

FINAL DRAFT



BRIDGEND TOWN CENTRE

MASTERPLAN
FEBRUARY 2011



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SECTION 01:
THE VISION FOR BRIDGEND

1.1 The Vision

6

SECTION 02:
BRIDGEND TOWN CENTRE

2.1 Location Context & Accessibility
2.2 The Masterplan Study Area

10

SECTION 03:
THE MASTERPLAN CONTEXT

3.1 The Opportunities
3.2 The Challenges

14

SECTION 04:
THE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

4.1 What should Bridgend aim for?
4.2 What should the Design Principles be?

18

SECTION 05:
THE MASTERPLAN FRAMEWORK

5.1 Develop the Retail Destination
5.2 Maximise the Riverfront
5.3 Improve the Gateways
5.4 Enhance the Quality Environment and Historic Character
5.5 Strengthen the Core
5.6 Create a Vibrant & Accessible Visitor Destination

22

SECTION 06:
**DELIVERING & IMPLEMENTING
CHANGE**

6.1 Role of the Public Sector
6.2 Role of the Private Sector
6.3 Priority Actions & Phasing
6.4 Short Term Initiatives
6.5 Medium to Long Term Initiatives
6.6 Local Planning Policy
6.7 Outcomes & Measuring Success
6.8 Action Plan

42



SECTION 01: THE VISION FOR BRIDGEND

THE VISION FOR BRIDGEND

This masterplan sets out the future development and management framework for Bridgend town centre. Its purpose is to ensure that Bridgend builds on its many strengths, so that alongside recent investment, there is a catalyst for future growth that ensures its competitiveness as a retail centre and delivers a vibrant and busy, family friendly destination.

Bridgend has recently received a major boost with the confirmation of £9 million of funding which will improve the physical appearance of the town centre, preserve and enhance historic and key buildings and upgrade properties to provide positive and attractive floorspace. This funding, together with recent and committed private sector investment, is set to mark a new era for the town centre and create employment opportunities over a wider area.

The key aim of this masterplan is, therefore, to harness this exciting potential and provide a framework for taking Bridgend town centre forward over the next decade. This masterplan is flexible and has the ability to adapt to changing economic/market conditions and meet the requirements and aspirations of both the private and public sector over this period.

1.2 THE VISION

Central to the masterplan for Bridgend town centre is the fulfilment of its role as an historic market town and sub-regional retail destination that realises its potential and captures currently untapped catchment expenditure. This masterplan must, therefore, base its strategy around retail-led regeneration and an overarching Vision for the period up to 2020 and beyond, that seeks to:

Ensure that Bridgend town centre expands its retail offer and fulfils its potential as a thriving, vibrant and accessible market town.

This Vision needs to be supported by a series of Strategic Objectives which will help drive its delivery and translate directly into a series of projects and actions:

- **Develop the retail destination** - building on the current retail base with a strong independent focus with more modern retail units to attract new retailers and enhance the town centre offer;
- **Maximise the riverfront** - maximising the riverfront in order to create a more diverse and unique town centre, and to distinguish Bridgend from the more uniform "out-of-town" shopping experience;
- **Improve the gateways** – focusing on key buildings and approaches and encouraging complementary town centre development and diversity of uses;
- **Enhance the quality environment and historic character** - accentuating the buildings and spaces and the particular identity and image of Bridgend;
- **Strengthen the core** – focus development in the town centre and resist development pressure in peripheral locations; and,
- **Create a vibrant and accessible visitor destination** - optimise town centre accessibility by all modes of transport with clear signage and enhanced parking facilities. Investment in the town centre will mean that it attracts a wider range of visitors coming to Bridgend as a whole.

THE VISION FOR BRIDGEND

VISION





SECTION 02: BRIDGEND TOWN CENTRE

BRIDGEND TOWN CENTRE

2.1 LOCATION CONTEXT & ACCESSIBILITY

Bridgend (Pen-y-bont) is located equidistant between the cities of Cardiff and Swansea in South Wales. As the principal town within the Bridgend County Borough its population is approximately 35,000 which is about 25% of the overall County Borough population of 134,800. The River Ogmore (Afon Ogwr) runs through the middle of the town centre and joins the Bristol Channel at Ogmore by Sea, thereby creating opportunities for wider linkage.

The town itself benefits from excellent access by a variety of forms of transport. It is served by 3 motorway junctions (35, 36 and 37). Junction 36 is less than 2 miles to the north of the town centre offering an average journey time of 35 minutes to both Cardiff in the east and Swansea in the west. The railway and bus stations are both within the town centre. In terms of rail, the station services the local area with journey times of approximately 20 minutes to Cardiff and on a national perspective sits on the London Paddington to Swansea strategic east west rail link. Figures 1 and 2 outline the town's location in a sub regional context.



Figure 1. Bridgend's strategic location



Figure 2. Local context and road network

2.2 THE MASTERPLAN STUDY AREA

The study area is outlined on Figure 3. It is based on the town centre boundary as defined in the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) which was adopted in May 2005. In addition to this defined area, this masterplan includes the civic area situated to the west of the A473, the Brewery Field area to the north of the A4061 and the largely commercial area east of the railway line.

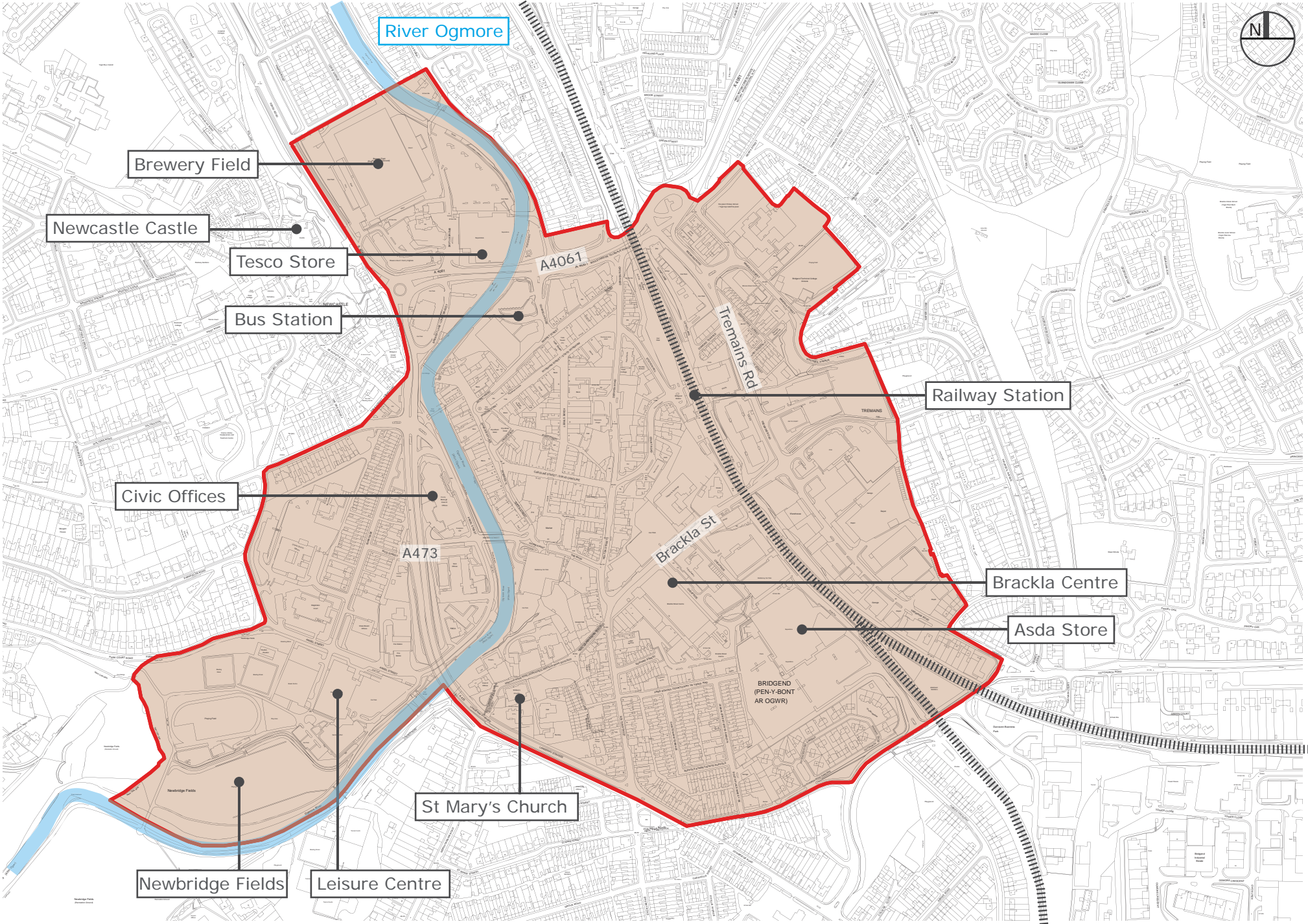


Figure 3. Study area boundary and local features/landmarks

BRIDGEND TOWN CENTRE

The initial focus of the masterplan was to assess six strategic areas of the town. These are defined as “Opportunity Areas” rather than “sites” so that there is a degree of flexibility on the scope of delivery and how wider areas could benefit, either indirectly or directly from redevelopment. With this in mind, it is also important to note that whilst these six “Opportunity Areas” can offer direction to the overall masterplan, the ultimate aim of the masterplan is to enhance and benefit Bridgend town centre as a whole. In this regard, and in order to meet the Vision outlined earlier, any redevelopment proposals or initiatives should be based on the need to complement, and relate directly to, the main retail core of the town centre.

The six Opportunity Areas that were identified by the Council are: (see figure 4)

- ① The Brackla Street Centre/Cheapside: this is concentrated around The Brackla Street Centre, Cheapside and the Police Station.
- ② Tesco, Brewery Field Area: this area includes newly developed offices fronting the roundabout junction of the A4061 and A4063, The Riverside Tavern public house, Tesco foodstore and the rugby stadium.
- ③ Surface Car Park/Telephone Exchange Area: which is adjacent to the Brackla Centre/Cheapside Opportunity Area. The area currently includes a Council owned surface car park and the Telephone Exchange site.
- ④ The Rhiw Multi-Storey Car Park: this area consists of the Council owned Rhiw multi-storey car park and is accessed via Water Street. The area also includes the adjacent car dealership which fronts onto Nolton Street.
- ⑤ Embassy Site: the site is located immediately adjacent to the main retail area on the roundabout of the A4063 and the A4061. The site was formerly a Cinema and Bingo Hall.
- ⑥ Angel Street Area: this area is peripheral to the core town centre and provides a link from the town centre through to Newbridge Fields. The area currently contains a variety of uses which includes the Magistrates Court and Fire Station.

This masterplan, therefore, seeks to understand the opportunities that exist in these areas and the related contribution that they could make to the town centre as a whole.

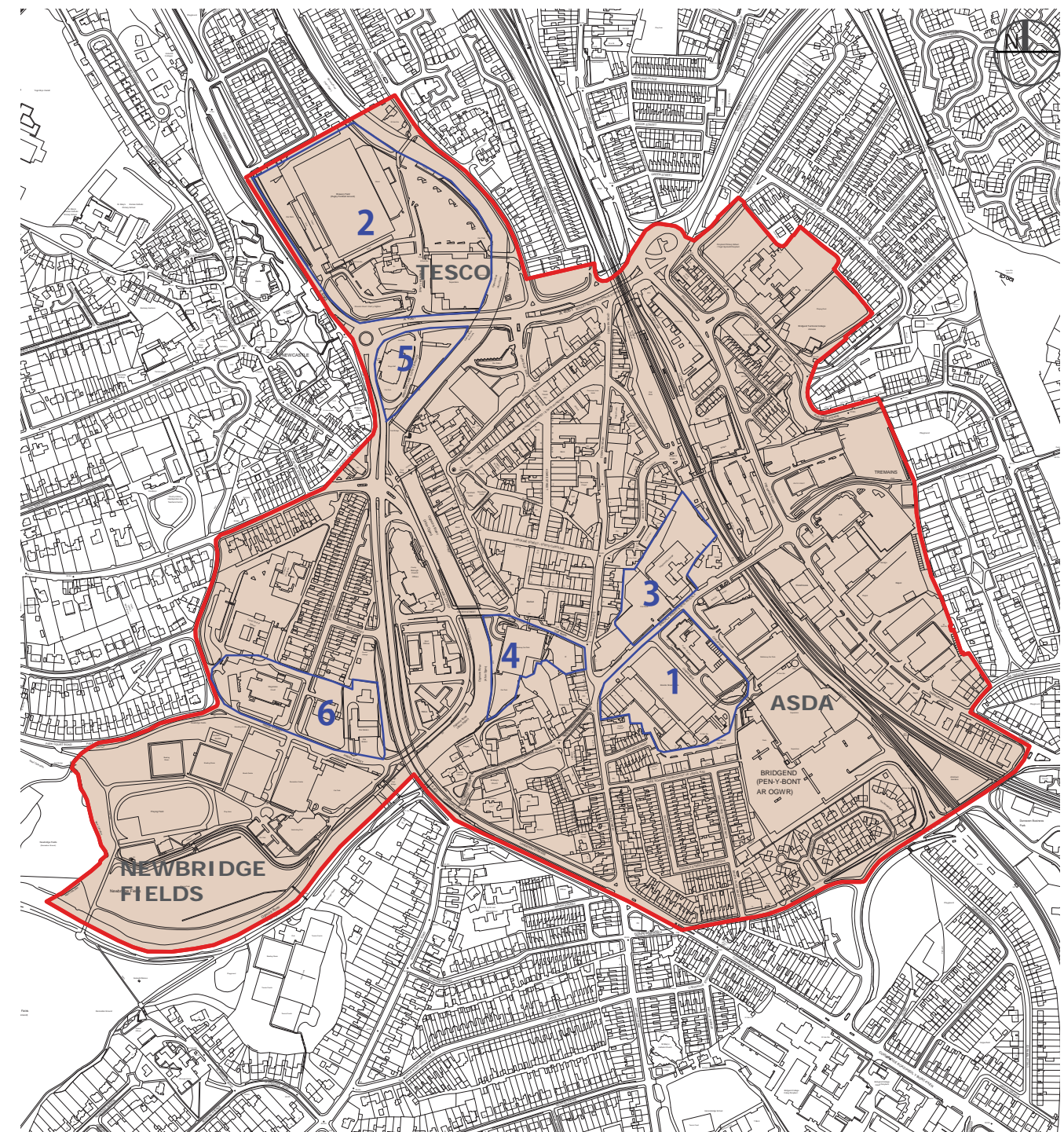


Figure 4. The six Opportunity Areas within the study area



SECTION 03:
THE MASTERPLAN CONTEXT

THE MASTERPLAN CONTEXT

The masterplan context is an essential part of the evidence base for the Strategic Objectives and Vision. The evidence base is set out in a series of Technical Appendices, as follows:

