



Bargoed Placemaking Plan

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theurbanists

Prepared by: The Urbanists
Address: The Urbanists,
Westgate House, 11 Womanby Street,
Cardiff, CF10 1BR
Email: info@theurbanists.net
Website: www.theurbanists.net

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Author: FV
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01. Introduction to the Placemaking Plan

Introduction

Bargoed town centre is a key settlement for the County Borough as a service and retail destination to the local community and a place of work for local business owners. As the largest town in the Heads of the Valleys area Bargoed also plays an important strategic role, with its services and retail offer also helping to support the ongoing vitality of the communities living in this part of the County Borough.

Like town’s across Wales and the UK, Bargoed has faced stern challenges in recent years; increased competition from out of town retail in the wider Capital City region and a continued rise in online retailing has provided stiff competition to traditional high street purchasing. More recently, the Covid-19 pandemic exacerbated an already difficult commercial environment for high street businesses, closing much of the high street for large periods and cutting off many business from its loyal customers.

Bargoed’s history stands its out as an industrious and resilient town; and in facing the recent challenges, Bargoed and its businesses has to been true to its reputation, and the town remains a place that local people want to visit and where businesses want to work. To help the town continue to recover and ultimately thrive, the Bargoed Town Centre Placemaking Plan has been prepared. The plan offers a bespoke place vision for Bargoed based on the shared aspirations of residents, businesses and the Council. It sets out our ambitions for the town centre in line with the Placemaking Wales Charter and explains the type of bespoke interventions that shall be pursued and delivered to ensure Bargoed remains a key destination for current and future generations.

- Legend:
- Project Location

●

Sub-regional Centre

●

Principal Centre

●

Local Centre

○

City

●

Town
- Road

Railway

○

Train Station

—

Water

—

Park



Bargoed is located in the Rhymney Valley, 8 miles north of Caerphilly and 18 miles north of Cardiff, and is served by the A4069 and the Rhymney railway line. The railway station provides circa four services per hour towards Cardiff and hourly services to Rhymney on Mondays to Saturdays, with reduced services on Sundays, with plans to increase the number of services on both directions by the South Wales Metro project.

Placemaking Policy

Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 and **Planning Policy Wales** identify placemaking as the means to maximise well-being and create sustainable places. Placemaking is a holistic approach to planning and designing development that considers development opportunities holistically in the context of the local place to ensure they are appropriate to the place and best support the community. In this way placemaking ensures the design and delivery of development that promote people’s prosperity, health, happiness, and well being in the widest sense.

Placemaking is a statutory process in Wales and underpins decision making to ensure that new development and investment build on an enhance the sense of place of our town’s and wider settlements.

In recognition of the important role of placemaking, the **Placemaking Wales Charter** has been introduced in Wales and reflects a commitment by those that practice in development, design and regeneration to support the development of high quality places.

The **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act** is focussed on improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. It requires all public bodies to think more about the long-term, to work better with people and communities and one another, and to work collectively to improve the wellbeing of Wales. The Act identifies seven wellbeing goals to guide action and identifies how public bodies should work.

Sustainable development is central to the Act, and is based on giving equal priority to improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales. Each aspect of well-being is as important as the other and it is critical that all four are improved. This approach will ensure that “the needs of the present are met without comprising those of the future”.

Sustainability is also at the core of the Welsh Government’s environment and climate change policies. The **Natural Resources Policy** (NRP) is the second statutory product of the Environment (Wales) Act. The focus of the NRP is the sustainable management of Wales’ natural resources, to maximise their contribution to achieving goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

The policy sets out three National Priorities:

- Delivering nature-based solutions
- Increasing renewable energy and resource efficiency
- Taking a place-based approach

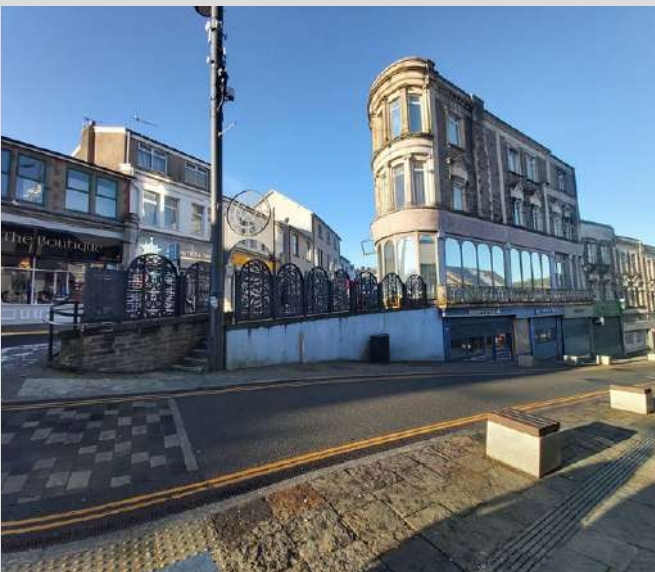
Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 and Planning Policy Wales requires planning, investment and development to create sustainable places. Sustainable places have the right mix of homes in the right place; include local employment and services; have excellent public transport and active travel infrastructure; and, are green. National policy defines that they also require mixed-use town centres that satisfy local needs.

In recognition of the key role that town centres have in building sustainable places, the Welsh Government has introduced the ‘Town Centre First’ principle, which requires all new major commercial, retail, education, health and public service investment and proposals to be located in town centres. Further, the Welsh Government has established the Transforming Towns funding programme, to enable projects to redevelop and improve town centres and nearby areas.

The Bargoed Placemaking Plan has been developed in accordance with national policy and legislation and advances this agenda, setting out the pathway for investment and ensuring that Bargoed Town Centre is a sustainable place that serves the needs of its wider community.



Hanbury Street.



High Street and the former Emporium building.



Bargoed railway station.



Hanbury Square.

Placemaking Plans

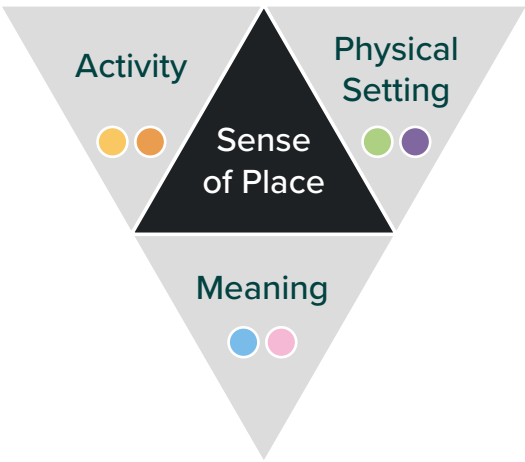
A Placemaking Plans are the means to ensure placemaking is used as a statutory process. Placemaking Plans are particularly important to satisfy the Welsh Government’s ‘town centre first’ principle to address the decline in our traditional high streets. They provide the means to set a an agreed place vision for town centres that is supported by stakeholders and can be used to deliver investment that enhances diversity and resilience and increases vitality.

The Placemaking Wales Charter

In 2020 Welsh Government and the Design Commission for Wales, in collaboration with the Placemaking Wales Partnership, developed the Wales Placemaking Charter.

The Charter provides advice for placemaking practice that can be applied to the preparation of placemaking plans; builds on the strengthening focus on Placemaking in policy and practice in Wales and aims to provide an overview of the range of considerations that go into placemaking; it promotes the creation of vibrant, sustainable, and inclusive communities across Wales by focusing on the quality and design of the places where people live, work, and play.

To help shape practice, the Charter introduces six placemaking principles: People and Community; Movement; Public Realm; Location; Mix of Uses; and Identity. The Placemaking Plan has been prepared in accordance with these principles. The principles are reported below and have been used to structure this document.



The diagram above shows how the placemaking principles, identified in the *Wales Placemaking Guide (2020)* document, collectively contribute towards the creation of a better sense of place and high-quality environment for all.

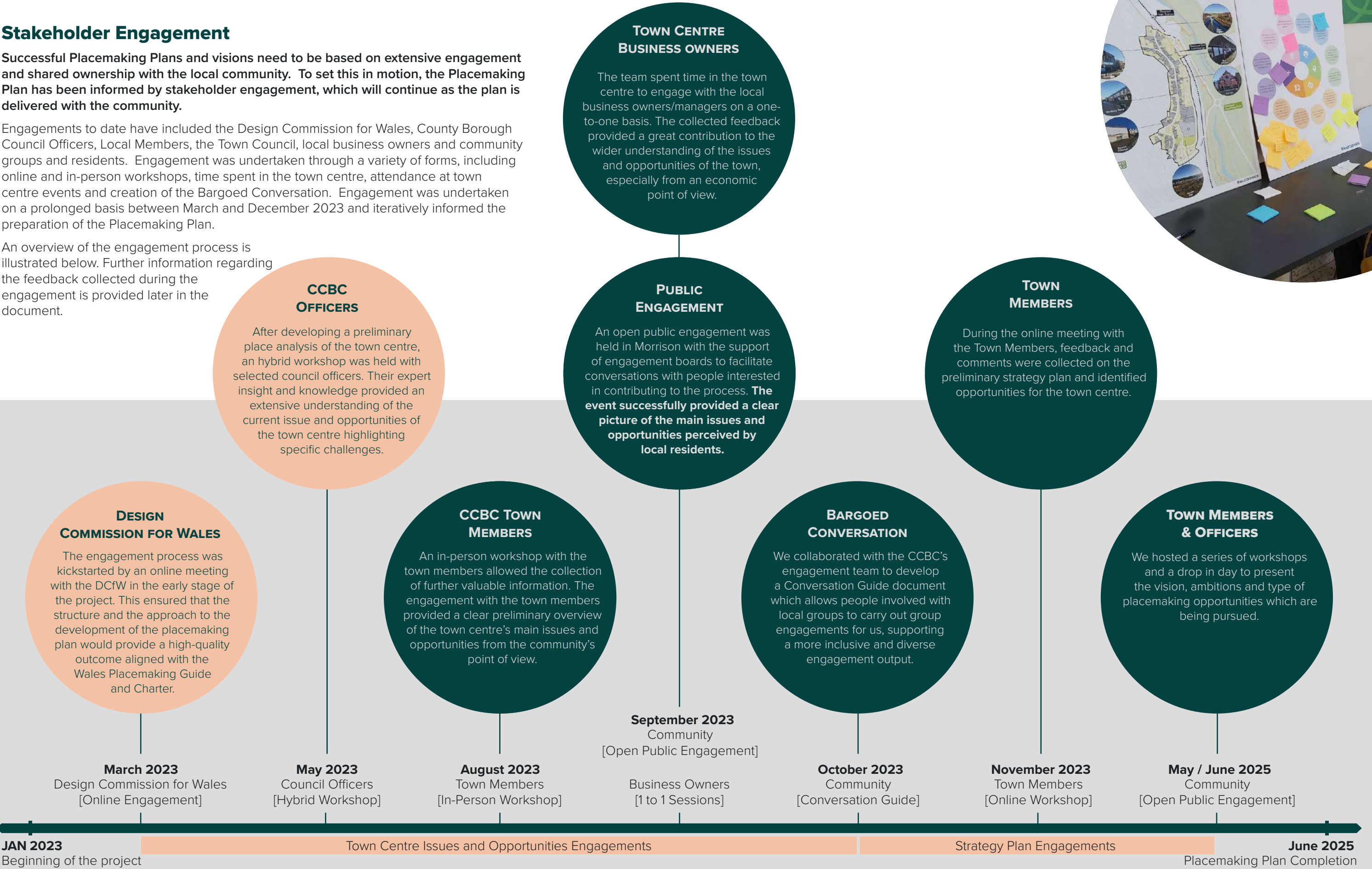
WALES PLACEMAKING GUIDE PRINCIPLES					
PHYSICAL SETTING		ACTIVITY		MEANING	
Movement Walking, cycling and public transport are prioritised to provide a choice of transport modes and avoid dependence on private vehicles. Well designed and safe active travel routes connect to the wider active travel network and public transport stations and stops are positively integrated.	Mix of Uses Places have a range of purposes which provide opportunities for community development, local business growth and access to jobs, services and facilities via walking, cycling or public transport. Development density and a mix of uses and tenures helps to support a diverse community and vibrant public realm.	Location Places should grow and develop in a way that uses land efficiently, supports and enhances existing places and is well connected. The location of housing, employment, leisure and other facilities are planned to help reduce the need to travel.	Public Realm Streets and public spaces are well defined, welcoming, safe and inclusive, with a distinct identity. They are designed to be robust and adaptable, with landscape, green infrastructure and sustainable drainage well integrated. They are well connected to existing places and promote opportunities for social interaction and a range of activities.	People and Community The local community is involved in the development of proposals. The needs, aspirations, health and well-being of all people are considered at the outset. Proposals are shaped to help to meet these needs as well as creating, integrating, protecting and/or enhancing a sense of community and to promote equality.	Identity The positive, distinctive qualities of existing places are valued and respected. The unique features and opportunities of a location including heritage, culture, language, built and natural physical attributes are identified and responded to.

