

SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 3 - MONDAY, 26 APRIL 2021

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 3 HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON MONDAY, 26 APRIL 2021 AT 09:30

Present

Councillor JPD Blundell – Chairperson

SE Baldwin	N Clarke	P Davies	DK Edwards
J Gebbie	T Giffard	CA Green	DG Howells
M Jones	JR McCarthy	RMI Shaw	JC Spanswick
RME Stirman	E Venables	LM Walters	JE Williams

Apologies for Absence

DRW Lewis, RL Penhale-Thomas, JC Radcliffe, KL Rowlands, G Thomas and MC Voisey

Officers:

Nicola Bunston	Consultation Engagement and Equalities Manager
Meryl Lawrence	Senior Democratic Services Officer - Scrutiny
Tracy Watson	Scrutiny Officer
Delyth Webb	Group Manager - Strategic Regeneration

117. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr SE Baldwin declared a personal interest in item 4, as he was a Member of the Town Hall Trust.

118. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of a meeting of Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3 dated 17 December 2020 be approved as a true and accurate record.

119. BRIDGEND TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION MASTERPLAN AND CONSULTATION

The Corporate Director – Communities began by thanking the Committee for the invitation to present the report on the Bridgend Town Centre Regeneration Masterplan and Consultation. She advised that along with the Group Manager Strategic Regeneration, Team Leader Regeneration Projects and Approaches, and the Consultation Engagement and Equalities Manager, she would take Members through the outcomes of the consultation, take some time to discuss some projects, and answer Members' questions. She provided some background context to the Masterplan and the consultation and why the Masterplan had been produced.

The Cabinet Member for Education and Regeneration reinforced what the Corporate Director had said, following which he spoke about the strategic vision for the Masterplan.

The Group Manager Strategic Regeneration presented an overview.

Following the presentation of the report, Members of the Committee asked the following:

Masterplan Questions:

A Member commented that in terms of transport, two areas needed to be looked at were: inter-town transport, and; more widely the connectivity to all other areas of the

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County and how best that was delivered. In terms of the cost basis, the Member asked if there was a phased approach to this, how much the Local Authority had to put in to different schemes, how much was already underway and what was the project plan to be able to deliver this.

The Corporate Director - Communities explained that there were no financial implications, as there was no money from Bridgend Council for this presently. There was money towards town centre management and grants and other things being done within the town centre. This was a strategic Masterplan that needed a strategic approach to delivery. e.g., Bridgend College moving to the town centre. Three funding sources: Welsh Government (WG) transforming towns, the 21st Century schools programme and sustainability work with WG, would enable the Local Authority to move the Bridgend College project forward. Money had been awarded from WG to purchase the South Wales Police (SWP) building on Cheapside, demolish it, retaining ownership by the Council, and transferring that to the College on a long lease. This was currently being worked on, although it was not a signed and sealed deal. The College had applied to WG to be part of Band B funding to secure funding and one of the aspirations was they join the Bridgend District Heat Network. There was money from the Heat Networks Investment Project (HNIP) towards the heat network in addition to Bridgend investing money in developing that Heat Network.

Another example of working with partners to assemble finances was with the railway station. There were projects in the Masterplan to improve the front of the station, making it more accessible from within town, making it more attractive to people by rail and more sustainable forms of transport. The Local Authority was working with Transport for Wales (TfW) and the Rail Authority to look at what was possible at the front of the station. In addition, there was a key private landlord, who owned some properties, around the front of the station, who was interested in developing them as commercial activities. Work was being done with the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (CCRC) to look at what funding was available, highlighting the recent development around the railway station in Cardiff, which had been done with private finance. Consideration needed to be given if this type of approach would work for Bridgend, being one of the busiest stations in South Wales, working with the Rail Authority, private investors and the CCRC, setting up a task and finish group looking at bringing in all of that investment together.

This would need to be done for each of the projects, looking more innovatively at partners and funds that were available and putting those investment blocks together to make those things happen, which was why collaboration was so important. This was not about the Council coming and fixing things. These were just two examples of work being done with Bridgend College and the Railway Station. She felt these were deliverable and the ones to concentrate on, along with trying to create a town square and get some culture and vibrancy back into the town centre.

