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Date: 21st February 2017

Dear Sir/Madam,

A meeting of the **Blackwood Town Centre Management Group** will be held in the **Sirhowy Room, Penallta House, Tredomen, Ystrad Mynach** on **Tuesday, 28th February, 2017** at **2.00 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

AGENDA

	Pages
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 Minutes 9th September 2016.	
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1 - 4

A greener place Man gwyrddach



Correspondence may be in any language or format | Gallwch ohebu mewn unrhyw iaith neu fformat

To receive and note the following updates: -

4	Business Report.	5 - 10
5	'Choose the High Street' Christmas Voucher Booklet Analysis.	11 - 16
6	Cobbled Lane High Street, side of Flour Mill.	
7	Summer Events.	
8	Procurement of Footfall Counter Provider.	17 - 20
9	Market Place Re-development.	
10	Aldi Re-development.	
11	Red Lion Update.	
12	Audit.	21 - 28

Circulation:

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

Town Councillors

Other Organisations



BLACKWOOD TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, PENALLTA HOUSE ON FRIDAY 9TH SEPTEMBER 2016 AT 2:00 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillors:

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

Together with:

Town Councillors: C. Erasmus, Z. Hammond

Also:

A. Highway (Town Centre Development Manager), A. Dallimore (Team Leader – Urban Renewal & Conservation), P. Hudson (Marketing & Events Manager), & A. Jones (Clerk)

1. TO APPOINT A CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR FOR THE ENSUING YEAR

Mr Highway opened the meeting and requested nominations for the Chair. Councillor Hawker nominated Councillor Dix and this nomination was seconded by Councillor Rees.

Councillor Dix took over the meeting and invited nomination for Vice-Chair. Councillor Williams nominated Councillor Cook and this nomination was seconded by Councillor James.

Councillor Cook accepted the position.

2. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors: E. Aldworth (Consultee), D. T Davies (Consultee), Mr J Hold (Clerk), Mr H Edwards (Blackwood Retail Partnership), Mr A Oldham (Manager Blackwood Shopping Precinct), Mr S Wilcox (Assistant Town Centre Manager), M Jones (Principal Enforcement Officer Planning).

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING 26TH FEBRUARY 2016

The minutes were taken as read.

5. 'CHOOSE THE HIGH STREET' STORIES

Mr Highway presented his report to the group.

The Chair thanked Mr Highway and his team for their hard work.

The Chair stated that it is very important to use all available means to promote the town and that this is an excellent idea which shows how dynamic our High Street is.

6. 'CHOOSE THE HIGH STREET' CHRISTMAS VOUCHER BOOKLET

Mr Highway presented his report to the group and showed the group what the design of the booklet would look like.

The group were advised that the booklets would be in production in the next few weeks.

Mr Highway informed the group that retailers are becoming more aware of the scheme as each year passes and already 30 retailers have submitted offers.

The group were advised that the offers received to date appear to be more competitive than in previous years.

The Chair thanked Mr Highway for the report and the hard work.

7. GO2 MY TOWN VIRTUAL TOUR OF THE WEBSITE.

Mr Highway took members on a virtual tour of the Go2 My Town Website and highlighted how the site works and the information available to people interested in setting up new businesses in the town centre.

Councillor Cook asked if there was a direct link from Caerphilly Council's website. Mr Hudson advised that IT is looking into this.

Mr Highway showed the group how to find the stories for each of the towns on the site.

Mr Highway shared with the group some of the comments of appreciation from retailers featured in the 'Stories' initiative and were grateful of support from the Council.

The Chair thanked Mr Highway and stated that having good working relationships with the retailers is very important.

8. RED LION UPDATE

Mr Dallimore passed on apologies from Mike Jones from Planning and read out the following statement provided from the officer.

"The current position is that I have written to the company that owns the land requesting their assistance in cutting back the overgrowth immediately surrounding the building and removing the resulting material, together with any rubbish or debris that became evident after cutting back the overgrowth from the land. No response was received to my initial correspondence, or subsequent letters. I have obtained Authority to take action under Section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act, which is the only avenue open under the planning legislation to try and remedy the current condition of the land. The Local Planning Authority is not in a position to take direct action to clear the site until any legal action has run its course. Notices under

that section of the Act have to be served on the owner or occupier of the land, the recipient of such a notice has the right of appeal, currently to the Magistrates Court against the requirements of a notice. I have sent a Requisition for Information to the company to establish who has an interest in the land, as they may be liable under any action taken. When the necessary information has been provided, it is my intention to issue a notice that would require such steps as may be considered necessary to be taken to return the land (including building) to a state of amenity.”

Mr Dallimore informed the group that Mr Jones has written to the owners but have not received a response, therefore the next step would be to consider if illegal action should be taken.

The Chair stated that it is frustrating but understands that we have to go through process and thanked Mr Dallimore for the update.

9. THURSDAY NIGHT ROAD CLOSURE IMPLEMENTATION

Inspector White advised that the situation in Blackwood is being monitored by the police and officers have carried out research and checked CCTV footage, He informed the group that only 5 instances had been reported which included anti-social behaviour or speeding, but no cruising on Thursday night.

Inspector White confirmed if calls are received they will revisit the possibility of closing the road again until then the road will remain open.

