

Neath Integrated Territorial Strategy

An Integrated approach to Sustainable Urban development (as part of the Swansea Bay City Region)

May 2015

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Executive Summary

In an environment of reduced public sector funding but a continued need for creating better conditions for investment and job creation, through improving skills and infrastructure, the importance of securing all available sources of funding cannot be underestimated. EU funding has always been important to helping regenerate local areas, in the current climate it will be vital to maintaining the approach to revitalising local communities.

This strategy is needed because local stakeholders have identified that a significant opportunity exists in Neath to better integrate the range of proposed actions tackling economic, social and environmental regeneration from the public, private, community and third sectors. The mix of communities in the Neath area, the diverse range of businesses in and around the town centre and the unique natural environment makes Neath ideally suited to be a model for the **sustainable Welsh market town of the 21st century**. The publication of the Future Generations bill sets out challenging goals for securing the future well being of communities across Wales. An in depth assessment of need and opportunity identifies that Neath possesses all the key ingredients to achieve real sustainable development ensuring the well being of the widest cross section of local people.

Without this approach the risk will be that ideas for change and improvement would be developed, funded and implemented in isolation without addressing ways in which their broader maximum impact might be secured. Projects that are rightly designed to have a national or regional benefit may overlook their local context and for want of a small, engineered link may miss delivering a significant enhanced local impact. Local proposals can equally suffer from an absence of linkage and struggle to evidence sufficient scale of impact on their own when competing for funds.

All those involved are committed to identifying how their project links to others and as a result achieve a greater range of local benefits as well as collaborating on implementing a co-ordinated programme of change that maximises community benefit. This document seeks to set out the known range of proposed activity and draw out the impacts on city region and EU 2014-2020 operational programme priorities, as at Autumn 2014, in order to support future business cases for individual projects seeking funding support and enable an overview of the wider programme of change for Neath as part of the Swansea Bay City Region. The transformative range of proposed project activity is summarised under four key themes Economy, Place, Transport and Connectivity, Community - the linkages between the proposed package of projects and the proposed priorities for the City region and the EU 2014-2020 programme are also set out in a summary matrix.

All those with an interest in making Neath a better place to live and work will want to see this integrated strategy gather pace in delivering the exciting programme set out in the strategy and remain flexible in responding to new opportunities and challenges the area will face.

1. Introduction

This integrated strategy document brings together all the proposed actions planned by the public, private and third sectors to improve Neath as a place to do business, live, work and enjoy life. It represents the first real attempt to map and connect different aspects of economic, social and environmental development at a settlement level, outside the statutory framework of a local development plan, for the purposes of securing a holistic framework of interdependent proposals for change.

Neath already has lots of good things going on in terms of jobs, investment, housing improvements, transport infrastructure and service improvements in leisure and health. The recent development of a successful bid for Welsh Government Vibrant and Viable Places funding identified a need to draw together development and funding proposals centred on the Neath area, in order to produce a clear, coherent framework of change proposals.

All too often ideas for change and improvement are developed, funded and implemented in isolation without addressing ways in which their broader maximum impact might be secured. Projects that are rightly designed to have a national or regional benefit may overlook their local context and for want of a small, engineered link may miss delivering a significant enhanced local impact. Local proposals can equally suffer from an absence of linkage and struggle to evidence sufficient scale in isolation when competing for funds.

Underpinning this is a recognition by all that actions and activities within a defined geography are interdependent and would benefit from having, as a minimum, an increased awareness of each other's intentions. What continues to bedevil the promotion of a more "joined up" approach is an absence of a reference point and time to think and seek information beyond the understandable imperatives of one's own project.

The impending launch of the new round of EU structural funds 2014-2020 provides a new opportunity to develop a more integrated approach that will also benefit other funders when assessing the merits of a projects objectives to improve the condition of a place. As a collective, co-ordinated programme for change over a 7 year period the projects set out here represent a unique opportunity to transform the prospects for the town and its surrounding area.

As an integral part of the Swansea Bay city region, a key reference point for Neath proposals is how they address the City region priorities framework which in turn informs the Economic Prioritisation Framework (EPF) of the West Wales and the Valleys structural funds programme. Activities outlined in this plan may form part of larger, EU funded, regional projects seeking to achieve a similar objective in a number of places. They may also stand alone, offering a clear benefit to the relevant theme and action priority set out in EU documentation

EU policy has sought to promote greater integration in the delivery of structural funds with the most recent development of Integrated Plans for Sustainable Urban development a requirement of the Jessica programme.

The projects outlined in this plan for Neath will be potentially be funded from a range of public, private, EU and third sector sources – what they all have in common is that they are located in the urban area that is Neath and they hope to have positive impact on the people living in that area and the adjacent valley communities.

It is hoped that this document will support project applicants in developing their projects, support funding applications and help funders identify that their commitment, along with others, will be enabling a wider framework for change to take place during 2014-2020 and beyond.

In the context of projects seeking EU funding, projects will initially complete an 'operation logic table' and if considered suitable will be asked to move to develop a phased Business Plan based on the Better Business case model(five case model). This strategy is intended can help inform the "strategic case" in this model.

2. Context and needs

Neath is located at the centre of the South Wales economy. It benefits from direct access via the M4 corridor to London, the South East of England, other parts of the UK and Europe. A detailed socio-economic profile of the Neath area (Appendix 1) identifies the town faces some significant challenges in securing overall sustainability and further strengthening its resilience in addressing future challenges.

Taking an integrated approach to place improvement is about organising all available resources better to deliver improved services, regenerate an area and as a result deliver sustainable development. In considering Neath's current condition and future priorities for action, some "key tests" of what might be defined as a Sustainable settlement might be applied to any proposals for action:

- a) Resource consumption should be minimised;
- b) Local environmental capital should be protected and enhanced;
- c) Design quality should be high;
- d) Residents should enjoy a high quality of life;
- e) Equity and social inclusion should be increased;
- f) Participation in governance should be as broad as possible;
- g) The community should be commercially viable, i.e. not requiring public subsidies to maintain its performance on the other criteria;
- h) Integration of environmental and quality of life objectives

- a fully sustainable settlement would perform well on all the above, not some at the expense of others.

In other words, a sustainable settlement is one that is as self-sufficient as possible – grows much of its own food, employs much of its resident population, relies little on car-based commuting, retains a high proportion of local expenditure, is energy-efficient and generates responses to its own needs renewably. Progress towards such goals needs to be part of any integrated strategy promoting sustainable development in Neath.

History of the Area

Prehistoric Times to the Roman Occupation:

There is evidence of undated prehistoric settlements on the hills surrounding the town of Neath which were probably Celtic. Human remains were discovered twenty five miles away at Paviland Cave on the Gower peninsular dated 24,000 BC proving that humans lived in the region during the last Ice Age. Once known as the 'Red Lady of Paviland', the remains are those of a man. Neath was on the southern edge of the ice sheet with the Vale of Neath being a glaciated valley. Vegetation and animal life migrated to the area following the recession of the ice around 15,000 years ago.

The Romans used the name Celt (outsiders) for the unfederated European tribes outside of their empire and the inhabitants of the Neath area prior and during the Roman occupation were members of the Celtic Silures tribe. Nidum is the name of the Roman fort discovered close to the housing estate known as Roman Way on the west side of the River Neath, whereas Neath Town is located on the east side of the river. The fort covered a large area now lying under the playing fields of Dur-y-Felin Comprehensive School.

Historically, Neath was the crossing place of the River Neath and has existed as a settlement from Roman times, following the Roman invasion of what was to become the Roman province of Britannia Superior after the 1st century AD. The Antonine Itinerary (circa 2nd century) names only nine places in Roman Wales, one of them being Neath. The Roman occupation of Britain ended in the 5th century AD.

The Normans to the Present Times:

Richard de Granville defeated the local Welsh Lords and established a timber motte and bailey castle near Neath Abbey in 1129. This was later destroyed by the native Welsh Lords. A second castle was erected on the east bank of the River Neath - the site of the present castle, which is close to the shopping centre. The Welsh language name for Neath is Castell-nedd, referring to the Norman Neath Castle.

A small village with a market and a church was developed by the Normans circa 1150. This later formed the nucleus of Neath town. Intermittent warfare between the Welsh and the Normans continued for the next 150 years and so hindered any development and population increase. The town of Neath was destroyed by the Lords of Afan in 1184, 1230 and 1259. Peaceful conditions from the 14th century onwards allowed the village to develop and for commerce to expand. A river bridge was erected in 1320, trade flourished and regular markets were held.

The Tudor period saw the demise of the Marcher Lordships and the emergence of the gentry class of people who assumed control of trade and economic growth with a Portreeve and a body of "Councilors" to govern the town. Coal mining commenced around Neath in the early 16th century and copper smelting in the surrounding area at Aberdulais in 1584. Neath was still a small town clustered around its castle and church throughout the 15th and 16th centuries but huge changes were to take place in the 17th and 18th centuries.

The Evans family of Eaglesbush expanded the small coalfield at the lower Cimla which were greatly improved and enlarged by the Mackworth family from Derbyshire. The Mackworths constructed one of the largest and most modern copper smelting factories in the country at Melincryddan in 1695, the refined pigs of copper were transported to the Gnoll mills where they went through a number of processes of battering, rolling and eventual manufacturing into pots and pans. Neath became an industrialized town at that time with coal mining and heavy metal refining as a major source of employment. The streets of old Neath remind visitors of the pre-industrial nature of the town; Cow lane, Duck Street, Cattle Street, Butter Street, Bull Ring. Some of which survive at the present time.

The Neath Canal was completed from Neath to Glyn-Neath in 1795 followed by the Tennant Canal in 1824 from Swansea to Aberdulais. These led to an increase in manufacturing industry reliant on coal as a fuel. Brick making, ship building and chemical production on the towns outskirts and iron manufacturing at Neath Abbey. In 1823 Neath's population was only 3000 persons which increased to 4000 by 1849 and to 14,000 in 1880.

The arrival of the steam railways was a major factor in the expansion of industry and population growth. The South Wales Railway 1850 and the Vale of Neath Railway 1851 encouraged industrial growth. An industrial suburb was created at Melincryddan due to the construction of the Melyn forge and foundry 1864, the Melyn tinplate works 1864, Eaglesbush tinplate work 1890 and later the Neath Steel Sheet and Galvanizing Company works adjacent 1896.

Neath also became a prosperous commercial centre and fine civic buildings were erected. The old Town Hall 1820, new market 1837, Mechanics Institute 1847 where Alfred RussellWallace worked on his ideas on the evolution of man. Alderman Davies School 1858, St David's Church 1866, Gwyn Hall 1887, Victoria Gardens 1897. New streets were laid out - Windsor Road, London Road, Queen Street, Eastland Road, Cimla Road. Residential suburbs sprang up at Penydre, Tyn-y-caeau, Mount Pleasant and Hillside.

Later development included the Cimla and Westernmoor, Neath Abbey, and Caerwern.

Neath is a pleasant town to shop in, it has many attractions for the visitors and local alike. The Victoria Gardens is a Victorian gem where one can relax away from the bustle of shopping. Neath Museum which occupies part of the Gwyn Hall houses displays that depict the areas history. The Gnoll Country Park, once the seat of the Mackworths is now a magnificent country park. Neath Canal which at one time was the lifeline of industry has been turned into a linear park which offers boat trips in the summer months, although much of the canal requires repair.

The Castle Hotel in Neath Town centre was the meeting place for the founders of the Welsh Rugby Union. The inaugural meeting of the Welsh Rugby Union took place in the Nelson Room at the Castle Hotel on 12th March, 1881. There is a plaque outside the hotel commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Welsh Rugby Union, and at that time the Nelson Room name was changed to the Centenary Room. Still

displayed in the room are the plaques of the original eleven members of the Welsh Rugby Union.

Present Day

Neath is an historic town that has retained much of its former character and its culture. The previous borough council was absorbed into the larger unitary authority of Neath Port Talbot on April 1st 1996. An active town council promotes improvements to the town and is instrumental in staging events such as the Neath food festival. The town encompasses the electoral wards of Neath East, Neath North and Neath South. Neath is served by the South Wales main line at Neath Railway station, on Windsor Road. Neath bus station is at Victoria Gardens, where First Cymru provide direct inter-urban services to nearby Port Talbot and Swansea. The A465 skirts the town to the north-east and also provides a link to the M4.

Economic Character

The town centre contains a wide range of national operators and local, independent traders centred around an historic market. Occupancy rates are holding up well in comparison to other town centres and the further development of the retail offer in new developments near the civic centre will further strengthen the towns role as major centre.

The town is also home to a strong offering of professional services companies and remains a key employment centre with a clustering of firms on the Milland Road, Neath Abbey and Canal Green industrial estates. Despite recent improvements to the range and quality of commercial space in the town centre there is an evident need further improvement for start up , easy in /easy out space for new companies in the area.

Population

In relative terms, the population of the area exhibits a marginally older age structure than the Wales average, with slower growth than both Neath Port Talbot and Wales averages.