The Group Manager Strategic Regeneration said all she would add was to highlight some other partners that would enable projects to happen sequentially. In terms of in-town living, that very much relied on social landlord partners to be able to help provide that piece, taking advantage of grants, that Authority Officers could not. This was a 10-year plan in its entirety, and these were big projects. The Railway Station project would start now with a view to look at being delivered in 3 - 5 years. The same with the College. The Band B process would take up to 2024, so that was the time period that these projects took to come forward. The in-town living piece was something that could go in tandem with those projects, but the process of bringing together the design and financial package could mean this would start to come forward next year. In conclusion, a number of these projects would happen over the 10-year period but BCBC won't be

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financing it all; this was about supporting partners to be able to make their own investment in the town centre.

A Member asked in respect of financing and where that would come from, had the partnerships mentioned showed a willingness to come forward with financing and who they were.

The Corporate Director - Communities explained, in relation to the piece around the college, the Local Authority was working with the Director of Transforming Towns - WG, the South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner, the management board of Bridgend College, the Director of 21st Century Schools – WG, as well as a tremendous amount of work on the District Heat Project with HNIP, UK Government and WG, with everybody committed. The funds were available although there was a long way to go, but the intention was there. With regard to the railway station, there were monies available, some of them CCRCD grant sources, which would have to be applied for. There was a will to make these things happen but a detailed feasibility study would be conducted, to look at the timescales, the market, and the cost and risk implications of undertaking that project.

In terms of in-town living, RSL's were keen to replicate some of the work already done in getting living back in the town centre. This considered having commercial use on ground floor with residential above. In terms of housing stock, there were many 3-bed properties, but the demand was for 1-bed properties, in addition to people that no longer wanted a 3-bed property but would like to live somewhere there is vibrancy and activity because it helped with social isolation and making people feel connected to the town centre. There was quite a lot of funding and will out there, but it was a case of now putting the business cases together, getting planning permission, etc., and making those links in order to draw down the money.

The Leader explained that in relation to the financial implications, the Council had an excellent record at securing high contribution rates from external funders, often 100%, giving the examples of the Gaylard Building and the development on Nolton Street. The Council's role had been vital through securing that funding with partners and there was still an opportunity to restore some other historical buildings and seeing how businesses could flourish in those buildings. He noted that the Council was the only Local Authority in Wales to secure 4 phases of the Heritage Lottery funding in respect of the Davis Building. It gave him confidence that the Council had the capability to attract and secure the types of investment needed and showed more could be delivered in the future. He highlighted that over 20 small independent businesses had opened in Bridgend during or just before the pandemic and these would provide a unique selling point for the town centre.

The Cabinet Member for Communities agreed that the Local Authority had a track record of very successful bids for investment within the town centre, not forgetting the involvement in active travel. This would be the catalyst for transforming the daytime and night-time economy and providing an economic boost for the town centre. He noted that in the past finance would have been secured and then matched to a project. This blueprint allowed projects to be matched to finance, which would allow Bridgend to be looked at as a strategic venture, which was an important thing. What needed to be done was demonstrate to those giving finance that this was a realistic plan for a number of projects that linked into a strategic vision for the whole of the town.

The Member raised concern about financing remedial works after projects were completed e.g., bricks coming lose in the town square. They also asked in respect of increased footfall due to in-town living and the movement of the college into the town centre, where would all these people park. In addition, the Member noted that the river

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was going to be a big part of the previous Masterplan and asked what was happening there. In relation to the night-time offer, the Member raised concern that the town centre was somewhere to be avoided previously and asked if there was likely to be any more CCTV, in terms of people's safety.

The Corporate Director - Communities explained that in terms of the safety aspect the Local Authority was working with police colleagues in designing out crime. CCTV was a key part of this but working with SWP colleagues, the perception of crime was sometimes higher than the actuality and there needed to be a basket of things put together, including having the right police presence and not having dark unlit areas. A higher footfall would give a greater sense of safety and almost diminish the opportunist crime. This was a combined basket approach to make community safety at the heart of everything done and it was an important part of wellbeing, whilst working with police colleagues and the Town Council on a range of initiatives to make the day and night-time economy vibrant.