- **Appendix 1 Planning Policy Review and Town Centre Health Check:** a review of planning, economic and community policy.
- **Appendix 2 Market Review:** assessing the vitality and viability of the town and also providing a headline position on commercial performance.
- **Appendix 3 Review of Design Principles and Urban Form:** An urban form, land use and spatial quality appraisal of the town centre.
- **Appendix 4 Review of Access & Movement:** An audit of movement and access including links to nearby communities, car parking, public transport, walking and cycling.

The key messages derived from the Technical Appendices are summarised within this section.

3.1 THE OPPORTUNITIES

In providing an investment context to the masterplan it is important to understand the opportunities that currently exist in Bridgend:

A) Retail Capacity: CACI was commissioned by the Council to carry out a retail capacity study for Bridgend (Retail Needs Planning Study 2007 – 2021). An addendum to the study was issued in June 2010. It concludes that Bridgend town centre is not performing to its full potential and, like other similar sized town centres in South Wales, has suffered from increased competition from “out-of-centre” retail developments and neighbouring city centres. It does conclude, however that there is an evidence base for concentrating on clawing back retail expenditure and reducing leakage to neighbouring centres. The key findings relating to retail capacity are summarised below:

Comparison	CACI concludes that if Bridgend is to fulfil its potential, headroom capacity exists for up to 14,024 sq m of additional comparison floorspace up to 2021.
Bulky Goods	CACI concludes that there is very little headroom for any additional bulky goods space in Bridgend town. However, for the whole of the County Borough, there is capacity for 16,400 sq m of additional floorspace up to 2021.
Convenience	CACI concludes that taking into account the increased competition in neighbouring areas, the strong offer in and around Bridgend and decline in balance of trade, (brought about by new provision in the pipeline), there is no capacity for further provision up to 2021.

B) Catchment Population: Data from Property Market Analysis (PMA) shows that Bridgend’s retail catchment population of 175,000 has a retail comparison goods (non-food) spend of £372m. This compares favourably to other towns such as Llanelli (£212m), Rugby (£295m) and Kidderminster (£315m) and is above the average catchment spend of the PMA ‘average town’ classification (£357m). Town centre retail floorspace in Bridgend is estimated at 64,101 sq m (0.69million sq ft) which is comparable with the ‘average town’ definition.

C) Planning Policy: National and local policy clearly reinforces the importance of regenerating town centres and recognises that their role needs to be based around creating destinations for retail and shopping based activity but also a wide range of services and leisure facilities to support the surrounding community.

D) Convenience Anchors and Multiples: Bridgend benefits from a new Asda store to the southern end of the town centre and an existing Tesco store close to the Brewery Field and bus station to the north. Whilst there are a number of convenience stores on the edge of the town centre, the benefit of these uses is that it draws people towards the town centre core. In parallel with this, the presence of a number of national multiple retailers, including Monsoon, W H Smith, La Senza, Boots, Mothercare, Dorothy Perkins, Top Shop and Burtons, provides a decent base position for the town centre to move forward.

THE MASTERPLAN CONTEXT

E) Convergence Funding: As outlined earlier, the £9 million funding to improve the physical appearance of the town centre will enhance the environment and upgrade certain buildings. This exciting opportunity will set the tone for further investment from the public and private sectors and lift the centre in terms of its profile. A further £2 million is in the pipeline, to improve connections to the railway station and the Brackla Street area.

F) Niche Retail: Bridgend has a high number of niche and independent retailers which give the town centre its distinctiveness. These retailers provide a different offer to the multiple retailers and, as such, provide diversity and interest to the shopping core. The presence of Bridgend Indoor Market, with its mix of delicatessens, cafés, gallery, bookshop, jewellers and homewares, further complements this offer.

G) Historic Quality: The town centre has areas of historic quality and character, such as Dunraven Place, buildings at Elders Yard and the Conservation Area at Merthyr Mawr Road. The opportunity exists, therefore, to make these areas fit in with the wider urban fabric and act as a good precursor to public realm enhancement and high quality design. The Council has recently won a Royal Town Planning Institute National Award for improvements to the historic quality of Dunraven Place.

H) Level of Services: The town centre has a good level of services with a number of banks and supporting town centre functions. There is a concentration of office space abutting the east side of the retail core and more modern office buildings on the northern periphery adjacent to Tesco and the Brewery Field. The location of the Council's Civic Offices, on Angel Street, adds to the critical mass of employees in this location.

I) Accessibility: The town centre has the potential to attract visitors through its accessibility by all modes of public transport and the motorway network. Whilst this has also resulted in leakage to competing centres, the base position is strong and there remains an opportunity to "promote" the town and improve the experience, both on arrival and in terms of permeability and car parking.

J) Environment: The shopping environment has improved greatly as a result of pedestrianisation, but there are further opportunities for greening the public realm. The recent enhancement of the river through a modern walkway has opened up certain parts of the town centre to other land uses and has improved linkage and the environmental setting. An opportunity exists, therefore, for this to be the benchmark for further use of the river.

K) Development Sites: A number of strategic development opportunities exist at the core and immediately adjoining the town centre which can be delivered by both the private and public sectors. Recent activity supports this, and in parallel with the public sector investment, a number of schemes such as at Elders Yard have recently been proposed through private landowners/investors.



Dunraven Place: Historic quality and character



Market Street: Pedestrianisation has resulted in an improved environmental quality



Large retail stores close to the town centre help to draw people in



The River Ogmore is a key feature of Bridgend town centre

3.2 THE CHALLENGES

In recognising the opportunities that exist in Bridgend, it is also important to acknowledge the challenges that the town centre faces in achieving the Vision. As with the previous analysis, the Technical Appendices and baseline review form the basis of the following analysis:

A) The Economic Climate & Retailing: In terms of town centre regeneration, the credit crunch effectively halted UK town and city centre development from a position in 2008 (the boom year) where some 800,000 sq m of development was opened nationally in 14 different schemes. The industry moved, during 2009, into a position where only those schemes already committed were likely to proceed for the foreseeable future. This was primarily due to the very severe and sudden reduction in capital values, which essentially made all schemes unviable and in parallel, access to debt funding to implement such schemes became extremely hard to source. This meant that a number of the country's town and city centre developers quickly either withdrew from the sector or, unfortunately, went into administration. Very few developers remained active and essentially they chose to start re-structuring and re-designing their existing proposals very cautiously. As this masterplan is to plan for the next 10 years and beyond however, it is important to ensure that Bridgend is ready for the next cycle as the industry is starting to appreciate that a virtual halt in the development pipeline is now an opportunity, and is (very selectively) starting to commit to take forward new, redesigned retail schemes.

B) Quality of Retail Space: Retailers are beginning to recognise that they will need to review their general requirements and approach if they want to secure additional units of the right quality, and in the right location, to achieve their growth plans. In some selected prime locations there is already scarcity of large prime space and hence the first very tentative signs of rental growth. The challenge remains that many town centres need to provide more modern retail units to meet modern retailing requirements.

C) Accessibility: Accessibility from three motorway junctions is undoubtedly a benefit to the town centre. One of the challenges is to increase the promotion of the town centre from these key access points, enhance the general perception of Bridgend to visitors and to improve legibility and identity on the highway network.

D) Car Parking: Quality car parking provision is essential to any town centre if it is to attract investment and retain visitors for longer periods of time. A balance needs to be struck between the competing priorities of car parking utilisation, number of spaces and revenue control. One of the key challenges is to improve the overall experience of parking in Bridgend town centre.

E) Competing Centres: Bridgend's proximity to the McArthurGlen factory outlet centre and Cardiff cannot be underestimated. Bridgend must aim to claw back lost expenditure by becoming a destination in its own right. To do this, Bridgend's offer needs to be different, but equally good.

F) Town Centre Management and Partnership Working: Ensuring that there is shared responsibility and a consistency of message from key stakeholders, to ensure that any town centre proposals, events and initiatives enhance the visitor experience.



SECTION 04: THE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

THE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

In order to work towards the Strategic Objectives and deliver the Vision it is important for the masterplan to have a clearly defined development strategy to provide a rationale that focuses major new development in key areas in the town centre.

As part of the Vision, the masterplan is clear that the strategy has to be based around retail led regeneration, but it also must recognise that there is a need to:

- Enhance the overall visitor experience;
- Create a diverse mix of uses;
- Encourage business growth; and,
- Increase residential provision.

It is also essential that this strategy contributes to an attractive, sustainable and high quality environment which integrates and links all parts of the town centre.

The rationale for basing this development strategy around retail led regeneration is due to the fact that it is retail demand (and the higher land values associated with retail uses) that kick start other development forms, particularly as retail is now seen as a leisure pursuit rather than simply a functional activity. There is clear evidence that the best retail environments do not simply serve their catchment areas (and hence clawback expenditure which has leaked to other locations), but can also attract additional high yielding expenditure such as the visitor and leisure tourism market. These factors are key for Bridgend given its location and the opportunities and challenges outlined in the baseline context.

4.1 WHAT SHOULD BRIDGEND AIM FOR?

In assessing this key question, the main strategic factors will relate to Bridgend's location, the evidence base that exists, the development opportunities and the delivery considerations. In this regard it is clear that the building blocks need to be based around:

- **Size and Scale:** The Retail Needs Planning Study has demonstrated that capacity exists for comparison goods retail of up to 14,024 sq m up to 2021. This provides a rationale for additional retail space in the town centre to support the Strategic Objectives.
- **Providing Opportunities for Development:** In terms of location and critical mass, Bridgend is within close proximity of Cardiff, the primary retail destination for South Wales. In addition, Bridgend also has a significant level of out of town retail in respect of comparison goods, at the McArthurGlen Factory Outlet. Bridgend therefore needs to provide the additional retail capacity in the town centre, recognising the role of Cardiff, but ensuring that retail expenditure is clawed back by offering an alternative destination based around a family friendly and easily accessible environment. This will be fundamental to its success. A critical mass of new development is required and it is unlikely that this can be provided on a piecemeal basis. Opportunities exist in the town centre where development can provide modern retail units of a size and type that meet current occupier requirements. Traditional high street retail units do not, in many instances, meet the requirements of the majority of national retailers, so in order to attract new retailers to town centres such as Bridgend, there is a need to provide a modern unit of a specific size in the correct location.
- **A Stronger Retail Circuit:** Ensuring any significant new development has a positive impact on the wider town centre and benefits existing businesses is critical. This can be achieved through Bridgend strengthening its retail circuit. Delivering new retail provision in areas that are not linked to the existing core or which are stand alone schemes will not strengthen the town centre.

There is, therefore, a clear rationale for Bridgend seeking an enhanced form of retail provision in order for the town to move up the retail hierarchy and establish itself as a more attractive destination.

The masterplan and associated policies must, therefore, be based around both a pro-active and defensive role in driving forward both development and wider investment to Bridgend. It is important for the future of the town centre that any retail development opportunities are directed to the core retail area and inside the existing town centre boundary (as defined in the UDP). Any edge of centre or out of centre proposals for retail development that include town centre uses, that would adversely impact on the vitality and viability of the designated retail core should, therefore, be resisted. This must be the fundamental driver for attracting development in the town centre.

THE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

4.2 WHAT SHOULD THE DESIGN PRINCIPLES BE?

In design terms, the purpose of this masterplan is to highlight the key parameters associated with any development taking place within the town centre. There is, therefore, a need to promote complementary activity to ensure that the Strategic Objectives can be delivered effectively.

