



## **CAERPHILLY TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP – 9TH APRIL 2019**

**SUBJECT: UPDATE ON MATTERS RELATING TO CAERPHILLY TOWN**

**REPORT BY: TOWN CENTRE DEVELOPMENT MANAGER**

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### **1. PUBLIC CONVENIENCES**

In October 2018, Welsh Government announced its provisional budget settlement; under the settlement Caerphilly County Borough Councils faced a funding reduction of 0.3%, this coupled with inescapable pressures that the Council has to fund, meant that the Council needed to find savings of over £15.6 million for the next year alone.

As part of the draft budget proposals for 2019/20, the closure of all 5 Public Conveniences was presented as a saving proposal (£74,000).

The draft budget which included this saving underwent a comprehensive consultation process held over a period of six weeks from the 19<sup>th</sup> November 2018 to the 11<sup>th</sup> January 2019, with the views expressed to be fed back to and considered by elected members at a Special meeting of full Council in February 2019.

The consultation included officer representation at the Community Council Liaison Committee (21<sup>st</sup> November 2018), Newline, Council's website, Special Scrutiny Committee meetings, Town Centre Engagement and Public Drop in Centres. Drop in sessions were held in 9 venues across the county borough between the 26<sup>th</sup> November and 13<sup>th</sup> December 2018 (Rhymney Library, Bargoed Library, Caerphilly Library, New Tredegar White Rose Centre, Risca Palace, Newbridge Tabernacle, Nelson Library and Blackwood Library).

Town and Community Councils also received this information via their Community Council Liaison Officer – Caerphilly Conversation engagement email (22<sup>nd</sup> November 2018) and a copy of the final budget proposals circulated to all clerks on the 18<sup>th</sup> February 2019.

At the meeting of Special Council on the 21<sup>st</sup> February 2019, elected members approved the final budget proposals including the closure of the 5 public conveniences (recommendation 10.1.2 – Appendix 2 – page 16). Following the decision of Council, notices were placed in each of the public conveniences and the closure will come into effect on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019.

### **2. CIVIL PARKING ENFORCEMENT**

- Traffic Regulation Order remedial works have been substantially completed.
- The Traffic Regulation Order consolidation order has been advertised and will be concluded by the 8<sup>th</sup> April.
- A Service Level Agreement has been signed with Rhondda Cynnon Taf County Borough Council to provide back office support for the civil parking enforcement process within Caerphilly County Borough Council.

- All Civil Enforcement Officers have been recruited and trained. During March the officers have been undertaking an extensive exercise across the county borough to issue warning notices to drivers advising them of parking restrictions.
- Traffic Regulation Order remedial works have been completed.
- The Traffic Regulation Order consolidation order has been made.
- A Service Level Agreement has been signed with Rhondda Cynnon Taf County Borough Council to provide back office support for the civil parking enforcement process within Caerphilly County Borough Council.
- All Civil Enforcement Officers have been recruited and trained. During March the officers have been undertaking an extensive exercise across the county borough to issue warning notices to drivers advising them of parking restrictions, alongside other media releases.

### **3. AIR QUALITY – VERBAL UPDATE**

### **4. PLASTIC FREE TOWNS**

There is a growing global movement to reduce the amount of plastics which are used, with a particular focus on preventing millions of plastic bottles from entering our rivers and seas. In response, many UK towns are taking positive steps to cut the amount of plastics which businesses use and actively supporting the water bottle Refill Scheme. Town Centre Management is engaging with local retailers to encourage them to participate in the Refill Scheme. Participating businesses agree to refill a reusable water bottle for free and are given a blue Refill sticker to put in their window and included on the Refill App so people can find them. To support this and other elements of Plastics Free Towns a special version of the successful 'Choose the High Street' logo has been designed.

### **5. SIGNAGE STRATEGY**

The Council are working in partnership with CADW to support the delivery of CADW's masterplan for Caerphilly Castle over the medium term and a key focus of the plan centres on improving the wayfinding for visitors on arrival in the town centre. Similarly, there is a need to develop an integrated interpretation plan for the Castle that starts when a visitor enters the town.

