



REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – FOR INFORMATION

SUBJECT: TOWN CENTRE IMPROVEMENT GROUP 2017 SUMMARY

REPORT BY: INTERIM CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITIES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Scrutiny Committee on the progress made by the Town Centre Improvement Group during 2017 against the Council's objectives.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 This report provides a summary of work undertaken by the Town Centre Improvement Group during 2017. The report highlights how the Group works alongside the Council's five Town Centre Management Groups and outlines some of the issues that have been resolved in each of the five principal towns. An appendix to the report lists all of the issues resolved in 2017 by the Town Centre Improvement Group using an Environmental Audit process.

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 all of 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 Improvement Group (TCIG) was established in 2005 with appropriate representation from all relevant service areas.
- 4.2 The remit of the group is to:
- Improve the environment within the County Borough's five principal town centres at Caerphilly, Blackwood, Bargoed, Risca and Ystrad Mynach;
 - Benchmark the performance of Council services in the five town centres;
 - Demonstrate the commitment of the Council as an authority to the environmental improvement of the five town centres;
 - Provide an internal forum for the Council to address issues that potentially blight town centres.
- 4.3 The TCIG includes representation from all the relevant Council departments and from the Police Inspectors whose respective responsibilities include Caerphilly, Blackwood, Bargoed, Risca and Ystrad Mynach town centres.
- 4.4 The purpose of the TCIG is to ensure that there is a responsive and co-ordinated approach to the maintenance of the town centres through the process of an Environmental Audit. In addition, the TCIG addresses operational issues brought forward from the Town Centre Management Groups for Caerphilly, Blackwood, Bargoed, Risca and Ystrad Mynach.
- 4.5 The work of the TCIG should be seen as complementary to the five Town Centre Management Groups, ensuring that environmental and maintenance matters, which are the responsibility of the Authority, are addressed in an effective manner. The group, which is chaired by the Cabinet Member for Economy, Infrastructure, Sustainability and Wellbeing of Future Generations, meets every six weeks to consider Environmental Audits compiled by Town Centre Management.
- 4.6 During 2017, across the five town centres a total of 98 issues were actioned through the TCIG. The Group's strength continues to be built on providing a forum for collaborative working and exchange of information across Council departments. The report provides an overview of the variety of the issues examined in the audit process and highlights the TCIG's role in resolving them. Examples of the issues resolved by the Group during 2017 are outlined in the report.

Common Town Centre Issues

- 4.7 There are a number of issues common issues within our town centres, these include:

Illegal Parking

The issue remains a significant problem in all five principal town centres. The TCIG has enabled officers to work with the different Police Inspectors to discuss how to best utilise their limited resources to enforce parking restrictions and deter instances of illegal parking.

Civil Parking Enforcement

Although parking enforcement for the moment remains the responsibility of Gwent Police, the TCIG is being used to build relationships which will assist in managing the change in enforcement practice in whichever way it is determined.

Event Programme

In the County Borough's principal town centres a varied program of events takes place throughout the year. The TCIG meetings provide an opportunity at the planning stage to consult other service areas on the impact of the events and advise of any road closures.

4.8 **Caerphilly**

Homeless Person Caerphilly Castle – Community Safety / Police / Town Centre Management
CADW staff reported that a homeless person was sleeping rough in the gateway to the castle. The response from the Council's support services was coordinated through a multi-agency group which meets regularly to discuss the problems, exchange information and explore solutions which help a person re-establish a permanent home.

Programme of Painting Works - Highways

In preparation for the summer events programme, a series of maintenance works were carried out in Dafydd Williams Park and Crescent Road. The work was undertaken by the Council's "Community Response Team" and included painting, minor repairs and graffiti removal. These measures play an essential part in maintaining the appearance of the town centre.

Pwll y pant Roundabout Works - Highways

The implementation of the 52-week programme of major works on the roundabout has impacted on footfall levels and retail sales in the town centre causing concern in the wider business community. The TCIG provides a forum to make other service areas aware of wider public concerns and the progress of these works.

4.9 **Blackwood**

Historical Cobble Footpath Resurfacing of Lane (Leading from Flour Mill to Cefn Road) - Highways

The lane has been an ongoing maintenance issue for a number of years. Following appeals by members of the public to repair the surface whilst preserving the cobbles, a programme of work was planned and successfully completed.

