

## Enterprise and Business Committee

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Lleoliad:  
**Committee Room 1 – Senedd**

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Dyddiad:  
**2 November 2011**

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Amser:  
**09:15**

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Cynulliad  
Cenedlaethol  
Cymru

National  
Assembly for  
Wales



I gael rhagor o wybodaeth, cysylltwch â:

**Siân Phipps**  
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### Agenda

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#### Informal Meeting (9:15 – 9:30)

#### 1. Introductions, apologies and substitutions

#### 2. Inquiry into the Regeneration of Town Centres : Evidence Session (9:30–10:30) (Pages 1 – 6)

Lee Waters, Director – Sustrans Cymru  
Liz Thorne, Policy Advisor – Sustrans Cymru

Clive Campbell, Chair of South East Wales Transport Alliance (SEWTA) Policy Group

#### 3. Inquiry into the Regeneration of Town Centres : Evidence Session (10:30–11:30) (Pages 7 – 31)

Carole-Anne Davies, Chief Executive – Design Commission Wales  
Alan Francis, Chair – Design Commission Wales

Jennifer Stewart, Heritage Lottery Fund Wales  
Ian Morrison, Heritage Lottery Fund Wales

#### 4. Papers to note (Pages 32 – 33)

Minutes from Previous Meeting

## Enterprise and Business Committee Inquiry into Town Centre Regeneration

### Evidence from Sustrans



Sustrans welcomes the recognition of the Enterprise and Business Committee that sustainable transport plays an important role in the regeneration of town centres. We will attempt to frame our response around the terms of reference for the inquiry.

#### **1 What approaches have been followed to successfully deliver and finance the regeneration of town centres in Wales? Are there lessons to be learned from elsewhere?**

As part of Sustrans' major infrastructure projects to extend the National Cycle Network we are working with local authorities to open up access to town centers by people on bikes or on foot.

Pedestrian and cycle-friendly environments have been shown as the core around which economic growth, public health, sustainability and overall quality of life are built. It is therefore crucial that these environments are considered in any long-term development and regeneration plans<sup>1</sup>.

Land use and urban transport policies have historically been dominated by the desire to facilitate mobility (the ability to travel) rather than accessibility (the access to the goods and services which are the motives encouraging people to travel). This has resulted in lengthening journey distances, increasing levels of motorised traffic, and wide-ranging negative side-effects, including an increasing centralisation of services in out-of town centres, impacting severely on town centre facilities.

Using EU Convergence funding through our Valleys Cycle Network project, and Big Lottery funding through our Connect2 project, we have been able to lever in further funding from WG Regeneration money and Safe Routes in Communities, as well as Regional Transport Plan grants, to enhance town centres. For example, in Merthyr we are linking the town centre via the shopping centre to the National Cycle Network (in this case the local Trevithick Trail) to allow people to get from nearby communities without using a car. In Monmouth we are working with the local authority and volunteers to create a local network of routes to link pedestrians and cyclists to parts of the town that are severed from the shopping centre by the busy dual carriageway. We are opening up access in Rhyl, Pontypool, Ebbw Vale, Maesteg, Pontypridd, and Newport.

Retail vitality and increased footfall are frequently linked to the provision of an attractive shopping environment.<sup>2</sup> Whilst it is traditional for retailers to pursue more car access and parking, and to resist measures to promote walking, cycling and public transport use, research suggests that retail vitality and regeneration would be best served by traffic restraint, public transport improvements and a range of measures to improve the walking environment.<sup>3</sup> In a study conducted by Sustrans involving 126 retailers and 840 customers, retailers were found to have overestimated the importance of car-borne trade by almost 100%. This misperception can lead traders to push for transport planning decisions which are not in their best interest and creates the risk of mistakes being made in transport and planning policy.

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<sup>1</sup> Warren, J (2010) Civilising the Streets

<sup>2</sup> Wales Online (2009) Capital Investment Pushes Cardiff Up Retail Rankings

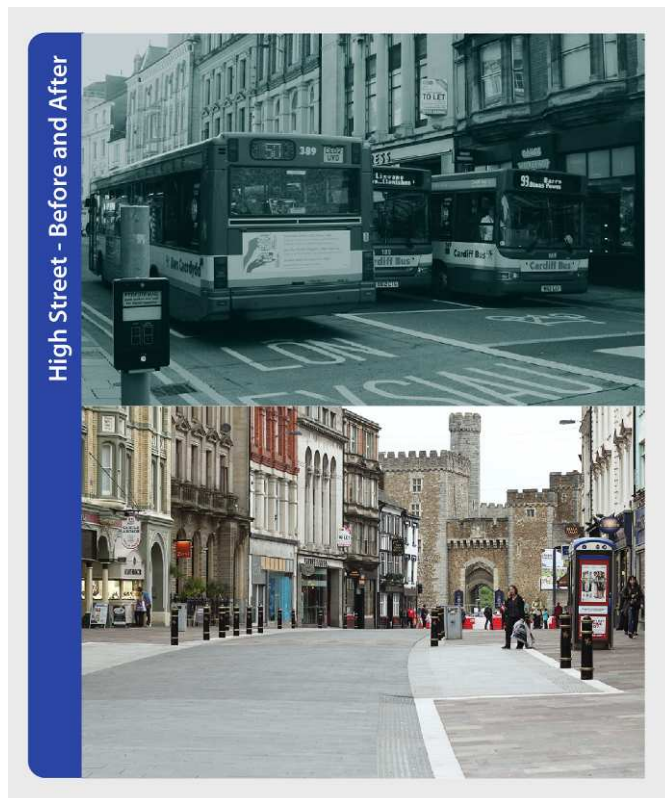
<sup>3</sup> Sustrans (2006) Shoppers and How They Travel

In the same study, researchers analysed how many businesses a shopper will visit, according to their mode of travel. Cyclists and car users were found to make four times as many single-shop visits as pedestrians. Four out of five pedestrian shopping trips were found to take in two to five shops, compared with three fifths of car and bicycle trips.

People enjoy shopping in a more human environment where they navigate traffic-free spaces at their leisure instead of having to negotiate busy roads. Major investment in the walking environment, such as wider pavements and traffic restraint measures, should therefore result in attracting more regular, dedicated custom to the area and have a positive impact on retailers and customers alike.

## **2 How does the Welsh Government use the levers at its disposal to assist in the regeneration of town centres in Wales?**

As discussed previously there are number of good examples of progressive measures being advanced. A further example is Cardiff city centre where the Welsh Government and the local authority have prioritised sustainable modes of transport in the city centre and have improved conditions for walking and cycling through improved crossings.



Many bus services have been re-routed away from the central train and bus station because of congestion and air quality concerns in the city centre, and through traffic has been removed from St Mary Street to create a pedestrian friendly environment. The Council has spent some £2 million to date on pedestrianisation and a further £9.5m on changing the bus routes with further investment planned during 2011/12.

The council is also managing demand for city centre car parking through the reduction of long stay car parking spaces and the creation of a network of Park and Ride sites along key road corridors into the city centre. Enforcement is being carried out by civil enforcement officers employed by the council to police the on-and off street restrictions by serving penalty charge notice to vehicles seen to be contravening the regulations. Cardiff Council took over responsibility for Civil Parking Enforcement in

July 2010. The scheme gives the Council direct control over the deployment of enforcement staff to tackle illegal parking and the problems it causes. The scheme ensures the benefits of other transport improvements such as Bus Priority are not compromised by illegal parking. However, work needs to be done on parking in cycle lanes.

A town that wishes to develop its transport sustainably and to increase the permeability for modes of sustainable transport needs to make it more attractive, convenient and easier for people to choose to walk, cycle and use public transport compared to choosing to use a car.

A recent success story was in Penarth where a key link between the town centre and the new Pont y Werin bridge was identified along a side street that had been earmarked for additional car parking spaces. After a constructive dialogue with the local authority we persuaded them to amend the plan for parking along Arcot Street to include a contra-flow for cyclists along the one-way street to allow a direct route to the bridge.