Officers of the Council have been looking at options for improving the wifi offer within the town centre and on assessing potential options for installation of digital information & advertising totems within the town centre that will also support the Council's vision for the wider town centre and will form part of the integrated place making strategy.

### **6. ARTWORK WELSH NATIONAL MEMORIAL UPDATE**

Caerphilly Town Council (as Client) are working with the Council's Urban Renewal Team to take forward a new Artwork commission commemorating the Welsh National Anthem. The commission will be funded by the Town Council and Council.

Within Caerphilly the remains of an old sycamore tree within the grounds of Dafydd Williams Park was used (December 2009) to incorporate some words from the National Anthem and an image of a dragon. Unfortunately this sculpture had to be removed during 2017 leaving a small commemorative plaque on the Workman's Hall as the only memorial to Evan & James James achievements within the Town.

Both Caerphilly Town Council and the Caerphilly Town Centre Management Group (CTCMG) were therefore keen for some form of new unique memorial of the National Anthem to be located within a more Town Centre location.

Consequently a working group of the Town Council has been set up and with assistance/guidance from Urban Renewal the project has been taken forward. A brief was developed and issued to 5 local Artists, 4 of whom returned their submissions and initial design concepts for a sculpture. Following an evaluation of the of the submissions, which took place on the 4<sup>th</sup> March 2019, a preferred Artist was chosen. The chosen Artist is **Mr Rubin Eynon** and the decision to formally appoint him to take forward this commission was subsequently ratified by the Town Council on the 18<sup>th</sup> March 2019.

I attach an image of Rubin's initial design concept for information, which will be further developed and refined with the Client group and community over the coming months.

Timeframe for the commission is next financial year (19.20) with completion by February 2020.

## RUBIN EYNON

### Urban Arts

Dan-Y-Dderwen, Aberpergwm Farm Cottages, Glynneath, SA115RH 01639 720158  
rubin.urbanarts@mac.com www.rubineynon.co.uk

### Project Outline

#### The sculpture.

The proposed design would require the sculpture to be modelled initially from various materials such as timber, plaster, modelling resins, clay etc, possibly also combining 3D printing technologies for the soundbox, to produce the casting 'pattern'.

The pattern would be sent to M.B. Finearts foundry in Pembrokeshire ( Who also cast the nearby Tommy Cooper sculpture and the model of Caerphilly castle ) where they would translate the pattern into wax ready for casting into a hollow bronze form.

Once cast in bronze the completed sculpture would be patinated to prematurely age the surface in the traditional way.

#### The plinth

The proposed sculpture would be installed onto a solid block of pennant stone sourced from the Dualis Valley, cut and supplied by Celtic Stone in Neath. The stone would be set into the existing paving with an adequately sized concrete foundation underneath it.

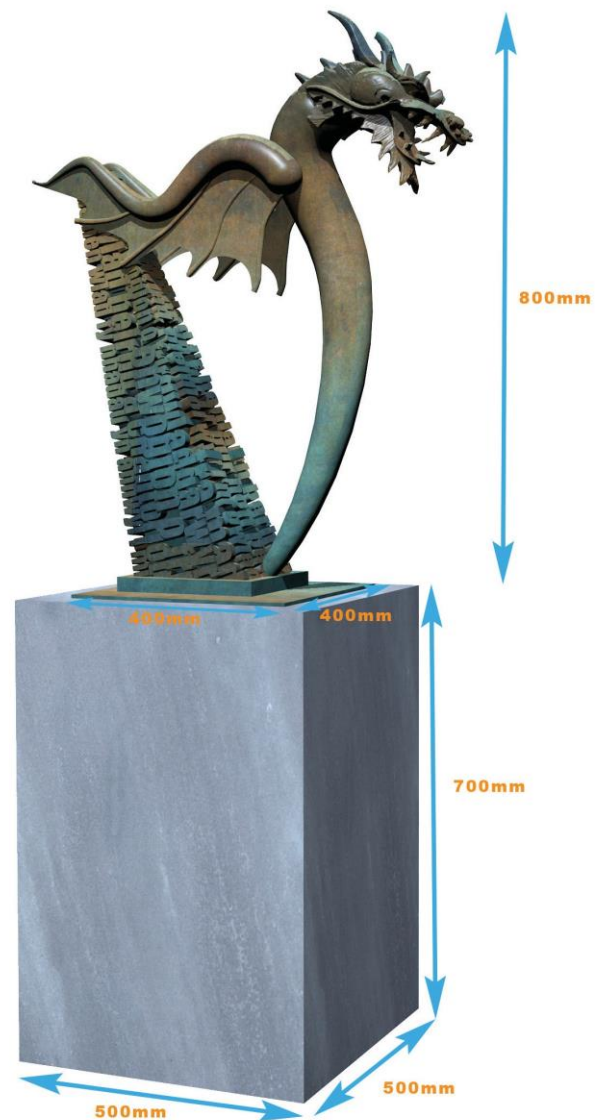
The sculpture would be installed via stainless steel pins fixed into its underside and resin anchored into the stone block.

