



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

24TH JANUARY 2019

PORTH TOWN CENTRE: DRAFT STRATEGY

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION, PLANNING AND HOUSING IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING, COUNCILLOR BEVAN

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1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to set out the results of the public consultation exercise carried out on the draft Porth Town Centre Strategy; and the focussed service user consultation on the specific proposals to relocate the services currently provided by Alec Jones Day Centre to the new Community Hub at Porth Plaza.
- 1.2 In addition, this report seeks Cabinet to approve the Porth Town Centre Strategy and the further development and delivery of schemes as set out within the document.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Considers the responses to the public consultation exercise undertaken in respect of the Porth Town Centre Strategy and determines whether any amendments are required to the proposals.
- 2.2 Considers the responses to the focussed service user consultation on the specific proposals to relocate the activities currently provided at Alec Jones Day Centre to the new Community Hub at Porth Plaza and determines whether any amendments are required to the proposals.
- 2.3 Subject to 2.2, and in response to the feedback received through the consultation as set out in paragraph 7.4 and 7.8 of the report, authorise the Director, Public Health, Protection & Community Services to undertake a further engagement exercise with the service users of Alec Jones Day Centre to identify and put in place the necessary arrangements for alternative hot meal provision.

- 2.4 Subject to 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 above, approve the Porth Town Centre Strategy (subject to any changes as result of the engagement process outlined above) and the further development and delivery of schemes as set out within the document.

3.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To continue to deliver on the Council's commitment to support the regeneration of town centres and encourage private sector investment in the high street economy, as set out in Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council's 2016-20 Corporate Plan "*The Way Ahead*".
- 3.2 To deliver this commitment and to tackle the many challenges currently faced by our town centres, the solution requires an integrated, co-ordinated and holistic approach to town centre regeneration that harnesses the many exciting opportunities currently presented through the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal.

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Enabling vibrant and enticing town centres, with a strong offer, which recognises that they are at the heart of our communities is a clear commitment within Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council's 2016-20 Corporate Plan "*The Way Ahead*". The plan also makes a commitment that they will benefit from investment to ensure an attractive environment exists for businesses, residents and shoppers.
- 4.2 To deliver this commitment and to tackle the many challenges currently faced by our town centres, the solution requires a sophisticated and sustainable approach to regeneration.
- 4.3 As such, the Porth Town Centre strategy sets out an integrated, co-ordinated and holistic approach to town centre regeneration that takes into account the distinctive role Porth has at the heart of the community and its important location for services, employment, housing and transport functions.
- 4.4 On the 16th October, Cabinet agreed to initiate a public consultation exercise on the draft Porth Town Centre Strategy and receive a further report detailing the results from the consultation exercise.

5.0 PORTH TOWN CENTRE: PROPOSED STRATEGY (SUMMARY)

- 5.1 The proposed vision for Porth Town Centre is:

'To transform Porth Town Centre into a prosperous and attractive town, which offers a wide range of opportunities for visitors, residents and

businesses; anchored by Porth Transport Hub and a much regenerated Station Quarter’.

- 5.2 To achieve this vision, the strategy is supported by a series of strategic objectives that will drive its delivery and translate directly into a series of projects and actions:
1. To improve connectivity with the town centre and surrounding areas through the development of a Transport Hub.
 2. To create the conditions for the town to become a thriving Station Quarter.
 3. To improve the key gateways into the town.
 4. To support the development of housing.
 5. To provide the conditions to strengthen employment opportunities.

Making it Happen – the Key Schemes

- 5.3 Achieving the vision and objectives for the town cannot be achieved with one simple scheme. Instead, it demands the implementation of a wide range of co-ordinated and integrated **physical** development projects. The draft Porth Town Centre Strategy takes each of these strategic objectives and sets out a wide range of projects and investment opportunities in more detail. This includes:

The development of a modern quality Transport Hub and Station Quarter that efficiently links commercial development with residential areas.

- 5.4 The delivery of this project will result in transformational change for Porth by improving the connectivity within the town centre and surrounding areas. This has the potential to attract more people to the town to work, live, visit and invest therefore improving the footfall and the ability of the town to attract investment by creating jobs and homes. The potential also exists to create a modern well-designed arrival point that welcomes visitors, business people and residents, providing a high quality experience.
- 5.5 The strategy has identified the site currently occupied by the Alec Jones Day Centre as having the potential to accommodate a new Transport Hub. This site is ideally positioned for a Transport Hub; housing a bus interchange, taxi rank, cycle racks and linking to the train station and the park & ride. The site covers approximately 1,700 sq m allowing for the delivery of a new fit for purpose bus station, which will act as a catalyst for a much-regenerated *Station Quarter* with a mix of commercial, retail, office and residential developments.

(Appendix 1 within the strategy document includes a map outlining the proposed area for the transport hub and station quarter).

- 5.6 The development of a Transport Hub at this site would provide an integrated and improved interchange that aligns both the bus and train stations that will allow them to cope with future, increased passenger numbers and increased services, whilst offering easy access to the whole public transport network. Opportunities to encourage active travel through improved pedestrian and cycle routes and the creation of cycle docking facilities will also be a key feature of the Transport Hub development.
- 5.7 This project will also seek to work with Transport for Wales to develop an integrated ticketing system that offers local residents and visitor's simplicity, convenience and value for money across the bus and rail services serving the metro. This would address the current issue of passengers using a connecting bus service to Porth train station and currently have to pay separately for their bus and train journeys.

The development of Porth Plaza into the Community Hub for Rhondda South.

- 5.8 The opportunity exists for Porth Plaza to be developed as a Community Hub to provide a range of Council services from the same location. This will provide direct access to many of the services residents need on a daily basis as well as providing opportunities to receive business support, employment support and information, advice and assistance on a range of issues that affect people's quality of life and well-being.
- 5.9 Community hubs provide a focal point and facilities to foster greater local community activity and bring residents, the local business community, and smaller organisations together to improve the quality of life in their areas. This development, located in the heart of the town centre, would bring more residents into the town; improving footfall levels and potential spend at local businesses.
- 5.10 In developing Porth Plaza into a Community Hub, it was proposed to re-locate the services currently provided by Alec Jones Day Centre to the new Community Hub. The current Day Centre is currently underutilised with an average of 27 meals served per day. The co-location of services within Porth Plaza will enable the Council to provide residents and community groups with access to rooms to meet and socialise.
- 5.11 Bringing the current Day Centre services together with other services will provide a better offer and create economies of scale in terms of staffing and building costs. Making better, more cost effective use of our community assets and reinvesting resources in new or retrofitted, fit for

purpose buildings will enable services to be sustainable in the longer term.

The provision of additional long and short term parking to accommodate the future regenerated Porth Town centre.

- 5.12 Improving the car parking offer throughout the town will improve the quality of infrastructure needed to support town centre investment and also allow visitors and shoppers to enjoy improved access to the town whilst creating a more positive experience.

Extending the current Park and Ride provision within the town centre.

- 5.13 The development of a **Phase 2 park and ride** facility is currently in the early stages of development and will be progressed during 2018 with completion expected in 2019. The facility aims to provide a further 72 (circa) parking spaces, taking the overall park and ride offer in the town to almost 150 parking spaces.

The redevelopment of existing underused, disused and derelict buildings throughout the town to create housing, office and retail accommodation.

- 5.14 A number of properties close to the train station and at key locations throughout the town centre have the potential for mixed-use development, with commercial and retail opportunities on the ground floors and the reuse of vacant floor space at upper levels, suitable for residential use. Converting unused or underused commercial space into economically productive property also helps boost the profitability of the town.

Explore opportunities to relocate Council Staff into Porth Town Centre.

- 5.15 As part of the Council's proposal to transform Adult Social Care, Bronwydd House, which currently houses over 200 Council employees, has been identified as a site for extra care housing developments. As such, the first phase of this project will be to explore opportunities to relocate these staff to underused or vacant office space/premises within Porth Town Centre. This will generate footfall into the town that has the potential to enhance the town centre economically.

Public realm improvements.

- 5.16 The enhancement of the town centre streets and spaces as part of the Station Quarter and Transport Hub developments will raise the quality,

value and confidence in the town. This will create a far more attractive environment for shoppers and visitors to the town, and enhance the town's distinctiveness.

The introduction of the Town Centre Maintenance Grant.

- 5.17 The Town Centre Maintenance Grant will provide financial support to town centre traders / landlords (including vacant properties) to undertake minor improvements and maintenance works which will improve the external front elevation of town centre properties. The scheme will contribute to a positive impact on the street scene, creating a more attractive and vibrant environment which has the potential to increase retail spend and stimulate further private sector investment.

The redevelopment of the former Porth Junior school site for residential use.

- 5.18 The development of new residential units within Porth will help diversify the existing housing stock, promote housing in sustainable locations that are well served by public transport; and increase the footfall into the town centre.

Developing extra care housing for the elderly and vulnerable.

- 5.19 The economic value of this development will be beneficial to the town as older people will be able to live within and be part of thriving local communities, including the town centre, and increase regular daily footfall to benefit the mix of local independent traders and national retail chains.

6.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 An equality Impact Assessment form (EqIA) screening form has been prepared for the purpose of this report. It has been found that a full report is not required at this time.
- 6.2 In relation to the specific proposals to relocate the services currently provided by Alec Jones Day Centre to the new Community Hub at Porth Plaza a full equality impact assessment has been undertaken. This was undertaken given the proposal will affect persons with a protected characteristic, particularly age and disability. The full equality impact assessment is presented at Appendix 2 and shows that although there are areas of concern it is possible to take steps to mitigate any adverse impact, for example:
- Whilst the current Day Centre activities can be successfully transferred to the Community Hub, the reconfigured building may not

be suitable to offer the hot meals that are currently provided from the Day Centre. Therefore, it is proposed that, subject to members decision, to mitigate the impact on service users the Council will explore alternative provision within the town centre where service user can be signposted to other local cafes/providers. Ongoing community engagement will be central to the development and future of the Porth Plaza Community Hub.

- By exploring the potential of allocating additional disabled parking bays at Porth Plaza car park to meet the potential increase in demand if the Day Centre activities are transferred to Porth Plaza community hub.

7.0. CONSULTATION

7.1 As previously mentioned, on the 16th October, Cabinet agreed to initiate a public consultation exercise on the draft Porth Town Centre Strategy over a 6 week period. It was also agreed that this would include a focused service user consultation on the specific proposals to relocate the services currently provided by Alec Jones Day Centre to the new Community Hub at Porth Plaza.

7.2 The following paragraphs present the findings of the consultation on the proposed strategy for the regeneration of Porth Town Centre:

Porth Town Centre Strategy Consultation

7.3 The 6 week consultation period ran from the 29th October until 10th December 2018. The consultation used a range of methods including a questionnaire, two public face to face engagement events held at Porth Plaza and Morrisons and a number of smaller engagement events held at community and leisure centres. In addition to this, officers attended an Older Persons Wellbeing event at Ystrad Sport Centre to raise awareness with over 70 people in attendance.

7.4 The response to the consultation exercise are presented at Appendix 3 and can be summarised as follows:

- In total, 139 people attended the face to face events and there were 72 responses to the questionnaire.
- 80% of respondents to the questionnaire felt that the strategic objectives outlined in the proposals would improve Porth Town Centre although some concerns were raised about increased parking issues and the timeline for the project causing disruption to the area.
- The face to face engagement events responses were mostly positive with very few negative comments being made. The majority of people were supportive of the overall strategy and particularly supportive of the proposed transport hub. Negative comments centred mainly

around concerns about increased traffic and parking issues. Local food businesses also expressed concern that if Porth Plaza were to include a café/dining area this will be unwelcome competition and contradict the vision set out within the strategy specifically around support for town centre businesses. The businesses did however express an interest in working with the Council to come up with an appropriate solution and possibly provide the hot meals themselves.

- 7.5 The full consultation report is presented at Appendix 3 and includes comments received from respondents during the consultation exercise. Overall, the consultation shows that respondents are supportive of the Porth Town Centre Strategy and welcome the proposals.

Alec Jones Day Centre Consultation

- 7.6 The targeted consultation period ran for 6 weeks, from the 29th October to the 10th December, 2018. The following methods were used to consult with Day Centre service users;

- An online and paper questionnaire.
- Drop in Engagement events on the 16th and 22nd November 2018, located at the Day Centre
- A dedicated email address (consultation@rctcbc.gov.uk) and freepost address if needed.

- 7.7 The responses to the consultation exercise are presented at Appendix 4 and can be summarised as follows:

- Overall, 27 people filled in a questionnaire and 39 people engaged directly with us at the events.
- The main reasons for using the Day Centre were for meeting friends and socialising (82% of service users) and to have lunch (70% service users).
- Respondents were asked what they would do if the Day Centre activities were to transfer to Porth Plaza. 92% of service users responded to this question stating that they would attend the new Community Hub and nobody stated that they would stop attending the activities.
- Respondents were asked what they would do if the Day Centre meals were to transfer to Porth Plaza. 91% of service users responded to this question stating that they would attend the new Community Hub for a hot meal.
- It is important to note that further comments from the service users were focussed on their desire to have the same service and meals, at the same cost, as they currently receive in the Day Centre.

