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**Date: 8th October 2014**

Dear Sir/Madam,

A meeting of the **Blackwood Town Centre Management Group** will be held in the **Ebbw Room, Penallta House, Tredomen, Ystrad Mynach** on **Friday, 17th October, 2014** at **1.30 pm** to consider the matters contained in the following agenda.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Chris Burns'.

**Chris Burns**  
INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE

## A G E N D A

- 1 To receive apologies for absence.
- 2 Declarations of interest.  
Councillors and Officers are reminded of their personal responsibility to declare any personal and/or prejudicial interest(s) in respect of any item of business on this agenda in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000, the Council's Constitution, and the Code of Conduct for both Councillors and Officers.

To receive and note the following minutes: -

- 3 Blackwood Town Centre Management Group held on 16th May 2014

To receive and note the following updates: -

- 4 Area Forum Budget Balance;
- 5 Blackwood Christmas Market 2014;

A greener place Man gwyrddach



- 6 Councillor Dix Proposal Area Forum Budget Balance to be retained for maintenance issues for Town Centre;
- 7 Consultation on new BMI logo;
- 8 'Choose the High Street' Campaign Progress Update;
- 9 'Choose the High Street' @ Christmas;
- 10 Footpath from Blackwood Gate Retail Park;
- 11 'Maxime' Cinema Update;
- 12 Proposal for the Retention of Community Response Team (CRT) Services;
- 13 Blackwood Town Centre Audit.

**Circulation:**

Councillors Mrs E.M. Aldworth, Mrs P. Cook, D.T. Davies, N. Dix, C. Hawker, K. James, A. Rees and T. J. Williams

Town Councillors Ms C. Erasmus, Ms Z. Hammond and Mr J. Hold (Clerk)

**Other Organisations**

Mr C. Cook, (Caerphilly Access Group)

Mr H.T. Edwards, (Blackwood Retail Partnership)

Mr A. Oldman, (Blackwood Shopping Precinct)

Inspector M. Smith, (Gwent Police)

The Manager, (Asda Blackwood)

The Manager, (Blackwood Library)



## BLACKWOOD TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, PENALLTA HOUSE  
ON FRIDAY, 16TH MAY 2014 AT 12.30 P.M.

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PRESENT:

Councillors:

Councillors: P. Cook, N. Dix, K. James, C. Hawker, P. Leonard, A. Rees

Together with:

C. Erasmus (Town Councillor), Z. Hammond (Town Councillor), Inspector M Smith (Gwent Police)

Also:

A. Highway (Town Centre Manager), S. Wilcox (Assistant Town Centre Manager),  
A. Dallimore (Team Leader - Urban Renewal & Conservation), A. Jones (Clerk)

### 1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

Mr. Highway opened the meeting and asked for nominations for Chairman. Councillor Dix was nominated and seconded and all agreed, Councillor Dix accepted the position and continued with the meeting

### 2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN

Councillor Dix asked for nominations for Vice Chairman. Councillor Rees was nominated and seconded and all agreed, Councillor Rees accepted the position

### 3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

### 4. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors: T. Williams, D. T. Davies (Consultee), E. Aldworth (Consultee), Bob Campbell (traffic management).

**5. WELCOME INTRODUCTION FOR NEW MEMBER COUNCILLOR ALAN REES**

Councillor Dix introduced Councillor Rees to the group and the group introduced themselves to Councillor Rees

**6. TO NOTE THE PREVIOUS MINUTES (7TH FEBRUARY 2014 MIN NO'S 1-3, PAGE NO'S 1-3)**

The previous minutes were taken as read

**7. 'A' FRAMES PROTOCOL**

Mr Highway advised the group that there were no officers available to attend the meeting however the report was for information as this report has been brought to the group previously. If there were any concerns over the report they were to be made to Mr Highway for him to take up with the service area.

**8. CHOOSE THE HIGH STREET**

Mr Highway presented his report, which informed the group that since the Christmas campaign feedback was brought to the group. Town Centre Management has been working on a number of platforms to raise consumer choice throughout the towns.

The aim of the campaign is to increase importance of supporting local retailers by promoting their businesses and raise awareness of consumer choice.

As part of the advertising, 250 bags have been handed out from the Customer First office in Blackwood, all members were provided with a bag. Information will be going out to all businesses and local banks have been contacted and provided with leaflets to provide to potential new businesses.

Advertising will continue in a number of ways such as banners, billboards, twitter, facebook and youtube.

Councillor Hawker stated that the billboard design is very good and really stands out. Mr. Highway confirmed that this was designed in house and it is a credit to our organisation that we have officers who can do these things.

Councillor Dix added that this was excellent work and is a really good initiatives, he hopes that this will boost trade in the towns and that Blackwood will remain robust with trade. He thanked Mr Highway for his hard work and report.

**9. CINEMA UPDATE**

Mr Highway confirmed that he is in regular contact with the cinema operator and advised that the cinema was due to open in June but unfortunately this has now been delayed until the end of July. It was confirmed that there will be five screens and they will be showing current blockbuster movies.

Mr Dallimore advised the group that there are workmen on site continuing to work to get the cinema opened as soon as possible.

Mr Hold advised that the Town Council has been in talks with Blackwood Rotary Club to hold a premier film event in the Maxim cinema with possible dates of the 17th or 24th July. All

monies would be donated to charity and are in discussions with the operator.