With regard to increasing footfall, there was not going to be reams of additional parking in the town centre with the intention to have greater active travel routes. There was a significant amount of parking offers in Bridgend which at the moment, and pre Covid-19, had peak times, but were not full in their entirety, for the majority of the time. It was more about having the right parking in the right place. A piece of work around car parking and active travel was being undertaken, which needed to be looked at in more detail to understand the impact. It was about active travel routes and ensuring that well lit connectivity and a nice route through, as well as bringing them past retail and shops, for the spend.

In terms of remedial works, this would be worked through any project that was done, because it was important to look at maintaining the quality of the project put in e.g., stone paving and/or street furniture. There would be a maintenance liability that would come to the Local Authority by adopting a community square, so it was important to look at high quality products and ensure that the maintenance liability was as low as possible, which was a key part of the project brief.

The Group Manager Strategic Regeneration added, in terms of parking and crime, the Masterplan itself had done a parking assessment as part of the baselining work, and there would be a parking strategy that evolved from that. In terms of the crime piece, through this process the police had been quite heavily involved in the development of the Masterplan with their involvement in designing out crime and had thoroughly looked at the Masterplan. In addition, the police, as a result of the potential sale of their current site, were currently looking for premises within the town centre to have a police office presence.

In terms of the river, a huge amount of work had been done on flood alleviation, which the previous Masterplan hadn't taken account of at the time. In terms of any development in the town centre, consideration needed to be given to a 1 in 100-year flood risk issue, so there was a challenge to have any major development in the town centre. When the Rhiw Car Park was built, as part of the planning process, specialists were engaged to demonstrate that the development was viable. The Team Leader Regeneration Projects and Approaches and team had done much more work on flood risk in general, demonstrating that the town was not at risk of a 1 in 100-year flood and therefore major development was now permissible within the town centre on that basis. It was much easier to be able to look at projects and look at how these could be developed along the river.

A Member noted that the Council would be encouraging independent traders to come to Bridgend and asked what incentives were there to encourage them to stay. Had there

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been a look back over the previous Masterplan of which there had been some criticism, to examine mistakes made and lessons learned. She agreed at the need for leisure and green spaces, but how were people going to be encouraged back to Bridgend who were not on a bus routes or with rail links.

The Leader noted that in terms of independent retailers the difficulty that the Council had was that it was not the landlord to probably 95% of the traders in the town, only being the landlord to traders in the indoor market, who had received a generous discount on rent. Rates was the other big cost and WG had effectively provided rates relief to those businesses. In addition, the Council continued to offer free car parking, which would be reviewed on an ongoing basis and some businesses would have benefited from outdoor hospitality adaptations grants, provided by the Council. These were the tools available, but it was important people supported the town centre, to go in there and have a look as the town was constantly evolving and changing with new businesses starting and a very vibrant restaurant and café scheme and people needed to get behind the town and support those businesses.

The Corporate Director - Communities explained the marketing and communications piece around 'love your town' and 'love Bridgend', which was continuously being communicated on social media and the website. There had been quite a bit of channel shift, during the pandemic, with more people now shopping online or having a look online, before they ventured out. Training and support was available to create websites for independent retailers, not just for online shopping, but to encourage people to see what traders offered, which had been really successful during the pandemic in terms of a Christmas website piece. It was important to continue that success, although this wasn't the same as footfall, but if people were encouraged to come to the town centre along with an increased online presence, so that businesses had both channels, then this would help secure the future of some of these independents.

The Cabinet Member Communities noted one of the things the Local Authority needed to do, in order to make Bridgend more viable, was to make it an area people wanted to come to for different reasons, which is what the Masterplan was addressing. Public transport was key including the South Wales Metro, and the Council was looking at ways of bringing public transport more in line with people's expectations.