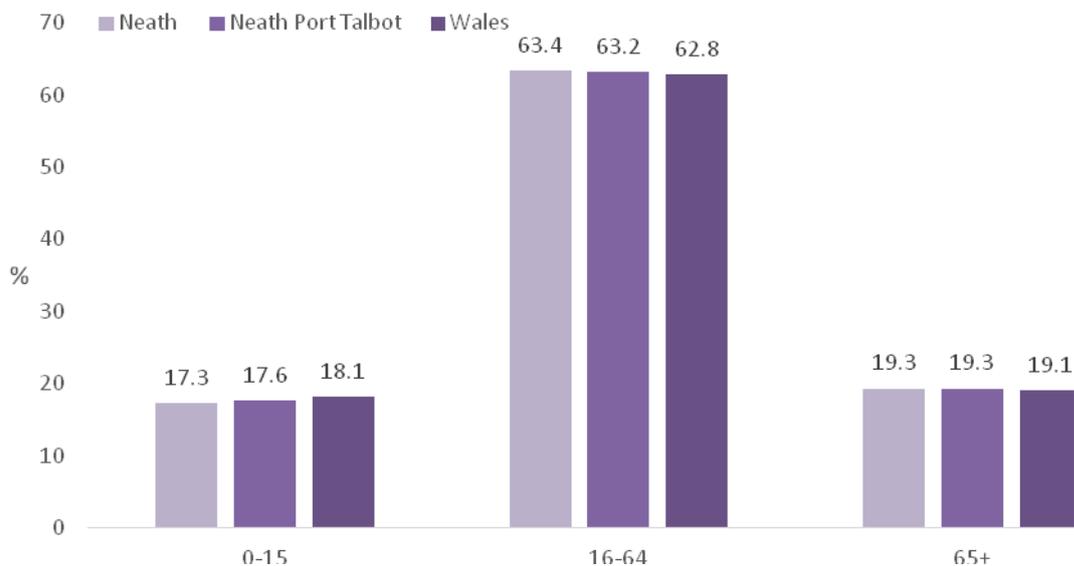
The population of the study area was estimated at 19,261 in mid-2012 (ONS), 13% of the total population of Neath Port Talbot: a 2.3% increase since 2008. The comparative increase for Neath Port Talbot and Wales were 0.4% and 1.7% respectively.

The variance in age structure between the study area, Neath Port Talbot (NPT) and Wales is marginal, particularly with regard to the proportion of persons aged 65 years and older, in which the difference is only 0.1% for the study area than the Wales average, and in line with that of NPT.

The age group 0-15 years shows the greatest variance between the study area and the regional and national averages. This category is proportionally 0.8% lower than the Wales average, although only 0.3% lower than the NPT average, indicating a slower population growth than on a national scale.

The LSOAs within the study area exhibit quite different age structures: the proportion of the population aged 65 and over was significantly higher in Neath North 1, Cimla 1, Neath North 2 and Neath East 2, and much lower in Neath East 4, Neath South 2, Neath South 1 and Neath East 3. In the 0-15 years category, Cimla 2, Neath East 2, Neath North 1 and Neath North 2 are significantly lower than the average for the study area, whilst notably higher Neath South 1, Neath South 2 and Neath East 3.

Figure 1: Age Structure of Population, 2012 estimates (ONS)



Housing

Neath's Local Housing Market Assessment forecasts a need for 4,100 new homes within the sub area up to 2026. This figure forms part of an overall housing need within the County Borough of 8,027 dwellings during this period (or 535 units per annum). Of this total figure, 3,100 social housing units/ other Affordable Housing for rent is needed and therefore it is important to maximise Affordable Housing delivery wherever possible. The projected requirements in the Neath area represent over 50% of the future whole county need for new housing. The type, mix and location of new housing required will have a significant impact on the character of the settlement and demand for services. It is hoped the range of potential sites identified in the draft LDP will enable overall impact to be managed in relation to distribution of new development across the area. Development at some sites potentially risks exasperating air quality issues unless accompanying local traffic management issues are addressed.

The wide range of quality of existing housing stock in the public and private sector has seen The Wards of Neath East and parts of Neath North included in a Neath East Renewal Area which has undergone major housing renovation and energy efficiency improvements since 2009. Neath Port Talbot homes also has a major programme of planned improvements towards achieving the Welsh Housing Quality standard. The neighbouring Briton Ferry East and West areas contain communities experiencing significant deprivation and housing quality needs.

Health, Prosperity and Education needs

The socio economic analysis (Appendix 1) highlights significant differences in “life experience” for the residents of Neath. The Communities First programme operates a targeted programme of anti-poverty measures focusing on specific communities in and around the edge of the town.

A Neath cluster delivery plan undertakes health promotion, skills development, employability and job search support projects seeking to close the gap between Neath’s, prosperous and most deprived communities. Significant disparities exist in educational achievement by children, young people and adults, chronic health conditions, physical and mental well being and labour market participation. Supporting this effort by creating a wider *integrated territorial strategy* focusing need and opportunity harnesses the wider capacity of the business and residential population in tackling poverty linking the physical and economic improvements planned for the area with those who might benefit most.

National Context

The strategy and proposed programme of activity closely supports the key national regeneration priorities set out in the Welsh Government “Vibrant and Viable Places” framework and the updated Tackling Poverty Action Plan ‘Building Resilient Communities’

outcomes of securing Prosperous, Healthy and Learning Communities as well as supporting the Growth and Sustainable Jobs, Education, Poverty, Welsh Homes, Safer Communities and Culture and Heritage of Wales themes of the Programme for government. The strategy is also consistent with the central organising principle of sustainable development set out in One Wales, One Planet.

Regional Context

As a key settlement in the new Swansea Bay City Region Economic Regeneration Strategy the future success of the town plays a key role in helping realise the vision for Swansea Bay.

This integrated strategy for the Neath area is aligned to the strategic aims in the City Region strategy and is complementary to other regeneration programmes and proposals within SWW. The impact of nearby key complementary projects eg: new Swansea University Campus will have cross border impact and opportunities. The unique contribution of Neath as a sustainable, viable settlement enhances the overall offer of the city region contributes directly to its overall competitiveness.

As the primary gateway settlement to the city region, from the valley corridor, it represents the first point of significant economic activity containing several major employment sites and sits at the connection between the A465 and M4. The South West Wales economic growth strategy also highlights the role of the town and, the coastal area between the town and the main city centre represents a key corridor of potential economic growth alongside the M4 and electrified rail link. As an employment and service hub for the Valley areas in the north of the city region,

interventions in Neath impact directly on some of the most disadvantaged communities in Wales. Effective transport, employability and skills interventions will be key in order to link need and opportunity at this measurable level.

The programme will have complementary impact on the key priorities identified in the Swansea Bay City Region framework. It supports the key objectives of linking the coastal living opportunity with the wider development of the Western Valleys area and growing and diversifying the economic base of the whole region. Importantly, the Neath programme concentrates on further embedding the manufacturing strengths of the region and the role of the town and its port in supporting future growth in the advanced manufacturing sector.

Local Context

Local Development Plan

The development strategy of the LDP is to facilitate growth within Neath **Port Talbot**, with a focus on the Coastal Corridor whilst reinvigorating the Valley communities. As key elements of the Development Strategy, the LDP makes provision for the majority of new residential development along the Coastal Corridor; allocates Strategic Employment Sites at Baglan Bay and Junction 38 (M4), Margam; promotes mixed use regeneration schemes **including** Neath Town Centre, and allocates the Harbourside area in Port Talbot and the Urban Village in Llandarcy (adjacent to Neath) as two Strategic Regeneration Areas, providing the opportunity for the redevelopment and regeneration of brownfield land which will be developed over the LDP period and beyond.

The LDP will support the delivery of services and facilities at the local, community and town centre level as follows:

Local level – within walking distance there should be accessible open space, green space, a local shop and community facilities. Open and green space and rights of way which are accessible to all should be available and walking and cycling routes should provide safe and easy access to facilities and public transport. The provision of local shops to serve every day needs will be supported.

Community level – would have easy access to a wider range of services, facilities and shops and will include district centres which the Deposit Plan will identify. Within these areas a wider range of goods and services will be promoted and new facilities will be expected to be located within the centres in order to sustain them. For some people these centres will be within walking or cycling distance while they would be accessible from smaller settlements by public or community transport.

Town level – would have the widest range of facilities and services and act as shopping, leisure, social, service and transport hubs for the surrounding communities. They will be accessible by walking and cycling for some and also by public/ community transport. They will be the focus for larger scale developments due to their good transport links and wider catchments.

Single Integrated Plan and Strategic Equality Plan

The Programme for Neath supports two key themes of the SIP:

- Neath Port Talbots communities and environment are sustainable
- Neath Port Talbot has a strong and prosperous economy leading to reduced poverty.

In developing this framework the impact on protected groups in the county borough has been assessed in line with the Council's commitments under its Strategic Equality Plan (2012).

Neath faces significant challenges in tackling deprivation issues amongst sections of the community and meeting evidenced housing need. The current range and level of job and training opportunities in the local economy and the housing provision available does not meet the current and projected needs of the local population and forecast in migration.

The current local response to this is a series of unconnected, confirmed. The LDP seeks to encourage the development of an integrated community in Neath but and potential project proposals in the town does not propose arrangements for a co-ordinated implementation of this approach. Components of a wider programme do not currently benefit from a defined relationship to each other in terms of securing maximum linkages between them and securing resulting additional outcomes for local people.

A system of joint planning, implementation, monitoring and review of proposals set out in this wider strategy and programme is required. This would ensure the co-ordination of a range of stakeholders involved in delivering specific aspects, within their respective specialism and pay due regard to other components thus facilitating the additional outputs and outcomes projected by the programme.

The presence of housing, employment and transport services alongside community advice, information, employment advice and training will deliver the coordinated implementation and additional value required. Servicing and sustaining active collaboration with major employers, small business representative organisations and the third sector will be a key facet to securing the desired benefits, providing a structure that will take a long term view of the settlement towards managing its continuing sustainability.

Massive strides are being made to utilise improve green infrastructure in the town in including Wales' first cycling and walking guide, large scale tree planting, green corridors and bio diversity protection measures. A high degree of certainty around implementation exists due the fact that much of the land and buildings involved are in public ownership

Neath Town Centre – the focus for commercial, administrative and cultural activity for the surrounding communities. The town is benefitting from investment in its public realm through the Convergence programme which is helping to improve the image

and function of the town centre and upgrading and new development of commercial buildings in the town.

EU Structural Funds 2014-2020

The 2014-20 Welsh Programmes will put balanced sustainable development as a central organising principle and will support the overall Welsh Government aim of improving the lives of people in Wales:

“healthy people living productive lives in a more prosperous and innovative economy; safer and more cohesive communities, with lower levels of poverty and greater equality; a resilient environment with more sustainable use of our natural resources and a society with a vital sense of its own culture and heritage.”

The 2014-2020 ERDF and ESF Programmes will help create an environment which will support and underpin economic growth and jobs. It is clear that future EU programme resources will need to be more concentrated if they are to have a greater transformative effect on Wales’ economy and labour market, but to have a transformative effect they cannot act alone. Structural funds alone cannot address the structural weaknesses or take full advantage of the emerging opportunities in the Welsh economy and labour market. But in helping create the right environment for a much bigger investment machinery, including the private and voluntary sector, genuine transformational impact becomes more achievable. The draft Operational framework for 2014 -2020 sets out a number of thematic priorities that aim to address issues of business competitiveness, skills and infrastructure. The proposed Sustainable Urban development theme summarises the preferred approach:

Decline of communities across Wales and lack of infrastructure investment in urban areas a barrier to sustainable urban development. Many of these areas suffer from poor physical infrastructure, under-developed tourism or natural assets and a lack of suitable or attractive premises for businesses as well as wider issues of low skills and economic inactivity. An integrated approach is therefore desirable that considers all elements together, but at the same time does not duplicate provision. A key element of this will need to be a prioritisation process which identifies growth opportunities for specific sites, rather than seeking employment growth everywhere. Need to focus on areas with employment growth potential rather than solely on deprivation; infrastructure investment can be a catalyst for integrated schemes and subsequent private sector investment and employment growth. Need to join up disparate investments in infrastructure within urban areas (e.g. tourism, regeneration, sites and premises, etc.) as part of an integrated plan (through delivering along the principles set out in the ERDF legislation for Sustainable Urban Development -SUD).

(Draft EU Operational Programme West Wales and the Valleys 2014-2020)

The framework goes onto highlight ...

If coordinated with other activities, an integrated package of support for the regeneration of a place can be underpinned through a single (or small number of) investment(s) in physical infrastructure or improved connectivity. These elements will be supported under Priority Axis 4, and where such investments are supported they

*will be expected to be a prioritised part of an **integrated territorial strategy** in line with the principles for Sustainable Urban Development. Furthermore, they should demonstrate how that investment will complement other initiatives (e.g. skills investments, local labour markets, business investment, etc).*

Broader EU context

In October 2011, the European Commission adopted *legislative proposals* for EU cohesion policy for 2014-2020. The new proposals are designed to ensure that EU investment is targeted on the Commission's long term goals for growth and jobs and aim to *harmonise the rules* related to different European Funds. EU Cohesion Policy invests in areas such as energy efficiency; training; research and innovation; transport; support for Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs); renewable energy; and co-operation between European regions. The Commission is proposing changes to the Cohesion Policy for 2014-2020 in order to deliver the Europe 2020 Strategy objectives with a *greater focus on results and positive outcomes* and to *maximise the impact* of European Funding. One aspect of the cohesion policy is promoting social cohesion and tackling issues such as social and economic deprivation.

