



Future Ferndale

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A regeneration strategy for Ferndale Town Centre

November 2006

FERNDALE

Regeneration Strategy

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In May 2006 RPS Design were appointed by Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council to prepare a Regeneration Strategy for Ferndale Town Centre. RPS Design is pleased to present their Regeneration Strategy in this report.

The aim of the strategy is to provide a framework for Rhondda Cynon Taff and local representative community led groups to co-ordinate regeneration activity and to promote events in Ferndale.

In their original Brief for Consultants dated 20 January 2006, Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council identified four main focus areas for the strategy. These were:

- New development opportunities within and around the town centre.
- Enhancing the retail centre of the town through physical works and recommendations on management and promotion activities.
- Addressing the range of transportation issues affecting the town.
- Developing the tourism potential of the area.

To achieve this RPS Design has consulted extensively with Rhondda Cynon Taff and local community representatives to **manage expectation** and identify with them the key **physical improvement** issues, opportunities and aspirations they would like to see addressed within the Regeneration Strategy.

These physical improvement issues, opportunities and aspirations have been turned into a list of meaningful and **deliverable recommendations** for Rhondda Cynon Taff to now prioritise and implement to deliver the regeneration of Ferndale.

The recommendations have been drawn together in a series of seven emerging proposal areas. These areas are:

- 1. Transport** - identified the need to provide a relief road linking Station Road with the Oaklands Business Park to alleviate town centre congestion and reduce the number of pedestrian and vehicular accidents in this area. As a result of this town centre parking, servicing and pedestrian environment could be enhanced.
- 2. Enhancing Gateways** – includes proposals to create a greater sense of ‘entrance’ to Ferndale with artworks and new signage designed in collaboration with local schools.
- 3. Town Centre Enhancements** – generally to improve the public environment to create a more uniform and attractive town centre for residents and visitors. Proposals include the provision of a new ‘occasional’ space in front of the doctor’s surgery for public use.
- 4. Darran Park Enhancements** – Focusing on raising awareness of the park, it’s lake and historic woodland the recommendations included enhancing trails, providing play facilities for all age groups and providing a new ‘green’ pavilion to provide a range of improved facilities including a café.
- 5. Commercial Improvement Area (CIA)** - proposals to improve the appearance of buildings and focus on new uses to provide economic sustainability for the town centre.
- 6. Improve Parking Facilities** – considers a range of locations and provisions for improved parking including providing up to 50 spaces in Lime Street.
- 7. Gaps In Teeth** – a proposal to retain one of the undeveloped sites along Dyffryn Road and provide a new public space to include a new bus stop, CCTV, seating planting and high quality hard and soft landscaping.

A preliminary indicative cost study has been prepared and provides for various developments to site infrastructure together with associated soft and hard landscaping and the construction of new carparks, public toilets and a new sustainable pavilion. In addition, the cost study includes for the consequential demolition and disposal of a number of existing buildings and facilities.

The costs are based upon approximate quantities, costs/m². The preliminary indication of cost has been split into separate categories as follows:

Element	Total £
1.0 Gaps In Teeth	50,450
2.0 Doctors Surgery	54,000
3.0 Public Realm Enhancements	155,400
4.0 Lime Street Car Park (50 spaces)	162,400
5.0 Additional Areas	50,000
6.0 Darran Park	614,425
7.0 New Play Facilities	19,500
8.0 General Allowances	125,000
Sub total	£1,231,175
Preliminaries 15.00% (includes for site location)	184,676
Sub total	£1,415,851
Inflation Allowance 6.00% (Estimate priced at 3rd Quarter 2007)	84,951
Sub total	£1,500,802
Client Contingency 17.50%	262,640
Total	£1,763,442

The Relief Road is subject to more detailed site investigation. The estimated cost of delivering this piece of infrastructure is between £1.7-2.8 million.

It is generally acknowledged that successful regeneration is deliverable only with an enthusiastic and energetic local community. There is a great deal of energy and enthusiasm evident in the community activity in the area.

This Strategy has been driven by local community representatives through the Steering Group and individual interviews conducted by members of RPS Design. Consultation was expanded to the wider public through a 'workshop' with local stakeholders and business leaders held on the 11th July 2006. The results of this formed the basis for a public exhibition held over three days 19th to the 21st October 2006. This was attended by over 200 members of the public. Recommendations from these events have been included within this Strategy.

Ferndale is a **vibrant and attractive** settlement that still retains the integrity of much of its historical built form. The regeneration must deliver a town that is economically sustainable, attractive to its residents, easily accessible and welcoming to surrounding communities and visitors, and prepared to face the **challenges of change** possible in the future.

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1.0 Introduction



In May 2006 RPS Design were appointed by Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council to prepare a Regeneration Strategy for Ferndale Town Centre.

Together with their colleagues at RPS Transport, Davis Langdon Cost Management Consultancy and Stevens and Associates Leisure and Tourism Consultants, RPS Design is pleased to present their Regeneration Strategy in this report.

The aim of the strategy is to provide a framework for Rhondda Cynon Taff and local representative community led groups to co-ordinate regeneration activity and to promote events in Ferndale.

To achieve this RPS Design has consulted extensively with Rhondda Cynon Taff and local community representatives to **manage expectation** and identify with them the key **physical improvement** issues, opportunities and aspirations they would like to see addressed within the Regeneration Strategy.

These physical improvement issues, opportunities and aspirations have been turned into a list of meaningful and **deliverable recommendations** for Rhondda Cynon Taff to now prioritise and implement to deliver the regeneration of Ferndale.

Ferndale is a **vibrant and attractive** settlement that still retains the integrity of much of its historical built form. The regeneration must deliver a town that is economically sustainable, attractive to its residents, easily accessible and welcoming to surrounding communities and visitors, and prepared to face the **challenges of change** possible in the future.

Report Structure

The report documents the consultation process to date. It summarises the issues raised through the consultation process and incorporates these into a list of recommendations for the physical regeneration of Ferndale.

This is supported by a visual and photographic analysis by RPS Design of Ferndale Town Centre; its built form; its transport and movement patterns; its voids and its open spaces (including Darran Park). This analysis is used to identify the Strengths Weaknesses and Opportunities for the physical regeneration.

This work is developed into a series of detailed physical regeneration proposals establishing a number of meaningful and deliverable opportunities to improve the character of Ferndale to benefit the community and provide

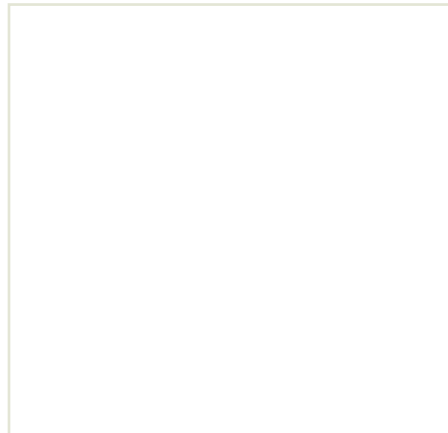
potential lifestyle enhancements for local people and visitors.

These proposals are then summarised into a list of study recommendations which have been submitted to Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council in July 2006 for their comments approval.

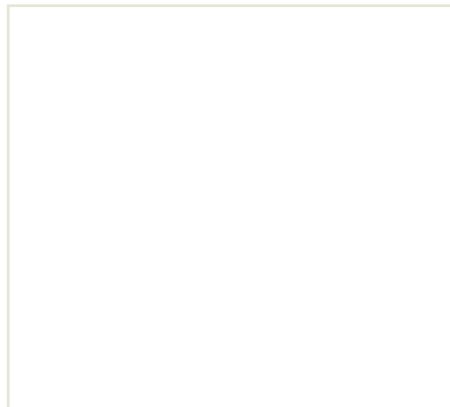
The recommendations have had an initial costing exercise completed to provide an estimated value of the proposals to assist Rhondda Cynon Taff in identifying funding and an appropriate implementation strategy.

The local aspirations for Ferndale to become a tourist destination and how the physical regeneration proposed in this report will contribute to this are also considered.





2.0 Consultation



This section describes the consultation carried out to date and identifies the issues arising from this and a background document review carried out by the consultants.

2.1 Issues arising from consultation and background review



In their original Brief for Consultants dated 20 January 2006 Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council identified four main focus areas for the strategy. These were:

- New development opportunities within and around the town centre.
- Enhancing the retail centre of the town through physical works and recommendations on management and promotion activities.
- Addressing the range of transportation issues affecting the town.
- Developing the tourism potential of the area.

Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council officers and representatives of the local community and local councillors formed a steering group to advise on the key issues the physical regeneration will need to consider and local residents aspirations for Ferndale.

Following the initial consultation with the steering group, local residents and businesses were identified by the group for the consultants to conduct separate consultation with.

The key issues raised can be summarised as follows:

- Ferndale suffers from a number traffic problems along the High Street as a result of its vibrancy. The problems identified include poor pedestrian safety and lack of parking within the town centre.

- Particular consideration should be given to areas of poor quality streetscape within the town centre, in particular in front of the doctor's surgery; in places there is a need to lift the appearance of the town centre.

- Improvements are needed to derelict and unattractive areas particularly along Dyffryn Road. This could include the provision of a new residential development or amenity space.

- Darran Park is a considerable natural asset but there is an apparent lack of awareness of the facility both within the community and outside.
- Restrictions imposed on new development and extensions within the planning process should be reviewed through the emerging Local Plan.



- Ferndale has suffered from a poor press and a negative image and residents are apparently aggrieved at a perceived lack of investment in Ferndale, in particular the 'Community First' funding which was allocated to Maerdy and Tylorstown and not Ferndale.
- There is a need to stem the flow of residents leaving Ferndale.
- Proposals need to be good quality, durable and low maintenance.
- Visitors accommodation in Ferndale is limited and generally of a poor quality.

2.2 Community



It is generally acknowledged that successful regeneration is deliverable only with an enthusiastic and energetic local community. There is a great deal of energy and enthusiasm evident in the community activity in the area.

The Ferndale and Blaenllechau Partnership is a group made up of local people and of representatives of locally based organisations and businesses. The Ferndale and Blaenllechau Partnership is an unconstituted body. They send a delegate to Rhondda Cynon Taff's Area 6 Partnership. With support from an Rhondda Cynon Taff grant, the group undertook a Community Appraisal in 2002 to form the basis of an Action Plan and are currently implementing some of the recommendations.

The Community Appraisal recommended in its summary that action should be taken to:

- a. Develop more car parking facilities in Ferndale
- b. Provide CCTV cameras in Ferndale.
- c. Ensure Rhondda Fach by-pass happens.

- d. Improve the appearance of areas of wasteland.
- e. Attract new businesses to Ferndale.
- f. Improve the appearance of the Strand.
- g. Improve the appearance of derelict buildings.
- h. Encourage more use of the countryside.
- i. Encourage more use of Darran Park.

The Appraisal also suggested more help for young people in starting up their own business.

Blaenllechau Community Regeneration

It is a community based regeneration organization established in 1994, serving the people of Blaenllechau and the surrounding area of Upper Rhondda Fach in the South Wales Valleys. The organisation is charitable and aims to provide relief from poverty and disadvantage, to improve educational opportunities, to facilitate participation in community life and to alleviate social, environmental and economic deprivation.



The group has excellent facilities that include: the Bell Centre providing a community café, nursery, training suit and youth provision; Ffladau Farm, a community farm providing environmental projects, performance space and meeting rooms. It also owns the Glyn Youth Drop-In supporting activities for young people; the Glyn Fish Bar serving a traditional fish and chip shop menu; and the Mission Hall which is being converted into a multi-purpose space for the benefit of the whole community.

The Arts Factory

It was established in 1990 and became a member of the Development Trust Association in 1996. Arts Factory works to build a stronger community by generating income through enterprise and using it to provide community facilities and services. They are based on Highfields Industrial estate and also have a base in the Tre-Rhondda Chapel which is well used by the people Ferndale and, located in the centre of Ferndale, provides a focal point for community learning and activity.

2.3 Different Age Groups

There are other vibrant organisations which provide community activities for people and promote the area including the Ferndale Rugby Club, the Morlais Choir and the Boys and Girls Club who are dependent on volunteers.

The Ferndale and Blaenllechau Social Audit strongly highlighted the fact that at present, most of the children, teenagers and young adults in Ferndale suffer from a lack of things to do.

A focus group held with local teen-agers revealed their priorities to be:

- That action should be taken to create a place where young people can hang out without disturbing other people or being disturbed.
- That action should be taken to increase the range of activities and opportunities for young people in Ferndale. Existing provision was seen as valued but inadequate.
- Concern that young people in Ferndale are vulnerable to bullying on the street.
- Concern at the level of drug use among some young people in Ferndale.



Tackling youth disengagement highlights the importance of having opportunities to develop outside the formal environment of school. Some suggestions for encouraging youth engagement include; drop in centre, youth shelters, a chess club and drama group, sports facilities, arts/music projects including live music events, and environmental projects.

The Audit also highlighted the importance of providing facilities for other age groups. For the elderly suggestions included tea dances and bingo and a Citizens Advice Bureau.

Suggestions to improve people's health and local sports facilities included an annual junior Olympics event, a local gym, and more exercise classes for adults and more cycle paths.



2.4 Consultation Workshops

On the 11th July 2006 members of the community were invited to an expanded Steering Group meeting to comment upon emerging ideas.

Recommendations and actions from this workshop have been included within this report. In general there was support for the proposals included with this regeneration strategy and an agreement to move forward with more detailed studies.



2.5 Public Exhibition



This section has been prepared to give an overview of the public consultation event held over three days in the Tre-Rhondda Chapel. The event consisted of a public exhibition of the emerging proposals for Ferndale Regeneration and was attended by representatives of RPS and Rhondda Cynon Taff officers to answer questions from the public.

Attendance

The exhibition is considered to have been well attended by members of the public including two groups of school children from the local community school. In total 206 people attended over the three days.

Thursday 19th October - 43
Friday 20th October – 131
Saturday 21st October – 32

Comments

Members of the public attending the event were asked to fill in comments on sheets prepared in

advance to identify the seven areas considered for regeneration. These were

1. Transport
2. Enhancing gateways
3. Town Centre enhancements
4. Darran park enhancements
5. Commercial Improvement Area (CIA)
6. Improve parking facilities
7. Gaps in teeth

In total 44 comments sheets were returned containing 142 comments. The areas receiving the most comments were Transport (36), Town Centre enhancements (26), Darran Park enhancements (25) and Improve parking facilities (20). The areas with least comments were Enhancing gateways (15), CIA (11) and Gaps in teeth (8).



The key comments were;

1. *Transport*

The proposal for the relief road received 178 direct comments. Of which 11 comments supported the proposal, 4 supported the Rhondda Fach Relief Road and the remainder did not support a relief road.

7 comments requested improved crossing facilities specifically at the bottom of North Road and a number of comments requested improved bus services and stops.

2. *Enhancing gateways*

The comments support the proposals, with only 1 comment cautionary about the proposals questioning the expense. A number of comments have requested some form of sculpture and 2 specifically mention including ferns as part of the art work.



3. Town Centre enhancements

The comments overwhelmingly support the proposals to improve the town centre. Only 1 comment did not support widening the pavement. A number of issues need to be more carefully considered including the displaying of wares on the pavements by shopkeepers causing obstacles for pedestrians and that there is a concern about the number of takeaways in Ferndale.

The following is a list of facilities repeated in many comments that people would like provided;

- A bookshop
- A child friendly café (coffee shop)
- A vegetarian shop
- Lights in the lanes
- A youth centre
- Water fountain(s)
- A college or university

4. Darran Park enhancements

The comments received about this demonstrate strong support for enhancing the facilities in Darran Park. In particular the following were repeated in many comments;

- Provide a café in the park
- Improve toilet facilities
- Provide fencing around the lake
- Create an island or nesting boxes in the lake
- Increase the provision of swings and slides
- Provide a paddling pool
- Improve management and supervision by providing by more staff.

5. CIA

The comments support the proposals for improving the shop fronts.

6. Improve parking facilities

Improved parking in Ferndale is well supported by the comments but a number of comments question why Lime Street has not been completed yet. One request specifically asks for disabled parking near the existing retail facilities in the Strand.

7. Gaps in teeth

50% of the comments support the proposals for open space provision.

An emerging ideas summary sheet was prepared for members of the public to take away with them.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

1. Transport

1. We obviously need a new relief road coming up there.
2. The Zebra crossing at the bottom of North Road is very dangerous outside the North road School. A few people have been killed or injured there. There should be something done to calm the traffic flow.
3. Traffic horrendous. Needs crossing before there will be a fatality.
4. We need some sort of traffic calming measure outside the infants' school in North road, as drivers repeatedly ignore the level crossing. In 40 years living in Ferndale I personally have witnessed many accidents and near misses at this spot, also the police need to prevent cars parking on zigzags on this crossing. The safety of the children should be paramount.
5. The continuation of the Rhondda Fach bypass is the only feasible answer to the chronic congestion suffered in Ferndale. I don't see a small bypass along the rugby field as an answer. Also a one way section of Ferndale's High Street is impractical and inconvenient. The full bypass is the only answer to our problems
6. The proposed bypass road to overcome traffic through Ferndale is a waste. All efforts should be to get the money to extend the Porth to Pontygwaith bypass to Maerdy. The proposed road will encroach on the excellent recreational facilities cricket and rugby. Having a road running along the side is not wanted. There is also a children's playing area in the vicinity. One way through High Street except for buses. What cost to enable this to be done?
7. Cut the price of fares on local buses. Look again at parking in Ferndale. Enforce parking restrictions that are already in place.
8. I agree with all relief road proposals.
9. I don't want any relief road. The Rhondda Fach has suffered from enough inappropriate development.
10. I am broadly supportive of the proposal for the 'inner' Relief Road. Would be pleased for a solution including Maxwell Street - if the gradients permit.
11. Transport links to the town need to be significantly improved for both business people and users. The proposals I have seen seem to meet the requirement.
12. New roads, zebra crossings.
13. Nicer bus stops, game shop, painting a good grandstand, have a car park, zoo, less litter, more pay, more youth hang outs, market, clothes shops, sweet shops
14. I would like more crossing and less traffic.
15. An excellent idea but will it ever deliver. Funding as always is the issue.
16. Relief rood is needed in Ferndale. Murder trying to get through Ferndale with buses and delivery lorries.

17. I am a resident of Wood Street and I would very much like to see an enhanced junction out onto Rhondda Road, also speed ramps along Rhondda Road.
18. Parking is a major problem in Ferndale specially on the main road. Improvements have been made since the most recent restrictions have been in place (on High Street). I have been knocked down on site road leading off High Street (major accident). We definitely need the new bypass road to go all the way up to Maerdy (and beyond) otherwise there will be congestion at the new roundabout in Pentygwaith.
19. A relief road/bypass is essential for Ferndale's future and is the key factor for further enhancements ie Town Centre (attractive, safe, pleasant environment). At the moment major congestion problems, dangerous for shoppers/pedestrians. A MUST DO ACTION FOR FERNDALE. May even encourage people to stay in Ferndale to live and outsiders to live here.
20. Rhonda Leader. Photos of Ferndale, before and after. Rhondda.leader:wne.co.uk Dave Edwards
21. Resident parking required on Fountain Street.
22. Cross Street junction with Maxwell Street - visibility issue due to parking vehicles. Unhappy with the existing priorities on the junctions to the west of High Street.
23. Need to consider south bound bus stops - how are residents travelling south to be picked up by buses? Several residents expressed concerns regarding this issue.
24. The information should be available on the website for residents to view online.
25. Rhondda Road - need for residents parking.
26. Traffic calming to control speed of cars travelling up and down Rhondda Road is needed. Query regarding bus stops to travel out of Ferndale towards Powys etc.
27. If an accident occurs between Ferndale and Maerdy then all traffic is stopped - we need to relieve this somehow.
28. Need bus stops in either or both Lake Street and Fountain Street if only one way traffic on High Street and Duffryn Street.
29. Bypass is not helpful.
 - a.Public transport access for people travelling down the valley,
 - b.Current plans adversely affect cricket and rugby pitches and children's playground, and
 - c.Put all traffic to run past entrance to OAP complex
 - d.Finally small point - current plans put the road in a frost hollow
 Above all, this will damage the argument for the extension to the Fach relief road.
30. A new relief road badly needed asap
31. Crossing at bottom of North Road very dangerous. Cars need to slow down before they get to crossing. There is need for another crossing on High Street

32. Crossing facilities improved. Relief Road (good idea)
33. Book shops, music shop, no new road
34. Pedestrian only shopping centre, with the relief road taking the traffic.
35. At the moment the Town Centre is a disgrace - dirty, run down, frightening (evenings), bad traffic (congestion), unfriendly for shoppers (dangerous crossing the road) The relief road/bypass is a major factor to Ferndale's regeneration, ie similar road to Tonypany.
36. The route proposed to put in for a mew road alongside the rugby field and oakland business park factories will not help.