Conversely, one of the strongest tools for creating more convenient sustainable transport networks is to reduce 'permeability' for private motorised traffic. This means that people using cars would have limited access to many of the key destinations people want to get to, while people travelling by sustainable and active transport means would be able to get right to where they want to. Sustrans advocates full permeability for active transport modes, semi-permeability for public transport and reduced permeability for private motor traffic.

There is clear evidence from the evaluation of the Sustainable travel Towns project in England that in order to significantly increase use of sustainable transport projects need to plan for the long term (at least four years) rather than expecting to achieve results within a couple of years. In addition, these projects must address both 'soft' and 'hard' measures; i.e. including both improvements to service quality as well as improving the marketing and promotion of these services. Finally, measures must be taken to 'lock in' this traffic reduction, for example through the provision of bus lanes, implementation

of parking charges and reallocation of road space. Measures that enforce traffic restraint can also be combined with measures to improve the street environment, such as pavement widening, planting and seats, and decorative surfaces.

**3 How are the interests and activities of communities, businesses, local authorities and Welsh Ministers identified and coordinated when developing and implementing town centre regeneration projects?**

Too often they are not. A key element of our Big Lottery funded Connect2 project has been to work with local communities to develop the design and form of our project. This has not always been met with enthusiasm from local authority partners; the instinct from transport professionals is sometimes to agree the detail of a scheme and then consult. And indeed it is not always easy. In Treforest, for example, we have faced criticism from a small group of residents for our plans to build a new walking and cycling bridge to connect a new route from Church Village into Pontypridd, via Treforest. In response to the concerns we have been greatly involved in planning a community consultation programme with the residents, led by the local authority. There will be a series of exhibitions at community venues throughout September and October led by the local authority as part of the consultation process. We are also carrying out face to face and doorstep surveys to establish people's views on the proposed scheme. We are carrying out a similar process in a number of other schemes.

In strategic terms the impact of town centre regeneration projects on sustainable transport is rarely considered at an early stage. Where regeneration schemes have been able to make a contribution has often relied on Sustrans being able to influence the plans, but inevitably we cannot be everywhere and there is a limit to the impact a relatively small charity can have.

The Welsh Government's commitment to introduce a Highways and Transport (Wales) Bill to place a duty on local authorities to provide and maintain a network of walking and cycling routes represents an ideal opportunity to assist in the regeneration of town centres in Wales. This Bill, given the right tools, has the potential to aid the economic and social regeneration of communities across Wales. By stipulating the need to prioritise walking and cycling above private motorised modes of transport, through offering local authorities the legislative tools they need to develop these routes and by ensuring that a standardised approach is adopted, the Bill will bring benefits to health, to the environment and to businesses across Wales.

Lee Waters,  
National Director, Sustrans Cymru  
9 September 2011

# Enterprise and Business Committee

## Inquiry into Town Centre Regeneration

### Evidence from the South East Wales Transport Alliance

1. The South East Wales Transport Alliance is a joint committee of the ten local authorities in the region, charged with preparing and co-ordinating regional transport policies, plans and programmes on behalf of its constituent councils, including the statutory Regional Transport Plan (RTP). Our comments are limited to the transport aspects of town centre regeneration. For the purposes of this document, the term “town centres” include city centres.

#### Town centres and transportation

2. Town centres are important transportation hubs. They are the most important trip attractors (in terms of trip ends by area). The majority of public transport services are focused on town centres, and as a consequence town centres also function as key interchanges for many trips with different trip ends.

3. A substantial portion of trips to most town centres are made by car. This has a number of negative consequences for town centres. Roads into town centres are generally the most congested urban streets, slowing down buses and essential traffic (business, deliveries, etc) as well as private cars (and thus undermining the attractiveness of the town centre itself). They are also often the streets with the least amenity for residents, pedestrians and cyclists.

4. In other words, while some trips will always be made by the private car because there is no reasonable alternative, successful and growing town centres cannot be primarily dependent on access by the private car.

5. As the key determinators of modal choice of trips to town centres are availability of car parking and (quality of) provision of alternatives, the number of car parking spaces needs to be managed, and the improvement of access by rail, bus, cycling and walking must be made an integral part of any town centre regeneration plan. Not doing so is likely to undermine the regeneration objectives in the long term; it would also conflict with the social inclusion and environmental objectives of the Wales Transport Strategy and Wales Spatial Plan.

6. As Sewta has proposed to the Welsh Government in its input into the Nation Transport Plan (NTP) prioritisation process, there is a danger that transport facilities are overlooked on town centre regeneration schemes, especially if there is no pressure from the funding bodies or policy frameworks that these facilities have to be provided, safeguarded or enhanced. The NTP should identify city and town centres as a priority for improving interchange, and good quality interchange facilities should be required as a component of regeneration / redevelopment schemes, and not as an afterthought. Issues of this nature have the potential to arise in a number of centres in South East Wales over the next few years.

#### Public transport, walking and cycling provision

7. Town centres themselves need to have quality bus access facilities (bus stops). Because of town centre interchange functions, there also need to be good quality bus interchanges (bus stations). Local authorities in South East Wales have delivered a number of quality interchanges in recent years (e.g. Bridgend, Blackwood), and through making use of Sewta RTP funding are developing and delivering further interchange upgrades. However, improvements in integration with town centre regeneration / redevelopment schemes need to be a continuing priority.



8. Furthermore bus access should be provided to where people want to go – a single bus station on the fringe may not be good enough. Where relevant, buses should be crossing or even going through pedestrianised areas. A good example is Newport, where bus-only access across lower Stow Hill enables passengers to get off the bus right in the middle of the city centre prior to arriving at the bus station. There are also many examples of buses crossing or going through pedestrianised streets in continental Europe.

9. Town centre regeneration plans should also include bus priority (bus lanes, traffic light priority) along the key bus corridors leading into the town centre to ensure reliable access and short journey times.

10. In town centres that are served by rail, station upgrades should be considered to ensure that visitors get a good first impression. Good walking connections from the rail station into the town centre must also be provided.

11. To ensure that residents from nearer residential areas have good access there is a need to ensure that high quality walking access arrangements (broad pavements, including good crossing facilities) are provided. Town centre regeneration plans should also provide facilities for cyclists, in particular cycle corridors into the town centres and ample cycle parking within them.

#### Impact of out-of-town development sites

12. The Wales Spatial Plan states that “out-of-town retail development risks undermining the regeneration and viability of town centres, as well as contributing to unsustainable traffic patterns.”<sup>1</sup> This statement is reflected in the Regional Transport Plan. Similar risks can also arise from out of town office development. The development of sites near the motorway and strategic road network over the last couple of decades has clearly strongly contributed to the congestion currently experienced on these routes, particularly along the M4 Corridor. Furthermore poor accessibility of out-of-town sites by walking and cycling (because of their distance from residential areas) and by public transport (because of the *relative* small number of trips to individual sites and wide distribution of trip origins and the common lack of consideration of buses in out-of-town retail sites layouts) makes access difficult for people other than by car.

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<sup>1</sup> Wales Spatial Plan, 2008 Update, page 35

# Agenda Item 3

Enterprise and Business Committee  
Inquiry into Town Centre Regeneration

Evidence from the Design Commission for Wales



## Consultation Response

9 September 2011

Siân Phipps  
Clerk to Enterprise and Business Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
CF99 1NA

Dear Colleague

### **Enterprise and Business Committee – Inquiry into the Regeneration of Town Centres**

Thank you for notifying us of this consultation. We welcome the opportunity to comment. We have italicised the terms of reference, which provide a helpful structure. Our comments are set out in plain text.

The terms of reference are:

- *What approaches have been followed to successfully deliver and finance the regeneration of town centres in Wales? Are there lessons to be learned from elsewhere?*

There are all too few examples. Some good practice in both the physical and community regeneration of town centres exists though it is often due to independent effort. See our further comments at the end of this section.