Mr. Highway has met with Beverley Edwards from Tidal's store with regards to trying to find a suitable location for the opening event and this is still ongoing. Councillor Dix confirmed that the Mayor has been invited to open the event.

Councillor Leonard asked how would the cinema be promoted.

Mr. Dallimore advised that the Town Centre Management team are going to work with the operator to help promote the cinema.

Mr. Highway advised that the Town Centre Gazette would be used to advertise the opening of the cinema promoting that it has five screens showing latest releases

Choose the High Street will also be a good marketing tool for the promotion of the cinema

## **10. CHANGING OF DISABLED PARKING BAYS IN HIGH STREET**

Mr. Highway advised that Bob Campbell was not able to be at the meeting.

Town Councillor Z. Hammond and Mr. Hold highlighted that there has been a lot of work with regards to improving the high street which should have been carried out after the disabled bays were put in place not before.

Mr. Highway requested that all queries be sent to him and he will contact Traffic Management.

## **11. TOWN CENTRE BUDGET ALLOCATIONS**

Mr. Dallimore informed the group that due to budget cuts, improvements and maintenance for all five towns has been reduced to £20,000. This will have a big impact on what repairs and maintenance will be undertaken throughout the towns.

Mr. Dallimore advised that the Council will continue to work hard to secure additional external funding and will look to work with the Town Council to achieve this.

Councillor Dix agreed that more focus and smarter thinking in looking to acquire funding externally is the way forward.

Councillor Hawker asked for clarification as to where the external funding would come from and could the Heritage Lottery be used for older buildings like the cinema.

Mr. Dallimore advised that there are a number of possible routes some of them being Welsh Government grants, European and Lottery monies. With regards to the cinema, the developer decided to go alone without any external funding.

## **12. AREA FORUM BUDGET**

Mr. Dallimore advised the group that there is £7,657 in the area forum budget, which in the past has been used for events.

Councillor Dix requested that the group and Mr. Highway look at possible ideas where this money could be used within the town.

Possible suggestions were that the old toilet block has a mural on it. Mr. Dallimore would look to work with the owners of the toilet block to see if an arrangement could be made for a mural

to be painted and the owner maintains afterwards. Mr Dallimore would look into possible designs and costs. Improve the steps, which lead from Wesley Road or replace old bins were other ideas.

Councillor Dix invited the group to vote on exploring the mural on the toilet block with the owner. This was put to the group and the votes were unanimous to take this option forward.

### **13. BLACKWOOD TOWN CENTRE AUDIT**

Councillor Dix informed the group that Colours is under new ownership and they are looking to turn the premises into a wine bar and make improvements to reduce the noise volume by fitting an internal door. Anyone under the age of 16 will have to leave by a certain time.

Mr. Dallimore advised that the studs outside Argos are not having the impact to stop parking. Arrangements have been made to go and look at the area again with NCS to see alternative solutions.

Mr. Highway has made enquiries with the owners of Poundstretcher who have advised that the matter is with the Insurance Company.

The number of Homeless people in Blackwood has reduced and Kath Peters is meeting with the police to discuss this matter.

Mr. Dallimore advised that the planning application for former junior school has been discussed with planning and it is only an outline application so it will be brought back to the audit once a full application has been submitted.

Councillor Dix raised concerns over the safety of the structure and that people are gaining access to the premises. Mr Dallimore requested that these concerns be passed to him so that they can be referred to Planning and Property Services.

Defective step could not be identified more information has been requested to be able to refer this back to Highways.

The Manager of Asda was grateful that the potholes on Cliff Road are to be repaired.

The group were advised that Inspector Mark Smith will no longer be covering the Blackwood area and will be replaced by Inspector Mark Thomas. Councillor Dix on behalf of the group thanked the Inspector Smith for all of his support and hard work over the years and wished him well in his new role.

Inspector Smith thanked the group and stated that he had enjoyed his time working with the group.

The meeting closed at 1.31 p.m.

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CHAIRMAN



## **BLACKWOOD TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP – 17TH OCTOBER 2014**

**SUBJECT: BLACKWOOD CHRISTMAS MARKET 2014**

**REPORT BY: MARKETING & EVENTS MANAGER**

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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 This report seeks to update the group on plans for this year's Christmas Market and to make a request for a funding contribution from the Area Forum Budget towards the costs of staging the event.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 Following last year's event the aim for this year is to continue building on the awareness of the event in the County Borough and beyond to attract an audience in excess of last year's recorded footfall.

