



REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - FOR INFORMATION

SUBJECT: TOWN CENTRE IMPROVEMENT GROUP 2018 SUMMARY

REPORT BY: INTERIM CORPORATE DIRECTOR - COMMUNITIES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Scrutiny Committee on the progress made by the Town Centre Improvement Group during 2018 against the Council's objectives.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 This report provides a summary of work undertaken by the Town Centre Improvement Group during 2018. The report highlights how the Group works alongside the Council's five Town Centre Management Groups and outlines some of the issues that have been resolved in each of the five principal town centres. An appendix to the report lists all of the issues resolved in 2018 by the Town Centre Improvement Group using an Environmental Audit process.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The proposals within the Council's Regeneration Strategy "A Foundation for Success" are based on a number of regeneration principles, some of which acknowledge that town centres are powerful economic hubs and have the capability to drive economic growth and provide a focus for local economic activity. The vitality and viability of town centres should be enhanced by working in partnership with the business community in order to attract new investment and sustain confidence.
- 3.2 In particular, the following objectives within A Foundation for Success all have a town centric focus:
- SB1 – Building a more resilient and diversified economy;
 - SB2 – Supporting economic growth and innovation;
 - SB3 – Creating an environment that nurtures business;
 - SQL7 – Refocus on town centres to serve the needs of residents and business.
- 3.3 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 sets out seven Well-being Goals which aim to make a positive impact upon the social, economic, environmental or cultural well being of the area or community concerned. This report aligns with all of the following Well-being Goals:
- A prosperous Wales
 - A resilient Wales
 - A healthier Wales
 - A more equal Wales
 - A Wales of cohesive communities
 - A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language
 - A globally responsible Wales.

4. THE REPORT

4.1 The Town Centre Improvement Group (TCIG) was established in 2005 with appropriate representation from all relevant service areas.

4.2 The remit of the group is to:

- Improve the environment within the County Borough's five principal town centres: Caerphilly, Blackwood, Bargoed, Risca and Ystrad Mynach;
- Benchmark the performance of Council services in the five town centres;
- Demonstrate the commitment of the Council as an authority to the environmental improvement of the five town centres;
- Provide an internal forum for the Council to address issues that potentially blight town centres.

4.3 Within the TCIG there is representation from all the relevant Council departments and from the Police Inspectors whose respective responsibilities include Caerphilly, Blackwood, Bargoed, Risca and Ystrad Mynach town centres.

4.4 The purpose of the TCIG is to address operational issues brought forward from the Town Centre Management Groups for Caerphilly, Blackwood, Bargoed, Risca and Ystrad Mynach and ensure that there is a responsive and co-ordinated approach to the maintenance of the town centres through the process of an Environmental Audit.

4.5 The work of the TCIG should be seen as complementary to the five Town Centre Management Groups, ensuring that environmental and maintenance matters, which are the responsibility of the Authority, are addressed in an effective manner. The group, which is chaired by the Cabinet Member for Economy, Infrastructure, Sustainability and Wellbeing of Future Generations, meets every eight weeks to consider Environmental Audits compiled by the Town Centre Development Manager.

4.6 During 2018, across the five town centres a total of 75 issues were actioned through the TCIG. The number of issues resolved in 2018 compares with 98 in 2017, the fall in the number of issues resolved is as a result of the MTFP savings. The key to the success of the Group still lies in adopting a collaborative approach between the various Council departments in order to address town centre issues. The report provides an overview of the variety of the issues examined in the audit process and highlights the TCIG's role in resolving them. Examples of the issues resolved by the Group during 2018 are outlined in the report.

4.7 Common Town Centre Issues

There are a number of common issues within our town centres, these include:

Illegal Parking

Parking remains a significant problem across the five principal town centres. The TCIG has enabled officers to continue to liaise with Police Inspectors in order to discuss how to prioritise limited resources to tackle instances of illegal parking.

Civil Parking Enforcement

Parking enforcement is the responsibility of Gwent Police until April 2019 when the Council will take it over. During this time of transition, the TCIG is helping to build relationships between the Police and Council officers which will assist in the handover of powers.

Event Programme

Each year there is a varied annual events program across the County Borough's principal town centres. The TCIG meetings offer a valuable opportunity to consult with other service areas over road closures and other activities which may cause disruption.