By way of overview, Aberdare, Narbeth and some elements of Cardigan have worked well and have captured the value of partnerships due to the tenacity of individuals with vision and energy. Pontypridd and Merthyr present a mixed picture. The latter has benefitted from a material upgrading of the town centre yet it lacks the balance of other amenity and cultural provision – it is entirely reliant on retail



both within and without the town. Its cultural and historical importance has been overlooked. Lessons from Blaenavon could be usefully employed. Pontypridd is a key challenge and the quality of the built environment, property and retail frontage in the town centre is poor. Conservation area work is good where it has taken place in parts of the town, but this has not been extended and the approach to improvements elsewhere in the high street have been of varying quality. It is noted however that there are currently ongoing public realm improvements on site within the town centre.

In the south east of the country regeneration efforts have in some ways served to undermine other local centres. The Ebbw Vale initiative is interesting and in many ways welcome, however its revived rail connection could have been more ambitious – this has been borne out by its popularity. This is true of many valley rail connections and more could be done where government partnerships are possible to improve and prioritise public transport availability and access. The construction of the road which bypasses Brynmawr diverts traffic from the town centre and funnels into the large scale edge of town retail park – very large in comparison to the area it serves. This has had a detrimental effect on traffic impact and the vibrancy of the town centre, which was already in decline. Future plans for education provision in the area, and the focus on Ebbw Vales are perceived locally as potentially negative. In the Torfaen area, specifically Pontypool, the quality of the urban fabric of the town is under exploited and there is an opportunity to better utilise aspects of heritage in regenerating its fortunes. An edge of town retail scheme in the area has undermined its public transport capacity in relation to rail and the road network again encourages bypassing of the centre. The town sits on the edge of the Blaenavon World Heritage site and is historically important. This aspect could be better exploited.

We are aware of interesting emerging projects in the north of the country and have commented further on these below.

The pattern of imbalance between effort and impact is to be found throughout Wales.

- *How does the Welsh Government use the levers at its disposal to assist in the regeneration of town centres in Wales?*

The processes and approaches used are difficult to identify and are not usually clarified. The available levers should be used much more strategically and could be better co-ordinated so that active communities are supported with a light touch and swifter funding processes, where funding is attached to programmes. Too often

the planning function is viewed negatively and the opportunities it offers are unrealised. The clarity of national guidance in Planning Policy Wales compares favourably with some other UK countries. Local authority (LPA) guidance and policy could be better aligned, adopted, implemented and adhered to. Alignment of consents/procedures relating to the historic built environment, protected areas and listed buildings, would be beneficial. Much of this is being addressed already with several items at consultation stage and several recommendations from a variety of reports, already implemented. The issues around economics and opportunities for mixed use centres are affected by other ownership and investment forces which are highlighted below.

Lessons learned from the delivery of design quality and regeneration through Wales' only Urban Regeneration Company and its partnership working with the local authority would be very useful if analysed and shared with other local authority regeneration/economic development teams.

- *How are the interests and activities of communities, businesses, local authorities and Welsh Ministers identified and coordinated when developing and implementing town centre regeneration projects?*

This is often unclear.

***In answering the questions above the Committee would be particularly interested in hearing views on the following issues:***

- *The roles the Welsh Government and local authorities play in the regeneration of town centres.*

The role of local authorities is crucial and they require good skills, particularly in urban design, as well as properly set out, adopted and implemented local guidance, drawn from national policy. The coordination of design issues with an assessment of economic and community impacts needs to be carefully considered through a holistic approach, balanced through clear policy.

- *The extent to which businesses and communities are engaged with the public sector led town centre regeneration projects or initiatives, and vice versa.*

Public engagement with projects/initiatives can be problematic and is not always undertaken effectively or at the earliest opportunity, which can lead to adverse comment or disengagement from within communities. Some of the most vibrant town centres have achieved their level of vibrancy from an individual/community champion

rather than an initiative. Reference work in Ruthin, Cardigan, Narbeth already highlighted.

- *The factors affecting the mix of residential, commercial and retail premises found in town centres - for example, the impact of business rates policy; footfall patterns and issues surrounding the night-time and daytime economies within town centres.*
- *The impact of out-of-town retail sites on nearby town centres.*
- *The use of funding sources and innovative financial solutions to contribute to town centre regeneration – including the Regeneration Investment Fund for Wales; the use of Business Improvement Districts; structural funds; Welsh Government, local authority and private sector investment.*
- *The importance of sustainable and integrated transport in town centres—including traffic management, parking and access.*
- *The potential impact of marketing and image on the regeneration of town centres – such as tourism, signage, public art, street furniture, lighting and safety concerns.*
- *The extent to which town centre regeneration initiatives can seek to provide greater employment opportunities for local people.*
- *The Committee would also welcome any recommendations on what measures could be used to evaluate success of initiatives undertaken to regenerate town centres.*

Many of the issues above are covered in greater detail in our comments below.

### **Expanded comment:**

Local authorities, the Welsh Government, various groups, individuals and organisations in Wales play an important part in Town Centre Renewal and Regeneration. There are some major areas which require greater sophistication of approach, if a more valuable, positive impact is to be achieved.

### **Design Quality**

In Wales some of the most challenging areas are among the smallest rural spots and market towns. Cities constantly, aggressively pursue retail spend and it's much harder for Pontypool, Rhyl, Porthcawl or Ruthin. Nevertheless some are active and Ruthin has built on town and county local authority relationships and an active grass-roots community. Retailers, the arts and faith communities, schools, hoteliers and the wider public have

achieved much – from the re-design to RIBA award winning standard of the Ruthin Craft Centre, to a reputation for local food, good markets and great hotels. In 2010 The Guardian reported that Ruthin was a *“Gem of a town – an identity all of its own – with no Starbucks or McDonalds and nine places to have tea or coffee, the most prestigious being Annie’s which has 15 varieties of scone!”* The Bro Rhuthun partnership has worked with local businesses to build a website, produce jute bags, and launch a town loyalty card. They have also identified their architecture, historic and contemporary as key selling points and contributors to the environmental quality in the town and attractiveness to visitors, retailers and investors.

Key differentiators can be used as unique selling points and the Welsh language, local produce are differentiators. Good design is a key differentiator.

Successive reports over the last decade have demonstrated the economic value of good design, not least the 2007 report commissioned by Places Matter! The North West Regional Design Review Panel – part of England’s North West Regional Development Agency. These demonstrated that good architecture and urban design had real economic impact, showing that good design could add up to 20% in rental and capital value and speed up lettings and sales.

In 2009 the follow-up tested the findings in the context of economic downturn and the research held fast. In addition it revealed, as DCfW has consistently argued, that good design significantly mitigates the costly effects of poorly designed environments which are detrimental to social, environmental and economic success.

Good design draws multiple benefits, achieving better rents and market attractiveness due to enhanced profile and image. Design bolsters civic pride and supports access to goods, services and amenities; it stimulates local supply, delivers energy and carbon efficiency, reduces pollution and strengthens ecological benefits. Design forms part of a skilled employment sector and sets career paths for talented creative people, capable of delivering innovation.

Where good design and town benchmarking have been employed tangible benefits have been recorded. On these last, the work of Rhona Pringle of Accend and her previous work with Yorkshire Forward on market towns is impressive. Rhona has shared her knowledge with DCfW most recently in the work we have been doing in Ruthin. Action for Market Towns (AMT) have some very useful items on Town Benchmarking and the work of Catherine Hammant, chair of AMT is every interesting. Catherine also worked with DCfW on our small Ruthin seminar project ‘Designed for Business’ which we delivered in May 2011. The Commission will be pleased to share further information on this work with the committee.

**Mixed use in town centres:**

The refurbishing of existing townscape, street frontage and/or premises are affected by patterns of ownership, landlord/pension fund/investor interests – and the dynamic such patterns engender.