2. Enhancing Gateways

1. Anything to improve the appearance of our town is welcomed. I have no ideas that have not been proposed.
2. The street should be named.
3. I agree with proposals I have viewed.
4. Once again I am in agreement with these gateways.
5. A big arch with ferns on the top, at the start and end of Ferndale.
6. Better equipment for school, better Old People's home, water fountain in two centre; college, ice-cream parlour, better community spirit, larger playground area in park, Greenwood cleaned out, retail park, nicer houses.
7. Bigger signs.
8. These proposals are great in theory but I feel some residents also need a push to improve the look of their own properties.
9. A statue of an important figure from the area
10. Mall, university
11. I would like a fern and famous person from Ferndale
12. Again a good idea, well thought through.
13. This would show to Ferndalians a positive and proud factor living in Ferndale. Also, encourages visitors to site again and word of mouth may encourage tourism. "IT WOULD GIVE A WELCOME FACTOR A BIG BOOST"
14. Unnecessary expense?
15. Reduce clutter, one art work each end

3. Town Centre Enhancements

1. Clear the space in front of the doctor's surgery to provide a seating area and provide more CCTV cameras on the main road.
2. There should be a crossing on the High Street. The traffic congestion here is dreadful. You put your life in their hands when crossing the street to do your shopping. The greengrocers should not be allowed to put their wares on pavement.
3. No more takeaways. Pavements are being impeded by shopkeepers' wares. Very dangerous to step on to road - no room for prams.
4. Unsafe - ages to cross; pelican crossing; traffic lights; improved storage facility in rugby pitch
5. Stop giving licences to takeaway outlets. We already have more than enough. I think we already have more than Pontypridd and this is ridiculous. You can smell Ferndale before you see it.
6. Again anything to improve the area is welcome. Enhancement is not enough. We need more security measures. CCTV et. I do not feel the area is dangerous but I believe old people and parents of young people think it is. Obvious signs of security should ease the fears of these people.
7. The displaying of wares by shops on pavement results in very little pavement for pedestrians. This is illegal. Will Council take the necessary action to stop this?
8. We are owners of Pennel Chapel, Duffryn Street and would like to be included in some of the façade regeneration plans/enhancement. We envisage the chapel being used again as a concert hall or festival hall for local schools, choirs etc. parking would be an issue as the building seats 700 people. At present we use the basement for a youth design centre. We have been approached by a local school to use the main chapel for harvest and Christmas concerts. We feel it is a public space that can be used by the community as there is no other auditorium of this size in the upper Rhondda Fach.
9. I agree with proposals I have viewed.
10. I do not agree with the widening of the pavements. The three shops that sell their wares outside will continue to do so. The shop fronts should be altered inside.
11. High Street must be sorted. Traffic is a nightmare.
12. Signs showing Ferndale nice, youth centre, bookshop and library teamed up, tea shops, better park, no new road by Greenwood, island in lake
13. Arcade, Amusements, McDonalds, vegetarian shops, bigger shops (more floors), sports shops, cinema, swimming pool in Ferndale.
14. Close some of the fast food outlets to reduce rubbish. The proposals I have viewed seem to be planned well and can't wait to see this taking shape.

15. Game shops, more youth facilities, lights in lanes, movie shop, too many Chinese shops, water fountain, cinema, tree swings, book shop, train station.
16. I would like the shops to be tidied up and the noise outside Spar to be gone. Less takeaways. More youths. A café which is more child friendly.
17. A good use of free space which is much needed. Again we have the issue of vandalism, but properly policed, it could work.
18. Most of the time it is dirty. Cross the road is still difficult (High Street)
19. Consistent street lighting - cast iron Victorian columns and elegant lanterns to unify the streetscape. Encourage traders to remove shutters.
20. Yes improve town centre and tidy up.
21. Too many takeaways. Please do not allow any more.
22. Mall, cinema, McDonalds, big supermarkets, less litter, sweet shop, vegetarian shops, native trees, university, college, slides on the mountains, bigger shops, sports shop, water park, lights in the lanes on north road, swimming pool, cafes in the park, blockbusters, water fountains, all over Ferndale bigger play area, more tree swings, better toilets, X factor, bigger fairs, theme park, bigger houses, game or game station, a book shop, orthodontist, improve the grand stand, bigger park (like Aberdare Park)
23. Car parks, a Starbucks (coffee shop), a funfair, less takeaways, a dog walking track, more youth centres, a Borders (book shop) paths and signs in the forest, now new road by Greenwood, trains, cycling and biking paths down by the river, trains, clean up Darran Park, College or University.
24. More equipment, less takeaways, less litter, shops updated, updated library, more cameras, cyber café, more activities for children, less traffic congestion, native trees planted, bird houses in the forests, train, more paths in the forests, more Welsh schools, cycling paths, nicer pubs, salad bar, sushi bar, cinema, encourage Welsh speaking, music shop, sports centre.
25. Stop giving Planning Permission to Chinese Takeaway Indian. There are enough of these at present. We need more retail shops.
26. Pelican crossing at the post office as well as two zebra crossings to slow down traffic on high street.

4. Darran Park Enhancements

1. Fence around lake to stop children having easy access when not supervised.
2. The Darran Park was a beautiful park in years gone by. But they have no one up there to oversee what the teenagers are up to.
3. Bike ramp or course; Mountain bike track; Cinema in old school; Bowling alley; Changing rooms; Paintball; Assault course; Youngster's arcade; Burger van - facility; Theme park - water park; Well used by local children

4. An island or something similar for wild life, ie ducks to breed around or in lake as they used to breed in park but do not any more.
5. To use the clichés “Jewel in the Crown” of Ferndale “Light under a Bushel “ too easy. The Darran park needs to be tidied up. A better play/kick about area. Some people do not know it exists - publicity and events. The park is beautiful - LET THEM KNOW
6. Children playground should be enlarged; new dressing rooms for football; all roads and paths resurfaced; grandstand improved; lake to be cleaned up; new benches round lake and bowling green; bowls pavilion new windows, toilets renewed and front of pavilion fascia board to have “Ferndale Bowls Club Founded 1925”; entrance steps to bowling green should be disable friendly.
7. I agree with all the proposals for Darran park. Perhaps it could include an island for the wildlife that has come to the park.
8. Install a youth sports facility as has just been created in Edmund Street, Tylorstown - and while we're at it - what about some youth provision in Ferndale? This is the only place in Rhondda Fach NOT designated communities first and is therefore losing out on funding for such provision which has not existed for many years.
9. It is essential that the lake itself becomes available for coarse fishing soon as it is the only lake of its type for miles around. The footpaths around the lake are superb and offer many places for people to walk their dogs in a woodland setting with views across the lake - so there is no need for conflict.
10. Only one person managing the park currently - needs more. Nobody visits the park. Not well know even to locals.
11. On Aberdair Park Act has 7 staff and a lorry. Grass over swimming pool area. Repoint the walls.
12. There is a need for a small children's paddling pool. In the summer you have to travel to Maerdy as there has always been room for a similar area to be done in Ferndale park. The argument that we had a swimming pool there is no longer a fact.
13. Café up park, upgrade grandstand, upgrade toilets, bigger play area, tree swing and tyre swings, paint ball area up the woods.
14. Better toilets, café in park, a sign on park
15. Nicer grandstand, X factor, fountain, pop idol, new toilets, puppet show, ice skating, a fair, pool, college, paths, parlours, ice cream shop
16. I would like the grandstand to be shut down. I would like a proper water fountain and proper toilets. I want a café up the park.
17. Anything that brings people back to this beauty spot is a great help. Children and adults of all ages would benefit, providing it was properly looked after. Consultation with local schools to see what the children wanted would be a help.
18. Play area needs improving. Swimming baths put back, need more swings, slides etc with such a big park.
19. Upgrading to park would be beneficial and any other enhancements to the town
20. At the moment run down. Problem with drugs, gangs, etc. Needs to have a refurbishment. New fencing and gates, repaired walls, new equipment, lick of paint, landscape etc. RCT to promote the community to use. Similar to Aberdare/Pontypridd.
21. Café is a good idea but will need good shutters.
22. Not a high priority. Tidy up. Clean up. How about a paddling pool instead of the underused netball court.
23. Please make a lot more of this lovely park. Refreshments better gateway and toilets

24. Big fines for people who allow their dogs to foul the park. It is not a pleasant place to visit
25. Please do something about the lake in Darren park and make it a nicer area for walkers.

5. Commercial Improvement Area (CIA)

1. The Retail shops should be updated. Some of them are in a disgusting state.
2. Frontage of shops could be improved.
3. Highfield estate skateboard park.
4. Seeing the closed down shops in our town is very sad, but do we need eight takeaways? This is disproportionate to such a small area. The filth it leaves on our streets is also heartbreaking. So we need bins, we need public toilets, we need better, or at least some policing.
5. Empty shops which are an eyesore should be made to be maintained by owners.
6. Agree with this.
7. Main thing is for any enhancements to be accompanied by provision for business enterprises - especially for small businesses.
8. I would like a train station.
9. I would like the shops to look nicer.
10. In urgent need of attention - a very good idea overall - again with proper security measures
11. Again important but this will come from improved road links.

6. Improve Parking Facilities

1. Disabled parking should be by the Fish Shop not on the hill used by the fire engine
2. This is already in the pipeline.
3. In the pipeline.
4. Parking is the root of the commercial rebirth of Ferndale. Why is the Lime Street car park scheme stopped??? Is the new High Street arrangement any good? The answer is better policing again!! When the wardens are there, no problem.
5. Enquiries made to find car parking facilities throughout Ferndale. Steps must be taken to ensure that the new layout in the High Street

- works. Illegal parking to be stopped by fines etc.
6. Must be improved.
 7. This again is a good proposal. The old fire station should be compulsorily purchased to have better access to a new car park.
 8. Yes please - but need to be close enough for people to use them.
 9. Bigger parking areas.
 10. Ferndale desperately needs a car park and those in surrounding streets should be given the option of residential parking in the future.
 11. Car parks.
 12. I would like Lime Street to have a parking facility.
 13. Well overdue which should help traffic flow, again with proper traffic wardens to ensure it works.
 14. We need more parking facilities in Ferndale. Shop workers, bank workers taking up parking spaces in Fountain Street. Pull down old printers n Maxwell Street. Ideal parking facilities.
 15. This is a major issue in Ferndale.
 16. More parking spaces needed. It is a nightmare for the motorist!
 17. Parking in Ferndale is a nightmare. Work had started for a car park behind Ferndale Band Club. It has stopped. Why? We're in desperate need for the facility.
 18. Complete the new car park at Lime Street
 19. Parking very poor now. Proposed plan much better

7. Gaps in Teeth

1. What is left? There are a lot of problems in Ferndale. Nothing is impossible if the money is there. We need to go for it. If it is left to deteriorate any more it will become a ghost town. I do not wish to see the tumbleweed blowing through our deserted streets!!
2. Lights in North Road lane.
3. I would like some lights in the lanes as when I walk home it is pitch black and I have to walk right around.
4. A major problem in the area which requires urgent attention. Again, I am all in favour as long as the Council delivers.
5. These proposals sound excellent.
6. A good clean up is needed.
7. Again, important to the overall development of Ferndale's regeneration.
8. Keep open grass nicely

2.6 Post Document Consultation

Following the circulation of the draft regeneration strategy document on the 17 August 2006 the steering group submitted various comments which have been incorporated into the document.

The following list of projects was provided by the steering group many of which have been identified within the regeneration strategy document.

Ferndale Improvement Town Centre

1. Pavement covering the High Street
2. Signs
3. Lighting
4. Seating
5. Look for premises for one stop shop
6. Disabled dropped kerbs and facilities
7. Pelican crossing library side
8. Pelican Crossing outside infant school
9. Lime Street-Car Park resurfaced, lighting, drainage and cameras adjacent wall to Lake Street.
10. New toilets with disabled access

11. Maxwell Street printing building to be purchased and pulled down for parking facility.
12. Medical centre- High Street walls to be knocked down to move back for environment improvement.
13. Bus pull in North Road environment improvement.
14. Purchase land at fire service and put disabled parking spaces
15. Fronts of shops improved
16. CCTV cameras - High Street
17. 20 Mph zone through High Street

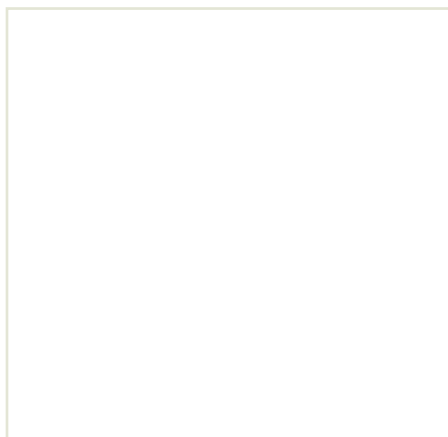
Darran park, Ferndale

1. Playing area for ages 5+.
2. New build of changing rooms and cafeteria.

On the 2nd November residents (Approx.70) attended a meeting to discuss the proposals. These were mainly residents of the streets most affected by the road (especially Albany Street). The group expressed concerns about the impact of the road on their houses and the play area.

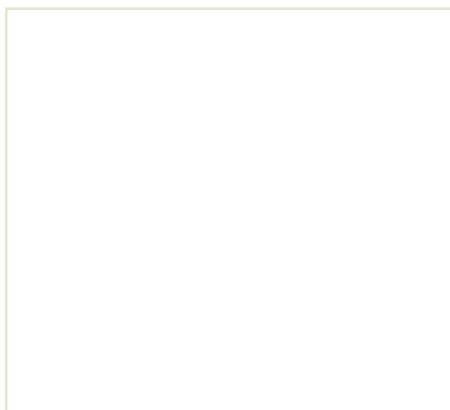
At the meeting it was agreed to go back to the residents when the study is further advanced.





3.0

Planning Context



This section describes the planning and historical context for Ferndale's physical regeneration. It also describes the current socio-economic context.

3.1 Introduction

Town and Country Planning Act 1990
 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council resolved on 20th July 2005 to cease work on the Rhondda Cynon Taff Unitary Development Plan (UDP) and commence work on a new Local Development Plan (LDP) following changes introduced by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

The adopted Rhondda Cynon Taff (Rhondda) Local Plan (1998) includes Ferndale and will remain in force until such time as it is superseded by the Rhondda Cynon Taff Local Development Plan.

In the interim period this plan will form the basis for development control purposes in accordance with the draft Commencement and Transitional Provisions Order Explanatory Note published by the Welsh Assembly Government.

The proposed timetable for the LDP Process is shown below and indicates the date for adoption of the LDP will be March 2009.



Regulation	Stage in Plan Preparation	Timescale
9	Statutory instrument to commence LDP	April 2005
14	Delivery Agreement	June – December 2005
	Pre Deposit Participation	September 2005 – May 2006
15 & 16	Pre Deposit Public Consultation	July – August 2006
17	Statutory Deposit of Proposals	June – July 2007
20 & 21	Alternative Sites Consultation	September – October 2007
22	Submission of LDP to National Assembly	February 2008
	Pre Examination Meeting	April 2008
23	Independent Examination	August – October 2008
24	Receipt of the Planning Inspector's Recommendations	Feb 2009
25	Adoption	March 2009
37	Annual Monitoring Report	January 2010

3.2

Rhondda Local Plan 1991-2006, Adopted February 1998



The specific planning policies and environmental designations for Ferndale are contained within the Rhondda Local Plan, which was formally adopted in 1998. While the LDP is in development, the local Authority will be required to make direct reference to these policies and aims when making any decisions regarding development in the area.

The overall aim of policies in the Rhondda Local Plan is to protect and conserve the natural attributes and create and sustain a more 'liveable' and attractive urban environment and landscape, whilst improving the quality of life of local residents.

There are several policies within the Rhondda Local Plan that relate specifically to Ferndale and its environs, these are indicated on the proposals map, and these are detailed below:

Ferndale

Policy ENV 1 – Settlement Boundary – This policy limits development beyond the defined settlement boundary shown on the proposals

map except for development associated with agriculture and forestry, countryside recreation, the minning and working of minerals and the conversion of suitable buildings to residential, tourist accommodation or business uses (Class B1).

Policy ENV 3.20 – Landscape Protection and Conservation – This policy designates Darran Park/Craig Rhondda Fach as Local Landscape Areas. The policy protects designated areas by insisting that development proposals within them must respect the area's special landscape qualities with regards to their siting, scale and design.

Policy ENV 4.8 – Green Barriers – This policy prevents further coalescence of settlements by not permitting development which would have an unacceptable impact on the openness of the Ferndale/Tylorstown green barrier.

Policy R1 – Retail Zone – This policy restricts the approval for retail developments to within the area defined on the proposals map only provided that the scale, design and external

materials are in keeping with the character of the shopping centre and that adequate off-street parking can be provided. Exceptions are made for large out of town shopping developments and local shops.

Policy TL11.5 – Play Area Provision – This policy identifies the land at Ayrton Street for the development of play area facilities.

Policy TR3.4 This policy provides for improvement to visibility and the widening of the footpath on Rhondda Road at the brow of the hill.