- Service users were asked what the impact of the proposed transfer of the day centre would have on them. Some of the responses stated that there would be no impact, as long as the current facilities were transferred to Porth Plaza.
- There were concerns raised regarding the lack of parking at Porth Plaza.
- Discussion with the service users showed that they value the work and friendliness of the staff at the centre and some of the comments made were regarding concerns about the impact the proposal would have on the current Day Centre staff.

7.8 In addition to the above points, during the consultation a number of service users expressed concerns about the layout and open plan nature of Porth Plaza. Some service users expressed a wish to see a separate dining area exclusively for their use. With the proposed reconfiguration/usage of Porth Plaza this would not be possible.

7.9 Service users also expressed a view that the provision at Porth Plaza should be the same type of meals, available at the same time of day and at the same cost. If Porth Plaza is reconfigured to make the ground floor and entrance more vibrant, including the movement of the library to create a better service offer with additional community room capacity, it may not be possible to provide like for like service provision to that currently available in Alec Jones Day Centre. However, the current Day Centre activities, including community group activities, could still be successfully transferred to the Community Hub

7.10 As part of the consultation process the Council also engaged with the family of the late Alec Jones' regarding the proposals to relocate the Day Centre to the new Community Hub in Porth Plaza and to look at how it could recognise the name and contribution made by Alec Jones going forward if the proposals were agreed. The family thanked the Council for its consideration of them as part of the consultation process, and as such found the proposals for Porth to be very interesting. The family suggested an appropriate way in which to recognise Alec Jones' positive contribution would be to erect a plaque on the site of the former Day Centre or new Transport Hub.

7.11 In conclusion, in light of the consultation feedback, the concerns raised by local businesses and existing service users of the day centre and the constraints around the layout of Porth Plaza, it will be necessary to explore alternative options for provision of hot meals in the town. One option would be to explore an arrangement with a local café or food business which would address the wishes of existing service users and respond to the concerns of local businesses around potential competition.

7.12 The full consultation report is presented at Appendix 4 and includes comments received from respondents during the consultation exercise. Overall, the consultation shows that respondents are supportive of the services they receive at the Alex Jones Day Centre transferring to the Porth Plaza Community Hub.

8.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

8.1 There are no direct financial implications in developing this outline strategy for Porth, but as the opportunities are developed, the financial implications will be fully assessed, and where appropriate reported to Cabinet.

9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

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

10.0 LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT.

10.1 The delivery of this strategy will contribute to the Council's corporate priorities:

- Economy – building a strong economy
- People – promoting independence
- Place – creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live and work

10.2 Enabling vibrant and enticing town centres, with a strong offer, which recognises that they are at the heart of our communities is a clear commitment within Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council's 2016-20 Corporate Plan "The Way Ahead".

10.3 The strategy is consistent with the sustainable approach promoted by the well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act through the five ways of working:

- Long term – the objectives identified, and the actions that will deliver these objectives, are part of a longer-term vision of enhancing Porth and builds upon the long term vision of the Council.
- Prevention – the strategy recognises that there are a number of challenges that need to be addressed in order to achieve the vision. The projects identified will respond to these concerns in order to ensure that they don't get worse or occur in the first place.
- Integration – the projects identified in the strategy will help deliver a number of the objectives identified within the Council's Corporate

Plan. A key feature of the strategy is to ensure the approach to regenerating Porth is joined up, integrated and co-ordinated.

- Collaboration – intrinsic to this approach is collaboration with other public services and third sector organisations.
- Involvement – communities will be involved with the delivery of a full public consultation to obtain the views of wider stakeholders.

10.4 This approach makes a direct contribution to the seven national well-being goals, in particular a prosperous Wales, a resilient Wales, a healthier Wales, a Wales of cohesive communities and a more equal Wales.

11.0 CONCLUSION

11.1 This report sets out the results of the public consultation exercise carried out on the draft Porth Town Centre Strategy; and the focussed service user consultation on the specific proposals to relocate the services currently provided by Alec Jones Day Centre to the new Community Hub at Porth Plaza. Overall, the consultation shows that respondents are supportive of the Porth Town Centre Strategy and welcome the proposals.

11.2 The new Community Hub at Porth Plaza will provide a range of services that are responsive to the needs of Porth town centre; these would include a front facing newly designed library and employability support. Whilst the current Day Centre activities can be successfully transferred to the Community Hub, the reconfigured building may not be suitable to offer the hot meals that are currently provided from the Day Centre. Therefore, it is proposed that, subject to members decision, to mitigate the impact on service users the Council will explore alternative provision within the town centre where service users can be signposted to other local cafes/providers. Ongoing community engagement will be central to the development and future of the Porth Plaza Community Hub.

11.3 The outline strategy includes a wide range of activity which is both short and long term for delivery involving a range of partners. It is both ambitious and realistic in its approach and achieving the vision and objectives for the town cannot be achieved with one simple scheme. Instead, it demands the implementation of a wide range of co-ordinated and integrated physical development projects.

11.4 The delivery of these projects would result in **transformational change** for Porth by improving the connectivity within the town centre and surrounding areas. This has the potential to attract more people to the town to work, live, visit and invest therefore improving the footfall and the ability of the town to attract investment creating jobs and homes.

11.5 As Porth is the gateway to the two Rhondda Valleys this transport interchange will not just benefit the residents of Porth but will also have a positive impact on a much wider population.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

Public Service Delivery, Communities & Prosperity

Contact Officer

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

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Item:

Background Papers

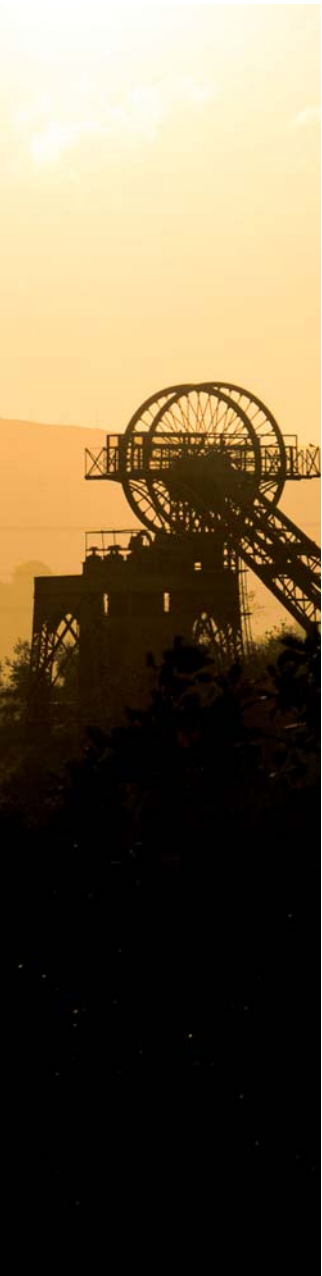
[Cabinet](#) – 16th October, 2018.

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Enabling vibrant and
enticing town centres,
at the heart of our
communities.

**STRATEGY
2018/19**



PORTH TOWN CENTRE



RHONDDA CYNON TAF

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Introduction

Enabling vibrant and enticing town centres, with a strong offer, which recognises that they are at the heart of our communities is a clear commitment within Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council's 2016-20 Corporate Plan "The Way Ahead". The plan also makes a commitment that they will benefit from investment to ensure an attractive environment exists for businesses, residents and shoppers.

To deliver this commitment and to tackle the many challenges currently faced by our town centres, the solution requires a sophisticated and sustainable approach to regeneration.

As such, this regeneration strategy sets out an integrated, co-ordinated and holistic approach to town centre regeneration that takes into account the distinctive role Porth Town Centre has at the heart of the community and its important location for services, employment, housing and transport functions.

Pivotal to this strategy is the key aim to harness the many exciting opportunities currently presented through the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal, the Valleys Taskforce and the Council's Strategic Opportunities Area approach to regeneration and provide a framework for taking Porth forward into the future that delivers economic growth and job creation. A range of projects and investment opportunities in and around Porth town centre is included in the framework; many of which can be delivered within the short to medium term, whilst others will be longer-term schemes.

PORTH TOWN CENTRE: The current challenges and opportunities

In developing this strategy, it is important to understand the key challenges, but also the opportunities that exist in and around Porth that have the potential to support the regeneration of the town.

These challenges and opportunities have been identified and summarised under the following themes:

- **Connectivity**
- **Town Centre Gateway**
- **Car Parking**
- **Retail**
- **Housing**



Connectivity

Transport is fundamental to connecting people, businesses and services; whether it is connecting people to jobs, education, leisure or community facilities, or connecting visitors and residents.

Porth is a key settlement identified within the County Borough's Northern Strategy Area, as set out in the Council's Local Development Plan. It is regarded as the gateway to the Rhondda Fawr and Rhondda Fach valleys because both valleys meet at Porth, and it is reasonably well connected with Pontypridd and Cardiff via the A4058 and the A470 (see appendix 1 for a map of Porth Town Centre and the focus for this strategy). However, the A4058 south of Porth experiences daily high volume traffic as it leads to Pontypridd and the A470 to Cardiff.

Porth train station is located on the Treherbert line, with two trains per hour running from Porth into Cardiff. The National Cycle Network 881 connects to the station via an off-road dedicated cycle/footway route that connects from the southbound platform northward up the Rhondda Fach. According to the Office of Rail and Road, in 2016/17 there were 341,742 entries and exits at Porth station, making it the 33rd (out of 222) busiest in Wales.

Porth also benefits from an established, **but at capacity**, Park and Ride facility conveniently located adjacent to the train station. The £1.8M scheme, opened in the summer of 2016, provides 73 park and ride spaces together with improved disabled access, cycle parking and improved access to the station.

However, a poor transport interchange still exists between bus and rail services within the town, with bus stops currently located along Pontypridd Road and Porth Street (B4278), several hundred metres from the train station with no accessible taxi rank or cycle storage. This current set up prevents a seamless transition for those who use the bus link service from the surrounding areas to the train service in Porth. This is especially an issue for residents of the Rhondda Fach, Trebanog, Tonyrefail and Gilfach Goch as no rail link exists and therefore bus links to Porth Station are vital to allow commutable journeys.

In addition to this, passengers using a connecting bus service to Porth train station currently have to pay separately for their bus and train journeys. This unintegrated approach is inconvenient for passengers and often results in them paying more for their journey. The current deregulated bus market makes it difficult to achieve an integrated approach.

Opportunity

Porth's key location and its train station is seen as one of the town's greatest assets – many similar sized towns in the UK do not benefit from such connectivity, and it is therefore fundamental that such an asset is capitalised upon.

Major infrastructure projects are an instrument for kick-starting regeneration with train stations, and their surrounding environments, increasingly seen as the steer for regeneration programmes as previously inaccessible land is unlocked and dilapidated buildings bought back into use.

Through Cardiff Capital City Deal there is an exciting opportunity to facilitate significant change and kick start the regeneration of Porth, which has the potential to provide resources to unlock significant economic growth, delivering jobs and private sector investment. The City Deal Investment Fund will also facilitate the delivery of the South East Wales Metro, which will make substantial improvements to the connectivity by public transport across the region

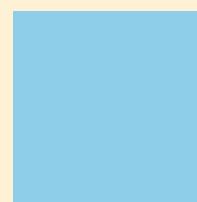
The Metro will focus on modernising the core valley lines resulting in far more frequent and faster trains in and out of Cardiff. As part of this development, Porth Train Station will see an increase in train services from two trains per hour to four trains per hour from 2022. This presents an excellent opportunity to capitalise on this investment and transform Porth into a key **Transport Hub** and open up the possibility of a much-regenerated **Station Quarter**.

The development of Porth as a Transport Hub would provide an integrated and improved interchange that aligns both the bus and train stations that will allow them to cope with future, increased passenger numbers and increased services, whilst offering easy access to the whole public transport network. Opportunities to encourage active travel through improved pedestrian and cycle routes and the creation of cycle docking facilities will also be a key feature of the Transport Hub development.

Furthermore, one of Transport for Wales's strategic goals is to achieve a fully integrated, joined-up transport system with integrated ticketing. This provides an opportunity to work with Transport for Wales to develop such scheme that offers local residents and visitor's simplicity, convenience and value for money across the bus and rail services serving the metro. This would address the current issue of passengers using a connecting bus service to Porth train station and currently have to pay separately for their bus and train journeys.

Alongside this, developing and investing in the delivery of **park and ride enhancements** would also provide transportation and environmental benefits. In particular, an extended Porth Park and Ride facility would attract drivers from a wide catchment area, significantly shorten vehicular journeys, improve accessibility to areas of employment by sustainable travel, reduce congestion on the local and strategic highway network and improve air quality.

The delivery of these projects would result in **transformational change** for Porth by improving the connectivity within the town centre and surrounding areas. This has the potential to attract more people to the town to work, live, visit and invest therefore improving the footfall and the ability of the town to attract investment creating jobs and homes.