### **3. LINKS TO STRATEGY**

- 3.1 The Council has agreed to a five-year regeneration programme entitled "People, Businesses and Places". The proposals within the strategy are based on a number of regeneration principles, one of which is "Strengthening Town Centres".
- 3.2 'A Prosperous Caerphilly' is identified as a key outcome in the Council's Single Integrated Plan and the 'Ongoing provision of tourism and community events' as one of the means of helping to achieve this outcome along with 'Other town centre events in line with regeneration objectives'

### **4. THE REPORT**

- 4.1 Last year's event attracted combined footfall figures of 11,598, an increase of 24% increase over the average footfall for the town centre of 9,353 (previous 3 weekends). Feedback from the community, resident and business has been regularly positive about the range of attractions and the appeal of the event.
- 4.2 For 2014 there are 44 stalls booked, a 10% increase over 2013, in addition the following attractions have been secured for the event:
- Birds of Prey
  - Reindeers
  - Donkeys & Nativity Scene
  - Children's pottery
  - Facepainting
  - Children's funfair rides
  - Street Entertainment

4.3 Promotional activity for the event will include:

- Featuring in our main Christmas event poster
- A listing in the What's On guide
- 10,000 A6 flyers that will be distributed across town centres and specific events in the County Borough e.g. Firework displays, Christmas Light openings and Christmas Fairs
- Advertisement in Primary Times
- Direct Mail of flyer to event database

4.4 In order to raise the profile of the event and attract a wider audience to the event it is proposed to run an event specific radio campaign for which additional funding would be required.

## **5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 Two of the Council's Strategic Equality Objectives (numbers 3 and 4) are relevant to this report in that they cover matters relating to Physical Access and Communication Access for various individuals and groups covered by Equalities and Welsh Language legislation.

5.2 Town centre regeneration and tourism issues are strongly influenced by these and due consideration of the Strategic Equality Objectives and related actions can contribute to the success of tourism projects and events for example by attracting wider audiences.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 The core funding required to stage the event will come from various departments from within Caerphilly County Borough Council with additional funding support from Blackwood Town Council.

## **7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 Officers from Caerphilly County Borough Council's Business Enterprise Support Services department will co-ordinate the event.

## **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

8.1 To accept the report as an update on progress of the event and to consider a request for a financial contribution of £2,000 towards the staging of the event from the Area Forum Budget.

## **9. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

9.1 In order to continue the development of the event in line with the Strategic Objectives of the Council.

## **10. STATUTORY POWER**

10.1 Local Government Act 2000.

Author: Paul Hudson, Events and Marketing Manager  
Consultees: Andrew Highway, Town Centre Development Manager





## BLACKWOOD TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP – 17TH OCTOBER 2014

**SUBJECT: 'CHOOSE THE HIGH STREET' CAMPAIGN PROGRESS UPDATE**

**REPORT BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To provide information on the progress of the 'Choose the High Street' campaign run by the Council's Town Centre Management Team.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 The 'Choose the High Street' campaign ran throughout the summer months across the five managed town centres. A number of promotional platforms were utilised to communicate the message to the public.

### **3. LINKS TO STRATEGY**

- 3.1 The Council has agreed to a five-year regeneration programme entitled "People, Business and Places". The proposals within the strategy are based on a number of regeneration principles, one of which is "Strengthening Town Centres".
- 3.2 'A Prosperous Caerphilly' is identified as one of the key outcomes in the Council's 'Single Integrated Plan'. The Implementation of the *Unique Places* model of Town Centre Management in the County Borough's principal town centres is one of the actions identified to achieve this outcome.

### **4. THE REPORT**

- 4.1 Following the publication of the Portas Review in 2011, there has been a great deal of strategic thinking and media focus on the future of Britain's town centres. Subsequent reports and studies have all drawn attention to the threat posed to the high street by the growth in online shopping, particularly through the advent of Smartphone technology and also the expansion of out of town retail parks. In light of these changes in consumer spending, the active promotion of town centres is seen as key to their long-term survival and future growth. In Spring 2014, the Council's Town Centre Management team developed a new concept 'Choose the High Street', the aim was to use this brand across the five managed town centres in order to promote them as shopping destinations and business opportunities.
- 4.2 During the summer months the 'Choose the High Street' campaign was rolled out in Caerphilly, Blackwood, Bargoed, Risca and Ystrad Mynach town centres. The initiative moved away from the 'discount card' concept used at Christmas and took a twofold approach in promoting the town centres. Firstly, 'Choose the High Street' highlights the power of

consumer choice and asks shoppers to make a conscious decision to use their local high street. Secondly, it encourages new 'start up' businesses to locate onto the high street.

Summary of platforms utilised to promote the campaign:

- 5,000 x free canvas shopping bags given away in Libraries and Customer First Centres;
- 1,000 children's balloons given away at town centre events;
- 30,000 'concertina' leaflets given away in the Libraries, Customer First Centres and at town centre events – Caerphilly 10K / Blackwood Beach Party / Risca Hoe Down & Show Down / The BIG Cheese;
- Advertising billboards displayed in each town centre;
- 700 window stickers distributed to retailers across five town centres;
- Article in Newslite - delivered to every household in the County Borough;
- Lamppost banners;
- YouTube videos produced;
- Content posted on Council's Facebook page;
- Content posted on Council's Twitter page;
- Re-development of the Town Centre pages on the Caerphilly County Borough Council website, with a banner placed prominently on the council website homepage to signpost visitors to the pages;
- Retail Property Directory site rebranded as 'Choose the High Street';
- 250 business leaflets sent to local banks, enterprise agencies, grant providers and Business Wales contacts;
- Proactive engagement with property agents who have shops for sale or let in the town centres.

#### 4.3 Additional Promotion

As the campaign unfolded additional items were purchased in response to public demand and also to support the Welsh Governments 'Support Your High Street' seven day initiative between September 20th – 27th:

- An additional 3,000 free canvas shopping bags were ordered for Libraries, Customer First Centres and the new Mobile Customer Service Centre;
- A full-page Caerphilly Observer advert and accompanying web banner advert was placed.