On this basis, the core design principles must relate to the best practice urban design guidance. This includes 'Creating Sustainable Places' (WAG, 2005), the Design Compendium (English Partnerships, 2000), Responsive Environments (Bentley et al., 1985), Manual for Streets (DfT, 2007) and Building for Life (CABE, 2005). Collectively the key design parameters relevant to Bridgend town centre are contained within Appendix 3, but can be summarised as follows:



CONTINUITY & ENCLOSURE

The enclosure of streets and spaces, a consistent building line and active frontages onto the public realm are essential components in the creation of a safe and secure environment. This helps to create a stronger sense of place and identity and encourages social interaction. While much of the town centre is pedestrianised, the need to accommodate service and emergency vehicles outside the pedestrianisation time limits has limited the use of these spaces for events and activities. There is a need to find solutions to these competing demands, to harness the full potential of Bridgend's historic setting.



ACCESSIBILITY

New development in the town centre must accommodate the needs of all users and ensure safe and secure access to local facilities. New development must be incorporated into the local movement network and create a layout that is permeable and responds to local desire lines.



VARIETY & DIVERSITY

Variety and diversity are integral factors in increasing the choice available to people. This may be visually in terms of building form and detail, or the nature of a given space. This is important in relation to retail requirements, and the need to create units of different sizes which can attract a range of retailers.



RESOURCE USE & ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Development sites should be designed and delivered to minimise resource use and maximise energy efficiency during construction and operation.



CONTEXT & CHARACTER

Integrating a development site into the surrounding area and establishing a consistent character is vital to delivering a successful town centre. This includes locally distinctive development patterns, landscape, culture, materials and bio-diversity, paying regard to the Conservation Areas and the Conservation Area Management Plan. Considerable investment has been made in enhancing and restoring the historic core, and it is essential that new development enhances its historic setting.



LEGIBILITY

A legible scheme will allow people to easily read their surroundings. This can be achieved by clearly marking entrance points and routes through the town centre, creating identity and character by emphasising the town's characteristics and new design elements and defining spaces which are memorable. This is particularly important in Bridgend in relation to attracting occasional visitors, as routes through the town both by car or on foot are not currently well marked or legible.



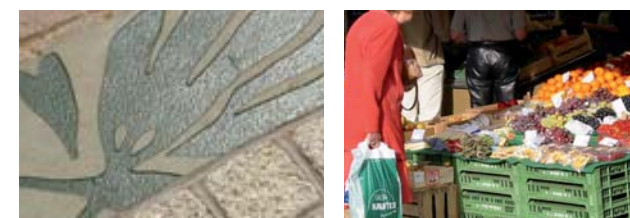
COMPACTNESS

To meet sustainable criteria any development in the town centre must consider efficient and appropriate land uses. To achieve this, development needs to provide an appropriate density of development that is in close proximity to public transport routes such as the railway and bus stations and to local amenities. Retaining the existing town centre boundary will assist with this.



ADAPTABILITY

Schemes must be designed to be robust, to accommodate possible change in use over time and to respond to the needs and expectations of inhabitants and users.



RICHNESS

Richness relates to the sensory experience of a place, the detailed design of buildings needs to allow for richness to develop over time.



SECTION 05:
THE MASTERPLAN FRAMEWORK

THE MASTERPLAN FRAMEWORK

Delivering the Vision and the Strategic Objectives will, therefore, hinge on grasping the opportunities that exist for development in the town centre over the short, medium and long term. This section considers where energy should be concentrated, focussing on how the Opportunity Areas identified earlier, and those developments and initiatives currently led by both the public and private sectors within the wider town centre, will meet the Strategic Objectives.

5.1 DEVELOP THE RETAIL DESTINATION

The development of Bridgend as a retail destination will be achieved through building on the current retail base, with strong independent focus, with more modern retail units to attract new retailers and through enhancement of the town centre offer.

SOUTHSIDE

The area known as Southside is located in the southern half of the town centre and has considerable potential to enhance the town's retail offer. The recent Asda scheme in this part of the town has delivered a focal point, but there remains a significant opportunity to expand retailing in this area and improve linkage through Cheapside, The Brackla Street Centre and the rest of the town centre.

The Southside Opportunity Area includes:

- ① **The Brackla Street Centre:** which includes retail units fronting Brackla Street, with the remainder accessed via an arcade, where there are a number of vacancies. The Brackla Centre is in private ownership and plans for refurbishment, modernisation and re-branding are imminent;
- ② **Cheapside/Police Station:** the Opportunity Area also includes the Police Station, located on Cheapside, which occupies a large office building. It is understood that South Wales Police are currently carrying out a review of their accommodation requirements and whilst the Police wish to retain a presence in the town centre, it doesn't necessarily need to be in this location. A redevelopment opportunity will exist if this site becomes available; and,
- ③ **The Brackla Street 3 Surface Car Park:** this has circa 126 spaces and is owned and run by the Council.

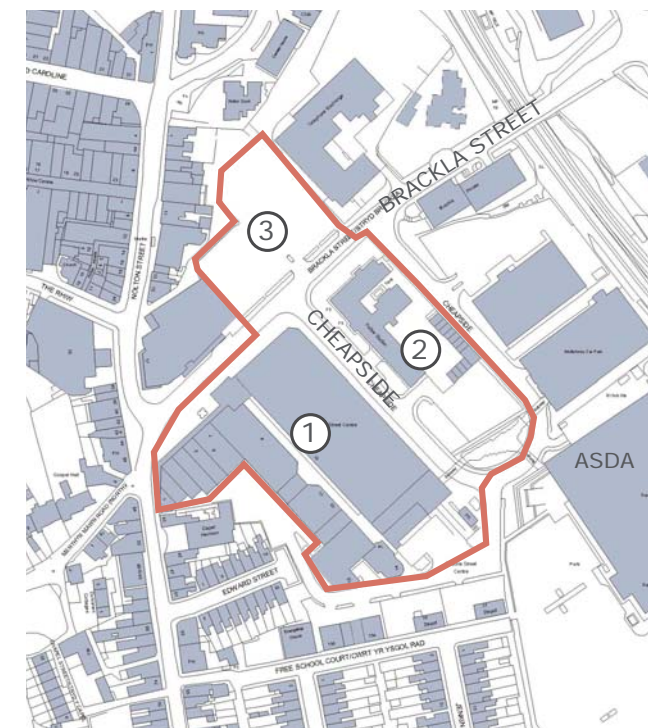


Figure 5. Southside Opportunity Area

THE MASTERPLAN FRAMEWORK

Meeting the Vision

The Southside Opportunity Area provides an opportunity for redevelopment and a new focus for retail and leisure provision that will strengthen the southern edge of the town centre. The area is located between the existing Rhiw Shopping Centre and the new Asda redevelopment, but whilst having a retail focus, is underachieving as a destination. The pattern of existing development in the area, consisting of defined buildings in defined ownerships, lends itself well to redevelopment due to:

- The opportunity for redeveloping the Police Station site, should it become surplus to requirements as a consequence of an ongoing review of its accommodation;
- The focus on improving the Brackla Shopping Centre and the opportunities that exist for refurbishment or redevelopment. (The CACI Report in 2007 outlined proposals for a circa 2800 sq m extension to the centre which has yet to be implemented but plans are in place for refurbishment in the short term);
- The Council's controlling interest in the Brackla Street surface car park and the opportunity that exists for linking into Nolton Street, The Rhiw Shopping Centre and the core retail area to the northwest;
- The need to improve linkages between Asda, Cheapside, The Brackla Street Centre and the rest of the town centre; and,
- The fact that, if land could be assembled, there is the opportunity to create a site of significant "critical mass" to deliver new retail and leisure provision within the town centre.

On this basis:

The Southside Opportunity Area should provide the focus for new retail and leisure provision that creates the link between Cheapside and the remainder of the town centre retail circuit, through high quality public realm/spaces that result in an increased vibrancy in the southern part of the town centre.

The Strategy for the Southside Opportunity Area

The Southside Opportunity Area is an opportunity to deliver a critical mass of retail development. The key viability and scheme principles will rely on:

- **The scheme being delivered comprehensively:**
An early phase delivered on the Council's Brackla Street car park is less financially attractive, given the scale of the development that can be accommodated in a comprehensive scheme. A strong tenant mix/covenants would be more likely if it formed part of a larger scheme that was appropriately anchored. In addition, if the car park is redeveloped in isolation, the Council may lose control of the wider redevelopment given that the rest of the site is not within its ownership. This may also impact on the quality of the scheme given that phases may be delivered by different developers and at different times. Appropriately addressing the linkage and permeability issue is also seen as fundamental.
- **Critical mass:**
Given the size of the area there is the potential for a scale of development that could accommodate in excess of the 10,000 sq m of "net additional" retail space which would be consistent with the retail capacity that currently exists. Ultimately, the scale of development will be dependent on how the existing Brackla Street Centre is integrated into the scheme. This will be important in ensuring a quality scheme and environment is created with the necessary frontages onto Cheapside. A scheme of this size would be of a scale that would have a positive impact on the town.
- **New retail & leisure:**
Given current market conditions, a scheme of this type is unlikely to be anchored by a department store, but more based around fashion retail and a series of key tenants. The exact mix and configuration will be dependent on the retailer's specific requirements at the time, market conditions and the layout of the development. In addition to the retail units there is an opportunity for this area to accommodate leisure and A3 uses to provide a variety of offer.

SECTION 05

THE MASTERPLAN FRAMEWORK

Development Principles

Given the above, any redevelopment or intervention in this area should be based on the following development principles:

- Redevelopment and enhancement of the area to create a lively, attractive, high quality retail and leisure area providing modern units integrated with surrounding retail area;
- Creating sufficient critical mass to create the “step-change” required for this part of the town centre, given that there are limited alternatives for such a development elsewhere within the centre;
- High quality pedestrian links and public realm between town centre retail core, The Rhiw, Nolton Street and Asda to create retail circuit within existing centre;
- Investigate whether two way traffic in the northern part of Nolton Street can be achieved to allow the street to act as a town centre ‘spine’;
- Create a key focal public space for the town centre to reinforce the transition into a pedestrian priority area;
- Provision of high quality accessible car parking for the scheme that is linked into the overall development strategy for the town;
- Traffic calming along Brackla Street to enhance the pedestrian environment; and,
- High quality design and construction which will raise the appearance, image and profile of this part of the town centre.

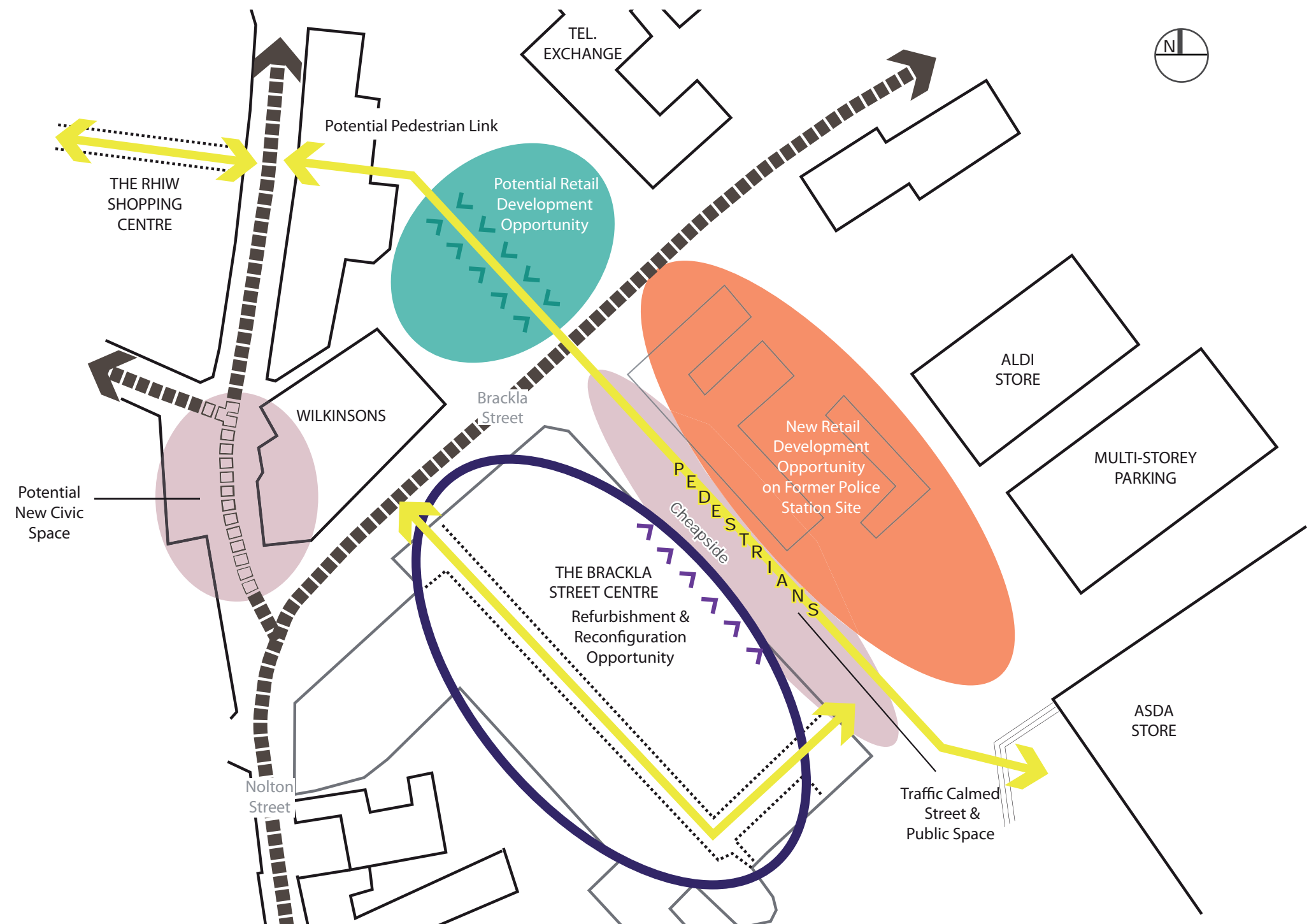


Figure 6. Southside Opportunity Area concept plan utilising the development principles described

Delivery

The key delivery issues for the Southside Opportunity Area will be:

- How any proposals would fit into the timescales, objectives and aspirations of the Council, South Wales Police and the owners of The Brackla Street Centre;
- What the implications and solutions would be in relation to car parking following a detailed review of existing provision;
- The national retail market, from both an occupier and developer perspective, given the recent economic conditions;
- The Council providing developer certainty by “de-risking” certain elements. The preparation of a Development Brief and an understanding of the procurement and marketing route from both a legal and commercial perspective that can move the process forward to a more detailed stage; and,
- Ensuring this is the principal focus for significant large scale redevelopment and intervention.