In an effort to reinforce territorial cohesion the Commission believes that European *cities* have the potential to make a much larger contribution to policies for growth, social cohesion and environmental sustainability. To this end it is proposing that a **minimum of 5% of the European Regional Development Fund** resources for each Member State for 2014-2020 should be invested in integrated actions for **sustainable urban development** with the management and implementation delegated, where appropriate to cities (under Article 7, paragraph 2 of the proposed ERDF regulation).

An integrated territorial strategy

There is an 'Operational Programme' for each region of the EU which sets out the region's priorities for delivering European funding (e.g. the structural funds) and the expected impact of the investment. In Wales the West Wales and the Valleys programme 2014-2020 sets out the key priorities (summary attached at Appendix 1). Funding for an integrated territorial strategy can be financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF) and Cohesion Fund. The purpose of this approach is to create degree of flexibility across funding streams. It is arguable that currently EU structural funding has tended to be somewhat inflexible with strict regulations as to the type of areas that the funding should support. An Integrated Territorial strategy aims to promote greater flexibility/cross-funding to promote an integrated approach to addressing issues within a specific area.

A common and central feature of integrated strategies for sustainable urban development are improvements in connectivity and investing in business, tourism and heritage infrastructure. The aim for investments in the connectivity to and from key urban centres, and in the physical infrastructure offer (for businesses and visitors) within those centres, is to create new territorial opportunities, including inward investment. The challenge is to ensure that investment does not happen in

isolation but opens up opportunities for regeneration and encourages greater private sector investment).

WEFO are keen to ensure integrated territorial strategies are not only about securing and spending of EU funds and are therefore encouraging the use of existing economic strategies rather than creating new ones. This should help ensure genuine integration of any supported actions cross-economy rather than just with other ESI funds. For example investment in housing, healthcare, education and inward investment can all be key territorial drivers and would not feature in an approach that focussed solely on spending ESI funds.

A clear role for appropriate regional and urban authorities in helping plan and deliver the programmes will be encouraged, building on the collaboration developed during 2007-2013. A role for regional and urban authorities in developing and prioritising key opportunities will help in demonstrating a clear strategic fit to the Managing Authority and can be supported through the use of Technical Assistance.

It is envisaged that all parts of the ERDF programme being able to support integrated strategies for sustainable urban development. The strategic physical infrastructure investments under Priority 4 will be wholly delivered in accordance with the principles for Sustainable Urban Development as they are key drivers for integrated territorial strategies. :

There are three key elements of the Integrated Territorial approach – an integrated development strategy; a package of actions to be implemented; and co-ordinating governance arrangements

1. An integrated territorial development strategy: a ‘designated territory’ should have an *integrated territorial development strategy*. The ‘designated territory’ could, for example, be a specific geographic area with a region, for example, a city such as Swansea or could be areas of deprivation within that city (or could focus on cross-border city co-operation) An integrated territorial development strategy can be defined as a general framework of co-ordination between governmental bodies (including local and regional authorities) and other stakeholders (private businesses, the community and voluntary sector, service users) to create a common economic, social and environmental vision for an area. The Swansea Bay City region strategy provides this at the regional level, this strategy seeks to complement this at the sub region level.

2. A package of actions to be implemented: these actions should contribute to the thematic objectives of the regional Operating Programme as well as the objectives of the territorial strategy (e.g. tackling urban deprivation, supporting SME’s; improving the environment and promoting energy efficiency). Combination of ERDF and ESF is encouraged so that “soft investments” (e.g. skills support for people who are unemployed, grants for small community groups etc.) are linked to “hard investments” (e.g. physical infrastructure investment).- Sections 3, 4 and 5 set out below

3. Governance arrangements: Ultimately the ‘Managing Authority’ for the Operational Programme (in Wales, the Wales European Funding office – WEFO) will

be responsible for managing and implementing the operations of any Integrated Territorial approach seeking to utilise European Structural investment. In order to ensure regional and local integration the governance arrangements for the Swansea Bay city region and the Neath Port Talbot regeneration partnership will be the reference points for approval and monitoring of progress of this strategy – Section 8.

Research suggests that the most successful EU Programmes (e.g. URBAN II) associated with an effective integrated approach are ones which involve a **broad range of local partners** (including the private and voluntary and community sectors, citizens), a **community-led approach** that can provide an input into identifying local needs and priorities and the necessary responses.

City region prioritisation

The Swansea Bay City Region Board is making good progress in delivering the Economic Regeneration Strategy and are developing a portfolio of schemes to support with a view to commissioning schemes if there are gaps in delivering against the five Strategic Aims of the Strategy. This Neath Integrated Territorial Strategy reflects some of the schemes that will deliver the Swansea Bay City Region Strategic Aims, but also seeks to capture the range of proposals under development in the Neath area that may not currently feature in the Swansea Bay City Region portfolio of schemes.

Neath Integrated Territorial Strategy

Local stakeholders have identified that a unique opportunity exists to better integrate the range of proposed actions tackling economic, social and environmental development from the public, private, community and third sectors. Development of new retail premises in the heart of the town centre, continuing investment in housing, improvements in bus and rail transport and reconfigured health and education services all combine to support a strong programme of private sector investment in renewable energy, advanced manufacturing and logistics.

All those involved are committed to identifying how their project links to others and as a result achieve a greater range of local benefits and collaborate on implementing a co-ordinated programme of change that maximises community benefit. An in depth assessment of need highlights the key issues facing the settlement and points to the type of response required. Some proposals exist which will help address these issues and others require further development This document seeks to set out the known range of proposed activity and draw out the impacts on city region and EU 2014-2020 operational programme priorities, as at Autumn 2014. It also highlights several “opportunity” gap projects that require further development in addressing identified needs. The main purpose of the Integrated Territorial strategy is to support future business cases for individual projects seeking funding support and enable an overview of the wider programme for Neath as part of the Swansea Bay City Region. The range of proposed project activity is summarised in the following sections of this strategy under four key themes Economy, Place, Transport and Connectivity, Community - the linkages between the proposed package of projects ,and the proposed priorities for the City region, the EU 2014-2020 programme and the key elements of a sustainable settlement are set out in a summary matrix in Section 6

3. Economy

Regional and local economic context

In July 2013, Swansea Bay was launched as Wales' first City Region, to boost investment and job opportunities. The Swansea Bay City Region includes the Local Authority areas of Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire, City and County of Swansea and Neath Port Talbot.

The identification of the City Region has emerged as a result of a report commissioned by the Welsh Government highlighting that economic growth increasingly happens in regions centred on a city, attracting higher skilled jobs and pay. The City Region concept will remove existing administrative boundaries between Local Authorities to create a central business area. The approach will create a larger and more efficient labour market and better prospects for job creation, attracting inward investment and innovation to create additional value added to the local economy. The approach also offers better scope for planning housing, transport, support for business and other services.

This strategic framework looks to support South West Wales and its future economic development. The New South West Wales (NSWW) represents an ambitious new economic growth plan for South West Wales. The strategy found that despite investment into infrastructure within the area, the region is under performing and focuses on the most important strategic challenges the region faces. The long term vision is for economic success, to allow South West Wales to be a confident, ambitious and connected City Region, recognised internationally for its emerging Knowledge and Innovation economy.

The framework comprises of five complementary Strategic aims:

1. Business Growth, Retention and Specialisation.

This includes;

- Providing tailored business and support for retention and growth;
- Supporting large-scale existing major employers across SWW, within both the public and private sectors;
- Developing a coherent and consistently first rate inward investment;
- Developing a more entrepreneurial culture across the City-Region;
- Encouraging a more dynamic and sustainable start-up market.

2. Skilled and Ambitious for long-term success.

This includes;

- Improving attainment and ambition in our low performing schools;
- Ensuring further and higher education provision in the City-Region offers flexible
- support and aligned to needs of employers;
- Promote awareness of the value of up-skilling;

3. Maximising job creation for all.

This includes;

- Supporting workforce re-entry amongst those who are economically inactive;
- Local enterprise development;
- Increasing job opportunities by supporting employment growth within the indigenous business stock;
- Establishing a co-ordinated programme of work experience placements and formal apprenticeships;

4. Knowledge Economy and Innovation.

This includes:

- Maximising the long-term potential of the new Science and Innovation Campus at Swansea University;
- Developing a long-term strategic approach to nurturing new businesses;

5. Distinctive Places and Competitive Infrastructures.

This includes;

- Developing and implementing a concerted framework for the engagement of visitor and investor audiences;
- Investing in the coordination of spatial planning to establish a roadmap for targeted development of land, property, and infrastructure;
- Engaging local communities, businesses, and associated stakeholders such as housing associations in local visioning;
- Developing a competitive Next Generation Broadband infrastructure across all parts of the City-Region;
- Empowering the community and voluntary sector to take a role in development, delivery and testing of new approaches to public service delivery.

Neath Port Talbot Single Integrated Plan: Working in Partnership (2013-2023)

Incorporating the vision and guiding principles of the Community Plan, the Single Integrated Plan (SIP) sets out the Council's vision for Neath Port Talbot.

The Plan's vision is to; 'Create a Neath Port Talbot where everyone has an equal opportunity to be healthier, happier, safer and prosperous'.

The Plan outlines steps to protect and improve local services and support communities over the period 2013-2023 and prioritises action in the following areas;

-Children and Young People –working to ensure that children and young people get the best possible start in life and achieve their potential.

-Anti-poverty –supporting families on low incomes, prioritising mitigating impacts of welfare reform and make best use of available European funding.

-Health inequities - working to integrate local health and social care services for older and disabled people, with a strong focus on enabling people to retain or regain their independence.

-Transport - identifying transport issues locally and explore how these might be addressed through local, regional and national mechanisms.

The Plan has 5 main outcomes to achieve the vision. Under each outcome, a list of measures and steps are detailed; of particular relevance to this section of the Neath framework is:

Outcome 4 - Prosperous:

Neath Port Talbot has a strong and prosperous economy leading to reduced poverty.

The outcome aims to improve our local economy and help reduce poverty, addressing the loss of industry within the area and the challenging economic climate through the following;

- Developing key sites, projects and infrastructure to retain and attract investment into the local economy;
- Develop key sites and premises across the County Borough to encourage economic growth and ensure that the development and implementation of the Local Development Plan allows us to do this. Sites include **Coed Darcy Urban Village**, the new Swansea University Science and Innovation Campus, Baglan Energy Park, Harbourside serviced by the new Harbour Way, Neath Parkway, physical improvements to Neath Town Centre, Pontardawe and Croeserw, the redevelopment of Neath Town Centre and Croeserw Community Enterprise Centre and the Afan Lido.
- Maintain a watching brief of the City Region developments and future Welsh
- Government regeneration programmes and consider ways in which Neath Port Talbot can benefit.
- Develop the tourism sector, in particular tourism related businesses, and consequently increase jobs in the local area.
- Maximise community benefit clauses in all contracts and the planning process to
- increase local jobs and benefits to local businesses.
- Make the most of community investment by working in partnership with NPT Homes and Gwalia who are delivering substantial investment programmes within the County Borough.
- Delivering the Convergence/Welsh Government funded project to develop mountain biking in South Wales.

- Work with Welsh Government to gain investment from the final year of the Western Valleys Strategic Regeneration Area.
- Create high quality jobs and economic growth across the County Borough through development and investment;
- Deliver the current programme of European Convergence and Rural Development Plan for Wales funded projects to build stronger local and regional communities.
- Take a more strategic targeted approach to maximising funding from European and domestic sources in the future.
- Engage with others to deliver regional collaborative projects, such as in relation to inward investment, place marketing and business development through the Swansea Bay Partnership.
- Maximise the number of people who are able to access employment, by addressing barriers to employment;
- Reduce the number of people not in work through key employment support initiatives such as the South West Workways project, COASTAL project, local Employment Support Group, other initiatives sponsored/led by Jobcentre Plus and employability projects supported in Communities First areas.
- Work with young people and disadvantaged parents to ensure that they have the skills and confidence so that they are best equipped to embark on working life.
- Further develop training and employment opportunities for disadvantaged groups including young carers, care leavers, past offenders and unemployed 18-25 year olds.
- Promote self-employment initiatives.
- Ensure that a strong network of support is available to help individuals manage changes to Welfare Reform, in order to address barriers which prevent people from accessing employment.
- Develop a strong network of local businesses who are able to generate economic growth.
- Provide good quality business support services.
- Encourage young, high technology companies to emerge from the Baglan Bay Innovation Centre.
- Attract business leaders in Research and Development to purpose built accommodation such as the Research and Development Village in Port Talbot Harbourside.
- Support the development of social enterprises, as an alternative business model where appropriate.