#### 4.4 Social Media

Social media platforms *Facebook*, *Twitter* and *YouTube* were used as a complementary mechanism to reinforce the messages promoted through press articles and roadside billboards.

YouTube film clips were produced involving local independent traders from each of the five town centres these helped to showcase the unique retail offering of each town centre. In each film clip, the retailers were united in conveying the message that there are many reasons why residents should choose to support their local high street. To date, the collective number of views of these film clips is in excess of 1,000.

Facebook and Twitter were used to reinforce the key messages of the campaign with in excess of a collective 14,000 followers. Throughout the three month first phase period, regular engagement activity took place to gauge residents' thoughts and views on a range of high street related issues including customer service and suggestions for potential enhancements to town centres in the future.

A 'closed' Facebook group was also created, to allow the County Borough's retailers a unique place where they can share best practice, ideas and potential opportunities to work collaboratively. This element of the campaign is in its very early stages, but will continue to be built upon over the coming months.

#### 4.5 New Businesses

Since the 'Choose the High Street' initiative was launched in June a number of new businesses have opened in the five managed town centres:-

<b>Business</b>	<b>Town Centre</b>
Cadwalladers	Caerphilly
EMS Motorcycle Spares	Caerphilly
Gills Café & Coffee House	Caerphilly
Vapo Place Café	Caerphilly
Scruffy 2 Fluffy Pet Parlour	Bargoed
Simply at Home	Bargoed
Beauty by Emma	Bargoed
The Band Box	Risca
The Nook	Risca
Busy Bees Home Design	Risca
Amore	Ystrad Mynach
Coffee @ 37	Ystrad Mynach
Preachers Lounge Bar	Blackwood
Maxime Cinema	Blackwood
Jim's Traditional Fish & Chips	Blackwood
Learn About Wales	Blackwood

#### 4.6 Potential New Businesses

In addition, Town Centre Management have provided information & support in response to enquiries from people looking to start the following businesses or establishing new projects:-

<b>Business</b>	<b>Town Centre</b>
Coffee Shop	Blackwood or Caerphilly
Crèche	Blackwood or Bargoed
Ex Service persons café	Blackwood
Coffee shop	Ystrad Mynach
Foodbank shop	Blackwood
Hope Rescue Charity Shop	Caerphilly
Win a Shop Project	Bargoed
Kickplate Photography Exhibition	All five town centres
Cafe	Caerphilly
Sports / School wear Shop	Ystrad Mynach
Indoor Sports Facility	Blackwood / Ystrad Mynach
Kitchen producing locally sourced food	Caerphilly
Coffee shop	Caerphilly

#### 4.7 Retailer Survey Results

A total of 692 surveys were sent out to every business across the five managed town centres of those just 39 were returned, giving a response rate of just 5.6%.

Of the responses received, a summary of the results is below:-

<b>Question</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Unsure</b>
Are you aware of the "Choose the High Street" campaign?	82%	18%	
Have you displayed the promotional window sticker?	72%	28%	
Are your customers aware of the "Choose the High Street" campaign?	30%	70%	
Do you think "Choose the High Street" was successful?	13%	61%	28%

Retailers were also asked which promotional tools they felt were the most successful. Social media and billboards were ranked the highest, followed by the window stickers, then the free canvas shopping bags and finally the leaflets distributed at events.

#### 4.8 Public Survey results:

To supplement the retailers' survey, an online survey was also conducted asking members of the public for their views on the campaign so far.

The responses were gained through a combination of social media (CCBC Facebook and Twitter) and through email to the CCBC Viewpoint Panel Members.

A total of 114 people responded to the survey – and a summary of the results are below:-

#### 4.9 Question:-

1. Have you heard of the Choose the High Street campaign? **Yes: 50% No: 49%.**
2. If you answered 'Yes' to question one, where have you seen the Choose the High Street campaign promoted? **The majority of respondents saw the campaign promoted through social media (40%), Newslite (24%) and the local newspaper (20%).**
3. The Choose the High Street campaign aims to encourage local people to support their local town centres and local traders. Do you agree with the sentiments of the campaign? That is, do you support what the council is trying to achieve through this campaign? **Yes: 88% No: 4% Not Sure: 7%.**
4. How often, on average do you visit your local town centre? **The majority of residents said they visited their town centres once a week (30%), most days (19%) and fortnightly (14%). 11% said they rarely visit their local town centre and 1% said they never do.**
5. Which Caerphilly County Borough town centre do you visit most often? **The responses, in descending order were Caerphilly (39%), Blackwood (32%), Risca (10%), Ystrad Mynach (6%), Bargoed (6%) and None (4%).**
6. What would encourage you to visit your local town centre more often than you currently do? **This question generated a total of 98 responses. The issue that drew the most responses (37) was the provision of free / better parking, the second highest number of responses (35) related to the need for an improved shopping offer. A small number of other responses highlighted better street cleansing, longer shop opening hours and retailers running special offers as suggestions for improvements.**
7. Would a Christmas/festive discount offer encourage you to support a retailer in your local town centre? **Yes: 58%, No: 15%, Not Sure: 26%.**

#### 4.10 Summary

The 'Choose the High Street' campaign was the first stage in a longer process to raise awareness of the need for people to support their local town centre. Since the launch of the campaign in the County Borough, a UK wide effort to promote the 'Great British High Street' and a one-week initiative by Welsh Government - 'Support Welsh High Streets' have both taken place. This demonstrates that the council's 'Choose the High Street' campaign is in line with current strategic thinking on town centre development.