4.8 **Caerphilly**

73 Cardiff Road – Planning / Environmental Health / Police

Over a period of time the building's condition has deteriorated leading to a number of complaints from Councillors, residents and neighbouring businesses. In order to improve the condition and security of the site the TCIG was used to identify sections of legislation within the Council's remit which could form the basis of a dialogue with the building's owner.

Pwll y pant Roundabout Works - Highways

The major roadworks scheme on the roundabout has impacted on traffic flow in the Caerphilly basin and generated public comment and business concern. At the TCIG meetings Council service areas were made aware of changes in works programme as the scheme evolved.

Programme of Painting Works - Highways

In response to CADW's desire to raise the profile and status of Caerphilly Castle, over the summer street furniture throughout the town centre was repainted in a burgundy heritage colour. The work by the Council's 'Community Response Team' plays an essential part in maintaining the appearance of the town centres.

4.9 **Blackwood**

Homeless Person Gravel Lane – Community Safety / Police / Town Centre Management

Staff at *The Market Place* reported that a homeless person was sleeping rough behind the shopping centre. The Council's support services, which are coordinated through a multi-agency group, approached the person and offered help. The aim is to provide homeless people in the County Borough with a genuine opportunity to re-establish a permanent home.

Blue Badge Police – Licensing / Police

Following complaints about taxis parking in 'Blue Badge' bays on High Street, the TCIG acted as a forum to discuss the options open to officers. Subsequently, it was decided that in addition to Police parking enforcement action, Licensing officers would visit the taxi operator's to encourage their drivers to park more responsibly and considerately.

Travelling Circus Posters - Parks / Highways

A circus visiting Blackwood Show Field placed a large number of advertisements throughout the town centre, which drew a number of complaints. TCIG members identified a new approach whereby the circus operator's bond paid to hire the field was held until the posters were removed.

4.10 **Bargoed**

Antisocial Behaviour at Morrisons – Police / Community Safety / Town Centre Management

The store has experienced problems with groups of young people congregating in the undercroft car park and causing extensive damage to lighting and bollards. A multi-agency group led by Town Centre Management regularly updates the TCIG on progress made to resolve the different elements of what is a complicated problem to solve.

Footway Repair - Highways / Urban Renewal

There have been a number of instances where 'wheelie' bins have been set on fire on the section of footway between Bargoed Gateway and Eastview Terrace. This has necessitated a series of localised footway repairs to the damaged tarmac surface.

Vacant Units Lowry Plaza – Urban Renewal

Following the closure of *Poundworld* officers across a number of service areas including: Property Services and Legal Services, worked together to secure a new tenant. The TCIG meetings kept officers apprised of progress on this high profile site in the town centre.

4.11 **Risca**

Accumulation of Litter in Commercial Street - Cleansing

The lane which connects *Tesco* with the town centre is a key linkage to promote pedestrian footfall between the two sites. Either side of the lane is derelict lane which leads to accumulation of litter. Cleansing teams instigated a deep clean and frequent litter picks.

Tredegar Grounds Park - Parks

The statue in the centre of Tredegar Grounds was defaced with paint over the summer months. In response the Council's Parks department cleaned the statue and surrounding area and worked with the Police to successfully identify the offender.

Legality of Signage Pontymister Industrial Estate - Planning

An illuminated sign was erected on Pontymister Industrial Estate next to a road drawing complaints as it was deemed a distraction to drivers. The sign was the subject of a Planning Enforcement enquiry which resulted in the owner being asked to remove it.

4.12 **Ystrad Mynach**

Cutting back of Foliage – Town Centre Management

A section of land in private ownership frequently becomes overgrown. After a complaint was received from the local Assembly Member in relation to the overgrown foliage, Town Centre Management liaised with the owners who agreed to cut the area back.

Culvert Works & Road Closure – Highways / Transportation / Town Centre Management

The culvert which runs beneath Penallta Road was in urgent need of repair. A 10 week programme of works was planned which included a full road closure and bus diversions. Information was shared at the TCIG meeting to make service areas aware of the disruption

Litter Pick Siloh Square – Cleansing

The area of Siloh Square in the heart of the town attracts a build-up of litter leading to complaints. During the year the Council's Cleansing team have undertaken numerous litter picks. One of the purposes of the audit is to demonstrate that the Council is acting effectively and quickly to meet service requests.

4.13 **Town Centre Issues**

The Appendix to this report summarises the issues resolved within each of the town centres from January to December 2018. The information highlights the diverse nature of problems addressed by the TCIG and the commitment of service areas to resolve those issues.

