



## CABINET - 21ST MAY 2014

**SUBJECT: RISCA AND PONTYMISTER TOWN CENTRE ACTION PLAN**

**REPORT BY: ACTING DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

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

- 1.1 To adopt the Risca and Pontymister Town Centre Action Plan 2014 as Supplementary Planning Guidance and as a framework for regeneration of the town centre.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 A draft Risca and Pontymister Town Centre Action Plan has been developed and consulted on. A consultation exercise was carried out between February and April 2014. A report of the public consultation responses is attached as an appendix to this report.
- 2.2 The draft town centre action plan has been amended in light of the consultation responses and the Plan is now put forward for adoption by Council. When adopted it will supersede the previous 2002 Risca and Pontymister Town Centre Action Plan.
- 2.3 The Risca and Pontymister Town Centre Action Plan will form Supplementary Planning Guidance to complement the Local Development Plan .

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

- 3.1 Risca and Pontymister is located within the 'Connection Corridor' of the Wales Spatial Plan framework for South East Wales. With its key strategic location on the A467 and its railway link to Cardiff, Risca and Pontymister can play an important part in forging the strong links between the Valleys and Cardiff that the Wales Spatial Plan seeks to achieve.
- 3.2 Caerphilly County Borough Regeneration Framework - The Council's Regeneration Framework focuses on a number of key priorities, comprising eight 'activity areas' within which regeneration activity can take place. The proposals and aspirations set out in this plan contribute directly to five of the eight priorities identified within the Regeneration Framework including:
- Strengthening Town Centres;
  - Regenerating Communities and Raising Aspirations;
  - Increasing Economic Activity and Addressing worklessness;
  - Protecting and Developing the Economy;
  - Connecting People and Places.
- 3.3 Caerphilly County Borough Council Sustainability Strategy - The proposals in this Action Plan will make a significant contribution to the Council's sustainability aspirations by helping to:

- Regenerate the town centre and the local economy;
- Provide services locally for the residents of Risca and the Risca basin;
- Improve public transport infrastructure and pedestrian environments;
- Encourage healthy lifestyles by providing pedestrian and cycle links between the town and local parks.

3.4 Risca and Pontymister is identified as a 'Principal Town' in the Council's Local Development Plan (LDP), which states; - *"Risca / Pontymister is the main centre for services in this district. The College of Further Education at Crosskeys serves an even wider area. The commercial function of the area is largely overshadowed by its close proximity to Newport and to some extent Blackwood. However the possibility exists to restructure the town centre to attract inward investment and improve the attractiveness of the area to residents and visitors alike. CM4.7, CM4.8 and CM4.9 allocate land for retail developments within Risca / Pontymister, thus aiding the creation of a diverse local economy. Scope exists to exploit the opportunities afforded by the re-opening of the Ebbw Valley railway line and the restoration of the canal. An opportunity exists to provide for new mixed-use development comprising employment, retailing and housing development on brownfield land adjacent to the River Ebbw. Care will need to be taken however as large areas of the valley bottom are identified as being at risk from flooding."* The Risca and Pontymister Town Centre Action Plan, when it is adopted, will become supplementary planning guidance to the LDP.

## 4. THE REPORT

### **Purpose of the Risca and Pontymister Town Centre Action Plan**

4.1 The Town Centre Action Plan has seven main purposes;

- 1) To set out a comprehensive strategy and proposals for the successful regeneration of Risca town centre;
- 2) To provide supplementary planning guidance to the adopted Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan (LDP) in order to assist in the determination of planning applications;
- 3) To market a number of development sites within Risca/Pontymister as a suitable investment opportunity for the private sector;
- 4) To expand on the potential for the town to benefit from its proximity to the Monmouthshire and Brecon canal, River Ebbw and Cwmcarn Forest Drive, ensuring that new developments integrate these important natural assets;
- 5) To provide evidence and a framework for funding bids to deliver the proposals contained within this Action Plan;
- 6) Promote the role of Risca and Pontymister town centre as a 'Principal Town Centre' and to meet the needs of its catchment population within the Southern Connections Corridor of the Borough;
- 7) To enhance Risca and Pontymister based on its identified roles and functions in order to respond appropriately to the economic, social and environmental needs of the town.

### **Public Consultation on the draft plan**

4.2 Consultation on the draft plan has been carried out. An exhibition on the draft Risca and Pontymister Town Centre Action Plan was placed in Risca Library between the 28<sup>th</sup> February and 8<sup>th</sup> March. The plan was also available to view on the Council's website.

- 4.3 Furthermore, officers attended both the Risca West Town Council and Risca East Community Council meetings. The draft plan was also presented to the Regeneration Scrutiny Committee on 1<sup>st</sup> April for comment.
- 4.4 The Plan's proposals met with general approval. A detailed account of representations made is contained in Appendix 1 to this report but in summary the main points made by respondents apart from general expressions of support were:
- Too many housing proposals
  - Concerns over traffic along Mill Street
  - Need for more leisure facilities within Risca and Pontymister

#### **Changes from the draft plan**

- 4.5 Following the public consultation exercise, the Plan has been updated to address the concerns raised and to review the feasibility of the proposals suggested. The changes made are also listed within Appendix 1.

#### **Implementation**

- 4.6 The implementation of this town centre action plan will be co-ordinated by the Urban Renewal section of Caerphilly County Borough Council's Regeneration and Planning Division. The private sector have played a pivotal role in the regeneration of the town in recent years and it is envisaged that the council will continue to build on this in order to implement key proposals of this action plan.
- 4.7 Public investment will also be sought but given the current constraints on public expenditure, proposals will be implemented as and when funding opportunities arise.

### **5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no significant equalities implications associated with the report. The proposals within the Town Centre Action Plan will be delivered to meet the Council's Equalities policies.

### **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The Plan implies substantial capital expenditure over the next five years and beyond. No funding has been secured for the proposals outlined in the plan and therefore full implementation of the proposals will depend heavily on the support of the private sector and external funding sources.

### **7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 None.

### **8. CONSULTATIONS**

- 8.1 This report reflects responses from consultees as set out in section 4. Any further substantive comments will be reported orally to Cabinet. As a policy document, the Risca and Pontymister Town Centre Action Plan will have to be adopted by full Council.

### **9. RECOMMENDATION**

- 9.1 That Council adopts the Risca and Pontymister Town Centre Action Plan 2014 as Supplementary Planning Guidance to the Local Development Plan.

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

- 10.1 In order to provide a comprehensive framework for the regeneration of the town centre, to supplement the LDP, to provide support bids for grant aid to regenerate the area and to promote the town centre for private investment.

## **11. STATUTORY POWER**

- 11.1 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Local Government Acts 1972 and 2000. This is a Council decision.

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Background Papers:  
Risca and Pontymister Town Centre Action Plan 2014

Appendices:  
Appendix 1 – Public Consultation Report