In cities and larger towns securing genuinely mixed use with a good residential element is more straightforward with larger owners/investors being less risk averse. Smaller operators in smaller towns – or no operators at all – present a great challenge.

Communication between parties is rare and/or fragmented; interests are often better served by allowing vacant property to sit empty rather than risk future investment opportunity; few owners/ landlords in Wales are experienced with meanwhile uses or temporary tenancy arrangements which could support co-worker and other SME initiatives.

Freeholders in a particular area could be brought together to agree new masterplans and prioritise which would offer a more fruitful collaboration than the promotion of a masterplan by an LPA or an external party.

Much regeneration is led by retail and in many cases by an 'anchor store'. Too often in Wales this is the sole focus and mixed use possibilities are not properly explored. This is partly a matter of finance, partly the culture of particular government departments, partly a lack of experience on such schemes (at local and national levels, both politically and amongst officers of LPAs), elsewhere and an absence of systematic analysis of possibilities, cost, opportunity and viability.

**Business rates:**

Models exist which demonstrate the value of sliding of flexible business rates which are more closely attuned with the nature of the business in question, its size and scale. Sliding scales in some areas assist smaller independent operators and retailers and we know of some areas of Wales where rate relief programmes have helped small centres, but these have been temporary measures.

**The value of culture; engaging with artists:**

Genuinely mixed development comprises cultural amenity alongside retail and other leisure. Wales could better exploit this aspect in smaller towns. Local authorities have in recent years taken a simplistic approach to art in the public realm and have failed to capture the value of projects which enrich the townscape and which add value for developers. Planning Policy Wales TAN 12 Design include very clear guidance on working with artists. A combination of good cultural provision, and a well animated streetscape

enlivened by good public art can significantly strengthen the attractiveness of town centres. Many artists and other creative practitioners populate smaller places with broader activities and co-worker set ups. These models are identified by organisations such as Urban Pollinators and Meanwhile Space and these models should be examined. Details of organisations and their web sites are below.

### **Retail and town centres; scale and appropriateness:**

The Commission scrutinises many development projects through its Design Review Service and is at times presented with retail led schemes of inappropriate scale and unacceptable poor quality. In the long term these are damaging and they simply set up future problems.

The 'sequential approach': Planning Policy Wales Edition 4; Chapter 10, Planning for Retail and Town Centres points 10.1.1 through 10.3.18, P143-150

With regard to national planning guidance, PPW Edition 4 sets out very clear guidance at national level regarding balance and systematic analysis in relation to retail and town centres. In our experience it is referred to rarely. We would draw your attention to this aspect of PPW.

### **Town centres different functions and different places:**

Liz Peace, of the British Property Federation has noted that *"Given the structural nature of these changes there is no point harking back to the old high streets we all claimed to love. We need to be creative in looking for new roles and uses for these empty shops."*

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Agora report by Urban Pollinators also highlighted that town centres can be become much more socially centred places with a variety of different activity, less reliant on retail alone and with much more night time and flexible activity. The report also highlights collaborations in north Wales around Flint and we would direct you to the report via their website. We have included below their details and those of others working in innovative ways around this issue.

### **Initiatives and good practice:**

Urban Pollinators Ltd	<a href="http://urbanpollinators.co.uk/">http://urbanpollinators.co.uk/</a>
Gavin Harris	Manorhaus Hotel Ruthin, and Town Councillor <a href="http://www.manorhaus.com/">http://www.manorhaus.com/</a>
Action for Market Towns	<a href="http://towns.org.uk/">http://towns.org.uk/</a>
Empty Shops Network	<a href="http://emptyshopsnetwork.com">http://emptyshopsnetwork.com</a>

Meanwhile Space CIC	<a href="http://www.meanwhilespace.com/">http://www.meanwhilespace.com/</a>
MyCard	<a href="http://towns.org.uk/amt-i/loyalty-cards-shop-local/">http://towns.org.uk/amt-i/loyalty-cards-shop-local/</a>
Incredible Edible Todmorden	<a href="http://www.incredible-edible-todmorden.co.uk/home">http://www.incredible-edible-todmorden.co.uk/home</a>
Research 00:/	<a href="http://www.architecture00.net/">http://www.architecture00.net/</a>
Res Publica	<a href="http://www.respublica.org.uk/">http://www.respublica.org.uk/</a>
Wigan Plus	<a href="http://wiganplus.com/">http://wiganplus.com/</a>
Cooltown Studios	<a href="http://www.cooltownstudios.com">www.cooltownstudios.com</a>

### **About DCfW and the context in which it comments:**

The Design Commission for Wales (DCfW Ltd) is a national organisation established in 2002 by the Welsh Assembly Government (now the Welsh Government), to champion better buildings, spaces and places. Design Commission for Wales Ltd (DCfW Ltd), is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Welsh Government.

*The Commission champions high standards of architecture, landscape and urban design in Wales, promoting wider understanding of the importance of good quality in the built environment in the interests of sustainable development.*

The Commission's work responds to four strategic aims set out by the Welsh Government, in its funding agreement:

1. To champion *high standards of design* and architecture to the public and private sector in Wales by promoting wider understanding of design issues and the *importance of good standards in enhancing the built environment* across all sectors.
2. To promote design practice that is compatible with the Welsh Assembly Government's Sustainable Development Scheme, *promoting best practice in energy efficiency, waste disposal and public transport.*
3. To promote design practice compatible with the highest standards in relation to *equal opportunity and promoting social inclusion.*
4. Give due regard to promoting *excellence in day to day developments*, like housing estates and industrial units, as well as promoting excellence in prestige projects.



The Design Commission for Wales is concerned with the quality of the built environment in Wales and to raise the design quality of buildings and the spaces between them, working with colleagues in the field of architecture, urban and landscape design and including consideration of the countryside as well as the cities, towns and villages of Wales. The skills and experience of its board, staff and voluntary panellists span commercial property, regeneration, architecture, sustainability, urban and landscape design, planning and transport.

#### Capacity and programmes:

The Design Commission for Wales comprises a small paid operational team of 4 staff (one part time), and carries additional capacity in the form of its expert volunteers acting as **Design Review Panellists** and also through its **Advocates in Practice Network**.

Design Review Panellists are practicing professionals in their field, experienced in all kinds of development projects. The panel is multi-disciplinary, with members coming from the fields of urban and landscape design, architecture, sustainability, planning, engineering and transport. They are appointed through competitive interview for a term of two years, pending review and reappointment. Panel members are unpaid and give their time and expertise freely. Advocates in Practice, like DCfW's Design Review Panellists, are unremunerated. Typically they will volunteer their time, energy and expertise in promoting DCfW's messages about good design and in playing a part in activities, events, research and campaigns.

#### DCfW's programme includes:

- National Design Review Service – scrutinizing public investment in and the quality of development schemes throughout Wales (For example in 2010 alone it scrutinised £1.8bn of development)
- Design Exchange for LPAs
- Bespoke professional training for LPAs
- Client support, mentoring
- Education:   My Square Mile framework for Primary education  
                    Know Your Place framework for Communities
- Case studies
- Conferences, seminars, other events, publications
- Advocacy, public and community awareness

DCfW sponsors The National Eisteddfod for Wales Gold Medal for Architecture. It is the only award supported by the Design Commission for Wales, which attaches great

importance to architecture as a vital element in the nation's culture and to honouring architects achieving outstanding design standards.

**For further information go to [www.dcfw.org](http://www.dcfw.org)**

We hope our comment is helpful and would be pleased to provide further information should this be required.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carole-Anne Davies', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Carole-Anne Davies  
Chief Executive  
[cad@dcfw.org](mailto:cad@dcfw.org)

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# Enterprise and Business Committee Inquiry into Town Centre Regeneration

## Evidence from the Heritage Lottery Fund

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### Inquiry into the regeneration of town centres – a submission from the Heritage Lottery Fund

#### 1. Executive Summary and cross-reference to the Inquiry's Terms of Reference

##### 1.1 Executive Summary

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) is grateful for the opportunity to submit a response to this Inquiry into the regeneration of town centres in Wales. For the last 17 years, the HLF has invested over £224m to over 1900 heritage projects throughout the length and breadth of Wales, many of these projects help in the regeneration of communities and their town centres.

