

Bridgend Valleys Placemaking Property Improvement Grant

Guidance notes for applicants



UK Government Wales
Llywodraeth y DU Cymru

**LEVELLING
UP**

1. Background

Version 1.0 FINAL (May 2023)

1.1. The UK Government Shared Prosperity Fund has been made available to Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) by UK Government to enable places to invest in capacity building and infrastructure support to restore community spaces and relationships and create the foundations for social, environmental, economic & cultural development at the neighbourhood-level.

Projects will need to be meet the objectives of the UKSPF Communities and Place investment priority. The investment priority will enable places to invest to restore their community spaces and relationships and create the foundations for economic development at the neighbourhood-level. The intention of this is to strengthen the social fabric of communities, supporting in building pride in place.

The specific intervention relevant to this grant fund is- **W1: Improvements to town centres & high streets**

Applicants will be expected to deliver against the following outputs:

- Amount of commercial buildings developed or improved (m2)
- Number of rehabilitated premises (numerical value)
- Number of commercial buildings developed or improved (numerical value)

1.2 Corporate Plan

Bridgend County Borough Council 'Delivering Together' Corporate Plan 2023-2028.

BCBC's Corporate Plan for 2023-28 sets out the council's priorities and how we will work alongside local people and partners to provide services over the next five years.

Called 'Delivering Together,' the plan is designed to be easier for people to engage with.

This fund will meet Wellbeing Objective 3 of the corporate plan- A County Borough with thriving valleys communities.

1.3 Location

Grant applications will be open to owners or occupiers of commercial properties in the District Centres and Local Service Centres in the valleys of the Llynfi, Garw and Ogmore (excluding Maesteg Town Centre). Please see annex 1 for detailed boundary maps of eligible areas.

2. Introduction

2.1. The Fund offers applicants the opportunity to apply for a grant (subject to planning) to –

- Convert vacant floor-space on upper floors into new residential accommodation. Undertake external and internal works to improve vacant space above shop / commercial frontages, with the intention of assisting applicants to bring that space back into use for residential purposes. The scheme will offer the opportunity to enable the conversion of empty floor space

into new homes, maximise opportunities to revitalise empty properties and provide mixed use opportunities for applicants.

- Physically improve their property by offering the opportunity to apply for a grant for a new / commercial property frontage and associated external and internal works. The intention of the fund is to enhance building frontage and bring vacant commercial floor space back into beneficial use.

The improvements undertaken must be within the applicant's ownership or leasehold of the property (with owners consent). Projects incorporating external improvements of a building must be in accordance with Council Supplementary Planning Guidance and internal works should assist the sustainability of the property alongside the achievement of outputs.

Works

The following guide includes examples of the type of works that could be supported. Each scheme will be assessed by officers on a case by case basis to determine eligible works.

Residential

- The minimum requirement from each scheme is 1 x 1 bedroom self-contained flat. Eligible expenditure includes works deemed necessary to create new residential accommodation.
- Schemes should comply to the minimum floor space as recommended in the most up to date Welsh Housing Quality Standards, currently this is:-
 1. 46m² per one bedroom flat
 2. 59m² per two bedroom flat
- Must adhere to Rent Smart Wales criteria.
- Student accommodation, bedsits and studios are not eligible for grant funding

Commercial - External

- Shopfronts
- Signage
- Windows & doors
- External lighting
- Roofs & chimneys
- Rainwater goods (guttering and down pipes)
- Rendering, stone cleaning and repairs, re-pointing
- Structural works

Commercial - Internal

- Windows & doors
- Improved accessibility

- Walls, ceilings, lighting
- Energy Efficiency measures when included as part of the overall scheme;
- Utilities and services, including heating
- Welfare facilities (e.g. essential washroom and cleansing facilities only)
- Structural works

Ineligible expenditure includes:

- Repair and general maintenance costs
- Certain types of fixtures and fittings – eligibility to be confirmed by the Council
- Cost of works being carried out as a legal statutory requirement
- Legal and accounting fees
- Cash and/or credit card payment to Agents/contractors
- Costs of applying for statutory consents
- Works carried out prior to grant offer (unless approved by the Council in writing)
- Any invoices paid for using cash/credit card

3. The Grant

3.1. The grant will be a maximum of 80% of reasonable eligible costs, up to a maximum grant award of:

- £30,000 for occupied properties
- £49,999 for properties that have been vacant for more than 6months.

Each application will be considered on the basis of its specific circumstances.

3.2. All grants are at the discretion of the Council and are subject to budget availability. The amount of any grant offered will be assessed on an individual project basis, taking into account environmental and economic benefits arising. There is a limited allocation of grant funding and it will be awarded on a competitive basis.

