend College's Learning and Skills Campus to Cheapside. This project will act as an anchor project for investment in the town, supporting further investment, redevelopment and driving footfall.

5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules

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

6. Equality Act 2010 implications

- 6.1 A full EIA has been carried out as part of the development of this strategy, policy or proposal. The full EIA considers the impact of the strategy, policy or proposal on the nine protected characteristics, the Socio-economic Duty and the use of the Welsh language.
- 6.2 In summary the EIA assessment has determined that;
- There would be no negative impact on those with one or more of the protected characteristics, no socio-economic disadvantage or negative impact on the use or promotion of the Welsh language.
 - The projects emerging from the masterplan will provide the opportunity to ensure that all new development is designed to be better integrated into the environment and have been highlighted to ensure they are designed in line with the Equality Act 2010.
 - For the first time the Masterplan has engaged with children and young people in its development, and will ensure that projects positively encourage their engagement in the detail development and design.
- 6.3 The full EIA is attached as **Appendix D**.

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 BCBC'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 BCBC 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, Bridgend Town Council, local organisations, Bridgend College, social landlords and major landowners. Its objectives will need to be delivered in partnership with both the public and private sector.
- **Involvement**
The collaborative process of developing the Masterplan 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. BCBC 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 BCBC 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 Cabinet:

- Endorses the consultation results and confirms these results can be fed into the Consultation Note within the Masterplan document.

- Approves a review of the policy section within the Masterplan to ensure alignment with the new LDP.
- Welcomes a future report to sign off the final document and receive an update of progress made on key projects.

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Background papers:

[Bridgend Town Centre Masterplan full version](#)