Town Centre Gateways

The gateways to a town are what visitors see first and create the perception of what can be expected from the rest of the town. The appearance of gateways can be used to raise the profile of the town, increasing the awareness as an attractive and worthwhile place to visit and invest.

Stations are intrinsically attached to their local community and act as a gateway to both town and railway. Porth station gateway extends westwards along Station Street to the junction with Hannah Street. Porth Train Station and the approach to the station is currently aesthetically uninviting and very uninspiring. Many visitors travelling to the town will arrive at Porth without a real sense of arrival as the relationship between the transport interchange and the town is extremely poor.

In addition to this, there are at present a number of prominent, vacant and under-used buildings in the vicinity of the train station and the town centre, specifically Station Street and Hannah Street. Some of the buildings have seriously dilapidated and become local 'eyesores' and hotspots for anti-social behaviour resulting in the long term blight of the area, which will affect inward investment, businesses and property prices.

Opportunity

The station is an important gateway into the town. With the development of the metro and Porth as a Transport Hub, there is an excellent opportunity to transform the area into an attractive, modern and well-designed arrival point for residents and visitors to the town with enhanced public realm and improved signage and infrastructure (soft landscaping).

Developing the area around the Train Station and Transport Hub into a **Station Quarter** would provide a fitting gateway into Porth, creating a fully integrated, accessible and welcoming town centre with a focus on the redevelopment of key buildings that offer diverse uses. Commercial, office, retail and residential developments in the Station Quarter and town centre has the potential to strengthen the existing economic assets while diversifying its economic base. Converting unused or underused commercial space into economically productive property also helps boost the profitability of the town.

Retail

As with many of Rhondda Cynon Taf's town centres the main economy of Porth is retail, with the centre of Porth home to the shopping district based around Hannah Street, with other businesses mainly located on nearby Pontypridd Road and Porth Street.

Town centre retail is facing a multitude of challenges to their future vitality and viability. Many of our High Streets are characterised by falling retail sales, reduced footfall, increased business failures and rising vacancies. The growth of internet shopping and multi-channel retailing also means that many retailers are actively seeking to reduce rather than increase their store portfolios.

Porth's town centre footfall has dropped year on year from 2011, from a weekly average of 13,210 to 9,274 currently, although the vacancy rate in 2017 was 11.6%, which is below the Welsh average of 13% but slightly higher than the UK average of 11%.

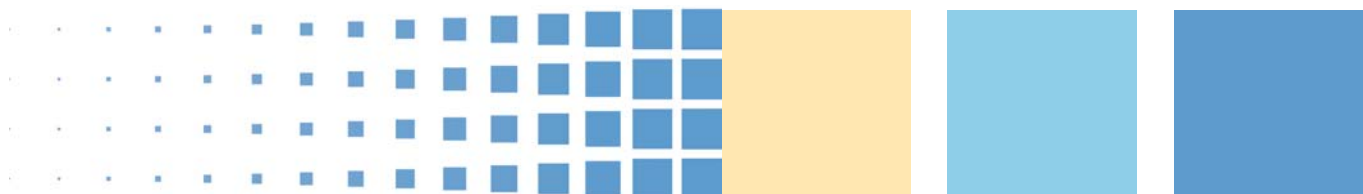
Over recent years, three national banks have closed their branches in the town leaving it without a single bank. Traders firmly believe that this has affected and contributed to the decline in footfall which has had a negative impact on local businesses.

Opportunity

The Transport Hub has the potential to attract new economic investment to the Station Quarter, town centre and surrounding area with the development of mixed-use neighbourhoods and multi-functional buildings within a few hundred metres of the station. There is the potential to incorporate quality, town centre accommodation, which is attractive to young professionals, and the development of retail units suitable for entrepreneurs, small businesses and start-ups.

As part of the Council proposals to transform Adult Social Care, Bronwydd House, which currently houses over 200 Council employees, has been identified as a suitable site for extra care housing developments. As such, an opportunity exists for many of these staff to be relocated to underused or vacant office space/premises within Porth Town Centre. Locating over 200 Council staff into Porth Town Centre will not only bring back to use one or a number of vacant buildings but will also generate footfall into the town that has the potential to enhance the town centre economically.

A further opportunity to locate public sector services within the town also exists with the Council's commitment to develop Community Hubs across the borough. Due to Porth's pivotal location and soon to be improved transport links, it is ideally placed to provide the Community Hub approach to serve the Rhondda South. The hub will provide a range of services such as business support, employment support and information, advice and assistance on a range of issues. This development, located in the heart of the town centre, would bring more residents into the town; improving footfall levels and potential spend within local businesses.



Car Parking

The provision of town centre parking can be considered as customer service, the aim of which is to provide good access to the town for residents, workers, shoppers and visitors.

Porth Town Centre currently benefits from a mixed but limited parking offer with two main public car parks; one short-stay in West Taff Street (up to 2 hrs) offering 30 spaces and one long-stay in Foundry Place offering 46 spaces. Both car parks are located in the south of the town which provides the main route of access into the town for vehicles. An additional 35 limited waiting spaces (1 hour, no return within 1 hour) area also available throughout Hannah Street.

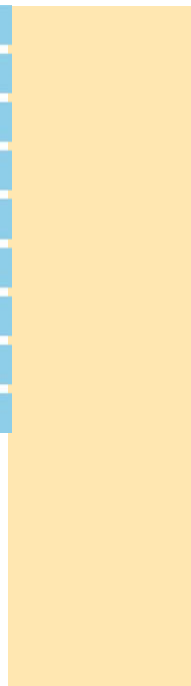
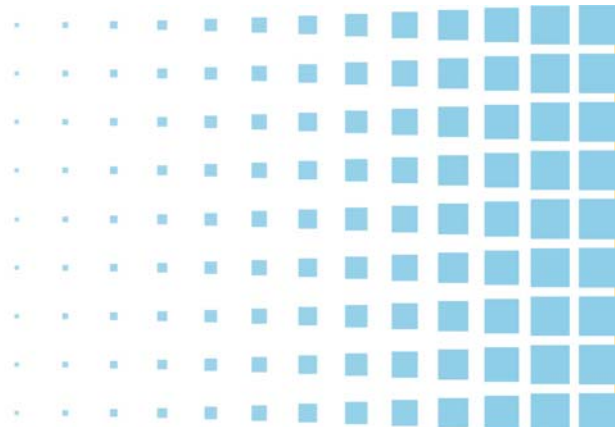
Although a decision made by the Council in 2017 to introduce free parking across many of its towns, including Porth, has gone some way to improving the parking offer, a lack of physical parking still exists which presents a challenge and acts as a barrier for those accessing the town.

Opportunity

Improving the car parking offer throughout the town will improve the quality of infrastructure needed to support town centre investment and also allow visitors and shoppers to enjoy improved access to the town whilst creating a more positive experience.

Whilst it is envisaged that the enhancements to public transport as part of the Metro will increase the number of people travelling to and from Porth by public transport, the potential relocation of 200 Council employees to the town centre, means that there is still a need for additional car parking.

The availability of quality parking in the right locations play a key role in the perception and attractiveness of the town centre and in turn is fundamental to increasing footfall. Throughout the town there are a number of vacant sites that have the potential to provide further car parking spaces.



Housing

The 2015 Mid-Year Population Estimates indicated that Porth had a population of 6,000 people living in different areas of the town, namely Birchgrove, Britannia, Glynfach, Llwyncelyn, Mount Pleasant and Porth town centre.

Porth has habitually been identified as a mid-housing market area across Rhondda Cynon Taf in recent Local Housing Market Assessments. It is known locally as the 'Gateway to the Valleys', due to its pivotal position at the foot of the Rhondda Fawr and Rhondda Fach, rendering it one of the higher demand parts of the Rhondda specifically.

The Council's annual Housing Market Needs Assessment has identified a need in Porth for one bedroom apartments, plus four units for Low Cost Home Ownership comprising a mix of two and three bedroom houses. Furthermore, and as part of the Council's approach to Transforming Adult Social Care and the development of extra care housing, it has been estimated that Rhondda Cynon Taf will need a further 220 extra care housing units to meet the needs of an increasingly older population. In relation to Porth, it is estimated that an additional 60 units will be required to meet the needs of the community.

Opportunity

The development of new residential units within the town centre and surrounding area would help diversify the existing housing stock, promote housing in sustainable locations that are well served by public transport; and increase the footfall into the town centre. This type of accommodation is likely to appeal to young professionals who may be unable to afford the house prices for similar accommodation in Cardiff. The increase in train services from Porth to Cardiff as part of the metro development would make living in Porth an even more attractive proposition.

Furthermore, as part of Pontypridd's Regeneration Strategy, Transport for Wales is committed to locating approximately 500 staff to the new Taff Vale office complex on its completion in 2020. Given Taff Vale's close proximity to Porth, and the forthcoming Metro programme which will improve connections between Pontypridd and Porth, it is not inconceivable to envisage an increased demand for housing in the Porth area.

To accommodate this potential demand, a number of properties close to Porth train station have the potential for mixed-use development; with commercial and retail opportunities on the ground floors and the reuse of vacant floor space at upper levels for residential use. Such opportunities can help to seamlessly integrate retail, open market sale and affordable units for rent within the town centre. The incorporation of additional residential units can provide natural surveillance of the streets when retail outlets are closed and help to combat the issues associated with a transient evening population. This can make a positive contribution towards the ongoing regeneration of the town centre, improve commercial property vacancy rates and increase regular daily footfall. Furthermore, such developments also present an opportunity to support growth and investment in the Town Centre by increasing the potential pool of labour for traders and providing job opportunities for the residents, closer to home.

As previously mentioned, Bronwydd House in Porth has been identified as a suitable location for an extra care development. This site has been identified as it is close to the town centre, has good access to transport, health services and local amenities, and the site is of sufficient size to deliver an aspirational offer with good social and community opportunities for residents in the scheme and surrounding area. The economic value of this development will be beneficial to the town as older people will be able to live within and be part of thriving local communities, including the town centre and increase regular daily footfall to benefit the mix of local independent traders and national retail chains.

VISION AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this section is to set out the kind of place that Porth could become if it positively harnesses its assets and effectively co-ordinates the regeneration effort.

The Vision:

‘To transform Porth Town Centre into a prosperous and attractive town, which offers a wide range of opportunities for visitors, residents and businesses; anchored by Porth Transport Hub and a much regenerated Station Quarter’.

Central to the vision is the ability to create a sense of place by boosting the perception and experience of the town, generating a positive environment in which to live, work, visit and invest. The vision will help to rejuvenate and sustain the town centre, grow the local economy, increase job opportunities and provide for urban living. The renewal of key sites across the town and the development of the Transport Hub and Station Quarter will be the catalyst for such changes.

Strategic Objectives:

To achieve this vision and address many of the challenges identified in section 2, this strategy is supported by a series of strategic objectives that will drive its delivery and translate directly into a series of projects and actions:

- 1 To improve connectivity with the town centre and surrounding areas through the development of a Transport Hub. This includes:**
 - Developing a modern quality transport interchange to efficiently link commercial development with residential areas that capitalises on and maximises the opportunities being presented through the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal, specifically the delivery of the South East Wales Metro.
 - Work with Transport for Wales to develop and introduce a fully integrated, smart ticketing scheme that offers local residents and visitor’s simplicity, convenience and value for money across the bus and rail services serving the metro.
 - The provision of additional long and short term parking to accommodate the future regenerated Porth town centre.
 - Extending the current Park and Ride provision within Porth.

2 To create the conditions for the town to become a thriving Station Quarter. This includes:

- Optimising the area around the station and proposed transport hub to create a thriving hub of enterprises.
- Targeting existing underused and vacant buildings around the station and proposed Transport Hub to create modern mixed-use accommodation that is attractive to young professionals and units suitable for entrepreneurs, small businesses and start-ups.
- Transforming the perception of Porth from a peripheral town into a fully integrated part of the Cardiff Capital Region.
- Creating the conditions to attract and develop new amenities.

3 To improve the key gateways into the town. This includes:

- Creating a fully integrated, accessible and welcoming town centre with a focus on the redevelopment of key buildings, which offer diverse uses, on the main approaches into the town.
- Creating a modern well-designed arrival point for residents and visitors to the town, with particular focus on the Transport Hub and Station Quarter.
- Introducing a Town Centre Maintenance Grant to provide financial support to traders/landlords (including vacant properties) to undertake minor improvements and maintenance works which will improve the external front elevation of town centre properties.
- Public realm improvements including the creation of new public spaces.

4 To support the development of housing. This includes:

- Identifying key residential opportunities, including vacant properties that need redeveloping or renovating, that can be unlocked to create the best mix of private and affordable housing.
- Improving the standard of existing housing and broaden the mix of housing through new developments.
- Developing extra care housing for the elderly and vulnerable, which provides affordable, flexible and adaptable accommodation that meets the criteria for lifetime homes.