Stakeholder Engagement

Successful Placemaking Plans and visions need to be based on extensive engagement and shared ownership with the local community. To set this in motion, the Placemaking Plan has been informed by stakeholder engagement, which will continue as the plan is delivered with the community.

Engagements to date have included the Design Commission for Wales, County Borough Council Officers, Local Members, the Town Council, local business owners and community groups and residents. Engagement was undertaken through a variety of forms, including online and in-person workshops, time spent in the town centre, attendance at town centre events and creation of the Bargoed Conversation. Engagement was undertaken on a prolonged basis between March and December 2023 and iteratively informed the preparation of the Placemaking Plan.

An overview of the engagement process is illustrated below. Further information regarding the feedback collected during the engagement is provided later in the document.



02. Introducing Bargoed

County Borough Importance

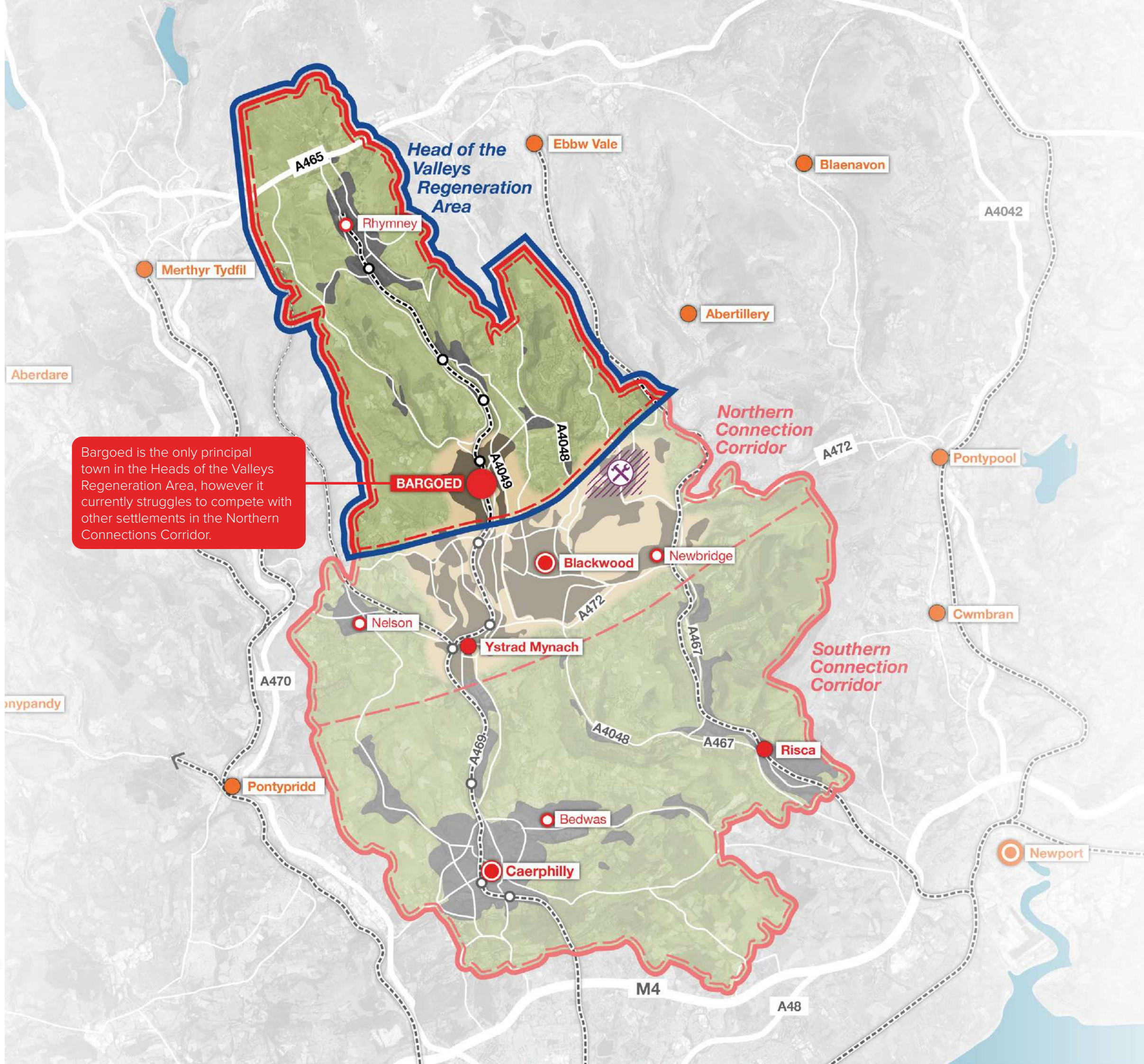
Bargoed is located in the Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Area (HOVRA), however is in close proximity to the Northern Connections Corridor, which includes the Principal Town's of Blackwood and Ystrad Mynach and the local centres of Nelson and Newbridge. Bargoed is the only Principal Town in the HOVRA, while Rhymney is the remaining local centre.

The east-west highway connectivity is limited due to the linear topographical character of the valleys. The north-south A469 by-pass road connects with the A465 Heads of the Valleys road to the north and the A470 to the south, serving Cardiff and linking with the east-west M4 motorway.

Bargoed is also served by the Rhymney railway line. The railway station provides circa four services per hour towards Cardiff and hourly services to Rhymney from Mondays to Saturdays, with reduced services on Sundays, with plans to increase the number of services on both directions by the South Wales Metro project.

As the principal town of the HOVRA, Bargoed provides a range of functions and services for the surrounding settlements that are not available elsewhere in the HOVRA.

The 'Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Area Masterplan' reinforces "the role of Bargoed as a service centre for the north of the County Borough by promoting its diversification for alternative uses and taking full advantage of its bus/ rail connectivity, whilst retaining and consolidating a strong retail core".



Role of the Towns within the County Borough

In preparing Placemaking Plans for the County Borough's town centres it is important to recognise the unique attributes of each and the key functions that they have evolved. These create opportunities to shape the future of each town and also ensure that complementary roles are prioritised so that all towns can flourish.

Caerphilly and Blackwood are the largest towns in the County Borough and due to their population, catchment and mix of uses are the key sub regional towns that are strategically important to the County Borough. Each of the town's has unique opportunities and due to their location in the Northern and Southern Connection Corridors respectively have the opportunity to grow in a complementary fashion. Caerphilly has the potential to become a national tourism destination in addition to being a key leisure and service hub for the extensive residential community. Blackwood meanwhile does not have the same heritage offer but it has a significant catchment that is due to grow further, is located in the strategically important northern connections corridor which provides a west/east transport connection through the mid-Capital City Region and is a recognised regional leisure destination.

Supporting the regional towns are the principal towns of Risca, Ystrad Mynach, and Bargoed.

These towns have smaller populations and catchments but provide key retail, leisure, and service functions to their communities and the communities in adjacent residential settlements. Each again as a unique role and function with Ystrad Mynach being the Civic Heart of the County Borough, Risca acting as the key hub for the growing outdoor and activity tourism offer provided by ongoing investment into Cwmcarn Forest Drive and Monmouthshire Brecon Canal. **Bargoed meanwhile is the gateway to and traditional service centre for the upper Rhymney Valley and the Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Area.**

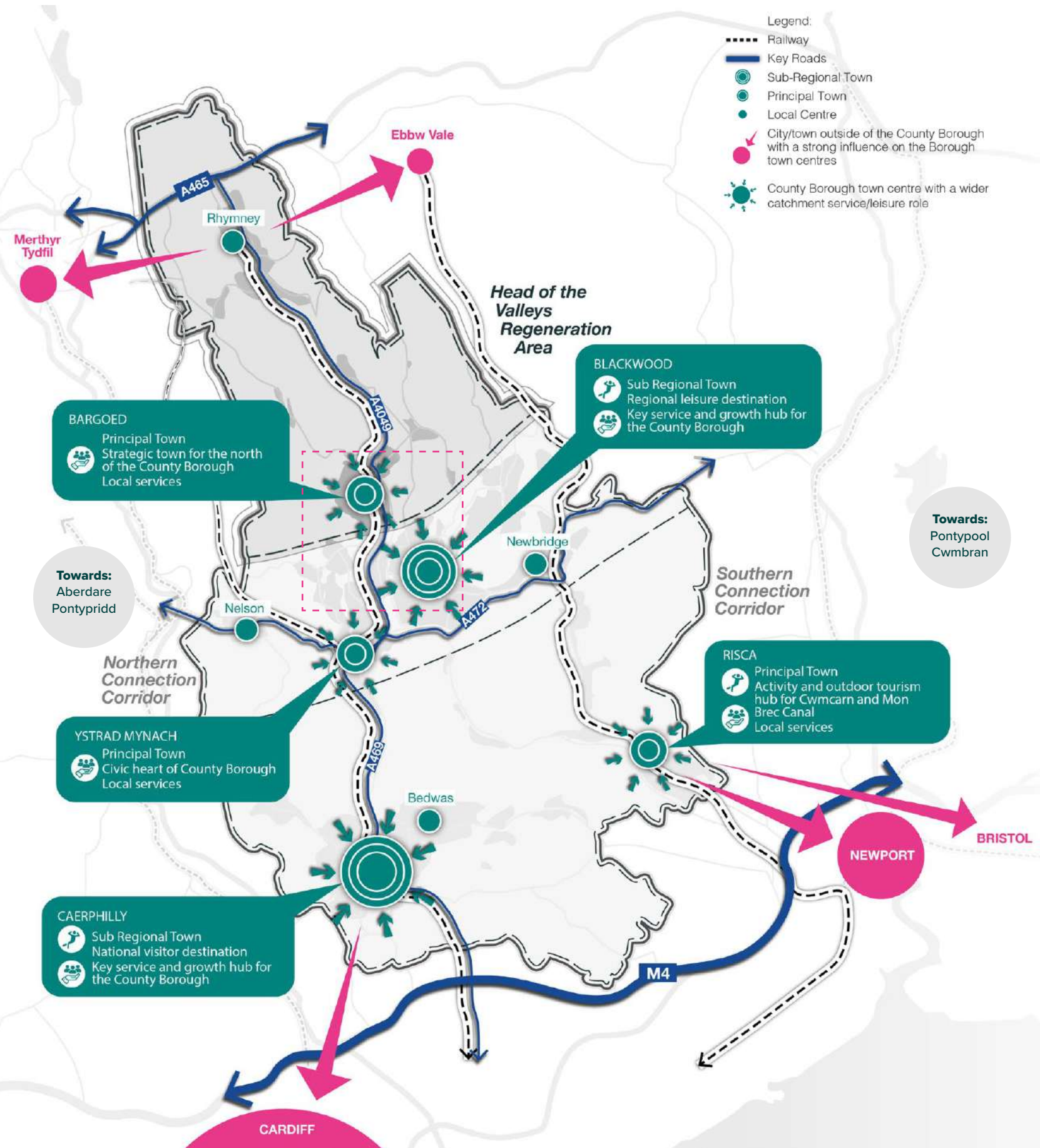
The remaining towns are local centres that provide important everyday uses to the local communities. The population and catchments in these centres are much smaller and the extent and depth of the retail, leisure, and service offered reflect that. They perform a supplementary role to the principal and sub-regional towns.

Proximity, Connectivity and Function

While Blackwood, Bargoed and Ystrad Mynach are located relatively close together, the geography of the valleys, the history of each town, and the significant local populations and catchments they serve means they have traditionally functioned independently. **Blackwood and Bargoed in particular appear geographically close (1.75 miles directly), but their strategic location as the gateways to the upper Sirhowy and Rhymney Valleys means they are not as easy to travel between as they appear.** Highway links between the two either navigate the steep topography of the Sirhowy and Rhymney valleys or detour back towards the strategic highway links of Ystrad Mynach. This means that while it is relatively easy to travel between the two by private vehicle traveling by bus can take over 30 minutes. Rail travel between the two is not possible.

In light of these factors, each town must be able to sustain the local population and wider valley communities and the unique roles of each help to provide a focus point for the type of investment and change that will be pursued.