This submission sets out the work of the HLF (Section 2) and its funding for regeneration, primarily through its Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) programme which has invested over £29m in 22 historic town centres in Wales (Sections 3, Appendix 1 and 2); reference is also made to HLF's Heritage Grants programme which funds the restoration of key buildings, in town centres, often as part of wide regeneration strategies, similarly with the HLF Parks for People programme which includes urban parks (Appendix 3). Current and future challenges to town centres, and suggestions to deal with these challenges are covered in Sections 5, 6, 7.

[Note: We have not defined 'town' or 'town centre', nor distinguished between 'larger town' and 'city', instead we have used appropriate examples across our awards in Wales.]

##### 1.2 Inquiry's Terms of Reference and issues

In our submission, we have directed our response primarily to the following areas of the Inquiry's Terms of Reference and issues:

- *What approaches have been followed to successfully deliver and finance the regeneration of town centres in Wales? Are there lessons to be learned from elsewhere? See **Section 4** and case studies provided in **Appendix 2 and 3**.*
- *How are the interests and activities of communities, businesses, local authorities and Welsh Ministers identified and coordinated when developing and implementing town centre regeneration projects? See **Section 4.1***

- *The extent to which businesses and communities are engaged with the public sector led town centre regeneration projects or initiatives, and vice versa. See Section 4.1*
- *The use of funding sources and innovative financial solutions to contribute to town centre regeneration See Section 4.5 and Appendix 2*
- *The extent to which town centre regeneration initiatives can seek to provide greater employment opportunities for local people. See Section 4.5 and Appendix 2 for jobs created and jobs safe guarded.*
- *The Committee would also welcome any recommendations on what measures could be used to evaluate success of initiatives undertaken to regenerate town centres. See Section 6.2 for the Oxford Brookes University long-term evaluation of the THI programme. Also see Appendix 2 for specific outputs from a sample of five THI schemes in Wales.*

## Section 2

### Introduction

- 2.1 Using money raised through the National Lottery, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) sustains and transforms a wide range of heritage for present and future generations to take part in, learn from and enjoy. HLF has supported more than 34,000 projects allocating over £4.7 billion across the UK, including more than **1,900** projects totalling over **£224 million** in Wales, to date. As the largest dedicated funder of the UK's heritage, with around £255million a year to invest in new projects in the UK, and a considerable body of knowledge and evaluation over 17 years, we are also a leading advocate for the value of heritage to modern life.
- 2.2 HLF's approach is driven by the nature of its funding from Lottery players. We support heritage that is valued by the public and help them to get involved with and learn about it, thereby sustaining heritage for future generations. Lottery funding has been awarded to a broad range of heritage - from national icons and collections to small, neighbourhood projects; from landscapes, National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty to castles and piers; from projects that develop and promote skills, training and job creation; and from steam trains, museums and parks to oral history and local traditions. Almost half of this funding has been awarded to voluntary and community organisations with nearly all projects involving volunteers. The need and demand for Lottery funding remains strong. In 2009-2010, HLF received applications for £524m from across the UK – more than two and a half times its grant budget for that year.
- 2.3 HLF's investment of £4.7bn has been matched by partnership funding of £3.4bn giving a total of over £8bn for the UK's heritage since 1994.
- 2.4 We operate a number of different grant schemes: the most relevant to the regeneration of town centres in Wales are:

#### 2.4.1 Heritage Grants

This is the programme through which the bulk of larger capital grants (£50,000 and upwards) are made, including the repair of historic buildings and the restoration of iconic industrial, transport and maritime heritage. See Appendix 3 for examples, such as Newbridge Memorial hall and Institute, Merthyr Old Town Hall (indicative funding at this stage), and St Peters School within Blaenavon.

#### 2.4.2 Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI)

Through THI, we support schemes that aim to regenerate the historic environment in towns and cities across the UK – explicitly targeting areas of social and economic deprivation. This grant programme is perhaps the most relevant of all our grant schemes in relation to the inquiry. More details of this programme, its evaluation and outcomes, are outlined below.

#### 2.4.3 Parks for People

This is a programme directed towards historic public parks. They are usually owned and managed by a local authority. Restoration of urban parks are very much part of the regeneration of town centres, as they often provide a much-loved and much used focus of community involvement, and pride.

#### 2.4.4 Your Heritage and Young Roots

These are smaller-scale projects of less than £50,000 – frequently run by local community and voluntary organisations – that can be very successful in delivering community benefits in areas of social and economic disadvantage.

#### 2.4.5 Skills for the Future

In May 2010 we awarded £17m to 54 projects throughout the UK that will create 800 new heritage training opportunities. Skills for the Future offers work-based training in a wide range of skills that are needed to look after buildings, landscapes, habitats, species, and museum and archive collections, as well as equipping people to lead education and outreach programmes, manage volunteers and use new technology. In Wales, over £1.3m has been invested in heritage-based training which will deliver 70 placements, and adds up to an impressive 68 years' worth of paid training opportunities. Of immediate relevance to the Inquiry is the grant of over £662k to Carmarthenshire County Council to help 30 local people acquire traditional heritage building skills including carpentry, lime plastering etc on genuine heritage construction sites. These skills are essential in West Wales as a consequence of the high number of heritage buildings in the area, both in rural settings and in town centres. This Skills Initiative is in addition to the requirement in the THI programme to provide skills-based training, such as up-skilling existing workforces, or setting up new apprenticeships. Despite HLF's long-term investment in this field of traditional heritage building skills, there is still huge need in this sector – an issue which is being investigated by the Historic Environment Group (HEG), an advisory group for the Housing, Regeneration and Heritage Minister of the Welsh Government. HLF has contributed to HEG since its inception, with particular emphasis recently on co-ordinating a group to identify need and opportunities in traditional and sustainable building skills in Wales.

### 3 HLF funding for regeneration

- 3.1 As a heritage agency, HLF is not dedicated solely to regeneration funding. As noted, our income is from the National Lottery and our funding must always be for heritage of all kinds, in all parts of the UK. However, the previous UK government issued HLF a set of policy directions in 1998 that included a requirement that we take into account “the scope for reducing economic and social deprivation” in our grant making. As a result, local authorities amongst the 25% most deprived in Wales,

England, Scotland and N. Ireland have benefited from our funding to a greater extent than the rest of the UK, having received around 30% of our funding to date, a proportion which has been close to 40% in more recent years. On this basis HLF recognises that our role in regeneration is an important and potentially growing one.

- 3.2 Partly in order to encourage more applications from deprived areas, in 2002 we established geographic priority areas in each of our regional and country offices, which are a focus for development activity.
- 3.3 For HLF, regeneration of places needs to start with what people already have – which could be local iconic buildings, distinctive housing and streets, historic parks and other open spaces or the civic buildings in the area, including museums and galleries. We also believe it includes things which are not physical – customs, traditions, a collective ‘memory’. Heritage projects in deprived areas – including activity projects – have the potential to contribute to regeneration. Good heritage-led regeneration is based on what people value locally and helps communities to determine their own future.
- 3.4 Given that places have individual and independent histories, so heritage-based regeneration ensures that the unique distinctiveness of place is retained, helping to maintain a sense of identity that is vital for social well-being and economic vitality. Research undertaken by the HLF since 2005 has consistently demonstrated the benefits of local heritage to people<sup>1</sup> - for example three quarters of people believe HLF projects have made their local area more attractive, and 61% believe HLF projects have made their area a better place to live. Analysis of the responses to the recent consultation on HLF’s next Strategic Plan 2013-19 demonstrated that 65% of respondents agreed that heritage-led regeneration should continue to be a focus for HLF activity, so it is clear to us that we do have a continuing role to play in developing thriving town centres.