A Member hoped that the parking strategy included, not just town centre parking, but the impact on residential parking and resident permit parking because the two were interconnected. They asked in terms of project management methodology, what monitoring and control had been done in relation to the previous Masterplan that would show successes and failures. What had been highlighted was that the Council did not own 95% of the town centre, so it was around changing the perceptions of traders and individuals that there was things happening in the town centre. Anything produced afterwards, should be on the front foot promoting what was being achieved e.g., success with the Heritage lottery fund, etc.

The Corporate Director - Communities explained she had come from a programme / project orientated background and liked strong governance, in terms of understanding scope, what was being delivered, timescales, benefits and risk. Nothing came without risk and there needed to be a balanced objective. Just as vital as monitoring, was reviewing what had been done and sharing lessons learned. There had been some successes with previous masterplans, but the way regeneration was being delivered had changed and the environment had moved on so much. What was important was reviewing lessons learned and explaining why the direction had changed, as regeneration plans should be dynamic. It was important to set out the Masterplan but it should be reviewed, maybe after 5 years, and if necessary, changed. She acknowledged that the report to Cabinet should include reflection on the previous

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Masterplan and explain why the change of tack and what lessons had been learned. In terms of communicating aspirations more widely, this could be done, because it was important that people understood the ambitions and what was trying to be achieved.

The Group Manager Strategic Regeneration clarified that in preparing the masterplan, the consultants had reviewed the previous Masterplan, to work out what was still relevant and what parts could still be carried forward. It was written at a time when the economy was in a different place, retail focused with large areas of square footfall designated for major retail development. This was not the future of the town centre, which was more focused on the independent market and retaining what was there. It was the timing of the previous Masterplan that let down its delivery. WG policy had also changed dramatically in a number of places with the policy around town centre first, brought in, in 2020, which was a big game changer for the town centre, in terms of major development and the direction around active travel. She highlighted the vibrant and viable places programme, which Bridgend had capitalised on and more recently the Targeted Regeneration Investment (TRI) programme. WG had targeted funding towards town centres, which was not available at the time of writing the last Masterplan and put a completely different spin on this one. It was referenced in this Masterplan, as part of the baselining piece, but there wasn't enough about the successes of the last Masterplan and linking some of those projects to the Masterplan directly.

The Member stated that his comments were not a criticism, but communications needed to be increased, to make sure information was being given for people to digest and understand it more, and was communicated clearly in a way that people understood.

The Chairperson agreed that this was an important lesson for Councillors and Officers to be succinct and clear in what was said to members of the public, in every communication made.

A Member thanked the Officers for their presentation and stated that there would be significant reputational issues for the Authority if there was limited or no delivery, and there was a need to look back to the previous plan. Reflecting on his own role in the Local Authority, he suggested perhaps Members in a supportive context, should annually review and appraise the Masterplan.

A Member raised concern about bringing lots of people into the town centre and how this would be accommodated including access, as some would be using cars. She was not convinced about the marketability and demand for office-space and asked what was envisaged in terms of the culture hub.

The Corporate Director - Communities explained that in terms of office space, this was intended to be business incubator space e.g., the Welsh Innovation Centre for Enterprise (ICE) in Caerphilly, where new business start-ups or very small business start-ups, could come and hire an office space and grow their business. This allowed complimentary businesses to help each other to grow and something that WG colleagues felt was needed.

With regards to living in town, it was challenging in terms of mobility and in particular the use of the car. Planning regulations would dictate how many planning spaces, particular residential developments would be permitted to have in place. Looking at Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and their provision of flats, there was sometimes lower than average car ownership and an important part was making sure the active travel piece was right. Each development would have to be judged on its merit to ensure a problem isn't created e.g. avoidance of new developments parking in adjoining residential areas.

The Group Manager Strategic Regeneration explained that a really good in-town living example was the Rhiw development, which was predicated on being able to provide

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sufficient parking within the floor space of the development. What had subsequently been found was that the parking was under occupied because what would hope to come out of in-town living, had actually happened e.g., giving up a vehicle because of access to a train. That was the model being looked at for in-town developments, but it may not always been possible, in addition to working within the new planning policy which considered the wider impact on the numbers of units being built. This would happen on a development by development basis with what opportunity there was to provide parking within the developments themselves.