Ferndale/Blaenllechau

Policy ENV 2 – Landscape Protection and Conservation – This policy designates the vast areas around Ferndale and Blaenllechau as a Strategic Landscape Area. The policy protects designated areas by insisting that development proposals within them must respect the area's special landscape qualities with regards to their siting, scale and design. More detailed information is available in the

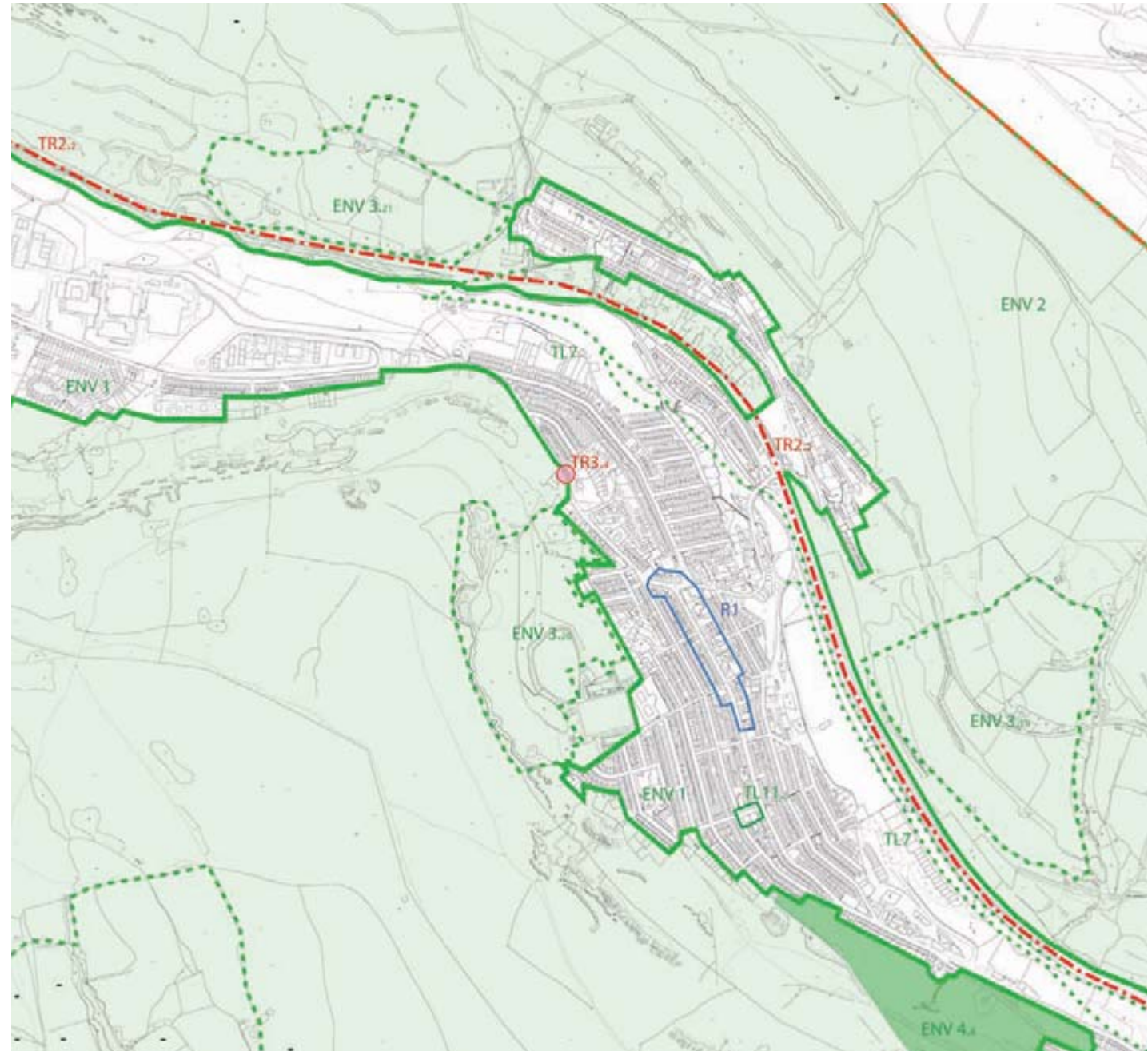
'Landscapes Working for Rhondda Strategy', which evaluates landscape elements and characteristics, to allow each one to be considered on its own merits when making development control decisions.

Policy ENV 3.19 Landscape Protection and Conservation – This policy designates Blaenllechau as a Local Landscape Area.

Policy ENV 3.21 Landscape Protection and Conservation – This policy designates Ffaldau as a Local Landscape Area.

Policy TL 7 - Development of Rhondda Fach River Parkway – This policy designates the areas both sides of the Fach River for the creation of an imaginative River Parkway along the length of the valley floor from Maerdy to Pontygwaith and beyond. This will include an extensive footpath, bridleway and cycle path network with picnic sites and viewing stations. Furthermore if widened, small lakes could be created to add variety to the landscape.

Policy TR2.2 – Strategic Highways Schemes: Protected Routes – This policy safeguards land for highway improvements for the A4233 Upper Rhondda Fach Relief Road.



3.3 Historical Context



The name Ferndale is a direct Anglicisation of the Welsh name Glyn Rhedynog and was first adopted in the 1860's, by either David Davies, Blaengwawr who sank the Ferndale pits or his chief cashier Delta Davies.

Ferndale No. 1 Colliery also known as Blaenllechau Colliery was founded in 1862 when the first pit was sunk. In 1870 No.2 Pit was opened, followed by a third in 1890. The Colliery reached its peak in 1914 when there were 5,654 men employed with an output of 1,750,000 tons with the works extending under the surface for an area of between six and seven square miles. Ferndale No. 1 Colliery was shut in 1959. There were two serious pit explosions; the first in 1867 with a loss of life of 178 and a second in 1869 when 53 miners were killed.

Ferndale quickly became the main township of the Rhondda Fach with a busy shopping centre, based around The Strand, as well as The Ferndale Workmen's General Hospital and Eye Infirmary, built in 1891. It also boasted numerous chapels such as Tre-Rhondda built

in 1867, and the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, built in 1880. It also boasted numerous recreation facilities within Darran Park and lake, an outdoor swimming pool as well as the ever present Workmen's Institute and Library.

In 1867 the population of Ferndale was approximately 800 lodged in houses crudely built of wood. These were replaced in the 1870's with long terraces of stone houses by the colliery company as a result of large numbers migrating to the area. By 1901 there were 8,965 people living in Ferndale. In 1991 there were 4,678.

Since the closure of the colliery most mine work buildings have been demolished. To mitigate the loss of employment, new employment opportunities were provided by the construction of three facilities located at the entrances to Ferndale – Highfields, Ferndale and Oaklands Business Parks. Other prominent buildings demolished include the Princess Louise Arch and most recently the Workmen's Hall, a large building previously a focus of community



life in Ferndale now replaced by the doctors surgery.

Sources: <http://www.ferndale-wales.co.uk>;
<http://webapps.rhondda-cynon-taff.gov.uk/libraries/heritagetrail/rhondda/ferndale/ferndale.htm>



3.4 Socio-economic context



Under the powers provided in the Local Government Act 2000, Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council assumed its Community Leadership role and prepared its Community Plan entitled 'A better Life – A programme of Change for the Future'. This set out a shared vision for improving the quality of life for everyone who lives and works in Rhondda Cynon Taff setting goals to be achieved by 2014.

The Regeneration Strategy of Rhondda Cynon Taff designated the three wards of Maerdy, Ferndale and Tylorstown as Renewal Area 6. The Area Regeneration Partnership for Renewal Area 6 was launched in 2003. Area 6 is one of the most deprived areas within Rhondda Cynon Taff. The Communities First Initiative was launched on March 1st 2003. Maerdy and Tylorstown are designated Community First Areas.

Ferndale is not a Communities First area but is an Objective 1 Priority 3 Community Economic Development area. Ferndale is

Ranked 117 in Wales in the Welsh IMD 2000 (Maerdy and Tylorstown are ranked 5th and 11th respectively).

The table below gives a summary of the main socio-economic characteristics of Ferndale, based on data from the 2001 census, compared to both Rhondda Cynon Taff and England and Wales.

According to the 2001 Census, the population of Ferndale is 4,419. This compares to 4,678 in the 1991 Census, representing a 0.9% decrease overall. The population aged 16 and under in 1991 was 19.3, which increased only slightly to 19.4 in 2001. The population aged 60 and over was 22.4% in 1991 and has increased by just over 1% to 23.6% in 2001.

	Ferndale Rhondda Cynon Taff		England and Wales
Wales			
Total Population	4,419	231,946	52,041,916
% population aged under 16	19.4	20.9	20.2
% total population aged 60+	23.6	21.3	20.9
% households with no car	35.4	31.6	26.8
% with limiting long term illness	31.5	27.2	18.2
% permanently sick or disabled	15.4	13.0	5.5
% employed full, part and self	48.5	51.5	60.6
% unemployed	3.9	3.6	3.4
% no qualifications	42.0	40.5	29.1

Source: 2001 Census (Development and Regeneration Unit, Valleys Innovation Centre. Tel. 01443 665000, ONS)



Deprivation

The figures in the table above show that there is a wide gap between Rhondda Cynon Taff and England in Wales and Ferndale differs slightly from Rhondda Cynon Taff in all categories. Of particular significance is the low employment figures compared with England and Wales with less than half of the population of Ferndale employed 48.5%. This corresponds to the high figures for people who have a limiting long term illness, are permanently sick or disabled. Of the 3.9% unemployed

There is a significantly high percentage of the population of Ferndale with no qualifications, 42.0% compared with 29.1% for England and Wales. This suggests a greater focus is required on making full time education achieve better results and on improving education and training available to people who have left full time education.

The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) has 8 measures of deprivation recorded for each of the 865 electoral divisions in Wales, six weighted domain indices, the combined Index of Multiple Deprivation and a Child Poverty Index. The table below shows the ranking for Ferndale where 1 is the most deprived ward in Wales. Ferndale is ranked 117th with its neighbours Maerdy ranked 5th and Tylorstown ranked 11th.

Economic activity in the Rhondda Fach is the lowest of all areas within the Rhondda Cynon Taff Borough. Of the 53 wards within the Rhondda Cynon Taff area Ferndale is ranked 22nd in terms of employment deprivation with Maerdy and Tylorstown being ranked the 2nd and 3rd most deprived respectively.

The Renewal Area 6 records poor statistics for housing stock with the proportion of households considered to be in unsuitable housing and is

Welsh Index of Deprivation (2000 Wales)	Ranking (in Rhondda Cynon Taff)	Ranking
Income	34	332
Employment	22	94
Health	12	48
Education	27	197
Housing	8	221
Access	9	454
Child poverty	36	389
Welsh Index overall	20	117

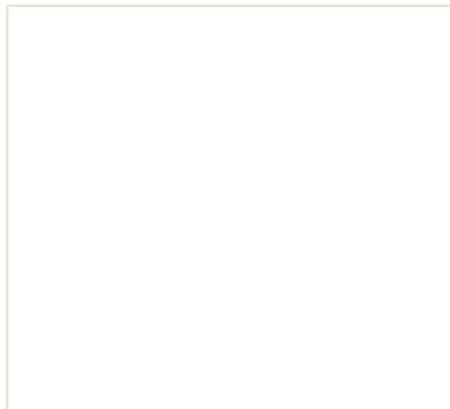
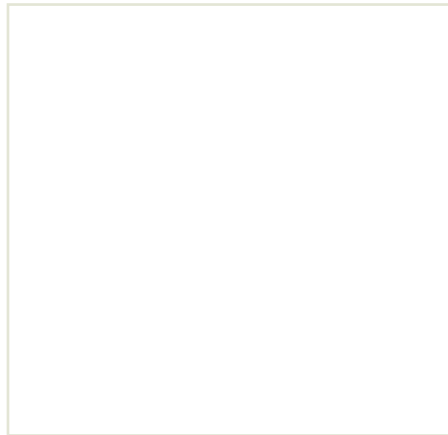
well above average at 21.6% compared to 15% for the Borough. The Ferndale Ward is the 8th most deprived in terms of housing deprivation in the Borough and is ranked higher than both Tylorstown and Maerdy ranked 14th and 41st respectively.

Although Renewal Area 6 is served by an A-road connecting the main settlements, there are no rail links and as such the area is relatively remote. The Ferndale ward is the 9th most deprived in terms of access deprivation in the Borough and is ranked higher than both Maerdy and Tylorstown ranked 12th and 44th respectively.

The Rhondda Fach area also records poor statistics in relation to health and well-being – it has the lowest score of all the defined Renewal Areas in the County Borough. At the ward level, Ferndale is the 12th most deprived ward in terms of health within the Borough and

48th most deprived ward in Wales as a whole. 46.9% of the population of Ferndale suffer from a limiting long term illness that prevents them from working or are permanently sick or disabled.





4.0 Ferndale Appraisal

The following appraisal of Ferndale's environment is based on visual and photographic surveys of Ferndale carried out during January to June 2006 and consultation issues raised during the meetings with local residents and the Steering Group over the same period.

The appraisal is a simple yet effective tool in establishing the full spectrum of issues effecting the physical regeneration of Ferndale in terms of the current strengths and weaknesses and future opportunities.

4.1

Built form

'It is the three dimensional mass of each building which defines the public realm. Building elevations and the cross-sections of public spaces should therefore be scaled to foster a sense of urbanism so that streets, squares and parks are defined by appropriately scaled buildings and/or trees fronting on to them.' Source: English Partnerships, Urban Design Compendium, August 2000.

Strengths

- Many of the valley towns expanded in the 1870's with long terraces of stone houses. Ferndale retains much of this terraced character.
- The buildings are predominantly two storeys with, occasionally, additional storeys exploiting the steep topography of the valley sides.
- Many of the buildings details (window and door surrounds etc.) have been individually and colourfully painted adding to the character of Ferndale
- These terraces help to create a strong identity for Ferndale and sense of place.
- Where buildings front both sides of a street they create strong sense of enclosure with a height to width ratio of approximately 1:2.
- Buildings fronting both sides of the street also provide casual surveillance of the streets and, with front doors opening onto the street, provide a level

of activity which helps to encourage sense of safety.

- The terraces are often punctuated with, or terminated by, key buildings which are generally non-residential in origin, are taller and have a greater degree of building articulation.
- These key buildings assist orientation, terminate vistas, help to define the spaces they front, provide visual enclosure and a gateway between streets.

Weaknesses

- Parts of these long terraces or key buildings have been demolished and now either remain empty as 'gaps in teeth', or replaced with poor quality or inappropriately scaled buildings.
- North Road adjacent to the Anchor Inn has a height to width ratio of 1:7.5. The maximum recommended by the Urban Design Compendium for squares and

very wide streets is 1:6.

- Several buildings are derelict or unused including the old print works and adjacent garages in Maxwell Street and buildings further north along Maxwell Street.

Opportunities

- Reinstate the sense of enclosure with either new well designed, appropriately scaled buildings or by providing spatial definition with tree planting.
- Retain the built form integrity of Ferndale by ensuring that new development respects and integrates with the existing urban fabric.
- New uses for derelict buildings should be considered.



4.2 Town Centre



Strengths

- The town centre is defined in the Rhondda Local Plan 1991-2006, Adopted February 1998 as a Commercial Improvement Area.
- The designated area is compact and walkable.
- It appears vibrant and successful meeting a demand from a wider area than Ferndale.
- It has two banks, two butchers, two greengrocers, a bakery, two convenience stores, a clothing shop, a pet food shop and many more local shops.
- It has a Doctor's surgery and a library.
- It has several food outlets including a café and Chinese take-aways.
- The Anchor pub provides visitor accommodation.
- The Tre-Rhondda Chapel provides a focal point and a centre for the community.

- Many of the historic buildings remain providing Ferndale centre with a strong sense of place with good urban enclosure.
- Topographically the centre exists at the highest point along the High Street, before dipping down and rising again along North Road.

Weaknesses

- The Doctor's surgery is set back from the street frontage reducing the sense of enclosure.
- There is no public space of good quality for informal gatherings or meetings.
- Combined with traffic problems, the lack of adequately wide pavements and obstacles placed on the pavements, the pedestrian environment - particularly for parents with buggies - can be difficult.
- Poor quality and poorly placed street

furniture, road signs, advertising hoardings, shutters and building signs create visual clutter.

- The gable and boundary wall of number 5 The Strand is in a poor condition with no frontage onto the street.

Opportunities

- Encourage more people to enjoy the centre by improving the quality of the public realm.
- Provide wider pavements and spaces for informal gatherings and meetings.
- Reinstating the sense of enclosure with either new well designed, appropriately scaled buildings or by providing spatial definition with tree planting.
- Improve the appearance of buildings and signage improving Ferndale's identity.
- Reduce the visual clutter.

Town Centre Key Buildings



Town Centre Opportunities

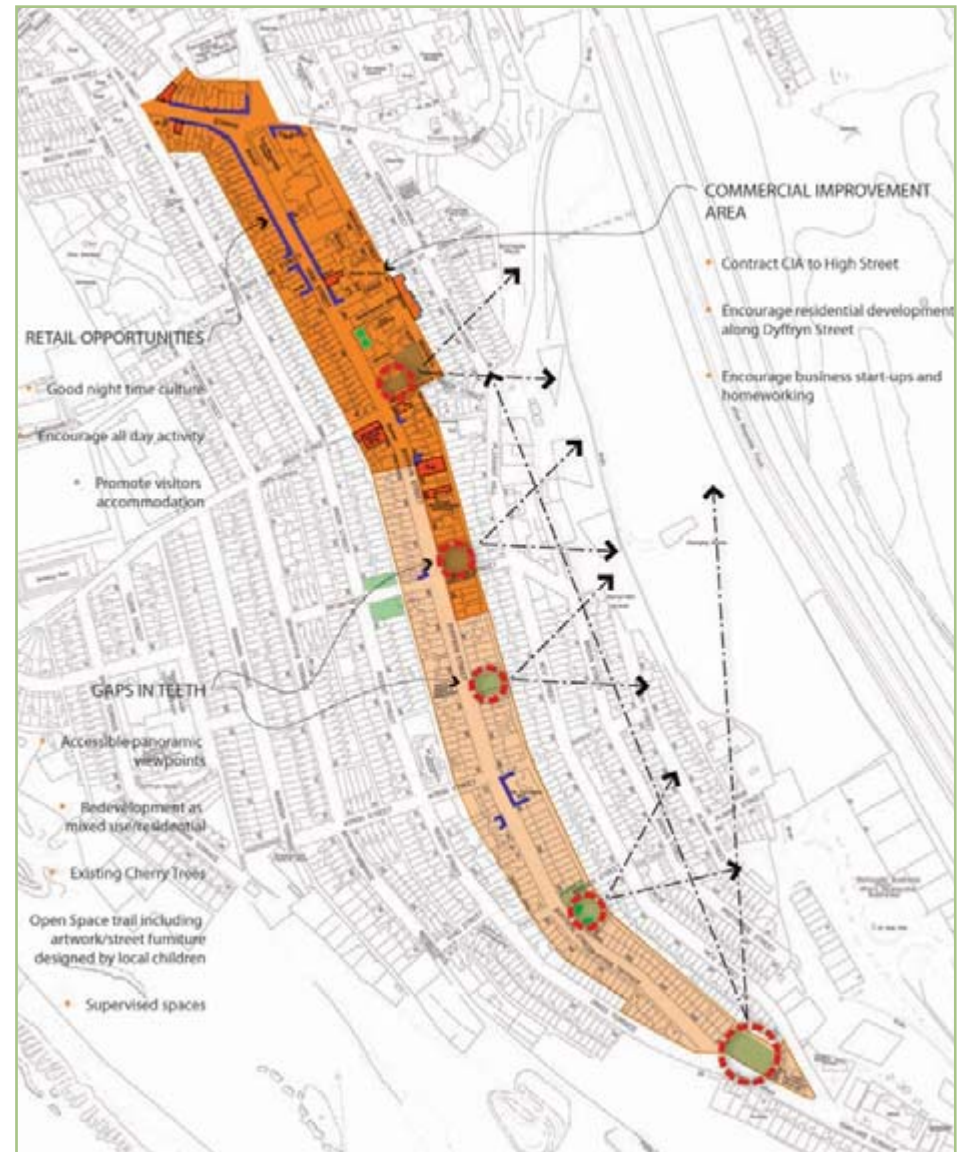


Diagram illustrating initial ideas from suggestions with the steering group

4.3 Open Space



Strengths

- Ferndale is surrounded by high quality, dramatic countryside which includes an extensive network of public footpaths, bridleways and cycleways.
- Following the steep slopes of the valley, the settlements historic development has greatly added to its visual beauty.
- Darran Park and Craig Rhondda Fach, covering approximately 15.7 hectares, contains ancient oak woodland, is set within a natural cwm and provides a beautiful local amenity.
- The park includes an all weather pitch with associated grandstand seating and facilities, a bowling club and equipped play facilities for toddlers.
- There are over two and a quarter thousand metres of existing footpaths through the park which link to the open countryside footpaths beyond.
- A Sustrans national cycle network traffic-free route number 47 runs along nearby forest tracks above Blaenllechau.

- 'Gaps in teeth' or undeveloped sites along Dyffryn Street provide informal areas of open space, a visual amenity and afford views across the valley.
- The gap adjacent to Our Lady of Penrhys RC Church is perhaps the largest of the 'gaps in teeth' while the space adjacent to Rosser Street already includes two Cherry trees and seating, and enjoys views over the Rugby field. The gap adjacent to Irfon Street affords an opportunity for enhancing a bus stop location.