Deposit Local Development Plan (2013)

In August 2013, the Council placed on 'deposit' its Local Development Plan (LDP). The LDP guides the future development of the County Borough, providing a clear vision for the area setting out where, when and how much new development can take place over the next 15 years (2011-2026). Once adopted, the LDP will become the Development Plan for Neath Port Talbot, superseding the current Unitary Development Plan (UDP), and be the primary document for use in the determination of planning applications.

Vision

The LDP Vision for 2026 states:

'The natural beauty and environmental importance of Neath Port Talbot's waterfront and coastal corridor area will be protected and conserved while previously developed, underused and unsightly former industrial and commercial areas are redeveloped, transforming the function and appearance of the whole coastal belt.

Key sites at Baglan Bay, Coed Darcy and the Swansea University Science and Innovation Campus, coupled with the area's good and improving transport and communication links will help deliver a competitive, knowledge-based economy. New and expanded settlements will provide sustainable housing and employment to meet the needs of local communities and the wider area.

The County Borough's rural areas and valley communities will be supported and revitalised through encouragement of new and expanded economic activity through provision for sustainable small scale employment, including tourism initiatives capitalising on existing successes such as the Strategic Tourism Destinations at Margam Park and the Afan Valley.

Benefits from natural resources will be maximised and the cultural, historic and natural heritage will be supported and enhanced. Economic growth and community cohesion will be promoted by concentrating development in key areas to provide benefits to a wider hinterland'.

Objectives

The LDP Vision will be delivered through a number of Objectives which are fundamental to the LDP and form the basis for policy development. Whilst all Objectives are relevant, the following are particularly relevant to Neath:

OB3: Deliver sustainable, safe and confident communities and develop vibrant settlements supporting a range and mix of facilities and services.

OB5: Realise the diverse potential and opportunities available for sustainable economic development along the Coastal Corridor to foster economic growth, with Coed Darcy, Swansea University Science and Innovation Campus, Baglan Bay and Harbourside being the anchors for growth.

OB7: Provide an adequate supply, mix, type and tenure of housing within sustainable settlements to meet the needs of the projected population.

OB11: To promote and protect a diverse portfolio of employment land and employment opportunities to meet the needs of residents and businesses and stimulate economic growth.

OB13: Maintain, enhance and develop a hierarchy of retail centres in line with the settlement framework recognising the principal role of **Neath**, Port Talbot and Pontardawe town centres.

The Development Strategy

The development strategy of the LDP is to facilitate growth within Neath Port Talbot, with a focus on the Coastal Corridor whilst reinvigorating the Valley communities. As key elements of the Development Strategy, the LDP:

- Makes provision for the majority of new residential development along the Coastal Corridor;
- Allocates Strategic Employment Sites at Baglan Bay and Junction 38 (M4), Margam;
- Promotes mixed use regeneration schemes at Neath Town Centre, Port Talbot Town Centre and Aberafan Seafront.
- Allocates the Coed Darcy area near Neath as one of two Strategic Regeneration Areas providing the opportunity for the redevelopment and regeneration of brownfield land which will be developed over the LDP period and beyond.

Policies

The following policies are particularly relevant to Neath:

Policy SP5	Development in the Coastal Corridor Strategy Area
Policy SRA2	Coed Darcy Strategic Regeneration Area
Policy CCRS1	Coastal Corridor Regeneration Schemes
Policy H1	Housing Sites
Policy EC1	Employment Allocations
Policy EC2	Existing Employment Areas
Policy EC3	Employment Area Uses
Policy R1	Retail Allocations

Proposals - Economy

Town Centre Redevelopment	
	
<p>The regeneration scheme in Neath Town Centre is a major redevelopment which includes the site of the former Council offices, surface car park, Magistrates Court, multi-storey car park and two retail stores below and other surrounding land. The site is allocated as a retail-led mixed use scheme which will contain a small element of housing (approximately 50 units). The site lies in very close proximity to the historic heart of Neath and offers the potential to sympathetically redevelop the site to provide facilities to enhance the vitality of the Town Centre while the additional residential accommodation will help make the area more vibrant. Phase 1 (new replacement car parking and two new stores) has commenced on site and is due to be completed in Autumn 2015 with phase 2 (residential and smaller retail units) commencing immediately afterwards, subject to funding.</p>	
Links to other elements	
Community	job and skills opportunities, reductions in levels of fuel poverty and mitigation of impacts of welfare reform due to increased social housing availability
Transport	proposals are in close proximity to public transport facilities with accessible links implemented to improve this further
Place	improving the condition and mix of retail space supports company relocation and growth ,making parking easier and safer will help attract more visitors

Small Business Accommodation	
	
<p>The need for small business accommodation in Neath falls into two categories – small starter units and modern office accommodation. Unoccupied larger units in the Milland Rd area have the scope to be “ broken down” into easy in /easy out business start up space, helping create a pipeline of potential occupiers. Refurbishment of property in the town centre has already been successfully undertaken and is evidencing demand for co-working space where companies pay for accessible serviced accommodation by the hour or day. Both these developments would benefit from marketing Neath as a place to do business , targeting growth sectors in the regional economy not dependent on a large city location.</p>	
Links to other elements	
Community	job and skills opportunities
Transport	proposals are in close proximity to public transport facilities with accessible links implemented to improve this further
Place	improving the business environment of the town centre supports town centre business sustainability , flexible occupation will support the development of a more active entrepreneurial culture in the area

Business Improvement District



Neath Port Talbot Council has been successful in securing Welsh Government funding to develop plans for a Business Improvement District (BID) in Neath Town Centre. The Welsh Government is supporting the development of additional BIDs in Wales as part of its commitment to encourage economic development and to deliver its new regeneration framework, Vibrant and Viable Places.

Once established, a BID delivers a sustainable financial model to a defined geographical area where businesses have voted to invest collectively in local improvements, in addition to those delivered by statutory authorities. Bringing together local businesses and other partners, BID's have proved to be an effective structure for improving the trading environments and profitability of towns and cities around the world. Used in areas as diverse as Merthyr Tydfil and Manhattan, BIDs are developed, managed and paid for by the commercial sector by means of a BID levy to fund physical environmental enhancements.

The findings from an initial scoping study indicated a number of issues for a potential BID to such as improving gateways into the town, looking at parking options and promoting Neath as a distinctive visitor destination that is safe during the day and night. The consultant will guide and advise the local partnership and provide the necessary support to give the prospective BID the best possible chance for success. The local authority, on behalf of the local BID group, submitted the initial feasibility report to the Welsh Government and approval has been given to progress to campaign and ballot stage.

Links to other elements

Community	job and skills opportunities, business supporting community priorities
Transport	proposals are in close proximity to public transport facilities with accessible links implemented to improve this further.
Place	improving the business environment of the town centre supports town centre business sustainability , organised business action and funding to tackle local issues will play a major part in addressing local regeneration challenges. Local skills and employment initiatives ,local purchasing and marketing initiatives combine to see an active business led involvement in securing change

Canal Green



The preferred option for this key site involves a mixed use approach to provide a holistic framework for the regeneration of the Milland Road area. The master plan builds on the existing mixed use character whilst affording new opportunities for improved linkages, both within and beyond the site, with improved building forms and public realm having a relationship with and connection to the water courses and the town centre.

The key aspect of the master plan is that it allows for a degree of flexibility to accommodate various delivery issues and will allow sites to be brought forward in isolation or within a wider package whilst setting out the spatial relationships and linkages that will ensure a cohesive development approach. The conceptual ideas allow for retention of the employment areas to the southern end of the site with early delivery mixed use development to the central and northern zones providing improved access for vehicle, pedestrian and cycle movement with new canal crossings to encourage all styles of employment and sustainable modes of transport.

New canal crossings will enable navigation and at least one bridge should create a central attraction. With the renewed use of the canal there is potential to open up canal side views by the use of terraced steps to the water's edge and transparent restraints/balustrade on bridges can promote long distance views along the canal. It is envisaged that any development will create open areas with links to the cycle and walk ways with a wide variety of play equipment for all ages encouraging access to and from the town centre and creating a destination to visit as well as pass through. Open areas will have amenity planting and designs take account for seating, street furniture, information signage and the potential to incorporate public art.

Employment uses will be encouraged to utilise both canal and river frontages creating attractive and safe public realms with active frontages to the developments. This will be achieved in a balance that favours public realm along the canal given the potential restricted access to the river frontages around the employment uses. The new waterside public realm will be supplemented by improved desire lines and links to the town centre and station, enhancing the experience of workers, residents and visitors alike.

The development comprises three zones: southern, central and northern reflecting existing users, transport and potential links to compliment off site uses.

The southern area of the site contains several employment uses that will remain in the medium to long term which are served by the existing transport infrastructure.

The central element of the site builds on the existing mixed uses with stronger relationships with the canal and the river. Green corridors will reinforce links from the river frontage to the commercial elements of the site and the town centre.

The northern element of the site incorporates strong links and use of the water frontages with canal crossings and pedestrian routes linking the exiting footbridge with the site, river and town centre.

The mixed use is non prescriptive to accommodate market forces and need at any time with an element of retail, residential offices, trade counter and perhaps education/healthcare. External seating and café uses provide active frontages to buildings which themselves provide natural surveillance and spatial enclosure. Developers will seek to enhance the natural environment promoting wildlife diversity through planting and the regeneration of existing water bodies. The sustainability of the site will be encouraged by the recycling of existing building materials for new foundations and road improvement whilst porous surfaces through the development area should be used to promote rainwater storage and attenuation.

Links to other elements

Community	job and skills opportunities, reductions in levels of fuel poverty and mitigation of impacts of welfare reform due to increased social housing availability
Transport	proposals are in close proximity to public transport facilities with accessible links implemented to improve this further.
Place	improving the Canal Green area extends the town centre supporting town centre business sustainability , combined with canal improvements Neath will become a waterfront town transforming perceptions of the town for residents and visitors alike

Coed Darcy Urban Village	
	
<p>Linking to the nearby villages of Llandarcy and Skewen and close to Neath is the £1.2billion planned new community development of Coed Darcy. The redevelopment of the former BP oil refinery will comprise 4,000 homes, community facilities, employment space and open space covering 1,300 acres (5.3 km²). Four new schools (1 Welsh primary, 2 English primaries and 1 secondary) are planned. Part of the development proposals includes a new southern access road linking the village to the Fabian Way (A483) into Swansea and rail access to promote sustainable travel.</p> <p>The construction work is expected to create 3,000 to 4,000 jobs which includes jobs created directly in the construction industry and from related support services. The village is expected to become a home to some 10,000 people once development is complete. The principles underpinning the development highlight the concept of self contained community with employment, leisure and community facilities within walking distance on the site. Neath as the nearest accessible town centre will see increased benefits from the development in terms of a locally skilled workforce and increased footfall for events and town centre services</p>	
Links to other elements	
Community	job and skills opportunities,
Transport	proposals are in close proximity to public transport facilities with accessible links implemented to improve this further.
Place	A new community of up to 10,000 people presenting challenges and opportunities for securing community cohesion across this part of the city region

4. Place

Neath is a market town, it offers a home to a significant commuter population for the Swansea Bay city region. Developments within the town centre continue to sensitively improve its function as a retail and service hub. Key public services are based within the town and Neath Port Talbot college have an impressive campus serving the wider area.

The close proximity of the town to the M4 and the A465 and operation of a main line railway station provide good transport links for the local population in moving about the city region. High quality green spaces such as Victoria Gardens and Gnoll park are easily accessible from most parts of the town but require care and attention through pro-active maintenance.

Cycling is difficult in and around the town and the overall traffic flow around and through operating in a ring road style needs attention (see transport and connectivity). Neath contains affluent and deprived communities, a healthy small business community and a strong voluntary and third sector network (Neath Port Talbot CVS are based in the town).

The river Neath and Neath and Tennant canals are underutilised assets providing opportunities for making the town centre more outward facing and linking both sides of the settlement through development of walking and cycling links. As gateway town to the valleys to the north scope for broadening the tourism serviced accommodation sector exists. The Neath valley has always been an attractive tourism location and opportunities for further development of the valley tourism offer , housing and employment sites exist as part of this framework.

As the primary settlement for the Neath Valley the town services a wider community of 50,668 people in nearby settlements such as Resolven and Glynneath and stretches along the coastal corridor to link with Briton Ferry and Baglan. Large edge of town industrial estates provide accommodation for a wide range of businesses with resulting make up of employment sectors being well balanced between manufacturing, retail and services.