3.3. Grants will normally be awarded exclusive of VAT. If the applicant cannot recover VAT this may be accepted as an eligible cost at the discretion of the Council, subject to the applicant undertaking to repay to the Council any VAT element, which later becomes reclaimable from HMRC as a result of a change in the applicant's VAT status.

3.4. The Grant will usually be paid on completion of all works subject to production of invoices, construction certificates, defrayment evidence etc. Interim payments can be made at the discretion of the Council.

3.5. A minimum of 10% of the total Grant award may be withheld (Retention) until the Council is satisfied that all of the work has been completed to the required standard, as declared by an independent Quantity Surveyor, and a copy of the practical completion certificate has been received.

3.6. Any variance to approved works will need to be agreed in advance with the Council.

4. Eligible applicants

4.1. The programme is open to Freeholders/Property Owners, Sole Traders, Partnerships, Limited Companies, Community Businesses, Co-operatives and Registered Social Landlords.

4.2. Grants for works to properties will only be available to owners of the freehold interest in the property or to lessees on the property, at the time of receipt of a valid application. If a leaseholder, applicants must provide a letter of consent from the freeholder to the proposed works and a copy of the lease agreement.

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that all the necessary land ownership requirements are in place to implement the scheme

5. Application Process

5.1. The application process will require the submission of the following supporting documentation to accompany the application form:

- A schedule of works, containing an itemised list of proposed works that is to be submitted to each contractor for them to quote against.
- 3 written quotations itemised against the schedule of works. Please ensure costs for all the required works come under the appropriate item heading, to allow easy comparison between quotes. Please note, this is essential. (If an applicant requires support to prepare a schedule of works and obtain quotations, an independent agent, such as a qualified architect or quantity surveyor can be used to coordinate the tender process. Agents' fees are eligible expenditure, at the discretion of the Council. Please email regeneration@bridgend.gov.uk for further information).
- Recent photographs of the property
- Copies of all relevant statutory consents (where applicable)
- Copy of building insurance certification
- Letter of consent from Freeholder (if Leaseholder)
- Copy of lease agreement from Freeholder (if Leaseholder)
- Evidence of match funding – please confirm how you intend to finance your contribution to the whole project. Confirmation should be in the form of a bank letter or other official documentation (original paperwork will be required) such as a bank statement.
- Survey Report (if applicable)

Depending on the type of the project, the following may also be required:

- Evidence will be required of accreditation to Rent Smart Wales and if applicable, Houses in Multiple Occupation Licenses/s.
- 2 copies of scaled drawings (minimum 1:50 scale) showing the existing building and the proposed works. (1:5 – 1:10 scaled drawings may be required for specific details.).

6. Contractors

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- 6.1. Where applicants have an interest in companies wishing to tender for the work, this will be permitted, but restricted to a maximum of one company per project.
- 6.2. It is possible that project applicants, or persons connected with them (such as relatives, business partners or friends) may wish to tender for a contract being offered by the project applicant. Whilst this is not unacceptable, such relationships must be declared, and the applicant will still need to ensure that they conduct the transaction in an open and transparent manner. The estimates/tenders must be from registered trading companies.
- 6.3. Before tendering, prospective contractors must carry out a mandatory site visit to ascertain the nature of the site, access and local conditions and restrictions likely to affect the execution of the works.
- 6.4. Contractors must price all items on the quotation.
- 6.5. Each contractor will also be required to submit a copy of their current Public Liability Insurance.
- 6.6. Contractor management is the responsibility of the Applicant unless agreed in writing by the Council.

7. Procurement

- 7.1. When procuring goods or services applicants should aim to get value for money whilst offering a range of businesses the opportunity to provide those goods or services in a fair and transparent manner. The applicant must therefore ensure that the following procurement procedures are adopted according to the estimated maximum value of the contract at quotation stage by obtaining different.

Estimated Value	Quotation required
£0 to £5000	2 quotations
£5001 to £49,999	3 quotations

- 7.2. The lowest quotation will be favoured as part of a grant approval. In instances where the lowest tender contractor cannot undertake the work, the second lowest contractor can be considered. Evidence will be required to show that the lowest contractor cannot do the work e.g. letter from contractor confirming they cannot do the work in the timeline required.

7.3. Estimates and tenders will be assessed externally by an independent Quantity Surveyor, appointed by the Council. The amount of the grant offered to each project will be determined by the Council and will be subject to the Quantity Surveyor report on the reasonable costs for the works which are considered eligible for grant aid.

