



Town Centres

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Unique Places



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Town Centres Unique Places



Why are town centres unique places?

Town centres are playing an increasingly important role as customers rediscover the true value of shopping locally.



They are also helping people to establish a sense of place in uncertain times and providing a space where they can reconnect with their community.



Bargoed



Blackwood



Caerphilly

Diverse

The retail offer in town centres is a broad one, mixing familiar high street names with smaller independent retailers. This combination gives the customer a unique shopping experience. The perception may be that town centres are just about shops, but in reality, their appeal is far wider. Service provision is equally as important as retail. Having access to a wide range of services in one place

encourages people to visit on different days for a variety of reasons. Services which are available in town centres include: Post Offices, Opticians, Pharmacies, Estate Agents, Banks, Building Societies, Dentists, Hairdressers and Nail Bars. Town centres also have a long tradition of being places where people go to meet up with friends in cafés and restaurants. The increasing popularity of a more European

lifestyle has led to the emergence of a café culture. As coffee shops and cafés place their tables and chairs out onto the pavements, towns have developed a more continental atmosphere encouraging people to stay longer and socialise. Therefore, it is the sheer diversity of what town centres offer in a single location, which is their real strength and one of the secrets of their enduring appeal.

What is their appeal and why should we regard town centres as unique places?



Blackwood



Bargoed



Caerphilly



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Convenient

The recent emergence of retail parks, often located away from the traditional centre of a town, has meant that the role of the town centre has now come under even greater scrutiny.

Today's customer is seeking better value from their shopping experience and the convenience of the town centres is becoming a strong attraction, in comparison to retail parks.

For many shoppers, a town centre with its multitude of shops and essential services is still within walking distance of their home. In contrast to a retail park, that may be a car or bus journey away.

Local

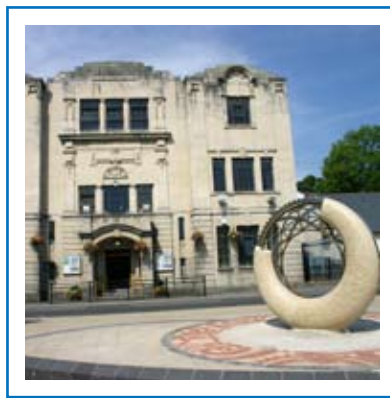
To understand why town centres are unique you need only to visit them and look around at the buildings that make up their fabric. These tell of a rich local heritage that link visitors with the town's cultural as well as its historical past. The evolving story of

a community is told through a town centre's architecture, public art and its landmarks. These celebrate successes and achievement, but also remember times of hardship and even moments of loss. The emotions people feel by being part of a community are very

difficult to define and virtually impossible to replace. Town centres encourage a person to have a feeling of ownership over where they live. They can also play a valuable part in contributing to the notion of a place someone can recognise as home.



Caerphilly



Blackwood



Bargoed

In conclusion, town centres are still at the heart of the community and need always be regarded as such.

They combine a diverse offer of shops and services, in a convenient location, providing

a connection between the many separate elements that make up a community.

It is these qualities, which make town centres unique places and are the cornerstones on which their future needs to be built.

This document begins with an overview of each of the three principle towns in Caerphilly County Borough and sets out their individual strengths as investment opportunities for retailers, service providers and businesses.

Caerphilly

**is the largest town in the County Borough
and a sub-regional centre.**



The catchment area for the town includes Senghenydd, Abertridwr, Llanbradach, Bedwas, Trethomas, Machen, Rudry, Waterloo and Draethen, this area has a population of approximately 53,000. The town is a popular tourist destination, due to the presence of the second largest fortress in Europe located in the centre of the town.

The town has two shopping areas each providing a distinct type of shopping offer. The Castle Court Shopping Centre, located directly opposite the castle, is home to a wide variety of multiple retailers including: Morrisons, Argos, WH Smith, Boots and Costa Coffee.



Whilst Cardiff Road is a more traditional shopping area featuring many of Caerphilly's independent retailers, interspersed with familiar high street names including: Peacocks, Superdrug, Tesco and Iceland.

Future developments in the town centre are focussed on two sites: Firstly an area on the West side of Cardiff Road, secondly a site in Park Lane, which overlooks the castle and presents a prime town centre location.

