

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

CABINET: 19<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2018

REFERENCE FROM ENVIRONMENT AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE: 18<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2018

“613 BARRY REGENERATION PROGRESS REPORT (REF) –

The Head of Regeneration and Planning, in presenting the report, advised that Cabinet on 20<sup>th</sup> November, 2017 had received a copy of the report which apprised of past regeneration policies, programmes and projects in relation to Barry together with details of key issues and challenges for the future. The Cabinet had also referred the report to the Scrutiny Committee for its consideration.

In order to elaborate further on the document, a short presentation was also provided a copy of which was tabled at the meeting.

The presentation was divided into three parts:

- Part 1 – The Regeneration Challenge
- Part 2 – The Council’s Track Record of Targeted Investment and Place Making in Barry
- Part 3 – Emerging Projects, Policies and Funding Programmes.

The report also highlighted that the socio-economic and cultural environment of Barry had changed dramatically over the last 100 years or so, with Committee being informed that the coal boom, as the nineteenth century turned into the twentieth century, a steady economic decline followed the inter-war period. The decline prompted a plethora of government-led regeneration and redevelopment initiatives stretching back to the late 1980s which differed in scale, scope and vision

In referring to nineteenth century expansion, the Head of Service advised that there had been a unique combination of the port industrial hub, expansion of the town and Barry Island becoming a resort. In referring to the rise and decline of Barry, reference was made to the Barry Island Holiday Camp which had closed in the mid-1990s, the fact that the Port No. 1 Dock had been decommissioned in the late 1980s and for the town centre the impact of out of town retail parks, online retailing and the loss of key anchor stores in the area.

With regard to the Council’s track record, reference was made to the investment in physical infrastructure, in particular the Waterfront Phase 1 development where land reclamation disposal had been acquired, the Ffordd y Mileniwm had been developed, the Gladstone Bridge and Thompson Street Footbridge. For housing

there were Registered Social Landlord partners (Golau Caredig, Ty Bamwr, Ger y Mor), the Welsh Housing Quality Standards had been introduced, The Quays at the Waterfront had been developed, housing renewal areas established (Castle land and Main Street) and the Council had utilised ARBED funding to provide energy saving home improvements at Gibbonsdown and Castleland. For investment in communities, investment had been placed in the Town Hall, King Square and Central Park, the YMCA Barry, Gibbonsdown Children's Centre, Porthkerry Country Park (Forest Lodge) and parks and play areas within the Vale.

With regard to working with local residents and stakeholders to better understand local needs and delivery quality schemes various other initiatives had been established including Basset Park, Iolo Place, Fforest Community Park, Dryden Terrace, Pencoedtre, George Street and Maslin Park.

In helping to create employment the BSC, Pump House, Premier Inn, Asda and The Quays at the Waterfront had all been established in the area and the Pump House itself was a focal point of Barry's waterfront development. This provided apartments, cafés, restaurants, health and leisure facilities, Academy Espresso Bar, Hang Fire Smoke House and a Snap Fitness 24/7 gym.

For investment in tourism, monies had been forthcoming for the Island in respect of the Eastern Promenade, Nell's Point, a number of events, the new link road and the causeway.

With specific regard to moving forward and shaping the future: drivers for change, the Head of Service advised of strengthened communication and engagement so that people and groups in Barry were involved with an emphasis on working together. A flexible framework of investment aims which could adapt to a changing context was established in order to opportunities to be seized. Aligned to the Welsh Government's national strategy Prosperity for All: Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Cardiff Capital Region delivery themes, Committee was informed that funding was likely to flow from these priorities in the future. It was important that the Council had a flexible and adaptable policy direction to maximise the regeneration impact of investment, with a proactive whole town approach to regeneration combining the improvement to places with support for the people who live in them. It was also important to ensure Barry's place in the Cardiff Capital Region and harnessing and adding value to private sector interest and investment. This had been done by the Barry Town Centre Gateway regeneration, land at Nell's Point, Barry Island and the Southern Development Site at the Innovation Quarter.

With regard to funding, Welsh Government's Targeted regeneration Investment for the three year period 2018/19 – 2020/21, the Council would be seeking to develop a programme of capital investment in the physical infrastructure of Barry with specific focus on economic regeneration projects in Barry Town Centre and Barry Island, which supported job creation, enhanced employment and would create the right environment for businesses to prosper.

The Head of Service stated that the Council had taken the view that this was an evolving list of proposals for Barry, however, the main elements of the proposals currently being developed were noted as :