8. Outputs

8.1. Applicants should note that projects will be expected to deliver against the following outputs –

Intervention	W1: Funding for improvements to town centres and high streets, including better accessibility for disabled people, including capital spend and running costs.
Output	Amount of commercial buildings developed or improved (m2)
Definition	<p>The total square meterage of new commercial floorspace completed or improved. Commercial space includes, but is not limited to: retail, hospitality, office and industrial space.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A retail space means a fixed location for the display or retail sale of goods or services. Examples include, but are not limited to: supermarkets, shops selling clothing, electronics, furniture, books, etc. - A hospitality space means a space whose primary purpose is for accommodation or food service. Examples include, but are not limited to: restaurants, cafes, pubs, bars, catering, hotels, campsites and other accommodation. - Office space means a fixed location where the primary activities are concerned with financial services, professional services (other than health or medical services), or any other appropriate services in a commercial, business or service locality. - Industrial space means space used for industrial processes, storage or distribution. - Other commercial space means non-public or community spaces that do not fall into the categories above. - Completed means physical completion of the facilities and space is ready for occupancy immediately. A building should be classified as complete once it is on the non-domestic rating list. - Improvement means adding, renovating or repairing facilities with the aim of creating a better space. It does not include maintenance of existing facilities.
Evidence requirements	<p>Project data that will evidence the total square meterage of commercial space completed or improved -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificate of practical completion of the works.e.g. QS certification of works carried out • Photographs before and after completion of the scheme

Intervention	W1: Funding for improvements to town centres and high streets, including better accessibility for disabled people, including capital spend and running costs.
Output	Number of rehabilitated premises (numerical value)
Definition	The number of premises that have been rehabilitated. - Premises means a building together with its land and outbuildings that have become damaged by industrial or other development and is beyond beneficial use without treatment. - Rehabilitated means remediated to a point of beneficial use.
Evidence requirements	Project data that will evidence the number of rehabilitated premises <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificate of practical completion of the works.e.g. QS certification of works carried out. • Photographs before and after completion of the scheme

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8.2. Successful applications will be expected to fulfil the outputs indicated on the application form. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that evidence to support any outputs is made available to the Council, even if the property is leased out to a third party.

9. Statutory requirements and expectations

9.1. Applications should provide confirmation of any required consents, such as Planning Permission, Building Regulations, Change of Use, SAB/SUDS or Listed Buildings consent. Applicants are responsible for seeking the appropriate consent(s) needed to carry out the project and ensure that all works comply.

9.2. Applicants will be expected not to be in arrears with payments or in dispute with the Council at the grant approval stage and payment stage of the project.

9.3. All works need to comply with the guidance within the schedule letter and Council Supplementary Planning Guidance.

9.4. Listed properties or properties within a Conservation Area will be subject to further conditions as advised by the Council.

9.5. The applicant must ensure that their business and premises are compliant with all relevant environmental health, trading standards and consumer protection legislation and have no history of non compliance or convictions in respect of the current or former businesses operated by the same.

10. Decision making Process

10.1. An assessment of the completed application and full supporting documentation will be undertaken by Council Officers. During this process additional information may be sought from applicants.

10.2. Successful applicants will be issued with a grant offer letter together with relevant terms and conditions.

10.3. Unsuccessful applicants will be issued with a notifying letter.

11. Insurance

11.1. For a period of five years from the grant award date, the applicant must comprehensively insure the property with a reputable insurance company and, if requested, provide the Council with evidence of such insurance.

12. Subsidy Control

- 12.1. This Grant is awarded under UK Subsidy Control Rules. Under the Subsidy Control Act 2022 a subsidy is where a public authority provides support to an enterprise that gives them an economic advantage, meaning equivalent support could not have been obtained on commercial terms. It can take the form of a grant, a tax break, a loan, guarantee or equity investment on favourable terms, or the use of facilities below market price, amongst other kinds of support.
- 12.2. The Council will assess grant applications to determine any potential Subsidy Control implications. Each application will be considered on the basis of its specific circumstances. All applicants must also consider how they will deliver in line with subsidy control rules and work with the Council to provide any additional information that is deemed required. Further information on the Subsidy Control Rules can be found under the UK Government guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/subsidy-control-regime>)
- 12.3. Where the Council determines that a grant cannot be compliantly awarded under the UK Subsidy Control Regime the application will be considered ineligible and your application will be rejected.
- 12.4. The Council reserves the right to require repayment of any grant funding which following award is subsequently found to contravene Subsidy Control Rules.