Various marketing platforms have been used to make consumers, retailers and potential business start-ups aware of the 'Choose the High Street' brand. However, realistically, this will take time, as it is impossible to encourage a permanent behavioural change over just a three-month period. In the coming months officers will continue to support local retailers in developing new ways to use the 'Choose the High Street' brand to promote the five town as shopping destinations and business opportunities.

## **5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 This report is for information purposes, so the council's EqIa process does not need to be applied.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The campaign is funded through the Town Centre Management core budget.

## **7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are no direct personnel implications.

## **8. CONSULTATIONS**

- 8.1 There are no consultation responses that have not been reflected in this report.

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 9.1 That Members note the contents of the report.

## **10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 10.1 This report is for information only.

## **11. STATUTORY POWER**

- 11.1 Local Government Act 2000.

Author: Andrew Highway, Town Centre Development Manager  
Consultees: Pauline Elliott, Head of Regeneration & Planning  
Cllr. K. James, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning and Sustainable Development  
Allan Dallimore, Team Leader Urban Renewal  
Paul Hudson, Marketing & Events Manager  
Hayley Lancaster, Senior Communications Officer  
Steve Wilcox, Assistant Town Centre Manager  
Elizabeth Sharma, Research Officer

Appendices:  
Appendix 1 Endorsements for 'Choose the High Street'

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A number of endorsements were received for the campaign:-

"The 'Choose the High Street' campaign successfully connects with customer sentiment and highlights the power of consumer choice. The initiative demonstrates the importance of managing our town centres, something we as the Association of Town & City Centre Management have highlighted to Welsh Government." **Chief Executive Martin Blackwell - Association of Town & City Centre Management**

"At Revive and Thrive, we fully support and endorse the excellent 'Choose the High Street' campaign. Our high streets are about much more than shops - they are places to meet and relax and give us all a sense of community, of belonging somewhere. This campaign is an important part of the on-going effort to revitalize and rejuvenate the most important part of the places we live in." **Mark Barnes Managing Director - Revive & Thrive**

"The 'Choose the High Street' campaign is very good and something that Welsh Government could consider using in other towns across Wales, I would be happy to use the campaign locally in Bridgend." **Rhiannon Kingsley - Chair of Association Town & City Centre Management Wales / Bridgend Town Centre Manager**

"The role of the high street in the 2020's is vitally important and the 'Choose the High Street' campaign affirms this. The retail scene is evolving rapidly and our high streets reflect this as top internet performers open shops and new 'collect' provisions become part of how we now use our local high street. Any campaign to make customers aware of the need to vote with their feet and support the high streets is to be welcomed." **John Couzens, Centre Manager - Castle Court Shopping Centre, Caerphilly**

"I drove in from the north end of Blackwood earlier this week, a route I do not usually travel and saw the *Choose The High Street* billboard situated next to the Institute. What a great sign, it certainly is eye catching, a great advert for the campaign and one that will hopefully have a positive effect." **Huw Edwards - Tidal's Store & Chair of Blackwood Retail Partnership**

"Choose The High Street is an innovative way of encouraging those who do not shop locally to come into town and see what is available and what they are missing." **David Collins - Bargoed Chamber of Trade**

"Each shop in a High Street is individual and a reflection of the owner's personality, which is something very special. Choose the High Street encourages people to experience this." **Helen O'Sullivan – Risca Pine Centre**

"A High Street is not just about the variety of shops, but also the community. People cannot only shop for their items, but also chat with the shopkeepers, which keeps community spirit alive within the town. The Choose the High Street campaign endorses this." **Andrew Berry – Andrew Berry Jewellers**

"Thanks for providing us with the high street bags we ran out of them pretty quickly we had customers who sent their friends, family and neighbours to come in and get one which then improved our footfall. Customer Feedback was very positive and all thought the same about supporting our local high street shops." **Customer First Team Caerphilly Library**

"Just to say thanks for the bags they have been very popular with our customers. Also we are distributing the High Street info maps with the bags now and customers are saying how useful they are." **Blackwood Library Staff**

"We have had a very favorable response from the customers and have put a supply of the leaflets and bags on the main reception desk and the cash office." **Customer First Team, Ty Penallta**

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## BLACKWOOD TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP – 17TH OCTOBER 2014

**SUBJECT: 'CHOOSE THE HIGH STREET @ CHRISTMAS'**

**REPORT BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 This report provides information on the 'Choose the High Street @ Christmas' campaign, which will be run in the County Borough's five principal town centres in the weeks leading up to Christmas 2014.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 The next phase of the 'Choose the High Street' campaign will be directed towards encouraging more people to spend in their local town centres over the Christmas period. Retailers across the five managed town centres will have the opportunity to submit an offer, which will be included in a voucher booklet. The scheme supports local businesses as it offers them a chance to participate in a coordinated campaign under the 'Choose the High Street @ Christmas' banner. In addition, a new 'Pop Up Shop Guide' has been produced by Town Centre Management, which sets out the process of setting up a Pop Up shop and is particularly relevant in the run up to Christmas.

