



BARGOED TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP – 11TH OCTOBER 2017

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON MATTERS RELATING TO BARGOED TOWN

REPORT BY: TOWN CENTRE DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

1. NEW UNIQUE PLACES

- 1.1 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.
- 1.2 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.

2. CHOOSE THE HIGH STREET CHRISTMAS VOUCHER BOOKLET

- 2.1 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.
- 2.2 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.

3. RETAIL PLATEAU PHASE 2

- 3.1 The Council have been unable to secure a national cinema operator as a tenant on the largest of the undeveloped sites on the plateau. This has left the site laying fallow. Although works have been undertaken to improve its visual amenity, it is still the Council's intentions to develop the site for a use which benefits the community of Bargoed.
- 3.2 Savills property consultants were commissioned to undertake a Development Options report to establish if there was any demand/interest for the plateau sites. They were tasked with soft market testing the plateau to a number of developers within a range of sectors. Part of their commission was to examine the potential for a smaller second tier cinema through discussions with alternative operators. In addition, they tested the plateau for other leisure, retail, office and residential uses and also went about establishing if any funding viability gaps existed for these uses.

- 3.3 Savills final report has now been received and identifies some interest from an A3 operator for a fast food drive-through on the largest of the sites.
- 3.4 More recently, officers from the Council have entered into a dialogue with a pub/restaurant chain who are looking at opportunities to expand their business interest at suitable locations in the region.
- 3.5 The company's Managing Director has now given approval for them to enter into negotiations with the Council over the release of the land for development.
- 3.6 Draft Heads of Terms have been presented to the Council and the company's design team have now entered into a dialogue with the Council in order to better understand the sites physical development constraints which will inform their development design process.

4. LOWRI PLAZA LETTINGS UPDATE

- 4.1 Units 3 and 4 have been the focus of discussions with a prospective tenant for some time now. Previous reports to the Town Centre Management Group have outlined how this tenant has appointed property agents to act on their behalf and that through negotiations with the Council, Heads of Terms have been agreed for a 10 year lease.
- 4.2 The tenant has appointed a Project Manager who has put a specialist design team together to work on detailed fit-out plans for the units. These have been developed from indicative layout plans (which include for a mezzanine level and a lift) and have been submitted to CCBC and to Rockspring (the head landlord) for approval.
- 4.3 In the same manner that the indicative fit-out plans had to be approved by both CCBC and Rockspring, the same protocol is currently in progress for the detailed fit out plans.
- 4.4 Once these plans have been approved by both parties they will be appended to the lease agreement.
- 4.5 CCBC's solicitors, Morgan La Roche, have finalised the wording of the lease agreement with the tenant's solicitors. The detailed fit out drawings form part of the legal agreement, therefore the lease cannot be signed until they are made available and approved.
- 4.6 A good sign of progress is that the Council has now received planning applications for the frontage of the properties.
- 4.7 The tenant currently requires an embargo on publicity of their occupancy, hence there have been no news bulletins or stories.
- 4.8 The Council's retail agents will go to out to the market with a concerted campaign to attract a tenant to Unit 6A as soon as this embargo is lifted.

5. BUS STOP OUTSIDE GOUGH SOLICITORS

- 5.1 A meeting was held with the Solicitors on 5 June to discuss the concerns. The meeting involved local Councillors (from CCBC and Bargoed Town Council), along with officers representing a number of service areas in the Council.
- 5.2 The issues raised by Mr Gough were discussed fully and a number of measures were agreed to resolve some of the issues raised, but it was confirmed that there was no scope to relocate the bus stop to the locations suggested. A subsequent meeting was held between the local Police Inspector and officers of the Council to discuss the issues of parking in the town centre.

6. SUMMER AND CHRISTMAS EVENTS UPDATE

- 6.1 The most recent Bargoed open air cinema event held in September saw a personalised welcome from Aberbargoed's Hollywood film star Luke Evans, broadcast on the big screen prior to a showing of Beauty and the Beast in which Luke stars as 'Gaston'.
- 6.2 Stall applications have been sent out with respect to the Bargoed Christmas Market and staff are now going through the process of allocating stall pitches and formalising the accompanying entertainment activities which takes place on 25 November.
- 6.3 A Tender has been advertised on sell2Wales for the Bargoed Ice Rink that is planned for 6 – 10 December and last year incorporated a Christmas grotto operated by Bargoed Town Council and took place underneath the Morrison's store in Bargoed.

7. CHOOSE THE HIGH STREET PROPERTY INDEX

- 7.1 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.

8. PROCUREMENT OF FOOTFALL COUNTER

- 8.1 The new footfall counters were installed in mid-August by our new provider – *PFM Footfall Intelligence*. The systems have been successfully calibrated and validated and are sending back data.
- 8.2 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.

9. PARKING ENFORCEMENT

- 9.1 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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