#### Timescale

I would estimate a timescale of between 3 to 4 months to complete this piece of sculpture depending on the availability of the foundry carry out the casting work.

#### Summary

Although I have drawn up an initial concept for this commission I would be more than happy to develop this idea or to draw up other conceptual ideas if required and am always very keen to work with clients and stakeholders during the design phase of any project to ensure the final design fulfils the brief before production begins.



Proposed sculpture dimensions

## **7. CADW STUDY REGENERATION UPDATE**

### **Caerphilly Transport Hub**

CCBC have identified that a sub-regional transport interchange in Caerphilly is a vital component in the long term vitality and competitiveness of the whole town.

It is a vital link to the wider region. The rationale behind Metro is to change the status quo by improving not only connectivity, but perception, property values and economic activity.

CCBC commissioned consultants to produce an urban design framework outlining a set of design principles to how the existing combined bus /train station public transport interchange can be redeveloped to create a landmark transport hub and stimulate the local economy by providing commercial and retail space as part of any redevelopment.

A small client group consisting of Welsh Government Transport, WG Regen, WG Valleys Task Force and Transport for Wales have appointed Mott Macdonald and the Urbanists to undertake more detailed work on this project.

Mott Macdonald are concentrating their efforts on undertaking a WEITAG assessment on the transport proposal whilst the Urbanists brief is a little wider – they will produce a place-making plan, focused on integrating new regeneration schemes into the existing urban fabric. Two separate stakeholder events have been held to date .

### **Caerphilly Castle**

Last year CADW launched new tourist attractions at the castle – Dragon's Lair and Gilbert's Maze.

Cadw's intentions are to invest heavily into Caerphilly Castle to transform it into a Tier One Tourist attraction. One of their primary goals is to increase visitor numbers to over 200,000 over the next 5 years.

Cadw have commissioned ARAD consultants to produce a 5 year masterplan for CADW – which has now been signed off by senior Welsh Government officials and the Cabinet Secretary for Culture.

The masterplan sets out a number of key target areas for investment including:

- more children orientated activity
- Improve arrival points and improve legibility
- Possible Water based activities
- Better food offer – using the Great Hall to better effect
- Making more use of the Grove area – maybe educational/ conservation centre.

The Council are now meeting regularly with CADW to investigate ways in which it can help to add value to the visitor experience. Already some improvement works have been carried out to Crescent Road car park, the main arrival point for car borne visitors.

### **Park Lane**

Council owned Park Lane site is being promoted for a quality hotel offer to bolster the visitor economy. Council have spend upwards of £800,000 making the site clean and attractive for development.

Through an open and transparent procurement process a preferred developer has been identified. They will shortly be taking a 12 month exclusivity option on the Park Lane land which will allow them to undertake the necessary survey work, due diligence to inform their designs.

Visit Wales have been in in dialogue with the developer over gap funding to ensure that a quality hotel brand is brought to the site.

CCBC have been successful in securing Welsh Government Targeted Regeneration Investment Funding (mixture of loan and grant) to purchase No 25 Cardiff Rd (formerly Specsavers/Profile) to increase the red line boundary and make the site larger and more attractive.

### **Pentrebane Street – Mixed use Regen Project with Linc Housing Association**

The Council have identified Pentrebane Street in Caerphilly as requiring radical intervention.

This privately owned 3 storey block of buildings sits in the heart of the town centre but its current use is limited to low quality ground floor retail activity plus indoor market activity.