Caerphilly town centre is built around its majestic castle and is surrounded by beautiful Welsh countryside. Its close proximity



to the northern suburbs of Cardiff allows the town to market itself to a much wider customer base, capitalising on its proximity to the capital. The unique character of this historic town, makes it a real alternative to the big city experience.

The branding of 'Relaxing Retail Therapy' has given the Town Centre a strong identity and defines the shopping experience it strives to deliver. In 2009 Caerphilly was awarded Fairtrade Town Status in recognition of the work done by local retailers, businesses, churches and voluntary groups to promote the concept of Fairtrade.



Caerphilly Castle and Town Centre



Blackwood

is the second largest town in the County Borough area and is one of two sub-regional centres.



The catchment area has a population of approximately 34,000 and includes Argoed, Cefn Fforest, Penmaen, Pengam, Pontllanfraith and Ynysddu. There are a number of multiple retailers present in the town including Argos, Peacocks, Boots, Iceland and Superdrug.

Blackwood town centre offers shoppers a wide choice of independent retailers interspersed with multiple retailers. The strength of its appeal is the range and diversity of its retail offer.

Within the last few years the town has dramatically improved its transport infrastructure with the construction of the Sirhowy Enterprise Way and the iconic Chartist Bridge. The new road now links the town centre with the Oakdale Business Park opening up the town to 5,000 potential customers.

Blackwood has long been an interchange for bus routes from all over the South East valleys, the construction of the award winning Interchange Bus Station makes the town more accessible to people

from all over the surrounding area. Together these projects define the town's future, making it an attractive option for investors looking to locate in the South East Wales valleys.

Private sector investment in two new retail parks, located at either end of the town centre, creates new opportunities for retailers looking for a presence in the South East Valleys area. The northern Retail Park is anchored by an ASDA superstore and the southern development by a Focus DIY store.

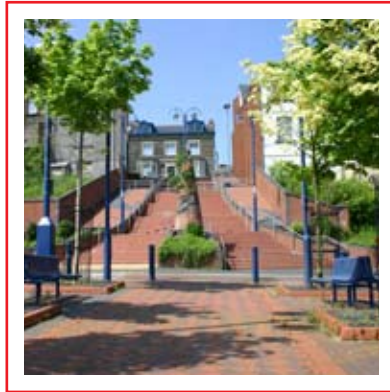


■ The Chartist Bridge and Statue



Bargoed

is the most northern of the six main retail centres in the County Borough and is located in the Rhymney Valley.



It is the third largest town behind the sub-regional centres of Caerphilly and Blackwood and is the largest of the four district centres. The catchment area for the town includes Rhymney, Fochriw, Pontllytyn, Abertysswg, Deri, New Tredegar, Aberbargoed and Gilfach with a combined population of over 26,000.

Since the closure of the colliery in 1977, Bargoed has been in a weak economic position. The town has a number of multiple retailers including Peacocks, Dorothy Perkins, Burtons and Spar.

The new £25 million link road Angel Way was opened in 2009, linking the north and south of the Rhymney Valley. This road significantly increases accessibility to the town and provides an opportunity to attract well-known high street names to improve the existing retail offer.

The Council has ambitious plans to continue the regeneration of Bargoed. The construction of a new bus station at the north of the town centre will improve transport infrastructure and accessibility. This project will be combined with a

comprehensive public realm scheme that will create an environment that enhances the pedestrian space. A new retail plateau is under construction, which is situated directly alongside the existing retail area. It will create a new shopping centre at the heart of in the town centre.

The Bargoed Big Idea website - www.bargoedsbigidea.co.uk is a stand-alone Internet site that acts as an information point for the Greater Bargoed Regeneration Scheme and as an interactive investment portfolio.



■ Regeneration Scheme: Phase 1 - Angel Way



The Role Of Town Centre Management

Through the process of Town Centre Management, Caerphilly County Borough Council has established a method to look after its three principle towns. This model of Town Centre Management is now explained in detail. Town Centre Management within the Caerphilly County Borough covers the three principle towns of - Caerphilly, Blackwood and Bargoed.