However, it is also important to recognise that not all towns can be the same and have the same mix of uses and services and that the different socioeconomic profiles of each town need to inform the scale of placemaking interventions that are taken. For the sub-regional towns there is an opportunity to deliver a scale of investment and service provision that serves that town and the wider County Borough. The opportunity for a principal town, like Bargoed, is to collaboratively shape a future identity for the town and to put in place the socio-economic and physical foundations that supports the long-term health, wellbeing and prosperity of the local communities it serves. **This opportunity exists for Blackwood to be the primary retail, leisure and service destination in the Mid Valleys and also the Heads of the Valleys areas.**



The History of Bargoed


Bargoed was originally a market town, but it grew substantially when the South Wales Valleys became a key industrial centre. Over the course of the late 19th and early 20th centuries Bargoed and the surrounding settlements prospered as thousands of families were attracted into the area to work in the coal mining industry. During this time the town centre became a focal point for the community, which peaked at just under 18,000 residents in the 1920's, providing essential services, shops, and entertainment venues. The length of the Bargoed town centre high street, and noticeable local buildings, including the Police Court and Police Station and Hanbury Road Baptist Chapel and Schoolrooms, stand as a symbol of the inward investment that was made during this period. The coal industry declined from the mid-20th century and Bargoed Colliery eventually closed in 1977, almost 50 years ago. The decline and subsequent closure of the colliery brought the same socio-economic challenges to Bargoed town centre and its communities that were faced by many other industrial settlements across South Wales.

Today 'Greater Bargoed' consisting of the towns of Bargoed, Aberbargoed and the village of Gilfach has a population of 11,860 (Census 2021). After the colliery closed, the site was landscaped to create a recreational nature park (Bargoed Woodland Park). **In more recent years, Bargoed has been subject to significant infrastructure and commercial investment;** a bypass was delivered that links Bargoed to the surrounding settlements of Aberbargoed and Gilfach and a new bus stop created. A Morrisons supermarket has also been delivered in the south of the town centre, along with significant car parking areas, and the traditional high street has been subject to public realm enhancement. As part of the latter public realm works, a one-way system was introduced for vehicles and opportunities for on-street parking were reduced; both were undertaken to improve pedestrian movement in the town. In spite of the investments made, the town centre has continued to face challenges, losing visitors to online shopping, out of centre retail destinations and other larger local town centres with a larger retail offer.



Above a picture of Parc Coetir / Bargoed Woodland Park created by the regeneration of three collieries. On the right an historical picture of Bargoed Collieries.

Socio-Economic Snapshot



Demographic

Bargoed generally has an older demographic with only 30% of residents under 24 years old.

The number of 18-29 year olds **moving away** from areas in Wale is **rising faster** than the rest of the UK, and areas such as Bargoed will be greatly affected by this.




Health and Wellbeing


The Bargoed area has one of the biggest health and wellbeing challenges in Wales and the UK. (Source: IWN (draft) Bargoed Wellbeing Outline Plan).

Employment Statistics


49.7% of the local population is economically active.




61.6% travel to work by car



2.1% travel to work by bus




1.8% travel to work by train



0.2% travel to work by bike

The most popular commuting destinations are Blackwood, Ystrad Mynach and Cardiff.








34.5% travel less than 10km to work.

26.7% travel between 10km and 30km.

Deprivation


63.9% of households were experiencing deprivation. 54.1% is the Welsh Average.





Education

28.2% of individuals aged 16 and over lack formal qualifications.



20.3% have attained degree and higher degree qualifications, almost half of the Welsh average.

03. Bargoed Town Centre Today

Bargoed Settlement

Bargoed town centre is located on the north eastern edge of the Bargoed settlement; the residential Bargoed settlement adjoins to the town centre to the south and west. There is a significant level change across the Bargoed settlement; with the land falling from the west to the east. The traditional high street areas of the town centre sit on a plateau; but the land falls sharply to the east to the valley floor, where the Bargoed Colliery was once located. The former colliery site was subject to reclamation and is now a Country Park which interfaces with the River Rhymney. Heolddu Comprehensive School is located on the western edge of the Bargoed settlement, overlooking the town. Bargoed Park is located in close proximity and includes significant areas of outdoor recreational areas. To the east of the Bargoed settlement on the opposite side of the valley is the settlement of Aberbargoed; this is connected to Bargoed by the bypass. There is a significant brownfield regeneration site in Aberbargoed that is proposed for residential and education uses. The settlement of Gilfach is located to the south of the Bargoed settlement.

The town centre is linear in nature and lies on a north / south orientation. The centre commences in the south at Cardiff Road and then includes Hanbury Square, Hanbury Street, High Street and Upper High Street. Bargoed railway station is located to the north of the town centre and the bus station is located on the eastern edge of the centre with significant car parking provision. The area’s west/east level change means that there is a level change between the town centre high street and the residential properties to the west, and between the centre and the car park and bus station located to the east. In the Local Development Plan, there is mixed use designation in the north of the town centre, which has been partially developed, and also in the south of the town centre, which has yet to be delivered.

Bargoed is a key priority for future investment in housing, education, and health, supporting its residents and serving communities across the Upper Rhymney Valley. The town centre can be central to this, acting as the catalyst for economic growth, improved wellbeing, and renewed civic pride.



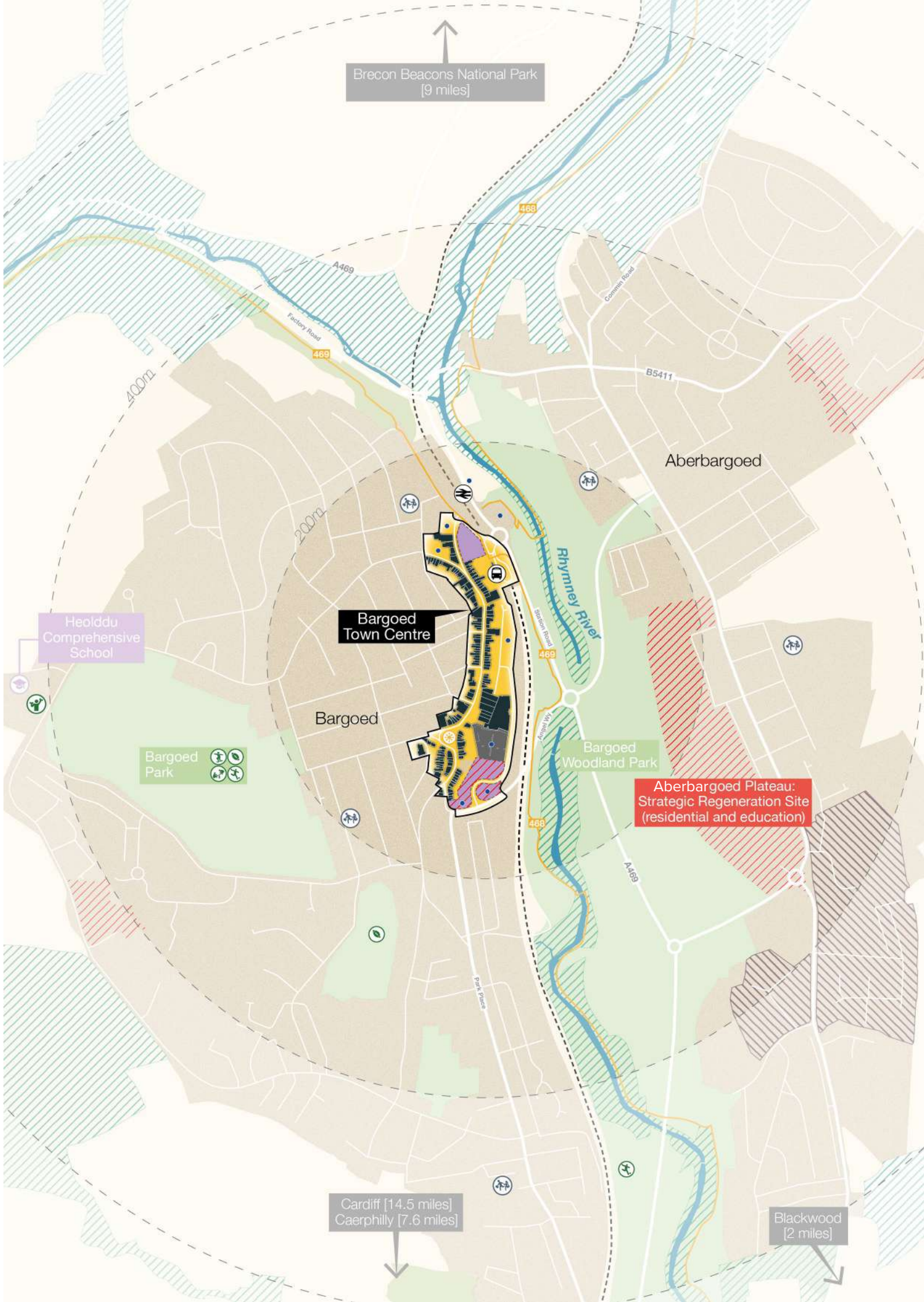
Hanbury Square.



Hanbury Road.

Legend:

- Town Centre Boundary
- Settlement
- Roads
- National Cycle Route
- Railway
- Train Station
- Bus Interchange
- Town Centre Buildings
- Commercial Opportunity
- Housing Allocation
- Employment Site Protection
- Water
- Green Space
- Site of Importance for Nature Conservation
- Hanbury Square
- School
- Leisure Centre
- Skate Park
- Playground
- Football Pitch
- Rugby Pitch
- Car Park



Commercial Property Context

National Property Market Conditions

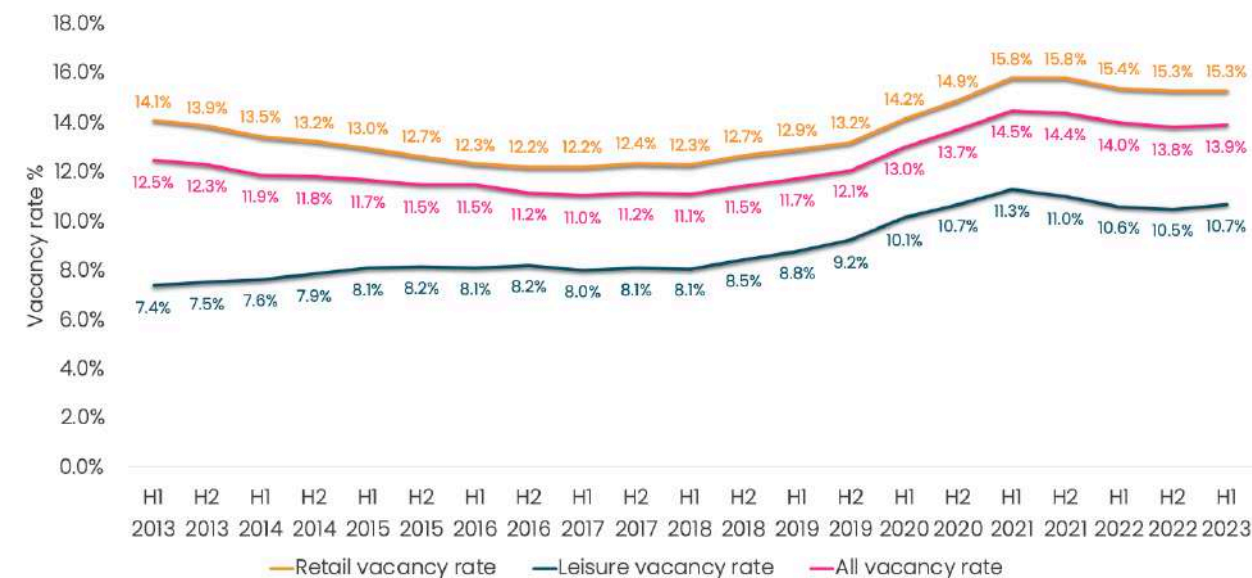
Between 2008-2022 the southeast Wales property market improved after a period of low interest rates boosted all asset classes, including property. The market improvement did not, however, result in new speculative or bespoke developments due to persistent viability issues and reliance on public sector funding. There was a significant change in the autumn of 2022 when the financial markets responded with caution to the UK Government's 'mini budget'. There was a loss in confidence which lead to reduced demand alongside reduced construction activity. Inflation also rose significantly, rising above 10% for a time and remaining at 6.8% in July 2023. There are continued concerns over the impact of rising interest rates on the wider economy.

Energy Efficiency and the EPC Crunch

Since 2008, it has been a legal requirement that whenever a property is built, sold, or rented, an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) is required. The Energy Act 2011 introduced the concept of 'Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards' (MEES) to address the energy efficiency of the existing building stock. This Act introduced a time-scale of April 2018 for the introduction of restrictions on lettings of those commercial properties with a poor EPC of F or G (which is understood to account for circa 18% of all UK commercial buildings, higher in the Valleys).