The Council has the ability to control or guide the form of redevelopment should it include the Brackla Street surface car park land (i.e. in their ownership) as part of the area. This is due to the fact that, as landowner, it could opt to have an influence outside its role as the Local Planning Authority.

What Will Success Look Like?

- Retail and leisure focus for the southern part of the town centre;
- Improvements to the scale, quality of the retail and leisure offer;
- Enhanced linkage and public realm; and,
- Good quality design and massing in an important location.

5.2 MAXIMISE THE RIVERFRONT

Maximising the riverfront is important for Bridgend in order to create a more diverse and unique town centre, and to distinguish itself from the more bland and uniform out of town shopping experience. The location of the river in the heart of the town centre provides a unique opportunity for both development and the creation of high quality linkages. The Council has recently invested in a new cantilevered boardwalk, which runs parallel with Dunraven Place and offers an attractive riverside environment for cafes and restaurants.

RIVERSIDE

In this context the Riverside Opportunity Area is an important strategic location in the town centre being next to The Rhiw Shopping Centre and backing on to the river. The Opportunity Area is made up of:

- ① Existing **Rhiw multi-storey car park** which is owned by the Council;
- ② A **Council owned surface car park** connected to The Rhiw multi-storey car park;
- ③ **Land fronting the river** in the ownership of the Council; and,
- ④ The existing **car showroom** fronting onto Nolton Street which is in private ownership and has an extant outline planning consent for retail development.

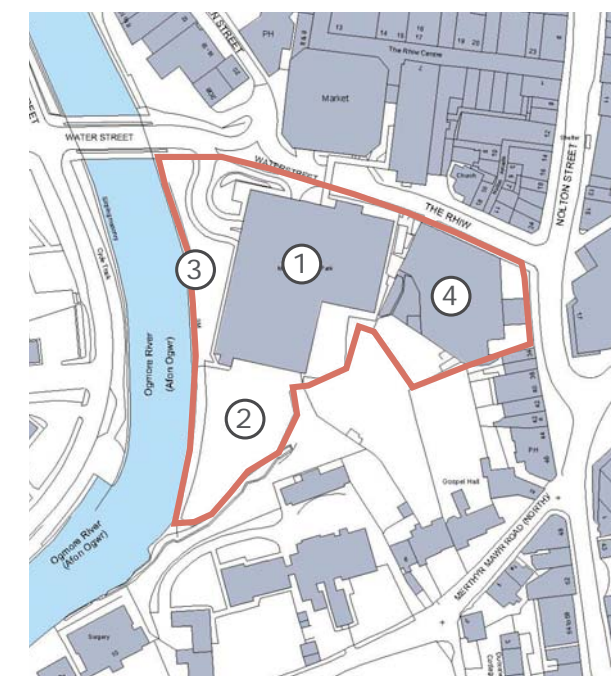


Figure 7. Riverside Opportunity Area

Meeting the Vision

The first consideration in reviewing this area is what its ultimate role should be in the context of the town centre. The improvement of linkage and activity to this location is paramount but the existing land uses do form a barrier to redevelopment.

The key factor is the location of The Rhiw multi-storey car park as this is currently the primary car park in the town centre and, therefore, strategically important for the success of the town. The current provision is of a low quality and outdated and this needs to be improved not only as a parking facility but as a gateway to shopping, services and employment role of the town centre.

THE MASTERPLAN FRAMEWORK

Linkage through to The Rhiw Shopping Centre, the Indoor Market and the rest of the town centre should be improved. The enhancement of the car parking spaces and the internal layout of the car park is currently underway to provide more family-friendly parking.

The existing car showroom on Nolton Street is a use that is not normally associated with modern town centres. On the basis that this site becomes available, the opportunity exists for this site to be redeveloped for retail uses, but also as a way of facilitating improved linkages to the rest of the town centre, to Nolton Street and The Rhiw to encourage pedestrians to this part of the town.

The site's location on the riverfront could provide additional uses such as office or leisure to further diversify town centre uses in this location, but the scope of this is dependent on the ultimate parking solution.

The area is not seen as an opportunity for significant retail development on the scale that could be achieved at the Southside Opportunity Area. The relocation of the Indoor Market or the car park at this stage would have substantial viability and delivery implications, and are therefore unlikely to happen in the medium term. There is an opportunity, however, to create a stronger retail circuit and strengthen this area of the town.

On this basis:

The Riverside Opportunity Area should provide quality car parking provision that is easily accessible by car from the main access points. The site should also establish better links with the retail core of the town centre and The Rhiw Shopping Centre through increased permeability and at level linkages to the town. Opportunities that make more of the riverfront would be encouraged.

The Strategy for the Riverside Opportunity Area

The car park is strategically important for the town centre, enabling shoppers to park in the heart of the retail area. The key assumption is that prior to the Council carrying out a full review of its car parking strategy this provision must remain in this location and be enhanced. On the basis that the car park can be redeveloped then there is a focus for wrapping other land uses around the car park and thereby opening up areas of the river to other uses.

As redevelopment of the car park is not part of the Council's current capital programme, the short term aim will be for the existing provision to be improved to create a high quality environment. The current car showroom site on Nolton Street remains an opportunity for redevelopment and is important in linking the existing core to the southern part of the town but also providing high quality frontage and massing. Its redevelopment is, therefore, encouraged.

Development Principles

Any redevelopment or intervention on the Riverside Opportunity Area should be based around the following development principles:

- Improve the general environment and parking standards at the Rhiw multi-storey car park either through redevelopment, refurbishment or enhancement;
- Enhance linkage to the wider town centre, but particularly to The Rhiw Shopping Centre and Nolton Street;
- Investigate the opportunity of developing retail frontage onto Nolton Street and the Rhiw Hill, to create a more interesting route to the river;
- Assess options for improving vehicular accessibility to this location from the main arterial routes and also from within the town centre itself; and,
- Investigate any opportunities to open up the riverfront through redevelopment opportunities, creation of active frontages and pedestrian and cycle access.



Figure 8. Riverside Opportunity Area concept plan taking into account the outlined development principles

Delivery

The CACI report of 2007 highlights this area as an opportunity for redevelopment, particularly given the close proximity of the Rhiw Shopping Centre. Whilst this area undoubtedly has a critical mass, the Opportunity Area currently contains the multi-storey car park, which given the issues highlighted earlier in the masterplan, has a strategic importance for the town centre. There is an assumption, therefore, until further work is undertaken on a parking strategy, that a significant form of car parking needs to be located in this position.

The key delivery issues, therefore, surround the future of the car park. The Council needs to lead a review, both through a wider town centre analysis but also a specific study into the role of The Rhiw multi-storey car park, its structural lifespan, capital expenditure requirements and revenue implications. Another consideration is that if the car park requires redevelopment, then there will be implications on the rest of the town centre. A full car parking strategy needs to assess the wider provision and ensure that there is a consistent approach throughout the town so that there is sufficient quantum in the right location.

Whilst redeveloping the car dealership is to be encouraged, the Council will need to understand how any future scheme relates to the car park and maximises its frontage/massing, particularly if developed separately.

- What Will Success Look Like?**
- Higher quality car parking provision in this location and linked to the wider offer;
 - Improved physical linkages to maintain and further encourage linked trips with the town centre;
 - Increase in pedestrian movement and increase in footfall to the town centre;
 - Enhanced river frontage and improved landscape quality; and,
 - Protection of the town centre as a retail destination.

THE MASTERPLAN FRAMEWORK

5.3 IMPROVE THE GATEWAYS

THE BREWERY FIELD

The Brewery Field Area is seen as an important site within Bridgend given its close proximity to the existing retail core and the nature of its current land uses. The site is a high profile gateway location and whilst currently outside the existing town centre boundary it contributes to attracting people into the town centre.

The area is made up of:

- ① **Existing Tesco** and surface car park. This part of the site is owned by Tesco and is allocated in the Bridgend UDP under Policy R10 which permits certain sites outside established commercial centres for retail activity;
- ② **The Brewery Field** which is currently used by both Bridgend Football Club and Bridgend Rugby Football Club as a sports facility. The Council has the freehold ownership with a lease to Brewery Field Ltd; and,
- ③ Adjoining **Riverside Tavern public house** and a modern **office building**, the latter which the Council has recently purchased.

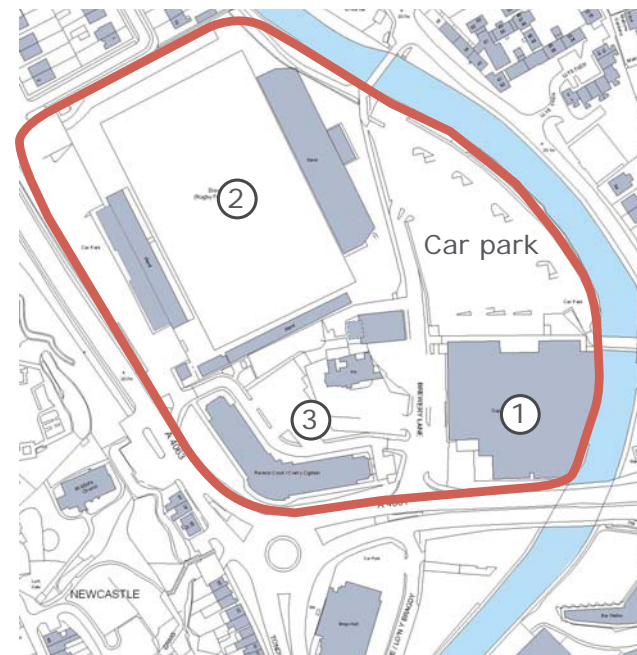


Figure 9. Brewery Field Opportunity Area

Meeting the Vision

The first consideration in reviewing the Brewery Field Area is that this site is not currently classified as a town centre site. Therefore, in the context of the Vision and the Strategic Objectives, consideration must firstly be given to whether the town centre boundary should be amended to include it as part of the town centre, whether flexibility should exist in terms of land use planning policy in this area, or whether it remains an edge of centre site.

If this site is included within the town centre boundary, or is allocated for uses that could be accommodated in more central locations, then it is possible that there would be a shift of focus away from the core to a more peripheral location. This could result in land uses becoming polarised and two competing areas being created, weakening the core of the town centre. Given that the

Strategic Objectives are based around creating a vibrant town centre and given the Brewery Field Area's separation from the town centre by the A4061, the clear conclusion is that this site cannot be deemed to be a town centre location.

The Brewery Field Area should, therefore, remain an edge of centre site but its role as a gateway to Bridgend and, therefore, an enabler to further investment in the town centre needs to be strengthened.

On this basis:

The Brewery Field should play a role as an edge of centre mixed use area that enhances its role as a gateway to Bridgend providing strong links whilst complementing but not competing with existing and future retail and leisure provision in the core of the town centre.

The Strategy for the Brewery Field Area

Given the pressures currently facing the town centre from out of town retail locations (including supermarkets) the retention of Tesco in this location is seen as important. The reason for this is that Tesco brings consumers into this edge of centre location as opposed to out of town locations. With Asda on the southern periphery of the town centre it ensures that convenience retail provision exists at either end of the town. The office buildings provide a commercial focus and ensure a gateway frontage onto the A4061. The Brewery Field itself is a sporting destination for the town.

The strategy for this area, therefore, is to improve the physical linkage to the town centre core, as currently the A4061 presents a significant barrier.

Development Principles

Whilst this is the base position, consideration needs to be given to potential land uses should part of the Brewery Field Area become available for redevelopment in future. Any redevelopment or intervention on the Brewery Field Area should be based around the following development principles:

- Retain the area as predominantly a sporting/leisure venue;
- Utilising a small pocket of land to the east of the river for commercial development;
- Improve the general environment throughout the Brewery Field Area and along the riverfront, with greater permeability and pedestrian linkage to the town centre, particularly with the Council having accommodation in this area;
- Enhance the gateway function of the site by seeking to create a more active and high quality frontage to the road, whilst recognising any technical requirement of site lines, accessibility and car parking;

- The potential of the riverfront should be maximised in terms of providing a setting for buildings, enhancing the landscape and providing a welcoming and pleasant pedestrian connection linking the town centre and residential areas to the north. Creating a riverside public walkway utilising existing bridges as crossing points;
- Assessing the opportunity for greening the riverside to soften the hard landscaping and linking into a green pedestrian footpath along the river;
- A greater diversity of uses should be encouraged in a redevelopment of this area. Although there is very limited need for bulky goods provision in Bridgend Town itself, CACI concluded there is capacity for 16,400 sq m of additional floorspace up to 2021 for the whole of the County Borough. Should redevelopment take place, and as an edge of town location, part of this provision could be accommodated in this area to strengthen Bridgend's sub-regional service role;
- Any redevelopment should include uses that complement retail provision in the town centre core. Opportunities for further enhancing linkage to the town centre should also be encouraged and can contribute to an improved physical gateway; and,
- Assessing the opportunity for creating public space and public art as landmark gateway features, and setting for a redevelopment scheme.