The Chair expressed concern over length of time taken to implement the road closure in the first place and so it is important to monitor the situation and not to allow car cruisers to come back to Blackwood town centre.

Mr Dallimore confirmed that the infrastructure and signage will remain in place in case it is ever needed again.

The Chair thanked Inspector White.

10. AUDIT

Mr Highway presented the Audit and the following items were raised.

Poundstretchers site – Mr Highway confirmed that he has spoken to the owner and this matter is still with the Insurance Company.

Toilet Block Enhancement – Mr Dallimore confirmed that Mr Jones has written to owner requesting that they cut back brambles. Mr Bolton had called back to confirm that he would be cutting them back although nothing has happened as yet.

Mr Dallimore advised that the Council will be looking to start process of issuing Section 215 notice via colleagues in planning.

The Chair wished to thank Mr Jones.

Street signage Resetting Gordon Road – Councillor Rees questioned whether the Monnington Lodge (Brewers Lodge) had changed its name and if it had then the street sign in place will need to be changed. This will be checked by Mr Hudson.

Condition of Steps R/O Wesley Road Car Park –The Chair advised that the area is looking a lot better. Z. Hammond confirmed that there is work currently being carried out with the railings. Mr Dallimore will chase for update.

Antisocial behaviour – Officers are very proactive and are targeting specific areas and moving people on. The Chair thanked officers.

Z. Hammond raised concerns from The Market Place Manager about groups gathering under shelters and lighting small fires which set off fire alarms by Peacocks and Iceland.

This will be raised with the Community Safety Wardens and the Fire Service.

Parking bay restrictions – Inspector White confirmed that Officers have been out and issued parking tickets over 3 days of enforcement.

Proposed amendment to Traffic Order – Inspector White advised that there is a meeting next Friday at 2pm to and invited Councillors to attend the meeting.

Former Guide Hall – Mr Highway advised that the demolition crew are waiting for utilities to be disconnected to enable them to go in. The Chair thanked officers in the Council.

Cleaning of planted area – Thanks were passed to Mr Rhodri Lloyd and his team. It was noted that there were mattresses found and evidence of people sleeping there, this will be passed to the police for further investigation.

Wheelchair Accessibility – Mr Dallimore advised that specific areas in the town centre would need to be identified so that officers can assess to see if CCBC own the land and consider what adaptations can be carried out. The group were advised that the Caerphilly Access Group could be brought in to discuss any issues.

Z. Hammond wished to thank Paul Hudson and his team for all their hard work on the Carnival event and looking forward now to a successful Christmas event.

There were no further issues raised.

The meeting closed 15:12.

CHAIR



BLACKWOOD TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP - 28TH FEBRUARY 2017

**SUBJECT: BUSINESS REPORT BLACKWOOD TOWN CENTRE 2016 - FOR
INFORMATION**

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR - COMMUNITIES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides information on the number of businesses opened and closed in Blackwood town centre throughout 2016.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The report gives a business overview of Blackwood town centre over the past year and details every retail business opening and closing within the town during 2016. In addition, it also provides an assessment of the annual footfall data collated in the town centre using the ShopperTrak Footfall electronic pedestrian counting system. Finally, the report sets out details of a number of initiatives that have been developed to support and promote existing businesses and attract new ones to the town centre.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 "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 "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.
- 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 the following Well-being Goals:
- A prosperous Wales
 - A healthier Wales
 - A Wales of cohesive communities
 - A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language
 - A globally responsible Wales.

4. THE REPORT

4.1 Blackwood Retail Overview 2016

In the first quarter of 2016 Blackwood town centre saw a number of businesses close. However, following the opening of *Costa Coffee* in April, a host of new retailers opened including: *Twinkle Tots*, *RBM Discounts*, *Bettys Boutique*, *Rebel Clothing*, *Profile* and *Lextan*. There was a particular trend towards independent clothes shops, although some of these were initially on short term leases. The area of High Street in the vicinity of the Blackwood Miners Institute saw three businesses open: *Exclusive Tiles & Bathrooms*, *Zam Zam Stores* and *Pizza Hut*. All of these have invested in their respective properties leading to an overall improvement in the areas appearance.

In August, value retailer Store 21 closed many of its UK stores including the one in Blackwood. As a result the building, which has the largest retail space on High Street, was sold. Town Centre Management quickly instigated a dialogue with the new owners and it is hoped that after modifications to the building new tenants can be secured.

During the latter part of 2016, the owners of The Market Place Shopping Centre began the refurbishment of the former Somerfield store. The immediate priority has been the buildings roof, but due to the length of time the unit has been vacant urgent works are also needed to the interior before it can be occupied by a new tenant.

A number of key issues could potentially affect town centres in 2017. The much anticipated business rates review was conducted last autumn; this led to some businesses having their rates reduced, whilst others had them increased. Small independent retailers in those towns where the business rates have been reduced are expected to be better placed to survive the challenging economic conditions. Following last summer's BREXIT vote, consumer confidence has faltered. It is still too early to predict the wider implications of the decision but whilst economic stability continues and consumer confidence remains volatile the long-term commitment of many multiple retailers to smaller town centres is uncertain.

4.2 Retail Property Directory

4.2.1 The *Retail Property Directory* provided through Town Centre Management is an online resource listing all retail properties to rent or buy in the five managed town centres. The Directory is designed to encourage businesses to open in one of the County Borough's town centres. In addition, Town Centre Management proactively engages with property agents both nationally and locally to secure new tenants for vacant town centre units.