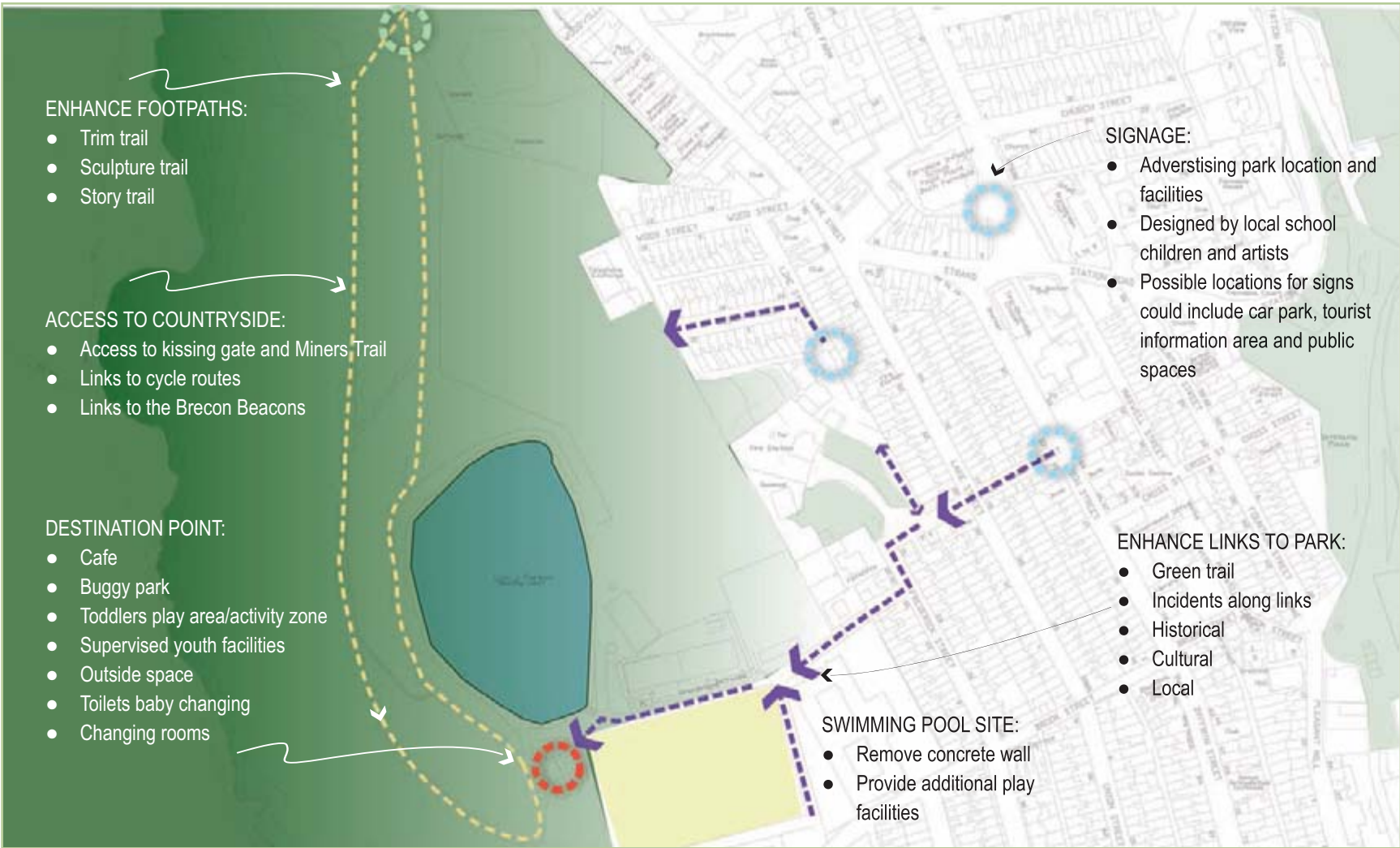
Weaknesses

- Darran Park is perceived to be isolated from Ferndale town centre with little awareness of its existence beyond that of the local residents.
- Many of the existing facilities in Darran Park suffer from neglect and wilful damage. The changing facilities, currently located in two prefabricated cabins, are of a poor quality and appear rarely used.

- Much of the wilful damage can be attributed to the sense of a lack of facilities for young people.
- The Rhondda Local Plan has identified a lack of play area in the southern part of Ferndale

Opportunities

- To consider the potential of Darran Park and the surrounding woodland landscape and improve facilities for local residents.
- To increase the range of activities and opportunities for young people.
- Raise the profile of Darran Park for local residents and visitors.
- To provide new open space including a play area within southern Ferndale.



4.4

Streetscape and the Public Realm



Strengths

- Much work has been done by the Ferndale and Blaenllechau Partnership improving Ferndale's streetscape including removing redundant street lighting columns and incorrect signposts, though a few of these still remain.
- Recent street improvements by Rhondda Cynon Taff to pavements along the High Street have improved the appearance of much of the town centre.
- The mature Monkey Puzzle trees in front of the day centre and library provide a good visual amenity, a relief to the built form and also help to maintain the sense of enclosure along the High Street.

Weaknesses

- Areas of streetscape suffer from the use of too many poor quality and damaged materials. In particular the 'crazy paving' areas and 'cobbled' traffic island adjacent to the Maerdy bus stop.
- This area also suffers from an excess of street furniture including damaged concrete bollards, street signage, and railings with flaking paint. The physical quality of the area also suffers from raised, un-used footpaths and low quality grassed areas.
- The raised planting bed in front of Brynderwen Court offers little public amenity and areas adjacent to these buildings also suffer neglect.
- The pavement materials used and workmanship at the junction of Lake Street and the Strand are also of a poor quality.

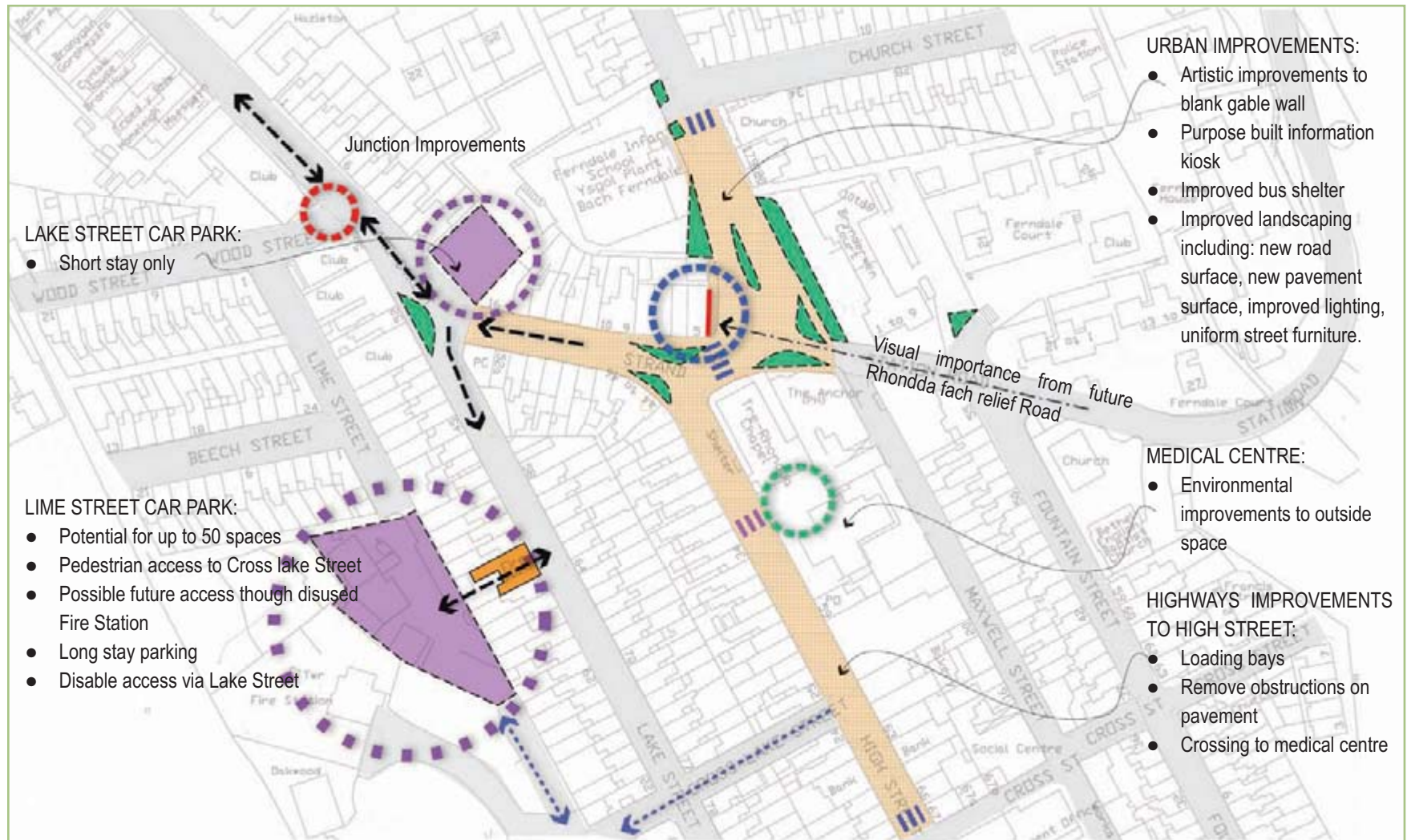
- Wilful damage of planting etc. contributes to the general feeling of decline of the public realm.
- The bus shelters unfortunately encourage some undesirable loitering.
- The area in front of the Doctor's surgery with low planting provides little contribution to the visual quality or the sense of enclosure of the High Street.

Opportunities

- To provide a high quality, uniform streetscape to help define the character of Ferndale.
- To improve street furniture and signage improving Ferndale's identity.
- To extend the use of CCTV or other enforcement measures to reduce anti-social behaviour.

Summary of Appraisal

Streetscape and Public Realm Opportunities



4.5 Parking

Strengths

- Ferndale has a vibrant town centre. This is supported by local residents, visitors and passing trade.
- There is a limited provision of public parking spaces in two town centre locations; in Lake Street and Maxwell Street.

Weaknesses

- It has been identified that the existing level of parking provision is inadequate to support the number of people using the shops and businesses in Ferndale.
- Heavy traffic combined with shop servicing and high levels of opportunistic parking along the High Street is causing a poor environment for other road users, in particular for pedestrians, resulting in a high number of accidents here.

Opportunities

- To reduce the reliance on the car and encourage walking and cycling in Ferndale by improving the pedestrian environment and promoting healthier life styles.
- Improve public parking facilities.
- Consider opportunities to improve access to public transport and extend the services within the area.

4.6 Transport



High Street

Existing Situation

Ferndale is a small vibrant town situated at the northern end of Rhondda Fach and is the commercial centre for a number of surrounding communities.

The town lies on the A4233, with Tylorstown, Porth and Pontypridd to the South and Maerdy and Aberdare to the North.

The A4233 runs through the centre of Ferndale. All traffic travels through the commercial area, including private cars and commercial vehicles. There is no existing alternative route for through traffic and as such a large number of HGV movements occur. This has a negative impact on the environment and increases noise and air pollution through the town centre.

The main commercial activity is situated on High Street and the Strand, which offers a range of small retail outlets, banks and food stores. A significant amount of indiscriminate

on street parking occurs at the northern end of High Street, resulting in passing difficulties and congestion.

Several site visits were undertaken during April 2006 to enable the existing transport issues affecting the town to be identified; the results are explained in more detail below.

Parking

High Street itself is approximately 6.7m wide extending from Brook Street to Tre-Rhondda Chapel. Parking is restricted with a "No Waiting 8am to 6pm (except Sundays)" traffic order preventing parking on both sides of the carriageway.

Site observations revealed that a significant amount of illegal parking occurs on High Street, particularly on its eastern side between the Chapel and number 67. Abuse of existing parking restrictions is clearly a regular occurrence. Although enforcement is undertaken on a daily basis it is restricted to



Dyffryn Street

set time periods. As a result, illegal parking occurs outside these time periods.

The existing parking restrictions on High Street does allow on street parking for Disabled Badge holders who are able to park for up to 3hrs.

This combined with illegally parked vehicles and loading operations means that for the majority of the day vehicles are parked on High Street. This has an adverse effect on the free flow of traffic through the town, as the restricted carriageway width is insufficient for two-way vehicular flow. As a result localised congestion occurs.

To the south, High Street leads into Dyffryn Street. Dyffryn Street is approximately 8.5m wide and provides unrestricted parking on its western carriageway. On the whole, the parking regime does not adversely affect the free flow of vehicles on Duffryn Street. However, forward visibility on to the existing zebra crossing is compromised as a result of



on street parking. On its eastern carriageway, 'No Waiting at Any Time' 8 am to 6 pm traffic orders are in place.

To the north, High street leads into North Road, via a double bend arrangement at the junction of Station Road and the Strand. North Road has a 'No Waiting at Any Time' parking restriction along its length on alternate sides of the carriageway. Observations confirmed that these parking restrictions are largely adhered to and do not prevent the free flow of traffic. It is considered that the parking provision in this area is sufficient.

The Strand forms a priority T-junction with the northern end of High Street and has a number of small shops on either side. The carriageway is approximately 8m wide. Parking restrictions are in place on both sides similar to that of High Street.

On its northern side a relatively new low-level kerbline has been installed, which forms a substandard lay-by. Observations revealed

that when vehicles parked in this location forward visibility onto the zebra crossing was severely restricted.

At the junction of Lake Street and the Strand there is an existing off street car park. The car park is free to members of the public and has 16 defined spaces. No time limit is in place. Observation revealed that the car park is used by local workers who park their cars in these spaces throughout the day. This sterilizes the car park and does not allow visitors to Ferndale the opportunity to park.

Traffic Speeds

Observations revealed that the speed of traffic travelling through the town is not excessive. The current speed limit is set at 30 mph and is largely being adhered to. In fact the presence of on-street parking curtails traffic speeds to acceptable levels.

The existing illegal parking on High Street and the hairpin bend at the northern end of High

Street both contribute to reducing vehicle speeds. To the north and south of High Street leading into the town centre, traffic speeds were observed at between 30-35mph.

Bus Services

Table 2.1 summaries the bus services that operate via Ferndale during Weekdays and Saturdays. As can be seen Ferndale benefits from good public transport provision. Site observations revealed a high demand for travel via this mode.

Route No.	Operator	Route	Frequency	
			Weekday	Saturday
132	Stagecoach	Maerdy - Ferndale - Porth - Trehafod - Pontypridd - Taffs Well - Tongwynlais - Whitchurch - Cardiff	30mins	30mins
171	Stagecoach	Clydach Vale - Tonypany - Ystrad - Penrhys - Ferndale - Maerdy	60mins	60mins
172	Stagecoach	Porthcawl - Bridgend - Bryncethin - Tonypany - Maerdy - Aberdare	60mins	60mins
X8	Stagecoach	Maerdy - Ferndale - Tylorstown - Porth - Pontypridd - Cardiff	60mins	60mins
155	Thomas Coaches	Ferndale - Hendrefadog - Penrhys - Tylorstown - Stanleytown - Porth local service	2 services per day	2 services per day



There are several bus stops in Ferndale. The most frequently used are the stops on Dyffryn Street, outside the Rhondda Hotel Public House, and outside the Government offices. The bus stop outside Ferndale Infants School is also frequently used. All three stops have shelters and 'Bus Stop' road markings. Two other stops on Dyffryn Road near numbers 4 and 73 have shelters but no 'Bus Stop' road markings.

Pedestrian Facilities

Main pedestrian activity is centred around the commercial area of Ferndale on High Street and the Strand. Observations revealed that pedestrian activity is relatively high for a town of this scale, which confirms the town's vibrancy.

The existing footways on either side of High Street and the Strand are relatively narrow ranging between 1.6m and 2.0m. Footway surfaces vary from paving slabs to bitumen. The footways are generally in a good condition,

with very few footway trips. However, the provision for disabled users is extremely poor, with a distinct lack of dropped crossing facilities especially at side road junctions.

Site observations revealed that due to the narrow footway widths, existing street furniture and shop displays, pedestrians often have to give way to each other, sometimes stepping onto the carriageway in order to pass.

At the northern end of Rhondda Road near Bryngoleu Crescent no footway exists. This represents a break in the footway provision, which should be addressed.

Ferndale benefits from four controlled Zebra Crossing facilities. These are located outside number 13 Oakland Terrace, 3 High Street, 5 the Strand and Ferndale Infants School.

The crossing on Oakland Terrace has recently been upgraded providing a build out on its eastern side and buff coloured anti-skid surfacing on both approaches. Red tactile paving is provided on both footways. However,

the layout does not conform to current standards and should be addressed.

The remaining crossings do not have any anti-skid surfacing. Textured paving is provided at all crossing locations. Again the majority of which do not conform to current standards.

Cycle Facilities

The National Cycle Network Route 47 (The Celtic Trail) runs to the east of Ferndale through Mynydd y Faldon. However, there is no direct link between Ferndale and the route. Any travel by cycle within Ferndale itself occurs on the existing highway network. The local topography is also against the use of cycling especially between Route 47 and Ferndale Town Centre.

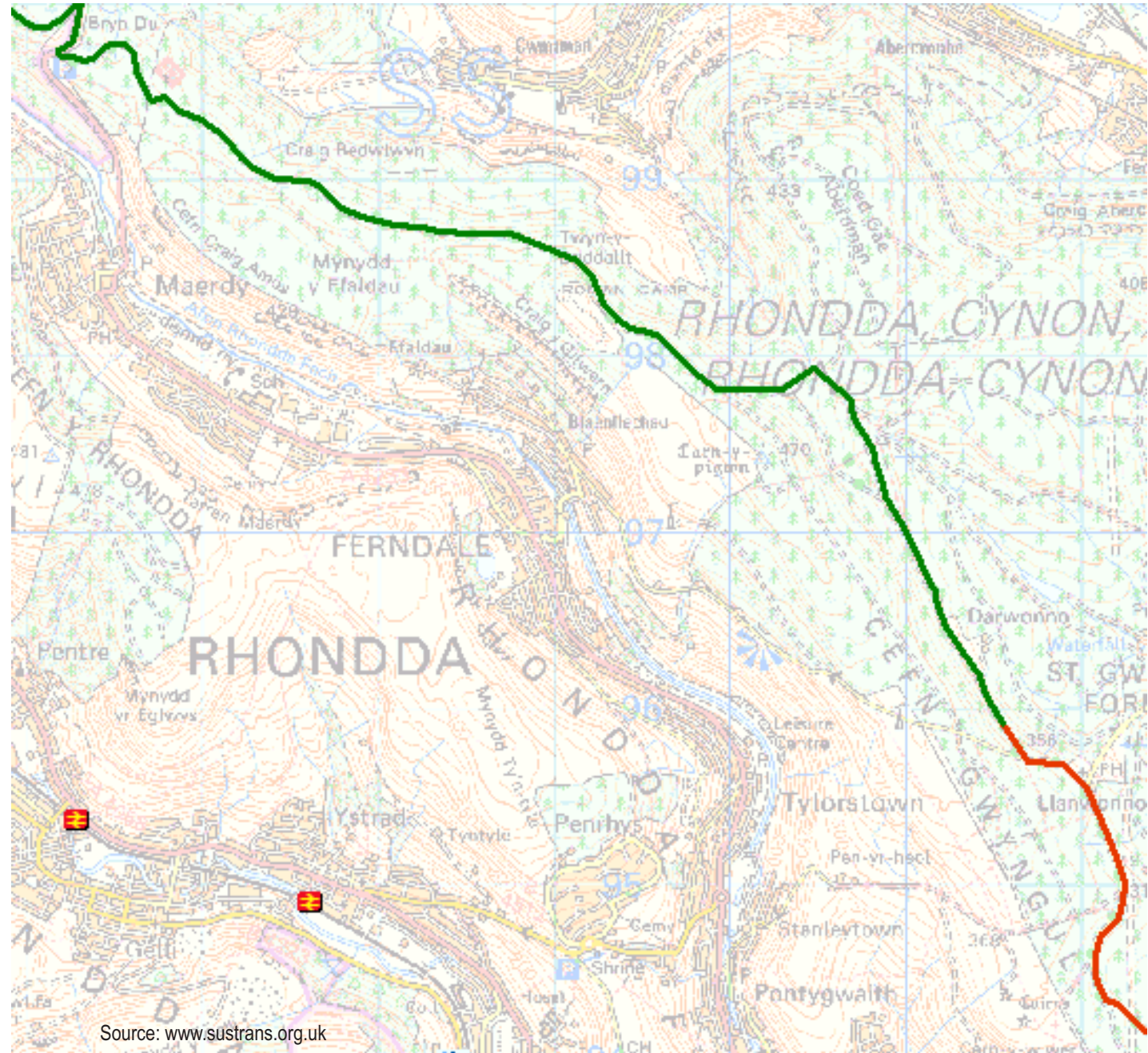
Accident Statistics

Accident statistics have been obtained from Glamorgan Engineering Consultancy for the latest 5-year period available, 01 October 2000

to 30 September 2005. The data illustrates accidents that have occurred on the local highway network within Ferndale.