On 1 April 2023 this legislation meant it became unlawful to 'continue to let' commercial premises with an F or G rating – this creates challenges for areas such as the South Wales Valleys with a higher proportion of older properties. The rules and regulations are however not straightforward with a key exemption if improvements are financially unviable, for example, if they do not pay for themselves through energy cost savings within seven years. The direction of travel is that the EPC standard required for a letting to be authorised will be tightened with an EPC rating of C or higher required by 1 April 2027 and B or better by 2030.

This will have an impact upon the Rhymney Valley property market as poor-quality buildings become 'unlettable' and lose rental value and capital value.



Retail and Leisure Uses in Bargoed

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, town centres were facing structural changes and challenges, however, these have been exacerbated by the pandemic and the following 'cost of living crisis'. The Local Data Company said there was a net loss of approximately 2,000 retail units across Great Britain in the whole of 2022 and 4,000 in the first six months of 2023. This increase has been attributed to the poor economic conditions facing business owners, the 'cost of living' crisis for shoppers and the final unwinding of pandemic support. The Local Data Company also note there is a rising number of retail units which have been unoccupied for over two years. This context will remain valid for the next few years.

The fastest growing retail subcategories of demand are: fast food; beauty salons; barbers; convenience shops; ice cream parlours; nail salons; bakers; pet shops; and, bars / cafés. The subcategories in decline are: banks / financial services; fashion shops; newsagents; bookmakers; hairdressers; recruitment agencies; chemists / toiletries; hotels (3 star); estate agents; shoe shops; vaping shops; and charity shops. The sectors in decline reflect where there is growing online competition but also changing trends. Town centre retail dominance is over, not least due to the rise in out-of-town retail, superstores and online. Therefore, a broader social mix of activities is needed within town centres with residential, flexible enterprise space (easy in, easy out) and complementary retail including coffee shops / fast food / bars, personal services (beauty, barbers) and convenience shopping.

Some local retail has benefited from increased home working. The value of thinking and acting locally increased during the pandemic period with many people re-assessing their traditional journey to work and reconsidering local accessibility of services, entertainment, leisure, and shopping activities. This in turn perhaps creates more demand for housing within walking distance of town centres.

Local property agents specialising in the local retail market report a subdued property market for high street and suburban retail.

AGENTS EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT THERE IS DEMAND FROM LOCAL RETAILERS FOR SMALLER SHOP UNITS UP TO £6K PER ANNUM WITH DEMAND REDUCING FOR UP TO £10K PER ANNUM.

There is, however, limited activity in the following sub-sectors of retail and leisure demand, which could be seen as opportunity areas for retail use in Bargoed:

- **Convenience retail** – Tesco 'one stop', Co-op etc. A limited number of strong covenant enquiries.
- **Local personal and leisure services** - such as beauty parlour, nail bars, hairdressers, barbers, gyms, tattooists, tanning salons.
- **Café sector** – coffee shops, tea shops, bars, sandwich, and hot food. Likely to be digitally connected and in locations with passing trade.
- **Artisan food retailers** – e.g., speciality bakers, high quality butchers etc.
- **Speciality shops** – there are a small number of high-quality enquiries for non typical sub sections, from angling supplies, florists, and many other uses, which will come through from time to time. These may also be connected to an online presence.

Employment Uses in Bargoed

Bargoed is not recognised as an office location. There are isolated examples of offices in the upper floors of retail and leisure units at rents of £8.00-£10.00 per sq ft and a limited public sector presence through job centres, the Department for Work & Pensions and Council hubs. Across the South Wales Valleys, the business park and out of town office sectors has, in general, had a decade of under-performance with little new floorspace being built. While the Covid-19 pandemic mostly affected retail and leisure markets, it has also impacted on the office market due to remote or hybrid working now being common working practice. **Welsh Government 'town centre first' policy, which was adopted in January 2020, provides an opportunity, as it places a focus on town centres to be considered first for the location of significant new commercial facilities, along with retail, education, health, leisure, and public service facilities.**

Town Centre Retail Uses Analysis

A review of the retail offer in the town centre was undertaken at the end of 2023 and identified **Bargoed had a higher level of independent businesses than the national average. It also identified a vacancy rate of around 20%, which at the time made Bargoed the principal town with the highest vacancy rates in the County Borough.** There are notably some larger vacant premises in key parts of the town centre that can magnify the presence of vacant premises.

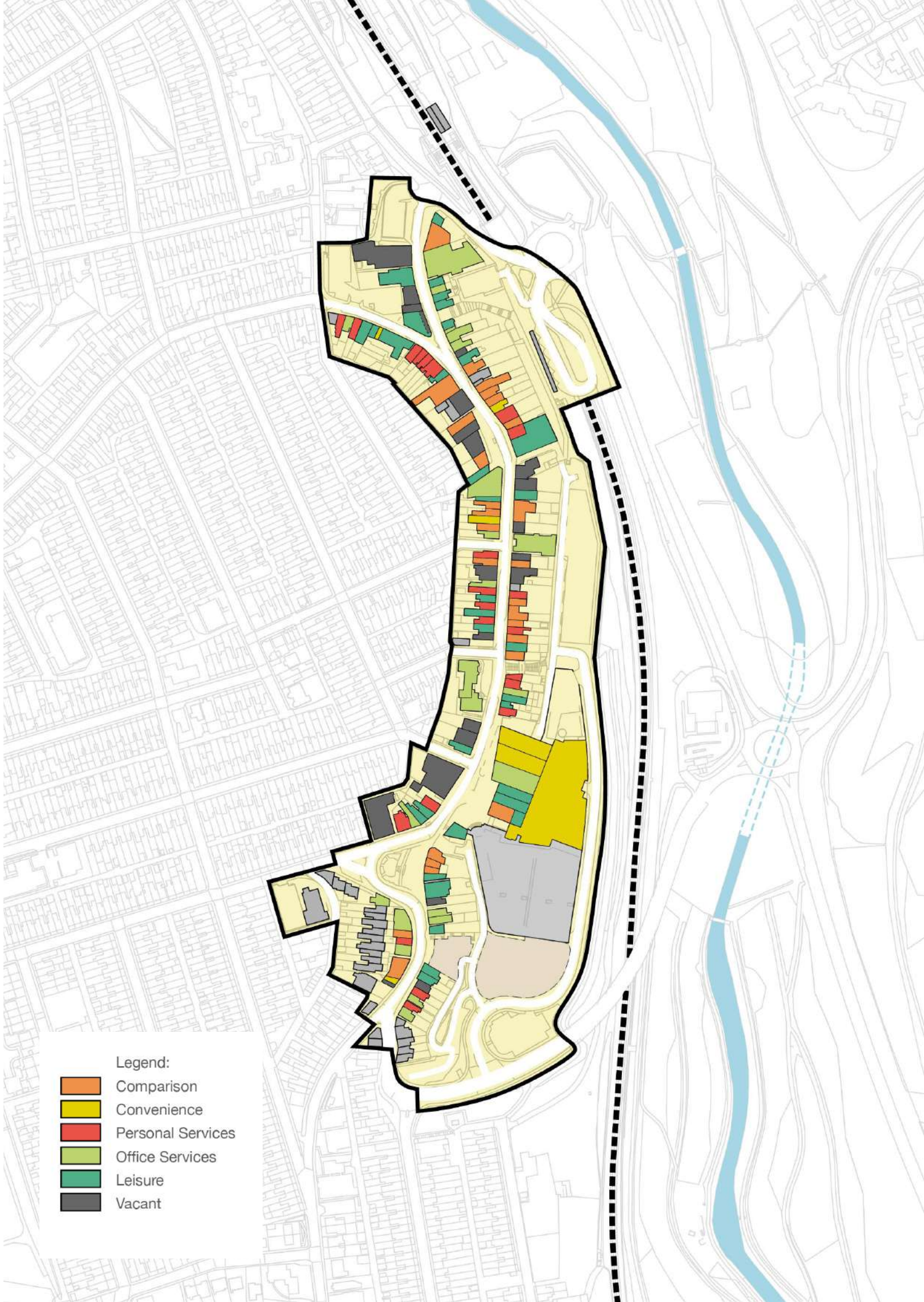
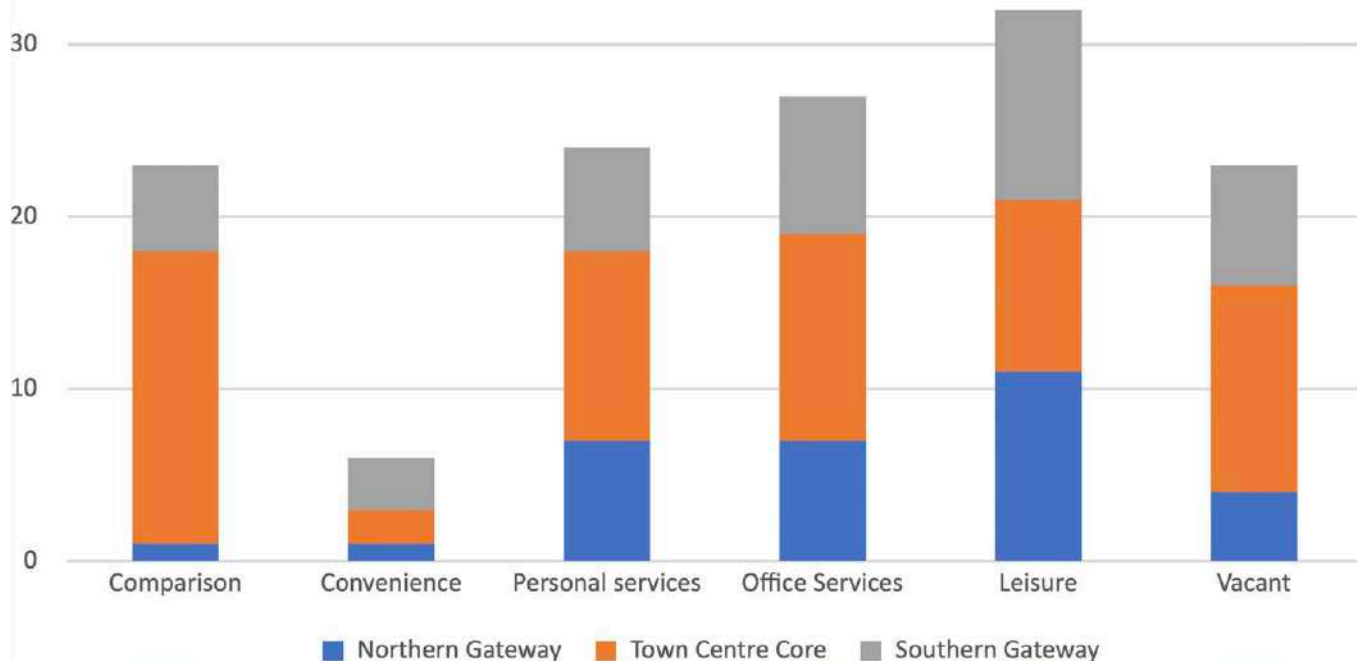
The analysis undertaken identified a total of 135 retail units and five main retail categories:

- Comparison
- Convenience
- Personal Services
- Office Services
- Leisure

The table and graph below, provides an overview of the type of offer within the town centre. The plan on the side provides a visual representation of the data.

Area	Comparison	Convenience	Personal services	Office Services	Leisure	Vacant	Total
Northern Gateway	1	1	7	7	11	4	31
Town Centre Core	17	2	11	12	10	12	64
Southern Gateway	5	3	6	8	11	7	40
All town centre	23	6	24	27	32	23	135

* The table above reflects the businesses in place on Saturday 25 November 2023. The analysis was based on direct observation.



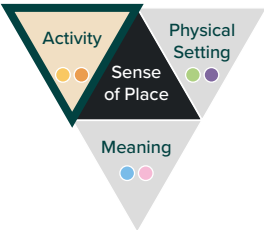
Town Centre Analysis

Views of the Community

To help inform an understanding of the town centre today, engagement was undertaken with Local Members and Town Council Members, local businesses and resident and community groups. The method of how engagement was undertaken was described in Section 1. The engagement used each of the Placemaking Charter principles to get the insights of local residents. A summary of the feedback provided is below by each placemaking principle. Further details can be found in the Appendix.

MOVEMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Congestion issues on High Street caused by bus stops and lack of a bus bay.• Illegal parking is a recurrent problem. Illegal parking on pavements, disable bays and loading bays.• The topography of the town makes access to the high street difficult for many people.• The one-way system has taken a while to get used to, and it can result in congestion when vehicles stop to pick-up or drop-off on the highway.• Some visitors and business owners would prefer the bus station to be located to the southern end of town as it's where the majority of the services are located.• Improved wayfinding across the town and towards the Woodland Park and the National Cycle Route (NCR).
MIX OF USES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use the existing empty units for short-term affordable business spaces to support local start-up businesses.• There could be opportunities to reuse bigger vacant premises to create an indoor food market, shared work spaces, or combination of both.• New leisure uses would be welcome as currently there is not much to do in the town centre, especially for local young people. Attractive uses could include places for board games and online gaming, bowling, dancing, gym, or other fitness places like a yoga studio. A better night-time offer of restaurants and cafe/bars is also needed.• Develop vacant sites at the southern end of the town. The vacant site next to Morrison could be used to provide some new leisure uses, or provide smaller modern residential units close to the town centre.• The variety of the retail types in the town centre is limited. A more diverse offer of shops would encourage more people to spend time in the town centre.• Converting some of the vacant premises into new homes might be beneficial to improve the appearance of some properties and get more activity into the town centre.• High vacancy rate, especially to the northern end of the town centre should be a focus for attention and could be another location for new homes or leisure uses.

LOCATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The southern end of the town centre is busy due to the presence of Morrisons and the Post Office. In comparison, the northern end is poorly performing and is in poor physical condition and there is a need to provide new activity to the north of the town centre to revitalise it.• The town centre needs to be a more diverse location and have a greater mix of uses that create consistent activity. Interesting events are a key part of creating activity also.• The location of the bus station and railway station next to the town centre are strengths; better connections from the stations into the town centre would be helpful.• Bargoed Park and Bargoed Woodland Park are good green spaces. Further improved amenities in these and better connections to the places would be positive.
PUBLIC REALM
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is are not many places where people can sit and socialise outdoors in the centre.• The regeneration of the town centre created a pleasant environment for pedestrians, but illegal parking that happens on it can cause disruption.• The town centre is quite narrow and would benefit from a larger public space. It would also be pleasant to see some greenery brought into the existing larger public spaces.• Short-term interventions to provide window dressings and shop-front improvements of vacant units, or decoration of shutters would help elevate the street scene and perception of the town.
PEOPLE AND COMMUNITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The library is a great community asset and is frequently used by the public.• Anti-social behaviour occurs in several areas across the town centre; the area in front of Lowry Plaza, by the bus station, the town centre car parks and the ground floor of the Morrisons multi-storey car park are key hotpots.• There is not much to do for teenagers and no job opportunities for young people, so a place where youth facilities are provided would be well used. The space could be used for socialising, studying and gaming. It could also be used to provide education and training support to help with studies and job opportunities and also deliver wider wellbeing services.• There is an appetite in the local community to open new businesses. Start-up retail and business space would support the creation of new businesses in the town centre.
IDENTITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bargoed has a strong industrial history and culture, but this cannot continue to define the town and a refreshed modern identity is required.• Bargoed has a tight-knit community and residents want to stay here; young people need to be retained.• Bargoed town centre is characterful and there are number of historic buildings that commemorate its rich history that should be celebrated.• There is an appetite to support the town centre; a programme of events would get people back into the town centre.



Town Centre Analysis

Place Analysis

To further understand the issues and opportunities identified from the stakeholder engagement a physical place analysis was undertaken of the town centre. The analysis was undertaken through each of the Placemaking Wales Charter principles, considering each of the three key aspects of what contributes to Sense of Place; namely Activity, Physical Setting and Meaning.

Activity

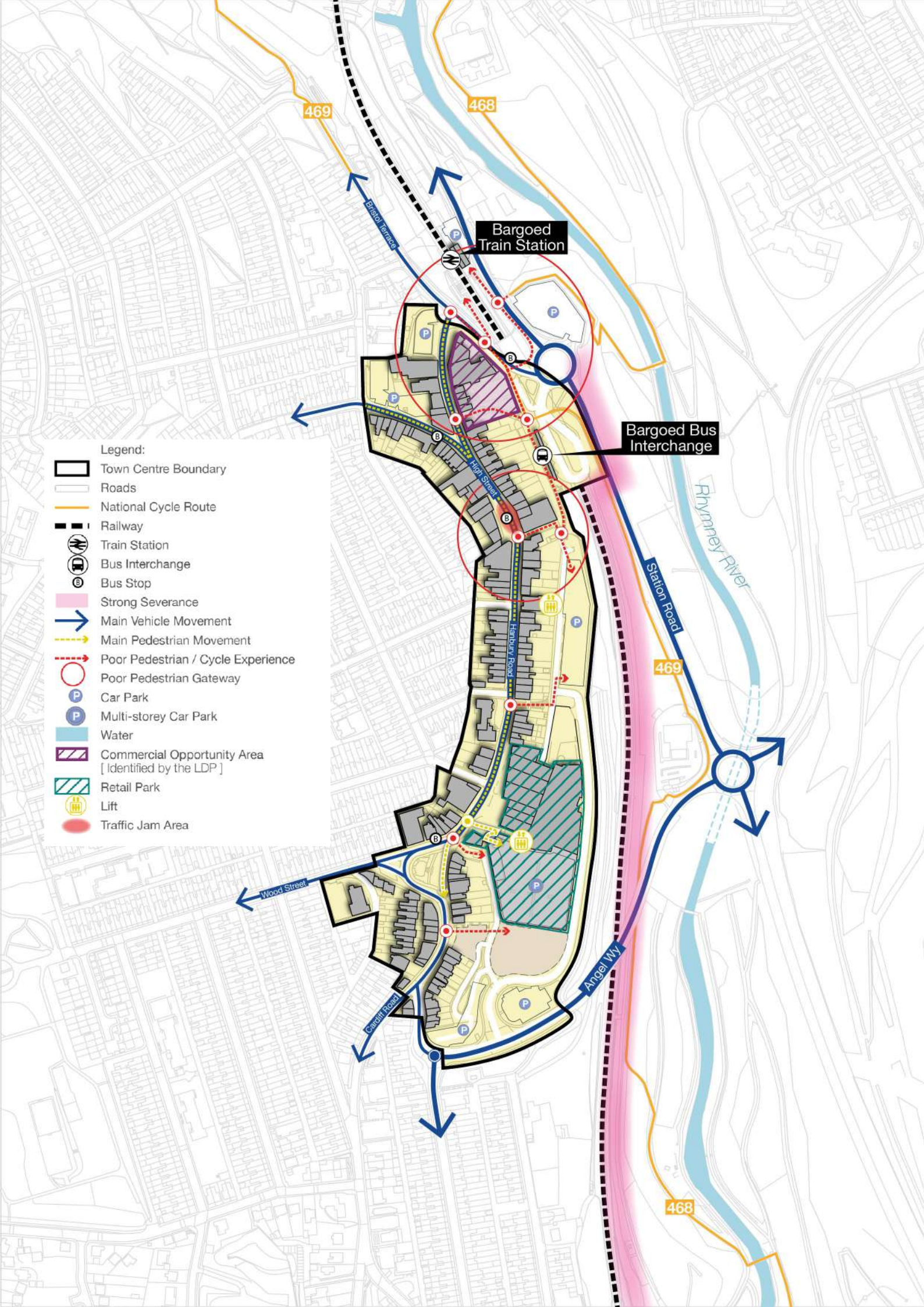
Movement

- **Vehicle Movement** - Cars are generally able to move through the town centre one-way system without issue. However, loading associated with retail uses and waiting buses can result in temporary congestion. The latter is noticeable around the Royal Square bus stop which does not have a waiting bus lay-by.
- **Parking** - There is a good amount of car parking spaces along the edges of the town centre, but the level changes can make it difficult for some visitors to access the town centre from these car parks. Illegal parking does occur along the high street area as visitors seek to park close to shops.
- **Pedestrian Movement** - The pedestrian routes through the town centre are generally good. The pedestrian routes into the town centre are limited; being dominated by highway and car movement and there is a significant level change from the railway station and bus station.
- **Public Transport** - The town is well connected, with a train station and a bus station located in the north of the town. A number of local bus stops serve the high street. Buses provide local and County wide services, but frequency could be improved.
- **Cycle Routes** - The NCRs 468 and 469 run to the east of the town centre and can be accessed from the northern end of the town. The routes are well used by locals but the wayfinding is limited. The topography, the railway and road infrastructure separate the routes from the rest of the town.

The average weekly footfall in Bargoed is approximately **8,840 visits per week.**

Mix of Uses

- **The High Street** - The traditional high street includes Cardiff Road; Hanbury Square; Hanbury Road, High Street; and Upper High Street. The area of retail stretches for 780m, which is noticeably long and includes approximately 138 businesses and 28 vacancies (a vacancy rate of approximately 20 %). The business offer consists of everyday uses, but there is a concentration of cafes and service uses like hairdressers. There are a noticeable series of large vacant properties where Hanbury Road transitions to High Street.
- **Northern Gateway** - The north eastern edge of the town centre has high vacancy levels that detracts from the street scene; the vacant buildings are large in scale and of traditional character, representing an opportunity for refurbishment. A Council premises is located in the north east of the town centre and has been subject to recent investment and upgrade. The current LDP shows a Commercial Opportunity area that includes the Council premises and wider adjacent blocks on the eastern side of High Street.
- **Southern Gateway** - The south-eastern edge of the town centre is characterised by the Morrisons supermarket; which is a busy footfall area for the town centre. The Morrisons building is multi-storey, consisting of parking; the Morrisons store; and then a series of small to medium sized commercial spaces that front on the Lowry Plaza , and include some national retailers. The remainder of the Southern Gateway is the traditional high street of the town centre; some noticeable vacant buildings, include the former cinema building and the Hanbury Arms.



Town Centre Analysis

Activity

Movement Key Summary

- The town entrance from the train and bus station requires improvement;
- Unregulated parking on the high street is a problem;
- The topography creates accessibility constraints, especially for people with limited movement capabilities;
- Connection and wayfinding to key green spaces and cycle links can be improved.



National Cycle Route 468. (Photo credit M J Roscoe)



Train station.



Bus interchange.



Car park.



Steep ramp between the centre and the car park.



Pedestrian gateway from the train station.

Mix of Uses Key Summary

- There are several vacant buildings across the town centre, with important clusters located at the top end of the town centre;
- There are vacant sites at the southern end of the town that can provide development opportunities;
- There is an opportunity to create facilities dedicated to young people;
- Opportunity to expand the variety of retail offer and activities within the town centre;
- Shortage of homes.



Hanbury Road.



Former cinema a the southern gateway.



Hanbury Arms



Vacant sites at the southern end of the town.



Vacant units at the northern end of the town.

Town Centre Analysis

Physical Setting

Location

- **Catchment and Topography** - Bargoed town centre is located in the northeast of the Bargoed settlement with its significant population of 11,860. Topography across the Bargoed settlement (declining significantly from west to east) reduces the potential for some residents to access the town by active travel means.
- **Homes** - There are a limited number of homes in the town centre or limited living above existing commercial spaces. The homes of the wider Bargoed settlement are located in close proximity to the town centre but accessibility is reduced for some of these households by the level changes through the settlement, or the distance for those at the extremities of the settlement. There could be an opportunity to introduce new high quality sustainable homes into the centre.
- **Public Services** - Bargoed library is a great community asset in the centre of the town, and there is a Job Centre and Post Office in the south of the town, but there are limited other key public facilities in the town centre (aside from retail uses). Key health and leisure uses are dispersed across the settlement. There could be an opportunity to integrate more public services into or closer to the town centre.
- **Natural Resources** - There is little natural resources in the town centre; the closest is Bargoed Woodland Park which is located east on the Rhymney valley floor (a much lower elevation than the town centre) and Bargoed Park located to the west (a much higher elevation to the town centre).

The library was built in a renovated historic chapel in 2011 and serves **15K** people from the surrounding area.