4.3 Choose the High Street – Stories

4.3.1 The 'Stories' initiative ran throughout the summer months and involved telling the stories of the people behind the shop fascia. At the close of 2016, 75 stories have been published on the Go2MyTown website and shared on social media. Due to the popularity of the scheme the initiative will continue in 2017. Over the summer a series of library exhibitions were staged displaying some of the stories and asking people to sign a pledge to shop locally. The initiative was extremely well-received by both businesses and the public alike.

4.4 Choose the High Street - Christmas Voucher Booklet

4.4.1 The 'Choose the High Street' initiative once again featured a Christmas Voucher Booklet in 2016. The campaign is designed to provide local businesses with an opportunity to capture consumer spend during the Christmas period and also to market the diverse retail offer contained in the town centres. Retailers across the five managed town centres were given the opportunity to participate. In total 112 offers were received across the County Borough, which is an increase of 7 on 2015. A total of 30 of these were from businesses in Blackwood town centre.

4.5 Go2 MyTown Web Site

4.5.1 The Go2MyTown web site is an online platform for the Council's business support services. Town Centre Management have utilised the site in order to make key pieces of information and data available online. These include: weekly footfall data, Property Directory, Town Centre Gazettes and 'Pop Up Shop' Guide. In addition, the site contains information on each of the five managed towns as well as featuring different elements of the 'Choose the High Street' campaign.

4.6 GovDelivery

4.6.1 In response to retailers' requests to receive footfall data by email, a GovMail delivery account was created for Town Centre Management enabling footfall data to be disseminated each week. The platform is also used to periodically issue a general news update.

4.7 Events

4.7.1 The town centre events programme provides local retailers with an opportunity to engage with a wider customer base. The increase in footfall numbers also has the potential to generate repeat visits to the town centres throughout the year.

4.8 Business Comparison

4.8.1 The Town Centre Management Team compiled these figures during weekly town centre visits over the course of a 12-month period. It should be noted that they are as accurate as possible given the methodology of the data collection.

Blackwood Business Comparison			
	2016	2015	LFL Comparison
Businesses Opened	13	14	1 less business opened
Businesses Closed	9	11	2 fewer businesses closed

4.9 Blackwood Footfall

4.9.1 Footfall in the town centre is measured outside *Boots* on High Street.

Blackwood Footfall Comparison			
	2016	2015	Difference
Highest Number	46,230 (19/12/16)	39,429 (26/10/15)	+6,801
Lowest Number	23,259 (25/01/16)	23,527 (09/11/15)	-268
Average Footfall	29,141	32,562	-3,421
Please note that the camera was offline for 19 weeks during 2015			

4.10 Town Centre Gazette

4.10.1 The Town Centre Management Team supports retailers by producing regular *Town Centre Gazettes*, which are bespoke to each town centre. In 2016 five editions were produced. In line with the provisions of the new Welsh Language Act the Gazettes were changed to a bilingual format.

5. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

5.1 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 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.

In addition, the report is also consistent with the five ways of working as defined within the sustainable development principle in the Act:

1. Long Term - Investment in town centres contributes to the sustainability and viability of local communities. It is accepted that the role and nature of town centres may change in the coming decades, but the challenge is for them to remain places which are relevant to how people live their everyday lives.
2. Prevention – The management and promotion of town centres through the ‘Unique Places’ model of Town Centre Management aims to prevent the decline of town centre and retain them as focal points of community life.
3. Integration – The continued vitality of town centres is integral to the Act by contributing to the prosperity, health and cultural identity of Wales.
4. Collaboration – Town Centre Management draws on different service areas within the Council to work towards achieving the well-being goals in respect of town centres. It also works in partnership with outside organisations such as Town & Community Councils, local charities and retailers to encourage and promote community engagement.
5. Involvement – The County Borough’s town centres serve a wide range of people across many different communities. They strive to be places of social interaction which celebrate diversity and promote equality.

6. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no potential equalities implications of this report and its recommendations on groups or individuals who fall under the categories identified in Section 6 of the Council's Strategic Equality Plan. As such, there is no requirement for an Equalities Impact Assessment Questionnaire to be completed for this report.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no financial implications.

8. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no personal implications.

9. CONSULTATIONS

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

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 It is recommended that Members note the contents of the report for information.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 Local Government Act 2000.

Author: Andrew Highway, Town Centre Development Manager
Consultees: Dave Whetter, Principal Engineer
Cllr. K. James, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning and Sustainable
Development
Allan Dallimore, Urban Renewal Team Leader
Paul Hudson, Marketing and Events Manager
Steve Wilcox, Assistant Town Centre Manager

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BLACKWOOD TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP – 28TH FEBRUARY 2017

**SUBJECT: 'CHOOSE THE HIGH STREET' CHRISTMAS VOUCHER BOOKLET
2016– ANALYSIS REPORT**

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR - COMMUNITIES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides information on the 'Choose the High Street' Christmas Voucher Booklet scheme, which ran across the County Borough's five principal town centres in the period leading up to Christmas 2016.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The report provides details of the 'Choose the High Street' Christmas Voucher Booklet scheme that was implemented by the Town Centre Management team during Christmas 2016. Included in the report is information as to how the scheme was operated, the numbers of retailers participating, marketing platforms used, along with feedback from questionnaires sent out to participating businesses.