In terms of the cultural space piece, this was something that came out of early conversations, before the pandemic happened that there was a wealth of heritage and cultural things that happened already within the town centre. People liked the offer at Carnegie House and wanted to see an expanded version. In addition conversations had taken place with Bridgend College about bringing the Sony Theatre into the town centre and what opportunity that presents in aligning that with the offer that happens in Carnegie House. There was an opportunity there although the project had not been explored in its entirety.

The Member stated that she was still concerned about the residential units and the answers received. She noted that one of the bid drivers for the plan to be successful was for residential use within the town to be massively increased. It was important not to end up with just one social mix within the town, there needed to be a mix for the town to be successful and vibrant and it needed to be a mix of people who had available cash to spend on services in the town, as well as people who needed affordable housing.

The Corporate Director - Communities clarified that it wasn't just about RSL's and younger people, but a mixed aged group and a mixed economy coming back. There was a need to encourage inclusivity and in particular to encourage an older population to come back and feel that there was some vibrancy around them, they could shop and use the leisure facilities in the town centre hub. She reassured Members that it would be a mixed residential in-town living piece.

A Member raised concern about the transport side, especially to do with the buses, because they were commercial entities and there was no control over them. They asked whether the Council was considering taking some buses back into Local Authority control or was the Council totally reliant on private businesses.

The Corporate Director – Communities explained there was no intention to become a transport provider currently. She noted, during the pandemic, the number of people catching buses had declined and in order to provide services to get key workers and to provide mobility, WG had subsidised those services. There were regular meetings with transport providers, Officers and Cabinet Members, to discuss a longer-term picture. Some conversations were about preparing integrated transport hubs, to try and bring all services together, as it seemed pretty obvious that if you get off a train you want your bus to be within the next 10 minutes. The rear of Bridgend railway station was being looked at, as well as the front, to see if buses and taxis could come to the rear, as well as looking at routes for cyclists and pedestrians, to try to create an integrated hub. Operators were interested because this would enable them to move people to where they wanted to be, especially at peak times, although this wasn't agreed.

Also being looked at was putting a bus terminus at Salt Lake in Porthcawl to connect it back to the Pyle railway line, in addition to looking at ultra-low emission vehicles with providers, and connecting up the CCRC Metro project. Transport was a major theme for WG in its decarbonisation plan, with all public sectors having to be net-carbon zero by 2030. £2.6m had been approved for active travel routes in the borough, and it was about making sure that the routes were in the right place. It was a key part of the 2030

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decarbonisation plan but she realised that there probably haven't been enough communication on that, which she would address.

A Member, commented that one of the reasons for declining bus user numbers was that it was easier to get a bus to Cardiff, than Bridgend. She also asked what was happening with the public conveniences as the only public conveniences open were at the bus station.

The Corporate Director - Communities clarified that the declining bus numbers were during the Covid-19 period and Bridgend had buoyant numbers ordinarily for bus services. She would have those conversations with the operators and in particular at the next quarterly session, and would raise the piece about how easy it was to get on a bus to Cardiff, but not so easy to get on a bus to Bridgend. It was important to put Bridgend back on the map as a County Town, so it is worth the bus ride into town, although it could not compete against the Capital City. In terms of public conveniences at the bus station, the Corporate Director - Communities confirmed that this was the current position as shops and hospitality had been closed, up until this point but she would get a more detailed response.

The Leader noted there was a new toilet provision within the market and would check if that facility had now reopened as part of the lifting of restrictions. Once indoor hospitality reopened, there would also be the return of the availability of toilets within restaurants, cafes and bars. He noted the Comfort Scheme, which had worked effectively in the town centre, where a number of businesses were open to anyone to use their toilets and the Local Authority provided a small financial support to those businesses to enable them to do that.