Proposals- Place

Rheola Estate Development	
	
<p>The Rheola Estate is on the outskirts of Resolven in an area that is included in plans for the wider regeneration of the Neath Valley. With the Waterfall Country nearby, the area is well visited by tourists and the development fits with the area’s tourism and leisure strategy.</p> <p>The plan for Rheola proposes a residential development on part of the estate to raise some of the funding needed to take the leisure and tourism plan forward. Holiday log cabins would be located on the estate along with a leisure complex which would include a swimming pool, spa, gym, restaurant, bar and shop, for use by tourists staying at Rheola and for the wider public.</p> <p>As a first step, the owners have relocated a Saturday Market from Rheola to the vacant TRW site nearby. This has allowed a former aluminium works buildings to be demolished. The owners have now submitted a planning application for a change of use for the TRW plant. The project also involves development of a training facility specialising in the teaching of heritage skills, redevelopment of the main estate long house and a community garden project in a restored Victorian kitchen garden area of the estate. Rheola’s location , just of the A465 provides easy access from and to Neath and the M4.</p>	
Links to other elements	
Economy	improving the condition and mix of tourism accommodation supports development of this key sector of the regional economy
Transport	Proposals are in close proximity to improved public transport facilities with accessible links implemented to improve this further.
Community	Improvements to health and well being and job and skills opportunities,– improved community spaces and green infrastructure developments

Housing	
	
<p>Investment is being made in improving the condition of the housing in the area including NPT Home’s major investment programme and the Authority’s renewal area activity which are positively impacting on the town. There is however a significant need and demand for market and affordable housing in the area as evidenced by the local housing market assessment and housing needs data. Through the allocations set out in Policy H1 of the LDP therefore, land is identified to accommodate 1,725 residential units over the Plan period up to 2026.The combination of bringing empty homes back into use, including those above retail premises in the main town centre, complements redevelopment of key sites for mixed use in an expanded town centre footprint. Vibrant and Viable Places funding is supporting a range of new and redeveloped housing improving the overall mix of provision and significant opportunity exists for energy efficiency measures and local employment and training in construction and refurbishment over a 3-5 year investment period. Proposals for new housing developments will be promoted in and around the town centre to contribute to the regeneration of these areas.</p>	
Links to other elements	
Economy	improving the condition and mix of affordable and market housing supports company relocation and growth minimising the need for commuting journeys

Transport	Housing proposals are in close proximity to improved public transport facilities with accessible links implemented to improve this further.
Community	Improvements to health and wellbeing and job and skills opportunities, reductions in levels of fuel poverty and mitigation of impacts of welfare reform – improved community spaces and green infrastructure developments

Environment – Green Infrastructure Improvements		
<p><i>Green infrastructure</i> – Extensive improvements to cycling and walking infrastructure around the town, replanting of diseased trees at Gnoll park and the greening of key buildings in the town centre will help broaden the impact of good quality green space in and around the town.</p>		
Links to other elements		
Economy	Securing stable, risk minimised conditions for investment in Canal green, Town centre	
Transport	Development of better integrated, rail, park and ride and cycling /walking infrastructure is at the centre of enabling Neath’s position as a sustain able settlement	
Community	Reassurance regarding flood risk and encouraging accessibility to natural assets and green space	

Town Centre		
<p>The progress in reshaping and extending the footprint and accessibility of the town centre can be further enhanced by continued improvements to shared public space and enhancements to key buildings and commercial property.</p> <p>Improvements to key “gateway” areas into the town from the north and west are also priorities.</p> <p>The Council will develop proposals for the redevelopment of key buildings (eg: 8 Wind Street) under the Welsh Government ‘Use it or Lose it’ initiative.</p>		
Links to other elements		
Economy	promoting the centre as a place to start-up/incubate business, securing a vibrant and viable service and retail hub to support wider economic development	
Transport	Regenerated mainline railway station needs to be complemented by better sense of place/arrival in the town	
Community	Improved community facilities in terms of culture, education and health complement the existing role of the centre as a retail hub	

Neath and Tennant Canal – Restoration and Access Improvements	
	
<p>The further development of the Neath and Tennant canals in order to enable greater boat usage including improved mooring and marina facilities. The Canal Green area developed around one or more canal basins – with temporary moorings for private boats and departure points for trip / restaurant boats – together with complementary canal-side facilities which would constitute a visitor destination making Neath a “canal town” . Proposals include a fixed over-bridge to provide vehicle access from Cribbs Row with a foot-bridge at Bridge Street.</p>	
Links to other elements	
Economy	promoting the centre as a place to start-up/incubate business, securing a vibrant and viable service and retail hub to support wider economic development
Transport	Regenerated mainline railway station needs to be complemented by better sense of place/arrival in the town
Community	Improved community facilities in terms of culture, education and health complement the existing role of the centre as a retail hub

5. Transport and Connectivity

Good access is critical to the quality of life and economic development of the Neath area. An effective and efficient transport system is vital to integrated development where good connections to national and international markets allow businesses to prosper and where everyone can access the opportunities they need to live healthy and fulfilling lives

The aims for targeted investment in transport have been informed by the Welsh Government in line with the developing National Transport Plan. These aims are consistent for the requirement for an integrated approach to investment in transport in Neath.

The aims are:

- to support economic growth and safeguard jobs
- to reduce economic inactivity by delivering safe and affordable access to employment sites
- to maximise the contribution that effective and affordable transport services makes to tackling poverty and support improvements in accessibility for the most disadvantaged communities
- to encourage safer healthier and sustainable travel

A Local Transport Plan for Neath Port Talbot is in development in collaboration with the other Authorities in the Swansea Bay City Region; Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire and Swansea.

The specific aims of the transport system in Neath could be defined as follows

- To provide a connected system that enables the Town and the surrounding area to operate as a single unit maximising the synergy between communities and developments.
- To maintain connectivity with the surrounding urban areas such as Swansea and Neath along with national regions.

In order to achieve this we need to ensure that our communities, strategic employment sites, hospitals, education centres and the Town centre are linked by reliable and effective transport opportunities

In Neath the relevant local communities are located along the Neath Valley from Glynneath to Briton Ferry,

New and proposed housing development, in and around the town, will create additional load on the transport infrastructure.

The development of the Strategic Regeneration Area at Coed Darcy Urban Village will also impact on local transport infrastructure

Main entry and egress points into the Town are the A465 from the north and the M4/A465 from the south. Main access by rail is from the main Paddington – Swansea line at Neath Station but there are minor stops for local trains at Baglan and Briton Ferry.

The docks at Neath Abbey wharf/Briton Ferry suitable for coastal shipping, mainly specialising in bulk cargos such as aggregates.

Transport corridors - The topography and demographics above lends itself to the development of strategic priority corridors such as the A465 along the Neath valley. The strategic routes require interchanges with links to other local communities and the national strategic network.

Position

Private Car Transport and Freight Haulage by Road

Neath has a reasonable road network that struggles to cope with demand at peak times and in key locations.

Congestion can occur at peak times on Cimla Road....Significant congestion occurs on the M4 at junction 43 at peak times.

The proposed housing development at Coed Darcy will add additional pressure to local road access at this junction.

Parking

Parking and opportunity to arrive by car is a major component of the town's viability and prosperity. The Town centre is served by a multi storey car park and several surface level car parks. On street parking is managed and controlled by the Council. Whilst the existing car parks are close to full at peak times, the parking provision in Town is considered adequate at present, although further development will require alternative solutions to be identified.

A multi use, 200 space car park is under construction adjacent to the civic centre as part of the retail scheme development.

Public Transport

Rail

Neath station is situated on the main Paddington - Swansea line and receives a regular hi-speed service providing connection to the wider transport network. Proposals exist to develop the station in order to provide access from both sides of the line with increased passenger capacity and a significantly improved travelling environment. This would enhance Neath's image as a modern, developing community.

Electrification of the main line will enable reduced journey time and more trains on the rail network, hence providing the opportunity for increased demand on the station facilities and connection with the local transport network.

The local stations at Baglan and Briton Ferry receive a two hourly service. Parking and access has recently been improved but these facilities are still under-used for 'park and ride' and commuter travellers.

Bus

Regional surveys confirm that 20% of job seekers have no access to a car so, consequently, have been unable to attend interviews and take up employment. A travel pattern survey with local residents is currently ongoing, which will inform future local transport planning

The main transport corridors are reasonably well served by bus routes and there linked routes from the main communities to the town centre, Aberavon Seafront and the Hospital.

First buses have recently demonstrated their commitment by investment in new Clipper service buses. Bus Quality Partnership meetings still occur between the Council and local operators in the area.

However **timetabling** and **service frequency** is creating transport problems. The bus services operate on a demand led, commercial basis with subsidies provided by the Council for less viable services. However, recently enforced cuts in Council spending will necessitate the removal of most or all of the subsidies.

There are identified gaps in the network relating to the strategic employment areas. Most of the services currently converge on or call at Neath Bus Station. This has several problems, particularly uninviting pedestrian access, poor ambience and lack of updated passenger information whilst manoeuvring and entry/egress for buses is not easy.

However, the bus stop area provides an important access into the town.

Co-locating the current bus drop off provision with the railway station to create a public transport interchange is a key priority.

Other bus route infrastructure such as bus stops and information provision is of varying quality.

Community Transport

DANSA is the main community transport organisation operating across Neath Port Talbot supporting services in the Afan, Dulais and Neath valleys. These services provide a vital link to the coastal services and employment opportunities for residents in Valley areas as well as enabling more sustainable short journeys between valley settlements to access local services and jobs.

Taxis

A number of taxi firms currently service the town and provide a valuable addition to public transport and community transport services by enabling bespoke access for those people needing customised trips to hospital and in plugging specific timetabling gaps in public transport services eg in accessing employment. Improvements to taxi ranks at public transport interchanges help with more sustainable accessibility and also heighten the towns attractiveness to business and leisure visitors

Walking and Cycling

The main transport corridors are served by dedicated walking and cycling routes such as the National Cycle Network –.

These routes and others feature on the Swansea Bay Cycle Route map recently developed and publicised in a ‘tube map’ type format.

The Green route linking Neath with the coast along the A474 needs significant improvement to create more off road, after dark cycling capacity. As a potentially key commuter as well as visitor investment here is a key priority.



Neath and the wider area suffer from lack of accessibility by public transport, particularly regarding the integrated linkages between bus and train. The existing bus station is around 800m walk from the train station. The bus service between the two is irregular and relies on through buses. Re-development of the train station would provide an opportunity to significantly improve accessibility, safety and the environment. Additional bus services from several directions will have direct access to the station reducing the need for passengers to change during their journey.

The existing bus alighting area is out-dated, congested, and has awkward access. Furthermore, it is anticipated that a facility for articulated buses, to run from Neath

through to the University in Swansea, will be needed in the future. The proposals can accommodate these longer vehicles.

Improvements are needed to improve access to employment, reduce car use, hence congestion and pollution, and improve the local environment and image.

Proposals -Transport and Connectivity

The current position identifies a need for a sustained programme of targeted investment to tackle key pressures and make the most of opportunities to secure greater integration. A number of proposals are in the process of implementation and others require further development

Private Car Transport

The arguments about the unsustainability of private car transport in urban areas are well rehearsed. In Neath provision for the car is currently adequate except for the requirements of planning for specific developments. Parking may become a problem in the future. For many of Neath's residents transport by private car is unaffordable, so there is a need to provide alternatives to enable them to gain access to work opportunities.

Public Transport

Rail

Some improvements have been undertaken by Network Rail and Arriva Trains Wales to improve disabled facilities, ticketing and both sides access at Neath station. Further investment is needed to further increase amenity and improve access at front of the station

Bus

Bus services are the most effective means of providing affordable travel to employment and other amenities for distances outside of walking and cycling range. However bus services, particularly with the recent cuts, are run on a commercial, demand led basis. Therefore, we need to create demand by ensuring relevant employment sites are accessible by bus - part of the land use planning process.

There is a need to identify where gaps in provision are, e.g. the most disadvantaged communities and the employment and amenity centres to make services viable and increase demand we need to ensure that the journey is as comfortable and efficient as possible. The Council can help in this by provision of some of the infrastructure necessary.

In Neath this would include

- refurbishment and relocation of the Bus alighting area and accesses following a review of its function as part of a new Transport Interchange.

- provision of better information through the journey, starting with passenger information displays in the bus station, train station and at the new Interchange
- upgrading of bus stops following review, starting with the Town Centre and the priority corridors, e.g. Glynneath to Briton ferry, and on to Fabian Way .
- provision of a high speed link between the rail station and the new University campus
- continued liaison with the bus operators through the Quality Partnership to help provide revised timetabling and closer integration with other transport modes as the employment sites develop.
- Improvements to the efficiency of the link between Neath and Briton Ferry (Neath Road), e.g. bus priority measures

Community Transport

Community transport can fill gaps where the public transport is inadequate and/or impractical. It could also be developed to provide links to the main bus corridors. In Neath this would help residents to gain access to the Town and other amenities.

Walking and Cycling

Promotion of walking and cycling will provide a healthier and more sustainable life style as well as an alternative access to employment sites.

In order to optimise the benefits of the infrastructure provided so far we need to improve safety and security for pedestrians and cyclists accessing areas away from the dedicated cycle routes. In the Town centre this would include the provision of more safe cycle storage and consideration of the interaction between cyclists and pedestrians.

For strategic cycle routes to operate as commuter routes ,other than during the summer months, they need to be lit and secure, otherwise alternative safe routes need to be provided on/or adjacent to the road.

Further additions and improvements to the Neath section of the city region map will be developed from 2014- 2020 through successful implementation of this strategy.

