



BLACKWOOD TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP – 19TH SEPTEMBER 2017

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON MATTERS RELATING TO BLACKWOOD TOWN

REPORT BY: TOWN CENTRE DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

1. TIME OF MEETING

- 1.1 A request received from Town? Councillor Darren Jones to review the time of the meeting.

2. NEW UNIQUE PLACES

- 2.1 A new version of the 'Unique Places' document has been produced. The latest version for the first time includes details of Ystrad Mynach town centre and also features a revised text in respect of Bargoed town centre reflecting the changes in the town due to the BIG Idea regeneration scheme.
- 2.2 The document is predominately used as an inward investment tool to respond to enquires relating to the five managed town centres. It is also a key element in Town Centre Managements proactive engagement with multiple retailers in respect of town centre vacancies and forms the basis of the 'Welcome Pack' supplied to new town centre business.

3. CHOOSE THE HIGH STREET CHRISTMAS VOUCHER BOOKLET

- 3.1 The 'Choose the High Street' Christmas Voucher Booklet has proved very popular with the public and retailers and will again be produced in 2017. The aims of the scheme are twofold:
1. Provide local businesses with an opportunity to capture consumer spend during the Christmas period;
 2. Market the diverse retail offer contained in the town centres.

Retailers in the five managed town centres will have the opportunity to be included in the booklet. The booklets will be given out in local supermarkets, libraries and at other key locations.

4. RED LION SITE UPDATE

- 4.1 Pobl Housing Association are taking forward a housing development at the Red Lion site at the northern end of the High Street. Their planning application for a total of 17 residential apartments in 2 blocks (three storey and four storey) was approved by CCBC on the 21st July 2017.

4.2 The approval is for the demolition of the Red Lion Inn and its re-development to provide 17 no. residential apartments (11 one bed and 6 two bed) together with associated vehicular and pedestrian accesses, 17 No. car parking spaces, amenity areas, landscaping and ancillary development.

Dimensions: Block 1 (that fronts onto High Street) has an 'L' shaped footprint with maximum dimensions of 16.2 metres in width, 20.1 metres in depth, with a maximum height of 14.0 metres (4 stories).

Block 2 (located to the rear of Block 1) measures 11.0 metres in depth, 12.5 metres in width, with a height of 12.3 metres to ridge level (3 storeys).

Materials: Walls: Rusticated render, sand cement render and buff facing brickwork.

Roofs: Blue/black cement fibre roof tiles;

Rough cast stone walls;

Colour coated windows, doors and rainwater goods.

Ancillary development, e.g. parking: Off-street parking for 17 cars, amenity areas, clothes drying areas, and refuse areas.