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 "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.
- 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 the following Well-being Goals:
- A prosperous Wales;
 - A healthier Wales;
 - A Wales of cohesive communities;
 - A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language;
 - A globally responsible Wales.

4. THE REPORT

4.1 In the lead up to Christmas 2016, the Council's Town Centre Management team once again produced a 'Choose the High Street' Christmas Voucher Booklet. The scheme provides local retailers with the opportunity to take part in a co-ordinated marketing campaign. This year's Christmas Voucher Booklet contained 112 offers across the five managed town centres which was an increase of 7 on the previous year. The aims of the scheme are to provide businesses with an opportunity to capture consumer spend during the Christmas period and also to market the diverse retail offer contained in the town centres.

4.2 The booklet was designed by the Council's Graphic Design team. In addition, to the offers also included was a brief description of each town centre, a map of the County Borough showing the location of the five managed towns and adverts promoting the work in the community of different Council departments. These adverts raised awareness of the role of the Community Safety Wardens and the support offered to residents who are over 50 as part of Welsh Government's 'Aging Well in Wales' initiative. They also included details of the Visitor Attractions, the Go2 My Town website and the Christmas Events programme.

4.3 The scheme was officially launched on 31st October at Risca Library where local school children from Risca and Ty Syn Primary Schools joined the Cabinet Member Cllr. James and Father Christmas.

4.4 Marketing Platforms

4.4.1 To support the campaign a number of different marketing platforms were utilised including:

- Bus adverts;
- Advertorial pages in the *Caerphilly Observer*;
- Social media engagement on the Council and Go2 My Town Facebook / Twitter feeds;
- Articles in the Council's *Newsline* publication, which is delivered to every household in the County Borough;
- Dedicated web page on the CCBC corporate website including a PDF version of the booklet;
- PDF version of the booklet and promotional page on the Go2 My Town website.

4.5 Production and Distribution

4.5.1 A total of 30,000 Voucher Booklets were produced, with distribution being carried out by the Council's Community Safety Wardens.

The following locations gave out voucher booklets:

- Caerphilly: Library / Customer First Centre / Visitor Centre / Wetherspoons - The Malcolm Uphill;
- Blackwood: Library / Customer First Centre / Blackwood Miners' Institute / Tidal Stores / Maxime Cinema, Chinkles;
- Bargoed: Library / Customer First Centre, Poundworld;
- Risca: Library / Customer First Centre & Tesco;
- Ystrad Mynach: Library & Tesco.

4.6 Supermarket Distribution

4.6.1 Once again the Town Centre Management team reached agreements with local supermarkets, ASDA (Blackwood) and Morrisons (Caerphilly & Bargoed) to distribute the booklets to their customers. For the first time Tesco (Risca & Ystrad Mynach) also participated in the scheme. Different receptacles were used this year which were sturdier and may be reusable next year.

4.7 Retailer Participation

4.7.1 The table shows the number of retailers taking part in the scheme compared to those in the previous years. This evidences the year on year growth in retailers participation of the scheme.

Town Centre	Number of Offers in 2016	Number of Offers in 2015	Number of Offers in 2014	Number of Offers in 2013	Number of Offers in 2012
Caerphilly	40	31	29	26	24
Blackwood	30	32	26	24	20
Bargoed	26	20	23	21	14
Risca	6	8	6	4	5
Ystrad Mynach	8	10	2	4	N/A
Offers in other towns	2	4	4	1	1
Total	112	105	90	80	64

4.8 Retail Engagement

4.8.1 The Town Centre Management team made visits to numerous retailers across the five town centres explaining the scheme and encouraging participation. Awareness of the scheme was much higher amongst retailers this year.

4.9 Retailer Survey

4.9.1 A survey was sent out to all retailers who participated in the scheme and the results are shown in the table below. A total of 86 surveys were sent out and 23 returned, giving a response rate of 27%.

4.9.2 A summary of the responses can be found below:

Question	Yes	No
1. Was the "Choose the High Street Christmas Voucher Booklet" beneficial to your business?	61%	39%
2. Did the voucher booklet bring new customers?	52%	48%
3. Do you think schemes such as this highlight the importance of shopping locally?	78%	22%
4. Did you feel that the scheme was well-publicised?	41%	59%
5. Did you notice the bus advertising used to promote the scheme this year?	10%	90%
6. Would you consider taking part in a discount scheme in the future?	76%	24%
7. If yes, would you revise your offer in any way?	21%	79%

4.9.3 The take up of offers in individual businesses varied considerably, as has been the case in previous years. The number of vouchers redeemed varied from zero to 20. It was apparent that the quality of the offers received was better than in previous years, which was reflected in the fact that only 30% of respondents reported having no vouchers redeemed compared to 36% last year. The average number of vouchers redeemed was around 5.

- 4.9.4 Generally, the responses were positive. However, the biggest change was to the responses in question 1. In 2015 48% of respondents felt that the scheme benefitted their business, this year that figure rose to 61%.
- 4.9.5 It is positive to note that despite the varying success of the offers amongst participating businesses, 76% of respondents would consider taking part in the scheme if it were run again. This high volume suggests that retailers see not only the transactional value, but also the free promotional benefit of being part of the scheme. Those who said they would revise their offer in the future generally said that they would give a different/larger level of discount.
- 4.9.6 For the first time this year, (external) bus advertising was used to promote the scheme. Unfortunately, this new advertising medium was noticed by only 10% of the respondents, despite it being a high profile element of the publicity campaign.