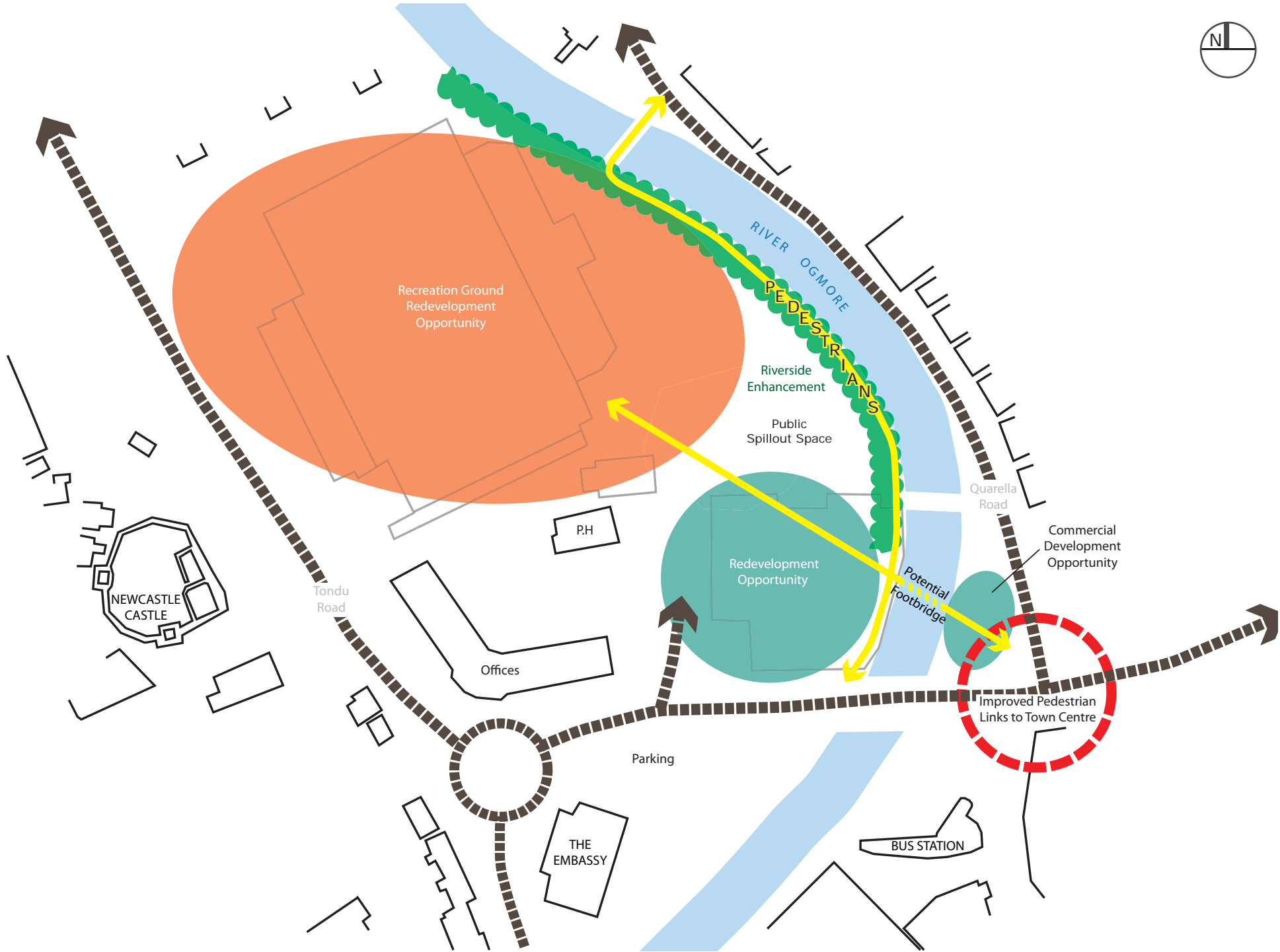


Figure 10. Brewery Field concept plan for potential future development

SECTION

05

THE MASTERPLAN FRAMEWORK

Delivery

In the short term, the Council supports the current uses at the Brewery Field Area and is not currently seeking to proactively redevelop the site. In the short to medium term, however, there are limited redevelopment opportunities on the site to provide funding for the suggested proposals for linkage improvements. These improvements are, therefore, dependent on grant and match-funding being available, or being delivered as part of a redevelopment scheme.

As part of the medium to long term strategy the Council has the ability through its freehold position on part of the site to lead the redevelopment process, through proactive engagement with the key stakeholders. One of the key issues will relate to the leasehold interest in the rugby ground currently held by Brewery Field Ltd (BFL) and the Tesco land interest.

The Council must ensure that it leads the process and understands the position in terms of timescale and viability, so that the objectives of all parties can be aligned. This will be important given the relationship between this area and the opportunities that exist in the town centre. Ultimately, the protection of the town centre will be paramount.

What Will Success Look Like?

- Development of a landmark gateway to town centre;
- Improved physical linkages to maintain and further encourage linked trips with the town centre;
- Increase in pedestrian movement and increase in footfall to the town centre;
- Enhanced river frontage and improved landscape quality; and,
- Protection of the town centre as a retail destination.

THE EMBASSY SITE

The site is made up of the former Bingo Hall, various small derelict buildings and surface car park at a prominent location on the entrance to the town centre. The site is in private ownership and is a highly visible derelict site which creates a negative image of Bridgend, compromising the significant investment being made in the historic core of the town. Given its prominent location and the derelict nature of the buildings, the objective for the site would be to ensure that redevelopment is of a high quality and complements core town centre uses and exploits its prominent gateway location. In the short term, however, demolition of derelict buildings on the site, to allow for increased parking provision, would make a significant positive impact on this key gateway location.



Figure 11. The Embassy site

The development, design and access principles should, therefore, be based on:

- Promoting a landmark “gateway” development;
- Delivering architectural design of the highest standard which promotes innovation and best practice, and respects the scale and character of the area;
- Providing uses that complement the existing town centre offer such as hotel, office, residential or leisure;
- Making use of the riverside setting; and,
- Improving pedestrian links to integrate the area into Dunraven Place and Market Street.

It is understood that the current landowner has redevelopment plans for the site and has recently been granted consent for the demolition of the existing building and the creation of a temporary car park. It is assumed that the above is a short term measure and that redevelopment plans, in line with the principles outlined above, will be the medium to long term aim for the site. As the area is in private sector ownership it will be private sector investment that will continue to be the main vehicle for delivery, with the local authority’s role being to influence the mix and density of uses through normal planning processes.

What Will Success Look Like?

- Improved townscape at a key location creating a landmark building;
- Land use(s) that complements and enhances the town centre offer; and,
- Quality linkage to the town centre core.

TELEPHONE EXCHANGE

The Telephone Exchange site is located adjacent to the Southside Opportunity Area and Council owned surface car park. The area is strategically located adjacent to the railway line and accessed from Brackla Street, a main access to the town centre from the east. The site is currently used as a telephone exchange, but whilst the building continues to operate as this use, technological advances mean that a large proportion of the building is under utilised.



Figure 12. Telephone Exchange site

This site could form a useful gateway location should the proposed new access road to the station be implemented. In terms of uses, any proposals will need to link to the retail core either through employment or residential uses. Dependant on land assembly, timing and viability the site could form part of the Southside Opportunity Area, but there are significant level differences which may restrict this opportunity.

The area is in private sector ownership and, therefore, private sector investment will continue to be the main vehicle, with the local authority influencing the mix and intensity of uses and the provision of facilities through normal planning processes. The key issue is that whilst the site and buildings may be under utilised, the main viability issue could revolve around the relocation of technical equipment either within the site or off site entirely.

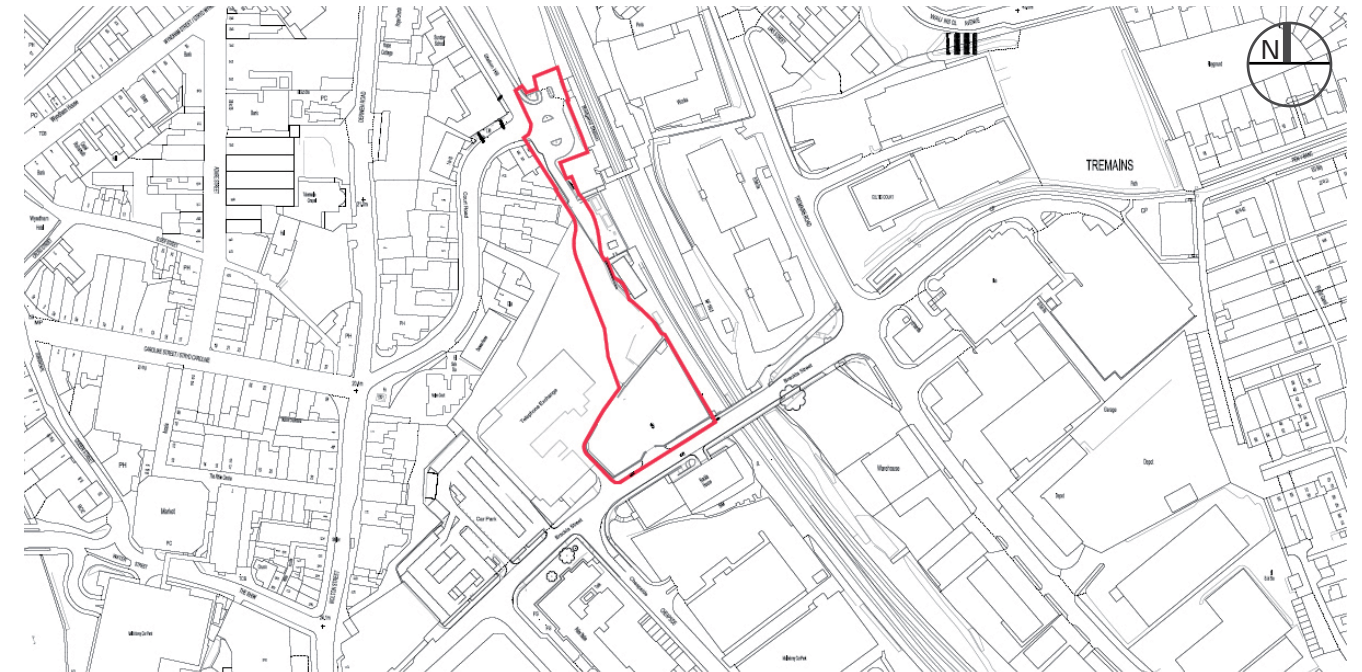


Figure 13. Red line boundary of proposed new access road

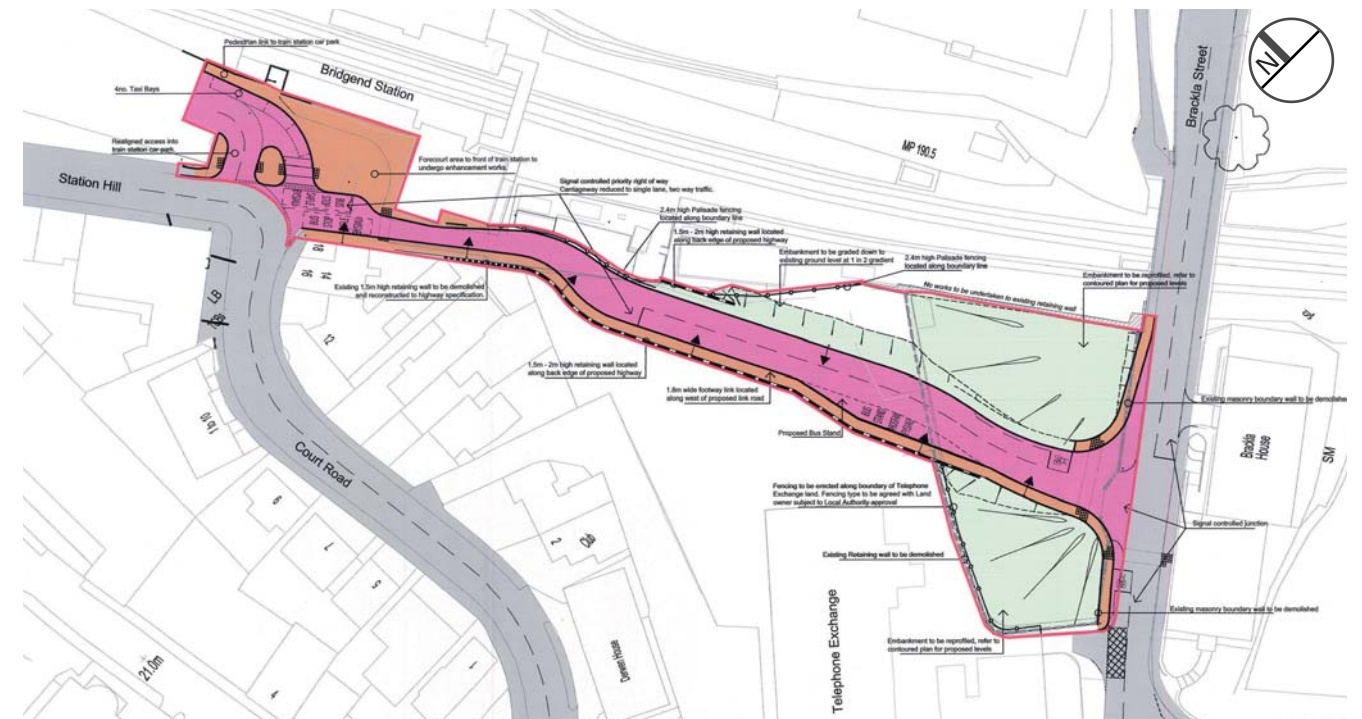


Figure 14. Plan of proposed new access road

5.4 ENHANCE THE QUALITY ENVIRONMENT AND HISTORIC CHARACTER

As outlined earlier, the Council is undertaking a number of projects to enhance the physical environment and improve linkages within the town centre. The successful award of just over £9 million of Convergence Funding to be spent specifically in the town centre is evidence of how the Council has worked hard to drive change in Bridgend.