#### **4. Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) Programme**

- 4.1 Through our Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) programme, we make grants that help communities to regenerate conservation areas displaying particular social and economic need throughout the UK by encouraging partnerships of local organisations to carry out repairs and other works to a number of historic buildings, structures or spaces within these defined areas. The overwhelming majority of THI schemes have focused on the improvement of historic high streets. In Wales, the HLF’s THI programme has acted as a catalyst for building and consolidating funding partnerships: Cadw for example, has contributed to every THI scheme in Wales (see listing in Appendix 1). The nature and requirements of the programme have also facilitated closer and more regular dialogue across funding and project partners in Wales, which then brings benefits in other work areas, such as Cadw’s Urban Characterisation work or the work of the Historic Environment Group (HEG).
- 4.2 Together with other organisations, HLF contributes a grant of between £500,000 and £2 million to a common fund, which is managed by a local partnership, and is used to allocate third-party grants towards works on individual building projects within each scheme and support a range of activities that encourage participation in the heritage and improve understanding and enjoyment of it.

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<sup>1</sup> BDRC for HLF, 2010: The Impact of HLF funding – Neighbourhood Surveys 2005-2009

- 4.3 We expect all schemes to deliver three core outcomes:
- Preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of conservation areas affected by high levels of deprivation and in need of regeneration;
  - bringing historic buildings back into appropriate and sustainable use; and
  - safeguarding the character of conservation areas through increasing training opportunities in heritage skills; increasing community participation; and improving approaches to conservation management and maintenance.
- 4.4 Our grant can form a maximum of 75% of the common fund; at least 25% must come from other sources.
- 4.5 In Wales, HLF has awarded £27,205,900 to 32 THI schemes helping improve the physical fabric of 22 historic town centres. This investment has levered in an additional £40,619,952, of which over £25 million has come from the private sector. As a result, around 500 individual buildings have been repaired and improved; over 175,000m<sup>2</sup> of vacant floor space has been brought back into use; at least 500 new jobs have been created and nearly 750 safeguarded; and at least 320 people have been trained in traditional building skills<sup>2</sup>.

## **5. Challenges facing our town centres**

- 5.1 Our involvement in this area since 1997 has given us a broad perspective of the problems that face our town centres (particularly our historic town centres). In our experience, there are a couple of issues, which are often related and have a tendency to develop out of each other.
- 5.1.1 Losing identity. Of significant concern is the erosion of the unique character of towns, both through the loss of independent retailers, the loss of a mixed economy, the loss of historic detail (such as shop fronts, canopies, traditional paving etc.), and the decline of traditional building skills. Hand in hand with this there is a lack of enforcement by overstretched local authorities (likely to be exacerbated by the cuts to council funding) to protect the historic character of town centres with the result that unsympathetic developments creep in, rendering places with a previously unique identity anonymous. The British Retail Consortium report '21<sup>st</sup> Century High Streets: a new vision for our town centres' highlighted 'a unique sense of place' as a key element of a successful high street.
- 5.1.2 Over-emphasis on new retail development. In recent years, there has been a move away from out-of-town shopping centres (since it was recognised that they drew trade away from high streets), towards edge of town developments, and town-centre redevelopments, with an increasing focus on mixed-use schemes. Such developments can be very successful, but they do need to be part of an integrated strategy and vision that takes account of the potential of the existing high street and the needs of each specific town and the community it serves. There is a risk that new developments may leave behind the current retail core. For example, the retail offer that was located on the high street may move to the new development resulting in lower-value rentals and retail incomes, which can mean less incentive to care for the existing

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<sup>2</sup> Detailed information on the outputs of five THI schemes in three towns (Bridgend, Cardigan and Penmaenmawr) is included in Appendix 2.



properties or to explore wider uses (such as above shop accommodation). We strongly encourage applicants under THI to have clear plans in place for how they will seek to ensure a distinct identity and continued use for existing retail cores if new developments fringing the area are planned.

## **6. How we can respond to these challenges**

- 6.1 We set up the THI grant programme in 1997 as a direct response to some of the problems facing our historic town centres. As mentioned above, HLF grants, in partnership with local authority and other funding sources, are used to restore buildings to full use, and to reinstate some of the architectural details that make high streets distinctive and attractive: to engage the communities who live, work in and visit them: and to provide training in the necessary skills to ensure the on-going maintenance of the buildings.
- 6.2 From our experience, there is no “one-size-fits-all” solution to solving the problems historic town centres face. However, in 1999 we commissioned Oxford Brookes University to carry out a long term evaluation of the THI programme<sup>3</sup>, focussing on 17 schemes across the UK, including three schemes in Wales: Colwyn Bay phase 1, Newport Lower Dock Street, phase 1 and Pembroke Docks phase 1. This longitudinal research (the only heritage study of its kind undertaken in the UK) has shown us that the schemes that achieve the most outcomes – restored buildings, new jobs, revitalised towns with a range of uses and occupancies - share several factors.
- 6.3 The ones that have achieved most in terms of retaining or creating jobs have often been the larger schemes, where wider regeneration strategies concentrate resources and ally HLF funding alongside that from other sources. They are schemes where there is a clear vision for the area, and strategies include recognition of the value of the historic environment and its potential, rather than regarding it as a ‘problem’.
- 6.4 A good example is the Penmaenmawr THI in North Wales, part of the Quarry Villages Partnership (see Appendix 2). A grant of £646,000 secured a further £3.75million's worth of investment from public and private sources. 41 properties were restored, 19 vacant premises brought back into use, which helped create 71 new jobs and safeguard 34 existing ones. It also encouraged the start of 13 small to medium business and there has been a positive impact in terms of civic pride for those living and working in the town. The confidence that THI gives communities up and down the country is something that we see time and time again.
- 6.5 The Oxford Brookes study has also demonstrated that schemes can struggle where deprivation is very acute, but even in these areas schemes can eventually succeed if the extrinsic factors also include a positive underlying economic trend.
- 6.6 Among the intrinsic factors affecting the success of a THI is the need for schemes to focus investment, rather than it being dispersed across a wide area, so that a critical mass can be created. Other factors include the need for clear and effective leadership – both in terms of political support and the day-to-day management of schemes – the availability of conservation skills, community organisation and involvement and effective business support. So it seems that any attempts to tackle

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<sup>3</sup> Oxford Brookes University, 2008: Evaluation of the Townscape Heritage Initiative

the varying issues facing our historic town centres need to include at least some, if not all, of these elements.

## **7. Future challenges for the regeneration of town centres**

- 7.1 HLF recognises that the whole of the UK is in a very different economic environment compared to the last ten years. Looking to the future, reductions in budgets are likely to make it more difficult for local authorities to develop and bring forward for consideration new heritage-based regeneration projects. In our THI and public parks programmes, for example, the proportion of match funding coming from the public sector has traditionally been relatively high.
- 7.2 Equally important may be the loss of skilled local authority staff, especially conservation and archaeology officers, who we know are key to the management of heritage-based regeneration schemes.
- 7.3 Furthermore, we know that the impact of our funding can only be sustained if local authorities operate the system of statutory heritage protection effectively and fairly, including statutory consent, enforcement, repairs notices, compulsory purchase orders and directions. The loss of other types of local authority staff – such as parks, biodiversity and countryside officers, and museum and library departments – could also have a detrimental effect on heritage-based regeneration initiatives.
- 7.4 All of these issues mean that we are concerned that the legacy of Lottery investment of the last 17 years, which has achieved so much for heritage and people, should not be jeopardised.
- 7.5 Organisations will need to evolve, to be flexible and to adapt to overcome the loss in public funding. Heritage organisations in regeneration areas certainly have the willingness to play a new type of role – reflected, for example, in the recent increase in applications to HLF for Community Asset Transfer projects in Wales. It is very evident that a radical rethinking is underway among all those involved in physical-led regeneration.
- 7.6 HLF has already begun to address some of these concerns through our own business processes and criteria. We have, for example, responded by relaxing our match funding requirements in most programmes to allow greater flexibility in funding arrangements that are coming under greater pressure.
- 7.7 However we recognise that we may need to go further and are keen to play a full role in shaping and responding to emerging regeneration strategies. It may be the emphasis on 'place making' as part of regeneration will have less prominence than during the last ten years. The objective of the 'urban renaissance' was to attract knowledge and service industries back into major towns and cities through high density mixed use redevelopments, improvements to public realm, quality streetscapes and investment in culture. Heritage has often been used very effectively, such as through our THI programme, to achieve positive economic and social outcomes. In the future, particularly when the current round of European funding comes to an end, it seems likely there will be fewer resources available for this type of physical regeneration. Instead, economic growth will need to arise from new private sector activity, based on the skills, traditions and ambitions of local businesses. We still see an important role for heritage here, since economic

development that is locally distinctive will be based on the history of trading, production, invention and creativity that enabled places to first develop in Wales.