The analysis has revealed that a total of 48 accidents have occurred during this period, 42 of which were of 'slight' severity with 6 being 'serious'. No fatal accidents have been recorded.

The majority of accidents (34 no) have occurred on the A4233. Fifteen of these accidents, approximately 44% have involved pedestrians. This clearly demonstrates that the needs of pedestrians are not currently being met. Pedestrians are competing with narrow footways and large volumes of extraneous traffic, including HGV's. These factors are clearly influencing the number of accidents that have occurred over that past 5 years. The emphasis needs to be changed; pedestrians should come first.



4.7 Proposed Rhondda Cynon Taff Transport Schemes

Proposed Rhondda Cynon Taff transport schemes

Parking High Street

Rhondda Cynon Taff have recognised that there is an existing parking issue on High Street, which prevents the free flow of traffic through the town. In response, several proposals have been considered over a number of years to alleviate the situation. Most recently, consultation has taken place between Rhondda Cynon Taff, Ferndale Town Centre Forum, local traders and other interested parties.

Proposals have been produced that seek to address congestion problems on High Street caused by illegal parking and loading / unloading operations. All stakeholders have agreed to a trial of the proposals, which are due to be implemented during 2006.

The proposals seek to rationalise the existing parking arrangement on High Street by

implementing 'No Waiting at Any Time' orders in conjunction with designated loading bays. In addition, dedicated disabled parking bays are proposed on Cross Lake Street.

Unfortunately, even though the measures proposed are workable, they rely heavily on enforcement, which as stated previously is where the existing traffic orders break down.

Car Park off Lime Street

Many visitors to the town travel by car. Clearly the lack of car parking within the centre of Ferndale is an issue for short-term shoppers. Proposals are in place to convert a former Council Depot at Lime Street into a public car park.

The new car park will provide up to 50 free car parking spaces; no time limit is proposed at this time, although it is likely to be a long stay car park. A new pedestrian link is also to be constructed on the eastern side of the Fire Station allowing pedestrians to access the town centre via Cross Lake Street.

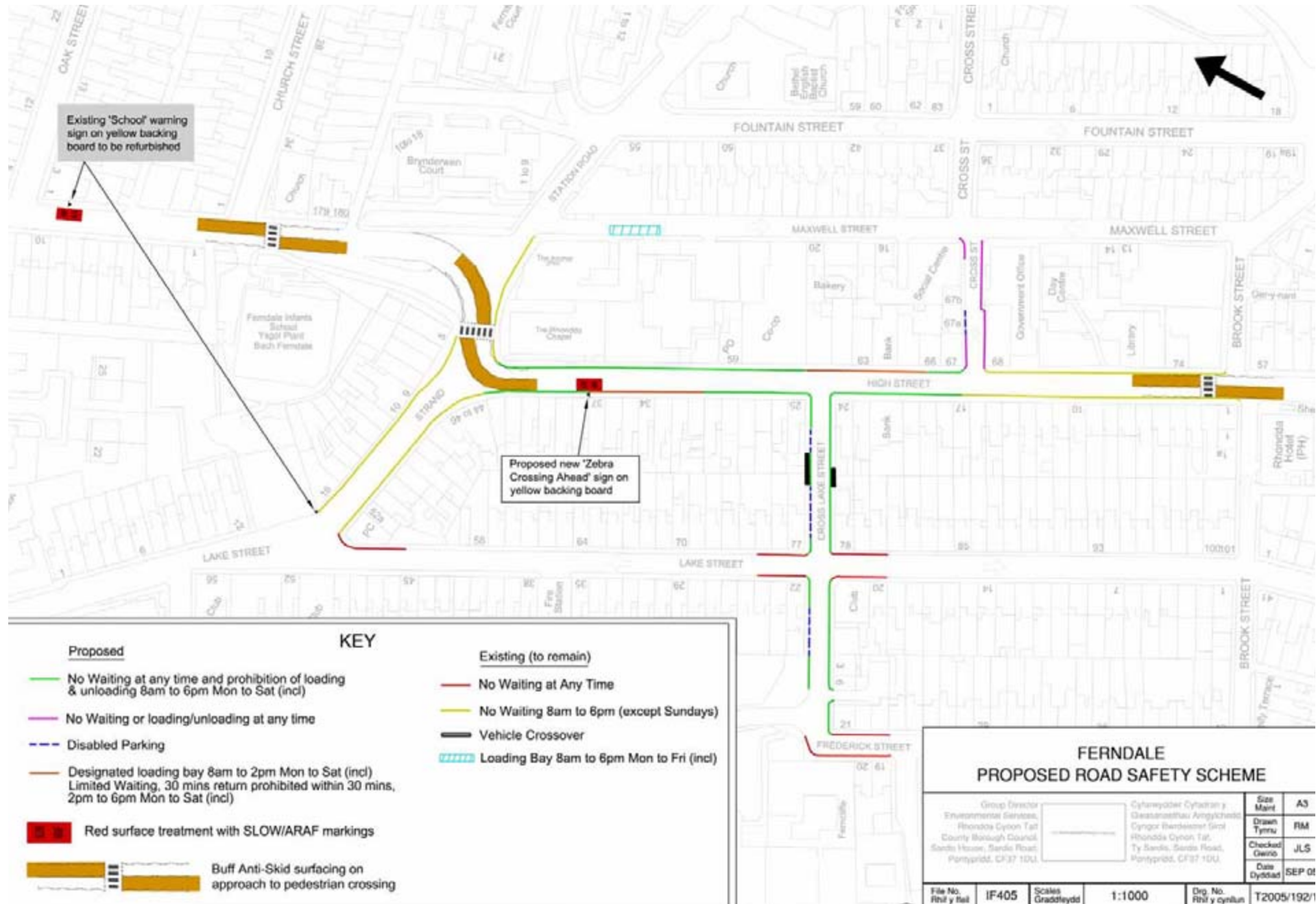
It is difficult to visualise how disabled access can be achieved given the level difference between the car park and Cross Lake Street. However, access by disabled users can still be achieved along Wood Street and down towards the Strand.

Vehicular access to the car park would be via Lime Street. The existing visibility on exit at Wood Street is substandard. The proposed solution is to build out the existing kerb line to improve visibility on exit. The build out would also provide protection for parked vehicles in the area.

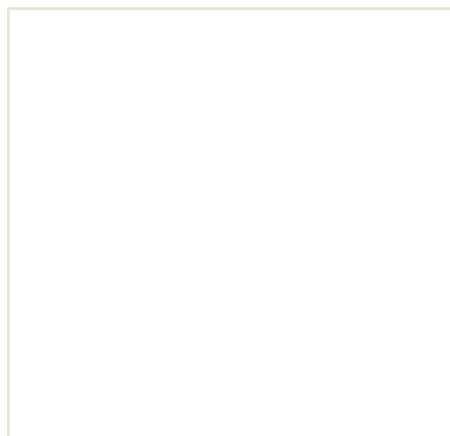
Extension of the Rhondda Fach Relief Road

The Rhondda Fach Relief Road, which is currently under construction, has been designed to improve the highway links between the Rhondda, the A470 and the M4.

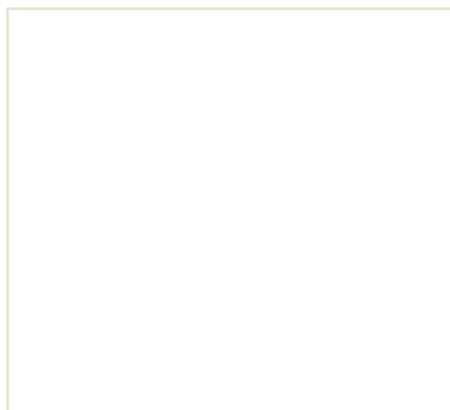
The new carriageway will complete the connection between the Trehafod Bypass and the Mid Rhondda Access Road and also provide a spine road along the lower Rhondda Fach.







5.0 Regeneration Proposals



The previous section identifies broad future opportunities for the physical regeneration of Ferndale. This section considers these opportunities in more detail for different areas of Ferndale and identifies an initial set of recommendations for the physical regeneration.

5.1 Transport



Introduction

This section identifies several proposed options designed to alleviate the problems within High Street and to enhance the area for pedestrians and other vulnerable road users. Unfortunately, the room available to make wholesale changes to the environment is insufficient if the existing traffic volumes and two-way flow is maintained.

The existing congestion indicates that the two-way flow currently on High Street is already struggling. Reducing the carriageway width to 6.0m would enable the footways to be widened by approximately 350mm on either side. However, this is likely to make matters worse. The only solution available to allow significant improvements to take place would be to reduce the volume of traffic on High Street itself. This is considered to be the preferred solution.

The proposals are split into short, medium and long-term measures, which are explained in greater detail below:

High Street – Short Term Measures (Works Cost £100,000 to £150,000)

- Enhancements to the existing crossing facilities, including anti skid surfacing on approach and localised width restrictions to reduce crossing times.
- Dropped crossings / tactile paving at side road junctions to provide continuity to the pedestrian infrastructure.
- Bus stop enhancements, shelters where appropriate, low floor bus kerbing, and textured coloured surfacing. “No Stopping Except Buses” Traffic Orders.
- Proposed Build out at Wood Street / Lake Street Junction to improve visibility on exit from the proposed Lime Street Car Park.
- Pedestrian Refuge Island located at the Strand to reduce crossing time and create two stage crossing facility.
- Enhanced gateway features on entry to the village – “Welcome to Ferndale” etc.
- Implementation of Rhondda Cynon Taff experimental traffic order, aimed at resolving congestion at northern end of

High Street. Requires comprehensive levels of enforcement.

- Enhancement of existing parking facilities including new lighting.
- Replace pedestrians crossings on North Street adjacent Ferndale Infants School and on High Street adjacent to the library with pelican crossings.

Pedestrian Accessibility – Recommended PERS Assessment

Prior to the short-term measures being implemented, it is recommended that a full inventory survey be carried out of the existing pedestrian infrastructure. There is a lack of disabled access facilities throughout, which should be addressed. To access the pedestrian accessibility problems a Pedestrian Environment Review System (PERS) assessment is recommended. This system accesses the pedestrian infrastructure and ranks each route according to difficulty and suitability of use. A brief description of PERS is given below.

PERS is a software tool developed by TRL in conjunction with the London Borough of Bromley to assess the quality of any pedestrian environment. PERS can assist in the identification of opportunities to improve pedestrian walking routes, whilst supporting the effective targeting of resources. PERS allows objective comparison of the level of service for pedestrians along different routes to inform strategic decision-making and the targeting of investment.

The study would consist of four phases. The first involves the collation of existing information, including accident data, traffic flows and public transport provision, which has already been carried out. In addition, pedestrian flow data would be collected to supplement this information. The second involves a series of stakeholder meetings and interviews. Thirdly, a programme of pedestrian street surveys could be undertaken to develop an awareness of issues surrounding accessibility. PERS would then be used to audit routes, links and crossings in and around the High Street area,

including the accessibility for disabled users.

Disabled access depends on continuity. There are too many breaks in the existing facilities as they stand. Dropped crossings with appropriate tactile paving should be installed at appropriate locations. These should be installed flush with the existing carriageway to assist wheel chair access.

High Street – Medium Term Measure - Ferndale Relief Road (£1.7 - 2.8 million)

The following medium term scheme, which could be implemented within two years, will provide a solution to the congestion issue. It will effectively cut the traffic levels in half and remove through traffic from High Street, whilst still allowing access for those who wish to shop / visit Ferndale.

HGV's that do not require access for delivery / collection purposes, will be diverted onto the proposed Ferndale Relief Road, providing a

positive environmental improvement – reducing noise and air pollution levels. The potential for accidents will also be greatly reduced.

A detailed feasibility study will be required to enable any constraints to be realised including topographical or land ownership. The study should also assess the economic effect on the commercial viability of Ferndale.

In summary, the Proposed Relief Road Scheme will be as follows:

- The proposed relief road alignment starting at the end of Oaklands Business Park will run north towards Station Road, via a new priority T-junction arrangement allowing direct access for Blaenllechau traffic. The road will be 7.3m wide with a shared use footway / cycleway on the eastern side.
- The length of the proposed new road section will be approximately 500m, requiring junction improvements at East Road and Station Road.

- A northbound one-way system on High Street from its junction with Brook Street towards the Strand can then be implemented.
- The proposed one-way section of High Street will have a reduced carriageway width of 3.65m, allowing footways wherever possible to be widened to 3.0m, Parking / loading bays can also be accommodated on street.
- Amendments to the existing crossing facilities including possible removal will be considered since numerous safe crossing points will be created along the entire length of the one-way system. Crossing times will be reduced considerably allowing safe passage for pedestrians.
- Significant improvements in road safety and pedestrian / vehicular interaction is possible, especially if kerb up-stands are reduced and complementary road surfacing materials used. This will create a more informal High Street environment, where non-motorised users and vehicle movements can be integrated more easily.
- Reduction in the number of extraneous HGV's will have a significant positive

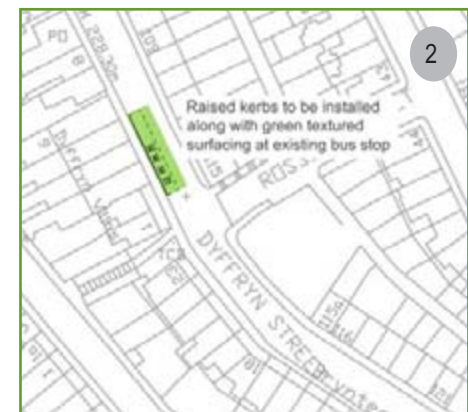
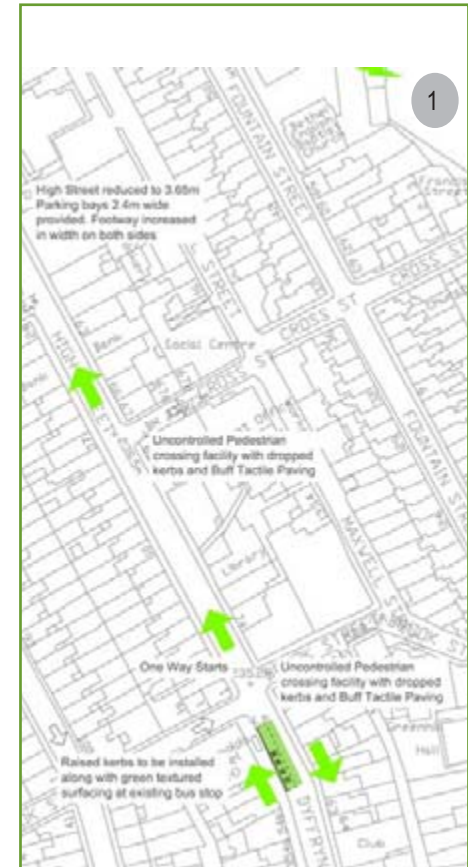
effect on road safety and will provide a dramatic environmental improvement – reducing noise and air pollution.

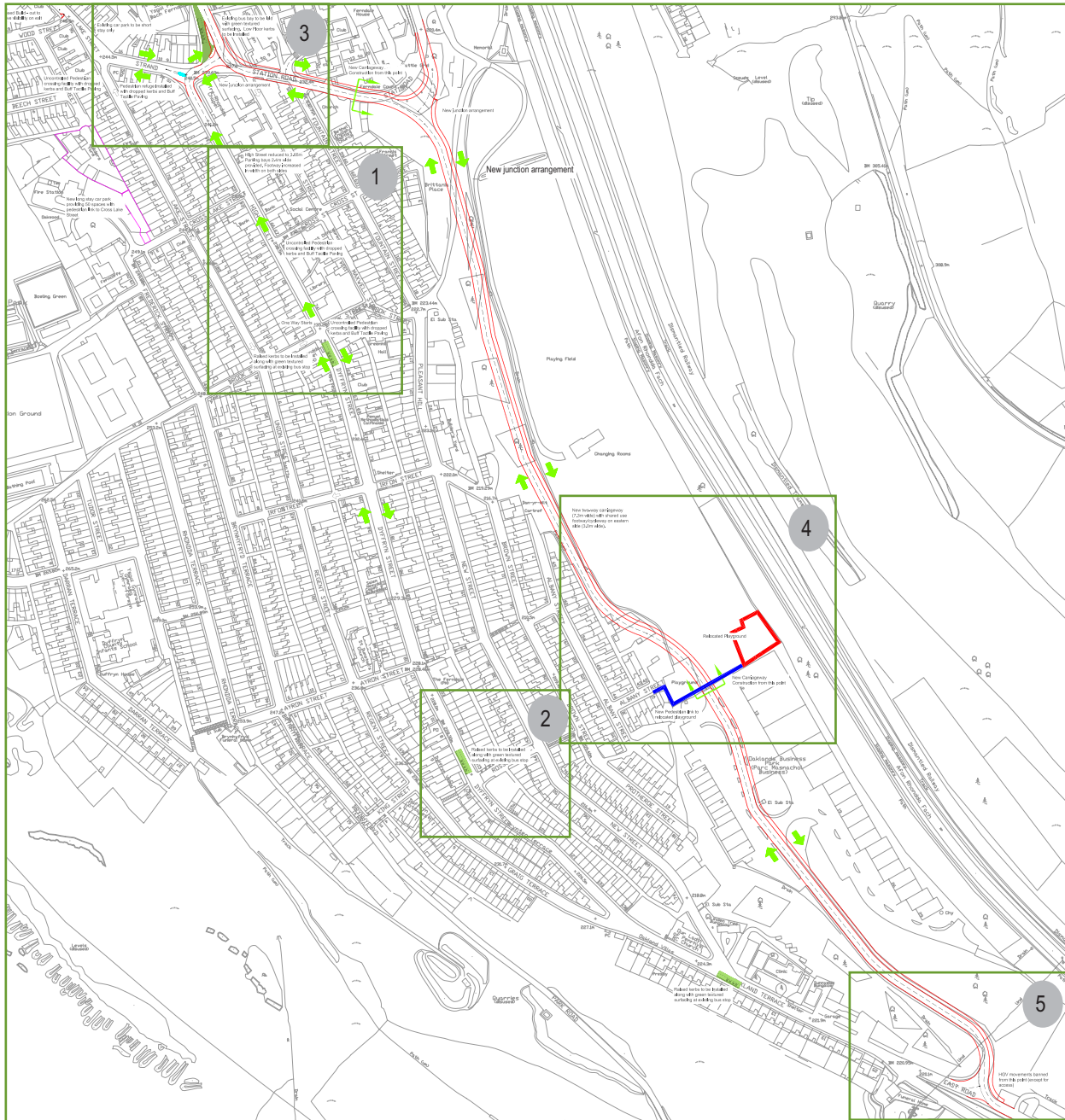
- Similar systems have proven to be very successful in other similar towns and villages e.g. Pontardulais in Swansea.