Condition of Former Toilet Block - Planning

Following complaints from the Town Council and Local Members, the TCIG provided a forum to discuss the options open to officers. Subsequently, it was decided that Planning would serve a S.215 notice on the owners which resulted work being immediately undertaken to cut back foliage.

Vandalism & Cleansing Issues Interchange Bus Station – Cleansing / Transportation / Police

To address the ongoing problems the multi-agency group was reconfigured building on existing relationships developed in the TCIG meetings to consider ways to reduce damage and associated repair costs and to manage the cleansing arrangements.

4.10 **Bargoed**

Footway Repair - Highways / Urban Renewal

A series of instances has occurred where plastic wheelie bins have been set alight on the footpath between Bargoed Gateway and Eastview Terrace necessitating localised footway repairs. The fires have damaged the actual tarmac surface and left a large mound of molten plastic on the footpath. Police officers are investigating similar incidents in other town centres.

Creation of Parking Area Lowry Plaza – Transportation / Police

As part of the wider consultation process, members of the TCIG were asked for their views on a proposed new Traffic Regulation Order which will create additional car parking spaces on Lowry Plaza adjacent to the Unit shops.

Development Plateau Phase 2 - Urban Renewal

Officers are considering how to best optimise the site adjacent to Morrisons car park. The TCIG kept officers apprised of the progress on this high profile site within the town centre.

4.11 **Risca**

Condition of Land Around Cuckoo Artwork - Urban Renewal / Cleansing

The location and maintenance of this local landmark continues to draw comment from the community. The TCIG is providing a platform for officers to share information and to consult with other service areas on the suitability of alternative sites whilst drawing on the available maintenance options.

Grubbing Out / Bench Repair in Tredegar Grounds Park - Parks

Through TCIG coordination Parks officers were able to improve the visual appearance of Tredegar Grounds Park by arranging for the pavements in the parks central circle to be cleaned.

Charity Shop - Licensing

Following complaints, Trading Standards officers were asked to attend a shop in the town centre to check on its charity status. This visit confirmed that the business was correctly operating as a charity shop and information shared with the TCIG meeting.

4.12 **Ystrad Mynach**

Litter Pick Siloh Square – Cleansing

Siloh Square attracts a build up of litter which is an ongoing subject for complaints by residents and the Community Council. The issue was passed to Cleansing who undertook the work. One of the roles of the audit is to show how the Council acts effectively and quickly to meet service requests.

Centre for Sporting Excellence Links - Urban Renewal / Highways / Planning

The Town Centre Management Group asked officers to consider enhancing links between the Centre for Sporting Excellence and the town centre. The request was discussed in the TCIG as the site of a proposed monolith sign needed to take into account Planning regulations and the location of Highways utility services.

Overgrown Foliage – Highways

The trees alongside Pengam Road, above Oakfield Street park became overgrown causing an obstruction for pedestrians using the footway. The Community Assets Team undertook the work highlighting their capacity to complete low cost & high impact town centre works.

4.13 **Town Centre Issues**

The Appendix to this report summarises the 98 resolved within each of the town centres from January to December 2017. The information shows the diverse nature of problems addressed by the TCIG and the commitment of service areas to resolve those issues.

The objective for 2018 is to continue to provide a high level of service in the five principal town centres, whilst accepting that budget savings under the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) will be required. As the TCIG has no specific budget allocation, reductions to maintenance budgets within all service areas will impact on the Council's ability to react to maintenance issues as they occur in the town centres. The challenging situation within the wider UK economy places a significant pressure on all retailers, particularly independents. The low levels of consumer spending mean that jobs within the retail sector remain at significant risk as national retailers rationalise their store portfolios. The aim for the TCIG and the process of Town Centre Management is to help promote sustainable long-term economic growth across the County Borough by delivering a coordinated approach to well-maintained and managed town centres which act as focal points for the local community.

5. ADDITIONAL PROJECTS

- 5.1 Through the work of the TCIG a wide range of projects have been delivered which have added value to the street scene and offered a visible improvement to the town centres. Many of these have tackled specific issues and sought to resolve longstanding problems through collaborative working arrangements between officers and mutual support between organisations.

6. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

- 6.1 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 resilient Wales* – developing green space in town centres helps to create a more biodiverse natural environment.
 - *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.

7. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

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

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Although there is no single budget allocation identified through the TCIG, individual departments have budgets for town centre works. However, it should be noted that to fund any “improvement” works identified through the Environmental Audit process the Town Centre Management team relies heavily on a combined budget allocation of £39k for 2017-2018. The Council’s ongoing commitment to its MTFP means that all budget allocations are reviewed on an annual basis.
- 8.2 Consequently, a reduction in allocated budgets figures does limit the Council’s ability to address requests for town centre maintenance works. As officers work within these constraints there has been a need to prioritise reactive maintenance over planned enhancements.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The “Community Response Team” is established within and funded through the Engineering Services Division and is an important asset in maintaining and improving the appearance of the principal town centres. The Community Response Team’s work includes preparing and painting street furniture such as railings, litter bins and benches along with sign cleaning and removal of foliage encroaching onto the footway.

10. CONSULTATIONS

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

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 To inform Members of the work of the Town Centre Improvement Group.

12. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

12.1 For Members to note the progress made against the corporate objectives.

13. STATUTORY POWER

13.1 Local Government Act 2000.

Author:	Andrew Highway	Town Centre Development Manager
Consultees:	Cllr. S. Morgan	Cabinet Member for Economy, Infrastructure, Sustainability and Wellbeing of Future Generations
	Cllr D T Davies	Chair Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee
	Cllr Mrs C Forehead	Vice Chair Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee
	Mark S Williams	Interim Corporate Director Communities
	Dave Whetter	Interim Head of Regeneration & Planning
	Allan Dallimore	Team Leader Urban Renewal
	Tony White	Waste Strategy and Operations Manager
	Rhodri Lloyd	Special Projects Officer
	Lyndon Ross	Senior Environment Officer
	Paul Wallen	Community Safety Warden Supervisor
	Dean Smith	Principal Engineer
	Gavin Barry	Assistant Engineer
	Lee Morgan	Licensing Manager
	Mike Headington	Green Spaces and Transport Services Manager
	Simon Beacham	Area Parks Officer
	Tim Stephens	Interim Head of Planning
	Steve Pugh	Communications Manager
	Paul Hudson	Marketing and Events Manager
	Anwen Cullinane	Senior Policy Officer
	Shaun Watkins	HR Manager
	Mike Eedy	Finance Manager
	Inspector G. Clifton	(Caerphilly)
	Inspector S. Drayton	(Blackwood / Risca)
	Inspector A. O'Keefe	(Bargoed / Ystrad Mynach)

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Matrix of Issues Resolved Across the Five Town Centres

TOWN CENTRE IMPROVEMENT GROUP 2017

APPENDIX 1

BARGOED

AUDIT	ISSUE	LOCATION	DATE	DEPARTMENT
FEBRUARY	Sloping Tree	Hanbury Road Car Park	12-Feb	Parks/Transportation
	Repair of Footway Surface	Bargoed Gateway	12-Feb	Highways/Urban Renewal
JUNE	Unlicensed Taxis	Town Centre	13-Jun	Police/Licensing
	Feeder Pillar Access Issues	Hanbury Square	13-Jun	Urban Renewal
	Resetting of Bollard	Hanbury Square	13-Jun	Highways
	Stella Filming	Town Centre	13-Jun	Town Centre Management/Highways/Police
	Creation of Parking Area	Lowry Plaza	13-Jun	Urban Renewal/Transportation
	Removal of Rubbish	Bargoed Gateway	13-Jun	Cleansing/Town Centre Management
	Damage to Footpath Surface	Bargoed Gateway	13-Jun	Highways/Urban Renewal/Police/Community Safety
	Vandalism	Bus Station	13-Jun	Transportation/Police/Community Safety
Cleansing Issues	Hanbury Road	13-Jun	Cleansing	
SEPTEMBER	Antisocial Behaviour	Town Centre	26-Sep	Town Centre Management/Police
	Water Leak on Highway	O/S Superdrug	26-Sep	Environmental Health
	Trimming of Foliage	Junction of Cross Street/Hanbury Road	26-Sep	Parks
NOVEMBER	Bus Stop Location Report by Gough Thorne Solicitors	Hanbury Road	21-Nov	Transportation/Police/Urban Renewal/Town Centre Management
	Damaged Render	Northern Punch-Through	21-Nov	Urban Renewal
	Broken Bin	Entrance to Emporium Car Park	21-Nov	Cleansing
	Cleansing Issues	Town Centre	21-Nov	Cleansing