5 To provide the conditions to strengthen employment opportunities. This includes:

- Strengthening employment opportunities through investment in disused and underused sites and the development of a Transport Hub and thriving Station Quarter.
- The development of a Community Hub to provide a range of Council services from the same location. This will provide direct access to many of the services residents need on a daily basis as well as providing opportunities to receive business support, employment support and information, advice and assistance on a range of issues that affect people's quality of life and well-being.
- Connecting people to opportunities; getting residents to work, education and training, connecting businesses with suppliers and customers, as well as providing easy access for visitors.

MAKING IT HAPPEN THE KEY SCHEMES

This Porth Town Centre Strategy is both ambitious and realistic in its approach. Achieving the vision and objectives for the town cannot be achieved with one simple scheme. Instead, it demands the implementation of a wide range of co-ordinated and integrated physical development projects.

The following projects have therefore been identified that, if delivered, will be the most effective at bringing about the desired change in Porth:

Project One

The development of a modern quality Transport Hub and Station Quarter that efficiently links commercial development with residential areas.

The delivery of this project will result in transformational change for Porth by improving the connectivity with the town centre and other areas. This has the potential to attract more people to the town to work, live, visit and invest therefore improving the footfall and the ability of the town to attract investment creating jobs and homes. The potential also exists to create a modern well-designed arrival point that welcomes visitors, business people and residents, providing a high quality experience.

This strategy has identified the area currently occupied by the Alec Jones Day Centre as having the potential to accommodate a new Transport Hub. This site is ideally positioned for a Transport Hub; housing a bus interchange, taxi rank and cycle racks, and linking to the train station and park & ride. The site covers approximately 1,700 sq m allowing for the delivery of a new fit for purpose bus station, which will act as a catalyst for a much-regenerated Station Quarter with a mix of commercial, retail, office and residential developments. (Please see appendix 1 for map outlining the proposed area for the Transport Hub and Station Quarter).

The development of a Transport Hub at this site would provide an integrated and improved interchange that aligns both the bus and train stations that will allow them to cope with future, increased passenger numbers and increased services, whilst offering easy access to the whole public transport network. Opportunities to encourage active travel through improved pedestrian and cycle routes and the creation of cycle docking facilities will also be a key feature of the Transport Hub development.

This project will also seek to work with Transport for Wales to develop an integrated ticketing system that offers local residents and visitor's simplicity, convenience and value for money across the bus and rail services serving the metro. This would address the current issue of passengers using a connecting bus service to Porth train station and currently have to pay separately for their bus and train journeys.

This project contributes towards the delivery of all objectives outlined in this strategy and will act as a catalyst for further investment and all proposed projects.

Approximate implementation times scales:
Short to medium term (0-6 years)

Project Two

The development of Porth Plaza into the Community Hub for Rhondda South.

The opportunity exists for Porth Plaza to be developed as a Community Hub to provide a range of Council services from the same location. This will provide direct access to many of the services residents need on a daily basis as well as providing opportunities to receive business support, employment support and information, advice and assistance on a range of issues that affect people's quality of life and well-being.

Community hubs provide a focal point and facilities to foster greater local community activity and bring residents, the local business community and smaller organisations together to improve the quality of life in their areas. This development, located in the heart of the town centre, would bring more residents into the town; improving footfall levels and potential spend within local businesses.

In developing Porth Plaza into a Community Hub, it is proposed to re-locate the services currently provided by Alec Jones Day Centre to the new Community Hub. The current Day Centre is currently under utilised with an average of 27 meals served per day. The co-location of services within Porth Plaza will enable the Council to provide a café style food outlet where food is available throughout the day, including hot meals. Residents and community groups would continue to have access to rooms to meet and the activities currently delivered as part of the Day Centre offer.

Bringing the current Day Centre services together with other services will provide a better offer and create economies of scale in terms of staffing and building costs. Making better, more cost effective use of our community assets and reinvesting resources in new or retrofitted, fit for purpose buildings will enable services to be sustainable in the longer term.

Approximate implementation times scales:

Short term (0-3 years)

Project Three

The provision of additional long and short term parking to accommodate the future regenerated Porth Town centre.

Improving the car parking offer throughout the town will improve the quality of infrastructure needed to support town centre investment and also allow visitors and shoppers to enjoy improved access to the town whilst creating a more positive experience.

A number of key sites with the potential to provide further car parking throughout the town will be explored and a feasibility study carried out with a view to developing them in a way that compliments the current offer and ensures a flexible and balanced parking offer exists for those who visit, work and shop in the town.

Approximate implementation times scales:

Short term (0-3 years)

Project Four

Extending the current Park and Ride provision within the town centre.

The completion of the town's first park and ride facility in 2016 resulted in the creation of 73 new parking spaces adjacent to the train station. This has gone some way to creating a more integrated transport interchange in the town, however with plans to increase the frequency of the train service to Treherbert to four trains per hour (north and southbound) from December 2022 as part of the South Wales Metro, the demand for an additional park and ride facility is highly likely.

With this in mind, a project to develop a **Phase 2 park and ride** facility (north of the current facility) is currently in the early stages of development and will be progressed during 2018 with completion expected in 2019. The facility aims to provide a further 72 (circa) parking spaces, taking the overall park and ride offer in the town to almost 150 parking spaces.

Approximate implementation times scales:
Short term (0-3 years)

Project Five

The redevelopment of existing underused, disused and derelict buildings throughout the town to create housing, office and retail accommodation.

A number of properties close to the train station and at key locations throughout the town centre have the potential for mixed-use development, with commercial and retail opportunities on the ground floors and the reuse of vacant floor space at upper levels, suitable for residential use.

Commercial, office, retail and residential developments in the Station Quarter and town centre has the potential to strengthen the existing economic assets while diversifying its economic base. Converting unused or underused commercial space into economically productive property also helps boost the profitability of the town.

Approximate implementation times scales:
Short to medium term (0-6 years)

Project Six

Explore opportunities to relocate Council Staff into Porth Town Centre.

As part of the Council's proposal to transform Adult Social Care, Bronwydd House, which currently houses over 200 Council employees, has been identified as a site for extra care housing developments. As such, the first phase of this project will be to explore opportunities to relocate these staff to underused or vacant office space/premises within Porth Town Centre.

Locating over 200 Council staff into Porth Town Centre will not only bring back to use one or a number of vacant buildings but will also generate footfall into the town that has the potential to enhance the town centre economically.

Approximate implementation times scales:
Short term (0-3 years)

Project Seven

Public realm improvements.

The enhancement of the town centre streets and spaces as part of the Station Quarter and Transport Hub developments will raise the quality, value and confidence in the town. This will create a far more attractive environment for shoppers and visitors to the town, and enhance the town's distinctiveness.

Approximate implementation times scales:
Short to medium term (0-6 years)

Project Eight

The introduction of the Town Centre Maintenance Grant.

The Town Centre Maintenance Grant will provide financial support to town centre traders / landlords (including vacant properties) to undertake minor improvements and maintenance works which will improve the external front elevation of town centre properties. The scheme will contribute to a positive impact on the street scene, creating a more attractive and vibrant environment which has the potential to increase retail spend and stimulate further private sector investment.

Approximate implementation times scales:
Short term (0-3 years)

Project Nine

The redevelopment of the former Porth Junior school site for residential use.

The development of new residential units within Porth will help diversify the existing housing stock, promote housing in sustainable locations that are well served by public transport; and increase the footfall into the town centre.

The former Porth Junior School site has the potential to address much of the prevailing housing need in the area through the development of one bedroom apartments and two, three and four bedroom houses, but also provides scope for sustainable tenant progression on site.

Approximate implementation times scales:
Short to medium term (0-6 years)

Project Ten

Developing extra care housing for the elderly and vulnerable.

Bronwydd House in Porth has been identified as a key site for extra care developments. This site has been identified as it is close to the town centre, has good access to transport, health services and local amenities, and the site is of sufficient size to deliver an aspirational offer with good social and community opportunities for residents in the scheme and surrounding area.

The economic value of this development will be beneficial to the town as older people will be able to live within and be part of thriving local communities, including the town centre, and increase regular daily footfall to benefit the mix of local independent traders and national retail chains.

Approximate implementation times scales:
Medium term (4-6 years)

NEXT STEPS

To realise these opportunities the Council will:

Consult the right people at the right time...	to achieve the best results we will talk to the appropriate people and organisations to benefit the project development. Involvement of stakeholders and our residents is vital in ensuring that our regeneration projects deliver the best possible outcomes. We will be continuing to work with local businesses, education institutions, training providers, the housing sector, individuals and communities to shape and support projects for the benefit of everyone.
Work in partnership...	with the right people and organisations at the right time. This will include the Council and other public sector bodies including Welsh Government and the private sector.
Put in place the best delivery arrangements...	that will make sure that we work with partners to project manage delivery effectively, ensuring that we drive the most successful outcomes.
Source funding and investment...	in a timely and creative way so that we can develop the most effective financial packages to ensure projects can go ahead.
Develop effective business cases...	for individual projects and initiatives to ensure that they are viable and cost effective, deliver the optimum benefits and outcomes and are sustainable into the future.
Monitor and evaluate...	so that we will ensure that we are able to improve delivery by understanding and learning from good practice and challenges experienced.
Review and consider available opportunities...	new opportunities often arise and some identified now, may become more difficult to achieve. We will review and appraise the portfolio of projects regularly.

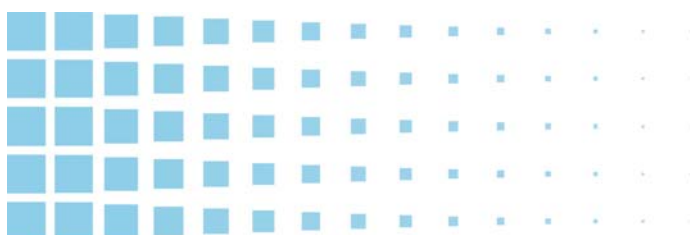


IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The implementation plan sets out each project, along with an indication of the delivery timescales and which strategic objective the project supports.

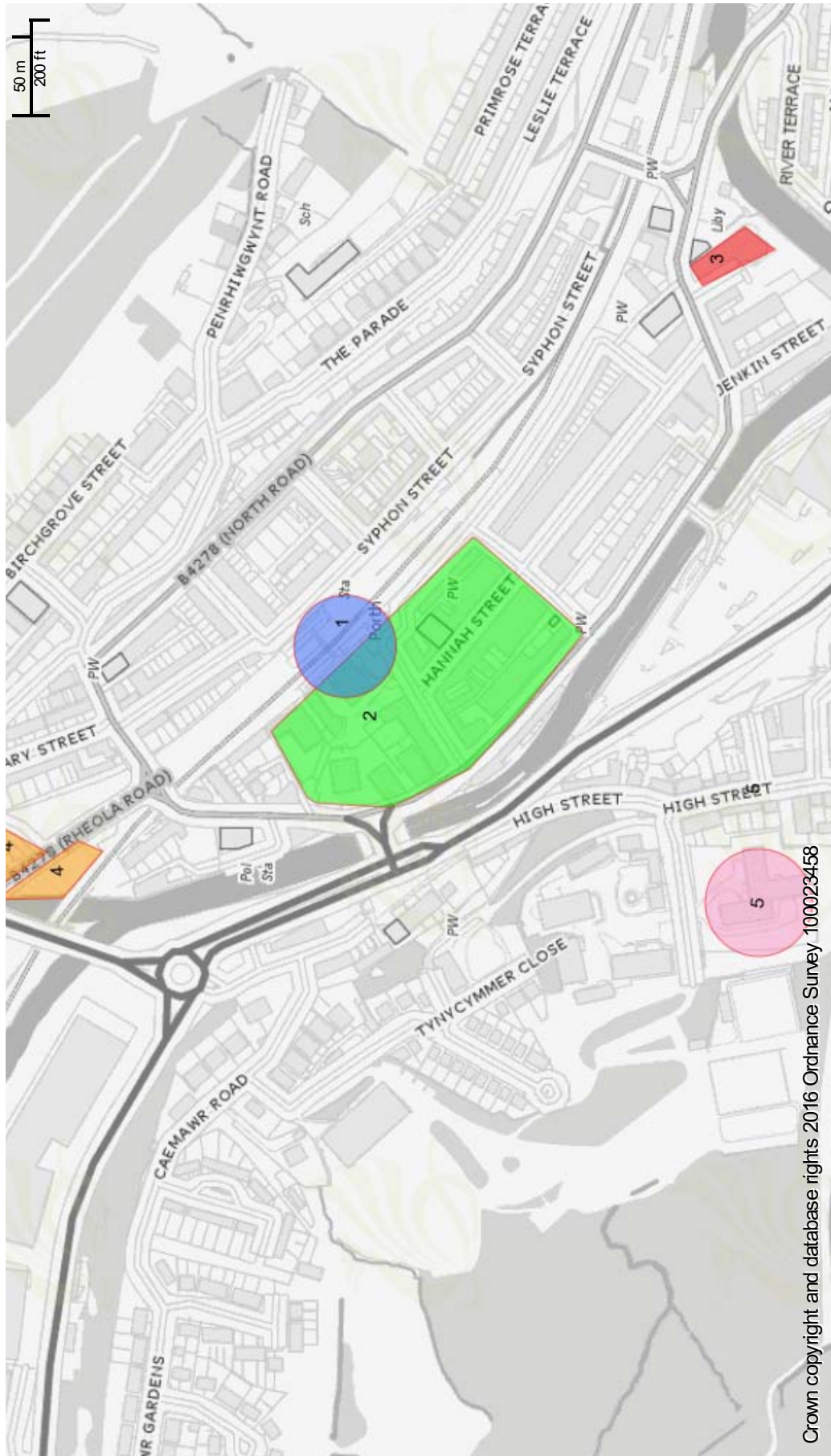
	PROJECT	DESCRIPTION	STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE MET					SHORT TERM 0-3 yrs			MEDIUM TERM 4-6 yrs			LONG TERM 7+ yrs		
			1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2
ONE	The development of a modern and quality Transport Hub and Station Quarter that efficiently links commercial development with residential areas.	The Transport Hub will provide an integrated and improved interchange that aligns both the bus and train stations that will allow them to cope with future, increased passenger numbers and increased services, whilst offering easy access to the whole public transport network.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓									
TWO	The development of Porth Plaza into the Community Hub for Rhondda South.	The opportunity exists for Porth Plaza to be developed as a Community Hub to provide a range of Council services from the same location. The co-location of public and voluntary sector services within the town will result in increased footfall.	✓			✓										
THREE	The provision of additional long and short term parking to accommodate the future regenerated Porth Town centre.	Improving the car parking offer throughout the town will enhance the quality of infrastructure needed to support town centre investment and also allow visitors and shoppers to enjoy improved access to the town.			✓	✓										
FOUR	Extending the current Park and Ride provision within the town centre.	The completion of the town's first park and ride facility in 2016 resulted in the creation of 73 new parking spaces adjacent to the train station. A project to develop a Phase 2 park and ride facility is currently in the early stages of development and will be progressed during 2018 with completion expected in 2019.	✓	✓	✓											