The objective for 2019 is to continue where possible to provide a high level of service in the five principal town centres, however it is accepted that this will become increasingly difficult given the budget savings which need to be made under the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP). The focus on wider economic development goals across the whole County Borough has influenced future structural changes in the Regeneration and Planning division. Town Centre Management functions will now be delivered by a multi-functional business support team who will focus on business support across the whole County Borough. As a group, the TCIG has no specific budget allocation and reductions to maintenance budgets within the service areas which belong to the Group have impacted on the Council's ability to react to maintenance issues as they occur in the town centres.

Retailers in town centres are under huge pressure given the challenging situation within the wider UK economy and jobs within the sector are under significant risk as national retailers rationalise their store portfolios and independent businesses close. The aim for the TCIG and the process of Town Centre Management is to help promote sustainable long-term economic growth across the County Borough by delivering a coordinated approach to well-maintained and managed town centres which act as focal points for the local community.

5. ADDITIONAL PROJECTS

- 5.1 Through the work of the TCIG a wide range of projects have been delivered which have added value to the street scene and offered visible improvements to the town centres. Many of these have tackled specific issues and sought to resolve longstanding problems through collaborative working arrangements between officers and mutual support between organisations.

6. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

- 6.1 This report contributes to the Well-being Goals as set out in Links to Strategy above in the following ways:
- *A prosperous Wales* - the retail sector is a significant employer within the County Borough and a substantial number of those retail businesses and jobs are located in the town centres.
 - *A resilient Wales* – developing green space in town centres helps to create a more biodiverse natural environment.
 - *A healthier Wales* – visiting a town centre promotes physical exercise and encourages social interaction.
 - *A more equal Wales* – town centres should strive to celebrate diversity and promote equal opportunity for all people regardless of their background or circumstances.
 - *A Wales of cohesive communities* – relevant, accessible and well managed town centres are vital to sustaining vibrant communities.
 - *A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language* – town centres contain significant elements of the nation’s architectural and cultural heritage. They are also places where the Welsh language can be taught, used and promoted.
 - *A globally responsible Wales* – providing communities with local shops and services potentially reduces the necessity and frequency of vehicle use and promotes public transportation links and use of Active Travel.

7. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 This report is for information purposes, so the Council’s EqIa process does not need to be applied.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Although there is no single budget allocation identified through the TCIG, individual departments have budgets for town centre works. However, it should be noted that to fund any “improvement” works identified through the Environmental Audit process, Town Centre Management relies heavily on a combined budget allocation of £40k for 2018-2019. The Council’s ongoing commitment to its MTFP means all budgets are being reviewed and this particular budget will be reduced by £5,000 in 2019/2020.
- 8.2 Consequently, a reduction in allocated budgets does limit the Council’s ability to address requests for town centre maintenance works. Given these constraints there has been a need to prioritise reactive maintenance over planned enhancements.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The “Community Response Team” is established within and funded through the Infrastructure Division and is an important asset in maintaining and improving the appearance of the principal town centres. The Community Response Team’s work includes preparing and

painting street furniture such as railings, litter bins and benches along with sign cleaning and removal of foliage encroaching onto the footway. It should be noted that this service is considered discretionary and is one of the proposed savings for 2019/2020 currently subject to consultation as part of the wider MTFP savings proposals.

10. CONSULTATIONS

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

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 To inform Members of the work of the Town Centre Improvement Group.

12. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

12.1 For Members to note the progress made against the corporate objectives.

13. STATUTORY POWER

13.1 Local Government Act 2000.

Author:	Andrew Highway	Town Centre Development Manager
Consultees:	Cllr. S. Morgan	Cabinet Member for Economy, Infrastructure, Sustainability and Wellbeing of Future Generations
	Cllr D T Davies	Chair Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee
	Cllr Mrs C Forehead	Vice Chair Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee
	Mark S Williams	Interim Corporate Director Communities
	Rhian Kyte	Head of Regeneration & Planning
	Marcus Lloyd	Head of Infrastructure
	Rob Hartshorn	Head of Public Protection
	Allan Dallimore	Team Leader Urban Renewal
	Hayley Jones	Waste Strategy and Operations Manager
	Ian Jones	Technical Assistant
	Lyndon Ross	Senior Environmental Health Officer
	Paul Wallen	Community Safety Warden Supervisor
	Clive Campbell	Transportation Engineering Manager
	Dean Smith	Principal Engineer
	Gavin Barry	Senior Assistant Engineer
	Lee Morgan	Licensing Manager
	Mike Headington	Green Spaces and Transport Services Manager
	Simon Beacham	Area Parks Officer
	Tim Stephens	Development Manager
	Mike Jones	Principal Enforcement Officer
	Steve Pugh	Communications Manager
	Paul Hudson	Marketing and Events Manager
	Anwen Cullinane	Senior Policy Officer
	Shaun Watkins	HR Manager
	Mike Eedy	Finance Manager
	Inspector G. Clifton	(Caerphilly)
	Inspector S. Drayton	(Blackwood / Risca)
	Inspector A. O'Keefe	(Bargoed / Ystrad Mynach)