The role of Town Centre Management operates using five key principles.

1. Strategic Development
2. Operational Issues
3. Coordinating The Public Sector
4. Encouraging Private Sector Investment
5. Engaging With The Retail Sector

1. Strategic Development

The strategic development of the town centres is a core part of the Council's wider regeneration strategy. The speed and nature of the development

in the towns will largely be driven by the vision and aspirations of the local authority, balanced with the level of financial investment that can be secured from the private and public sectors. Some of the factors of the regeneration process will fall outside the control of local government. Therefore, one of the roles of Town Centre Management is to draw together some of the different goals and ambitions of the public and private sectors, to form a single cohesive vision towards an achievable objective.



In a strategic capacity, Town Centre Management works with various groups and committees within local government to promote the interests of the town centres.

These include a Town Centre Management Group for each of the three principle towns. The groups comprise of key stakeholders from each town including local councillors, retail groups, Town Councils, Police Officers and Local Authority Managers. The groups are chaired by a local councillor and focus on strategic as well as operational issues. They also form part of the Council's wider decision-making process and are used as consultation forums.

2. Operational Issues

The day-to-day use of town centres, means that operationally there are always issues to resolve in order to create a better environment and improve the streetscape. Many of the issues require repeated site visits and internal officer meetings before they are successfully concluded. Town Centre Management provides a way to ensure that operational issues such as graffiti, flyposting and damage to the public realm are resolved quickly and effectively.

Building new partnerships with Police Officers responsible for town centre policing has helped to tackle long standing problems that blight town centres, such as retail theft and anti-social behaviour. Through Town Centre Management, the Police have been able to access the many different service areas within the local authority. These resources and expertise have helped Police Officers to deliver a better service for the people of the community that they serve.

3. Coordinating Public Sector

Central to achieving operational success in the managing of the Town Centres has been the establishing of the 'Town Centre Improvement Group', which is chaired by the Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Countryside. This group coordinates the work of the various departments within Caerphilly County Borough Council and comprises of key managers from within the council, whose service areas include Highways, Planning,



Transportation, Cleansing, Parks, Licensing, Community Safety, Tourism, Economic Development and Environmental Health. In addition, the three Police Inspectors who have responsibility for each of the three principle town centres, attend the meetings. To represent each 'Town Centre Management Group' the Chairperson of those groups (a local councillor) also attends the 'Town Centre Improvement Group' meetings.

Each meeting, held at the Council's Tredomen Business & Technology Centre, looks at an Environmental Audit compiled by the Town Centre Development Manager.

The audit highlights both operational and strategic issues. In addition, it gives specific details about each item and identifies the department and manager who is progressing it. This group forms a major part of the Town Centre Management model in Caerphilly County Borough Council, which enables the Local Authority to deliver an effective provision of its services in each town centre in an accountable and transparent way.

4. Encouraging Private Sector Investment

Developing a brand for the town centres has been vital in attracting investment from both the private and public sectors. The three town centre brands have been rolled out across a number of marketing platforms including: investment portfolios, lamppost banners, shop window stickers, website and town centre newsletters.



Each town through its branding is given a strong confident image, helping to dispel the stereotypes and preconceptions, which are sometimes associated with the industrial past of the South Wales Valleys. Through branding, each town's uniqueness and individuality is highlighted and reinforced. These brands are also used to give an overarching identity to the town when providing information on specific projects to investors.

offers visitors a varied and individual shopping experience and attracts new shoppers from outside the existing catchment area. These events create an opportunity for retailers to target a new customer base and so expand their business. Staging different events in the town centres plays an important part in broadening the overall visitor offer and prolonging customer dwell time.

context. A monthly Town Centre News has also been introduced to make retailers feel part of a wider town centre community. This newsletter provides details of events and occurrences within the specific town centre.

Footfall counters have been installed into each of the town centres. The information recorded is provided to retailers each week in the form of a Footfall Index.