	PROJECT	DESCRIPTION	STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE MET	SHORT TERM 0-3 yrs	MEDIUM TERM 4-6 yrs	LONG TERM 7+ yrs
FIVE	The redevelopment of existing underused, disused and derelict buildings throughout the town to create modern, housing, office and retail accommodation.	A number of properties close to the train station and at key locations throughout the town centre have been identified as being suitable for mixed use development.	1 2 3 4 5 ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		
SIX	Exploring opportunities to relocate Council Staff into Porth Town Centre.	Bronwydd House which currently houses over 200 Council employees, has been identified as a site for extra care housing developments. As such, an opportunity exists for many of these staff to be relocated to underused or vacant office space/premises within Porth Town Centre.	1 2 3 4 5 ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		
SEVEN	Public realm improvements.	The enhancement of the town centre streets and spaces as part of the Station Quarter and Transport Hub developments will raise the quality, value and confidence in the town.	1 2 3 4 5 ✓	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		
EIGHT	The introduction of the Town Centre Maintenance Grant.	The Town Centre Maintenance Grant will provide financial support to town centre traders / landlords (including vacant properties) to undertake minor improvements and maintenance works which will improve the external front elevation of town centre properties.	1 2 3 4 5 ✓ ✓	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		
NINE	The redevelopment of the former Porth Junior school site for residential use.	The development of new residential units within Porth will help diversify the existing housing stock. The former Porth Junior School site has the potential to address much of the prevailing housing need in the area through the development of one bedroom apartments and two, three and four bedroom houses.	1 2 3 4 5 ✓ ✓	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		
TEN	Developing extra care housing for the elderly and vulnerable.	Bronwydd House in Porth has been identified as a key site for extra care developments. This site has been identified as it is close to the town centre, has good access to transport, health services and local amenities.	1 2 3 4 5 ✓ ✓	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		



Appendix

Porth Town Centre Zonal Map



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KEY: 1. TRANSPORT HUB ZONE 2. STATION QUARTER 3. COMMUNITY HUB 4. PROPOSED PARK & RIDE 5. EXTRA CARE FACILITY
 Scale: 1:3622

Printed on: 2/8/2018 at 11:44 AM



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EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

Please ensure that you refer to the 'Equality Impact Assessment Guidance' when completing this form. If you would like further assistance please contact the Equality & Diversity Team.

Details

Name of initiative to be assessed: Relocation of Alec Jones Day Centre activities to Porth Plaza

Name of responsible officer: Paul Mee

Group/Directorate: Children and Community Services

Service Area: Community Services and Day Services

Date: 31st December 2018

a) What are you assessing for impact?

Service/ Function	Policy/ Procedure	Project	Strategy	Plan	Proposal	Information/ Position statement
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

b) Please name and describe below:

The Council owns Alec Jones Day Centre at Porth which is an open access centre for the use of adults aged 50 and over. It is open from Monday to Friday from 10.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. and provides a subsidised meal service and social activities for its users. Currently, the numbers attending for lunch-time provision is an average of 27 customers per day.

The daytime activities include the following:

- Wales Council for the Deaf meeting
- Singing for the brain
- CISWO
- Arosfa Senior Citizens meeting
- Age Concern Nail cutting service
- Welsh Language Group

The Local Authority does not have a statutory duty to provide a Day Centre service with subsidised meals and activities for people over the age of 50.

The proposal under consideration is to merge the Day Centre with other Council services that are delivered at Porth Plaza and to invest in changing the internal lay-out and refurbishing the Porth Plaza building to accommodate the needs of service-users. In addition to maintaining services for current users this would allow opportunities to develop further partnerships for the benefit of residents and to attract more people to the venue.

The Council currently delivers and/or facilitates a range of services at Porth Plaza including:

- a library service

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

- One4All advice service
- the provision of jobsearch and employment advice in partnership with a range of partners
- community meetings
- education and training courses
- youth activities

The facilities available for community use include:

- Public access PCs
 - free Wi-Fi
 - community meeting rooms
 - education/training room
 - IT suite
 - consultation rooms for use by external providers for delivery of advice and information on a range of health and well-being, welfare and other issues.
- There is also a creche on-site.

Under the current proposal the activities undertaken at Alec Jones Centre would transfer to Porth Plaza where there is scope for further activities and initiatives of benefit to current Day Centre users (and other residents) to be developed. This would then enable the Alec Jones Day Centre site to be redeveloped as part of the wider Town Centre Regeneration Strategy while strengthening the development of Porth Plaza Community Hub.

- c) Is the delivery of this initiative affected by legislation or other drivers such as codes of practice?
If so, please identify what and how**

Legislation:

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 places an emphasis on the principle of sustainable development. This proposal makes a direct contribution to the seven national well-being goals, in particular a prosperous Wales, a resilient Wales, a healthier Wales and a Wales of cohesive communities. Making better, more cost effective use of our community assets and reinvesting resources in new or remodelled, fit for purpose buildings will enable services to be sustainable in the longer term.

Other drivers

The development of community hubs are identified as strategic priorities in the following plans and projects:

Cwm Taf Well-being Plan 2018- 2023

The Public Service Board's aim to promote safe, confident, strong and thriving communities improving the well-being of residents and visitors and building on our community assets can be achieved through the development of community hubs. The proposed relocation of Day Centre activities to Porth

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

Plaza can help to reduce loneliness and social isolation by creating a town centre venue where a wide range of activities and events can be facilitated and a programme developed in partnership with all of its users.

The Cwm Taf Regional Plan 2018-2023

This five year plan sets out how the Cwm Taf Social Services and Well-being Partnership Board will respond to the findings of the Population Needs Assessment completed in 2017.

Evidence gathered from talking to people for the Population Assessment demonstrated that the following are important to the wellbeing of people with care and support needs:

- Making connections with others
- Access to Information and advice
- Organisations working better together
- Stopping problems before they start or get worse

The needs of vulnerable people and families can sometimes escalate into statutory services because there are limited opportunities available for people to seek help earlier. Good practice research has identified that strong community based initiatives are effective in providing low level support options and these are usually available from a community hub or open access facility.

It is intended that the proposal to create a hub at Porth Plaza will provide wellbeing opportunities for those who are most vulnerable in the community as well as providing a wider range of activities for current users of the day centre. The Porth Plaza building consists of 1973sq metres gross internal area (compared to Alec Jones Day Centre's 393 sq metres gross internal area) and this allows room for expansion and growth as the hub develops so that it can meet the community's needs over the longer term.

Our Valleys, Our Future

This plan's priorities for ensuring better public services includes an action to use existing, and create new, community hubs as well as a range of actions that will improve the health and well-being of communities.

Town Centre Regeneration

Enabling vibrant and enticing town centres, with a strong offer which recognises that they are at the heart of our communities, is a clear commitment within Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council's 2016-2020 Corporate Plan ('The way Ahead').

To deliver this commitment and to tackle the many challenges currently faced by our town centres the solution requires a sophisticated and sustainable approach to regeneration. The relocation of Alec Jones Day Centre forms an integral part of the proposed Porth Town Centre Regeneration Strategy which sets out an integrated, co-ordinated and holistic approach to town centre regeneration that takes into account the distinctive role Porth has at the heart of the community and its important location for services, employment, housing and transport functions.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

d) **Does the initiative directly affect service users, employees or the wider community?**

Yes
No

Continue assessment

No need to continue screening or carry out an EqIA

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

Screening/Relevance Test: Is an equality impact assessment required?

Screening is used to decide whether the initiative you are responsible for has a high or medium impact on any of the protected groups and will require a full EqIA.

Please provide details of the possible impact your proposal may have on the following groups, this may not necessarily be negative, but may impact on a group with a particular characteristic in a specific way.

You should also identify whether this constitutes a high, medium or low impact.

Please refer to Equality Impact Assessment Guidelines for further information.

Protected Characteristic	Impact
Age	<p>High. There are potentially negative and positive impacts on older people.</p> <p>As the proposal is to close Alec Jones Day Centre and to transfer its services to Porth Plaza, it has a major impact on adults over the age of 50 who currently use this service. In general Day Centre users were supportive of the proposed relocation of their current activities to Porth Plaza, but some service users who completed the survey expressed a wish to continue with the provision of both activities and hot meals at Porth Plaza.</p> <p>Beyond this user group the proposal has a potentially positive impact on people over the age of 50 in the community who would benefit from the development of a community hub with easy access to a wide range of services within Porth.</p> <p>See mitigations in the full Equality Impact Assessment below for how the provision of hot meals will be addressed.</p>
Disability	<p>High. There are potentially negative and positive impacts on people with disabilities. Accessibility has been identified as an issue for a small number of Day Centre users as the current car park that is adjacent to Porth Plaza is always in high demand and spaces are at a premium. It is also further for at least one user to walk from the bus stop.</p> <p>However on the positive side relocation of activities to the Porth Plaza Community Hub will enable disabled customers to access a wider range of information and advice at one venue and there will be opportunities to develop more activities and provision to support them through partnerships with third sector and other organisations.</p> <p>See mitigations in the full Equality Impact</p>

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

	Assessment below for how concerns relating to parking can be addressed.
Gender Reassignment	Neutral - there is no evidence to suggest that an impact is likely.
Marriage and Civil Partnership	Neutral - there is no evidence to suggest that an impact is likely.
Pregnancy and Maternity	Neutral - there is no evidence to suggest that an impact is likely.
Race	Neutral - there is no evidence to suggest that an impact is likely.
Religion or Belief	Neutral - there is no evidence to suggest that an impact is likely.
Sex	Neutral - there is no evidence to suggest that an impact is likely.
Sexual Orientation	Neutral - there is no evidence to suggest that an impact is likely.
Other Characteristics	
Welsh Language	Low positive - access to a training room will facilitate the delivery of Welsh language classes or other community learning classes in the medium of Welsh if there is a demand for these locally. The current Welsh language group held at Alec Jones Day Centre will be able to transfer to Porth Plaza and potentially this provision could be further developed at the new venue.
Carers	Medium positive - the potential to develop more provision on the Porth Plaza site could result in more activities being developed for people with a range of ill-health issues such as dementia, and engagement with third sector organisations who have space to deliver information and advice from Porth Plaza community hub would facilitate easy access to information on a range of issues that affect carers and their families.
Armed Forces Community	Neutral - there is no evidence to suggest that an impact is likely.

If after completing the EqlA screening/relevance test, you determine that this service/function/policy/project is not relevant for an EqlA you must provide adequate explanation below. (Please use additional pages if necessary).

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

Are you happy that you have sufficient evidence to justify your decision?

Yes

No

Signed: W. Edwards
4/1/19

Position: Head fo Community Services

Date:

N.B. If the initial screening process has identified actual or potential high or medium negative impact on a particular group or groups then you MUST carry out a full EqIA.