Working in conjunction with Linc Housing Association the building stock on the south side of the street has been targeted by CCBC and Linc Housing Association for demolition and redevelopment.

The creation of circa 60 flats (blended tenure) will contribute to the Welsh Government target to build 20,000 affordable homes

The creation of flexible commercial space to support new businesses, plus event space to support tourism and the night time economy will be provided at ground floor level.

Linc HA will target carbon and energy efficiency in the build design. Linc are currently negotiating with the 3 different freeholders over sales agreement.

### **Welsh Government Targeted Regeneration Fund Thematic Fund**

Caerphilly town centre has been Identified by CCBC as the focus for TRI thematic town centre grant– those properties are empty or underutilised and that frame the castle or are prominent in town centre will be prioritised.

RCT will act as lead authority to this regional thematic. The overall budget is £10m million between the 10 LAs within the Cardiff Capital City Region. RCT have yet to finalise the T&C's of the grants but ongoing meetings between LA's and Welsh Government have been productive and the grant scheme should be active very soon.

The Council are gearing up to spend circa £900k of grant over the next 2 financial years on targeted properties in the town centre. Meetings have been held with local property agents and owners to establish properties/property owners who could benefit from grant aid.

## **8. WORKING MENS HALL**

### **CAERPHILLY WORKINGMENS HALL & INSTITUTE (CWMHI)**

- Regeneration Project Officer (Glenn Cooper) from the Urban Renewal Team has continued to meet regularly with representatives from the Workingmen's Hall and assist with grant funding / project development matters in relation to the restoration plans for the building.
- With support from CCBC, a funding package is being assembled which will enable the CWHI to engage the services of an experienced Conservation Architect to help develop a Stage One application to the Heritage Lottery Fund.

- Glenn Cooper (CCBC) and Paul Pole (from CWHI) met recently with the Conservation Architect to agree a forward Action Plan for the next financial year. It is hoped that substantive work on grant funding applications for a Phase 1 of work will commence during 2019/2020. This is subject to the necessary feasibility studies and preliminary survey works which the Architect will undertake as part of their commission.
- CWMHI have recently applied to the Architectural Heritage Fund for grant funding of £5,000 towards Development Costs and a decision is expected shortly.
- An Expression of Interest to CADW's Capital Fund for Heritage Projects will be submitted later in 2019.

#### WELSH GOVERNMENT TARGETED REGENERATION INVESTMENT – THE URBAN CENTRE FUND

- The Council is participating in a major new regional Welsh Government grant programme, the "Urban Centre Fund". The Fund is being delivered as part of the Council's strategic regeneration priorities under the Welsh Government Targeted Regeneration Investment and is administered by Rhondda Cynon Taff CBC on behalf of the SE Wales Local Authorities.
- The Urban Centre Fund will assist applicants to physically improve their property by offering the opportunity to apply for a grant for new shop/commercial property frontage and associated external and internal works. The intention of the fund is to enhance building frontages and bring vacant commercial floor-space back into beneficial economic use.
- The Fund can also assist projects that aim to improve residential premises (e.g. flats above retail premises) as part of a mixed use development
- The grant will be a maximum of 70% of reasonable eligible costs, up to a maximum grant award of £250,000 exclusive of VAT.
- The Fund is open to Freeholder, Sole Traders, Partnerships, Limited Companies, Community Businesses, Co-operatives and Registered Social Landlords.
- The first tranche of funding in 2019/20 will focus on Caerphilly Town Centre.
- The Council is aiming to launch the scheme by early summer and has identified several projects through a targeted approach of properties within the main retail core of Caerphilly Town Centre & in the vicinity of Caerphilly Castle.

#### UR TEAM

2.4.19

### **9. CAERPHILLY RETAIL OVERVIEW 2018**

Castle Court Shopping Centre experienced a year of change in 2018 with the appointment of a new Centre Manager and a number of key tenant changes. Two longstanding vacant units were filled by *The Works* and independent travel agent *Tailor Made Travel*. Although two of the largest units became vacant during the year following the closure of *Burger King* and *Brighthouse*, one of the units was subsequently let to *Heron Foods*. The new manager introduced a monthly craft market which proved very popular and she partnered with the Town Council to create a Christmas lights switch on event with an inaugural 'Twilight Market' in the centre.