13. Payment of grants

- 13.1. Payment of the grant will not be made until all works are completed to the satisfaction of the Council and subject to the following:
- I. Submission of original invoice(s).
 - II. Submission of bank statement evidencing payment of all paid invoice(s).
 - III. Satisfactory revenues check (confirmation that applicant is not in arrears with the Council).
 - IV. Confirmation that all necessary statutory consents relating to Environmental Health and/or public protection (if applicable) have been complied with.
 - V. Confirmation that all necessary statutory consents including but not limited to *Planning Permission, SAB/SUDS, Building Regulations, Change of Use, or Listed Buildings Consent* have been complied with.
 - VI. Confirmation from an independent Quantity Surveyor (as appointed by the Council) that the works have been satisfactorily undertaken.
 - VII. If the independent Quantity Surveyor deems the work to be unacceptable, the applicant will have to rectify the work, at their own cost, and may incur a further cost for the Quantity Surveyor to reassess the work. If the work is not rectified to a satisfactory standard, the Council may have the work corrected and will withhold part or, whole of the Grant.
 - VIII. Production of Interim/Final Certificates.
- 13.2. Interim payments are considered at the discretion of the Council.
- 13.3. Invoices paid through credit card /hire purchase/extended credit agreements/finance leases/contra invoices and cash purchases **will not** be considered for grant funding; Payments must be in the form of BACS, Faster payments, CHAPS or cheque.

14. Publicity

14.1. The Council and UK Government reserves the right to publicise any project supported.

15. Monitoring

15.1. Officers of the Council will be permitted full access to the property in order for them to evaluate the effectiveness of the grant aid and compliance with its terms and conditions. The applicant will be contacted in due course in order to arrange a monitoring visit. Visits to the grant-aided scheme by representatives of the Council will take place to monitor the progress of works. Thereafter, these visits will be arranged at 6 monthly intervals until all conditions and outputs are attained and demonstrated.

16. Terms and conditions

16.1. A copy of the terms and conditions for the Grant will be provided with the formal grant offer.

17. Welsh Language

17.1. Applications in Welsh will not be treated less favourably than applications in English, in accordance with the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

18. Submission of applications

18.1. Applications should be sent to the following address:-
Regeneration@bridgend.gov.uk

	Town	Status
1	Bettws North	Local Service Centre
2	Bettws South	Local Service Centre
3	Caerau	Local Service Centre
4	Ogmore Vale	District Centre
5	Pontycymmer	District Centre
6	Nantymoel	Local Service Centre
7	Blaengarw	Local Service Centre
8	Blackmill	Local Service Centre
9	Pontrhydydyff	Local Service Centre

Appendix 1 – Eligible Areas

The grant will be available to owners or occupiers of commercial properties in the District and Service Centres of the valleys of the Llynfi, Garw and Ogmore (excluding Maesteg Town Centre).

District Centres and Local Service Centres are defined in the BCBC Local Development Plan (2013) under Strategic Policy SP10 which sets out the retail and commercial hierarchy of the Bridgend County Borough.

The eligible District Centres and Local Service Centres include:



Bettws North Commercial Centre

1:1000

Time of Plot: 14:36

Date of Plot: 23/06/2022

Plot generated by Nicola Lewis

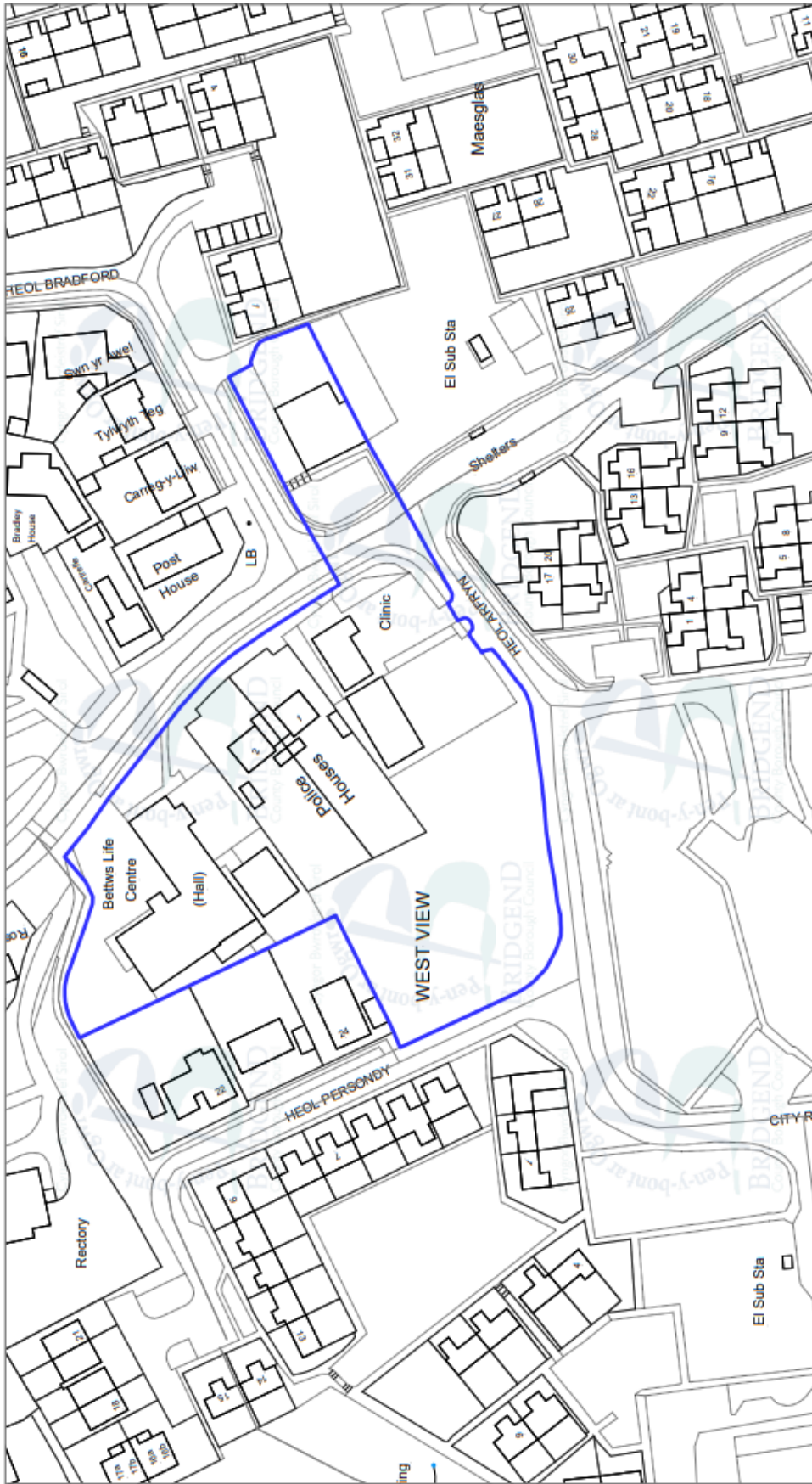
Department BCBC Regeneration



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Chief Executive

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Bettws South Commercial Centre

1:1250
 Time of Plot: 14:32
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Caerau Commercial Centre

1:2500

Time of Plot: 14:52

Date of Plot: 23/06/2022

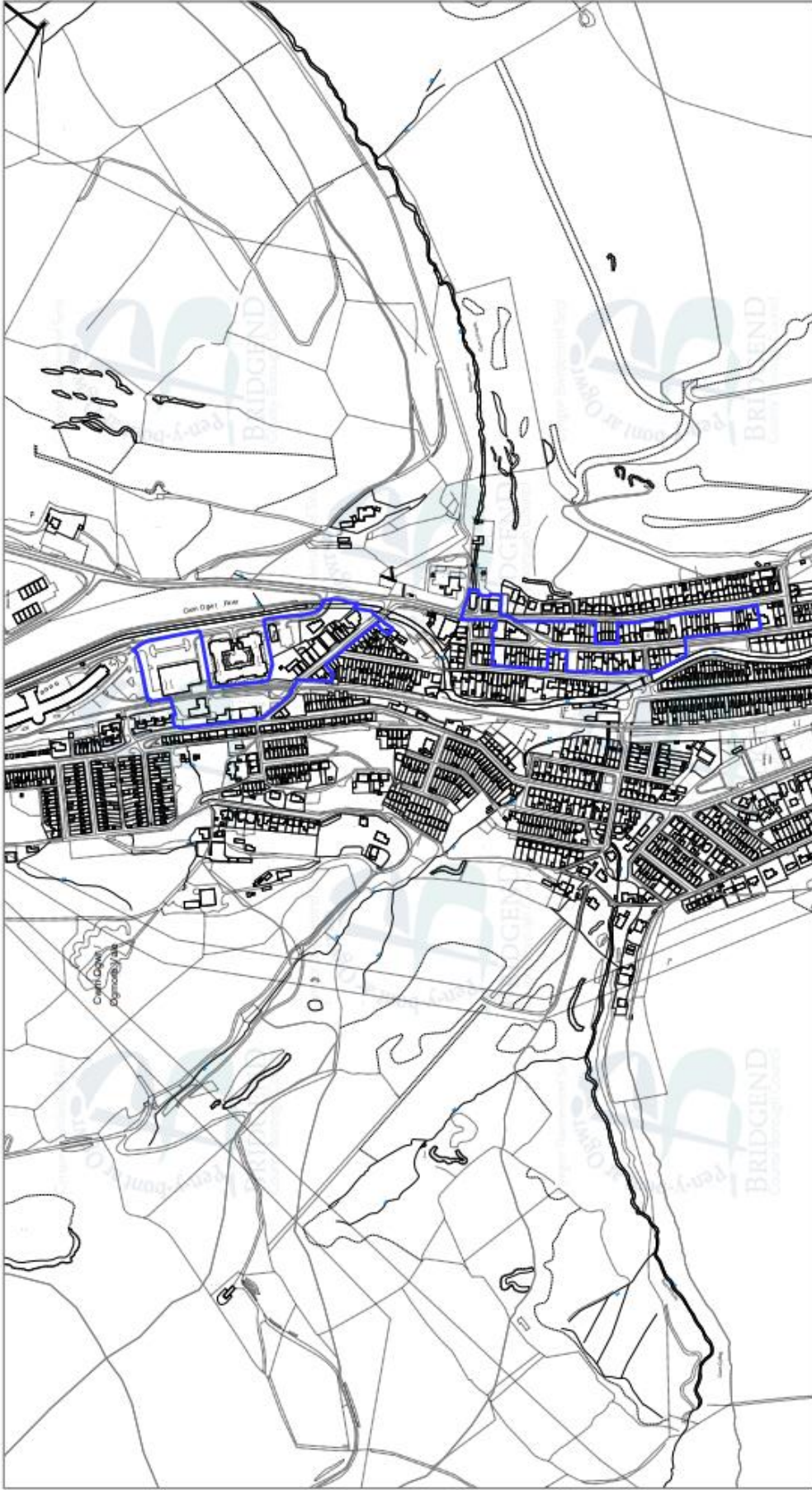
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Ogmore Vale Commercial Centre