The Chairperson, on behalf of a Member who needed to leave the meeting early, stated that in terms of green spaces in general it was good to see some in the plan, but obviously he would like to see more, but how were they going to be managed effectively. He asked why Newbridge Fields and the Brewery Field, which were part of the Town Council area, were not part of this development plan.

The Group Manager Strategic Regeneration explained that developing more green spaces in the Masterplan was being looked at and highlighted the success of a grant to the Sunnyside development, to be able to support greening efforts. This was a two-pronged approach, one looking at what interventions could be made in developing a greening strategy, but also looking at, developments as they came forward, and linking a greening project to those developments. In terms of Newbridge Fields and the Brewery Field, these were not deliberately excluded and work had been done with WG to set a boundary for the town centre, but in this instance that meant bringing the boundary closer towards the core to capitalise on all of the opportunities around funding and development, which resulted in those two being sat outside.

The Leader highlighted, in respect of links with green spaces, Craig-y-Parcau Local Nature Reserve, which was very popular with lots of residents as a place to walk, exercise and see wildlife, but there may be visitors that didn't know it was so close to the town centre. Work had been done with Bridgend Town Council to improve footpaths and access to the woodland along the river Ogmore, and he would look at strengthening those links, even if this was interpretative panel, to flag it up as something on the doorstep. This could be something taken forward and was a natural progression from the investment taking place in Sunnyside.

The Group Manager Strategic Regeneration confirmed that the new toilets in the market were open. In addition there had been a communication, last week to, sent to all retailers

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with some guidance on how to start the comfort scheme and how to open their toilets up to the public, in the current environment.

The Member raised concern that the comfort scheme should be looked at and highlighted a shop in her area, which benefited from the comfort scheme, but wouldn't let anyone in there.

The Chairperson agreed that these needed to be investigated to ensure that all companies were complying, if they signed up to the scheme.

Socio Economic Questions

A Member expressed that it had been a very interesting debate with positive support for the Masterplan. The unintended consequences was the possibility of increasing deprivation and disadvantage in other areas. There were other commercial centres that needed attention and Covid-19 had highlighted that local shopping had great benefits. When drawing up the Masterplan and moving it forward, it would be great to think that other areas were also treated in a similar way.

The Corporate Director - Communities acknowledged this was just the strategic Masterplan for Bridgend and there were other plans and strategies in place for all the other areas. She drew Members' attention to the significant amount of resources that had gone into Maesteg, over the recent years, including the Maesteg Town Hall cultural hub project, a grant of £250k for the Family Value Building and other shops on Talbot street. In addition work had been done with traders in Maesteg, during Covid-19, to enable them to continue to operate, along with commercial improvement schemes across the borough more widely to other outlets including small district centres including Pencoed, etc. She drew Members' attention to the Penprysg railway bridge and the railway crossing piece, as part of the metro project, and resolving the access arrangements would be really important for that centre there.

The Group Manager Strategic Regeneration explained that it was very difficult to cast the net widely, purely from the point of resource and that was both officer and financial. Grants had been offered particularly to the Valleys areas, over the last 6 months, including grants to support businesses to put outdoor development, supported partly by the Local Authority and partly by the final Valleys Taskforce programme. In addition 23 empty properties had been assessed for grants to bring them back into use. On the back of that, WG had been lobbied, in terms of a replacement programme for the Valleys Taskforce, as it stopped as of the 31 March. She explained that a Bridgend Valleys Regeneration Framework had been drafted in 2019, which she hoped could be utilised more. This was slightly different as it didn't necessarily set out specific interventions in the same way as a Masterplan, but set out key issues and how these would be tackled.

The Member asked if a copy of the Framework could be circulated to Members.

A Member stated there was a need to make sure the impact of the socio-economic duty, tied in to the wider Local Authority activity and governance around the Masterplan, town planning and the place making agenda. The Council needed communicate regarding the vibrancy work that was ongoing. There was also a need to tackle the really hard to reach empty commercial properties, as this could see a benefit of additional continued funding within the county.