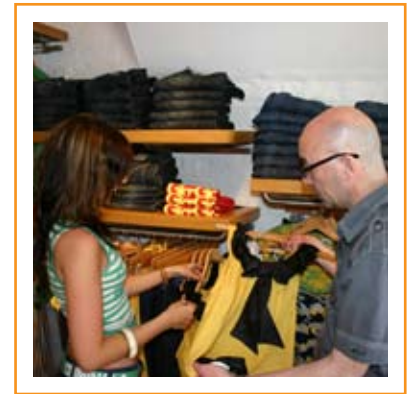


The council's web site includes individual web pages on each of the three principle town centres. The installation of webcams has enhanced people's opinion of the area and encouraged more visitors.

An events programme tailored around each town centre

5. Engaging With The Retail Sector

Engagement with the retail sector is an area that local government has found difficult in the past. The Town Centre Development Manager in Caerphilly County Borough Council visits the three towns each week to communicate with both the national and independent retailers. Retail News informs local retailers, in particular small businesses, on issues that are currently affecting the retail sector. This document ensures that they have some knowledge of the main issues affecting retailers. It also allows them to put their local performances into a national



The Index allows retailers to compare their town's footfall with the other two principle towns in the county borough and provides them with a national town centre benchmark figure. The Council views the Footfall data as a valuable indicator of the town's performance.

Funding

The Council provides the funding for Town Centre Management in its entirety. The Town Centre Development Manager delivers the process.

A budget is allocated from the Economic Development Division to pro-actively market the three town centres.

A portion of money from the 'Area Forum' budget is available to each of the Town Centre Management Groups, enabling them to take forward projects they consider to be important for the town's development.

To address maintenance issues, provision is made within a maintenance budget for town centres which is allocated on an annual basis.

This money is used to ensure that the environment in the principle towns reflects their status as the shop windows of the County Borough.



Conclusion

The importance of town centres in the wider regional economy of Caerphilly County Borough is now clearly recognised by the Local Authority. Within the scope of Town Centre Management, the strategic and operational needs of the town centres are being addressed in a coordinated way.

This model of Town Centre Management has been widely recognised by councils and town



centre partnerships in other areas of the UK as an example of best practice in Town Centre Management. The approach adopted in Caerphilly County Borough was featured at the Association of Town Centre Management (ATCM) Summer School and is used in their presentations as an excellent example of how to manage smaller centres.

Each individual town benefits from the vision and enthusiasm that Town Centre Management brings. The challenge in the coming years will be to continue to develop Town Centre Management within the County Borough and secure additional resources. By investing in Town Centre Management, the authority is delivering a better service, improving the town centre environment, attracting additional visitors and encouraging renewed private sector investment.

Town Centre Management in Caerphilly County Borough is helping to enhance, maintain and develop town centres as unique places.

Additional Information

Town Centre Management in Caerphilly County Borough Council takes a proactive approach toward attracting new retailers and investors.

To assist in the evaluation process of each town centre a number of key tools are available for each town centre.

The following reports can be obtained without charge on request from the Town Centre Development Manager.

CACI Market Summary Report

This report is compiled by CACI, one of the UK's most respected retail analysts. It provides detailed information on the town's demographics using the ACORN profile. It also sets out the town's place in the retail hierarchy.

Drivetime Map

The maps provided by Faber Maunsell / AECOM show the population within a 10 minute, 20 minute and 30 minute drive time of town centre.

Experian GOAD Maps

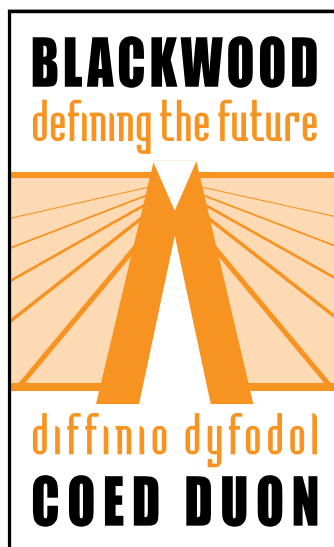
These reports, produced by Experian, give a detailed

break down of the expenditure of each geographic area that the town centre sits within.

Footfall data

Caerphilly County Borough Council has installed electronic pedestrian counters into each town. The counters are provided by Footfall (an Experian company) and measure the number of people on the main shopping street 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Weekly reports from Footfall provide comparative data on the previous week, the corresponding week in the previous year and a National Town Centres benchmark figure.



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