### **3. LINKS TO STRATEGY**

- 3.1 The Council has agreed to a five-year regeneration programme entitled "People, Business and Places". The proposals within the strategy are based on a number of regeneration principles, one of which is "Strengthening Town Centres".
- 3.2 'A Prosperous Caerphilly' is identified as one of the key outcomes in the Council's 'Single Integrated Plan'. The Implementation of the Unique Places model of Town Centre Management in the County Borough's principal town centres is one of the actions identified to achieve this outcome.

### **4. THE REPORT**

- 4.1 According to retail analysts, Christmas 2014 is expected to be a very difficult one for retailers, with only a modest sales growth expected. A number of factors are contributing to this, including: faltering consumer confidence and the continued growth in online sales. Over the last two years, in the lead up to Christmas the Council's Town Centre Management Team has run the 'Unique Places Discount Card' scheme, a tool for retailers to generate sales. After assessing the feedback provided by retailers in previous years, a slightly different approach will be taken for Christmas 2014.

- 4.2 Following the successful start of the 'Choose the High Street' campaign developed by the Council's Town Centre Management team over the summer months, the next phase of the scheme will be run over the Christmas period. 'Choose the High Street @ Christmas' will build further on the brand and in the weeks leading up to Christmas encourage people to spend locally in the five principal town centres. In doing so, the initiative is assisting local businesses as they try to capture consumer spend during this crucial trading period. The booklet has been developed to support local businesses but the onus remains on the retailers to participate and ensure that the booklet contains a large number of offers, which will incentivise customers to pick it up.
- 4.3 To market the campaign the 'Choose the High Street' branding will have a seasonal twist with the addition of '@ Christmas'. The adapted logo is included as an Appendix to the report.
- 4.4 This year's scheme centres on a printed voucher booklet and retailers in the five managed town centres will have the chance to submit an offer for inclusion in the booklet with the level of discount being set by retailer at their discretion. In order to allow time for design and printing, retailers will need to submit their offer by the 24th October on the form sent to them by Town Centre Management. Building on the successful distribution of the 'Choose the High Street' shopping bags through the Council's Libraries and Customer First Centres, the free voucher booklet will also be given out in these locations and at the Council's Christmas events. The use of a single voucher booklet covering all five towns as a promotional tool, rather than a discount card, means that people will have the offer physically in front of them as they plan their Christmas shopping.
- 4.5 An additional element to the Christmas initiative is the launch of a 'Pop-Up Shop Guide' produced by the Town Centre Management Team. The guide provides an explanation of what a Pop-Up shop is and explains the process of setting one up. It is hoped that by providing this guide in the months leading up to Christmas 2014, it will encourage people to explore opening a Pop-Up shop for Christmas. New Pop-Up shops will increase the shopping offer and also occupy an otherwise vacant unit. The guide will be branded as 'Choose the High Street' and further builds on the work already done to highlight the importance of the County Borough's town centres to the local economy.

## **5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 This report is for information purposes, so the council's Eqla process does not need to be applied.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The campaign is funded through the Town Centre Management core budget.

## **7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are no direct personnel implications.

## **8. CONSULTATIONS**

- 8.1 There are no consultation responses that have not been reflected in this report.

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 9.1 That Members note the contents of the report.

## **10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

10.1 This report is for information only.

## **11. STATUTORY POWER**

11.1 Local Government Act 2000.

Author: Andrew Highway, Town Centre Development Manager  
Consultees: Pauline Elliott, Head of Regeneration & Planning  
Cllr. K. James, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning and Sustainable Development  
Allan Dallimore, Team Leader Urban Renewal  
Paul Hudson, Marketing & Events Manager  
Hayley Lancaster, Senior Communications Officer  
Steve Wilcox, Assistant Town Centre Manager

Appendices:  
Appendix 1 Choose the High Street @ Christmas logo

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## BLACKWOOD TOWN CENTRE AUDIT – OCTOBER 2014

DATE	ISSUE	DEPARTMENT	PROGRESS UPDATE
21/02/13	<p><b><u>Provision of a Dedicated Disabled Parking Bay High Street</u></b>                      Officers have received a request to consider moving the disabled spaces for blue badge holders that are on the slope of Woodbine Road to the High Street parking bay that is fronting Tidal Stores to the Solicitors' offices where the road is flatter.</p>	<p><b>Transportation</b>  <i>Clive Campbell</i></p>	<p><b>PLEASE SEE PREVIOUS AUDITS FOR A FULL HISTORY OF THIS ISSUE</b></p> <p>2/6 All consultations are complete and a report is being produced for consideration by the Head of Engineering Services.                      4/8 The works have been passed to a contractor and will be carried out shortly.</p>
03/05/13	<p><b><u>Installation of Posts &amp; Road Studs on Crossing O/S Argos, High Street</u></b>                      Cllr. Dix has requested the installation of posts and road studs on the crossing point outside Argos to compliment the defensive street furniture on the opposite side of the road and make the crossing safer.</p>	<p><b>Urban Renewal</b>  <i>Allan Dallimore</i></p> <p><b>Highways</b>  <i>Marcus Lloyd</i></p>	<p><b>PLEASE SEE PREVIOUS AUDITS FOR A FULL HISTORY OF THIS ISSUE</b></p> <p>16/5 An update was provided to the TCMG.                      2/6 A budget needs to be identified to carry out additional works.                      4/8 A budget has been identified and the bollards have been ordered. Installation will be carried out in approximately 4 weeks.</p>
02/10/13	<p><b><u>Poundstretcher Site High Street</u></b>                      Officers continue to work with Poundstretchers in an attempt to rebuild the store and enable the retailer to return to the town centre.</p>	<p><b>Town Centre Management</b>  <i>Andrew Highway</i></p>	<p><b>PLEASE SEE PREVIOUS AUDITS FOR A FULL HISTORY OF THIS ISSUE</b></p> <p>16/5 An update was provided to the TCMG.                      2/6 The property's insurance company still hasn't settled the claim.                      4/8 The insurance claim has yet to be settled.</p>