Approved by Head of Service or Director

Signed:

Position:

Date:

Full Equality Impact Assessment

You should use the information gathered at the screening stage to assist you in identifying possible negative/adverse impact and clearly identify which groups are affected.

In terms of any disproportionate/negative/adverse impact that the proposal may have on a protected group, what steps (if any) could be taken to reduce that impact for each group identified. Attach a separate action plan if necessary.

Age

Concerns were raised by Day Centre users about potential changes to the lunch-time meals provision specifically the possible loss of access to hot meals and potential impact on the cost of meals provided. Questions were raised regarding the ability to deliver this provision at Porth Plaza.

It is unlikely that the meal provision can be facilitated within Porth Plaza community hub so that other alternatives will need to be explored.

Actions to address the issues:

Officers will continue to engage with Day Centre users and local café proprietors to assess the best way in which access to meals can be sustained for this customer group within Porth town centre. there is potential to explore an arrangement with local food business operator(s) whereby service users could be signposted to access a hot meal.

A solution will be agreed prior to the potential closure of the Day Centre.

Disability

A concern was raised in relation to the access to parking spaces for Day

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

Centre users if the provision is relocated to Porth Plaza as the car park adjacent to the building is very busy and parking places are limited.

Actions to address the issue:

The Porth Town Centre Regeneration Strategy has identified the need for additional parking spaces in the town centre and if these are created it could alleviate pressure on the Porth Plaza car park in future.

Officers will explore the potential of allocating additional disabled parking bays at Porth Plaza car park to meet the potential increase in demand if the Day Centre activities are transferred to Porth Plaza community hub.

If ways of reducing the impact have been identified but are not possible, please explain why they are not possible.

Evidence Sources

(i) Give details of any data or research that has led to your reasoning above, in particular, the sources used for establishing the demographics of service users.

Service usage data held with Adult Services was used to ascertain service level and activity data for the Day Centre.

Service usage data held by the Library Service was used to ascertain the level of room usage and activities delivered currently at Porth Plaza.

(ii) Give details of how you have engaged with service users on the proposals and steps taken to avoid any disproportionate impact on a protected group and how you have used any feedback to influence your decision.

A 6 week consultation was undertaken between 29th October and 10th December 2018. This included two drop-in sessions on 16th November and 22nd November. Full details of the consultation are provided in the Consultation Report produced by the Consultation team.

Key feedback from the consultation events were as follows:

- overall acceptance of the rationale for moving the Day Centre activities from the Day Centre to Porth Plaza
- concern about the effect the proposal would have on the provision of subsidised hot meals for Day Centre users
- need for the nail-cutting service to be retained
- some concern about parking issues at Porth Plaza and the town in general

Are you satisfied that the engagement process complies with the requirements of the

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

Statutory Equality Duties?

Yes

No

Decision Log - detail how Elected Members and Senior Managers have been involved in the decision process (give dates of key meetings and decisions made).

Rhondda Cynon Taf Cabinet Report 16th October 2018

Review

Date of Next Review:

If review is not required, explain why:

Completed by:

Signature:

Job Title:

Date:

This assessment must be approved by an appropriate Head of Service or Director

Approved by:

Signature:

Job Title:

Approval date:

Please return a copy to:

Equality & Diversity Team
The Pavilions
Cambrian Park
Clydach Vale
CF40 2XX

Email: equality@rctcbc.gov.uk

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM



Porth Town Centre Regeneration Strategy Consultation

*Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough
Council*

December 2018



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- This report presents the findings of the consultation on the proposed strategy for the regeneration of Porth Town Centre.
- The consultation was conducted in-house. The 6 week consultation period ran from the 29th October until 10th December 2018. The approach taken included a questionnaire for members of the public and face to face engagement events.
- 139 people attended the face to face events and there were 72 responses to the questionnaire.
- The majority of respondents were supportive of the proposed strategy, welcoming the likely benefits that regeneration could bring.
- 80% of respondents to the questionnaire felt that the strategic objectives outlined in the proposals would improve Porth Town Centre although some concerns were raised about increasing current parking issues and the timeline for the project causing disruption to the area.
- The table below shows the results of respondents views on which of the Strategic Objectives they think would help with the regeneration of Porth Town Centre.

To improve connectivity with the town centre and surrounding areas through the development of a Transport Hub.	83%
To improve the key gateways into the town.	80%
To provide the conditions to strengthen employment opportunities.	77%
To create the conditions for the town to become a thriving Station Quarter.	75%
To support the development of housing.	39%

- Respondents were asked whether they thought a series of key schemes will improve Porth Town Centre. The table below shows the results of those who responded 'Yes'.

The redevelopment of existing underused, disused and derelict buildings throughout the town	90%
The development of transport Hub and Station Quarter	86%
The provision of additional long and short term parking	85%
The introduction of the Town Centre Maintenance Grant	85%
Extending the current Park and Ride provision	83%

Public realm improvements	77%
The development of Porth Plaza into a Community Hub	75%
Developing extra care housing for the elderly and vulnerable	73%
Explore opportunities to relocate Council Staff into Porth Town Centre	69%
The redevelopment of the former Porth Junior school site for residential use.	47%

- The face to face engagement events responses were mostly positive with very few negative comments being made. The majority of people were supportive of the overall strategy and particularly supportive of the proposed transport hub. Negative comments centred mainly around concerns about increased traffic and parking issues.
- Overall the consultation shows that respondents are supportive of the strategy for regeneration.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report presents the findings of a consultation to gather public views on the proposed strategy for the regeneration of Porth town centre.
- 1.2 The strategy has the following vision for the future – “To transform Porth Town Centre into a prosperous and attractive town, which offers a wide range of opportunities for visitors, residents and businesses; anchored by Porth Transport Hub and a much-regenerated Station Quarter” and to obtain views on this strategy.
- 1.3 Section 2 outlines the background to the proposal and the proposed new changes that were consulted upon.
- 1.4 Section 3 details the methodology used.
- 1.5 Section 4 presents the consultation results.

2. BACKGROUND

The Proposal

- 2.1 The proposed vision for Porth Town Centre is:

‘To transform Porth Town Centre into a prosperous and attractive town, which offers a wide range of opportunities for visitors, residents and businesses; anchored by Porth Transport Hub and a much regenerated Station Quarter’.

Background

- 2.2 Enabling vibrant and enticing town centres, with a strong offer, which recognises that they are at the heart of our communities, is a clear commitment within Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council’s 2016-20 Corporate Plan “The Way Ahead”. The plan also makes a commitment that they will benefit from investment to ensure an attractive environment exists for businesses, residents and shoppers.
- 2.3 To deliver this commitment and to tackle the many challenges currently faced by our town centres, the solution requires a sophisticated and sustainable approach to regeneration.
- 2.4 As such, the Porth Town Centre regeneration strategy sets out an integrated, co-ordinated and holistic approach to town centre regeneration that takes into account the distinctive role Porth has at the heart of the community and its important location for services, employment, housing and transport functions.
- 2.5 To achieve this vision, the strategy is supported by a series of strategic objectives that will drive its delivery and translate directly into a series of projects and actions:
1. To improve connectivity with the town centre and surrounding areas through the development of a Transport Hub.
 2. To create the conditions for the town to become a thriving Station Quarter.
 3. To improve the key gateways into the town.
 4. To support the development of housing.
 5. To provide the conditions to strengthen employment opportunities.

3. METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 The purpose of the consultation was to seek views on the proposed strategy for the regeneration of Porth town centre.
- 3.2 The consultation has been conducted in-house. The consultation period ran from 29th October until 10th December 2018.
- 3.3 There were 2 public face to face events held at Porth Plaza and Morrisons and a number of smaller engagement events held at community and leisure centres. The locations of the smaller events were based on their location in relation to Transport Hub connections to communities on bus routes, without access to rail.
- 3.4 There was an online campaign with a dedicated page on the consultation webpage and social media posts created to raise awareness of the strategy and consultation events.
- 3.5 In addition to the face to face engagement, a questionnaire was produced with responses being collected either via tablet at the face to face events or being completed online.
- 3.6 Officers attended an Older Persons Wellbeing event held at Ystrad Sports Centre to raise awareness with over 70 people in attendance.
- 3.7 Two emails were received from members of the public providing their views on the proposed strategy.
- 3.8 Family members of the late Alec Jones were consulted with in respect of how the strategy may continue to recognise Alec Jones, in light of proposals to close the day centre and relocate services to the Community Hub.

4 CONSULTATION RESULTS

Results Questionnaire

- 4.1 Respondents were asked ‘Which of the Strategic Objectives do you think would help the regeneration of Porth Town Centre?’ and were able to select more than one answer.

Q1 Which of the Strategic Objectives do you think would help the regeneration of Porth Town Centre?

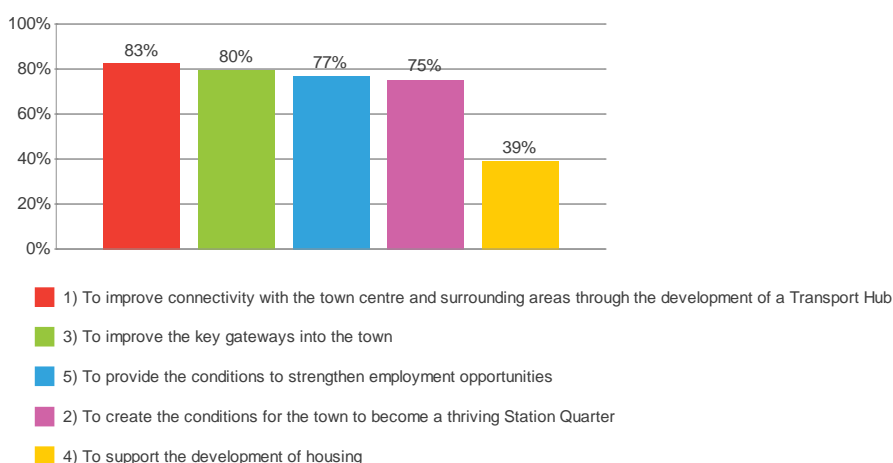


Figure 1

Objective 1 – ‘To improve connectivity with the town centre and surrounding areas through the development of a Transport Hub’ received the highest response (83%) closely followed by objective 3 – “To improve key gateways into the town” (80%). The lowest response was for objective 4 – “to support the development of housing”.

Comments included:

Transport Hub

“By developing a transport hub within the town centre, I would imagine this would lead to improved footfall within the town, which they need to be geared up to with the necessary support.”

“More central area for transport is a good thing.”

“This will help with development of Porth. Flow of transport to Cardiff and surrounding area.”

Parking

“Parking needs to be drastically improved.”

“The roads are too congested going through Porth and up to Pontypridd Road, make sure it doesn’t get even more congested with buses pulling in and out of Station Street. Parking is an issue in Porth and often find myself parking in Morrisons to go to the Plaza/Pop Factory.”

“Get rid of the ugly job centre building and provide people that are employed on Hannah Street with somewhere to park their cars. The street is always badly cluttered with cars.”

Employment Opportunities

“.....Lots of buildings are empty and businesses have left the town centre. Redevelopment would encourage business to return, and increase employment opportunities.....”

“Supporting businesses within Hannah St to continue trading is of vital importance to improve the current provision within the town...”

- 4.3 Overall, the results showed respondents were positive about the objectives with many supportive comments for each proposed objective.

“They are all good ideas especially targeting vacant buildings.”

“We would like Porth to be a busy town again.”

“Well done with the question, my answer is yes to all 5.”

- 4.4 Of the few negative responses, concerns were raised regarding the possible downsides of the objectives not providing the desired outcome.

“Additional housing will not necessarily increase footfall within the town centre as shopping habits are very much individual to a person’s needs. Additionally, more housing specifically where it has been suggested could significantly add to the already congested areas around the schools.”

“One of my concerns is that the Station Quarter could degenerate into an area of fast food outlets, set up to cater for the increasing needs of traveller for food and drink.”

4.5 Respondents were also asked ‘Do you think the Strategic Objectives outlined in Q1 will improve Porth Town Centre?’

Results show that the majority of people who responded (80%) agreed that the objectives would improve Porth Town Centre.

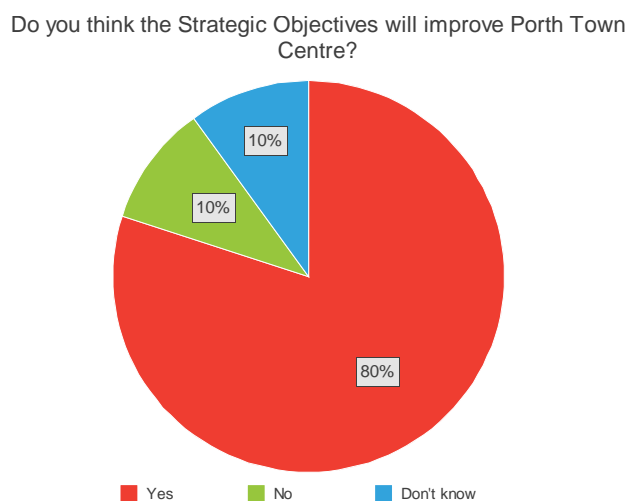


Figure 2

Of those who answered ‘Yes’ some of the positive comments included:

“This is a great opportunity for businesses and residents that could see a vast improvement in the town centre, compared to how it has declined over recent years. Promotion of any opportunities for businesses/residents to get involved in this process should be undertaken and there is a vital need to highlight the benefits these objectives can bring to them.”