TOWN CENTRE IMPROVEMENT GROUP 2017

BLACKWOOD

AUDIT	ISSUE	LOCATION	DATE	DEPARTMENT
FEBRUARY	Proposed Amendment of Traffic Order	High Street	12-Feb	Transportation/Police
	Rubbish & Weeds	Interchange Bus Station	12-Feb	Transportation/Parks/Cleansing
	Works to Unit 23	Marketplace Shopping Centre	12-Feb	Regulatory Planning/Town Centre Management
	Littering & Accumulation of Rubbish	High Street Car Park	12-Feb	Cleansing
	Spitting on Cash Machines	Town Centre	12-Feb	Police/Community Safety
JUNE	Condition of Steps	R/O Wesley Road Car Park	13-Jun	Parks/Highways
	Former Guide Hall	High Street	13-Jun	Regulatory Planning/Environmental Health/Community Safety/Police
	Deep Clean	Bus Station	13-Jun	Transportation
	Surface Issues - Historical Cobbles	Lane Leading from Flour Mill to Cefn Road	13-Jun	Highways
	Cleaning of Electronic Signs	High Street	13-Jun	Highways
	Retail Thefts	Town Centre	13-Jun	Police/Town Centre Management
	Safety Railings O/S Blackwood Miners'	High Street	13-Jun	Highways
SEPTEMBER	Repaint Carriageway Parking Bay Restrictions	Town Centre	26-Sep	Police/Highways
	Repainting Yellow Kerb Lines	High Street/Bridge Street	26-Sep	Police/Highways
	Broken Street Sign	High Street	26-Sep	Highways
	Broken Bench	High Street	26-Sep	Highways
	Bin Blocking Highway	High Street	26-Sep	Town Centre Management
	Weed Spraying	Hall Street/Gravel Lane	26-Sep	Parks
	NOVEMBER	Toilet Block Enhancement	High Street	21-Nov
Flyposting		Town Centre	21-Nov	Highways/Cleansing/Regulatory Planning
Bin Storage		Gravel Lane	21-Nov	Cleansing/Highways/Town Centre Management
Missing Manhole Cover		O/S Tidal's Store, High Street	21-Nov	Highways
Traffic Proposals		Bridge Street	21-Nov	Transportation
Broken Glazing		Interchange Bus Station	21-Nov	Transportation
Accumulation of Rubbish		Pentwyn Road	21-Nov	Environmental Health

TOWN CENTRE IMPROVEMENT GROUP 2017

CAERPHILLY

AUDIT	ISSUE	LOCATION	DATE	DEPARTMENT
FEBRUARY	Taxi Rank Issues	Station Terrace	12-Feb	Police/Transportation
	Blocked Drain	O/S Visit Caerphilly Centre, The Twyn	12-Feb	Highways
	Footway Obstruction	Market Street	12-Feb	Regulatory Planning
	Damage to Planters	The Twyn	12-Feb	Police
	Homeless Person	Caerphilly Castle	12-Feb	Police/Community Safety/Town Centre Management
	Retail Thefts	Town Centre	12-Feb	Police/Town Centre Management
	Temporary Grit Bins	Town Centre	12-Feb	Highways
JUNE	Installation of "No Through Road" Signage	Lane between Co-Op Bank & Sports Direct	13-Jun	Transportation
	Annual Remembrance Garden	Castle Street	13-Jun	Parks
	Cleaning of York Stone	Lower Twyn Square	13-Jun	Cleansing/Highways/Urban Renewal/Parks
	Cleansing of Memorial	Dafydd Williams Park	13-Jun	Parks/Highways
	Litter Bins Overflowing	Cardiff Road	13-Jun	Cleansing
	Repainting of Benches, Bins & Noticeboard	Dafydd Williams Park	13-Jun	Highways
	Repainting of Railings & Bins	Crescent Road	13-Jun	Highways
	Repainting of Benches & Bins	Moatfootpeth, Cardiff Road/Castle Street	13-Jun	Highways
	Overtuned Grit Bin	Cardiff Road	13-Jun	Highways
	Litter	Cardiff Road	13-Jun	Cleansing
	Pressure Washing	Top of Cardiff Road & Lower Twyn Square	13-Jun	Cleansing
	Distribution of Floral Displays	Town Centre	13-Jun	Parks
	Defective Pedestrian Crossing Lights	Cardiff Road	13-Jun	Transportation
SEPTEMBER	Broken Paving Slabs	Above toilet block, Cardiff Road	26-Sep	Urban Renewal/Highways
	Installation of Litter Bin	Crescent Road	26-Sep	Cleansing
	Event Parking in Residential Street	Town Centre (East)	26-Sep	Police/Events
	Deep Clean	Above toilet block, Cardiff Road	26-Sep	Cleansing
	Damaged Wall	Upper Twyn Square	26-Sep	Highways/Urban Renewal
	Broken Drain Cover	Lower Twyn Square	26-Sep	Highways/Urban Renewal
	Commercial Burglaries	Town Centre	26-Sep	Police
	Insecure Property	Pentrebane Street	26-Sep	Police/Town Centre Management
	Accumulation of Rubbish	Clive Street	26-Sep	Cleansing
NOVEMBER	Damaged Guardrail	O/S Specsavers, Cardiff Road	21-Nov	Highways
	Beggars	Town Centre	21-Nov	Police
	Removal of Carved Tree	Dafydd Williams Park	21-Nov	Parks
	Discarded Cash Machine Receipts	Station Terrace	21-Nov	Town Centre Management/Cleansing