These projects are a fundamental part of the masterplan in terms of their timing, phasing and delivery, but also their relevance to future regeneration projects, either as a catalyst, part of a wider initiative, or setting the standard for future investment. As these are now confirmed, their early implementation is a good short term win for the town centre.

1) Cheapside

There is obvious overlap between this short term project and wider objectives for the Southside Opportunity Area. As part of the short term objectives for Southside there needs to be a consideration as to where Convergence Funding fits into the overall development programme, particularly given that full scale redevelopment is likely to be a medium/long term aspiration. It is key that this part of the town is better connected to wider areas. These proposals will enhance the pedestrian environment between Asda and the town centre and potentially act as a catalyst for short term enhancement of The Brackla Street Centre.

The Convergence Funding improvements will enhance the public realm, using high quality natural materials, together with improvements to street lighting, in order to enhance safety and security in the area. Importantly, a gateway feature will be incorporated at Brackla Street to provide a sense of arrival for pedestrians approaching the town centre.

2) Court Road

Court Road is the main route for vehicles and pedestrians from the mainline railway station. This project will enhance this gateway location into the town centre and create an enhanced sense of arrival by undertaking public realm improvements within the Court Road area. The scheme will widen and enhance the footways along Court Road using high quality materials, ensuring pedestrian priority with designated parking areas at various locations along its length. Street lighting and street furniture will also be enhanced as part of the scheme as well as upgrading the drainage in the area.

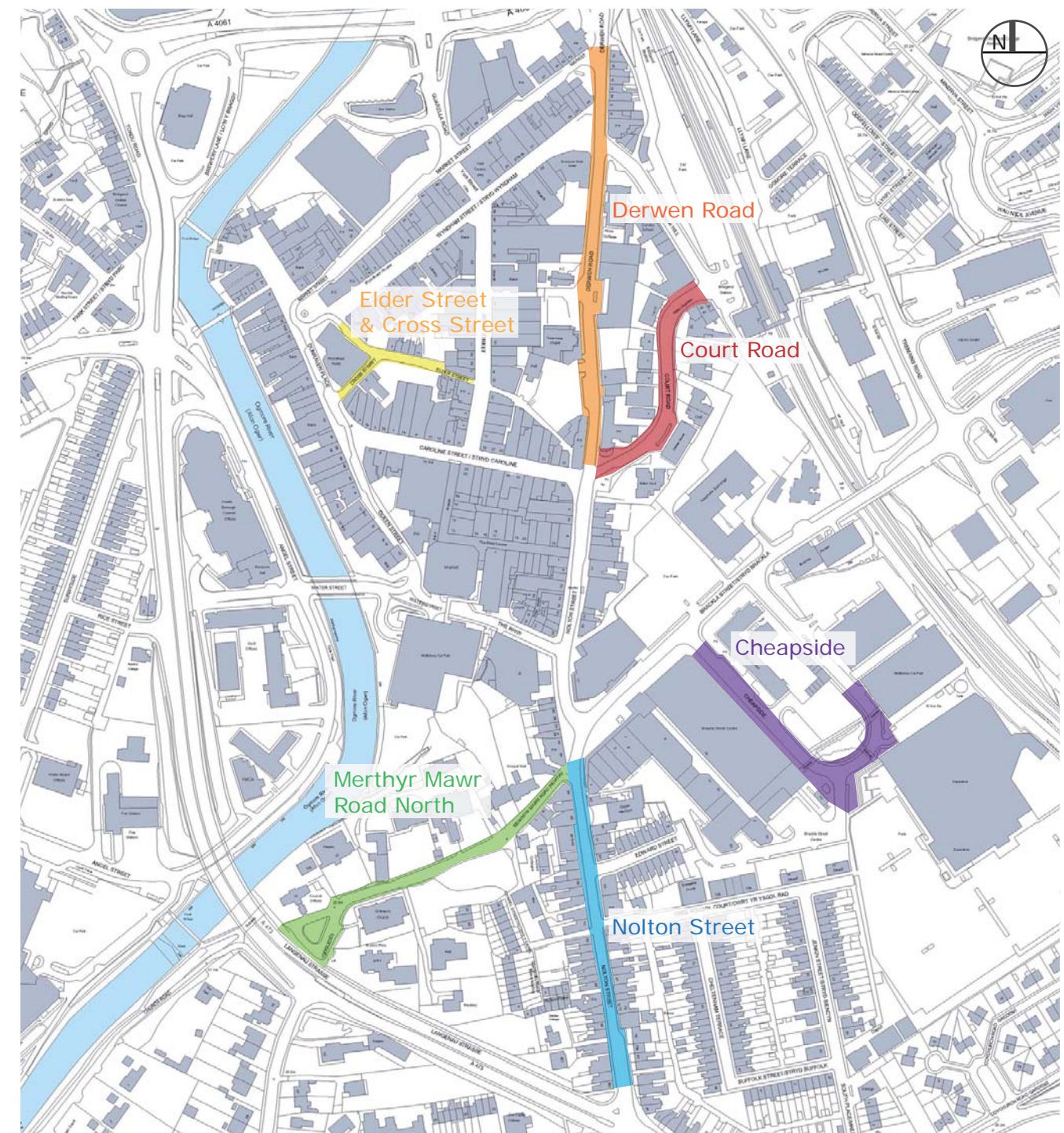


Figure 15. Areas of the town to undergo convergence funded public realm improvements

3) Nolton Street South

This project will focus on enhancing a key approach into the town centre from the south. Nolton Street is a busy, but secondary shopping street. The narrow roadway and pavements create conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians. The aim of the scheme is to reduce pedestrian/vehicular conflict by increasing circulation space for pedestrians and to deliver a suitable traffic management solution which will provide improved pick up/drop-off arrangements and reduce the negative effects of traffic on local amenity.

Specifically, the proposals are to reduce the road to a single carriageway, and incorporate parking and pedestrian circulation areas. The scheme will focus on using high quality, natural materials and on replacing/upgrading street furniture and street lighting. The introduction of short-term parking on Nolton Street will strengthen the performance of traders in what has become a secondary commercial area reliant on short term parking. The scheme will more effectively integrate the area with the town centre, to enhance its commercial attractiveness and potentially extend the primary commercial area of the town centre.

4) Merthyr Mawr Road North

The project will enhance a key pedestrian approach into the town centre from the south west. This scheme will link in with the Nolton Street South scheme and provide an improved pedestrian environment commensurate with the area's status as a designated Conservation Area containing a number of listed buildings.

The proposal is to reconfigure Merthyr Mawr Road North into a single carriageway (5m wide), making way for enlarged footways to be paved in high quality natural materials including an enhanced public square in front of St. Mary's Church. Street lighting will be upgraded to a high specification reinforcing the area's status as a designated Conservation Area.



Court Road



Nolton Street South



Merthyr Mawr Road North



Cheapside from Brackla Street

5) Elder Street & Cross Street

Elder Yard is at the heart of the town centre and has great historical significance. A key theme of this project component is to deliver an imaginative and innovative public realm enhancement in conjunction with the Elders Yard Redevelopment Scheme (see subsequent section 5.5), including provision for public art developed with the local community and local artists, reinforcing the character, identity and local distinctiveness of the area.

The Elder Street/Cross Street public realm scheme is fundamental in integrating the Elder's Yard redevelopment into the physical and economic fabric of the town centre. Critically, whilst the project will bring significant benefits in its own right, it will physically link with and act as catalyst for the subsequent retail, residential and public square elements that will follow.

6) Derwen Road

The public realm at Derwen Road will undergo a comprehensive enhancement in order to act as a catalyst to bring forward further development. The Derwen Road Public Realm Scheme extends from its junction at Wyndham Street to its junction with Caroline Street/Court Road. The proposed scheme will tie-in to the Court Road scheme and follow the design principles of reducing the road width to a single carriageway in order to provide for widened footways and thus an improved pedestrian environment. High quality natural materials will be used in the extended pedestrian circulation areas. The scheme will also provide improved street lighting/furniture and incorporate two 'focus areas' along its route.

THE MASTERPLAN FRAMEWORK

Public Realm Improvements Acting as a Catalyst

These public realm projects set the context and standard for key investment in the town centre in the short term and ensure there is a consistency of quality public realm and linkage throughout the town. The Convergence funding projects can, therefore, act as a catalyst by:

- Continuing to build upon previous phases of regeneration carried out to date;
- Reflecting the unique nature of the town centre in terms of the uses, functions and activities together with the opportunity to accelerate the regeneration of the economic and social development fortunes;
- Integrating new developments into the physical, economic and social fabric of the town centre;
- Creating pedestrian-friendly environments and addressing existing traffic management issues, by encouraging street activities, improving the gateway to the town centre, and contributing to the preservation and enhancement of the character of the Conservation Areas;
- Adding value to the programme of targeted and specific building restoration and repair projects that bring vacant or underused buildings back to beneficial economic use; and,
- Improving the physical linkages between the town centre and edge of town residential areas.

There is a narrow window of opportunity to 'bend' the approved Convergence projects to link directly with development schemes. This has already been achieved in Elder Yard, where private and public realm works will be seamlessly integrated to create a coherent scheme. Developers bringing forward schemes in the near future could also potentially benefit in a similar way.

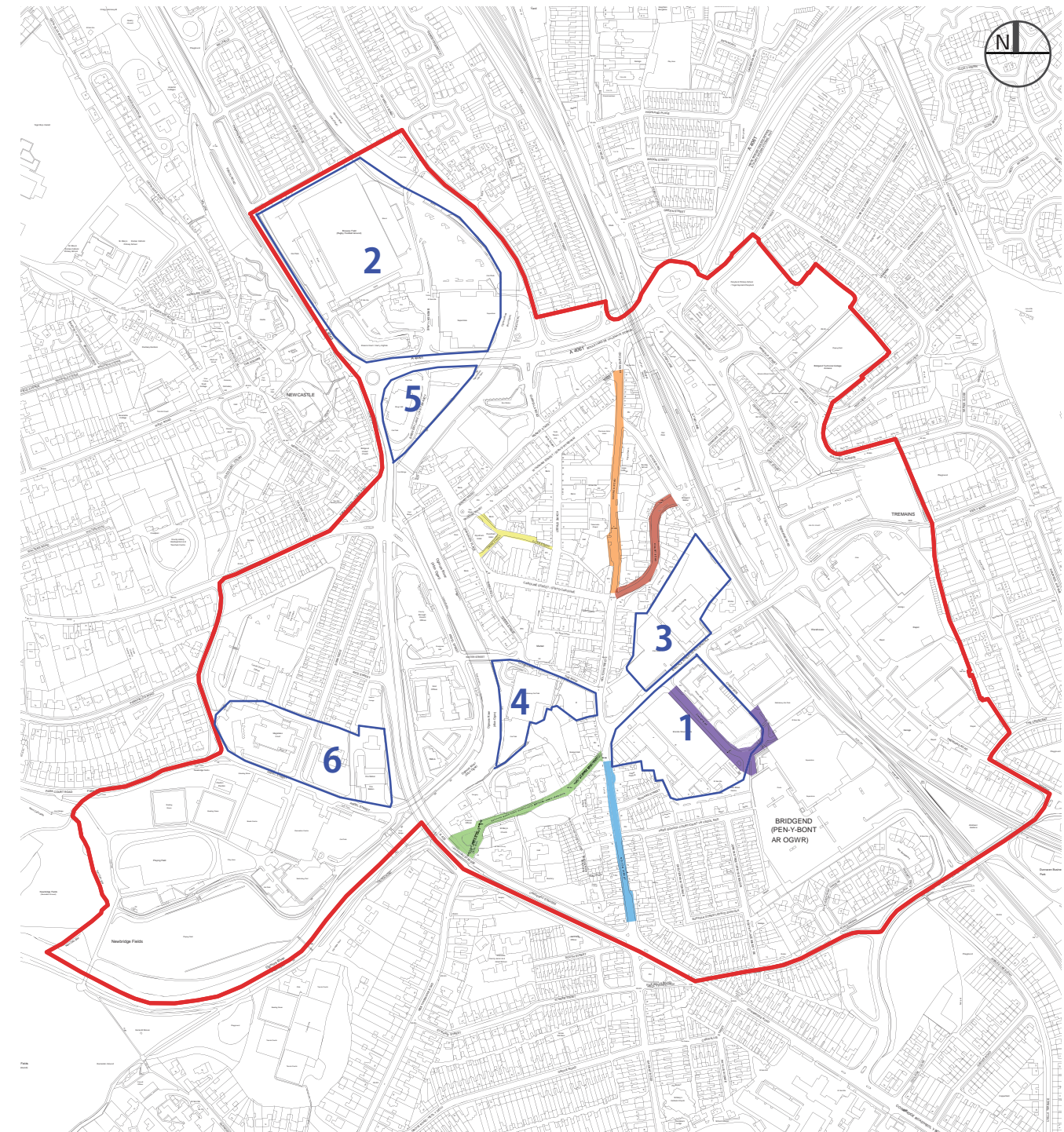


Figure 16. Convergence funded public realm projects and Opportunity Areas (numbered)

5.5 STRENGTHEN THE CORE

One of the fundamental principles of the masterplan is to focus development on the town centre. Whilst there are a number of Opportunity Areas that have been assessed for future development, there are further areas of the town centre which are fundamental to its success.