3D Images of the Proposed Development

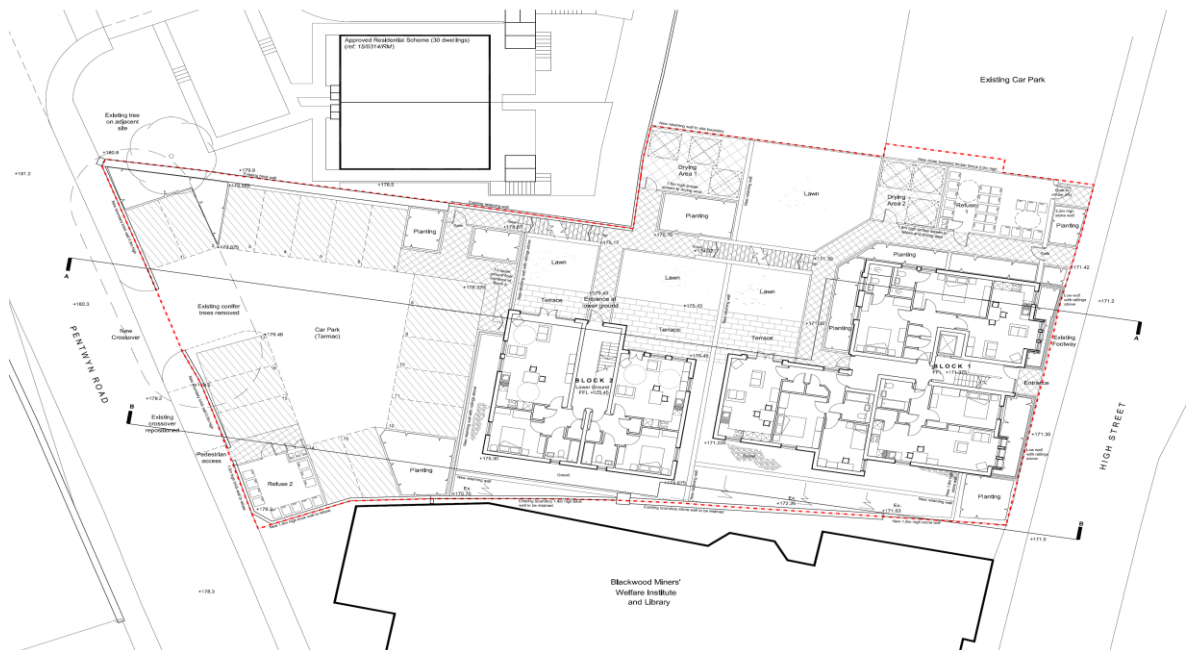




Front Elevation



Plan of Development



Pobl Housing Association intend to enter into contract with Ixion Development, the contractor building out the old Blackwood School site, in the next month or so with a start on site later in the year.

5. BARCLAYS BANK SITE UPDATE

- 5.1 Pobl are still reviewing 83 High Street, the construction costs are significant due to the site constraint's which means it requires tower cranes to undertake the build. There may be an opportunity to potentially apply for a new WG grant initiative which could assist in putting a funding package together. Therefore the scheme has been delayed whilst this financial issue is investigated further.

6. TOILET BLOCK UPDATE

- 6.1 Enforcement notices under Section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended have been drafted in respect of the site referred to above. The drafts have been sent to be translated. The notices will require that the overgrowth is cut back and the resulting materials, together with any rubbish, litter, etc. be removed from the land. They will be sent out as soon as possible after they are received back from being translated. There was an issue which needed to be clarified as to the right of appeal against such a notice, the legislation has been changed and appeals are now made to the Welsh Ministers and not as had been the case in the past to the Magistrates Court, but there was no guidance readily available as to how the changes were to be implemented.

7. SUMMER AND CHRISTMAS EVENTS UPDATE

- 7.1 Stall applications have been sent out to potential stall holders with respect to the Christmas Market and following a busy summer of events, staff are now going through the process of allocating stall pitches and working on a layout to incorporate the stall pitches alongside Christmas themed activities and funfair attractions.
- 7.2 The summer event was held over two days and was well received by the towns retail community offering them a promotional focus and increased footfall numbers

8. CHOOSE THE HIGH STREET PROPERTY INDEX

- 8.1 Following the closure of the Go2 My Town website earlier this year a new version of the 'Retail Property Index' has been developed and is available to view online via the Council's website. The Property Index lists every property for sale or let in Caerphilly, Blackwood, Bargoed, Risca and Ystrad Mynach town centres.

9. PROCUREMENT OF FOOTFALL COUNTER

- 9.1 The new footfall counters were installed in mid-August by a new provider – *PFM Footfall Intelligence*. The systems have been successfully calibrated and validated and are sending back data.
- 9.2 To ensure continuity with all historical footfall data, the new equipment has been installed in the same location as the existing counters. The only exception to this is the Bargoed (North) counter, which has been decommissioned as part of the department's Medium Term Financial Plan savings. This change also provides consistency throughout the town centres as they all now have one counter.

10. ALDI UPDATE

- 10.1 The Department of Work & Pensions have confirmed that following the completion of commercial negotiations it plans to open a new Jobcentre in Blackwood located at the former Aldi shop premises on the High Street.

11. POUND STRETCHER SITE

- 11.1 The insurance claim for the fire on the site remains to be settled, however the owners are keen to redevelop it and have several potential clients interested.

12. PARKING ENFORCEMENT

- 12.1 The issue of Civil Parking Enforcement is currently being considered by the Council. As part of this process officers are working alongside colleagues in neighbouring authorities and Gwent Police to explore the various options available. The matter is included on the draft forward work programme of the Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee. The Scrutiny Committee will consider and confirm its forward work programme at its next meeting on 20th September 2017. At present the Authority's future proposals are being developed and still remain to be finalised. It is anticipated that the proposals will be subject to a wider consultation with Members prior to seeking Cabinet confirmation and Council approval.

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