TOWN CENTRE IMPROVEMENT GROUP 2017

RISCA

AUDIT	ISSUE	LOCATION	DATE	DEPARTMENT
FEBRUARY	Christmas Lighting Problems	Town Centre	12-Feb	Highways/Town Centre Management
JUNE	Damage to Wall	Bethany Baptist Church, Tredegar Street	13-Jun	Highways/Urban Renewal
	Seating Area	O/S Risca Pine, Tredegar Street	13-Jun	Highways/Parks
	Damaged Sign	O/S Domino's, Tredegar Street	13-Jun	Highways
	Resetting of Street Sign	Station Road	13-Jun	Highways
	Repair of Bench	O/S Brooklands Centre, Commercial Street	13-Jun	Highways
	Demolition of Wall	Cenotaph Garden, Commercial Street	13-Jun	Parks/Highways
	Charity Shop	Tredegar Street	13-Jun	Licensing/Police
	Cigarette Bin	O/S Betfred, Tredegar Street	13-Jun	Town Centre Management
SEPTEMBER	Condition of Tidy Towns Planters	Tredegar Street	26-Sep	Parks
NOVEMBER	Grubbing Out	Central Circle, Tredegar Grounds	21-Nov	Parks

TOWN CENTRE IMPROVEMENT GROUP 2017

YSTRAD MYNACH

AUDIT	ISSUE	LOCATION	DATE	DEPARTMENT
FEBRUARY	Reinstatement of Litter Bin	O/S Premiers Stores, Oakfield Street	12-Feb	Highways
JUNE	Repainting of Double Yellow Lines	Town Centre	13-Jun	Highways
	Overgrown Foliage	Pengam Road	13-Jun	Highways
	Damaged Litter Bin	Siloh Square	13-Jun	Highways
	Litter Pick	Siloh Square	13-Jun	Cleansing
	Repainting Lines	Commercial Street	13-Jun	Highways
	Painting of Car Park Step Edges	Oakfield Street Car Park	13-Jun	Transportation
	Damage to Community Defibrillator	O/S Library, Commercial Street	13-Jun	Police
SEPTEMBER	Repainting of Bus Stop Markings	Bedwlwyn Road	26-Sep	Highways
	Removal of Chewing Gum	O/S Premier Stores, Bedwlwyn Road	26-Sep	Cleansing
	Carriageway Lining Adhesion	Town Centre	26-Sep	Highways
NOVEMBER				

TOWN CENTRE IMPROVEMENT GROUP 2017

TOWN	AUDIT MONTH	NUMBER OF ISSUES RESOLVED
Bargoed	February	2
	June	9
	September	3
	November	4
	TOTAL	18
Blackwood	February	5
	June	7
	September	6
	November	7
	TOTAL	25
Caerphilly	February	7
	June	13
	September	9
	November	4
	TOTAL	33
Risca	February	1
	June	8
	September	1
	November	1
	TOTAL	11
Ystrad Mynach	February	1
	June	7
	September	3
	November	0
	TOTAL	11
Summary	TOTAL	98