High Street – Long Term Rhondda Fach Relief Road

This relief road is very much at the embryonic stage; only feasibility studies have been carried out to date. It is difficult to predict whether or not this project will come to light, and it is envisaged that the scheme is at least 10 to 15 years away from implementation.

A “quick fix” has been considered; only construct the section of the relief road to the benefit of Ferndale. However, to construct this section of the relief road would be prohibitive on the grounds of cost. It has been estimated that the road construction cost would exceed £1.5m, since it is much longer than the proposed Ferndale relief road identified above. In addition, two river bridges would be required to complete the scheme. This cost as a result could escalate beyond £5m.





5.2 Enhancing gateways



Ferndale is important historically and geographically as one of a series of settlements along the valley. It now has an opportunity to enhance its own uniqueness and identity to encourage investment and continue to develop its sense of community.

Policy ENV 4.8 of the Rhondda Local Plan 1991-2006, adopted February 1998 prevents further coalescence of settlements by not permitting development which would have an unacceptable impact on the openness of the Ferndale/Tylorstown green barrier.

Although no specific green barrier has yet been identified, there is a similar sense of openness between Maerdy and Ferndale. The emerging Local Development Plan should reflect this by similarly not permitting development which would have an impact on this openness.

A tool for advertising Ferndale's uniqueness and identity is by providing Ferndale with a sense of 'entrance' - something, other than



the green barriers, that further emphasise the differences between the settlements.

It is proposed that at the entrances to Ferndale the possibility of a gateway development is explored with either a built form or series of signs and sculptures designed by local children and artists that help to advertise Ferndale as a unique settlement.

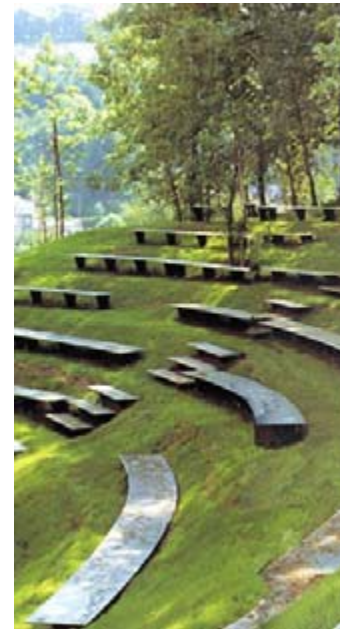
Similarly, there is an opportunity to revisit the business parks located at the entrances to Ferndale and to rationalise the underused facilities on the three sites - Highfields, Ferndale and Oaklands Business Parks - thereby releasing land for potential development.





Recommendations

- Amend Policy ENV4.8 to include a 'green barrier' for Maerdy/Ferndale.
- Create a greater sense of 'entrance' to Ferndale with possible new signs/artworks or a series of new signs/artworks designed by local school children and artists reflecting Ferndale's unique character including its artistic, and story telling culture, its unique town centre and Darran Park.
- Rationalise the provision on the under-utilised Business Parks, to provide new development opportunities and improve the quality and environmental performance of the business buildings.



5.3 Town centre enhancements

'Planning should promote public spaces and routes that are attractive, safe, uncluttered and work effectively for all in society, including disabled and elderly people' Source: CABE, By design – urban design in the planning system: towards better practice, 2000



Opportunity

Encourage more people to enjoy the centre by improving the quality of the public realm.

At the junction of the High Street and North Road there is an area of poor quality public realm. Being a crossroads at the perceived geographical centre for Ferndale, this will be a focus area for Town Centre environmental and physical enhancements. The aims of these enhancements will be to improve people's perceptions of the public realm, improve safety for pedestrians and make Ferndale Town Centre a more attractive place in which to live and visit.

The previous chapter identified several areas of poor quality streetscape in this location, in particular;

- The 'crazy' paving adjacent to the junction with Station Road;
- The raised, 'cobbled' traffic restriction area adjacent to the Maerdy bus stop;

- The landscape strip adjacent to this bus stop;
- The raised footpath adjacent to number 5 the Strand, and
- The highway works delivered as part of the one way system at the junction with Lake Street.

People's perception of this area can be improved by replacing the existing mix of poor quality streetscape materials with a high quality set of uniform materials that provide a safe, robust and attractive surface for people to walk on.

The bus stop area can similarly be constructed in this set of materials emphasising the priority of pedestrians in the public realm.

It is proposed that a pallet of high quality materials to be used for works within the public realm is identified and agreed with the local community. This uniform streetscape will help enhance the character and local distinctiveness of Ferndale as agreed with local residents.

Ferndale's Town Centre must provide access to everyday services for all users. This is a requirement of the Disabilities Discrimination Act 1995 and it is a requirement that any works to the public realm are designed to meet this.



Opportunity

Provide wider pavements and spaces for informal gatherings and meetings.

The landscaped spaces in front of the Ferndale Surgery have been identified by the steering group as poor quality areas detrimental to the streetscape of Ferndale Town Centre. Consultations with members of the practice have provided two key issues to be resolved; litter and security to the rear of the spaces.

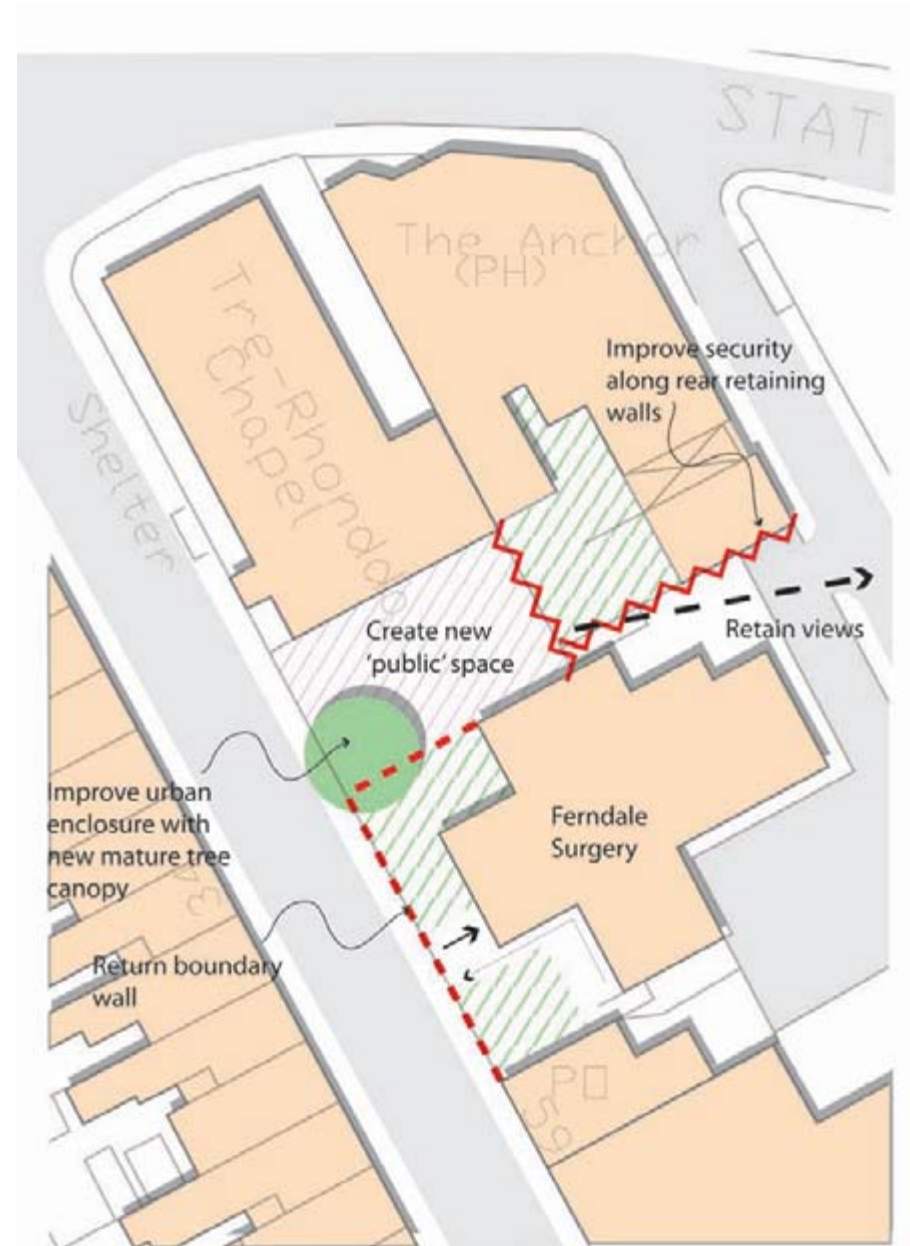
Providing a high quality space here would provide a much needed facility in the centre of Ferndale that can be used on a daily basis as an informal recreation space and provide a resource for town events on an occasional basis.

It is proposed that the front boundary wall of the surgery is returned to create a space adjoining the Tre-Rhonnda Chapel. Following agreement with adjoining land owners, a new boundary wall would be provided at the rear of this space to improve security for the surgery

but retain the views across the valley. Local schools and artists would be involved in the design of this space.

Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council will be responsible for maintaining this space and extending the use of CCTV cameras to monitor this area would provide an additional disincentive for anti social behaviour.

Proposals for widening the pavements and other public realm enhancements along High Street are considered in the transportation section of this report.



Creating a new 'public' space



High Street enhancements with proposed Relief Road



Opportunity

Reinstate the sense of enclosure with either new well designed, appropriately scaled buildings or by providing spatial definition with tree planting.

The junction of North Road and Station Road lacks a sense of enclosure in stark contrast to the rest of North Road and the High Street. The majority of the buildings fronting this space do not provide the space with an appropriate or safe urban form;

- The infants school is raised above this space. This has resulted in a brick retaining wall with metal railings fronting the space.
- Brynderwen Court has been located well away from the back edge of the pavement. This has resulted in a poor quality raised planting area fronting the space.
- Number 5 on the Strand has a painted gable wall with no openings fronting the space. The result of this is a lack of



surveillance on the space. Furthermore, there is an advertising board at high level which adds to the visual clutter of the space. The gable wall and side wall are poorly maintained resulting in a derelict appearance.

- In contrast to these, both the Tre-Rhondda Chapel and the Anchor both front this space but are constrained by the poor quality public realm works in front of them restricting pedestrian movement.

Improvements to the public realm previously described will improve people's perception of this area but will not provide a sense of enclosure appropriate to this setting as a focus at the centre of the town.

Long term consideration should be given to the build form surrounding this space and any buildings proposed in the future to replace Brynderwen Court or the Infants School should reinforce the sense of enclosure to this space and provide activity and casual surveillance on the space.



As an intermediate strategy it is proposed that the sense of enclosure could be provided by a well considered, high quality landscape solution. This would include the redesign of the raised planting area and landscape area adjacent to the Infants School and semi-mature/mature trees or new art works could be used to reinforce the street edge.

Thus, using an appropriately planted tree canopy, the street enclosure here can be reduced to between 1:6 and 1:2.5 to accord with the recommendations of the Urban Design Compendium.



Town centre enhancements without proposed Relief Road





Opportunity

Improve the appearance of buildings and signage improving Ferndale's identity.

Ferndale has a vibrant shopping centre focused on the Strand and the High Street. Shops and businesses compete with each other to attract customers and display information. Much of the historic built fabric remains but some has been replaced or enclosed with inappropriate or poor quality materials.

Ferndale should have an attractive town centre appropriate to its role in providing a service for a wider community in Rhondda. Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council's Neighbourhood Renewals Team has a funding strategy for providing enhancements to building facades which it has been trialling in Treherbert.

It is proposed to implement this façade enhancement strategy with the assistance of the Neighbourhood Renewal Team on a selection of buildings in Ferndale Town Centre along the Strand and the High Street.



Opportunity

Reduce the visual clutter.

Visual clutter results from too many competing elements in the environment. Street furniture (lighting, seating, bins etc.) compete with highways restrictions (bollards etc.) and shop signs compete with each other and street signs as well as satellite dishes, aerials etc.

What has proved successful in other town centre regeneration schemes has been the provision of a uniform set of street furniture, signs etc. This has often been specifically designed to enhance the distinctiveness of the town.

Community involvement in this process would help with this local distinctiveness and can be delivered through the design process involving local schools and groups in the design of street furniture and signs. It can further be used for new shop signage and shutters to link in with the façade enhancements.



It is proposed that, in appropriate areas, and with the guidance of Rhondda Cynon Taff's Highways Department a uniform set of street furniture and signage is provided and designed by local school children and artists.



Recommendations

- Generally, all replacement and all new street furniture (bollards, seats, signs, hanging signs, planters, lighting etc.) to be designed by local artists or children.
- Raised area in front of Brynderwen Court to be redesigned to be made secure with railings or similar and planted with trees.
- Landscape treatment works to include replacing the 'crazy-paving' and cobbled traffic restriction area with high quality attractive soft and hard materials including low level planters, bollards and trees as appropriate.
- Additional existing poor quality areas of landscaping to be enhanced with new surfacing, planting and street furniture from a palette to be agreed with residents.
- Highway improvements to include restricting parking and widening pavements along the High Street and providing safer streets and junctions for all road users.
- Prepare an accessibility audit and implement any recommendations.



5.4 Darran Park enhancements



Opportunity

To consider the potential of Darran Park and the surrounding woodland landscape and improve facilities for local residents.

Darran Park and Craig Rhondda Fach contains ancient oak woodland, is set within a natural cwm and provides a beautiful local amenity. The deep lake is the focus of a local story, provides a natural habitat for a range of wildlife and is used by local residents for fishing. There is an ongoing management programme for the lake and the woodlands.

The park has a range of other facilities. These include a well maintained bowling green (with a relatively new club house) which enjoys magnificent views; a flood lit all weather pitch and grandstand decorated by local school children; an enclosed five-a-side pitch; and an equipped play area for younger children.

The park is generally well maintained, however many of the facilities are displaying signs of wear and are subject to wilful damage. Recent

proposals for new planting and enhancements are also subject to wilful damage. The changing rooms and public facilities generally are in a very poor state and little used. These need to be replaced and facilities provided for encouraging a range of people to use the park and stay there longer.

There is a series of footpaths that wind through the woodland and around the edge of the lake. Many people use these paths for non-strenuous exercise and walking their dogs. It is important, in a culture reliant on the car, to raise people's awareness of their individual fitness and to provide a range of facilities that will encourage people to improve their fitness. There is an opportunity to provide additional incentive for this by re-considering the paths and facilities in the park.

It is proposed to provide a new park 'hub' to replace the existing changing facilities providing a range of facilities to meet the different need

of the park users. This will include a building or enclosure offering services for use by the park users including changing facilities, family focused café providing adequate storage space for buggies and prams, a gym, public conveniences including disabled facilities and other services to be agreed with the local community. This facility should be well designed and environmentally responsive.

The area surrounding the facility would be improved with new landscape and new facilities which could include a managed shelter for young people, storage and waste management, secure play area for toddlers,

Create a new destination hub in the park

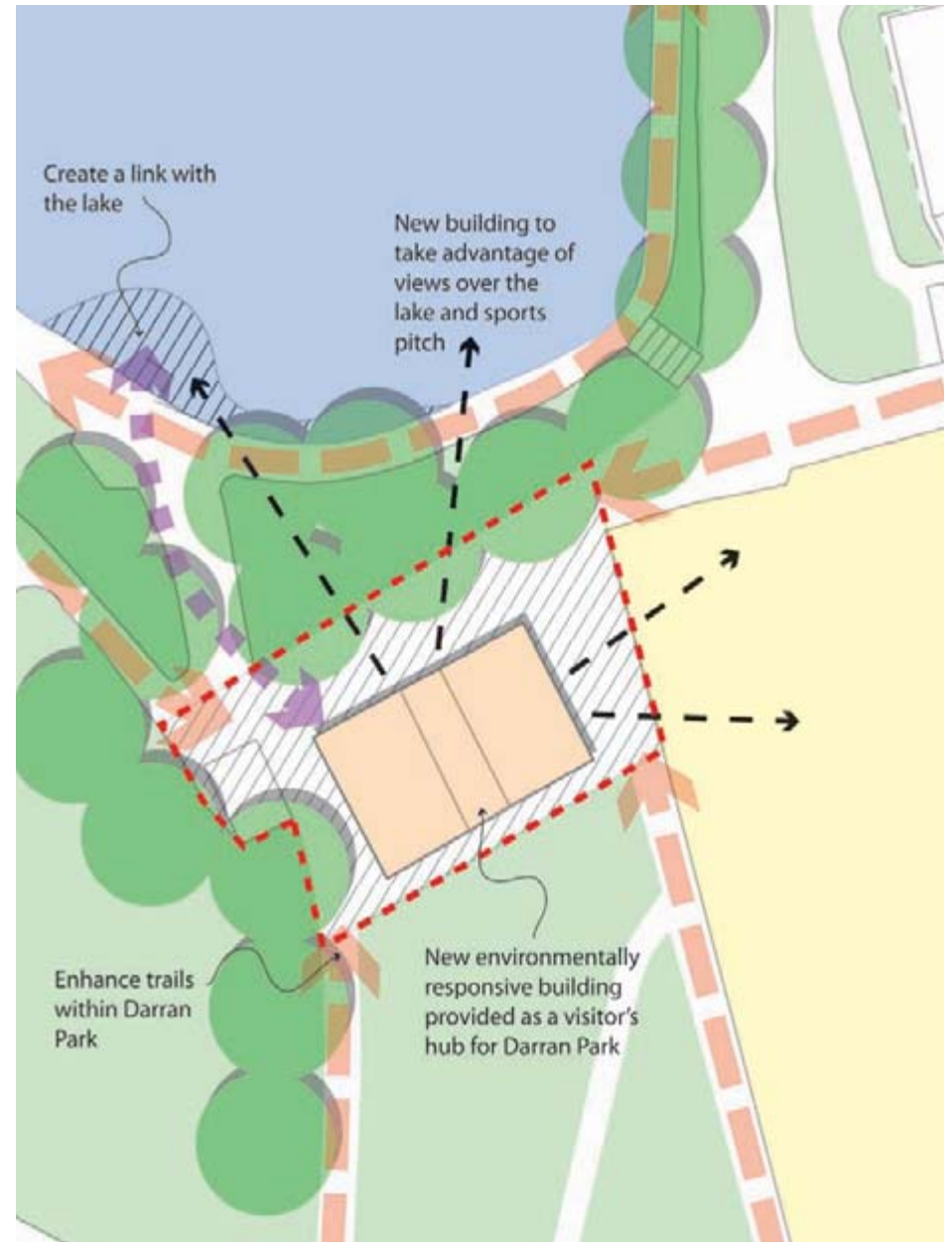


the potential for outside seating (as the climate improves) and a close link with the lake.

This facility would form the community focus of the park and the footpaths would be enhanced with landscaping and additional facilities and structures to encourage people to visit and use the park. This would include the development of 3 'themed' walks looking at local storytelling, history, sculpture and a trim trail with equipment provided to encourage people to exercise as they use the park. These walks would include one around the lake, one up to the kissing gate and minors walk and one at the park entry.



Careful lighting of the park, the cliff face and the woodland at night could be considered to extend the possible operating times for special occasions and provide a disincentive for anti-social behaviour.





Opportunity

To provide a range of facilities for older children.

Adjacent to the Brook Street entrance to Darran Park is an equipped play facility for younger children. This is mainly used by the children of parents while waiting for older children from Darran Park School. There are few facilities provided for the parents while waiting.

Adjacent to this play area is a poor quality hard standing area where the bathing pool used to be. This is edged with various raised areas and surrounded by a poor quality concrete panel wall. This is a substantial underused area.

It is proposed to redesign this area to include replacement play facilities for a range of children's ages and sports facilities for young people with appropriate secure enclosure and lighting. The surrounding area to be enhanced with new planting and seating



Opportunity

Raise the profile of Darran Park for local residents and visitors.

The steering group has identified the need to raise the profile of Darran Park for both local residents and visitors. With 'honey pots' including the Brecon Beacons only a short distance away providing a nationally known resource, Darran Park possibly has a more significant role locally, improving the quality of life and health of the residents.