Elsewhere in the town, Cardiff Road endured a tough year with lower footfall levels than previous years and businesses closing for a variety of reasons, which left a number of vacancies on the street. Some of these vacant units were filled during the year and new businesses *Bomper Studio.com*, *Aura* and *Luxuria Hair* all undertook significant works to improve their properties. The opening of another quality restaurant called *13 Market Street* overlooking the castle, perhaps signifies the emergence of a food quarter in the vicinity of The Twyn.

Pentrebane Street and Clive Street also saw a number of changes in their tenant mix over the 12 months. New businesses *Summerland Academy* and *Castle Bait & Tackle* opened in Clive Street. In Pentrebane Street *Mantra Tattoo Studio*, *The Hot Doughnut House* and *Déjà Vu* opened. After a long period of inactivity work finally began to bring a key building on the corner of Pentrebane Street and Cardiff back into beneficial use.

| <b>Caerphilly Business Comparison</b> |           |           |                                  |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|----------------------------------|
|                                       | 2018      | 2017      | LFL Comparison                   |
| Businesses Opened                     | <b>16</b> | <b>16</b> | <b>0 more businesses opened</b>  |
| Businesses Closed                     | <b>8</b>  | <b>10</b> | <b>2 fewer businesses closed</b> |

## UK Retail Overview 2018

The fabric of the UK's high streets fundamentally changed in 2018. Well established household names such as *Toys r Us*, *Maplin*, *Poundworld*, *The Original Factor Shop* and even *House of Fraser* have either disappeared or fallen into administration. This has left gaps in many prime town and city centre locations and seen nervous retailers dramatically reducing the number of stores within their property portfolio. Smaller town centres have been particularly hard hit with the likes of *Dorothy Perkins*, *New Look* and *Carpetright* all closing stores in prominent town centre locations. There is no single reason for the current downturn on the high street, rather it is a case of a number of different factors combining together. These include a squeeze on household budgets, the continued shift to experiential and online shopping, rising household overheads and an over capacity in many retail sectors. During 2018 more high street banks were lost and this is expected to continue in 2019 with banks realigning their service into a district centre model which locally means directing customers to Blackwood and Caerphilly.

## Footfall Data

2018

| Q1      | Commencing      | Week Total | Year Total |
|---------|-----------------|------------|------------|
| Week 01 | Mon 1-Jan-2018  | 19,864     | 19,864     |
| Week 02 | Mon 8-Jan-2018  | 22,543     | 42,407     |
| Week 03 | Mon 15-Jan-2018 | 20,676     | 63,083     |
| Week 04 | Mon 22-Jan-2018 | 20,893     | 83,976     |
| Week 05 | Mon 29-Jan-2018 | 22,762     | 106,738    |
| Week 06 | Mon 5-Feb-2018  | 21,317     | 128,055    |
| Week 07 | Mon 12-Feb-2018 | 23,219     | 151,274    |
| Week 08 | Mon 19-Feb-2018 | 24,674     | 175,948    |
| Week 09 | Mon 26-Feb-2018 | 18,192     | 194,140    |
| Week 10 | Mon 5-Mar-2018  | 26,378     | 220,518    |
| Week 11 | Mon 12-Mar-2018 | 23,986     | 244,504    |

| Q2      | Commencing      | Week Total | Year Total |
|---------|-----------------|------------|------------|
| Week 14 | Mon 2-Apr-2018  | 24,306     | 316,683    |
| Week 15 | Mon 9-Apr-2018  | 26,315     | 342,998    |
| Week 16 | Mon 16-Apr-2018 | 26,204     | 369,202    |
| Week 17 | Mon 23-Apr-2018 | 24,473     | 393,675    |
| Week 18 | Mon 30-Apr-2018 | 28,219     | 421,894    |
| Week 19 | Mon 7-May-2018  | 28,657     | 450,551    |
| Week 20 | Mon 14-May-2018 | 27,782     | 478,333    |
| Week 21 | Mon 21-May-2018 | 24,693     | 503,026    |
| Week 22 | Mon 28-May-2018 | 26,364     | 529,390    |
| Week 23 | Mon 4-Jun-2018  | 26,889     | 556,279    |
| Week 24 | Mon 11-Jun-2018 | 27,786     | 584,065    |



