

Regeneration of our communities – Physical Regeneration

Our town centres are a focus for our communities as places to live, work and shop. We need to help create the right environment and promote our area as an attractive location to live, invest and do business. To do this will mean working with stakeholders, investors and funding organisations to support improvement in our towns. Supporting business to start up, grow and win contracts is a key part of this

Why we agreed this priority

- The majority of actions within the 2012/13 priority plan have been completed although, as a result of the challenging economic times and changing policy context we are extending our deadline on the review of the action plan to deliver the Economic Regeneration Strategy
- Welsh Government state in their Programme for Government, that jobs and the economy are their overriding priority. Improving the business environment is one of the key principles guiding their approach, including support for small firms and maximising the benefits of European funding. They also support adoption of the community benefits approach to maximise the value delivered through Government procured expenditure
- In the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) 2011 Rhondda Cynon Taf was rated the third most deprived Local Authority in Wales. Rhondda Cynon Taf is noticeably more deprived than the median rank for Wales for employment, education, income, community safety and housing. In September 2011, 45,000 people of working age in Rhondda Cynon Taf were economically inactive, a rate of 30.3%. This figure is higher than that for Wales (27.5%) and for Great Britain (23.9%). Supporting local businesses and investment is key to improving employment and prosperity in the area
- The regeneration of Pontypridd and Aberdare town centres offers a real opportunity to create the best environment in order to increase levels of business investment and employment, attract more visitors and shoppers and be a focus for community events and activities. This will lead to the town centres becoming vibrant, prosperous, safe and attractive places which are sustainable into the future

Council Key Priority:

Regeneration of our communities - Physical Regeneration - town centre enhancement; helping the private sector bring land back to productive use and supporting local business, to benefit the local economy

Lead Officer:

Jane Cook - Director Regeneration & Planning

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| What we are trying to achieve: | Outcome 1 - Encourage and facilitate investment (including European funding) in Rhondda Cynon Taf to strengthen the economy and create jobs |
| It will support the delivery of the Single Integrated Plan Priorities | Outcome: Prosperity Priority: Places - Economy |
| What difference will delivery of this objective make to the residents of RCT? | Investment in Rhondda Cynon Taf will lead to job creation and a stronger economy which benefits individuals, their communities. Economic growth is significantly affected by external economic factors, but the benefits of growth filter right through our communities, impacting on health, wealth and wellbeing. Investment in RCT will provide direct jobs for local people as well as putting more into the local economy generally through local spending power |

| How will we measure our success | 2011/12 | | | | 2012/13 | 2013/14 |
|--|-------------|------------------|------|-------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| | Actual Data | Comparative Data | | | Actual Data | Annual Target |
| | | Quartile | Rank | All Wales Average | | |
| Me01 - Number of businesses in the County Borough (New) (Local) | 12,000 | Not Available | | | Data due Oct 13 | For information only |
| Me02a - The rate of births (start ups) of small / medium enterprises (New) (Local) | 555 | | | | Data due Dec 13 | For information only |
| Me02b - The rate of deaths (closures) of small / medium enterprises (New) (Local) | 495 | | | | Data due Dec 13 | For information only |
| Me03 - Amount of new floor space permitted and / or developed in major commercial developments in Rhondda Cynon Taf per annum (New) (Local) | N/A | | | | 23,393 sq m | For information only |
| Me04 - Number of jobs created through grant support programmes direct to businesses (funded by the Council and / or Welsh Government - excluding jobs created through the Pontypridd and Aberdare regeneration projects) (New) (Local) | N/A | | | | 159 | 73 |
| Me05 - Number of businesses supported through direct grant programmes (funded by the Council and / or Welsh Government) (New) (Local) | N/A | | | | 98 | 100 |
| Me06 - Number of people employed as a result of Community Benefits into Major Authority Contracts (New) (Local) | N/A | | | | 47 | Baseline Year |
| Me07 - % creditor payments to local businesses using post codes CF, SA & NP (Local) | 75.89 | | | | 73.13 | 70.00 |
| Me08 - Number of suppliers attending local development workshops (Local) | 456 | | | | 403 | 400 |
| Me09 - Number of local businesses that submitted bids / tenders for Council contracts (New) (Local) | N/A | | | | N/A | Baseline Year |