It is proposed as part of the public realm enhancements within this strategy to raise the awareness of the location of Darran Park and its facilities by providing new signs for the park and its facilities and enhancing the routes to the park perhaps with a series of sculptures, planting or works that advertise the parks role in the community.

Leaflets and brochures with maps showing local walks and places of interest should be produced and provided, with other relevant



local information, at a Tourist Information Centre located centrally in Ferndale. Discussions with the Arts Factory have identified the reception area of the Tre-Rhondda Chapel as a possible suitable location for a Tourist Information Centre.

Local art works proposed as part of this strategy, sculptures, murals, signage etc. could focus on representing the park and its woodland, lake and facilities and raising people's awareness of it. It is proposed to continue to work with local schools and to offer opportunities to people with learning disabilities to deliver the projects within the park and to form links with other Community First Areas.



Recommendations

- Identify appropriate locations for and provide new signage and interpretation panels/events along routes to the park designed by local children/artists.
- Identify appropriate works for improving footpaths through the park including an accessibility audit focusing on creating a series of distinct, linked trails with interpretation panels/signs etc.
- Identify opportunities for improving physical activities within the park and its environs including connecting to cycle routes and promoting sport based activity
- Replace the existing underused changing facilities with a high quality 'green' building that is in scale and sympathy with the surrounding uses and utilises its natural environment to provide a range of facilities.
- Enhancements to the former swimming pool site to include equipped play facilities for older children.
- Review suitability and fitness for purpose of the existing facilities.
- Provide walking, cycling and other local interest information leaflets within an easily identifiable, centrally located Tourist Information facility.



5.5 Commercial Improvement Area (CIA)



'It is of vital interest to all who live or work in the area, and to those we would seek to attract to it, that our towns and villages are attractive and pleasant places in which to live and work. Physical regeneration is, therefore, a key element in boosting our local economy.'

Source: A Better Life by Boosting Our Local Economy; Economic Regeneration Strategy 2004-2014, Rhondda Cynon Taff Economic Regeneration Partnership, March 2005

Policy R1 of the Rhondda Local Plan 1991-2006, adopted February 1998 restricts the approval for retail developments to within the area defined on the proposals map only provided that the scale, design and external materials are in keeping with the character of the shopping centre and that adequate off-street parking can be provided. Exceptions are made for large out of town shopping developments and local shops.

Ferndale's Town Centre is vibrant but contracting. It also suffers from parking problems and safety problems associated with the volume of traffic. The proposal for relieving the town centre of much of its traffic by building the Rhondda Fach Relief Road will reduce the possibility of passing trade to the local economy. To mitigate against this eventuality the town centre must strengthen its position within the business community by creating an enjoyable place to work and shop now.

To enable this to happen it is proposed to focus the CIA to the area along the High Street and the Strand and to focus resources on improving the appearance of the buildings and the public realm within this area primarily and improve the safety of pedestrians. It is also proposed to broaden the appeal of Ferndale by promoting the park and providing additional parking facilities close to the centre.



This can only be achieved by working with local shops, businesses, employers and the community. A Ferndale Town Centre Forum has been established bringing together representatives of the town. This group needs an economic strategy for Ferndale focusing on improving Ferndale for its residents to slow outward migration and build an economically competitive centre which can adapt to changes like the Rhondda Fach Relief Road.

The Welsh Assembly Government have described their proposals for achieving strong, vibrant and well maintained town centres in their Strategic Framework for the Heads of the Valleys document 'Heads – We Win...', March 2005. Rhondda Cynon Taff have described economic regeneration for the area in their document 'A Better Life by Boosting Our Local Economy; Economic Regeneration Strategy 2004-2014'.

Thriving town centres need a mix of businesses which compliment each other and exploit new technologies. Ferndale needs to develop this by encouraging new methods of working including home-working and smart working. The large under-used business parks may be more economically sustainable and meet this need by providing small scale, high quality office accommodation.

The Steering Group, supported by the Rhondda Local Plan and other local studies have identified the need for providing quality visitor accommodation. The Anchor Inn currently provides the only en-suite visitors accommodation in Ferndale town centre. Physical regeneration will make Ferndale a more attractive place to live and visit and the future for growth of visitor accommodation should be anticipated and proposals encouraged through the LDP process.

New intermediate labour market models are now in operation in Rhondda Cynon Taff which bring long term inactive and unemployed back into a work environment. The Action Team for Jobs initiative is delivering help through its Job Centre Plus programme covering all Communities First Areas.



Recommendations

- Contract to CIA to the High Street and the Strand, boundary to be agreed
- Encourage business start-ups and home-working, small scale high quality office accommodation.
- Encourage smart working.
- Encourage the growth of the vibrant night-time culture and explore the issues and opportunities for reducing anti-social behaviour with local police and business people.
- Encourage all day activity in the CIA reducing the need for shutters to be down during daylight.
- Identify the demand for and potential providers for holiday accommodation.
- Consider potential refurbishment of under utilised buildings and brownfield sites.

5.6 Improve parking facilities



Parking Lime Street



Parking Lake Street

Opportunity

Improve public parking facilities.

Parking options are considered in more detail in the transport section of the strategy.

Following discussion with the Steering Group and local residents two issues were highlighted. Firstly, parking along the High Street is often opportunistic and conflicts with deliveries and services to the shops and businesses. Secondly, there is not enough public parking in the centre of Ferndale and the existing provisions on Lake Street and Maxwell street are usually full with cars parked there for long periods by local workers.

There are a number of vacant sites and derelict or under utilised buildings located close to the Town Centre. Lime Street has been identified by the Steering Group as a car park providing up to 50 spaces. Another site identified by the Steering Group for possible parking is the former print works and garages on Maxwell Street. Parking facilities would also need to be

provided for visitors in a site adjacent to the River Parkway along the valley floor. These sites, together with the existing public parking sites adjacent to the town centre, can provide a range of parking options for car users included long stay and short stay options to encourage car users to park away from the High Street.

It is proposed that a network of parking provision is explored meeting the different needs of the car users and that this network is linked to the existing settlement centre with safe routes for pedestrians. Possibilities for enforcing parking restrictions should be explored.

Opportunity

To reduce the reliance on the car and encourage walking and cycling in Ferndale by improving the pedestrian environment and promoting healthier life styles.

Ferndale's success as a vibrant commercial centre at the heart of a wider community is causing conflict between different road users. There is a need to provide convenient access to the shops and businesses for local residents and visitors travelling by car from outside the area. However, there is also a need to provide safe streets for other road users particularly the most vulnerable in the community - children and the elderly.

Proposals for relieving the number of vehicles travelling through Ferndale are discussed in the transportation section of the strategy. It is critical that with or without the proposed relief road the pedestrian environment in the town centre needs to be made more safe and enjoyable for pedestrians.

Links to the existing parking facilities and the new facilities proposed should provide safe routes for pedestrians to the shops and businesses encouraging people to leave their cars outside the town centre.

Opportunity

Improve access to public transport within the area.

Options for improving public transport provision in Ferndale are considered in more detail in the transport section of the strategy.



Recommendations

- Provide a new secure car park for up to 50 spaces including pedestrian stepped access to Cross Lake Street. Future pedestrian access to Lake Street through the former fire station to be considered.
- The junction at Wood Street would need improving to meet current highway standards.
- Proposals for the former print works building and associated garage buildings along Maxwell Street for possible re-use of building and/or additional public parking.



5.7 Gaps in teeth



Opportunity

Reinstate the sense of enclosure with either new well designed, appropriately scaled buildings or by providing spatial definition with tree planting.

The historical settlement patterns in the valleys include continuous terraces of two storey dwellings lining the streets. Ferndale is a very good example of this with much of the historical street patterns and built form retained. However, along Dyffryn Street there are number of gaps and derelict buildings which local residents have expressed a desire to see improved.



Typically these sites and, possibly, others within Ferndale would be developed as they become available and considered individually with little overall guidance to their eventual development form or character. A clear strategy is required to ensure that the scale, design and external materials are in keeping with the character of Ferndale



It is important to consider these sites making a contribution to the streetscape. There is a clear sense of enclosure to most of the streets in Ferndale helping to define its character. It is important that new development or spaces respect this enclosure.

It is proposed that a series of guidelines or 'codes' are prepared establishing development parameters which could form supplementary planning guidance for development in towns like Ferndale to avoid inappropriate development.

Opportunity

Provide new open space within southern Ferndale.

The gaps along Dyffryn Street, however, provide a visual relief to the built form of the continuous terraces, allowing views out over the valley and assist visual orientation. There is an opportunity to retain one or more of these spaces and to provide an amenity for Ferndale by enhancing it as a public space.



Consideration should be given to which gap, if any, would be most suitable for use as a public space. This consideration should include the gap's topography and access, what possible benefits could be gained from its use as an open space including access to views and better public facilities and how the street's sense of enclosure could be re-created.

Following discussion with the Steering Group, the site on Irfon Street has been proposed because the bus stop located adjacent to this space could be enhanced as part of the provision.

It is proposed that this site be explored as a possible public space which would include enhancement of the bus stop, new semi-mature/mature tree planting to re-create the sense of street enclosure and the creation of a high quality public space including possible play area facilities and new street furniture designed by local school children and artists.

Design proposals for new open spaces should consider the safety of its users particularly in sites adjacent to busy streets.

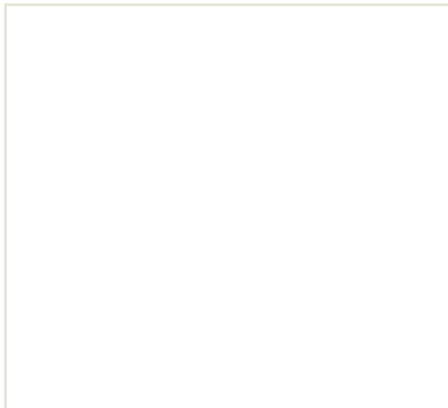


Recommendations

- Provide a suitable site(s) for high quality, safe, attractive and accessible public open space including possible play facilities, enhanced public realm, street furniture, planting and seating exploiting panoramic views and local views.
- Development of the remaining gaps along Dyffryn Street should be encouraged through the LDP as residential development provided that the scale, design and external materials are in keeping with the character of Ferndale.
- Provide an open space 'green' trail including artwork/street furniture designed by local children connecting wider open spaces to the town centre and Darran Park.
- The LDP should promote development of these gaps which delivers high quality affordable housing, green housing and home-working.







6.0 List of recommended actions

This section provides the recommended list of projects discussed with the steering group and submitted to Rhondda Cynon Taff officers for agreement in July 2006.

All the design projects included in this list will be subject to the planning and building regulation process and the appropriate guides for appointing design consultants. This is to ensure that the design and implementation process is undertaken in the most effective way and meets all current design legislation.

It is assumed that all the design projects will require an initial feasibility study to determine the viability of the proposal and explore options for delivery which should be determined in consultation with Rhondda Cynon Taff officers and the local community. It is hoped this information will help to ensure that adequate lead in and implementation time is allowed to ensure a successful scheme on the ground. It may be that funding this year is focused on preparatory work with implementation occurring next year.

Public consultation on these recommendations can range from keeping the public informed through to consultation and actual involvement in all or part of the design process. The process of bringing the public on board and taking them through a meaningful consultation or design process is a skilled and time-consuming process.

Advice in this area needs to be sought early so that the consultation/involvement can occur as an integral and meaningful part of the design process.

The proposals have been organised broadly within the Focus Areas identified in Rhondda Cynon Taff's brief and they have been colour coded as light green possible short/medium term and dark green long term proposals.

6.1

Focus Area - New development opportunities within and around the town centre.

Long term proposals

Short/medium term proposals

Commercial Improvement Area (CIA)

1. Review Local Development Plan proposals and government initiatives including:

- a. Contract to CIA to the High Street and the Strand, boundary to be agreed
- b. Encourage business start-ups and home-working, small scale high quality office accommodation.
- c. Encourage smart working.
- d. Encourage the growth of the vibrant night-time culture and explore the issues and opportunities for reducing anti-social behaviour with local police and business people.
- e. Encourage all day activity in the CIA reducing the need for shutters to be down during daylight.
- f. Identify the demand for and potential providers for holiday accommodation.
- g. Consider potential refurbishment of under utilised buildings and brownfield sites.

2. Retail Opportunities

- a. Encourage the vibrant night-time culture and explore opportunities for improving safety and security with local police.
- b. Encourage all day activity in the CIA reducing the need for shutters to be down during daylight.
- c. Identify the demand for and potential providers for holiday accommodation.
- d. Encourage the potential refurbishment of under utilised buildings and brownfield sites.

3. 'Gaps in teeth'

- a. Provide a suitable site(s) for high quality, safe, attractive and accessible public open space including possible play facilities, enhanced public realm, street furniture, planting and seating exploiting panoramic views and local views.

Long term proposals

Short/medium term proposals

- b. Provide an open space 'green' trail including artwork/street furniture designed by local children connecting wider open spaces to the town centre and Darran Park.
- c. Development of the remaining gaps along Dyffryn Street should be encouraged through the LDP as residential development provided that the scale, design and external materials are in keeping with the character of Ferndale.
- d. The LDP should promote development of these gaps which deliver high quality affordable housing, green housing and home-working.

4. Entrance Gateways

- a. Amend Policy ENV4.8 to include a 'green barrier' for Maerdy/Ferndale.
- b. Create a greater sense of 'entrance' to Ferndale with possible new signs/artworks or a series of new signs/artworks designed by local school children and artists reflecting Ferndale's unique character including its artistic, and story telling culture, its unique town centre and Darran Park.
- c. Rationalise the provision on the under-utilised Business Parks, to provide new development opportunities and improve the quality and environmental performance of the business buildings.

6.2 Focus Area - Enhancing the retail centre of the town through physical works and recommendations on management and promotion activities.

5. Doctors' Surgery

- a. Following agreement with the owners of the land and satisfactory completion of all legal requirements the area in front of the surgery to be designed to include new security treatment to the rear wall, returning the front boundary wall to create a 'public' space adjacent to Tre-Rhondda Chapel. This area to be landscaped to provide a high quality attractive space meeting a range of general and event based requirements.

6. Public Realm Enhancements

- a. Generally, all replacement and all new street furniture (bollards, seats, signs and hanging signs, planters, lighting etc.) to be designed by local artists or children.

Long term proposals

Short/medium term proposals

- b. Raised area in front of Brynderwen Court to be redesigned to be made secure with railings or similar and planted with trees.
- c. Landscape treatment works to include replacing the 'crazy-paving' and cobbled traffic restriction area with high quality attractive soft and hard materials including low level planters, bollards and trees as appropriate.
- d. Additional existing poor quality areas of landscaping to be enhanced with new surfacing, planting and street furniture from a palette to be agreed with residents.
- e. Highways improvements to include restricting parking and widening pavements along High Street and providing safer streets and junctions for all road users.
- f. Prepare an accessibility audit and implement any recommendations.

7. Lime Street Car park

- a. Junction at Wood Street to be improved to meet current requirements.
- b. Provide a new secure car park for up to 50 spaces including pedestrian stepped access to Cross Lake Street. Future pedestrian access to Lake Street through the former fire station to be considered.

8. Additional areas

- a. Proposals for former works building and associated garage buildings along Maxwell Street for possible re-use of building and additional public parking.
- b. Explore options for a central information point which could include a 'finger-posting' sign.

9. Building Enhancements

- a. Prepare proposals for enhancing street facades including shutters, signage, hanging signs, canopies etc.
- b. Engage with the new owners of number 5 to prepare proposals to improve its environ including ideas for the landscape area adjacent, generally improving the appearance of the boundary wall and rear buildings, 'opening' the ground floor visually and opportunities for the gable above including projecting images, cladding, removing hoarding etc generally improving this edge.

Long term proposals

Short/medium term proposals

Darran Park

10. Enhance links to Park

- a. Identify appropriate locations for and provide new signage and interpretation panels/events along the routes designed by local artists/children to the required standards. To include a focus on a green trail highlighting the towns historical, cultural and local character.
- b. Provide walking, cycling and other local interest information leaflets within an easily identifiable, centrally located Tourist Information facility.

11. Enhance footpaths within the park

- a. Identify appropriate works for improving footpaths through the park including an accessibility audit focusing on creating a series of distinct, linked trails with interpretation panels/signs etc. possibly including a trim trail - raising awareness of healthy living, a sculpture trail working with local and internationally known artists, a story trail working with local expertise, and a miners trail exploring historical routes out of the valley.
- b. Identify opportunities for improving physical activities within the park and its environs including connecting to cycle routes and promoting sport based activity including rock climbing and managing motorcycles/quad bikes access to the hills.

12. Park hub

- a. Work preferably with a local provider to replace the existing underused changing facilities with a high quality 'green' building that is in scale and sympathetic to the surrounding uses and utilises its natural environment to provide facilities including a café, buggy store, gym, toddlers play area/activity zone, supervised youth facilities, outside space, toilets, baby changing and changing rooms for use by the local community to become a new focus within the park. Satisfactory provision for services, access and parking must be made.

13. New play facilities

- a. Proposals for new equipped play area for older children age 6-11+ and sports facilities for young people on

Long term proposals

Short/medium term proposals

14. Improvements to existing facilities

- a. Prepare a review of the existing facilities to ascertain suitability and prepare recommendations for improvement. In particular, accessibility, the grandstand buildings, seating and toilet facilities.

Adjacent settlements

15. Considerations for adjacent settlements

- a. Although it is the focus of the regeneration strategy, Ferndale does not exist in isolation and considerations should be given to the relationship between Ferndale and its neighbours. For example, it may be beneficial to expand the public realm enhancement strategy and recommendations to incorporate Blaenllechau to form a joined-up approach.

Rhondda Fach Skills Centre

16. Feasibility Study

- a. Implement the findings of the recent feasibility study including developing an Action Plan to identify funding, building etc. developing partnership and governance strategies.

Community Appraisal (summer 2002)

17. Key local issues

- a. Develop more car parking facilities in Ferndale (see notes 6 & 7 above).
- b. Provide CCTV cameras in Ferndale. Feasibility required.
- c. Ensure Rhondda Fach by-pass happens (possibly outside the scope of this report).
- d. Improve the appearance of areas of wasteland (see note 3 above).
- e. Improve the appearance of the Strand (see notes 5 & 8 above).
- f. Improve the appearance of derelict buildings. Feasibility required, ownership and responsibility needs to be established.
- g. Encourage more use of the countryside (see note 10 above).

Long term proposals

Short/medium term proposals

Area 6 Regeneration Area Action Plan

18. IMD findings

- a. Ferndale is high on the list for Housing Deprivation in Rhondda Cynon Taff compared to its immediate neighbours. The regeneration strategy may recommend a stock condition assessment if one has not previously been commissioned from which recommendations should be actioned.
- b. Ferndale is high on the list for Accessibility Deprivation in Rhondda Cynon Taff compared to its immediate neighbours. The regeneration strategy may recommend a full accessibility assessment/audit if one has not previously been commissioned from which recommendations should be actioned.

6.3 Focus Area - Addressing the range of transportation issues affecting the town.

19. High Street – Short Term Measures

- a. Enhancements to the existing crossing facilities including anti skid surfacing on approach and localised restrictions to reduce crossing times.
- b. Dropped crossings / tactile paving at side road junctions to provide continuity to the pedestrian infrastructure.
- c. Bus stop enhancements, shelters where appropriate, low floor bus kerbing, and textured coloured surfacing. 'No Stopping Except Buses' Traffic Orders.
- d. Proposed Build Out at Wood Street / Lake Street Junction to improve visibility on exit.
- e. Pedestrian Refuge Island located at the Strand to reduce crossing time and create two stage crossing facility.
- f. Enhanced gateway features – "Welcome to Ferndale" etc.
- g. Implementation of Rhondda Cynon Taff experimental traffic order, aimed at resolving congestion at northern end of High Street. Requires comprehensive levels of enforcement.