4.10 **Conclusion**

- 4.10.1 In evaluating the scheme the wider changes in how the retail sector is approaching Christmas need to be understood. Multiple retailers are placing a greater emphasis on online sales and using discount vouchers sent to smart phones to encourage consumers to shop online. They are also staging flash discount days in stores in the lead up to Christmas. These changes make consumers increasingly price sensitive and place a much greater pressure on independent retailers to offer larger discounts. Although the scheme is operated and funded by the council, the level of discount offered by retailers remains solely at their discretion.
- 4.10.2 This year's booklet contained the highest number of offers since the scheme's inception which demonstrates that there is a growing appetite amongst local retailers to participate in the Christmas scheme. The distribution of 30,000 voucher booklets using an expanded supermarket partnership enabled the towns to be marketed and promoted to a wide audience across the County Borough.
- 4.10.3 The inclusion of adverts to support Council services continued to support the wider Improvement Objectives in the Council's Corporate Plan.
- 4.10.4 The Christmas Voucher Booklet scheme achieved its two primary objectives. Firstly, it offered independent retailers a chance to participate in a marketing campaign over Christmas. Secondly, it highlighted the retail offer across the five managed towns. Whilst the level of discount offered by retailers continues to be at the discretion of individual retailers, those elements of the scheme within the Council's control, the format of the booklet, publicity and distribution were all successfully delivered. The scheme remains a crucial tool in helping promote the County Borough's towns over Christmas and offering local retailers support in an increasingly challenging market place.

5. **WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS**

- 5.1 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 healthier Wales* – visiting a town centre promotes physical exercise and encourages social interaction;
 - *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.

5.2 In addition, the report is also consistent with the five ways of working as defined within the sustainable development principle in the Act:

- Long Term - Investment in town centres contributes to the sustainability and viability of local communities. It is accepted that the role and nature of town centres may change in the coming decades, but the challenge is for them to remain places which are relevant to how people live their everyday lives;
- Prevention – The management and promotion of town centres through the 'Unique Places' model of Town Centre Management aims to prevent the decline of town centres and retain them as focal points of community life;
- Integration – The continued vitality of town centres is integral to the Act by contributing to the prosperity, health and cultural identity of Wales;
- Collaboration – Town Centre Management draws on different service areas within the Council to work towards achieving the well-being goals in respect of town centres. It also works in partnership with outside organisations such as Town & Community Councils, local charities and retailers to encourage and promote community engagement;
- Involvement – The County Borough's town centres serve a wide range of people across many different communities. They strive to be places of social interaction which celebrate diversity and promote equality.

6. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

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

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The campaign was funded through the Town Centre Management core budget.

8. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no direct personnel implications.

9. CONSULTATIONS

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

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 That Members note the contents of the report.

11. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 This report is for information only.

Author: Andrew Highway, Town Centre Development Manager
Consultees: Dave Whetter, Principal Engineer
Cllr. K. James, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning and Sustainable
Development
Allan Dallimore, Team Leader Urban Renewal
Paul Hudson, Marketing & Events Manager
Steve Wilcox, Assistant Town Centre Manager
Dave Titley, Customer Service Manager
Gareth Evans, Senior Libraries Manager
Hayley Lancaster, Senior Communications Officer
Paul Wallen, Community Safety Warden Supervisor
Gareth Chapman, Web Designer



BLACKWOOD TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP – 28TH FEBRUARY 2017

SUBJECT: PROCUREMENT OF TOWN CENTRE FOOTFALL COUNTER PROVIDER

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR - COMMUNITIES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report is intended to provide members of the Town Centre Management Group with information on the renewal of the footfall camera provision contract.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The contract for the supply of footfall cameras in our principal town centres has recently come to an end. As such, a tender process is underway to award a new five-year contract. The report provides members of the Town Centre Management Group with an update as to the current status of this procurement process and the potential implications on data provision.

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 "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.
- 3.3 Data from the footfall counters is used to inform the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) into the Adopted Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan (LDP) (up to 2021). The main aim of the AMR is to assess the extent to which the LDP Strategy and Strategy Policies are being achieved. With regards to Retail and Town Centres, the AMR addresses the vacancy rates in the 5 Principal town centres, as well as using information from the shopper attitude surveys to ascertain how well the town centres are performing. More specifically, indicator L17 in the AMR provides an annual summary of footfall figures in the town centres, which is a vital component in measuring the vitality and viability of town centres.
- 3.4 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 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 footfall figures for Bargoed (North), Barged (South), Blackwood, Caerphilly, Newbridge, Risca and Ystrad Mynach are compiled using electronic pedestrian counting systems. These systems count the pavement directly beneath them 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. The counters are currently situated in the following locations:

- Bargoed (North) – Outside *Peacocks* on High Street;
- Bargoed (South) – Outside *Bargoed Sight Centre* on Hanbury Road;
- Blackwood – Outside *Boots* on High Street;
- Caerphilly – Outside *Happy Feet, Happy Sole* on Cardiff Road;
- Newbridge – Outside 16-18 High Street (formerly *Barclays Bank*);
- Risca – Outside *Palace Cinema Library* on Tredegar Street;
- Ystrad Mynach – Outside *Premier Stores* on Bedwlwyn Road.