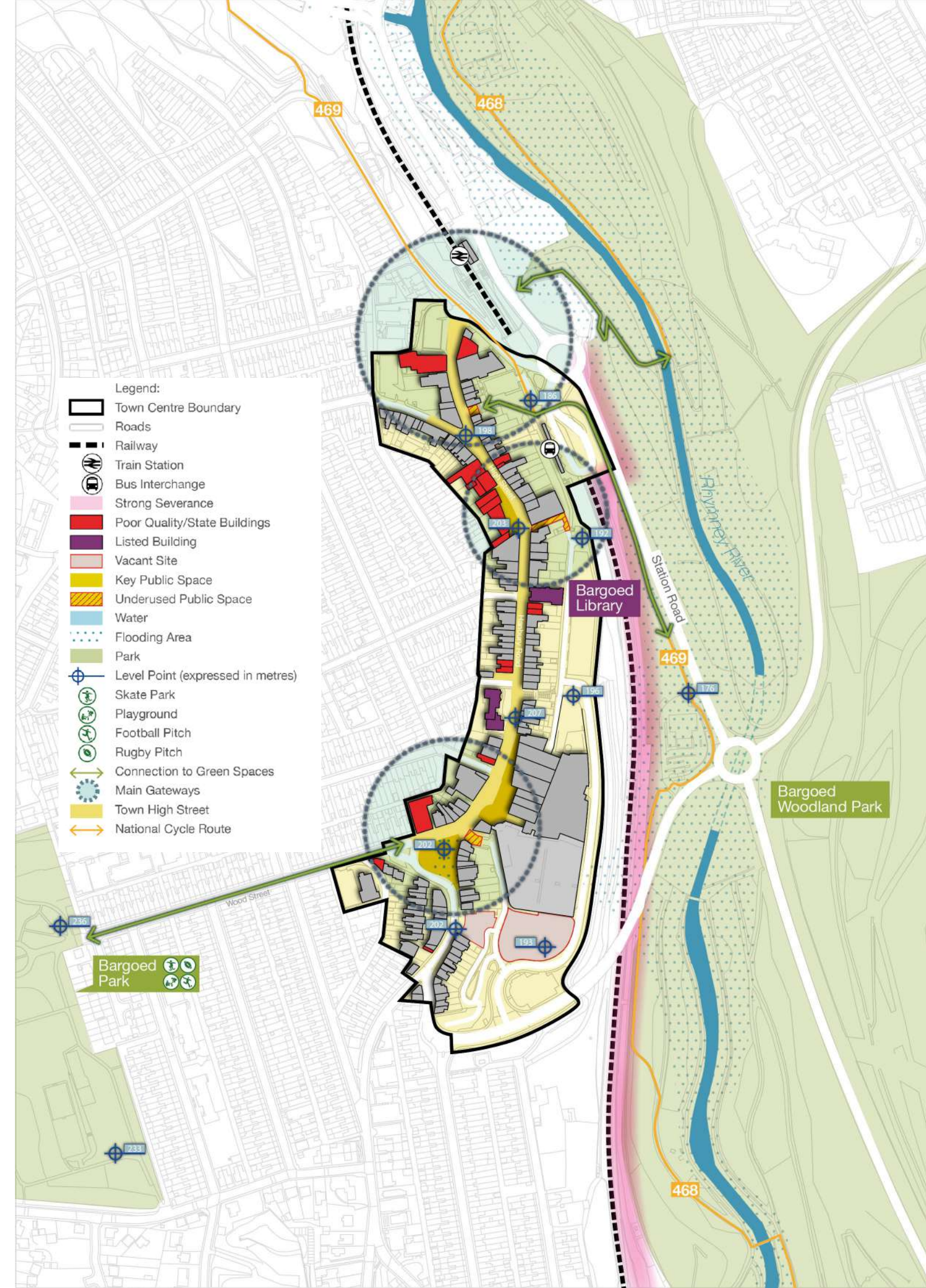
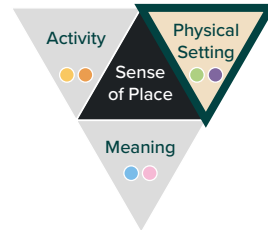
Public Realm

- **Streets** - Hanbury Road and High Street have been subject to public realm enhancements that have created a high quality hard landscape and created a good quality pedestrian environment, however, illegal parking can cause safety issues and result in congestion and disruption to businesses.
- **Public Spaces** - There are defined public spaces along Cardiff Road, Hanbury Road and High Street, but these offer limited opportunities for visitors to sit, wait and or socialise. The three key public spaces are subsequently underused. The public spaces are also characterised by hard landscape, with little green space to create a focal point or offer shade or shelter from the weather. The public spaces could be utilised for regular events; the Craft Market uses Hanbury Square and this could be built in with the public spaces used as the location of regular events.
- **Trees and Plants** - With the exception of a few trees and some planters there is little green infrastructure in the town centre's public realm. To access green resources visitors need to go to Bargoed Park or Bargoed Woodland Park.

The Bargoed May fair 2023 was a great success with a record of **16,410** visitors from all over South Wales.



Bargoed May fair in 2023.



Town Centre Analysis

Physical Setting

Location Key Summary

- There are a limited number of homes in the town centre;
- The topography can create limitations for people from visiting and spending time in the town centre;
- Parks and green spaces are located outside of the town centre, wayfinding can be improved.



Bargoed Park.



Bargoed Library.



Stepped pedestrian links to the car park.



Pocket space.

Public Realm Key Summary

- There is an opportunity for more greenery integrated within the town centre;
- The existing public spaces are underused;
- There is an opportunity to integrate more spaces for people to sit and socialise;
- Unregulated parking can detract from the experience of visiting the town and create accessibility and movement constraints.



Hanbury Square.



Royal Square



Hanbury Road.



Lowry Plaza.



Pop-up outdoor eating area on Hanbury Road.

Town Centre Analysis

Meaning

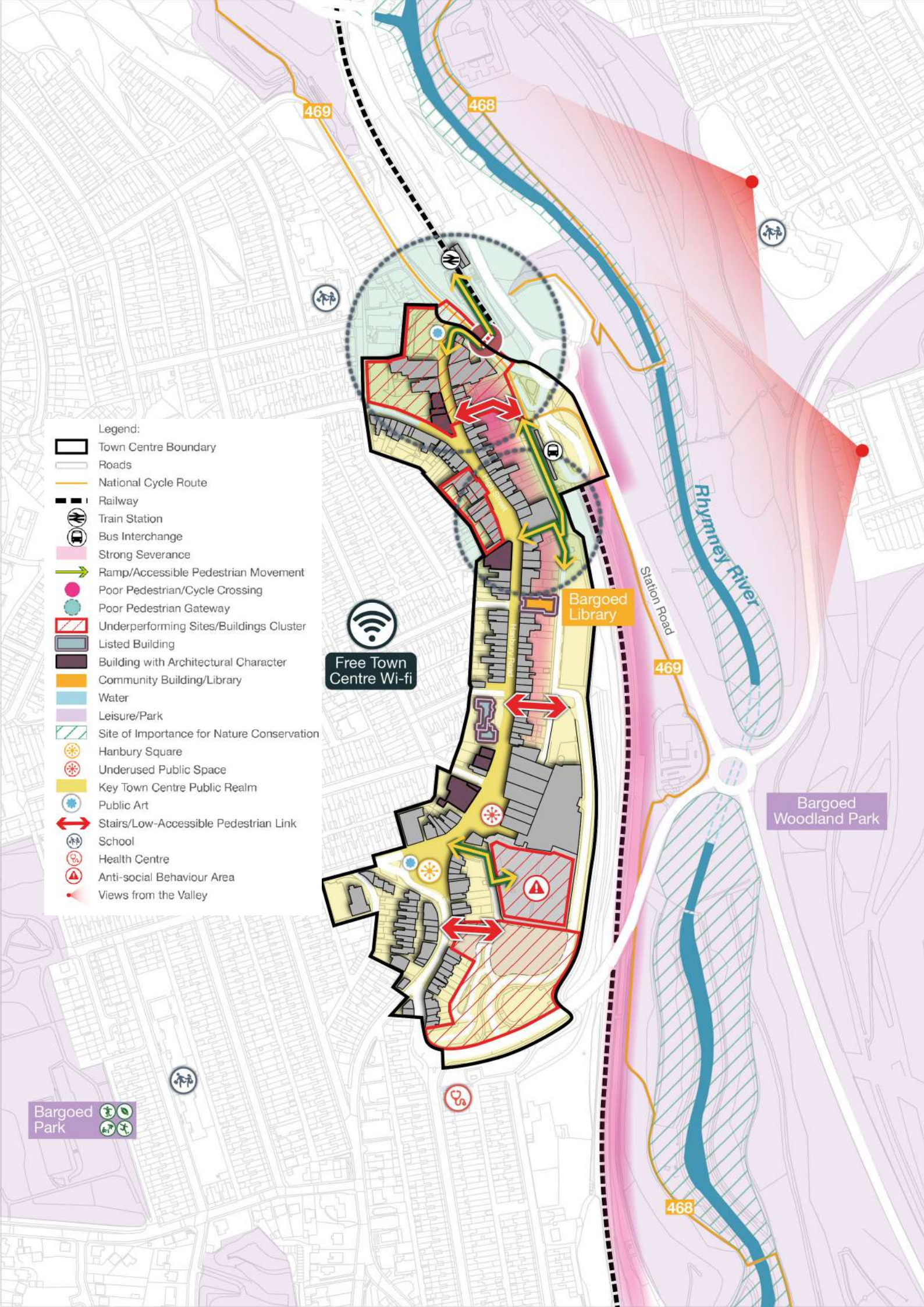
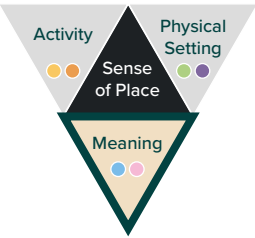
People and Community

The feedback of the local community on the town centre has been set out in the previous section. Key observations on the physical features of the town centre are below.

- **Drawing People into the Centre** - A limited mix of uses in the town centre reduces the reasons why people may come into the centre. There are a number of established businesses providing an excellent service and series of new business owners looking to make a positive impression. However, these uses do not currently attract sufficient numbers of visitors into the town, and the remaining vacant properties detract from the investment that is being made into the town centre and don't create a positive impression for the future of the centre. This reduces the sense of community for the town.
- **Waiting Time** - The mix of uses in the centre also reduced time spent in the town centre; more diversity of public services and homes could improve this and increase spend in the town centre. More events and establishing more places for visitors to stay and socialise in the public realm would also have a positive impact in strengthening stay time and strengthen sense of community.
- **Anti-Social Behaviour** - The town centre generally feels safe, but there are known areas of anti-social behaviour that can be intimidating for residents and business owners. A particular hotspot is the covered ground floor of the Morrisons car park. These needs to be removed to create an enhanced sense of community.
- **Facilities for Young People** - There are no facilities for young people in the town centre and a limited retail offer that appeals to a younger audience. Incorporating facilities and retail uses into the town centre that create activity and a place for young people would help to establish a sense of community among the young people of Bargoed.

Identity

- **Architecture** - There are three listed buildings within the town centre: the Police Court buildings, the Police Station building and the Library. A number of other buildings along the high street also remain characterful. Noticeable poor quality buildings, or buildings in dilapidation detract from the architectural identity of the town centre.
- **High Street Feel** - Unlike the town centres of many other South Wales settlements, the high street in Bargoed retains a traditional feel with combination of building heights, the width of the high street, plus the one-way system creating a sense of enclosure. With lower vacancy rates and mix of uses these physical features would help to create a strong and vibrant high street. The length of the town centre does inhibit the strength of the town centre offer, diluting the retail offer and commercial identity in the town.
- **Topography** - The steep level change across the town centre and wider settlement does create accessibility issues. The level change between the car park and the high street means that the majority of the connections are stepped, creating accessibility barriers. The lift at the back of the Library is a good asset however can't be used outside the library's open hours.
- **Future Identity** - There is a fierce pride in the town centre's industrial history. Local people would like to see the history defined further in the town, but also for there to be a fresh vision for the future that allows younger generations to create a new identity.
- **Culture and Art** - Public art is located in the south of the town centre in the form of the Miners sculpture and in the north of the town centre in the form of the angel sculpture. Art could be used to express the emerging identity of the town, with murals, use of vacant properties for art exhibitions or pieces helping to communicate local culture and identity.



Town Centre Analysis

Meaning

People and Community Summary

- The town centre has the opportunity to attract more people to support a more varied retail and commercial offer;
- With the exception of the library, there is a lack of facilities for young people in the town centre.
- The ground floor of the Morrisons multi-storey car park is a hot spot for anti-social behaviour, there is an opportunity to address this.



Bargoed library.



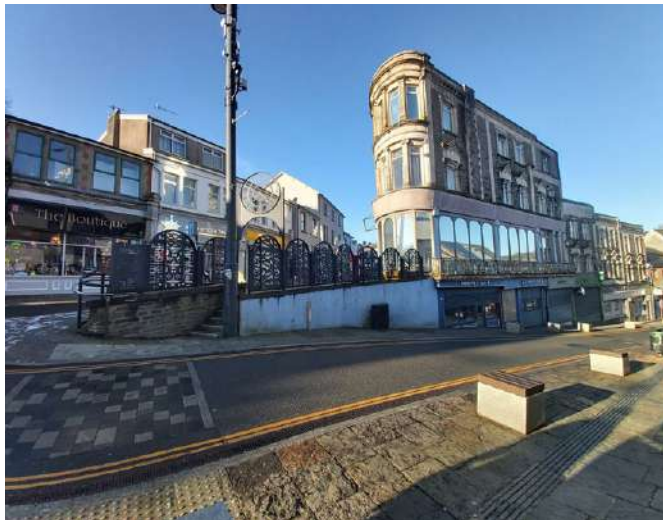
Details on an historic building on Hanbury Road.