Long term proposals

Short/medium term proposals

20. High Street – Medium Term Ferndale Relief Road

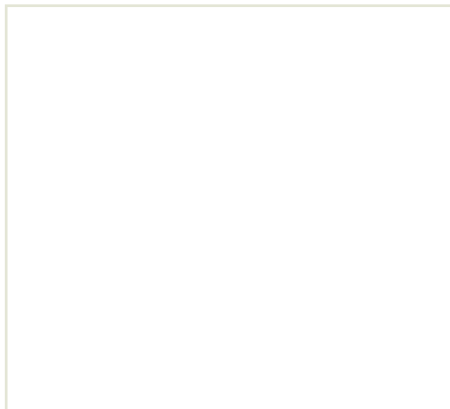
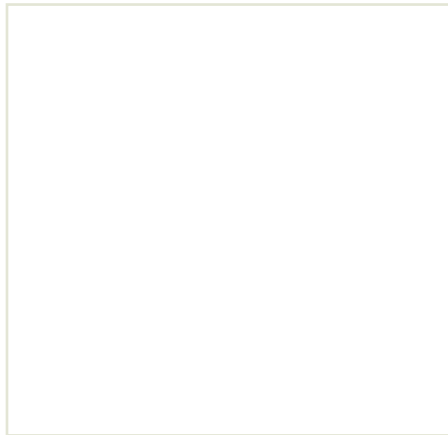
- a. A relief road connecting Oaklands Business Park with the northern end of High Street. The road will be 7.3m wide with a shared use footway / cycleway on the eastern side.
- b. The new road construction will be approximately 500m long, and will require junction improvements at East Road and Station Road.
- c. A one-way system (northbound), operating on High Street, from its junction with Brook Street to the Strand can then be implemented.
- d. The one-way section of High Street will have a reduced carriageway width of 3.65m, footways will be widened to 3.0m where possible, parking / loading bays can be provided on street.
- e. Amendments to existing crossing facilities including their possible removal as significant road safety improvements will be achieved.
- f. Significant improvements in road safety and pedestrian / vehicular interaction is possible, especially if kerb up-stands are reduced and complementary road surfacing materials used. This will create a more informal High Street environment, where non-motorised and motorised movements can be integrated more easily.
- g. Reduction in the number of extraneous HGV's will have a significant positive effect on road safety and will provide a dramatic environmental improvement – reduced noise and air pollution.
- h. Similar systems have proven to be very successful in other similar towns and villages e.g. Pontardulais in Swansea.

21. High Street – Long Term Rhondda Fach Relief Road

- a. This relief road is very much at the embryonic stage; only feasibility studies have been carried out to date. It is difficult to predict whether this project will ever come to light, and it is envisaged that the scheme is at least 0 to 15 years away from implementation.
- b. A “quick fix” has been considered; only construct the section of the relief road to the benefit of Ferndale. However, to construct this section of the relief road is prohibitive on grounds of cost. It has been estimated that the road construction cost would exceed £1.5m. However, two river bridges are also required to complete the scheme. These costs as a result could escalate and probably exceed the £5m barrier.



“Developing the tourism potential of the area”



7.0 Tourism

7.1 Focus Area - Developing the tourism potential of the area



Background

The development of tourism is at the heart of the strategy for regeneration of the Heads of the Valleys area. The Turning Heads strategy identifies five key priority themes, one of which is to create 'an appealing and coherent tourism and leisure experience'.

The Action Plan will be delivered in three key phases:

1. 2006/7: Major transformational landscape-scale projects
2. 2007/8: Renewal of key town centres
3. 2008/9: Development of the tourism and leisure offer

The regeneration strategy for Ferndale forms part of the initial three year, £30 million Assembly-funded action plan to start implementation of 'Turning Heads', the strategy for the Heads of the Valley which has a 15 year

life overall. As part of the three-year action plan, the Gateways and Greenways project will instigate environmental improvements including planting, landscaping and creating access routes as part of a £1m programme for the phased provision of river parks in the Cynon and Rhondda Fach Valleys.

The 2002 Community Appraisal identified, a need to encourage more use of the countryside and more use of Darran Park.



Clearly, any environmental and town centre improvements arising from the strategy and action plan for the present project will impact upon the image of Ferndale and create a **greater sense of pride** amongst residents and a more pleasant place in which to live and visit. The following improvements specifically, have the potential to enhance the appeal of Ferndale to visitors from elsewhere. Whilst these improvements are not specifically aimed at visitor markets, they are nonetheless highly appropriate for a community wishing to share its services, facilities and heritage with people living elsewhere:



Commercial Improvement Centre and Town Centre

- Improvements to roads and pavements to reduce traffic congestion and danger to pedestrians.
- New car parking facilities. Improved retail opportunities including identifying visitor accommodation.
- Providing attractive public open spaces for sitting and enjoying views over the surrounding countryside.
- Providing an open space trail including locally created art works.
- Creating a unique sense of place in Ferndale by providing new street furniture which has been designed by local artists / children (bollards, seating, signs, planters, lighting etc). Landscaping works throughout.
- A central Tourist Information Point or Centre

Darran Park

- Enhanced links to the park through signage, interpretation panels designed by local artists and children, and incorporating a green trail.
- Improving footpaths through the park and providing interpretative panels and signs with trails interpreting various themes: sculpture trail, story trail, miners trail.
- Making easy physical connections between the park and surrounding footpaths and Sustrans route 4.
- Develop a park 'hub' in a purpose built 'green' building including café, play area, flexible internal spaces for community use and associated improvements to access and parking.



In 'Heads we Win', the strategic framework for the Heads of the Valleys, the unique identity of the Valleys is attributed to the character formed by the communities and 'richness of heritage'. The need to increase confidence and aspiration within communities is also acknowledged.

Particular strengths underlying the proposals for Ferndale are:

1. The evident enthusiasm and energies of the local community
2. The strength in creativity within the community with the Arts Factory as the leading force
3. Local history and heritage – important stories to tell
4. Darran Park
5. The surrounding natural environment, local walks and cycle routes

The incorporation of public art throughout Ferndale will provide a distinctly different

character, setting the town apart from other valley towns and increasing the appeal to visitors. In addition, the intention to work with artists of international standing to develop a sculpture trail is innovative. Properly executed and promoted this project alone has the potential to attract day visitors to Ferndale.

Whilst plans to interpret the history of the town are entirely appropriate, the use of interpretive boards in the outside environment should be reviewed. These boards typically have a relatively short lifespan of up to three years and should, therefore, be used sparingly. Alternative means of interpretation could be considered including, for example, small permanent exhibitions or displays within the Park Hub, and within the Arts Factory building. Also local public houses and cafes should be encouraged to display photographs and works of art portraying local history, heritage and scenes; thereby helping to enhance the sense of place and local distinctiveness.

The opportunity to hold events which further develop local themes and stories has been identified by the community. Events of this kind appeal to local people and cultural 'explorers' seeking authentic experiences. However, this is a niche visitor market, likely to attract relatively few and the focus of events should always be upon community benefit.

In order to develop the interpretive offer it is recommended that the relevant community representatives within Ferndale should contact Herian: www.herian.org. This partnership organisation has been established in industrial Wales to 'bring alive the amazing story of the world's first industrial nation' and assists community groups and voluntary organisations in interpreting their own local stories. Herian offers free advice and assists communities with interpretive plans. Moreover, the Tourism Action Group of Heads of the Valleys Initiative has recently approved funding for five community interpretive plans. These are likely



to be spread between the five authorities and Ferndale might be eligible to apply for these funds.

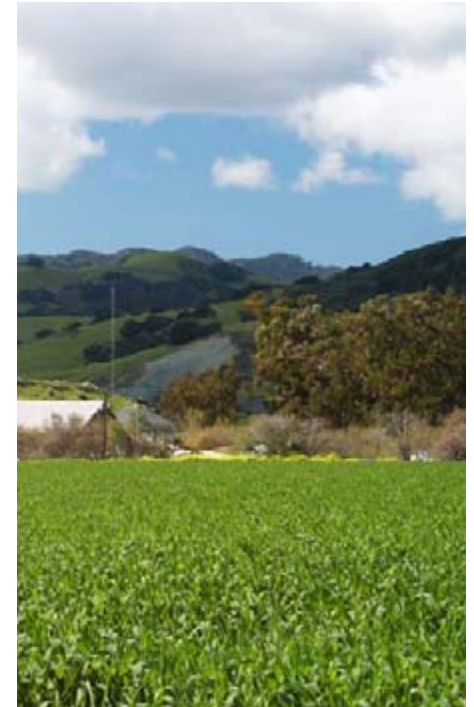
A Tourism Opportunity plan for the Heads of the Valleys area is currently in the pipeline and will be completed by September 2006.

Potential projects for the area will focus upon those inherent strengths of the entire Heads of the Valleys area which have been addressed in the Draft Strategy for Ferndale, namely:

- the importance of local heritage and its interpretation
- recreational activities including walking, cycling and horseriding
- accommodation needs
- the focus upon enhancing communities and building local appeal
- the opportunity for building day visitors

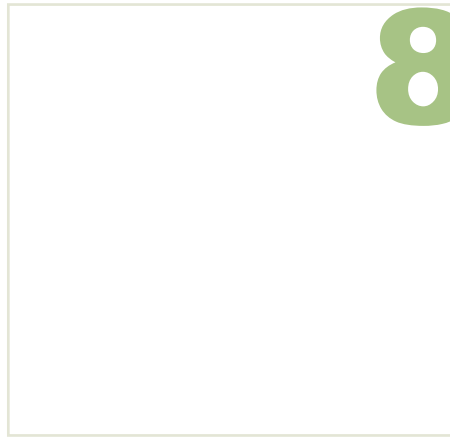
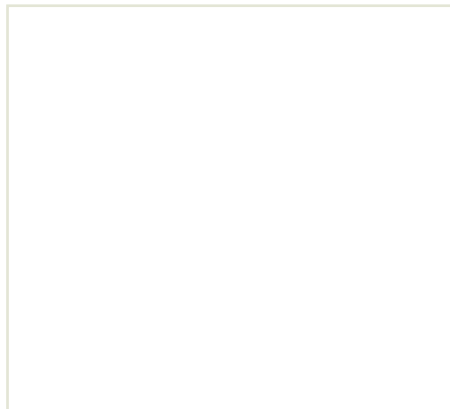
Clearly, Ferndale has potential to become a focus for some visitor interest along the Rhondda Fach, complementing the main 'honeypot' attractions at either end of the Valley: Dare Valley Country Park with its range of recreational activities and links to the Brecon Beacons, and Rhondda Heritage Park in the South.

However, it would be wrong to overstate the potential of Ferndale to attract significant visitor numbers. Whilst some uplift in the numbers of day visitors will arise following improvements, the demand for staying visitors will be negligible. Within the Valleys area there are communities that have greater intrinsic appeal to visitors, either because (a) they have already invested heavily in heritage product, (b) are highly important centres within the history of South Wales and/or (c) because they are easily accessible to main visitor markets. The most obvious examples are Blaenavon and Big Pit, Cefn Coed and the South Wales Miners Museum and Swansea Waterfront Museum.



Ferndale has the potential to provide further interest for cultural visitors to the Afon Rhondda Fach, and complement existing nearby attractions (Cynon Valley Museum, Aberdare, Rhondda Heritage Park, Pontypridd Museum, Pit Pony Sanctuary). However, the appeal of Ferndale will always be special interest / niche and by implication the numbers will be small. The focus for improvements must, therefore, be upon community benefit and lifestyle enhancements for local people. Any visitor income arising as a result of these improvements can be regarded as a bonus.





8.0 Implementation, Prioritisation and Costings

8.1 Introduction

This preliminary indicative cost study has been prepared by Davis Langdon on behalf of RPS to provide indicative costs, for the regeneration of Ferndale Town Centre, on behalf of Rhondda Cynon Taff CBC.

The proposal provides for various developments to site infrastructure together with associated soft and hard landscaping and the construction of new carparks, public toilets and a new sustainable pavillion. In addition, the proposal includes for the consequential demolition and disposal of a number of existing buildings and facilities.

The costs are based upon approximate quantities, costs/m², and historic cost data taken from Davis Langdon's Construction Costs Database.

The preliminary indication of cost has been split into separate categories as detailed in the RPS Regeneration Strategy as follows:

1. "Gaps in Teeth"

2. Doctors Surgery

3. Public Realm Enhancements

4. Lime Street Car Park

5. Additional Areas

6. Darran Park

7. New Play Facilities

8. General Allowances

Separate calculations have been included to cover costs of the following:

- Preliminaries
- Inflation
- Contingencies

The preliminary indication of costs has been

prepared to estimate the likely magnitude of costs that could be incurred in construction of this project.

It must be emphasised that this estimate has been prepared without the benefit of any detailed design information, surveys, investigations etc given the current early stages of the scheme. The estimate will be subject to adjustment as the design develops and further information becomes available.

Measurement details noted in this document have been prepared solely for the purpose of compiling the estimate itself and should not be used for any other purpose.

Exclusions:

- a) Professional fees - including all surveys, LA fees and charges
- b) Value Added Tax
- c) Land purchase costs including fees
- d) Archaeology
- e) Disposal of ordnance
- f) Asbestos survey and any subsequent removal
- g) Site remediation costs, including removal or treatment of contaminated arisings etc
- h) Radioactive/other specialist de-contamination
- j) Japanese Knotweed treatment
- k) Phasing of works
- l) Diversion of overhead HV electrical mains
- m) Fittings, Furniture & Equipment
- n) Third Party/ Neighbour/ Party Wall issues
- p) Future increases in Building Costs beyond 3rd Quarter 2007
- q) Upgrading offsite infrastructure works
- r) Local Authority Adoption/Drainage Agreements - Section 106, 278 etc
- s) Commuted Sums
- t) Any costs associated with Compulsary Purchase Orders (should they be required)
- u) Upgrading existing CCTV system, including works to incorporate new cameras
- v) Retaining walls

Works Subject To Further Studies/Clarification:

- i) Topographical survey
- ii) Ground investigation analysis
- iii) Survey of existing services including drainage
- iv) Condition surveys
- v) Party Wall surveys
- vi) Service diversions
- vii) Upgrading of existing services, sewers etc

8.2 Cost Summary

Element		Total £
1.0	Gaps In Teeth	50,450
2.0	Doctors Surgery	54,000
3.0	Public Realm Enhancements	155,400
4.0	Lime Street Car Park (50 spaces)	162,400
5.0	Additional Areas	50,000
6.0	Darran Park	614,425
7.0	New Play Facilities	19,500
8.0	General Allowances	125,000
		£ 1,231,175
Preliminaries - (includes for site location)	15.00%	184,676
		£ 1,415,851
Inflation Allowance: (Estimate priced at 3rd Quarter 2007)	6.00%	84,951
Sub Total		£ 1,500,802
Client Contingency	17.50%	262,640
		£ 1,763,442

8.3 Gaps in teeth - Costs

Gaps In Teeth

August 2006

1.0	New Bus stop; including installation, seating and end advertising panel	1	nr	3,000.00	3,000
2.0	CCTV camera Installation; assumed PTZ on a column, linking into existing system	1	nr	4,000.00	4,000
3.0	Mature trees	8	nr	2,500.00	20,000
4.0	Tree grilles	8	nr	500.00	4,000
5.0	Precast tactile flag paviours	10	m ²	65.00	650
6.0	Natural stone paving	77	m ²	150.00	11,550
7.0	Soft Landscaping; turf including imported topsoil and fertiliser	210	m ²	25.00	5,250
8.0	Bench seating	2	nr	1,000.00	2,000

8.4 Doctor's Surgery - Costs

Doctor's Surgery

August 2006

1.0	Precast tactile flag pavements	10	m ²	65.00	650
2.0	Natural Stone paving	84	m ²	150.00	12,600
3.0	Soft Landscaping; turf including imported topsoil and fertiliser	114	m ²	25.00	2,850
4.0	New Boundary wall; assumed 1 brick thick wall, facings one side, pcc coping	69	m ²	200.00	13,800
5.0	Modifications to existing boundary wall	61	m ²	100.00	6,100
6.0	Mature Trees	1	nr	2,500.00	2,500
7.0	Tree grilles	1	nr	500.00	500
8.0	Public Art - allowance	1	Item	15,000.00	15,000

8.5 Public Realm Enhancement - Costs

Doctor's Surgery

August 2006

1.0	Allowance for breaking up existing kerbs and pavements	650	m ²	10.00	6,500
2.0	Precast tactile flag pavements	60	m ²	65.00	3,900
3.0	Soft Landscaping; assumed dense planting	90	m ²	40.00	3,600
4.0	Mature Trees	4	nr	2,500.00	10,000
5.0	Tree grilles	4	nr	500.00	2,000
6.0	Block pavings to pavements	503	m ²	50.00	25,150
7.0	Allowance for modifications to WC facilities	1	Item	25,000.00	25,000
8.0	CCTV camera Installation; assumed PTZ on a column, linking into existing system	3	nr	4,000.00	12,000
9.0	Existing Façade Treatments; Number 5 Strand (Station Road elevation)	160	m ²	150.00	24,000
10.0	Bench seating	6	nr	1,000.00	6,000
11.0	Stainless Steel Bollards	10	nr	600.00	6,000
12.0	Public Art - allowance	1	Item	30,000.00	30,000
13.0	Cycle racks	10	nr	125.00	1,250

8.6 Lime Street Car Park - Costs

Lime Street Car Park

August 2006

1.0	Allowance for demolition of the exiting buildings	1	Item	25,000.00	25,000
2.0	50 car park spaces (1471 m2)	50	nr	1,500.00	75,000
3.0	Modifications to existing boundary wall	344	m ²	100.00	34,400
4.0	Directional Signage	1	Item	2,000.00	2,000
5.0	Allowance for the modifications to the Wood St/ Lake Street junction	1	Item	10,000.00	10,000
6.0	CCTV camera Installation; assumed PTZ on a column, linking into existing system	4	nr	4,000.00	16,000

8.7 Darran Park Enhancements - Costs

Darran Park

August 2006

1.0	Modifications to existing footpaths; assume 2m wide; resin bound gravel	1948	m ²	50.00	97,400
2.0	Bollard lighting to footpaths; assume @ 20m centres to one side of path only	49	nr	650.00	31,850
3.0	Allowance for the removal of 2nr existing portacabin changing rooms	1	Item	1,000.00	1,000
4.0	Construction of a new sustainable 2 storey pavilion unit; including an allowance for upgrading existing drainage	298	m ²	1,500.00	447,000
5.0	Natural Stone paving	182	m ²	150.00	27,300
6.0	Construction of a new pontoon	1	Item	4,000.00	4,000
7.0	Cycle racks	15	nr	125.00	1,875
8.0	Bench seating	4	nr	1,000.00	4,000

8.8

New Play Facilities - Costs

New Play Facilities

August 2006

1.0	Allowance for new children's play equipment to former swimming pool site	1	Item	10,000.00	10,000.00
2.0	Construction of new play area; including low impact ground surface	1	Item	7,500.00	7,500.00
3.0	Modifications to boundary wall	20	m ²	100.00	2,000.00

8.9

General Allowances and Additional areas - Costs

General Allowances

August 2006

1.0	Allowance for miscellaneous site clearance	1	Item	30,000.00	30,000.00
2.0	Allowance for temporary traffic arrangements	1	Item	20,000.00	20,000.00
3.0	Allowance for miscellaneous demolitions, diversion etc	1	Item	30,000.00	30,000.00

Additional Areas

August 2006

1.0	Demolition of existing garages to Maxwell Street	1	Item	15,000.00	15,000
2.0	10 car park spaces (260m2)	10	nr	1,500.00	15,000
3.0	Allowance for public information point (type and location to be decided)	1	Item	20,000.00	20,000
4.0	Demolition of existing WC facilities on the Strand and construction of new facilities including disabled toilets	1	Item	45,000.00	45,000

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