Elders Yard

Elders Yard is the primary regeneration scheme in Bridgend town centre at the time of the masterplan. Located in the heart of the historic town centre core between the shopping streets of Adare Street and Wyndham Street, it is set within narrow lanes which have historic charm, surrounded by other listed buildings. The scheme has the potential to transform the retail and leisure offer, and the public realm in the town centre.

The site is within the town centre conservation area and contains listed cottages at numbers 3 to 11 Elder Street and a former chapel of rest. These buildings are in a derelict state. Linked to these core buildings are others with frontages onto Adare Street and Wyndham Street. The redevelopment scheme is being undertaken on a phased basis with a number of individual buildings planned to be restored and brought back into use.

At the time of the masterplan full planning permission had been granted in January 2010 for the demolition of the chapel of rest, conversion of the cottage terrace into a restaurant, retail space and creation of a new open space in the form of a walled courtyard to the rear of the restaurant. A further phase is also planned along the Wyndham Street side of the area as shown on the axonometric diagram (figure 16). The scheme is private sector led, but has benefited from strong support from the Council to lever grant funding from the Heritage Lottery and Convergence funds.

There is an opportunity for this site to contribute to a more high quality, family focused evening economy in the heart of the town centre and in the short to medium term will be a major catalyst for strengthening the town centre core.



Figure 17. Elders Yard scheme axonometric



3D model of the proposed Elders Yard

The Rhiw Shopping Centre

The Rhiw Shopping Centre plays a crucial role in linking the north and south of the town and contains a number of key multiple retail units and the Indoor Market.

The Shopping Centre does lack a significant anchor and this is emphasised in the CACI report of 2007 which outlines that the average sized retail unit is less than 140 sq m gross. This further emphasises the need for new retail units in Bridgend which can meet more modern retailer space requirements as highlighted earlier. The CACI report of 2007 proposed a significant extension to the Shopping Centre, on The Rhiw multi-storey car park site, covered earlier in the master plan. The key delivery issue is how such an extension to the centre can be delivered given the location of the Indoor Market, the importance of the multi-storey car park in serving the wider town centre and the issue of viability given the potential development costs.

The Rhiw Shopping Centre is very important to Bridgend and any improvements to the existing retail provision should be encouraged. More significantly, the Rhiw Shopping Centre is an important strategic link between potential new development at the Southside and Riverside Opportunities Areas and a revitalised Nolton Street and Derwen Road. It should retain its role at the heart of the town centre and the fundamental principle is that any associated development links efficiently to this area given it is a critical part of the retail circuit through the town.



Entrance point to The Rhiw Shopping Centre

THE MASTERPLAN FRAMEWORK

Indoor Market

The Indoor Market is leased by the Council on a long lease from the owners of The Rhiw Shopping Centre and contains an interesting mix of delicatessens, food stalls, cafés, galleries, bookshops, jewellers and homeware. It has the potential to be a significant draw to the town centre, but a number of issues need to be addressed:

- **Poor visibility** – the market is hidden by its position to the rear of the Rhiw Shopping Centre and efforts to promote it are insufficient to overcome the barrier of its location;
- **Incoherent offer** – while the market contains an interesting variety of stalls, this variety contributes to the incoherence of the offer and adds to the difficulty of marketing it effectively; and,
- **Physical condition** – rental levels are not set high enough to generate a surplus to reinvest in enhancement and maintenance.

To fulfil its potential to strengthen the core of the town centre, further work is required to develop a coherent strategy for the improvement of the market, in partnership with the market traders, so that the Indoor Market becomes a destination in its own right and links into the wider Bridgend town centre management structure.



Bridgend Indoor Market

Market Street

A redevelopment opportunity exists on a site fronting Market Street, Quarella Road, and Derwen Road. The CACI Report in 2007 envisages that this site could house a major space user and that if high quality retail is located in this area it could create a level of balance within Bridgend's retail offer. There is also the opportunity for a significant design contribution given the site's highly visible location and its 'gateway' position to the town centre alongside the elevated A4061.

Like The Rhiw Shopping Centre, the site on Market Street has not been included as a key "Opportunity Area". As it occupies a strategic position on the pedestrian route between the bus and railway stations, however, it has the potential to accommodate a number of different uses including retail, commercial and residential.

The area is in numerous private sector ownerships which has viability and delivery implications. Private sector investment will continue to be the main vehicle, with the local authority influencing the mix and intensity of uses, and the provision of facilities through normal planning processes.

Additional Areas

There are a number of additional development areas in the town centre core, such as Lees Arcade /Nolton Arcade which are not be considered development opportunities, but where refurbishment and enhancement would be encouraged. These areas contribute to the unique character of the town centre and, therefore, need to be preserved and further integrated into the town centre.



View of potential Market Street/Quarella Road/Derwen Road from Quarella Road/A4061

5.6 CREATE A VIBRANT & SUCCESSFUL VISITOR DESTINATION

Parking Plan

It is clear that car parking provision plays an essential role in the perception and attractiveness of Bridgend town centre. The Technical Appendices have highlighted that parking is a key issue in the town centre and that a [Bridgend Town Centre Parking Plan](#) is required to guide the strategy, both in terms of provision but also where development opportunities could be exploited in future. The Rhiw multi-storey car park and the surface car park adjacent to Cheapside are fundamental to this.

A bespoke Parking Plan requires not just a review of parking charges, but an assessment of the quality of the experience and an understanding of visitor requirements, particularly when comparing Bridgend to competing towns. Town Centre Parking Plans are advocated by The Association of Town Centre Management and other bodies for all town centres and, because every town centre is different, a bespoke plan is needed. The seven key elements which are fundamental for Bridgend are:

1. Quantity & convenience:

The quantity of parking must match the size and aspiration of the town and be located close to the main retail core (for example a maximum 5 minute walk). Shoppers do not generally view park & ride as a good substitute for convenient town centre car parking unless the town is a major attraction in its own right.

2. Method of Payment & Control:

Payment systems which allow payment for parking on departure rather than on arrival can encourage longer shopping trips and greater spend.

3. Pricing structure:

The town centre car parks should offer tariffs which favour visits of up to three hours and discourage longer stays. This discourages the commuter from occupying a convenient parking space all day to the inconvenience of visitors or shoppers who would bring expenditure to the town centre. Pricing should encourage daily commuters to use less convenient car parks and public transport but it is important that the pricing structure is benchmarked against competing towns in the locality.

4. Security:

Car parks need to be properly designed, managed and maintained to feel safe and secure and the presence of uniformed patrols and CCTV are important. This is particularly important if Bridgend wants to grow its evening economy and encourage use of the town outside core hours.

5. Quality:

Car parks are gateways to the town centre and so quality of environment including decor, signing, and access points to shops must all be to a high standard. The quantity, quality and security of parking provision are much more significant than its price to those consumers who drive retail performance.

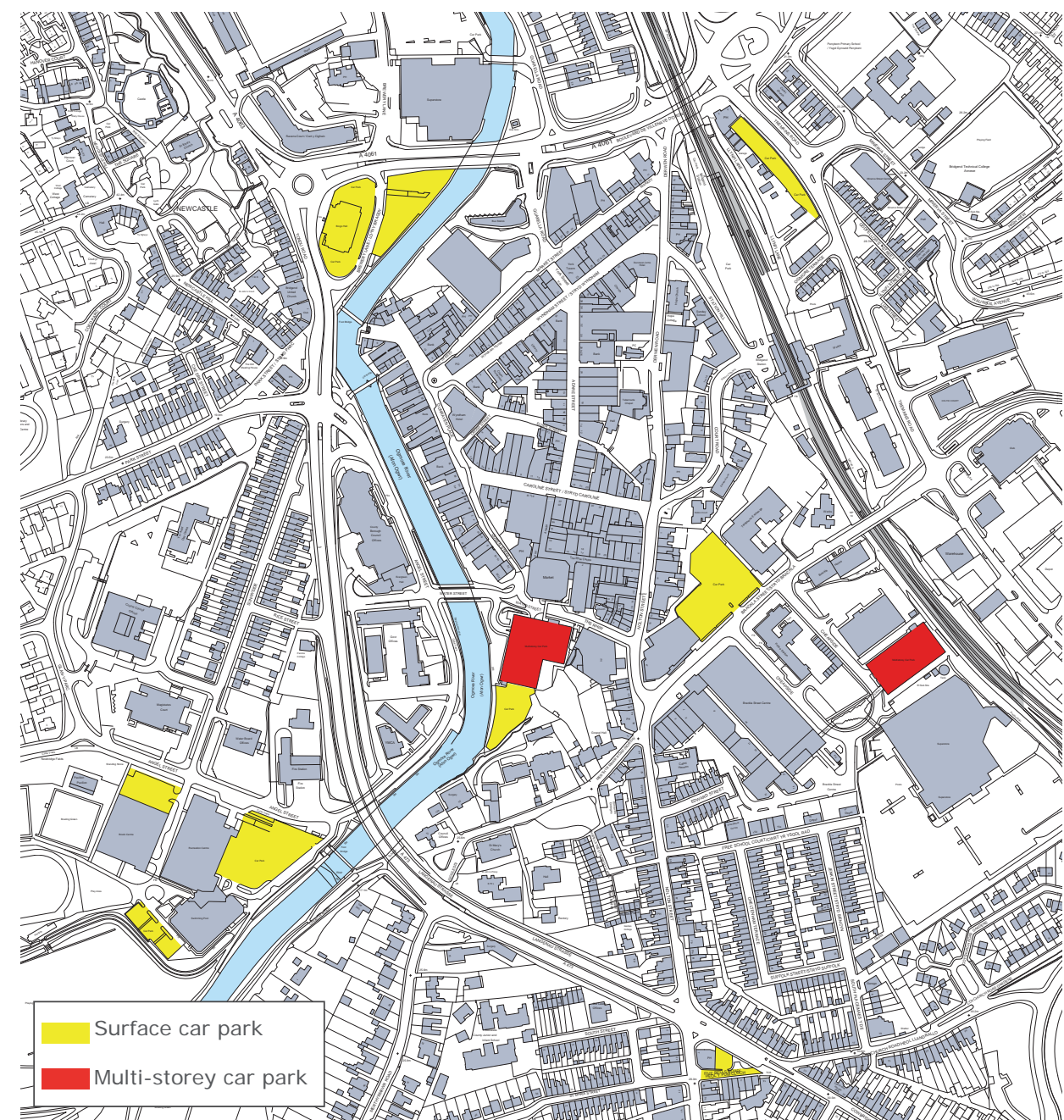


Figure 18. Car park location plan

THE MASTERPLAN FRAMEWORK

6. Signage:

Highway signage (including electronic variable message signs) can assist drivers quickly to find the most convenient available parking space, but also direct them into the town centre. This is a significant aspect for Bridgend given that there is limited profile for the town centre at each of the motorway junctions and Junction 36 is dominated by the McArthurGlen Factory Outlet Centre.

7. Impact of Redevelopment on Car Parking:

This is important both in terms of whether town centre car parks can be developed but also the impact on the rest of the town during and post redevelopment.

As highlighted earlier, successful town centres are dependent on the provision of sufficient good quality access and this is fundamental to the Strategic Objectives of this masterplan. Preparation of a Parking Plan will require the collaboration and implementation of all interested parties, from the Council through to the local traders. In conjunction with this, management strategies must also cater for other users of the town centre (such as commuters) whose participation in the town's activities is also important in retaining activity after working hours and enhancing the town centre's evening economy.

Due to its importance this Parking Plan should be implemented within the short term, particularly given that parking is seen by traders to be one of the key areas requiring urgent attention.

Access and Signage Strategy

Getting people to the town centre and attracting visitors is key. Therefore, in addition to the Parking Plan, and in order to address some of the wider access issues, an Access and Signage Plan is required to seek to address the following key elements:

- 1. Developing a sense of arrival** to Bridgend from key access points and a sense of identity; this is a huge opportunity to reinforce Bridgend as a destination.
- 2. Improving accessibility and signage**, conveying essential information and directional signage at key decision points and improving the town's accessibility.
- 3. Refining arrangements for pedestrianisation** and vehicular access to the town centre, focusing on proposed uses, events, deliveries, maintenance and improving vehicular access to the town centre in the evenings.