- 7.8 This change of emphasis is likely to mean that proposals must show how they will maintain or create private sector jobs, achieve private sector leverage, have a commercial logic and contribute to green economic growth.
- 7.9 We believe that HLF – and other heritage organisations involved in regeneration within the public, private and civic sectors – will need to be responsive and flexible to this changing regeneration environment. For example, though tourism and property re-development are frequently thought of as the most obvious ways in which heritage has a role to play in economic regeneration, there are other important connections, especially within the context of a growing knowledge-based economy in Wales, as in the rest of the UK. Heritage fits very well within the bigger picture of structural change predicted for the next decade, and ‘anchor’ heritage organisations could form an important component of local regeneration strategies<sup>4</sup>.
- 7.10 These issues are very much a part of our planning for our next strategic framework. We are currently considering what the best options will be for our funding in the period beginning 2013, and we made regeneration a particular feature of our recent consultation, in order to inform our future direction in this important area<sup>5</sup>.
- 7.11 Over the last year we are aware of anecdotal evidence that suggests in some of our THI schemes businesses are continuing to struggle and that newly restored premises are becoming empty again. The recession has led to a downturn in consumer confidence since 2007 and as spending slows; this has in turn affected retail margins, leading to business failures. The national town centre vacancy rate in the UK was an average of 11.2% in May 2011 for high streets and shopping centres (RUDI website). It is therefore important that we continue to keep our THI programme under review and ensure we introduce changes in order to adapt to changing economic conditions, and we are committed to work closely with the Welsh Government, local authorities and other key partners to target our investment towards schemes which offer the best outcomes for people and for heritage.
- 7.12 What we would envisage is a greater emphasis on mixed-use – but focusing on the re-use of historic buildings rather than new development. This could include the re-use of vacant upper-floors for housing, the transfer of redundant local authority buildings to voluntary and community organisations (often at a rate below market value) that have the incentive and means to develop them; the reuse of historic industrial units to support uses that encourage local production of goods, materials, food etc. We also recognise the importance of providing training in building repair and maintenance so that the skills are there to repair and maintain historic buildings (see Section 2.4.5), as well as training for community groups to develop business skills.
- 7.13 We believe the real key lies in actively engaging with and building the capacity of the communities who use the town centres. We believe the solution needs to be a partnership between all levels – business, local government and the Welsh Government, with involvement from a range of stakeholders, such as development or building preservation trusts, other social enterprise organisations, commercial developers and local communities.

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<sup>4</sup> The Work Foundation, 2010: Heritage and the 2020 Knowledge Economy

<sup>5</sup> Heritage Lottery Fund, 2011: Shaping the Future: Consultation on the HLF strategy 2013-2019



## Appendix 1

### Listing of HLF's Townscape Heritage Initiative schemes in Wales

Project Title	Project Ref	Project Status	HLF Grant Award
Aberdare Townscape Heritage Initiative	TH-07-00228/2	On-going	£950,000
Bridgend Phase 1	TH-04-50189/2	On-going	£910,000
Bridgend Phase II	TH-08-15810 R2	On-going	£532,200
Cardigan Phase 1	HF-98-00380/2	Complete	£300,000
Cardigan Phase 2	HF-03-50354/2	Complete	£735,000
Cefn Mawr phase 1	TH-04-50175/2	On-going	£1,000,000
Cefn Mawr phase 2	TH-09-04321	On-going	£862,200
Colwyn Bay Phase 1	HF-98-00429/2	Complete	£693,000
Colwyn Bay Phase 2	TH-10-04920	First Round Pass	£803,500
Denbigh Phase 1	HF-99-00168/2	Complete	£1,250,000
Denbigh Phase 2	HF-03-50324/2	On-going	£1,500,000
Dolgellau THI	TH-07-00227/2	On-going	£900,000
Flint Townscape Heritage Initiative	TH-07-00273/2	On-going	£920,000
Haverfordwest	HF-00-00167/2	On-going	£750,000
Holyhead Town Centre	TH-05-00267/2	On-going	£1,002,000
Holywell Phase 1	HF-98-00422/2	Complete	£400,000
Holywell Phase 2	TH-04-50184/2	On-going	£760,000
Llandovery & Llangadog Phase 1	HF-99-00137/2	Complete	£575,000
Llandovery & Llangadog Phase 2	TH-04-50185/2	On-going	£770,000
Llandrindod Wells	HF-02-00095/2	Complete	£675,000
Llanrwst Town Centre	HF-99-00122/2	Complete	£390,000
Lower Dock Street (Newport) Phase 1	HF-98-00357/2	On-going	£800,000
Lower Dock Street (Newport) Phase 2	HF-03-50390/2	On-going	£800,000
Maesteg Phase 1	HF-00-00168/2	Complete	£430,000
Maesteg Phase 2	TH-05-00257/2	On-going	£680,000
Pembroke Dock phase 1	HF-99-00142/2	Complete	£2,000,000
Pembroke Dock phase 2	TH-05-00263/2	On-going	£945,000
Penmaenmawr Phase 1	HF-02-00113/2	Complete	£646,000
Pontmorlais heritage Quarter, Merthyr Tydfil	TH-09-01855	On-going	£1,587,500
Pontypool Town Centre THI	TH-08-15699 R2	On-going	£849,500
Rhyl Phase 1	HF-00-00165/2	On-going	£1,250,000
Rhymney	HF-00-00164/2	Complete	£540,000
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>£27,205,900</b>

## Appendix 2

### Outputs from a sample of five Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) schemes in Wales



#### **Bridgend THI (Phase 1)**

Phase 1 ties in with the core aims of the Bridgend Town Centre Regeneration Strategy to improve the environment, sustain business confidence, to attract new investment and to redefine the image of the town centre. It focuses on the historic core of the town centre around Dunraven Place and has had a significant impact on the buildings in the area. One of the most significant projects involved complete restoration of derelict buildings in Elder Street and their conversion of business uses. The Elder Street project is nearing completion.

- HLF grant £910,000 (42 % of Common Fund of £2156,519)
- Other funders: Cadw £105,000; WAG PRF £408,165; Bridgend CBC SRF £224,538; WAG TIG £263,796 all secured.
- To date 12 buildings have been restored/repared and two projects remain on site (nearing completion).
- All projects involved bringing vacant floor space back into use.
- 27 jobs created with another 10 jobs anticipated on completion; 115 jobs safeguarded; 5 new businesses created and another 3 set to be installed on completion.
- 12 construction training seminars held with 76 placements.
- The THI has complemented other major projects in the conservation area including public realm work and construction of the riverside walk.
- Scheme close to completion

#### **Bridgend THI (Phase 2)**

Phase 2 aims to build on the successes of Phase 1

- HLF grant £532,200
- Other funders: CADW £60,000; Bridgend CBC SRF £225,000; Bridgend CBC and others £263,748; WAG DE&T £300,100; all either secured or anticipated.
- 15 priority projects planned, all partially or completely vacant.
- Anticipated that each project will create new jobs and/or secure existing ones.
- A series of 10 traditional skills training sessions will be held in conjunction with Bridgend College (to be launched 8<sup>th</sup> October)
- 5 year scheme close to starting.