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Matrix of Issues Resolved Across the Five Town Centres

TOWN CENTRE IMPROVEMENT GROUP 2018

APPENDIX 1

BARGOED

AUDIT	ISSUE	LOCATION	DATE	DEPARTMENT
FEBRUARY	Edging Stone	Bus Station Link - High Street	13-Feb	Urban Renewal
	Gully Cleansing	Town Centre	13-Feb	Highways
JUNE	Damaged Street scene	Lowry Plaza	06-Jun	Urban Renewal
	Damage to Miners' Heads Artwork	Hanbury Square	06-Jun	Urban Renewal
	Broken Channel Block	O/S Gus Jones, Hanbury Road	06-Jun	Highways
	Channel Block Damage	O/S Decofore, Hanbury Road	06-Jun	Highways
	Overgrown Foliage	Hanbury Road Steps	06-Jun	Parks
	Reinstatement of Surface	Footpath Linking Eastview Terrace & Bargoed Gateway	06-Jun	Highways
	Insecure Access	Angel Way Flyover	06-Jun	Engineering
SEPTEMBER	Licensing Tables & Chairs on the Footway	Town Centre	11-Sep	Highways/Licensing/Police/Community Safety
	Bin Repair	Hanbury Road	11-Sep	Cleansing
	Cleansing	Hanbury Road Car Park	11-Sep	Cleansing
	Criminal Damage	Hanbury Road Steps	11-Sep	Police
	Reinstatement of Surface	Bargoed Gateway Footway	11-Sep	Highways
	Cigarette Ends Cleaning	Town Centre	11-Sep	Cleansing
NOVEMBER				

TOWN CENTRE IMPROVEMENT GROUP 2018

BLACKWOOD

AUDIT	ISSUE	LOCATION	DATE	DEPARTMENT
FEBRUARY	Relay Taxis Parking Illegally	High Street	13-Feb	Police
	Feeding of Pigeons	The Market Place	13-Feb	Community Safety
	Dog Nuisance	Cheetah Print, High Street	13-Feb	Environmental Health
	Vandalism	St. Margaret's Church, High Street	13-Feb	Police
	Homeless Person	Gravel Lane	13-Feb	Police/Community Safety/Town Centre Management
	Litter Complaint	High Street	13-Feb	Environmental Health
	Dog Fouling	Hall Street	13-Feb	Environmental Health
	Assault of Homeless Person	The Flour Mill, High Street	13-Feb	Licensing/Police
	Noise Complaint	ASDA, Cliff Road	13-Feb	Environmental Health
JUNE	Litter Accumulation	Cliff Road	06-Jun	Cleansing
	Misuse of Blue Badge Bays	High Street	06-Jun	Police/Licensing
	Litter Complaint	Footpath linking Cliff Road with St. David's Wood	06-Jun	Cleansing
SEPTEMBER	Litter Bin Fires	Cliff Road	11-Sep	Police/Community Safety
	Bus Station Toilets Cleanliness/Vandalism	Bus Station	11-Sep	Cleansing
	Additional Crossing Point	High Street by BMI	11-Sep	Transportation
	Accumulation of Rubbish	High Street RO Luis Bar	11-Sep	Environmental Health
	Street Name Plate	Gravel Lane	11-Sep	Highways
	Fly Tipping	Gravel Lane	11-Sep	Cleansing
	Circus Posters	Town Centre	11-Sep	Parks/Highways
	Preachers Bar Noise Compliant	Hall Street	11-Sep	Licensing
	Reinstatement of Benches	Dragon Circle	11-Sep	Highways
	Refuse Collection Issues	High Street OS Cancer Research	11-Sep	Town Centre Management/Cleansing
Water Ingress	High Street Former Store 21	11-Sep	Highways	
NOVEMBER	Cleansing	Dragon Circle	06-Nov	Cleansing
	Relocate Noticeboard	Bus Station	06-Nov	Transportation
	Tree Pruning	O/S Blackwood Miners Institute, High Street	06-Nov	Parks
	New Litter Bins	Wesley Road/High Street	06-Nov	Cleansing/Town Centre Management
	Preachers Bar Broken Glasses	Hall Street	06-Nov	Licensing/Police