“Yes this will improve Porth which is really needed.”

“Any help would be greatly appreciated.”

“The developments look positive and important. I hope work will be able to begin soon.”

“Centralised services will make Porth a more attractive town to commute from and visit ...”

“Better connectivity. Integrated transport connections, and positive encouragement or people to transfer to Public Transport options.”

4.6 Of the small number who responded ‘No’ some comments included:

“Redevelopment on the suggested scale would disrupt the economic social use of the town for a long time.”

“Unless Porth is made accessible for driving customers then this initiative will not work. A transport hub will cause more traffic therefore people will avoid going into Porth.”

4.7 Respondents were then asked whether they thought a series of key schemes would improve Porth Town Centre.

The results show that the majority of people agreed with all of the schemes outlined in the questionnaire.

1. The development of a modern quality Transport Hub and Station Quarter that efficiently links commercial development with residential areas.



Figure 3

Comments included:

“Transport networks are the key to regeneration. People will only shop in Porth if there are shops, centre is worth coming for. Support for traders etc. is essential.”

“The business strategy has many facets to it and needs dividing and consulting individually. For example, business and residential should complement each other not have one to the detriment of the other.”

2. The development of Porth Plaza into the Community Hub for Rhondda South.



Figure 4

“...Also thought needs to be given to which are the most relevant services needed in the community hub based on the demographic of the area and also the levels of poverty experienced by residents.”

3. The provision of additional long and short term parking to accommodate the future regenerated Porth Town centre.



Figure 5

“Extra parking for what purpose?Unless you attract major retail brands, you can build all the car parks you want, won't help, same with transport, won't help.”

“When such a good sustainable transport hub is proposed I don't agree that spending on car parking is a compatible proposal. Traffic reduction (actual reduction in the number of vehicles) would enhance the visual and environmental attractiveness of Porth as a destination, particularly as a sustainable hub centre that doesn't require the car to get to it.”

4. Extending the current Park and Ride provision within the town centre.

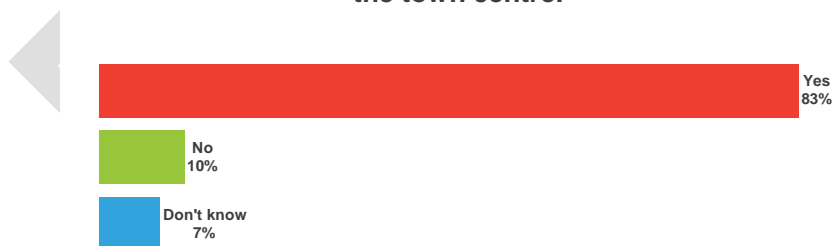


Figure 6

There were a number of comments made in relation to parking and the Park and Ride provision concerning effects on residents and traffic levels.

Comments included:

“If your to increase parking for Park and Ride residents around that that live next to the station would like permits as most days it's a struggle to park near our home and frustrating.”

“When such a good sustainable transport hub is proposed I don’t agree that spending on car parking is a compatible proposal. Traffic reduction (actual reduction in the number of vehicles) would enhance the visual and environmental attractiveness of Porth as a destination, particularly as a sustainable hub centre that doesn’t require to car to get to it.”

“I don’t see many people using the park and ride for its specific use (to park and ride the train). I see lots of people parking there just to go to the shops in town or to the Rheola or the Dr’s Surgery. Why make it bigger if people don’t use it for its intended use anyway?”

5. The redevelopment of existing underused, disused and derelict buildings throughout the town to create housing, office and retail accommodation.



Figure 7

“..... I am not convinced of the argument creating more housing will automatically lead to more expenditure in the Town centre.”

6. Explore opportunities to relocate Council Staff into Porth Town Centre.



Figure 8

There were a few comments provided in relation to these questions in support of the proposals and acknowledging the issue of derelict buildings and the benefits to be gained from relocating Council Staff. However there were a small number of comments that questioned the potential for negative impacts on businesses as a result of relocation.

Comments included:

“From my past experience in leafleting in Rhondda I have been shocked by the number of empty derelict properties.”

“Closing the council offices in Bronwydd will reduce the number of people visiting Hannah Street each day and keeping trade alive.”

“I think it’s a great idea to bring people from the Council into the Town as they have the opportunity to engage more with businesses. It also gives them the opportunity to pop out on their lunch and buy lunch in the town’s shops and cafes. As long as they don’t get relocated near Morrisons as that will take away business from the town shops again.”

7. Public realm improvements.



Figure 9

8. The introduction of the Town Centre Maintenance Grant to provide financial support to town centre traders / landlords (including vacant properties) to undertake minor improvements and maintenance works which will improve the external front elevation of town centre properties.



Figure 10

9. The redevelopment of the former Porth Junior school site for residential use.

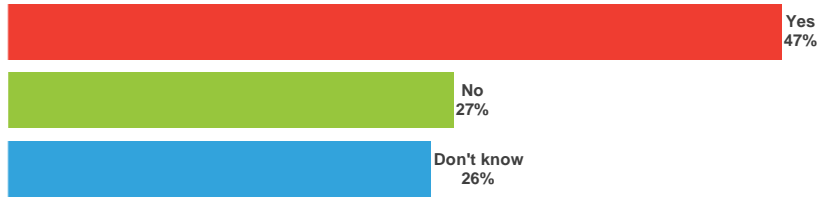


Figure 11

A number of comments were made in relation to the redevelopment of Porth Junior School with an even split of both negative and positive comments on this proposal.

Comments included:

“Under no circumstances should Porth Junior School be used for housing when the council finally realises that super schools DO NOT WORK we will need these schools to re-open to give our children the best start to their educational life which they haven’t got currently with the new super school initiative.”

“Creation of residential accommodation within Town Centre could provide more encouragement for better use of facilities. However it is important that as residential presence grows, so must community facilities, such as shops, recreational facilities, service facilities (eg Libraries. Community Centres. Doctor Surgeries etc.)

10. Developing extra care housing for the elderly and vulnerable.



Figure 12

Comments included:

“Extra care housing and care support will provide more options for people, not leading to full residential care.”

"I originally come from a place which had an initiative to provide more extra care housing for elderly residents and now most are surplus to requirements. It's a business model that only makes sense to the developers as they make money but usually the initiative falls flat."

- 4.8 Finally, respondents were asked 'Do you have any views on the development or content of the implementation plan? And they were also given the opportunity to provide further comments'

37% of people who responded to this question answered 'yes', with a theme emerging in the comments concerning the timeline for the strategy and possible disruption caused.

"It would be better done seamlessly than in bits."

"It appears that the strategy will be delivered a small part at a time and this could mean delays in completing the whole plan."

"As long as it doesn't take too long. I think the timing allocated for each project in the plan is far too long. Porth has struggled enough so why not give them what they deserve sooner rather than later? Businesses have struggled enough so the least the council can do is move it a little quicker."

"Provide timely updates for the residents of Porth and Cymmer area. Least disruption. Quick wins."

"Great concept and plans, however, as Porth resident I am concerned of potential traffic congestion during the building/construction of the hub and surrounding areas."

- 4.9 Some of the respondents were keen to be involved in the ongoing regeneration plans, as they develop.

"A plan that grows with the project is preferable to a rigid one. This is a good idea"

"that for this implementation plan to succeed, then I believe a strong focus should be on advertising how businesses and key stakeholders can be involved - not just the usual few."

"I think that the implementation plan would need contribution from local representatives from the community. Key stakeholder organisations have been mentioned above which understood is important, however it is the people who use the town centre on a daily basis who should be consulted. Representatives from organisations will likely have an overarching view in terms of numbers and figures, however decisions shouldn't be made solely by representatives who don't have day to day involvement in the town."

“All plans should have public opinion it adds to public buy in of the plan and makes it easier to deliver.”

- 4.10 Further positive comments in support of the proposals were provided at the end of the survey, including the following;

“I think it's a great plan and I hope it's carried through.”

“I think this is really positive for Porth and I commend the plans”

“Really positive for Porth”

“It should happen sooner than later.”

“Very clear and easy to understand”

“Will look forward to Porth being developed. It will certainly bring more customers to the shops and build a lovely high street to visit.”

“Support the plans”

“Hope this happens and gets the funding needed”

Respondent Profile

4.11 In total 72 people took responded to the questionnaire. The breakdown by type of respondent is shown below.

4.12 Gender

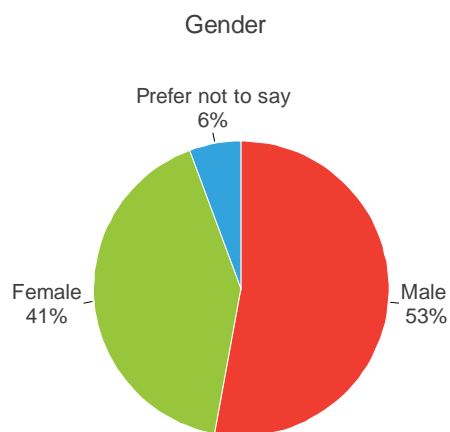


Figure 13

Age

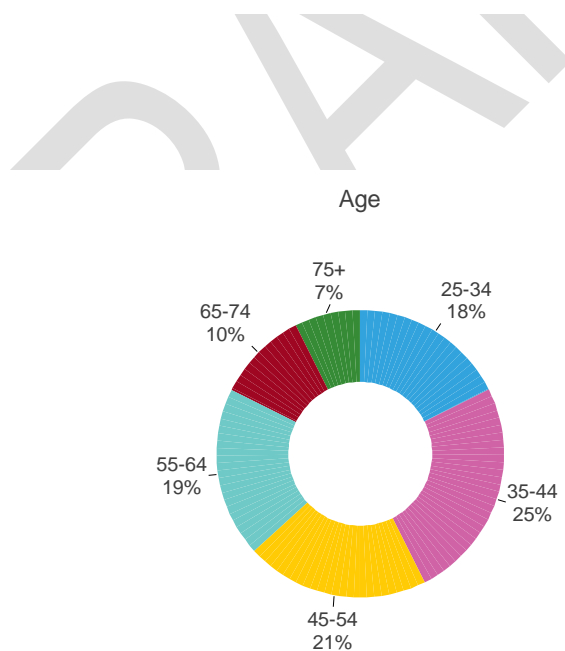


Figure 14

4.11 Under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duties, the Council has a legal duty to look at how its decisions impact on people because they may have particular characteristics. Respondents felt the proposal would affect them because of age and disability characteristics, the following are a small selection of the comments received:

“More disabled parking is a must.”

"I am a disabled person so would want suitable access to all parts of the town after regeneration completed."

"As I get older, I will be looking closer to home for the facilities that I need both on a practical level and socially."

- 4.12 Under the Welsh Language Measure 2011 and Welsh Language Standards the Council has a legal duty to look at how its decisions impact on the Welsh Language. The following are a selection of the comments received:

"All services and signage should be offered bilingually and should be promoted as such by all stakeholders. Both languages should be treated as equals."

"I am a Welsh learner I would welcome more Welsh language opportunities in the area, specifically any way to practice with other learners/Welsh speakers."

"More use of Welsh throughout the communication hub."

"The Welsh language doesn't appear to be supported anywhere in Porth."

"Positive effect would be to give people the option to learn Welsh through promoting Welsh valley culture."

"Encourage use and jobs offering the Welsh language as an option."

Results - Face to Face Engagement

- 4.13 There were a number of face to face engagement events held during the course of the consultation with 139 people actively engaging with officers during these events.

The events provided an opportunity for a mixture of residents, business owners, traders and staff affected by the proposed strategy to provide their views.

Overall, the responses to the consultation were largely positive with only a few minor concerns being noted.

Some positive comments included:

"Anything to improve Porth is a positive thing."

"I'm so glad something is being done."

"Bronwydd site is a good location for the extra care facility."

"Overall it's fantastic to see the Council being creative in improving Porth Town Centre."

- 4.14 There were some concerns raised regarding parking and suggestions for additional regeneration ideas, including the provision for young people and tourism.

"Why don't we purchase the land at the rear of upper cuts to provide a car park for Porth Farm Surgery?"

"Why can't each Community Hub house a Tourist Information Centre?"

"What is tourism doing to link in with businesses about their products/services and how these can boost tourism?"

"Turning Porth Plaza into a Community Hub is only for the older generation and to downgrade a vital council run service. Where are the plans to improve things for the younger generation so they can have access to community hubs/youth clubs? These plans should be for the benefit of everyone to attract the local community but more than that make Porth a better place to live not a place where you have to survive."