Neath Railway Station Redevelopment		
Building on recent improvements to station in terms of passenger facilities and access from both sides of the main line, further improvements to the railway station will be undertaken with the potential to redevelop the station building, forecourt area and car park. The potential of linking the station as part of an integrated /bus/rail hub, providing an improved sense of arrival into the town centre will be investigated.		
Links to other elements		
Economy	Electrification of the Swansea-Paddington main line and location of station to new development sites will mean benefits to the town and	

	increase attractiveness of commuting experience
Place	Stretching the town centre to include the newly refurbished station will link Canal green and the town centre more directly for the first time
Community	Public confidence in a rail travel experience and increased sense of safety will encourage greater more sustainable rail travel

Public Transport Hub	
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The existing bus station is around 800m walk from the train station along the high street. The bus service between the two is irregular and relies on through buses. The development opportunities on the western side of the town are also remote from the existing bus station, so, with the train station bridge link, this project will create a bus interchange opportunity close to the Canal green mixed use development area. The train station development provides an opportunity to significantly improve accessibility, safety and the environment. Additional bus services from several directions will have direct access to the station reducing the need for passengers to change during their journey. The existing alighting area is out-dated, congested, and has awkward access. Furthermore, it is anticipated that a facility for articulated buses, to run from Neath through to the University in Swansea, will be needed in the future. The proposals would seek to accommodate these long vehicles. The project is needed to improve access to employment, reduce car use, hence congestion and pollution, and improve the local environment and image.

The Project provides a transport hub that links the local bus service provision to the main line railway station. The purpose is to facilitate and encourage the use of public transport, thereby reducing congestion and improving the environment. The improved public transport system will reduce journey times and increase accessibility to employment for people from the neighbouring Neath Valley.

Links to other elements

Economy	Linked bus and train journey planning centred around the hub will assist in spreading prosperity to communities in neighbouring valleys
Place	Immediate access to the town centre for bus /rail hub will stretch town centre along main station road and beyond
Community	Public confidence in a bus/rail travel experience and increased sense of safety will encourage greater more sustainable bus/rail travel

Green Route – A474 Cycle Way	
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This route currently offers challenging cycling conditions and given its strategic function linking Neath with the coastal opportunities of Baglan, Port Talbot and Swansea City centre requires priority attention. Commuters and visitors alike are attracted to the canal side elements of this route but 50% of current provision is on the A 474 and the whole section lacks adequate lighting during winter months

Links to other elements

Economy	Improving cycling access to new development sites will mean benefits to the town and increase attractiveness of commuting experience
Place	Stretching the town centre to include the cycle route will link Canal

	green and the town centre more directly for the first time
Community	Public confidence in the cycling offer and increased sense of safety will encourage greater more sustainable travel

Bus service improvements



A range of measures are proposed in order to improve bus usage in and around the town including:

- refurbishment of the Bus Station and accesses following a review of its function complementary to the new Transport Interchange.
- provision of better information through the journey, starting with passenger information displays in the bus station, train station and at the new Interchange
- upgrading of bus stops following review, starting with the Town Centre and the priority corridors, e.g. Margam to Briton ferry, on to Fabian Way and into Aberavon Sea Front
- provision of a high speed link between the rail station and the new University campus
- continued liaison with the bus operators through the Quality Partnership to help provide revised timetabling and closer integration with other transport modes as the employment sites develop.
- Improvements to the efficiency of the link between Neath and Briton Ferry (Neath Road), e.g. bus priority measures

Links to other elements

Economy	Bus service improvements will improve accessibility to places of work
Place	Refurbishment works will improve the town centre environment and facility
Community	Improved services will enhance connectivity between Neath and surrounding communities

Local Road Infrastructure

- **Junction at Cimla Rd** , The B4287 is the primary access point into the town centre and onwards to the A465 is the main arterial link from the Afan valley and East Neath. Air quality monitoring identifies this area as bordering unacceptably high levels during peak times. Improvements to traffic flow and control measures will enable further development in East Neath to progress without compromising air quality further
- **Pen y wern Hill** – Proposed housing development in the Cadoxton/Bryncoch area to help address LDP targets requires enhanced local road infrastructure improvements part funded by developer contributions

Links to other elements

Economy	Road improvements will improve accessibility to places of work
Place	Improvements will improve the local transport infrastructure and improve air quality in and around the town centre.
Community	Improvements will help realise further residential development and provision of community facilities

Connectivity Improvements		
<p>As important as physical accessibility for businesses and communities is the ability to communicate with each other and the wider world using the fastest available broadband connections</p> <p>Local coverage is patchy and local enhancements to a national programme may be required.</p> <p>Initial work to enable access to fibre Superfast broadband has taken place in local exchanges and further expansion of access under the Superfast Cymru programme is planned in Spring 2014.</p> <p>Further local improvements to complement the national programme roll out may be needed particularly to address specific project or community needs.</p> <p>Actions to promote Digital Inclusion will be promoted to assist individuals and disadvantaged groups in accessing, in terms of provision and skills, Information and Communications Technologies.</p>		
Economy	Improvements will assist competitiveness of local businesses	

6. Community

Position

The communities that make up the Neath area comprise a population of just under 19,000 representing 15% of the total population of Neath Port Talbot as a whole. The area experiences some of the highest density living in Wales and suffers from higher than county and Wales averages in terms of ill health, economic inactivity and low education achievement (high than average numbers without any qualifications and lower than average NVQ 4 or above). 30-44 year olds are over represented as an age group as the number of 10-14 year olds. Significant deprivation exists in the area with the Fairyland estate and some other LSOAs ranked amongst the top 10% and 20% most deprived communities in Wales in terms of prosperity health and education. The area acts as an employment and service hub for neighbouring valley communities who again experience high levels of deprivation and find opportunities created in the coastal area difficult to access, primarily due to transport challenges.

Any integrated approach, such as that advocated in this strategy needs to operate at a level of population of sufficient size to merit a customised approach to public service delivery and a size where impact can be effectively measured. The targeted linkage between areas of opportunity and areas of need requires a commitment by all stakeholders and a mechanism for planning, managing and delivering integrated programmes involving information sharing, enhanced advice and guidance, customised skills development and training opportunities and resettlement support. Much progress has been made through programmes such as Workways but statistics evidence a continuing need for concerted co-ordinated action in linking opportunity and need.

Proposals - Community

Workways 2		
<p>Workways tackles the barriers that prevent individuals from finding employment. The project provides support with job searching, CVs, applications forms, interview skills, telephone techniques and access to training. Participants are also matched with local businesses, helping them gain the vital experience needed to find long term employment. Led by Neath Port Talbot Council in collaboration with Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire and City and County of Swansea, the South West Workways project is backed with almost £13 million from the European Social Fund through the Welsh Government. Workways 2 will build on the success of the initial Workways programme and link local people with opportunities arising from developments in Neath and the wider city region</p>		
Links to other elements		
Economy	Initiative will add value and maximise employment related benefits of investments in the Port Talbot area.	

Community Actions	
 communities first <i>cymunedau yn gyntaf</i>	
<p>Communities First provides targeted people development projects tackling health, education and prosperity in the Neath area. The following areas are part of the Neath Communities First cluster:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Briton Ferry East 2 - Briton Ferry West 1 - Neath South 1 and 2 - Neath East 1, 2, 3 and 4 - Neath North 2 and 3 - Coedffranc Central 3 <p>The local Communities First Action Plans will deliver projects within the Neath area and links will be developed with other regeneration projects in the programme to maximise the impact of investment. Linkages will also be made with the Western Valleys Cluster in the Neath, Swansea and Dulais Valleys.</p> <p>Other community actions such as Cynefin will also contribute to a comprehensive programme of regeneration actions in the area.</p>	
Links to other elements	
Economy	providing information to local people regarding new local job opportunities, helping employers with local recruitment campaigns
Transport	Located close to bus/rail hub
	Addresses barrier to access for those seeking work
Place	Provides ongoing update information on progress with integrated regeneration in Neath and the wider Swansea Bay region

Resilience Employment and Skills Task Force	
	
<p>Underpinning all the projects in the regeneration of Port Talbot will be a structured community resilience strategy and delivery partnership co-ordinating the development, deployment and sustainability of high quality advice, skills and employability services for the town. Building on the experience of NPT homes in delivering Targeted Recruitment and training a wider shared apprenticeship approach across the programme will be developed also utilising the South West Wales Shared Apprenticeship Partnership programme. The targeted development of third sector organisations as social enterprises or service providers will be a key objective for the local partners.</p>	
Links to other elements	
Economy	co-ordination of employment and skills provision to complement local opportunity
Transport	Addresses barrier to access for those seeking work
Community	links communities directly with job change in their area

7 – Project Matrix				
ITS Element	Proposed Project	City region	EU 2014 -2020	Sustainable settlement
ECONOMY	Town Centre Redevelopment	Business Growth, Retention and Specialisation Distinctive Places and Competitive Infrastructures Knowledge economy and Innovation	Connectivity and Sustainable Urban development	Commercially viable Design quality
	Small business accommodation	Business Growth, Retention and Specialisation	SME Competitiveness	Commercially viable
	Business Improvement District	Knowledge economy and Innovation Skills and ambitious for long term success	SME Competitiveness Research and Innovation Skills for Growth	Participation in governance Equality and Social Inclusion
	Canal Green	Business Growth, Retention and Specialisation Knowledge economy and Innovation	SME Competitiveness Research and Innovation	Environmental capital enhanced Commercially viable
	Coed Darcy Urban Village	Distinctive Places and Competitive Infrastructures	Connectivity and Sustainable Urban development Renewable energy and energy efficiency	Design quality Resource consumption minimised

ITS Element	Proposed Project	City region	EU 2014 -2020	Sustainable Settlement
PLACE	Rheola Estate Redevelopment	Distinctive Places and Competitive Infrastructures Business Growth, Retention and Specialisation	SME Competitiveness Connectivity and Sustainable Urban development	Commercially viable Design quality
	Housing	Business Growth, Retention and Specialisation Knowledge economy and Innovation	Research and Innovation (increase commercialisation of R&D I)	Design quality Equity & Social inclusion Quality of life
	Environment –Flood protection and Green infrastructure	Business Growth, Retention and Specialisation	SME Competitiveness Connectivity and Sustainable Urban development	Environment capital protected and enhanced Quality of life
	Town centre	Knowledge economy and Innovation Skills and ambitious for long term success	Research and Innovation Skills for Growth	Design quality Commercially viable
	Neath and Tennant Canal Improvements	Business Growth, Retention and Specialisation	Research and Innovation Renewable energy and energy efficienc	Environmental capital protected and enhanced

Transport and Connectivity	Neath Railway Station Redevelopment	Distinctive Places and Competitive Infrastructures	Connectivity and Sustainable Urban development	Resource consumption minimised
	Public Transport Hub	Distinctive Places and Competitive Infrastructures	Connectivity and Sustainable Urban development	Resource consumption minimised Equity and social inclusion
	Bus Service Improvements	Distinctive Places and Competitive Infrastructures	Connectivity and Sustainable Urban development	Equity and social inclusion
	Local road infrastructure	Distinctive Places and Competitive Infrastructures	Connectivity and Sustainable Urban development	Integration of environment and quality of life
	Green route cycleway	Distinctive Places and Competitive Infrastructures	Connectivity and Sustainable Urban development	Integration of environment and quality of life
	Connectivity Improvements	Distinctive Places and Competitive Infrastructures	Connectivity and Sustainable Urban development	Resource consumption minimised
ITS Element	Proposed Project	City region	EU 2014 -2020	Sustainable settlement
	Workways 2	Maximising job creation for all	Youth Employment and Attainment Tackling poverty through sustainable employment	Equity and social inclusion
	Communities Actions	Maximising job creation for all Distinctive Places and Competitive Infrastructures	Youth Employment and Attainment Tackling poverty through sustainable employment Youth Employment and	Equity and social inclusion

			Attainment	
	Resilience – Employment and Skills Taskforce	Maximising job creation for all	Skills for growth Youth Employment and Attainment Tackling poverty through sustainable employment	Equity and social inclusion Commercially viable

8. Mechanisms for Implementation

Integrated Strategy management arrangements

The partnership strategy management arrangements will contain the necessary combination of expertise to ensure successful delivery.

Senior Responsible Owner – responsible for programme overall programme co-ordination/communication in conjunction with stakeholders.

Programme delivery board – comprised of key stakeholders and responsible for receiving programme update, exception and highlight reports – decision point on programme content and variation.

Stakeholder forum – A wider business and community stakeholder forum held every 6 months to receive progress reports and consider added value. This is a key feature of the stakeholder communication and engagement plan - the key elements are listed below.

A stakeholder communication and engagement plan promoting the area to business and keeping existing business and residential communities informed - this proposes widescale use of social media, both the Communities First cluster involvement structures and a partner project blog.

Monitoring and evaluation arrangements –

A monitoring and evaluation plan for this strategy is attached at Appendix 2 - the key programme outcomes and supporting measures developed as initial project templates are completed. The programme will commission independent support to develop and implement best practice in monitoring and evaluation with an agreed RBA framework at its heart.