Woodland park.



Active frontages along the high street.



Former Emporium building.

Identity Summary

- Opportunity to improve buildings, contributing to the architectural identity of the town centre.
- There is pride in the historic heritage of the town, but there could be a stronger vision for the future;
- The programme of events that activate the public space and attract visitors to the town centre is still limited. The Mayfair was a great success, but more regular and frequent events are needed.



Police Court building.



Miners' sculpture in Hanbury Square.



Angel sculpture at the southern gateway.



Bargoed May Fair 2023.

04. Place Vision and Ambitions

Placemaking Vision

This Placemaking Plan will lay the foundations for success and put Bargoed back at the heart of the upper Rhymney Valley, the principal town for the north of the County Borough.

Bargoed has faced its challenges with incredible resilience, but now is the time to look forward and collectively forge a new identity that is confident and bold. **People will be at the heart of the town’s identity and together, public partners, local businesses, and the community can create a new energy that starts the process of change.**

Bargoed town has incredible potential and can be a key focus for investment in housing, education, skills, health, transport, fuel poverty, and climate resilience. Each will make a real positive difference to local lives and surrounding communities and attract new people in.

The town centre is key to driving growth and boosting local prosperity. To lay the foundations for lasting success, this plan will focus on delivering the following core ambitions in the centre:



Identity & People

A new identity, shaped with the community and grounded in its people and businesses, will challenge old perceptions and redefine Bargoed’s future.



Connectivity

Improved connectivity into the town, and harness the power of the Metro by making it easier for people to access public transport by active means.



Buildings & Spaces

Build on previous investment in the town centre’s public realm by continuing to invest in the public spaces and historic buildings.

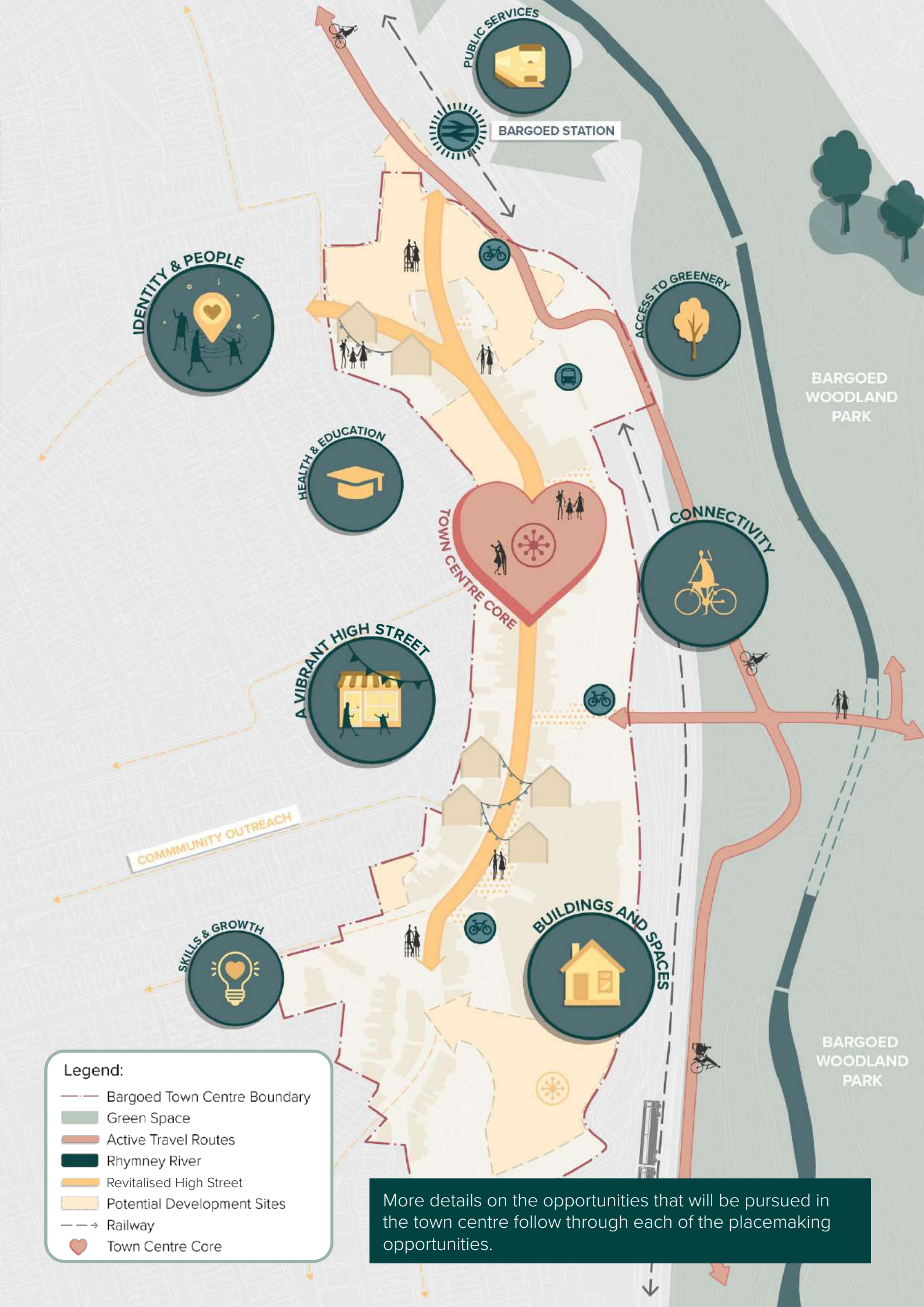


A Vibrant High Street

A revitalised, vibrant high street that is the beating heart of the town. This will be more compact, active, and diverse. It’ll draw people in, invite them to linger, and give local businesses a powerful platform to thrive.

Long-standing businesses, the backbone of the town, will be championed. At the same time, the passion and creativity of the next generation will be supported, fuelling new businesses that can shape the identity of the town.

New homes, public services, and business spaces will breathe life into vacant buildings and sites, helping to attract visitors, sparking day-to-night activity, and cementing Bargoed’s role as the service hub for the north of the County Borough.



05. Placemaking Opportunities

A series of placemaking opportunities have been identified to bring the vision and key ambitions to life. Shaped by community feedback and placemaking analysis, the opportunities fully align with the Placemaking Wales Charter principles.

Identity & People

Local engagement revealed deep pride in Bargoed, a strong sense of history, and remarkable resilience from its people and businesses. There’s a clear desire for change — and a readiness to help shape it.

The Placemaking Plan must harness this energy, putting local people and businesses at the centre of delivering transformation. This is about moving from consultation to collaboration, where the community isn’t just engaged, but is driving the change.

It also means redefining Bargoed’s identity in a way that’s bold, confident, and future-focused, and ensuring physical investment reflects that same ambition.

Key identity and people opportunities that will be under consideration include:

- **Create a clear plan for engagement and delivery** that sets out how Bargoed will move from consultation to collaboration, and how local people and businesses can take the lead in driving real change.
- **Actively involve local stakeholders in shaping a new town centre identity**, one that honours Bargoed’s unique history and heritage, looks to the future, and puts its people at the heart of the story.
- **Define and promote a strong town centre brand** that reflects the town’s identity, reshapes local perceptions, showcases local businesses, and provides a compelling platform to market Bargoed as a vibrant place to live, visit, and invest in.
- **Work together as a community to shape and deliver the physical and commercial opportunities in the placemaking plan.** Community groups, residents, businesses, property owners, and public bodies can all have a role to play as part of one shared delivery team.
- **Support business growth and entrepreneurship** by empowering existing businesses to grow, diversify, and promote themselves, while enabling young local entrepreneurs to establish and shape the future of the town centre. Support will include access to training, marketing, finance advice, and ‘tester’ retail spaces to trial new ideas.
- **Explore a Business Improvement District (BID)** with the business community to assess appetite and feasibility. The BID can be a collaborative vehicle that gives businesses a direct role in leading and funding improvements in the town centre.

High Street Vibrancy

Bargoed town centre and its businesses have long served as the heart of the community, and with the right focus, it can thrive once again. Through coordinated efforts across the public, private, and community sectors, the Placemaking Plan can **transform the town centre back into the vibrant local hub for the town and the upper Rhymney Valley - alive by day and night.**

The centre can be the local destination for public services, retail, leisure, and entertainment. A place for people to shop, connect, relax, and celebrate. It can also be a place to call home, with modern, well-connected housing that welcomes a diverse mix of residents and lifestyles.

The town centre has always been shaped by its people and businesses, and they will remain at the forefront of its transformation. The Placemaking Plan will champion the local businesses that have stood strong for years, while actively supporting a new wave of passionate, creative entrepreneurs. This fresh energy will **reinvigorate the town centre**, offering a dynamic and appealing business mix.

Key high street vibrancy opportunities that will be under consideration include:

- **Deliver a year-round events programme** that draws people into the town centre, boosts footfall, and celebrates local businesses, makers, and producers from Bargoed and the wider Rhymney Valley.
- **Encourage innovation and temporary use of space** by promoting a culture of experimentation and working with businesses, the community and property owners to activate vacant premises and public spaces through ‘meanwhile uses.’ These short-term interventions can animate the centre, pilot new ideas, and provide opportunities for creative, business, and community-led initiatives. Tools such as ‘Permission Statements’ could be explored to streamline and enable temporary change.
- **Co-locate public services in the town centre** to strengthen the role of Bargoed as a service hub by exploring opportunities to bring key public services - including health, education, and lifelong learning - into vacant or underused town centre sites. The Bargoed plateau, in public ownership, presents a strategic opportunity for this opportunity.
- **Unlock housing potential in the town centre** by working with local housing providers and developers to transform vacant buildings and sites into high-quality, accessible homes. This approach will support town centre living, boost footfall, and improve vitality.
- **Develop a sustainable evening and hospitality offer.** Prioritise the growth of a balanced night-time economy, including dining, arts, youth-friendly activities, and cultural experiences that keep the town centre active and welcoming into the evening hours.

Connectivity

Connectivity can drive real change for Bargoed. The Placemaking Plan can make the town centre more accessible by public transport and active travel, and provide the community with better links to local services, shops, and leisure.

Bargoed’s railway station, right next to the town centre, is a major asset. With the South Wales Metro offering trains every 15 minutes and direct access to Cardiff in under 45, Bargoed is better connected than ever.

This transformative investment doesn’t just open up jobs and leisure - it makes Bargoed an attractive place to live, combining affordability, a beautiful setting, and a strong sense of community.

Key connectivity opportunities that will be under consideration include:

- **Improved connections between Bargoed railway station and the northern town centre**, particularly High Street, St Gwladys Street, and Station Road.
- **Stronger links between High Street and Bargoed bus station**, alongside a review of bus provision on High Street to reduce congestion and improve access to services.
- **Enhanced routes between High Street and Hanbury Road**, including better connections to key town centre car parks at Hanbury Road and Morrisons. This also includes ongoing support for Bargoed Library, which provides level access to Hanbury Road.
- **Better access to National Cycle Routes 468 and 469**, with improved active travel infrastructure into and within the town centre, plus upgraded cycling facilities such as secure storage and changing areas.
- **Stronger links to local natural assets**, including Bargoed Park and Bargoed Woodland Park, to support recreation and wellbeing.
- **Measures to deter illegal parking** along High Street and Hanbury Road, helping to improve accessibility for pedestrians, businesses, and Blue Badge holders.
- **Clear and consistent wayfinding** throughout the town centre and to key transport, community, and leisure destinations.

Buildings & Spaces

People and community will be at the heart of the Placemaking Plan, **but visible investment in buildings and public spaces is just as vital**, showing care, ownership, and civic pride. Bargoed’s rich history is reflected in its many fine buildings, though many now need attention. With thoughtful renewal, these spaces can be restored, re-imagined, and become the foundation around which the new bold identity and future is forged.

Bargoed has a unique opportunity to lead the way in carbon reduction. The town can become a test-bed for how town centre buildings are adapted to be energy-efficient, climate-resilient, and help tackle fuel poverty. **The town centre can set a new standard for sustainable regeneration.**

Significant investment in Bargoed’s public spaces has already improved the town’s appearance, and now this can be built on. These spaces can be activated as vibrant places for people to gather, with platforms for art, culture, and green infrastructure that bring life and colour to the town centre streets.