### **Caring for Cardigan THI (Phase 1)**

The scheme focused on the town's commercial core. It was successful in improving the function of the town centre in terms of shopping, employment, housing and leisure; in reducing the number of vacant shops and improving the range and quality of shopping.

- HLF grant of £300,000 in November 1999 ( 53% of Common Fund of £571.295)
- Other public sector funding towards Common Fund: Cadw £116,212; Ceredigion £155,083.
- Private sector investment (property owners): £222,000 (estimated)
- 17 historic properties awarded grants
- These included 11 properties which were either completely vacant or had vacant floor space
- 28 new jobs created and 60 other safeguarded
- One of the projects funded was the restoration of Green Cottages which is now the HQ of the Cadwgan BPT which is restoring Cardigan Castle.
- Scheme completed October 2007.

### **Caring for Cardigan (Phase 2)**

Phase 2 aimed to build on the successes of Phase 1 and covered the same commercial area.

- HLF grant £735,000 (50% of the Common Fund of £1,420,000)
- Other public sector funding towards initial Common Fund: Ceredigion CC £125,000; WAG £500,000; Cadw £60,000. The Common Fund was subsequently expanded to £1,663,952.
- Additional public sector funding subsequently attracted: WAG LRF for LAs; Menter Aberteifi Cyf - total £243,952
- Private sector investment (property owners) £1,043,249
- 50 historic properties awarded grants
- These included conversion of vacant floor space above shops (8 flats created) and refurbishment and re-use of the Granary and Bridge warehouses
- 24.5 jobs created and 41.5 safeguarded. 5 new businesses set up in restored properties.
- Various training events in traditional building skills held
- 4 public realm projects
- The THI was a catalyst of other regeneration schemes in the town including the Area Renewal Scheme; Cardigan and South Ceredigion Regeneration Fund (WAG); and Riverside Development (WAG and EU).
- Scheme completed in November 2010.





### **Penmaenmawr THI**

This scheme covered the central parts of Penmaenmawr, including the main commercial area. It formed part of the over-arching Quarry Villages Partnership formed in 2000 in response to the area receiving Objective 1 status.

- HLF grant of £646,000 in October 2003 (24% of *initial* Common Fund of £2,662,000. The Common Fund was subsequently expanded to £4,429,611)
- Other public sector funding towards *initial* Common fund: Cadw £60,000; Conwy CBC £477,000; Conwy CBC HRA £1,479,000.
- Additional public sector funding subsequently attracted: WAG Environmental Improvement Grant of £1,767, 611.
- Private sector investment (property owners): £741,552.
- 41 traditional properties were restored
- 19 vacant premises were brought into economic use
- Projects included the restoration of a number of glazed Victorian canopies fronting the Central Arcade shops.
- Helped create 71 new jobs and safeguard 34 existing ones.
- The scheme also encouraged the start up of 13 new small and medium businesses, supporting the theory that an improved environment, and one that specifically builds on historic character, stimulates economic activity.
- Scheme completed November 2009.

## Appendix 3

### Further case studies of HLF-funded projects which support town centre regeneration.



#### Denbigh THI

The five year scheme involved working in partnership with the community, Denbigh Council, the Welsh Development Agency and Cadw, to allocate funds to conservation work on individual projects in the town. Projects involved the structural repair of buildings, restoration of architectural details such as original shop fronts, doors and windows, also bringing empty floor spaces into use and running a number of heritage training and educational activities and events



#### Pembroke Dock THI

The five year scheme involved working in partnership with the community, Pembrokeshire Council, Cadw and the Milford Haven Port Authority. As a result, a large number of dockyard and town centre buildings have benefited from the scheme. The strategy identified a number of regeneration priorities including regeneration of the Dockyard, improvement of the town centre and creation of a new waterfront with marina.



#### The Newbridge Memorial Hall and Institute

This community-led project will safeguard the future and return public access to one of the finest surviving early 20th century Art Deco theatre/cinemas in the UK. Divided into two distinct phases – phase 1 involves the complete restoration of the Institute with EU/Welsh Assembly support. The HLF award of £2.9million is directed towards phase 2, which will help restore the historic Memorial Hall and support heritage learning.



### **Merthyr Old Town Hall**

In March 2011 Merthyr Tydfil Housing Association received a First Round Pass to repair, restore and re-open the Grade 2\* listed Old Town Hall in the centre of Merthyr. The intention is to bring the building back into beneficial new use as an arts and community centre.



### **St Peters School, Blaenavon**

In 2003 HLF awarded £1.3million to repair the derelict St Peter's School buildings, to establish the Blaenavon World Heritage Centre. The buildings (Grade I and II\*) are of considerable importance to the industrial and social heritage of Wales and in the context of the World Heritage Site, have international significance. Serving as a base for the study of the town and the wider World Heritage Site, the Centre is fitted out with interpretive facilities based on a mix of traditional and ICT- based interactive displays. The buildings also provide valuable meeting and lecture facilities for use by the community.



### **Bute Park, Cardiff**

In 2006, HLF awarded over £3million towards the cost of restoring the park. In part the project will re-establish links between the park and castle. The park contains a stunning, nationally significant arboretum with 50 UK "Champion Trees", attracting over 1,000,000 visits a year.

## Enterprise and Business Committee

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Meeting Venue: **Committee Room 1 – Senedd**

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Meeting date: **Thursday, 20 October 2011**

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Meeting time: **10: – 11:10**

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This meeting can be viewed on Senedd TV at:

[http://www.senedd.tv/archiveplayer.jsf?v=en\\_200000\\_20\\_10\\_2011&t=0&l=en](http://www.senedd.tv/archiveplayer.jsf?v=en_200000_20_10_2011&t=0&l=en)

Cynulliad  
Cenedlaethol  
Cymru

National  
Assembly for  
Wales



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### Concise Minutes:

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#### Assembly Members:

**Nick Ramsay (Chair)**  
**Byron Davies**  
**Keith Davies**  
**Julie James**  
**Alun Ffred Jones**  
**Eluned Parrott**  
**David Rees**  
**Ken Skates**  
**Joyce Watson**  
**Leanne Wood**

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#### Witnesses:

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#### Committee Staff:

**Siân Phipps (Clerk)**  
**Meriel Singleton (Deputy Clerk)**  
**Andrew Minnis (Researcher)**

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### **1. Introductions, apologies and substitutions**

1.1 The Chair welcomed everybody to the meeting. There were no apologies.

### **2. Welsh Government draft budget proposals for 2012–13: Ministerial Scrutiny Session**

2.1 The Chair welcomed the Minister and his officials to the meeting. Members questioned the Minister.

2.2 The Minister agreed to provide further information on:

- The monitoring tools used by your department to demonstrate success within the National Transport Plan
- An update on the Welsh Government's negotiations regarding potential funding for the electrification of the Great Western mainline to Swansea.
- Clarification on how the non-cash amounts of the budget are set
- A progress report on the smart card initiative

### **3. Papers to Note**

3.1 The Committee noted the following papers:

- Written evidence from the Deputy Minister for Agricultural, Food, Fisheries and European Programmes on the draft budget.
- Minutes of the meeting held on 21 September 2011

### **4. Motion under Standing Order 17.42 to resolve to exclude the public for the remainder of the meeting**

4.1 The Chair moved a motion under Standing Order 17.42 to resolve to exclude the public for the remainder of the meeting.

4.2 The Committee agreed the motion, and moved into private session.

### **5. Welsh Government Draft Budget Proposals 2012–2013 : Discussion of Draft Report**

5.1 The Committee discussed the draft letters to the Minister for Business, Enterprise, Technology and Science; and the Minister for Education and Skills.

### **Transcript**

View the [meeting transcript](#).