Bridgend's image and the quality of its urban environment are vital to meeting the vision of this masterplan given the high aspirations of visitors and, therefore, the town centre requires a consistent brand to ensure future investment is targeted and focused.



A city centre map with key landmarks as part of Bristol's 'Legible City' initiative



Clear and correlating signing throughout the city centre will help visitors reach their destination more quickly



Interactive signage highlight car park occupancy

Working Together to Deliver a Vibrant Town Centre

Town centres that are attractive, well-designed, and well managed, with a range of shops, entertainment, good amenities, and good transport connections are engines for economic growth, providing a focal point for business and social interaction. Vibrant town centres are good for business as they create jobs, attract investment and generate income. At their best, they create a local buzz and define the wider area, attracting people from near and far.

Effective management of a town centre is critical in determining its success and sustainability. Town Centre Management (TCM) is a management and maintenance tool which has proven to be very successful in other towns and cities around Britain.

Town centre management will focus the strategic regeneration and renewal of the town and enable a co-ordinated and cohesive approach that can bring about change.

Bridgend is currently developing a town centre management team that will work in partnership on initiatives to address town centre issues including safety, environmental improvements, access, marketing and events. The need for TCM is to ensure:

- Engagement with all parties that influence the management of the town centre to agree the strategic way forward;
- A way of facilitating stakeholder engagement and buy-in to partnership decisions;
- A steer and guide on decision making to support baseline services enhancement;
- Support and deliver initiatives to increase footfall and thus increased sales;
- Reduced vacancies within the commercial sector;
- Improved security and street cleanliness, including reduced graffiti;
- Increased town centre residential populations; and,
- Increased employment opportunities.

High level integrated town centre management will be an important tool in managing and maintaining the improvements/projects implemented as part of this masterplan and the wider aims for Bridgend becoming a focal point for activity, growth and a destination in its own right. As TCM initiatives have developed, so have the scope of their activities. In many TCM schemes the original emphasis was focused on improvements to the physical fabric of the town centre but a more 'strategic' perspective is now being applied by many partnerships and this is key for Bridgend in ensuring there is consistency of message.

TCM now covers a wide range of activities ranging from basic streetscape maintenance and improvements, through to security via the provision and management of CCTV and other anti-crime initiatives. In many cases it also covers the marketing and promotion of town centres.

The two basic models of TCM are:

- **Strategic Partnership Model:** which requires a wide focus and seeks to address the 'big issues' of centres and their role as leisure and tourism destinations as well as their retail function; and,
- **Local Membership Model:** which is at the other end of the scale, and has a narrower focus on specific geographical areas, sectors and businesses with common problems and issues, such as CCTV or promotional initiatives.

Each town centre is unique and it is critical, therefore, to develop a town centre management model that fits the needs and characteristics of the town in question. This can be either one or both of the models illustrated but the relationship between the management team, town centre manager and the masterplan is likely to influence the model of future town centre management.

The recent concept of 'free leisure' opportunities would offer a new dimension for the town centre. Public art and informal play space would increase interest and interaction and integrate with facilities such as the library. Bridgend also has locations such as Dunraven Place and the River Walk as areas where this could take place. The recently commissioned Bridgend Tourism Strategy identifies the contribution that events can make to the image, economy and tourism potential of Bridgend and therefore, the recommendations of the strategy will dovetail with the masterplan. The Indoor Market located in The Rhiw Shopping Centre should be a destination in its own right and linked into the wider Bridgend town centre management.



A series of well planned events such as the 'Elfsteddfod' and Celtic Dancing celebrations have helped to create a 'local buzz'.



SECTION 06:
DELIVERING & IMPLEMENTING CHANGE

DELIVERING & IMPLEMENTING CHANGE

6.1 THE ROLE OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR

This is a long term strategy for Bridgend town centre which needs to be set within the current economic climate but be flexible enough to respond to the changes that will inevitably occur in the market over time. The Council's key roles in driving the delivery of this framework, therefore, must include:

- **Leadership** - the Council will lead the delivery of the masterplan;
- **Partnering** - the Council should work closely with the private sector to support appropriate development and to look to innovative ways to drive forward investment in Bridgend;
- **Accessing Funding** - there are a number of critical ways in which the Council can access funding. These include using their assets to drive forward delivery; fronting bids to funding partners; and ensuring appropriate levels of planning gain are obtained from development schemes to support delivery of the framework; and,
- **Communicating** - to ensure local residents, businesses and investors are consulted on the master plan before it is agreed, and importantly, regularly updated on progress made towards delivery.

In order to achieve this, the Council needs to ensure there is a responsible officer to oversee the delivery of actions for the town centre. The individual should be a specialist in planning and/or economic development with an in-depth understanding of the development process to enable them to be able to negotiate from a position of strength with the private sector. In addition, regular consultations and partnership working with the relevant stakeholder and town centre bodies will be essential, together with ongoing input from the Town Centre Manager as a key link with local businesses.

6.2 THE ROLE OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR

One of the key considerations is the Council's control over the delivery process. The Council does not have a significant land ownership position in the town centre; hence, it is important that the masterplan and associated planning policy can guide the form of development and drive those interventions that can help achieve the overall Vision of the town centre.

The Council has recently played an important role in securing Convergence Funding and through its current land interests in some of the key Opportunity Areas can help facilitate development through planning briefs and actively seek to drive forward any proposals. The private sector, however, will take a pivotal role in the delivery of any town centre regeneration initiative. In spite of the current economic recession and in particular difficulties in accessing finance, there are a number of locations such as Elders Yard and the Embassy site where developers are actively pursuing proposals.

Ultimately, it must also be acknowledged that the development market always operates in cycles, and that whilst surviving developers are likely to be more cautious in their investments and critically find it difficult to access finance, when the market emerges from the current financial turmoil, in the medium to long term confidence and subsequent activity will return to the market. This is a long term strategy for the area, which needs to be set within the current climate but be flexible enough to respond to the changes that will inevitably occur in the market.

The Masterplan for Bridgend town centre has set out a decision making framework for the Council to promote and evaluate proposals that both consolidate and enhance the town centre as a shopping destination over the next 10 years.

6.3 PRIORITY ACTIONS & PHASING

The aim of the Framework is to guide investment and development within the town centre over the next 10 years. It is important to note that a number of redevelopment proposals that have been highlighted for some of the Opportunity Areas are medium to long term initiatives. Before any initiatives can be delivered, a number of immediate, high priority actions need to be undertaken by the Council in order to facilitate and prepare for their implementation. These immediate actions should be commenced within the short term in order to pave the way and build/maintain the momentum for the delivery of the masterplan and those proposals of a longer term nature.

The Council will need to drive forward a number of the critical aspects of the masterplan, particularly in terms of improving accessibility, the quality of the public realm and the profile and image of the town centre. The proposed improvements to Cheapside, Court Road, Nolton Street South, Elders Street and Derwen Road which will be driven by the Convergence Funding award, are obviously short term actions and should help instil confidence amongst businesses in the town centre and help 'pump prime' further private sector investment in the fabric of premises in the centre.

Where it is realistic, the Council needs to be working in the current downturn to make potential development sites more readily available, de-risked and attractive to developers, so that when the market returns to a more stable footing, the right conditions will be in place to enable the private sector to get involved. Innovative ways of working to share and minimise risk with the private sector will need to be investigated on a site by site basis.

6.4 SHORT-TERM INITIATIVES (0-2 YEARS)

The Framework should be supported by a range of short term initiatives (0 to 2 years) which will include:

- The preparation of a range of site specific development briefs which can reduce developers risk by giving planning certainty over issues such as mix of uses, density and building heights and also seek to raise the design quality and integration of development. It can also add to overall marketability and interest from developers;
- Detailed site financial viability assessments can be undertaken for schemes. Such assessments can, firstly, be an important health-check on site specific proposals and secondly, increase certainty for developers;
- Delivery strategies should set out the delivery mechanisms (e.g. partnerships/joint working) and the funding and phasing of delivery. Convergence funding for works associated with the redevelopment of the Elder Street area, for example, will give confidence to the private sector;
- Increased Council inter-departmental and external co-operation (e.g. Environment Agency, Welsh Assembly Government, town centre manager, planning policy and property) can encourage development. Maximising linkages between economic development and planning

DELIVERING & IMPLEMENTING CHANGE

functions in terms of understanding the site specific uses that are acceptable, development requirements, economic objectives and business requirements can give investors, developers and occupiers confidence to invest in Bridgend;

- Develop and implement the Town Centre Parking Plan so that there is a clear view on the future strategy;
- Develop and implement the Access and Signage Plan to achieve a clear sense of arrival, signage and visitor experience; and,
- Develop and implement a comprehensive Town Centre Management Plan based on a clear understanding of the operation of the town centre.

6.5 MEDIUM TO LONG-TERM INITIATIVES

The successful delivery of the Framework needs to result in the following outcomes:

- **Strengthening the town centre offer and raising its profile:** Delivery of the interventions to strengthen the town centre offer in Bridgend should improve the retail and leisure offer, increase the number of shoppers and visitors, increase the amount of spend and raise Bridgend's profile and image for both residents and visitors;
- **Improving accessibility and parking:** Improving accessibility and legibility in the town centre for all modes of transport will increase the number of shoppers and visitors, lead to an improvement in parking provision and enhance the sustainability and the quality of the environment in the town centre;
- **Enhancing the physical environment:** Particularly through Convergence funding proposals and redevelopment. These should improve the quality of the town centre environment and public realm as well as enhance the town centre offer as a retail and leisure destination and raise the profile and image of Bridgend; and,
- **Maximising the community and commercial benefits from development opportunities:** Redevelopment led by the public and private sector in the medium to long term will provide a range of development sites capable of delivering investment to the town centre.

6.6 LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

Existing policies in the adopted UDP already complement and are flexible enough to support the findings of the masterplan. The Local Development Plan (LDP) is not yet at its deposit stage and it also offers a useful opportunity to adopt policies that will help secure the recommendations of the masterplan. Notwithstanding existing policies in the UDP, as a consequence of retail uses moving out of the town centre in recent years, a situation whereby the fabric of Bridgend's town centre is improved but its role and function declines further should obviously be avoided.

It is absolutely fundamental to the delivery of the Masterplan, that planning policy prevents retail development coming forward which could be seen as prejudicing the vitality and attractiveness of the core retail area within Bridgend's town centre. The LDP will need to make it very clear that new, out of centre, retail outlets that would contain high street retail uses will not be supported, reaffirming the importance of the sequential approach (town centre first) to retail, leisure, office and other town centre development. In addition, the policy will also need to promote the town centre as a focus for employment and leisure growth as well as encourage further residential provision.

6.7 OUTCOMES & MEASURING SUCCESS

Successful delivery of the masterplan should result in the following outcomes that can be monitored and measured through the annual town centre health checks and other market data to assess the success of the town centre. These are based on:

- Increases in **pedestrian footfall**;
- Increases in **visitor numbers**;
- Increases in the **duration of visits**;
- Increases in the amount of **spend and clawback** of lost expenditure;
- Reduction in **vacancy levels**;
- Strengthening **rental and yield** profiles; and,
- Higher **quality public realm**.

6.8 ACTION PLAN

The Action Plan reflects the fact that many of the opportunities for development in the town centre are dependent on an improvement in market conditions, and the decisions and aspirations of different landowners. For this reason the Action Plan will need to be adjusted over time and should not be seen as a blueprint for the whole length of the plan period.

The actions set out in the table below reflect mainly work that needs to be taken forward in the short and medium term, to create the conditions for regeneration and redevelopment, in the long term.

Strategic Objective	Action	Timescale	Responsibility
Develop the retail destination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare development brief for Southside Opportunity Area Develop delivery and marketing strategy for Southside working with other owner interests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short Medium/Long 	BCBC - regeneration & development
Maximise the riverfront	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure funding for public realm improvements to The Rhiw hill to improve access to and from The Rhiw multi-storey car park and the river 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medium 	BCBC - regeneration
Improve the gateways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with owners of the Embassy site to secure demolition and clearance of derelict buildings and replacement with temporary car parking Prepare development brief for Brewery Field if site is vacated for redevelopment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short Long 	BCBC - regeneration
Enhance the quality environment and historic character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the convergence programme of projects, focusing on improvement of linkages and access in the town centre Implement Phase 2 of the Townscape Heritage Initiative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short/Medium Short 	BCBC - regeneration & development/streetscene BCBC - regeneration
Strengthen the core	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare and implement Improvement Strategy for the Indoor Market 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short/Medium 	BCBC - regeneration & development/property
Create a vibrant and accessible visitor destination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare and implement a Town Centre Parking Plan that enables Bridgend to compete successfully against other local and sub-regional destinations. Prepare and implement a Town Centre Access & Signage Plan focusing on improving vehicular and pedestrian access to and within the town centre core Develop a strategic Town Centre Management Plan and Partnership with representation from the public and private sectors to drive forward integrated development and management of the town centre Deliver a high quality events programme which emphasises the town's uniqueness and vitality, and supports the delivery of the Tourism Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Short Term 	BCBC - streetscene BCBC - streetscene BCBC - regeneration & development BCBC - regeneration & development and Bridgend Town Council