The Corporate Director - Communities acknowledged that the socio-economic duty had come into force on the 1 April 2021, and would be looked at as part of the Cabinet Report along with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act (WFGWA), Equality Impact Assessment (EIA and Corporate Plan and how everything being done was

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contributing to wellbeing overall. The benefits were not all financial, in fact the majority were non-financial, and they were to create wellbeing where people want to socialise and meet friends. The spotlight during the pandemic had turned to mental health and wellness and wellbeing, with people having more respect for where they lived and their local environment as well as a greater appreciation of what was around them. A key part of the Masterplan, was local identity, getting people to appreciate how amazing Bridgend was, its heritage and everything on offer.

Consultation Questions

A Member referred to the integrated transport hub, and asked if Transport for Wales (TfW) and Network Rail were supportive of having an accessible entrance at the back of the station, which would probably have to be manned and were they prepared to invest and fund some of these extra resourcing.

The Team Leader Regeneration Projects and Approaches confirmed that there had been numerous meetings with Network Rail and TfW, (both TfW gov and TfW Rail Services) and they were very much on-board with the proposals, whilst acknowledging the issue of increased staffing, was something to be addressed.

The Member referred to the problem of the amount of parking spaces available, and asked would an entrance on the eastern side cause another issue with parking.

The Team Leader Regeneration Projects and Approaches explained that parking had been discussed in great depth, it was an issue, and would have to be resolved. There was existing parking provision on the western side of the track, so there may have to be allocation provided on the eastern side of the track. This needed to be a transit orientated development, incorporating places where people could park, there are adequate bus links and that people could access on foot and cycle there, so it was all part of the integrated approach for the site.

A Member asked what consultation had been done with property developers.

The Group Manager Strategic Regeneration confirmed that all known landowners had been formally consulted. Not just individuals, but shopping centres and the owner representatives in Bridgend and the UK, all public sector landowners and private sector landowners and developers. They had been part of the development process and welcomed the projects that were included within the plan. There had also been conversations with agents, those that represent major developers looking for sites and premises.

The Leader emphasised they were much more than consultees but crucial partners with much of the progress made, through that partnership. Even if it was not directly having that relationship e.g. maybe through RSL's having that relationship, there had been an overwhelmingly positive engagement with the majority of land owners, in terms of the square footage they owned and the number of owners. Overall, that had been a key to progress in recent years and would be key to progress, going forward, as this was not just the Authority's vision for the town, it was everyone's vision including all public and private sector partners, who were excited about this plan, because they could see the potential, as could the Local Authority.

The Chairperson thanked Officers and Cabinet Members for their time following which the invitees left the meeting.

Recommendations:

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Having considered the report on the Bridgend Town Centre Regeneration Masterplan and Consultation, and Invitees' responses to Members' questions the Committee made the following comments and recommendations:

1. That the report to Cabinet looks at the previous masterplan and reflects back and brings lessons forward.
2. That the Committee, in a supportive context, receives a review and appraisal of the masterplan at least annually. In addition the committee would like to have project specific updates using SMART measures, in terms of key project milestones.
3. Members raised concern about the level of parking in the town centre as a result of increased student numbers from Bridgend College moving to Cheapside, along with the potential for the Sony Theatre to move, in addition to increased numbers of vehicles due the residential in-town living piece. How would this impact on residential parking and resident permit parking.
4. Members asked for a copy of the travel strategy.
5. That any maintenance liability that would come to the Local Authority as a result of the masterplan, is factored in to the costings.
6. That with regard to the residential in-town living piece there should be a mix of social groups.
7. Strengthen communications in respect of active travel routes in the borough e.g. Craig-y-Parcau Local Nature Reserve.
8. Conversations continue with bus operators to ensure that it is not easier to get on a bus to Cardiff, rather than to Bridgend.
9. Members were concerned about that lack of public convenience facilities within the town centre and asked that consideration be given to new public convenience facilities being built at the eastern side of the railway station. Members further asked that the comfort scheme be reviewed to ensure that that all companies are complying, if they had signed up to the scheme.

That a copy of the Valley's regeneration framework be circulated to all Members of the Committee.

120. URGENT ITEMS

None.