4.2 The seven cameras are covered by two separate contracts – Bargoed (North & South), Blackwood, Caerphilly & Risca are under one contract last renewed on 1st December 2011. Ystrad Mynach and Newbridge are under a separate contract dated 31st March 2013. Both of these contracts run for a period of five-years and are between Caerphilly CBC and *ShopperTrak* (formerly *Experian FootFall & Tyco FootFall*).

4.3 The larger of the two contracts (covering Bargoed, Blackwood, Caerphilly & Risca) expired on 1st December 2016. Due to the value of the contract and the Council's Standing Orders for Contracts, a Band B mini competition tender process is currently being undertaken. This process is due to be finalised (i.e. contract award letter issued) by early March 2017 and the Town Centre Management Groups will be made aware of the successful provider at a future meeting. However, members should be aware that there may be a short gap in the provision of footfall figures if there is a change in supplier and/or equipment. The contract commencement date is scheduled to be early July 2017.

4.4 It is anticipated that the successful tenderer will become responsible for the provision of footfall data for Newbridge and Ystrad Mynach with effect from 1st April 2018 (when the current contract ends).

4.5 Following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning & Sustainable Development, and to manage future budgetary constraints as outlined in the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP), Bargoed town centre will no longer have two footfall counters. The Bargoed (North) camera will be removed upon completion of the tender process and the new provider will only supply data from the Bargoed (South) location. This change will also provide consistency across the town centres, as each town will have just one camera.

4.6 The cost of providing the footfall cameras is mainly borne by the Town Centre Management core budget. However, contributions are also provided by the Strategic Planning and Events departments due to the value of the footfall data to their work.

5. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

5.1 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 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.

5.2 In addition, the report is also consistent with the five ways of working as defined within the sustainable development principle in the Act:

- Long Term - Investment in town centres contributes to the sustainability and viability of local communities. It is accepted that the role and nature of town centres may change in the coming decades, but the challenge is for them to remain places which are relevant to how people live their everyday lives;
- Prevention – The management and promotion of town centres through the ‘Unique Places’ model of Town Centre Management aims to prevent the decline of town centre and retain them as focal points of community life;
- Integration – The continued vitality of town centres is integral to the Act by contributing to the prosperity, health and cultural identity of Wales;
- Collaboration – Town Centre Management draws on different service areas within the Council to work towards achieving the well-being goals in respect of town centres. It also works in partnership with outside organisations such as Town & Community Councils, local charities and retailers to encourage and promote community engagement;
- Involvement – The County Borough’s town centres serve a wide range of people across many different communities. They strive to be places of social interaction which celebrate diversity and promote equality.

6. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

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

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The footfall camera provision is funded primarily by the Town Centre Management core budget. However, due to the value of the data to other Council departments, contributions are also made by the Strategic Planning and Events departments.

7.2 As outlined above, the removal of the Bargoed (North) camera will contribute to the savings required across the Authority as identified in the MTFP.

8. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no direct personnel implications.

9. CONSULTATIONS

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

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 That Members note the contents of the report.

11. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 This report is for information only.

12. STATUTORY POWER

12.1 Local Government Act 2000.

Author: Steve Wilcox – Assistant Town Centre Manager
Consultees: Cllr. Ken James – Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning & Sustainable
Development
Andrew Highway – Town Centre Development Manager
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BLACKWOOD TOWN CENTRE AUDIT – FEBRUARY 2017

DATE	ISSUE	DEPARTMENT	PROGRESS UPDATE
02/10/13	<p><u>Poundstretcher Site High Street</u> 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>Town Centre Management <i>Andrew Highway</i></p>	<p>PLEASE SEE PREVIOUS AUDITS FOR A FULL HISTORY OF THIS ISSUE</p> <p>9/9 An update was provided to the TCMG. 18/10 The site will shortly be marketed for a new tenant. The owner's agents are keen for the site to be used as retail again. 13/12 The owner has been given details of the Council's Town Centre Loan Scheme, but is not interested in applying for this.</p>
16/05/14	<p><u>Toilet Block Enhancement High Street</u> 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>Urban Renewal <i>Allan Dallimore</i></p>	<p>PLEASE SEE PREVIOUS AUDITS FOR A FULL HISTORY OF THIS ISSUE</p> <p>9/9 An update was provided to the TCMG. 18/10 The owner has offered the site back to CCBC, which is unlikely to be accepted. Enforcement action is being considered. 13/12 Cleansing litter picks the area periodically. A Planning Enforcement letter has been sent to the owner, which has also been followed up. Additional enforcement is now being considered.</p>