1:7071

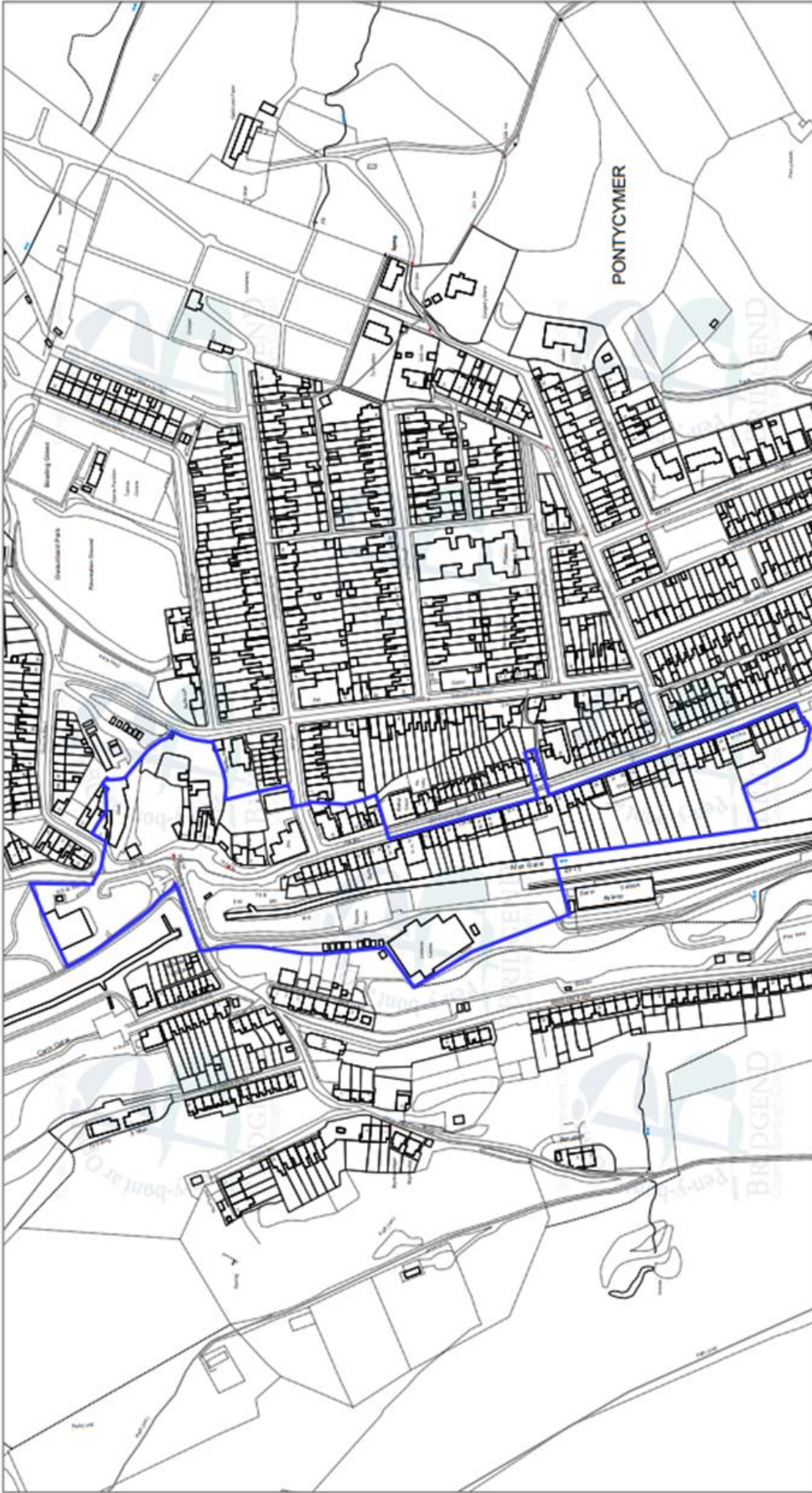
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Date of Plot: 23/06/2022