- Targeted regeneration investment project proposal Barry Town Centre gateway regeneration –
  - Working closely with the Health Board, at zoned Registered Social Landlords, landowners, potential funders and investors to deliver a hub of community focused services at the west end of the Town Centre (Gladstone Road) all forming part of the new town centre mix and linking the old centre with the new development on the Waterfront
  - Active travel measures (with easy opportunities for walking, cycling and accessing public transport) which encourage access to and through the Dock View Road Corridor linking the Town Centre to Barry Docks Station
  - Unlocking the development of a key site identified in the Local Development Plan at Barry Dock Station for a mix of uses including a bus interchange
  - A master plan was currently being put in place to guide the opportunities for major employment and housing growth.
- Barry Island Regional Tourism Destination –
  - The visitor experience was dominated by day visits rather than overnight stays
  - For long term financial viability, new operating models would be required to provide facilities that operated all year round rather than just in the main tourist season
  - Facilities would have to appeal to a local market, which would use them in winter and other times when visitor numbers were low, but equally would need to be attractive to visitors at other times, especially during wet or inclement weather periods
  - A master plan was currently being put in place to guide the marketing and development of Barry Island and further financial intervention would be necessary to unlock the potential of key sites including the possibility of partnering with the private sector to develop new or substantially refurbished leisure and tourism facilities.
- Key Issues –
  - Building relationships and partnerships with the promoters of nationally / regionally significant projects such as:
    - Cardiff Capital Region City Deal
    - St. Athan – Cardiff Airport Enterprise Zone
    - The Quays – Waterfront Barry
    - Generate greater community capacity to create and access opportunities in Barry and the wider area.

This new programme required the commitment of joined up working and doing things differently as set out in the Prosperity for All Welsh Government new national strategy. Although, however, there remained a number of concerns about the way

targeted regeneration investment would operate, particularly in relation to the development of the regional plan regeneration and the project approval process. The Council would therefore, along with other Local Authorities across South East Wales, be seeking further advice and assistance from the Welsh Government over the coming weeks and months with the aim of clarifying matters. There was no guarantee that the Council would be funded from targeted regeneration investment, but it was vital that the Council had schemes ready to submit for grant assistance should the opportunity arise during the period 2018/19 to 2020/21.

In referring to the slides, the Head of Service also stated that in particular the Pump House had been handpicked by the media via a TV network and was therefore a great asset to the town as well as being a listed building.

The Head of Service also advised that he had that day been in a meeting discussing new events for the forthcoming year which, he informed Members had been really positive with it being noted that it was now important to monitor how many people came to the town as a result of such events. Having a good access route in and out of Barry Island had also seen an increase in visitor numbers.

A Member, in noting the significant gap in funding since the WDA era and the reduction in funding since the Vibrant and Viable Places Scheme, queried whether this was likely to continue. In response, the Head of Service advised that it would be important for the Council to receive its share of the £44m being referred to by Welsh Government but that this figure was divided between ten Councils.

The local Member for Barry expressed his pleasure that a number of “high end establishments” were being sought for the Barry Island area and he hoped the decision was for upmarket tourism for the future. It was also important that a café culture be established to attract visitor numbers as well.

The Head of Service took the opportunity to inform Members that the toilet block on Barry Island was in the process of being sold to a company which had provided a detailed scheme similar to the one that had been established in Swansea which had proven to be a success. There was also interest in Nell’s Point with the focus being on capitalising on the bid and having people staying longer on the Island with the establishment of an hotel in the foreseeable future. Further discussions had also taken place with ABP regarding the use of the docks, with ABP having advised the Council that they had commercial aspirations for the Mole area.

Members also agreed with the comments that more should be done in relation to the use of other parts of the waterfront, with the question as to whether the dock area could also be used to attract cruise ships. Recognition the local ward member felt also needed to be given to increased car parking facilities, it being noted that a parking strategy was currently in the process of being developed to be presented to Committee and Cabinet in due course it was hoped that this would be presented by the end of the financial year.

A Member also raised the issue of the possibility of a call centre coming to the area, with the Head of Service advising that in terms of employment, the department was looking for an expansion at the BSC as it also employed a considerable number of young people and that BSC 2 was hoped to be up and running in the next few months. To date there was a considerable amount of interest for the BSC 2 from organisations and together with the Pump House were over 69 jobs were reported, it was envisaged that there would be an increase in employment and job opportunities.

Discussion subsequently took place in relation to the private sector coming more on board in the area, with the ex-Leader of the Council extending his warm congratulations to officers over the years who had worked tirelessly and hard in order to ensure the provision was brought forward for the area. All Members took the opportunity to congratulate the officers on their work so far.

In referring to deadlines for grant funding, the Chairman asked how flexible applications were to respond to an urgent change in focus. The Head of Service in response stated that the schemes that had been developed all had a significant number of different options that could be utilised and adapted dependent upon the terms of any bid. In particular he referred to the Health Centre at Holton Road which required a significant amount of repair and that the Council was currently working with the Health Authority on the scheme which was quite complex.

Whilst referring to premises at Holton Road, the Chairman also stated that different types of premises needed to be encouraged to “set up shop” similar to those on High Street advising that bespoke shops were important to encourage trade. The Head of Service stated that the traders at Holton Road were currently on board and that the department was looking to establish a business improvement district for Barry and if that was possible, it would be great news for the area.

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Planning, with permission to speak, advised that he was currently talking to a number of private sector individuals about the possibility of coming to Barry, with the emphasis of broadening the market and trying to ensure that the number of visitors who came to Barry actually stayed on the Island e.g. overnight.

In conclusion, the Chairman thanked all the Members for an interesting debate and the officers for a comprehensive presentation, with the suggestion that the Committee’s comments be referred to Cabinet to apprise Cabinet of the Committee’s discussions.

Having fully considered the report, it was subsequently

**RECOMMENDED – T H A T** the comments made at the meeting be forwarded to Cabinet for their consideration when the proposals for Barry Island regeneration are being considered.

Reason for recommendation

In order that Cabinet can consider the Committee's comments as appropriate.”