2013/14 Actions & Milestones

| Critical Improvement Actions | Way Forward/Milestones | Delivery Date |
|--|---|-----------------------|
| CA01 - Report the impact that the economic regeneration activities undertaken during 2012/13 have had (including town centre related activities) | M01 - Produce a report for Cabinet setting out the key economic regeneration activities undertaken throughout 2012/13 together with the impact they have had / starting to have | Sep 13 |
| CA02 - Support the development of Rhondda Cynon Taf as a location for investment and business growth | M01 - Progress the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) ¹ through the statutory consultation stage to support growth in Rhondda Cynon Taf: M01i - Report to Cabinet setting out the draft charging schedule | Jun 13 |
| | M01ii - Consultation on Draft Charging Schedule | From Jun 13 to Aug 13 |
| | M01iii - Submission of Draft Charging Schedule for examination | Dec 13 |
| | M01iv - Examination of Draft Charging Schedule | Feb 14 |
| | M01v - Report to Cabinet (including the inspectors report) and recommendations for implementing the CIL | Mar 14 |
| | M01vi - Implementation of the CIL | From Apr 14 |
| | M02 - Expand the bi-annual developer forum arrangements to include Planning Agents | Mar 14 |
| | M03 - Through engagement with Business Club members, review Business Club services to support improved business networking and encourage better trading opportunities | Jan 14 |
| | M04 - Deliver a programme of more extensive support (via the creation of a Business Enquiry Service) to local businesses to better understand their specific needs and facilitate the delivery of support, where appropriate, from Council services and / or a range of partners e.g. Business in Focus | From Jul 13 |
| | M05 - Provide a range of support to new business start ups and improve their opportunities to survive and grow (including gaining a better understanding of the key reasons for business 'deaths' to help inform how the Council can further support new 'start ups') | Mar 14 |

¹Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a new Levy that Local Authorities can choose to charge on new developments in their area. The finance generated from the CIL will be used to fund the provision of new or improved infrastructure that will support new development in the region

| Critical Improvement Actions | Way Forward/Milestones | Delivery Date |
|---|--|---------------|
| CA03 - Introduce arrangements to enable the Council to take maximum advantage of the next round of European Funding (to commence from January 2014) | M01 - Develop a corporate officer working group that will provide guidance on emerging programmes and advise on governance arrangements for projects | Mar 14 |
| | M02 - Report proposed funding applications (including those regionally based) to Cabinet for review and if deemed appropriate, approval and submission to the external funding body for consideration | Ongoing |
| CA04 - In collaboration with Welsh Government and business support agencies, provide opportunities that enable local businesses to prepare and submit robust bids and tenders | M01 - Hold Meet the Buyers Events and Supplier Development Days to help local businesses become better prepared to submit bids / tenders for Council contracts being let | From Jun 13 |
| CA05 - Maximise the community benefits potential of relevant new contracts | M01 - Evaluate the economic impact of work in Rhondda Cynon Taf arising from Abercynon/Ynysboeth/Cwmbach Schools, by using the Welsh Government's Community Benefits Measurement tool and report findings to the Corporate Management Team | Mar 14 |
| | M02 - Undertake a pilot of using Community Benefits clauses for projects less than £2m and report findings to the Corporate Management Team | Mar 14 |

Council Key Priority:

Regeneration of our communities - Physical Regeneration - town centre enhancement; helping the private sector bring land back to productive use and supporting local business, to benefit the local economy

Lead Officer:

Jane Cook - Director Regeneration & Planning

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| What we are trying to achieve: | Outcome 2 - Sustainable town centres which contribute to the economy of the Borough |
| It will support the delivery of the Single Integrated Plan Priorities | Outcome: Prosperity Priority: Places - Economy |
| What difference will delivery of this objective make to the residents of RCT? | Economic growth is significantly affected by external economic factors, but the benefits of growth filter right through our communities, impacting on health, wealth and wellbeing. Investment in RCT will provide direct jobs for local people as well as putting more into the local economy generally through local spending power |

| How will we measure our success | 2011/12 | | | | 2012/13 | 2013/14 |
|---|-------------|------------------|------|-------------------|-------------|----------------------|
| | Actual Data | Comparative Data | | | | |
| | | Quartile | Rank | All Wales Average | Actual Data | Annual Target |
| Me01 - Number of vacant retail premises in established towns and settlements (New) (Local) | 162 (9.4%) | Not Available | | | 187 (10.8%) | For information only |
| Me02 - Number of jobs created in Aberdare and Pontypridd Town Centres through grant support programmes direct to businesses (funded by the Council and / or Welsh Government) (New) (Local) | 8* | | | | 20* | 26* |
| Me03 - Amount of Floor Area (square metres) made available to bring back into use in Aberdare and Pontypridd Town Centres through grant support programmes direct to businesses (funded by the Council and / or Welsh Government) (New) (Local) | 530 sq m* | | | | 955 sq m* | 1,890 sq m* |

Footnotes:

* Data relates to the cumulative position over the whole length of the scheme which commenced in 2010/11

2013/14 Actions & Milestones

| Critical Improvement Actions | Way Forward/Milestones | Delivery Date |
|--|---|---------------|
| CA01 - Delivery of the Pontypridd Town Centre Regeneration Project through enhancement of the public realm (funded from the Welsh Government through the European Regional Development Fund and Targeted Match Funding, alongside Council and private sector contributions) | M01 - Complete public realm enhancements (in Taff Street, Market Street, High Street, Church Street, Mill Street and surrounding areas including the fountain at Peniel Square - subject to on-going snagging) | May 13 |
| | M02 - Deliver a programme of Townscape Enhancement projects for 2013/14 aimed at improving the physical condition of business premises / bringing floor space back into use / supporting businesses to develop | Ongoing |
| | M03 - Develop and deliver joint initiatives with businesses and stakeholders in Pontypridd Town Centre that will help encourage and attract business investment and sustain existing businesses | Ongoing |
| CA02 - Delivery of the regeneration of Pontypridd Lido Business Case to bring the grade II listed building back into economic use | M01 - Agree and introduce a programme of community educational and volunteering activities to help local communities benefit from the opportunities presented by the development of the Lido project | Aug 13 |
| | M02 - Progress arrangements to complete the design and tender process for the construction works | Mar 14 |
| | M03 - Complete the Lido restoration | Sep 15 |
| CA03 - Delivery of the Aberdare Centre Regeneration Project through enhancement of the public realm (funded from the Welsh Government through the European Regional Development Fund, Heads of the Valley programme and Targeted Match Funding. The remainder of the funding package is provided by the Council, the Heritage Lottery Fund, Cadw and the private sector) | M01 - Establish a programme of Townscape Enhancement / Heritage projects for 2013/14 aimed at improving the physical condition of business premises / bringing floor space back into use / supporting businesses to develop | Dec 13 |
| | M02 - Develop and deliver joint initiatives with businesses and stakeholders in Aberdare Town Centre that will help encourage and attract business investment and sustain existing businesses | Ongoing |
| CA04 - Explore funding opportunities (via the Welsh European Funding Office - WEFO) for the regeneration of Mountain Ash and Treorchy Town Centres | M01 - If invited by WEFO, submit business cases. Further actions to be incorporated into the action plan following notification from WEFO of the way forward | tbc |
| CA05 - Investigate the feasibility of establishing a Business Improvement District in Rhondda Cynon Taf | M01 - Prepare a report for Cabinet exploring the potential to establish a BID within Rhondda Cynon Taf | Mar 14 |