18/08/15	<p><u>Condition of Steps</u> <u>R/O Wesley Road Car Park</u> Cllr. Dix has received complaints in relation to the steps leading from Wesley Road car park to Morrison Street. The steps require some repairs to make them easier to traverse.</p>	<p>Parks <i>Mike Headington</i></p> <p>Highways <i>Gavin Barry</i></p>	<p>PLEASE SEE PREVIOUS AUDITS FOR A FULL HISTORY OF THIS ISSUE</p> <p>9/9 An update was provided to the TCMG. 18/10 An instruction to NCS to carry out remedial works has been issued by Parks. 13/12 All health and safety issues have been addressed. A quote has been obtained for the remainder of the work, which will be allocated from the Area Forum Budget.</p>
11/04/16	<p><u>Antisocial Behaviour</u> <u>Bus Station/The Market Place</u> At the TCIG, it was noted that there are ongoing problems in the bus station and the surrounding area in relation to antisocial behaviour linked to the sale and/or consumption of alcohol in the area.</p>	<p>Police <i>Ins White</i></p> <p>Community Safety <i>Paul Wallen</i></p> <p>Licensing <i>Myra McSherry</i></p>	<p>PLEASE SEE PREVIOUS AUDITS FOR A FULL HISTORY OF THIS ISSUE</p> <p>9/9 An update was provided to the TCMG. 18/10 An attempt to re-establish a retail partnership for information sharing is underway. A problem-solving group meeting is also being arranged. 13/12 Only one incident of antisocial behaviour has been reported since a key individual was arrested and given a Community Behaviour Order in October.</p>
27/04/16	<p><u>Repaint Carriageway Lines Denoting Parking</u> <u>Bay Restrictions</u> <u>High Street</u> Following resurfacing works, the old lines on the carriageway are now visible and the new ones are work and broken.</p>	<p>Police <i>Ins White</i></p> <p>Highways <i>Gavin Barry</i></p>	<p>PLEASE SEE PREVIOUS AUDITS FOR A FULL HISTORY OF THIS ISSUE</p> <p>9/9 An update was provided to the TCMG. 18/10 This is currently with the lining contractor. 13/12 The lining contractor continues with work throughout the current financial year.</p>

27/04/16	<p><u>Proposed Amendment of Traffic Order High Street</u></p> <p>Following a site meeting instigated by the Police, it was agreed to review the Traffic Order and in particular consider the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add yellow chevrons to the loading bays; • Change the shared loading bay & taxi rank O/S <i>The New Foresters</i> to a loading bay; • Remove the loading bay O/S <i>Flavour Vapour & Barclays Bank</i>. 	<p>Transportation <i>Dean Smith</i></p> <p>Police <i>Ins White</i></p>	<p>PLEASE SEE PREVIOUS AUDITS FOR A FULL HISTORY OF THIS ISSUE</p> <p>9/9 An update was provided to the TCMG. 18/10 The process to revise TRO is ongoing. 13/12 The TRO is due to be advertised in January 2017.</p>
27/04/16	<p><u>Repainting Yellow Kerb Lines Bridge Street/High Street</u></p> <p>The lines in this area need to be added to the kerbs outside the shops opposite the junction with Bridge Street to deter illegal parking.</p>	<p>Highways <i>Gavin Barry</i></p> <p>Police <i>Ins White</i></p>	<p>PLEASE SEE PREVIOUS AUDITS FOR A FULL HISTORY OF THIS ISSUE</p> <p>9/9 An update was provided to the TCMG. 18/10 This is currently with the lining contractor. 13/12 The lining contractor continues with work throughout the current financial year.</p>
06/05/16	<p><u>Former Guide Hall High Street</u></p> <p>The former Guide Hall behind High Street is in a poor condition and people appear to have gained entry. There is evidence of drinking and drug use within the building.</p>	<p>Regulatory Planning <i>Tim Stephens</i></p> <p>Environmental Health <i>Lyndon Ross</i></p> <p>Community Safety <i>Paul Wallen</i></p> <p>Police <i>Ins White</i></p>	<p>PLEASE SEE PREVIOUS AUDITS FOR A FULL HISTORY OF THIS ISSUE</p> <p>9/9 An update was provided to the TCMG. 18/10 Utilities companies have not yet issued notice that supplies have been capped off, so demolition cannot yet take place. 13/12 Officers continue to chase the one utility that has not yet been capped off in order for the demolition to be carried out.</p>

23/05/16	<p><u>Car Cruisers Road Closure High Street</u> Following the extensive car cruiser issue, which occurred in the town a number of years ago, a full road closure was implemented on High Street every Thursday night by the Police. In recent weeks this has not been implemented leading to vehicles once again using the street, sounding their horns and playing loud music. This behaviour has led to a number of complaints from residents to local Councillors.</p>	<p>Police <i>Ins White</i></p>	<p>PLEASE SEE PREVIOUS AUDITS FOR A FULL HISTORY OF THIS ISSUE</p> <p>9/9 An update was provided to the TCMG. 18/10 Neighbourhood Policing Team will monitor Thursday evenings for the next 4 weeks before holding a review meeting on 27/10. Councillors will also be invited to patrol with officers one Thursday evening. 13/12 The road closure is no longer being carried out following the situation being monitored for 4 weeks. Since the cessation of the closure, no incidents have been recorded on CCTV either.</p>
08/06/16	<p><u>Wheelchair Accessibility Town Centre</u> Cllr. Rees and Cllr. Dix have received complaints from town centre users who struggle to navigate the town with wheelchair users. The issues include illegally parked vehicles causing obstruction & obscuring views and the gradient on ramps leading to & from car parks.</p>	<p>Urban Renewal <i>Allan Dallimore</i></p> <p>Transportation <i>Dean Smith</i></p> <p>Police <i>Ins White</i></p>	<p>PLEASE SEE PREVIOUS AUDITS FOR A FULL HISTORY OF THIS ISSUE</p> <p>9/9 An update was provided to the TCMG. 18/10 Parking enforcement will continue as many issues are down to illegally parked vehicles. 13/12 Parking enforcement continues. Issue Closed 13/12</p>
06/07/16	<p><u>Deep Clean Bus Station</u> Cllr. Dix requested a deep clean of the bus station ceiling and lighting following complaints from residents.</p>	<p>Transportation <i>Dean Smith</i></p>	<p>16/8 The area will be cleaned when safety equipment is available. 18/10 Equipment is still being repaired, but work will be carried out as soon as possible. 13/12 No update could be provided.</p>