08/01/14	<p><b><u>Homeless People</u></b>  <b><u>Rear of High Street/Bus Station</u></b>  A retailer complaint has been received in relation to the lane at the rear of High Street. Homeless people are sleeping at the rear of the old Halifax building in the evenings and rummaging through neighbouring businesses' waste, which is causing a large amount of litter to be strewn across the lane and surrounding area.</p>	<p><b>Cleansing</b>  <i>Tony White</i></p> <p><b>Community Safety</b>  <i>Kath Peters</i></p> <p><b>Police</b>  <i>Ins Thomas</i></p>	<p><b>PLEASE SEE PREVIOUS AUDITS FOR A FULL HISTORY OF THIS ISSUE</b></p> <p>2/6 Patrols have increased and the problems have reduced. Ongoing meetings have been set up on how to address the issues around homeless people.  4/8 No further reports have been received by the Police.  <b>Issue Closed 4/8</b></p>
27/01/14	<p><b><u>Smoking &amp; Cigarette Ends</u></b>  <b><u>Town Centre</u></b>  A complaint has been received from Cllr. Dix in relation to smoking outside public houses in the town centre. A group of smokers outside a pub creates an unpleasant environment for passing pedestrians and an accumulation of cigarette ends.</p>	<p><b>Environmental Health</b>  <i>Lyndon Ross</i></p>	<p><b>PLEASE SEE PREVIOUS AUDITS FOR A FULL HISTORY OF THIS ISSUE</b></p> <p>16/5 An update was provided to the TCMG.  2/6 Officers continue to monitor and enforce.  4/8 An improvement has been seen.  <b>Issue Closed 4/8</b></p>
03/02/14	<p><b><u>Cinema Development</u></b>  <b><u>High Street</u></b>  The former Bingo Hall is being converted back to a Cinema by a private, independent operator.</p>	<p><b>Development Control</b>  <i>Tim Stephens</i></p> <p><b>Town Centre Management</b>  <i>Andrew Highway</i></p>	<p><b>PLEASE SEE PREVIOUS AUDITS FOR A FULL HISTORY OF THIS ISSUE.</b></p> <p>16/5 An update was provided to the TCMG.  2/6 Fit out works are ongoing. It is anticipated that the cinema will be operational in July.  4/8 The cinema is due to open on 6<sup>th</sup> August.</p>

17/04/14	<p><b><u>Car Cruisers</u></b>  <b><u>ASDA Car Park, Cliff Road</u></b>  ASDA management has noticed an increase in the number of car cruisers congregating in the car park during the evenings. This is leading to an increase in litter and anti social behaviour.</p>	<p><b>Police</b>  <i>Ins Thomas</i></p>	<p>17/4 Following a meeting with the store management and Police Officers, the area will be added to the patrol plan.  2/6 A slight increase has been noticed recently, so operations are running on Thursday evenings.  4/8 The situation appears to be under control, but will continue to be monitored.</p>
06/05/14	<p><b><u>Removal of High Kerb</u></b>  <b><u>Junction of High Street/Pentwyn Road</u></b>  Cllr. Dix asked Officers to consider the removal of the high kerb at this location, to make the area safer and more accessible for pedestrians. There are dropped kerbs on either side of the area.</p>	<p><b>Highways</b>  <i>Marcus Lloyd</i></p>	<p>2/6 Works are ongoing.  4/8 No update was available.</p>
07/05/14	<p><b><u>Graffiti Removal</u></b>  <b><u>Town Centre</u></b>  Graffiti has been placed the “Defining the Future” sign on the Northern end of town, which requires cleaning.</p>	<p><b>Cleansing</b>  <i>Tony White</i></p>	<p>2/6 The removal has been passed on to the cleansing team.  4/8 Graffiti has been removed.  <b>Issue Closed 4/8</b></p>
07/05/14	<p><b><u>Graffiti Removal</u></b>  <b><u>R/O High Street</u></b>  Graffiti has been placed on the rear of the Shoe Zone property, which requires removal. An indemnity form has been completed by the business, which authorises the works.</p>	<p><b>Cleansing</b>  <i>Tony White</i></p>	<p>2/6 The removal has been passed on to the cleansing team.  4/8 All businesses that have completed an indemnity form have been cleaned.  <b>Issue Closed 4/8</b></p>