Key opportunities for buildings and spaces that will be under consideration include:

- **Breathe new life into Bargoed’s buildings** by partnering with property owners to bring historic buildings and shopfronts back to life - making them ready for new businesses, homes, and public services. These buildings should be at the heart of Bargoed’s future, not left behind. This opportunity can be aligned with the meanwhile uses and temporary activation interventions to test what’s possible and deliver immediate impact.
- **Lead the way in sustainable regeneration** by working alongside building owners to improve energy performance, and create healthier, more efficient spaces for the people and businesses they serve. Bargoed can set the standard for town centre renewal that’s carbon efficient, climate resilient, and actively tackles fuel poverty.
- **Turn streets into places** by building on past investment and shaping defined public spaces where people can meet, rest, and connect. These don’t need to be major schemes, small, temporary interventions like pop-up seating areas can activate the town centre immediately, while also testing ideas for future permanent improvements.
- **Green the heart of the town** by exploring the introduction of street trees and planting to create pockets of green calm. Temporary greening, such as planters and pocket parks, can spark momentum, offering shade, beauty, and biodiversity. These green spaces can also encourage people to stay longer and make the town more climate resilient.
- **Celebrate culture in the everyday** by collaborating with the community to deliver creative interventions that animate buildings and public spaces. Murals, live exhibitions, and window displays can honour the town’s past while showcasing its future. Let Bargoed’s culture be seen, heard, and experienced at the heart of the town centre.

06. Conclusion

Conclusion

Bargoed plays an important strategic role within its local context, with key services and retail offer helping to support the ongoing vitality of the communities living in the upper Rhymney Valley. The town centre has faced significant challenges in recent years, navigating difficulties within the retail sector and overcoming setbacks that have impacted local businesses. Despite ongoing challenges, Bargoed continues to be a destination that attracts local visitors and appeals to businesses looking to establish themselves.

Through the process of this Placemaking Plan, an indepth analysis of Bargoed’s physical and commercial environment has been undertaken and clear place vision established for the town which has been shaped by engagement with community stakeholders. A set of key place ambitions, grounded in the principles of the DCfW Placemaking Charter, was also developed to support this vision.

The vision for Bargoed aims to forge a foundation for success and re-energise Bargoed as the principal town for the upper Rhymney Valley and Heads of the Valleys. The town centre will become more compact with an active and diverse high street at the ‘heart’ of the centre. From this vision, the Placemaking Plan presented strategies across the placemaking boundary.

To identify the type of investment and change that will be pursued the plan provides a strategy of actions to be pursued across the town centre. Key areas for action include the north of the town centre, the central Royal Square and Bargoed plateau. Proposals for these areas will be prepared in supporting action plans for the Placemaking Plan and these will be progressed and delivered in partnership with public sector partners and the community. Although all areas of the town centre have been considered, the plan helped shape key intervention areas which are highlighted to be taken forward, these are: St Gwladys Way to High Street, Royal Square and Hanbury Square to Bargoed Plateau.



Appendix
Stakeholder Engagement Feedback

A summary of the feedback collected during the engagement process is below categorised by each placemaking principle and by stakeholder group. Key comments raised by one or more stakeholders are summarised at the top of each theme summary.

MOVEMENT		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Congestion issues on High Street caused by bus stops and the lack of a bus bay.• Illegal parking is a recurrent problem. Illegal parking on pavements, disable bays and loading bays.• The topography of the town makes access to the high street difficult for many people.• The one-way system has taken a while to get used to, and it can result in congestion when vehicles stop to pick-up or drop-off on the highway.• Some visitors and business owners would prefer the bus station to be located to the southern end of town as it's where the majority of the services are located.• Improved wayfinding across the town and towards the Woodland Park and the National Cycle Route.		
Town Members <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The railway station and the bus station to the north of the town are great assets that can provide opportunities to attract commuters.• Mixed feelings regarding the one-way system in town - some are supportive, others less.	Local Community and Groups <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improved connections between Morrisons and the bus station would be helpful.• Extend the operational hours of the lift at the back of the library to ensure accessibility to the town centre.• The park and ride next to the railway station provides a good facility for commuters.• The one way system has created a better pedestrian environment, but it has reduced parking close to shops and loading bay use can cause obstruction to movement or cause congestion.• Better connections to the NCR to the town centre would provide an opportunity to attract cyclists into the town.	Business Owners <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The introduced one-way system and the fewer car park spaces along the high street have contributed to a more challenging trading environment.• More short stay bays on the high street to support local businesses.• More short stay parking bays required along the high street to enable quick trips to shops.

MIXED-USE		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use the existing empty units for short-term affordable business spaces to support local start-up businesses.• There could be also opportunities to reuse bigger vacant premises to create an indoor food market, shared work spaces, or combination of both.• New leisure uses would be welcome as currently there is not much to do in the town centre, especially for local young people. Attractive uses could include places for board games and online gaming, bowling, dancing, gym, or other fitness places like a yoga studio. A better night-time offer of restaurants and cafe/bars is also needed.• Develop vacant sites at the southern end of the town. The vacant site next to Morrison could be used to provide some new leisure uses, or provide smaller modern residential units close to the town centre.• The variety of the retail types in the town centre is limited. A more diverse offer of shops would encourage more people to spend time in the town centre.• Converting some of the vacant premises into new homes might be beneficial to improve the appearance of some properties and get more activity into the town centre.• High vacancy rate, especially to the northern end of the town centre should be a focus for attention and could be another location for new homes or leisure uses.		
Town Members <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The town centre is mainly service based and a number of businesses have closed down in the last decade, resulting in a noticeable vacancy rate. We need to stop the loss of businesses.• Improving the night-time economy offer in the town centre would strengthen the local economy and make the town centre more active after daytime hours.• Opportunities to use spaces above shops for residential units should be considered.	Local Community and Groups <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create another anchor attraction to be added to the northern end of the high-street and bring footfall back into the town centre.• The Emporium is a distinctive building and it would be positive to see that brought back into a beneficial use, along with the surrounding northern end of the town centre.• More places are required that provide activities for young people; this will also help to address anti-social behaviour.• Need more diverse retail uses, or an anchor use on the high street, that will help to increase footfall and encourage more businesses to move in to the area.• Grant required to help support the improvement/reuse of existing buildings.	Business Owners <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Need to make better use of the public spaces in the town centre, for example, a regular market and series of events that get people into the town centre, for example, local runs, exhibitions or music events.• More collective action by businesses owners, with external support, would be beneficial. Business Improvement Districts have been successful in other smaller towns in South Wales.• The town centre should provide a wider variety of retail and leisure uses and try to reduce the number of businesses in competition with each other.• The lower storey of the Morrisons' multi-storey car park has been used to accommodate an ice rink and roller skating rink previously. The area is characterised by anti-social behaviour, so it should be explored as an opportunity for a permanent leisure use.

LOCATION		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">The southern end of the town centre is busy due to the presence of Morrisons and the Post Office. In comparison, the northern end is poorly performing and is in poor physical condition. There is a need to provide new activity to the north of the town centre to revitalise it.The town centre needs to be a more diverse location and have a greater mix of uses that create consistent activity. Interesting events are a key part of creating activity also.The location of the bus station and railway station next to the town centre are strengths; better connections from the stations into the town centre would be helpful.Bargoed Park and Bargoed Woodland Park are good green spaces. Further improved amenities in these and better connections to the places would be positive.		
Town Members	Local Community and Groups	Business Owners
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Lots of the key attractors into the town like the banks, have closed. We need to create more uses that people have to come into the town centre to use. For example, health or community services. Good quality homes also.More events should be held in the town centre to create activity and a buzz.Most people go to Morrisons and then drive back home without spending time in the town centre as there isn't a good retail offer or leisure activities that make the town centre attractive.The topography of the town centre location makes walking and cycling difficult, so many people rely on cars.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Bargoed Park and Bargoed Woodland Park are great assets and close to the town centre, but the topography makes them difficult to walk to. Better connections to the centre, where possible, would be positive.Investments should be made into Bargoed Park and Bargoed Woodland Park to improve their offer and that may also increase complementary visits into the town centre.Bargoed Park had an open air swimming pool previously. It would be nice to have more in the Park for young people. For example, a better skate park, climbing wall or ball pool.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The topography of the town centre is challenging. The library's lift connecting the car park to the retail area is free for all to use, but it is not accessible outside office hours. This can make it difficult for some to access the high street.The May fair was a great success; thousands of people visited the town centre. This needs to be built upon.The town centre is often used by cyclists travelling though the wider valley. It would be useful to provide spaces for them to secure their bikes.Improve road cleanliness and waste management and collection, especially along the high street.More grants to support the improvement/reuse of existing buildings.

PUBLIC REALM		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">There are not many places where people can sit and socialise outdoors in the centre.The regeneration of the town centre created a pleasant environment for pedestrians, but illegal parking that happens on it can cause disruption.The town centre is quite narrow and would benefit from a larger public space. It would also be pleasant to see some greenery brought into the existing larger public spaces.Short-term interventions to provide window dressings and shopfront improvements of vacant units, or decoration of shutters would help elevate the street scene and perception of the town.		
Town Members	Local Community and Groups	Business Owners
<ul style="list-style-type: none">The recent public space regeneration has been positive but there are problems with illegal parking.Explore opportunity to design out illegal parking.The existing parks are a good asset for the town and should be better used.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Hanbury Square is great and improved the southern entrance into the town centre.A better entrance into the north side of town is needed.Improvement of the public spaces in town as they are underused.Improve road cleanliness and waste management and collection is required, especially along the high street.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The public spaces should be used for multiple activities. For example, splash pad in the summer.Create more places for visitors to sit and socialise in the town centre.There should be more trees and greenery in the town centre.Improve the physical appearance of the existing car park and perhaps introduce more greenery there also.

PEOPLE AND COMMUNITY		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">The library is a great community asset and is frequently used by the public.Anti-social behaviour occurs in several areas across the town centre; the area in front of Lowry Plaza, by the bus station, the town centre car parks and the ground floor of the Morrisons multi-storey car park are key hotpots.There is not much to do for teenagers and no job opportunities for young people, so a place where youth facilities are provided would be well used. The space could be used for socialising, studying and gaming. It could also be used to provide education and training support to help with studies and job opportunities and also deliver wider wellbeing services.There is an appetite in the local community to open new businesses. Start-up retail and business space would support the creation of new businesses in the town centre.		
Town Members	Local Community and Groups	Business Owners
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Young people need more facilities in the town so that they want to visit the centre.Support is required to create new business start up spaces.Anti-social behaviour can impact trading and needs to be prevented.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">With the Banks leaving the high street and moving to online banking, there is an increased need for accessibility to financial services. This can be online if support is provided, but it would be helpful to have a banking hub in the town that can be used for customers of different banks. This would draw more people into the town centre.Need to bring more key services and community uses into the town centre, for example health services or classes for parents and young children or older residents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Provide support to business owners to adapt their properties for community or public service use. Also provide support to adapt the upper floors of properties to create new homes that have easy access to the town centre facilities.Need to provide more child friendly spaces and features into the town centre to attract more visits into the town centre, enable the parents to stay in centre for longer and also make the town feel like a community.

IDENTITY		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Bargoed has a strong industrial history and culture, but this cannot continue to define the town and a refreshed modern identity is required.Bargoed has a tight-knit community and residents want to stay here; young people need to be retained.Bargoed town centre is characterful and there are number of historic buildings that commemorate its rich history that should be celebrated.There is an appetite to support the town centre; a programme of events would get people back into the town centre.		
Town Members	Local Community and Groups	Business Owners
<ul style="list-style-type: none">The mining heritage is a key part of Bargoed's identify, but its is not felt by the young generation; a new sense of community and belonging needs to be created to help create this.More uses need to be provided in the town centre for young people so that they see the town centre as somewhere to go for leisure time, to work or run a business.A community hub where cultural exhibitions and activities created by the local community would help to create a new diverse cultural identity for the town.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The miner's monument at the southern end of town is great and is a reminder of the local history and heritage of the town, but the town centre also needs to signify the future. Investment into the centre should set a new tone of modern ambition for Bargoed.Innovation is part of Bargoed's history; the town was home to the Austin Motor Company; which was the first factory in the world where every member of staff was registered as disabled. The factory was hugely successful and efficient and broke down stereotypical views.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The history of the town centre is a fine one and key buildings should be celebrated; but a new modern feel also needs to be provided that that looks to the future.Dilapidated buildings should be brought back into use, so they do not detract from the good quality ones.The geography of the town centre, particularly the changing topography means the exposed backs of properties on the east of the high street are exposed. Their poor quality is highly visible and does not provide a positive impression of the town centre.

theurbanists

Cardiff

Westgate House
11 Womanby Street
Cardiff, CF10 1BR

Bristol

Studio 410, Generator Building
Finzels Reach
Bristol, BS1 6BX

Email

info@theurbanists.net

Phone

029 2023 6133

www.theurbanists.net