- 4.15 Of the few negative comments, these included:

"I don't like the coffee shop idea within the transport hub as it takes away business from the other coffee shops."

“The extra care facility on Bronwydd site is not suitable for the elderly as it is located on a hill and is too far from the town, would be better to locate it in the old offices/flats in town where the area is more flat and central.”

“What Porth needs is to be regenerated for the present day and more importantly for the future. The regeneration should be for the community of Porth and not about attracting visitors from elsewhere. There isn’t currently anything in Porth to attract the local community let alone anyone else! The town centre needs much more variety in local shops, community buildings and services and not more takeaways and hairdressers.”

- 4.16 There was some level of concern expressed by the local food businesses in the area. They felt that if Porth Plaza were to include a café/dining area, that this may affect their trade and would be unwelcome competition. The businesses did however express an interest in working with the Council to come up with an appropriate solution and possibly provide the hot meals themselves.
- 4.17 Comments were also made regarding the Transport Hub and concerns regarding safety of this proposal.

“The new station quarter where buses pull into the station and reverse out is hazardous to pedestrians walking behind the vehicles when reversing. It should be a pull in, drop off and drive straight out layout so buses don’t have to park and reverse out.”

“The route for the buses to get in and out of the bus station will become dangerous. Turning from Station Street to Pontypridd Road is difficult now as many people think it’s a one way street as well as the parked cars plus no one lets the traffic out from Station street. This will inevitably cause delays. The whole idea of a ‘Transport Hub’ is to make it easier to travel by public transport.”



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Alec Jones Day Centre Consultation

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council

December 2018



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- This report presents the findings of the consultation on proposals to relocate the services of Alec Jones Day Centre to a new Community Hub in Porth Plaza as part of a new proposed strategy for regenerating Porth Town Centre (also subject to consultation).
- The targeted consultation ran for 6 weeks, from the 29th October to the 10th December, 2018. The following methods were used to consult with stakeholders;
 - An online and paper questionnaire.
 - Drop in Engagement events on the 16th and 22nd November 2018. A dedicated email address (consultation@rctcbc.gov.uk) and freepost address if needed.
- Overall, 27 people filled in a questionnaire and 39 people engaged directly with us at the events.
- The main reasons for using the Day Centre were for meeting friends and socialising (22 service users) and to have lunch (19 service users).
- Respondents were asked what they would do if the Day Centre activities were to transfer to Porth plaza. The majority (24 service users) who responded to this question said they would attend the new community Hub and nobody stated that they would stop using the service.
- Respondents were asked what they would do If the Day Centre meals were to transfer to Porth Plaza. Nearly all (21 service users), who responded to this question said they would attend the new Community Hub for a meal.
- Further comments from the service users focussed on their desire to have the same service and meal as they currently receive in the Day Centre.
- Service users were asked what the impact of the proposed transfer of the day centre would have on them. Some of the responses stated that there would be no impact, as long as the current facilities were transferred to Porth Plaza.
- There were concerns about parking at the proposed new venue and service users wanted the meals currently provided to be transferred to the new facility along with other facilities.

- Discussion with the service users showed that they value the work and friendliness of the staff at the centre and some of the comments were concerned about the impact the proposal would have on the staff.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report presents the findings of the consultation on proposals to relocate the services of Alec Jones Day Centre to a new Community Hub in Porth Plaza as part of a new proposed strategy for regenerating Porth Town Centre (also subject to consultation).
- 1.2 Section 2 outlines some brief background.
- 1.3 Section 3 details the methodology.
- 1.4 Section 4 presents the results from the online questionnaire.
- 1.5 Section 5 presents the views that were received at the engagement events.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The proposed vision for Porth Town Centre is:

‘To transform Porth Town Centre into a prosperous and attractive town, which offers a wide range of opportunities for visitors, residents and businesses; anchored by Porth Transport Hub and a much regenerated Station Quarter’.

2.2 The proposed strategy has identified the site currently occupied by the Alec Jones Day Centre as having the potential to accommodate a new Transport Hub. This site is ideally positioned for a Transport Hub; housing a bus interchange, taxi rank, cycle racks and linking to the train station and the park & ride. The site covers approximately 1,700 sq m allowing for the delivery of a new fit for purpose bus station, which will act as a catalyst for a much-regenerated *Station Quarter* with a mix of commercial, retail, office and residential developments.

2.3 The development of a Transport Hub at this site would provide an integrated and improved interchange that aligns both the bus and train stations that will allow them to cope with future, increased passenger numbers and increased services, whilst offering easy access to the whole public transport network. Opportunities to encourage active travel through improved pedestrian and cycle routes and the creation of cycle docking facilities will also be a key feature of the Transport Hub development

2.4 The opportunity exists for Porth Plaza to be developed as a Community Hub to provide a range of Council services from the same location. In developing Porth Plaza into a Community Hub, it was proposed to re-locate the services currently provided by Alec Jones Day Centre to the new Community Hub.

2.5 Bringing the current Day Centre services together with other services would provide a better offer and create economies of scale in terms of staffing and building costs. Making better, more cost effective use of our community assets and reinvesting resources in new fit for purpose buildings would enable services to be sustainable in the longer term.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 The targeted consultation ran for 6 weeks, from the 29th October to the 10th December, 2018.

3.2 The aim of the consultation was to gather the views of the Alec Jones Day Centre service users on the proposal to re-locate the services currently provided by the Day Centre to the new Community Hub in Porth Plaza.

3.3 The following methods were used to consult with stakeholders;

- An online and paper questionnaire.
- 2 Drop in Engagement events on the 16th and the 22nd November 2018.
- A poster to advertise the above events.
- A dedicated email address (consultation@rctcbc.gov.uk) and freepost address if needed.

3.4 Overall, 27 people filled in a questionnaire and 39 people engaged directly with us at the events.

4 Questionnaire Results

- 4.1 27 survey responses were received.
- 4.2 All responses received were from service users (26), apart from 1 who did not say.
- 4.3 The main reasons for using the Day Centre were for meeting friends and socialising (22 service users) and to have lunch (19 service users) as shown below;

Counts Base % Respondents	
Base	27 100.0%
If yes, what are your main reasons for using the Day Centre	
Meet friends / socialise	22 81.5%
To have lunch	19 70.4%
Member of a group that is based in the Day Centre	9 33.3%
To take part in an activity that is provided at the Day Centre	3 11.1%
Other (Please state)	2 7.4%

- 4.4 Further comments for the main reason for using the centre included;

Breakfast everyday

CISWO - Coal Industry Social Workers Organisation

I have a shower there approx. twice weekly another purpose built facility.

I take part in the nail cutting service provided. This is important to me as I can no longer reach and cut my own toenails.

*Old Age- Thursday, Bingo
TV Room*

The cooked food at lunch time is so important to us. I attend the nail cutting service.

The Centre provides me with a sense of companionship and I enjoy a warm affordable meal

Would be happy to join new groups and activities

- 4.5 Respondents were asked what they would do if the Day Centre activities were to transfer to Porth Plaza. The majority (24 service users) who responded to this question said they would attend the new community Hub and nobody stated that they would stop using the service.

Counts Base % Respondents	
	Base
	26 100.0%
If the Day Centre activities were to transfer to Porth Plaza	
Attend the new Community Hub in Porth Plaza	24 92.3%
Stop attending the Day Centre	- -
Attend an alternative venue	1 3.8%
Other (Please State)	1 3.8%

- 4.6 Further comments in relation to activities at the centre included;

As long as they have the meals and nail cutting service.

Free to attend. Big enough for 25/30 people. Private area. Accessible/lift.

Tea/coffee

Need to be central to Porth. Meal provisions.

- 4.7 Respondents were asked what they would do if the Day Centre meals were to transfer to Porth Plaza. Nearly all (21 service users), who responded to this question said they would attend the new Community Hub for a meal.

Counts Base % Respondents	
	Base 23 100.0%
If the Day Centre meals were to transfer to Porth Plaza, ...	
Attend the new Community Hub in Porth Plaza	21 91.3%
Stop attending the Day Centre	- -
Attend an alternative venue	1 4.3%
Other (Please State)	1 4.3%

- 4.8 Further comments from the service users focussed on the desire to have the same service and type of meal as they currently receive in the Day Centre.

Cooked dinners- would want exactly the same at the same price

Meals the same. Price the same. Service received.

Meals, price and service the same

Would expect to have the same type of meal as I get in Alec Jones

Same meals- hot meals

Don't know- parking is a problem by the Plaza. Want similar meals.

Is there enough room to prepare cooked food in the Plaza because we want our dinner there

- 4.9 Service users were asked how the transfer of the day centre would impact upon them. The following are a selection of the comments received;

No Impact

As I have had confirmation that my group can continue to meet in the plaza with the same conditions there will be no impact.

No difference as long as you can still have meals and socialise

No impact

None if like for like

Would attend in Porth Plaza

Would make it easier

It would be just a matter of getting used to the new venue

Parking Concerns

Difficult parking

Did query car parking in the town centre.

I have concerns about the parking availability around the Plaza

Parking/disabled. Unsure.

Parking availability

Personally, I am capable of the extra walking involved, should I need to use my car then parking space is needed.

Wouldn't see friends as they couldn't park. Isolation.

Other concerns

Health and safety- dangerous y/p running around. Need our own area.

I will miss the warmth and kindness

Large impact- attended for 16 years

Loss of social outlet

Longer walk to get there from my bus stop. Sometimes I take the taxi, not regular.

Negative impact if there is nowhere to go or nothing to do during the days

4.10 Any other comments and suggestions included;

Similar Service required

As long as kept the same would be happy

Meals

I feel that the Porth plaza should be able to provide an adequate meal service in line with the Alec Jones day centre, a service well provided by the workforce down the years

If meals at lunchtime can't be provided toast and tea provision would be important. Want somewhere to sit and socialise all AM. Not a café feel

Staff

I am concerned about the staff

We are worried about the ladies working at Alec Jones Day Centre. They cook good food we want them to cook for us.

Parking

Concerned about car parking around the plaza

Keep the Day Centre as it is

Keep it as it is. Take account of older people and disabled.

Keep this open

Keep the Alec Jones Day Centre, instead build bus station etc. around this.

Respondent Profile

4.11 The gender split of respondents was 50/50.

4.12 The majority of respondents were 75+ (84%)

- 4.13 Under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duties, the Council has a legal duty to look at how its decisions impact on people because they may have particular characteristics. The comments below show a selection of those received;

Age

Age and Mobility - my eyes are very poor. I would need to get used to going to another building.

Age, Disability

Disability

- 4.14 Under the Welsh Language Measure 2011 and the Welsh Language Standards the Council has a legal duty to look at how the decisions impact on the Welsh Language. The comments below show a selection of those received;

As I attend a welsh group I feel that more people may attend the centre.

Consideration for Welsh classes

This centre already has a Welsh language class 10am Friday takes place in the TV room.

- 4.15 As part of the consultation process the Council also engaged with the family of the late Alec Jones' regarding the proposals to relocate the Day Centre to the new Community Hub in Porth Plaza and to look at how it could recognise the name and contribution made by Alec Jones going forward if the proposals were agreed. The family suggested an appropriate way in which to recognise Alex Jones' positive contribution would be to erect a plaque on the site of the former Day Centre or new Transport Hub.

5 Engagement Events

Drop In events

- 5.1 We engaged with 39 people at the drop in events. The Day Centre service users were mainly guided through the questionnaire to respond. In addition the conversations at the events can be summarised under the following themes;

Keep the Centre

- Purpose built building and facilities why not keep
- Why can't they build the bus station next to the Day Centre?
- Purpose built, 30 years ago, stay as it is here
- Was purposefully built using European funding

Replicate in Porth Plaza

- Importance of the Centre for social interaction. The new one needs to look the same.
- Nail cutting facility must continue
- Need similar size rooms/space as are available now.
- Old Age Arosfa Group (Bingo – 30 people) - Meet every other week, would like to meet weekly in Porth Plaza if possible. Happy to move across, as long as they can continue to meet and hopefully weekly.

Meals

- Concerns about the layout and open plan nature of the existing Porth Plaza. Some service users wanted to see a separate dining area exclusively for their use.
- Concerns that the cooking facilities in Porth are not adequate/large enough
- The provision at Porth Plaza should be the same type of meals, available at the same time of day and at the same cost.
- Want hot food/meals the same as they are now.
- Hot meals at same cost as now.
- Not so much about moving down to Porth Plaza, more about the fact we want hot meals down there

Parking

- Disabled parking issues at the Porth Plaza, lack of parking

Health/Social

- Health - "helps with my depression"
- Fairly mobile so I will be able to get to the Porth Plaza
- Good for old and disabled people in the community
- Saves money on placements in care and health
- Helps with loneliness and isolation, depression and dementia
- Interaction with people important
- Older people need help cooking, due to health, standing up and mental health.

Other

- Need for the shower room
 - TV Room well used
 - Dangerous road on the corner of Porth Plaza, could be dangerous, may need a new crossing
-