07/09/16	<p><u>Weeding and Grubbing Out of Steps</u> <u>Hall Street</u> Cllr Dix informed Officers that there are weeds growing through the steps leading from High Street to Hall Street. The area requires treatment and grubbing out.</p>	<p>Highways <i>Gavin Barry</i></p> <p>Parks <i>Mike Headington</i></p>	<p>18/10 The work is scheduled to be completed during w/c 17/10. 13/12 The work has been completed. Issue Closed 13/12</p>
09/09/16	<p><u>Anti-Social Behaviour Issues</u> <u>The Market Place Shopping Centre</u> The Centre Manager has reported to the Police that a number of youths are loitering in the mall and have lit small fires as well as being abusive to shoppers.</p>	<p>Police <i>Ins White</i></p> <p>Community Safety <i>Paul Wallen</i></p>	<p>10/10 There has been no increase in incidents reported in this area. Local officers continue to patrol this and surrounding areas as part of their local patrol plan. 18/10 A problem-solving meeting is in the process of being arranged. 13/12 Very few incidents have been reported during the last month. Issue Closed 13/12</p>
27/09/16	<p><u>Rubbish & Weeds</u> <u>Interchange Bus Station</u> Cllr Dix has received a complaint that the area around the station is in need of weeding and a litter pick.</p>	<p>Transportation <i>Dean Smith</i></p> <p>Parks <i>Mike Headington</i></p> <p>Cleansing <i>Tony White</i></p>	<p>27/9 Arrangements have been made to undertake a litter pick and remove the weeds. 18/10 The weeds have been treated and litter picked. The issue of litter will be discussed at the problem-solving group meeting. 13/12 The weeds have been treated and removed.</p>

03/10/16	<p><u>Surface Issues – Historical Cobbles Lane Leading from Flour Mill to Cefn Road</u> The lane has been an ongoing maintenance issue for a number of years. It is unclear if the cobbles are of any historical value but due to their unsafe condition Highways intervention is now required.</p>	<p>Highways <i>Gavin Barry</i></p>	<p>PLEASE SEE PREVIOUS AUDITS FOR A FULL HISTORY OF THIS ISSUE</p> <p>18/10 Maintenance options are being considered. The historical value of the paths is also being investigated. 16/11 Officers have devised a gentle interim cleanse of the paths. Following this, an assessment of the required remediation works can be carried out with small areas being repaired. A long term maintenance plan will then be developed. 13/12 Highways will be carrying out some sensitive cleaning on the surface while the historical significance of the site is investigated.</p>
20/10/16	<p><u>Cleaning of Electronic Signs Town Centre</u> The “road closed” electronic signs at each end of the High Street have become badly weathered. They require cleaning to increase their visibility.</p>	<p>Highways <i>Gavin Barry</i></p>	<p>13/12 No update could be provided.</p>
12/12/16	<p><u>Works to Unit 23 (Former Somerfield Store) The Market Place Shopping Centre</u> The owners of the Centre have instigated a series of works to the building in order to attract a new tenant.</p>	<p>Regulatory Planning <i>Tim Stephens</i></p> <p>Town Centre Management <i>Andrew Highway</i></p>	<p>12/12 Work has commenced on site with a roofing contractor. A planning application is expected for a change of use. Details of the new Town Centre Loans Scheme have been passed on an expression of interest sought.</p>

12/12/16	<p><u>Letting of Former Store 21 Building</u> <u>High Street</u> The closure of Store 21 retail shop has left one of the largest retail floor spaces in the town vacant.</p>	<p>Regulatory Planning <i>Tim Stephens</i></p> <p>Town Centre Management <i>Andrew Highway</i></p> <p>Transportation <i>Dean Smith</i></p>	<p>12/12 Town Centre Management has met with the new owners on site to look at ways to bring the building back into use. Advice on change of use and Highways loading/unloading issues has been given to the owners. A temporary charity shop has been agreed. Details of the new Town Centre Loans Scheme have been passed on and an expression of interest sought.</p>
03/01/17	<p><u>Littering & Accumulation of Rubbish</u> <u>High Street Car Park</u> Cllr. Rees noted that the High Street car park near Hall Street has a lot of litter dumped within in, which is now beginning to accumulate.</p>	<p>Cleansing <i>Tony White</i></p>	
31/01/17	<p><u>Spitting on Cash Machines</u> <u>Town Centre</u> Local Members have been made aware that young people in the town centre are spitting on the ATM machines throughout the town centre. This is making them very unpleasant to use, which has led to complaints.</p>	<p>Police <i>Ins White</i></p> <p>Community Safety <i>Paul Wallen</i></p>	

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