Plot generated by: Nicola Lewis

Department BCBC Regeneration





Pontycymer Commercial Centre

1:3536

Time of Plot: 21:13

Date of Plot: 22/06/2022

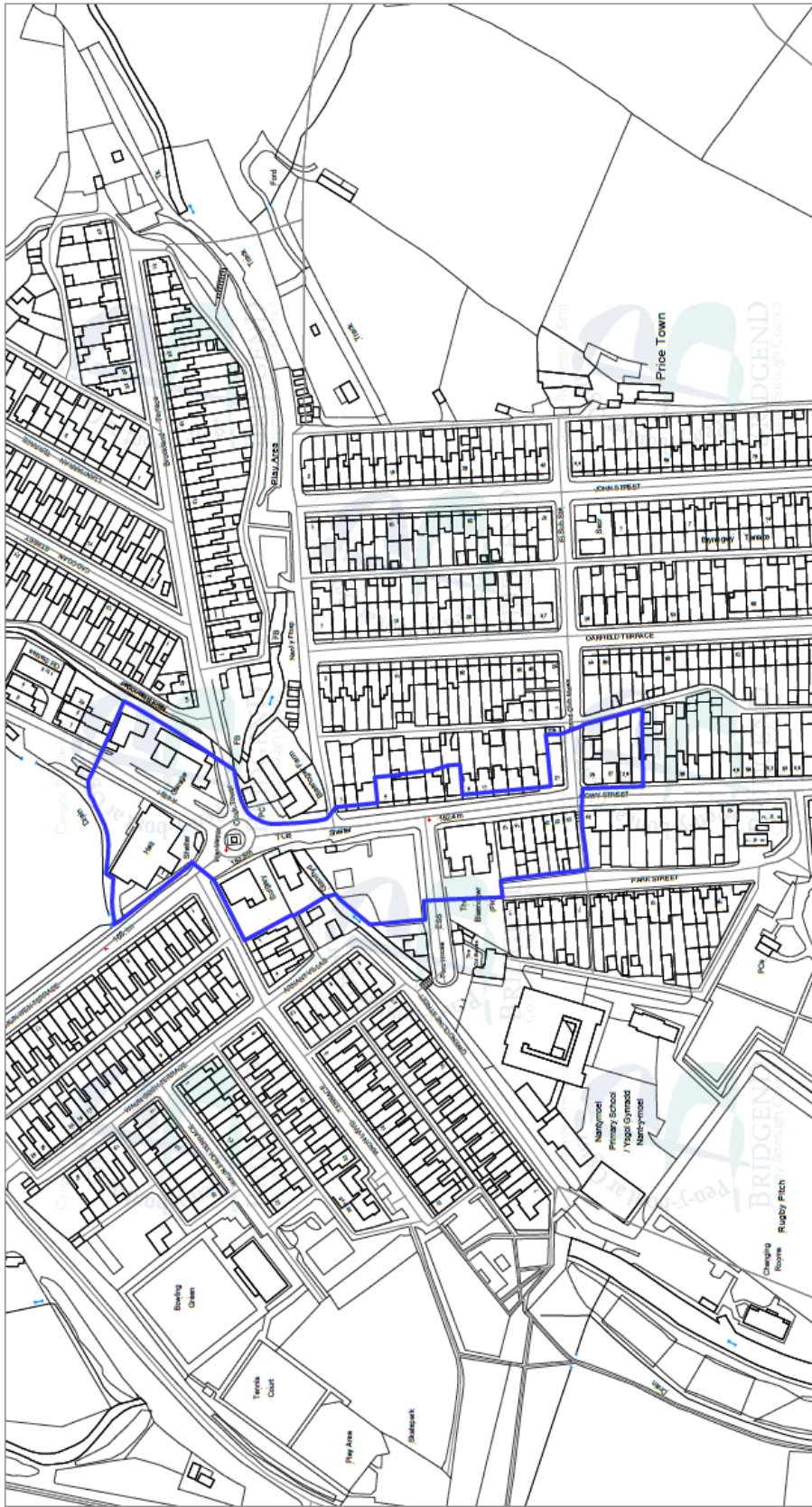
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Nantymoel Commercial Centre