16/05/14	<p><b><u>Toilet Block Enhancement High Street</u></b> At the TCMG, it was agreed that proposals would be developed to try and improve the appearance of the disused toilet block on High Street. Should the proposals be approved, the Area Forum Budget may fund the scheme.</p>	<p><b>Urban Renewal</b> <i>Allan Dallimore</i></p>	<p>2/6 Officers are currently in discussions on how to address the issues. 4/8 No resources are available at present. A scheme is likely to cost around £3k.</p>
19/05/14	<p><b><u>Beach Party Event Town Centre</u></b> The summer “beach party” event will be returning to the town centre on 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> June.</p>	<p><b>Business Enterprise Support Team</b> <i>Paul Hudson</i></p>	<p>2/6 Preparations by the Events Team continue. 4/8 The event was successful and well received. <b>Issue Closed 4/8</b></p>
19/05/14	<p><b><u>Choose the High Street Campaign Town Centre</u></b> Town Centre Management will be launching a summer campaign across the five managed towns, encouraging consumers to “Choose the High Street”. The scheme will run over the summer period and use several forms of media.</p>	<p><b>Town Centre Management</b> <i>Andrew Highway</i></p>	<p>2/6 Campaign has been launched to encourage shoppers to “choose the high street” and to also encourage businesses to trade from them. 4/8 The campaign has started well and will continue over the summer period. Press releases are continuing. The next phase will be to work with property agents to try and fill vacant town centre properties.</p>
13/06/14	<p><b><u>Removal of Overgrown Foliage O/S Kingdom Hall, High Street</u></b> The foliage within the boundary of Kingdom Hall of Jehovah’s Witnesses has become overgrown and is obstructing the footway.</p>	<p><b>Highways</b> <i>Marcus Lloyd</i></p>	<p>13/6 Notice will be served on the landowner for the plants to be trimmed back. 4/8 The landowner has carried out the work. <b>Issue Closed 4/8</b></p>



04/07/14	<p><b><u>General Cleansing</u></b>  <b><u>Interchange Bus Station</u></b>  The footpath leading to the Interchange Bus Station requires grubbing out and power washing. There is also a lot of litter on the path and in the flowerbeds alongside.</p>	<p><b>Transportation</b>  <i>Clive Campbell</i></p>	<p>4/8 The areas have been cleaned.  <b>Issue Closed 4/8</b></p>
08/07/14	<p><b><u>Weeding of Steps</u></b>  <b><u>Hall Street</u></b>  The steps leading from High Street to Hall Street require weeding to improve their appearance.</p>	<p><b>Highways</b>  <i>Marcus Lloyd</i></p> <p><b>Parks Services</b>  <i>Derek Price</i></p>	<p>4/8 The work has been carried out.  <b>Issue Closed 4/8</b></p>
21/07/14	<p><b><u>Raised Paving Slabs</u></b>  <b><u>Blackwood Retail Park</u></b>  Some paving slabs on the boundary of Blackwood Retail Park have become significantly raised, which poses a trip hazard.</p>	<p><b>Highways</b>  <i>Marcus Lloyd</i></p>	<p>4/8 Highways Inspectors are assessing whether this land is owned by the Authority.</p>
20/08/14	<p><b><u>Loading Bay Reinstatement</u></b>  <b><u>High Street</u></b>  A complaint has been received from a business in relation to the loading bay near the junction of Woodbine Road. The bay's line markings have not been reinstated following the recent carriageway resurfacing.</p>	<p><b>Highways</b>  <i>Marcus Lloyd</i></p>	
20/08/14	<p><b><u>Damage to Maxime Cinema Signage</u></b>  <b><u>High Street</u></b>  The lighting on the signage at the front of the Maxime Cinema has been damaged. The situation needs to be monitored to prevent further damage.</p>	<p><b>Police</b>  <i>Ins Thomas</i></p>	

28/08/14	<p><b><u>Youth Annoyance &amp; Damage</u></b>  <b><u>O/S New Look, High Street</u></b>  The manager of the New Look store has complained of instances of youth annoyance in and around the store since the cinema opening. There have also been some damage to the rear of the store.</p>	<p><b>Police</b>  <i>Ins Thomas</i></p>	
03/09/14	<p><b><u>Christmas Event</u></b>  <b><u>Town Centre</u></b>  Planning is underway for a Christmas event in the town centre, which is scheduled to take place on 6<sup>th</sup> &amp; 7<sup>th</sup> December 2014.</p>	<p><b>Business Enterprise Support Team</b>  <i>Paul Hudson</i></p>	
03/09/14	<p><b><u>“Choose The High Street @ Christmas”</u></b>  <b><u>Campaign</u></b>  <b><u>Town Centre</u></b>  The “Choose the High Street” campaign is being extended to the Christmas period to encourage people to shop locally this Christmas. The scheme will involve a voucher scheme that all retailers will have the opportunity to sign up to.</p>	<p><b>Town Centre Management</b>  <i>Andrew Highway</i></p>	
04/09/14	<p><b><u>Rat Problem</u></b>  <b><u>ASDA, Cliff Road</u></b>  The ASDA store manager has complained of a rat infestation on the Council-owned steps leading from the Miners’ Institute to the retail park.</p>	<p><b>Environmental Health</b>  <i>Lyndon Ross</i></p> <p><b>Parks Services</b>  <i>Derek Price</i></p>	