TOWN CENTRE IMPROVEMENT GROUP 2018

CAERPHILLY

AUDIT	ISSUE	LOCATION	DATE	DEPARTMENT
FEBRUARY	Street Café	Cardiff Road Above Toilet Block	13-Feb	Town Centre Management/Urban Renewal/Police
JUNE	Blocked Drain	O/S The Visit Caerphilly City, The Twyn	06-Jun	Highways
	Homeless Person	O/S Caerphilly Castle	06-Jun	Community Safety/Town Centre Management
	Dislodged Coping Stones	The Twyn	06-Jun	Highways
	Taxi Rank Parking Issues	Town Centre	06-Jun	Police
	Grit Bin	O/S New Look, Cardiff Road	06-Jun	Highways
	Remarking of Taxi Bays	Station Terrace	06-Jun	Highways
	Overflowing Bin	Area Around Castle	06-Jun	Cleansing
SEPTEMBER	Damage to Roofs	Town Centre	11-Sep	Police
	Cleansing of Steps	OS Visitor Centre	11-Sep	Cleansing
	Access to Vacant Property	73 Cardiff Road	11-Sep	Planning/Police
	Repainting Street Furniture	Town Centre	11-Sep	Highways
	Cleansing of Signage	Crescent Road	11-Sep	Highways
	Graffiti Removal	Park Lane	11-Sep	Cleansing/Town Centre Management
	Raised Paving Slabs	OS Visitor Centre	11-Sep	Highways
	Removal of Weed Growth	Steps The Twyn Square	11-Sep	Parks
	Broken Bin	OS Visitor Centre	11-Sep	Cleansing
NOVEMBER	Lighting of Obelisk	Cardiff Road	06-Nov	Urban Renewal
	Litter Pick & Graffiti Removal	Park Lane	06-Nov	Cleansing/Town Centre Management
	Repair to BIG Cheese Artwork	Castle Street	06-Nov	Parks

TOWN CENTRE IMPROVEMENT GROUP 2018

RISCA

AUDIT	ISSUE	LOCATION	DATE	DEPARTMENT
FEBRUARY	Broken Benches	Tredegar Grounds Park, Tredegar Street	13-Feb	Parks
JUNE	Repainting of Bollard	O/S Bayleaf, Commercial Street	06-Jun	Highways
	Damage to Statue	Tredegar Grounds Park, Tredegar Street	06-Jun	Parks/Police
	Restocking of Planters	Town Centre	06-Jun	Parks
SEPTEMBER	Accumulation of Litter	Commercial Street	11-Sep	Cleansing
NOVEMBER	Illegal Signage	Entrance to Pontymister Industrial Estate	06-Nov	Highways

TOWN CENTRE IMPROVEMENT GROUP 2018

YSTRAD MYNACH

AUDIT	ISSUE	LOCATION	DATE	DEPARTMENT
FEBRUARY	Weeds in Pavement Cleanliness	Town Centre	13-Feb	Parks/Highways
		Town Centre	13-Feb	Cleansing
JUNE	Links with Centre for Sporting Excellence Uneven Surface	Town Centre	06-Jun	Urban Renewal
		Siloh Square	06-Jun	Urban Renewal
SEPTEMBER	Homeless Person Begging Cut Back Foliage	Town Centre	11-Sep	Community Safety/Town Centre Management
		High Street OS Lucas Estates	11-Sep	Town Centre Management
NOVEMBER				

TOWN CENTRE IMPROVEMENT GROUP 2018

TOWN	AUDIT MONTH	NUMBER OF ISSUES RESOLVED
Bargoed	February	2
	June	7
	September	6
	November	0
	TOTAL	15
Blackwood	February	9
	June	3
	September	11
	November	5
	TOTAL	28
Caerphilly	February	1
	June	7
	September	9
	November	3
	TOTAL	20
Risca	February	1
	June	3
	September	1
	November	1
	TOTAL	6
Ystrad Mynach	February	2
	June	2
	September	2
	November	0
	TOTAL	6
Summary	TOTAL	75