9. EU Structural funds criteria and process

Key principles informing consideration of EU structural funds projects 2014-2020

- An unequivocal focus on supporting sustainable jobs, employment and growth and operations which facilitate the role of the third sector and private sector;
- Interventions should seek to integrate economic, social and environmental outcomes, consistent with the central organising principle of sustainable development and contributing to the outcomes of the cross cutting themes;
- Opportunities to achieve greater leverage from the deployment of EU funds, particularly with the private and third sector; and also more collaborative investments where these can add value and achieve outcomes;
- Clear added value, when compared with other ways of supporting and delivering policy, based on sound evidence that demonstrates a clear contribution to sustainable jobs and growth;
- Evidence of opportunity will form the foundation of project design and delivery with investments building on existing and emerging expertise, with human capital delivering to the future needs of businesses;
- Prioritisation of key strategic projects, that underpin the Specific Objectives and which deliver significant outcomes, will be a core part of a portfolio management approach to programme delivery; and
- Clear exit strategies need to be in place at the outset which fully consider the role of the third sector and private sector, build social resilience and tackle poverty within communities, promote equality, and achieve legacy effects.
- Projects will need to consider a range of targeting mechanisms to provide a focus for investment. The degree of targeting will vary according to the intervention.
- Targeting and prioritisation, where appropriate, should reflect:

growth sectors (e.g. specifically the Welsh Government identified key sectors, Grand Challenge areas in Science for Wales and the emerging Innovation Strategy);

areas of specific **geographical opportunity** (e.g. Enterprise Zones, any potential City region or other regional opportunity, Business Improvement District, Rural or Regeneration Area); and

clear identification of **specific target groups**, their needs and how actions will address these needs at a national, regional or local level as appropriate.

Poverty and Social Exclusion

Interventions which reduce poverty are usually best aimed at people, but the dynamics of poverty, social exclusion and deprivation are complex so issues of place can also be influential. While the programmes have an emphasis on sustainable employment as the best way out of, all activities offer the potential to tackle issues of poverty and will therefore be tested against the new Cross-Cutting Theme. In terms of geographical coverage, it will be important to seek to ensure that the benefits from a focus on areas of economic opportunity also lead to benefits in nearby areas of disadvantage.

In Wales, discrimination and social exclusion can be associated with specific groups or those with specific individual characteristics and these are explored in greater detail in the Welsh ESF Programmes. Discrimination and social exclusion can be further exasperated by issues of rurality and peripherality which limit accessibility to employment and economic opportunities.

Action to directly tackle poverty, disadvantage and social exclusion will primarily be taken through the ESF with specific actions expected to target unemployment, worklessness and barriers to accessing sustainable employment. Complimentary actions will also be delivered through the ERDF programmes, such as improving connectivity to ensure people, skills and jobs are joined up, or supporting local employment growth.

Promotion of Innovation

All projects will be encouraged to consider the opportunities innovation provides in piloting, trialling or developing innovative approaches to targeting and delivery. Small scale trialling, particularly through commissioning or procurement can engage wider actors, including the third sector, community groups and social partners in developing new targeting and delivery models to complement existing ones. Through this approach it will also be possible to incorporate linkages with LEADER groups within the EAFRD programmes.

Potential areas for innovation actions might include: new ways of targeting and engaging with under-represented groups; trialling new delivery models; or developing and piloting new sustainable exit strategies.

Opportunities for innovation may emerge as projects progress, and it will be possible to build in flexibility for innovative actions in project design. Due consideration should also be given to the potential subsequent mainstreaming of lessons learnt.

It is expected that all major strategic interventions (i.e. those likely to deliver substantial outcomes within the programme) should seek to incorporate innovative elements into programme design and indicate where trialling or piloting of approaches would work most effectively.

Dedicated Social Innovation actions under the ESF will be subject to specific monitoring and more rigorous evaluation with lessons learnt being disseminated both within projects and across WEFO.

2014-2020 - Project selection process/criteria

1. Under the current programmes, each of the twelve selection criteria aims to assess different aspects of the proposed operation. The streamlined nine selection criteria will instead provide a more robust challenge to the proposed operation.

2. The first three selection criteria to be applied will be classed 'core criteria'. These will be: 'Strategic Fit', 'Delivery', and 'Financial & Compliance'.

3... The purpose of the core criteria is to provide a broad challenge across all aspects of the proposed operation. Fundamental challenges will be made under these core criteria relating to how the proposed operation fits with the required programmes and wider strategies and economic opportunities; how it will be delivered (what, where, how, when, who); and basic initial 'Financial & Compliance' checks.

4. If a proposed operation is able to provide sufficiently robust evidence to progress through core criterion assessment, then the proposal will proceed through to the other six key criteria. The purpose of these is to build on the initial broad challenge of the core criteria through providing further detailed challenge on specific aspects of the proposed operation. Therefore, each of the six other key criteria will take an aspect of the initial core criteria and examine it in greater detail. The order in which these other key criteria are applied will be decided by WEFO on a case by case basis. The decision will be based on previous experience of that type of operation and any associated risks, as well as an analysis of the evidence gathered to date.

5. For example, the selection criteria of 'Management of Operation', 'Value for Money' and 'Indicators & Outcomes' will provide a further detailed challenge on elements originally examined under the core criterion of 'Delivery'. Likewise, the selection criterion of 'Long Term Sustainability' will provide a greater challenge on those areas first examined under the core criterion of 'Financial & Compliance'.

6. This approach of gaining a fundamental overview of the proposed operation through the core criteria, followed by a detailed challenge through the other key criteria is based on principles found in the Better Business Case (BBC) model. This model is currently being rolled out as best practice by HM Treasury and the Welsh Government and therefore it is expected that a significant number of funding applicants will be utilising the BBC process. EU Regulations state that WEFO must maintain an independent process for the selection of operations. Through this approach WEFO is seeking to map across to the BBC model where applicable, thereby reducing potential duplication for applicants. Many of the assessment questions listed under the BBC model.

Projects will be initially be required to complete an Operation Logic table(appendix 2) evidencing links to the main programme objectives(set out in summary form below),

the main changes expected, how the change will be achieved and what the main output indicators and targets are. Following an assessment of this initial table projects will be invited, if considered eligible , to complete a full business case.

Appendix 2

Fund	Priority	Changes sought
ERDF	Research and innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase capacity of Research institutions to attract competitive and private RD&I investment • Increase numbers of businesses carrying out innovation • Increase commercialisation of RD&I within the programme area • Increase R&I capability and exploitation for low-Carbon technologies, processes and services
	SME competitiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase number and survival of SMEs (including Social Enterprises) • Increase productivity in SMEs (primarily micro-SMEs), in particular through greater ICT exploitation and involvement in the digital economy • Increase size (in terms of employment growth) of businesses (may include investments in productivity growth) by addressing barriers to growth at key stages • More high growth businesses
	Renewable Energy & Energy Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing use of small scale renewable energy • Contribute to development of marine energy sector • Improve energy efficiency in housing, whilst helping tackle fuel poverty and develop supply chains
	Connectivity and Sustainable Urban Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve connectivity by addressing specific congestion bottlenecks in poor quality parts of transport network (TEN-T) • Greater urban and labour mobility through sustainable transport and improved access to employment opportunities • Improving access to strategic sites for jobs and growth • Completion of ICT and mobile networks • Increased sustainable and quality employment though targeted and integrated urban development
ESF	Tackling Poverty through Sustainable Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing unemployment amongst those at risk of poverty and discrimination • Reducing economic inactivity, worklessness and number of workless households. • Increase Social inclusion through sustainable employment • Reduction in barriers to sustaining employment and fulltime working.
	Skills for Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the skills levels of the employed workforce and progression to intermediate level skills and above • Increase in higher level skills with a focus on Research and Innovation • Increase Leadership and management skills, organisational flexibility and workforce diversity) • Reduce Gender pay gap and increased number of females at senior management
	Youth Employment and Attainment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase youth employment and employability of young people • Reduction of young people who are Not in Employment Education or Training (NEET) or who are at risk of NEET • Increased attainment levels amongst 11-16 year olds • Increased quality of the early years and childcare workforce

Appendix 3 – ERDF AND ESF INITIAL PROJECT APPLICATION LOGIC TABLES – (correct as at March 2014)

ANNEX A - LOGIC TABLE FOR PROPOSED EU OPERATIONS (PROJECTS) INCLUDING ERDF EXAMPLE

*PLEASE NOTE – This template does not constitute a business plan and will not be subjected to formal appraisal through the selection criteria. The aim of this logic table is to demonstrate the potential of the proposal to effectively deliver against the EU programmes.

Operation Title:	
Operation Synopsis (max. 50 words):	
Programme/Priority/Theme (multiple if the proposal could constitute an Integrated Operation i.e. receive funding from multiple Programmes and/or Priorities):	
Geographical area within proposed activity would take place:	

Table 1

Which Specific Objectives within the programmes would the proposed operation deliver against?	What change will the proposed operation seek to achieve?	How will the proposed operation achieve the changes sought?	Programme output indicators and targets
<p>List the Specific Objective(s) relevant to the proposed operation.</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (3.1) To increase the number of renewable energy devices being tested in Welsh waters and off the Welsh coast, including multi-device array deployments, thereby establishing Wales as a centre for marine energy production 	<p>Against <u>each</u> Specific Objective listed under the previous column, please <u>concisely</u> describe the final outcome(s) that the proposed operation seeks to achieve, including how it will contribute to the result target(s) for that Specific Objective.</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The production and installation of a full scale marine energy generation device that has been performance tested and proven as commercially viable. This operation aims to result in 5MW of additional capacity for wave and tidal energy – contributing 25% of the programme target of an additional 20MW of installed capacity in wave and tidal renewable energy. 	<p>For <u>each</u> specified final outcome identified in the previous column please describe, through a series of <u>concise bullet point descriptions</u> of activity, <u>how</u> this will be achieved.</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification of suitable candidate sites for device installation through tidal water flow and environmental research; Completion of environmental impact assessments for candidate sites, with a preferred option identified from a full analysis of potential benefits and impacts; All relevant consents, permits and planning permissions relating to the installation, power transmission and ongoing monitoring of the device will be obtained; Establishment of company to register all interests relating to device, progress design and manufacture of device and ongoing development; Agreement on route and specific 	<p>Please identify which <u>Programme output indicators</u> will be used to capture the activities described under the previous column. If possible, please identify a provisional contribution towards the relevant output target if possible.</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional capacity of renewable energy production Energy Support site preparation schemes Number of renewable energy prototypes tested

		<p>materials needed for power transmission onshore;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Acquiring facilities for manufacturing of device, full details of timescales and any procurement to follow; - Recruitment of staff to manage operation and identification of need for specialist trained employees for manufacture and ongoing development of facilities, including training needs through partnership with local and regional academic institutions. 	
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Table 2

Group(s) targeted	Identifying the barriers	Overcoming the barriers	How does the proposed operation fit within the wider investment context as set out in the Economic Prioritisation Framework (EPF)?
<p>Please identify the specific target group(s) (participants and/or SMEs/sectors) that the proposed operation would seek to support.</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marine energy sector. 	<p>For each target group identified under the previous column, please describe the specific barriers faced that form the need for the proposed operation.</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The technology utilised with the device has been theoretically validated but is as yet unproven through practical installation. Significant private sector investment is potentially available but will not engage until the commercial viability of the technology is proven. 	<p>For each barrier identified under the previous column, please describe how the operation will provide effective support for the target groups(s).</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The proposed operation (through the specific activities described in the above column) would allow the device to be performance tested and proven as commercially viable, which would unlock significant potential private sector investment. 	<p>Of the 'economic opportunities' identified within the EPF (thematic and/or regional), please list those that the proposed operation would deliver against.</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thematic Opportunity: Energy - Regional: Central and SW Wales <p>For each economic opportunity identified, please describe how the proposed operation will respond to the existing <u>demand drivers</u>, as well as how it would be adding value to and not duplicating existing provision and planned investment.</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The proposal would directly respond to the identified demand driver of crown estate leasing rounds for off shore marine technology. - The proposal would also compliment existing demand drivers such as the Energy Island initiative in Anglesey through contributing towards a regional aggregation of renewable energy expertise. - The proposal features as part of the

			<i>strategic plan for the identified Enterprise Zone and can demonstrate endorsement from key investors identified in the EPF and beyond</i>
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ANNEX B - LOGIC TABLE FOR PROPOSED EU OPERATIONS (PROJECTS) INCLUDING ESF EXAMPLE

*PLEASE NOTE – This template does not constitute a business plan and will not be subjected to formal appraisal through the selection criteria. The aim of this logic table is to demonstrate the potential of the proposal to effectively deliver against the EU programmes.