|                |                        |         |         |
|----------------|------------------------|---------|---------|
| <b>Week 12</b> | <b>Mon 19-Mar-2018</b> | 24,116  | 268,620 |
| <b>Week 13</b> | <b>Mon 26-Mar-2018</b> | 23,757  | 292,377 |
| Quarter        |                        | 292,377 |         |

|                |                        |         |         |
|----------------|------------------------|---------|---------|
| <b>Week 25</b> | <b>Mon 18-Jun-2018</b> | 26,384  | 610,449 |
| <b>Week 26</b> | <b>Mon 25-Jun-2018</b> | 29,279  | 639,728 |
| Quarter        |                        | 347,351 |         |

| <b>Q3</b>      | <b>Commencing</b>      | <b>Week Total</b> | <b>Year Total</b> |
|----------------|------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Week 27</b> | <b>Mon 2-Jul-2018</b>  | 30,571            | 670,299           |
| <b>Week 28</b> | <b>Mon 9-Jul-2018</b>  | 29,029            | 699,328           |
| <b>Week 29</b> | <b>Mon 16-Jul-2018</b> | 26,931            | 726,259           |
| <b>Week 30</b> | <b>Mon 23-Jul-2018</b> | 29,016            | 755,275           |
| <b>Week 31</b> | <b>Mon 30-Jul-2018</b> | 27,472            | 782,747           |
| <b>Week 32</b> | <b>Mon 6-Aug-2018</b>  | 24,897            | 807,644           |
| <b>Week 33</b> | <b>Mon 13-Aug-2018</b> | 25,471            | 833,115           |
| <b>Week 34</b> | <b>Mon 20-Aug-2018</b> | 25,787            | 858,902           |
| <b>Week 35</b> | <b>Mon 27-Aug-2018</b> | 26,520            | 885,422           |
| <b>Week 36</b> | <b>Mon 3-Sep-2018</b>  | 26,117            | 911,539           |
| <b>Week 37</b> | <b>Mon 10-Sep-2018</b> | 23,928            | 935,467           |
| <b>Week 38</b> | <b>Mon 17-Sep-2018</b> | 21,458            | 956,925           |
| <b>Week 39</b> | <b>Mon 24-Sep-2018</b> | 26,032            | 982,957           |
| Quarter        |                        | 343,229           |                   |

| <b>Q4</b>      | <b>Commencing</b>      | <b>Week Total</b> | <b>Year Total</b> |
|----------------|------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Week 40</b> | <b>Mon 1-Oct-2018</b>  | 23,844            | 1,006,801         |
| <b>Week 41</b> | <b>Mon 8-Oct-2018</b>  | 21,187            | 1,027,988         |
| <b>Week 42</b> | <b>Mon 15-Oct-2018</b> | 24,325            | 1,052,313         |
| <b>Week 43</b> | <b>Mon 21-Oct-2019</b> | 24,220            | 1,076,533         |
| <b>Week 44</b> | <b>Mon 28-Oct-2019</b> | 26,235            | 1,102,768         |
| <b>Week 45</b> | <b>Mon 4-Nov-2019</b>  | 22,546            | 1,125,314         |
| <b>Week 46</b> | <b>Mon 11-Nov-2019</b> | 23,509            | 1,148,823         |
| <b>Week 47</b> | <b>Mon 18-Nov-2019</b> | 23,866            | 1,172,689         |
| <b>Week 48</b> | <b>Mon 25-Nov-2019</b> | 20,637            | 1,193,326         |
| <b>Week 49</b> | <b>Mon 2-Dec-2019</b>  | 29,583            | 1,222,909         |
| <b>Week 50</b> | <b>Mon 9-Dec-2019</b>  | 23,533            | 1,246,442         |
| <b>Week 51</b> | <b>Mon 16-Dec-2019</b> | 28,276            | 1,274,718         |
| <b>Week 52</b> | <b>Mon 23-Dec-2019</b> | 19,357            | 1,294,075         |
| Quarter        |                        | 311,118           |                   |

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