1:2500

Time of Plot: 11:45

Date of Plot: 23/06/2022

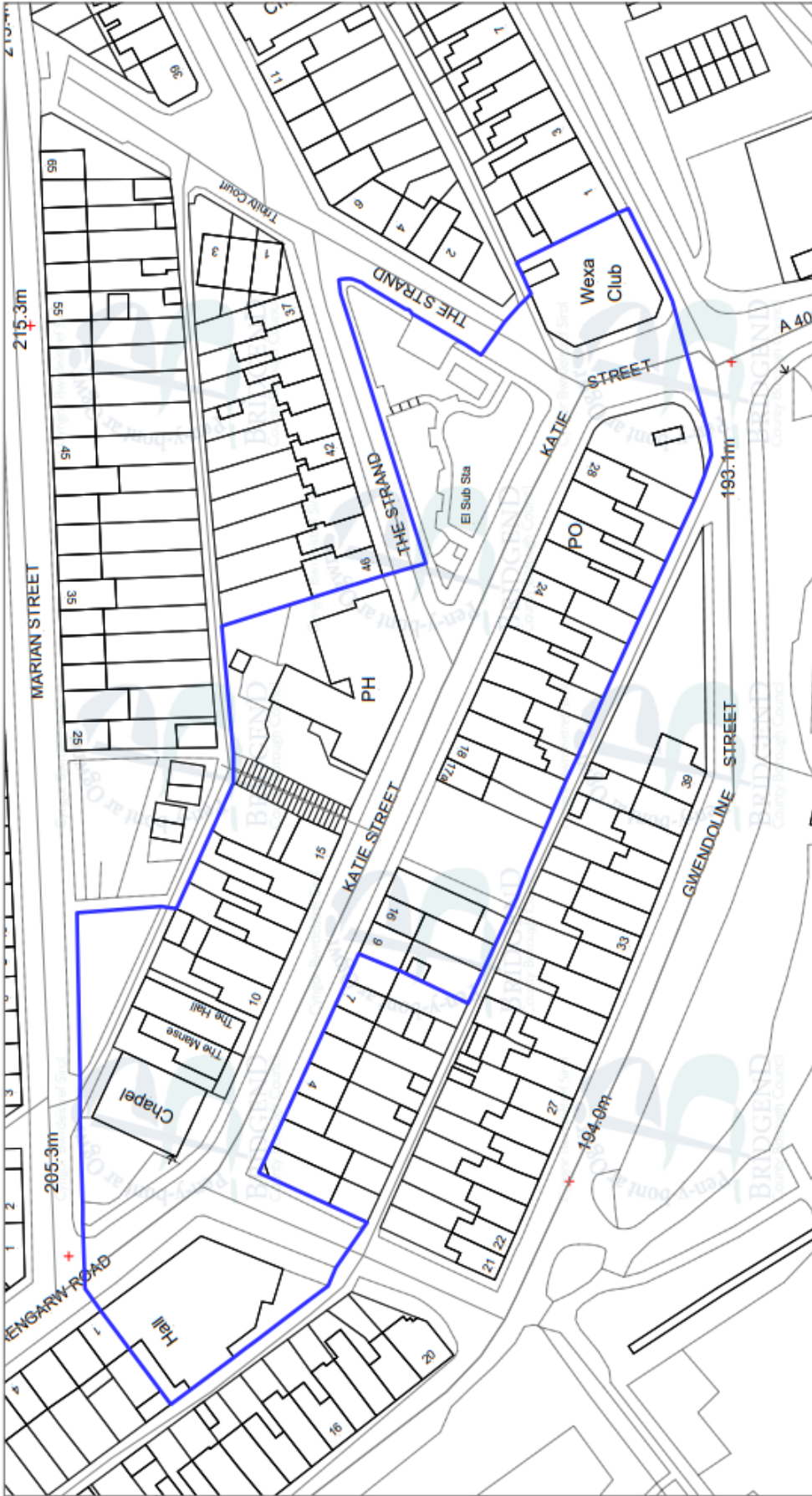
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Blaengarw Commercial Centre

1:1000
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