Operation Title:	
Operation Synopsis (max. 50 words):	
Programme/Priority/Theme (multiple if the proposal could constitute an Integrated Operation i.e. receive funding from multiple Programmes and/or Priorities):	
Geographical area within proposed activity would take place:	

Table 1

Which Specific Objectives within the programmes would the proposed operation deliver against?	What change will the proposed operation seek to achieve?	How will the proposed operation achieve the changes sought?	Programme output indicators and targets
<p>List the Specific Objective(s) relevant to the proposed operation.</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (2.5 WWV, 2.2 EW) To reduce the gender pay gap between women and men, reduce gender inequalities and support the progression of women in the workforce. 	<p>Against <u>each</u> Specific Objective listed under the previous column, please <u>concisely</u> describe the final outcome(s) that the proposed operation seeks to achieve, including how it will contribute to the result target(s) for that Specific Objective.</p> <p>For example:</p> <p>To reduce inequalities in the labour market amongst women</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contribution to the reduction in the gender pay gap in Wales (target reduction – nationally or by region) - Supporting the increased in levels of females in senior management positions (target) - Supporting the increase in female participation in non traditional areas of work (baseline and targets) 	<p>For <u>each</u> specified final outcome identified in the previous column please describe, through a series of <u>concise bullet point descriptions</u> of activity, <u>how</u> this will be achieved.</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Delivering skills support and mentoring for women in employment focussing on those wishing to progress in employment, who are returning from a career break, who consider themselves to be under-employed – either in terms of skills or hours - Delivering activities for employers focussing on modern working practices, to support the promotion of the role of women in the workforce, increased employee effectiveness and achievement of potential and to support workforce development - Delivering activities focussing on gender equality awareness and positive action initiatives, highlighting key stages where females and males can be affected by gender stereotypical perceptions and choices, influencing future career choices and outcomes. 	<p>Please identify which Programme output indicators will be used to capture the activities described under the previous column. If possible, please identify a provisional contribution towards the relevant output target if possible.</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participants gaining a qualification upon leaving - With upper secondary (ISCED 3) or post-secondary education (ISCED 4) - Employers adopting or improving equality and diversity strategies and monitoring systems

Group(s) targeted	Identifying the barriers	Overcoming the barriers	How does the proposed operation fit within
<p>Please identify the specific target group(s) (participants and/or SMEs/sectors) that the proposed operation would seek to support.</p> <p>For example:</p> <p>Female workforce generally with some additional focus on;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Those in middle management. - Those returning from career breaks - Low skilled 	<p>For each target group identified under the previous column, please describe the specific barriers faced that form the need for the proposed operation.</p> <p>For example:</p> <p>Low skills levels a barrier to progression within the labour market Disconnect from labour market and gap in knowledge due to break, skills require updating.</p> <p>Lack of awareness of opportunities and lack of transferable skills.</p> <p>Potential barriers to equality of employment amongst employers and lack of flexibility for working arrangements</p>	<p>For each barrier identified under the previous column, please describe how the operation will provide effective support for the target groups(s).</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide Demand led support to up skill low skilled female employees and for leadership and management training - Raising awareness of gender equality issues amongst employers and the promotion of flexible working arrangements - Raise awareness of career opportunities particularly in non traditional sectors and the promotion of transferable skills 	<p>the wider investment context as set out in the Economic Prioritisation Framework (EPF)?</p> <p>Of the 'economic opportunities' identified within the EPF (thematic and/or regional), please list those that the proposed operation would deliver against.</p> <p>For example:</p> <p>Specific targeting towards those identified growth sectors where women are under-represented in the workforce and in senior management positions.</p>

Appendix 4

Neath – Integrated Territorial strategy (ITS)

Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

1. Introduction

Monitoring and evaluation is an integral component of the proposed programme of change in Neath. At each stage in the programme ,and its constituent projects life cycles, the objective of the monitoring and evaluation plan is to secure information on the **effectiveness** of delivery of interventions, their **impact** in terms of addressing identified needs and intended objectives and their **accountability** in terms of delivery and value for money.

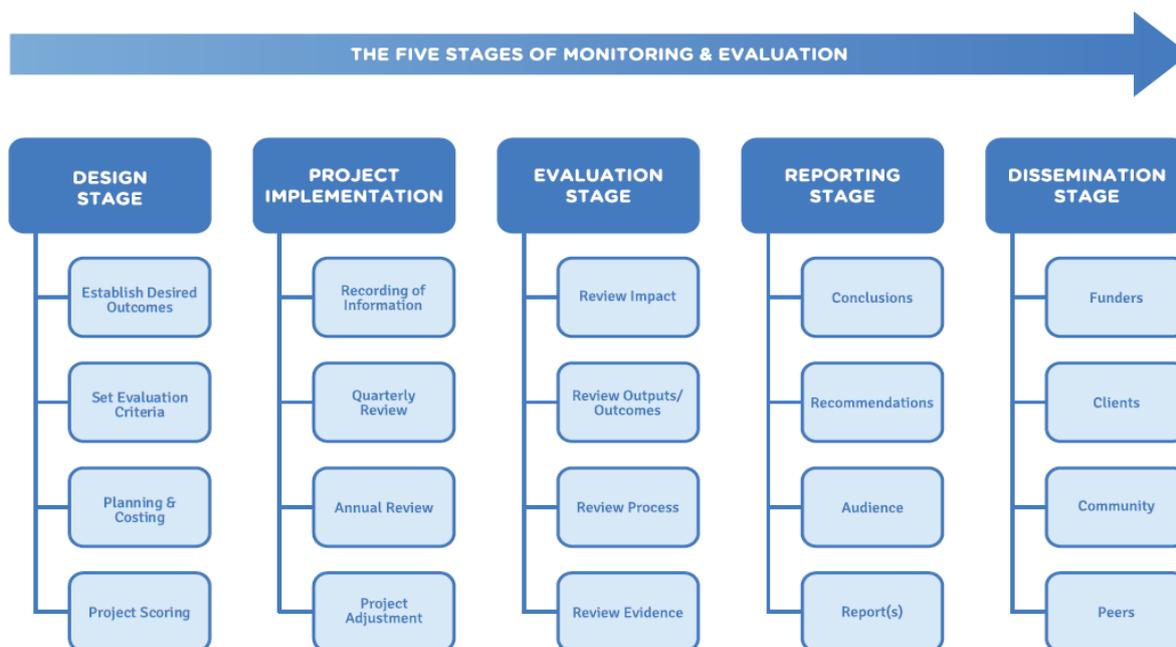
Design stage – relevant measures based on settlement need and ability to collect during programme period

Project Implementation – Keeping an overview of programme progress by securing consistent reporting (method and timescales) amongst all constituent projects

Evaluation Stage – Mid term and summative/final evaluations will assist in assessing the overall progress (mid) and eventual impact of the programme against key outcomes

Reporting stage- Presenting the results of the programme in ways all the local stakeholders can understand and comment on

Dissemination stage – Highlighting key lessons and good practice to a wider audience who might benefit from our learning.



It is intended that the monitoring and evaluation of the ITS activities and impacts on the local designated communities contribute to the overall initiative through a continuous learning process. Attention will be paid to the progress made on individual projects, within the community areas themselves and within the broader economic and social context of Neath and the Swansea Bay region. The monitoring processes in particular will seek to provide material which will be useful as a source of advice, guidance and ideas for the ITS projects as they continue to evolve in practice. This monitoring and evaluation plan will seek to capture the changes taking place in the local economy, neighbourhoods and communities and in those actively involved in project and policy implementation.

In short, therefore, the purpose of the **monitoring** is to provide an ongoing review and assessment of change in a number of key indicators; issues and views of those involved in the Neath ITS strategy. It is intended to identify the nature of that change and to provide evidence of that change to the communities and to the local partnership. This will enable the ITS projects to continue to evolve in a way appropriate to the needs of the communities and the shifting policy context of the initiative. The purpose of the **evaluation** is to provide a mid term and end of strategy assessment of the impacts of the ITS initiatives in terms of the quantitative and qualitative changes and the processes involved in securing the desired economic and community regeneration.

2. Objectives for monitoring and evaluation in the Neath ITS strategy

The Partnership of organisations promoting the targeted investment strategy in Neath aims to achieve integrated regeneration through a coordinated series of projects designed to address economic, social and environmental issues, this in turn will help realise the area's full economic potential and place it as a key centre of investment for the future of the county, city region and national regeneration. This strategic vision for economic and community regeneration is translated into practical effect through four key areas of action: *housing, employment, education* and leisure. Together, these actions will be realised through the effective and efficient use of

infrastructure and resources within Neath. The strategy presents an opportunity for considering impact in the round cross referencing monitoring and evaluation arrangements connected with the pilot Cynefin programme and the Neath Communities First cluster delivery plans

The actions, in addition to delivering specific outputs in their own right seek to contribute some specific outcomes that will help local partners and Welsh Government judge how effective the strategy has been overall. Appropriate population indicators will help judge progress towards achieving overall outcomes. These have been identified following a review of baseline data for the settlement as a whole including WIMD and Census 2011.

The objectives of this monitoring and evaluation plan are therefore :

- To collect project monitoring information detailing project performance management in a timely and consistent manner so as to enable strategy management and governance to take necessary actions to assist in ensuring the final delivery of overall outputs and outcomes
- To provide the framework for commissioning interim and summative evaluations of the strategy
- To provide information for dissemination via the strategy's stakeholder engagement and communications plan

3. Levels of assessment

The monitoring and evaluation arrangements are based on a hierarchy of assessment which are complementary in providing a means of identifying change at different scales within the locality, area and wider region. The levels of assessment comprise different levels of data collection and aggregation but care is taken to ensure that the appropriate indicators are related to the objectives of the Neath strategy at each level. The hierarchy is set out as follows:

3.1. Regional/strategic

The regional level of monitoring and evaluation will involve an assessment of change in the regional and strategic levels of the Swansea Bay City region. A regional economic framework has been developed and the Neath strategy's contribution to this will be assessed and reported.

3.2. Place level

The Place level of monitoring and evaluation will involve an assessment of change in Neath and the relevant communities in the urban and strategic context including the impact on the adjacent Afan valley. The emphasis here will be primarily quantitative in nature, drawn from secondary sources.

3.3. Community level

The community level of monitoring and evaluation will involve an assessment of change in the specific ITS area. The emphasis here will be primarily qualitative in nature (but will include some quantitative evidence). The purpose of the community level of monitoring and evaluation is to address the related objectives of outputs and outcomes.

Outputs are defined as the progress made in the ITS area in terms of evidence of community involvement and participation in the projects and initiatives associated with the local area. The progress of the Neath Communities First cluster deliver and community involvement plans will be key information sources here

3.4. Project level

This involves a quantitative assessment of the inputs and outputs associated with the individual projects in the ITS area. The principal responsibility for this will rest with project delivery organisations but the results will be integrated with the monitoring and evaluation of the ITS strategy at the regional, place and community levels of analysis.

3.5 Summary of key activities, outcomes and measures

From a wider potential range of measures addressing holistic regeneration some key proposed strategy outcomes and indicative measures have been identified to help inform overall strategy evaluation:

Neath – Integrated Territorial strategy –Key measures			
	Activity	Outcomes	Key ITS strategy measures
Healthy Communities	<p><u>Housing investment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New build public and private • Group repair • Energy efficiency • Homes above shops 	<p>Increased provision of suitable market and affordable housing to meet evidenced need in the target area improving the commercial/residential ratio in the town centre</p> <p>Number of Empty properties brought back into use reducing</p>	<p>Mix of development appropriate to achieve LHMA objectives for area</p> <p>% reduction in fuel poverty</p>

		numbers of vacant units	
Healthy and Prosperous Communities	<u>Connectivity</u> Transport hub Connections –coast, town valley	A % increase in the number of linked bus and train journeys undertaken	Mode of travel Passenger and business surveys
Prosperous Healthy And Learning Communities	<u>Canal side development</u>	Provision of enhanced waterside access and start up business development in/near the town centre More people visit Neath to spend their leisure time and money An increased sense of well being and community confidence as a result of an heritage facility being brought back into use	Increased footfall and local spend Perception of area as a good place to live
Prosperous and Learning Communities	<u>People into work</u> Resilience, Employment and	More people in jobs	Employment activity

	skills tack force	<p>More people achieving qualifications</p> <p>Residents, businesses and partner organisations feel better informed about local regeneration opportunities</p> <p>Increased numbers of people from the Communities First clusters as a % of all targeted recruitment and training/social clause beneficiaries</p>	<p>and inactivity rates</p> <p>% level of awareness of stakeholders, businesses and residents</p>
	Neath Communities First Cluster		
Prosperous, Healthy and Learning Communities	Prosperous and Learning communities projects	Increased attainment, employment and entrepreneurship rates by cluster residents	See cluster delivery plan

Project recording and reporting will be consistently structured to ensure strategy progress on reporting

- Investment levered in (split by private, public and third sectors).
- Percentage of spend retained within Wales-based supply chains.
- Net additional jobs created.
- People supported into work (including through targeted recruitment and training)
- net additional entry-level (NQF Level 2 or below) jobs created through targeted regeneration investment; and
- number of people supported into work through targeted regeneration investment who are a) low-skilled (NQF Level 2 or below) and b) from workless households.

Each level of monitoring will comprise three inter-related processes of data collection and investigation. *Baseline information* will be collected at the outset of the ITS

strategy, the purpose of which is to establish the conditions in the wider regional context at the point at which the ITS commences. It will involve quantitative data from secondary sources, which will be organised according to the main themes of activity.

Monitoring of changes by ITS theme and *Evaluation* at the mid term and end term stages of the ITS strategy

3.6 Techniques

The most appropriate monitoring and evaluation techniques will be examined and implemented.

Community Benefits statement sets out the proposed approach to capturing project outputs gained from using the Welsh Governments Community benefits and I2 I toolkits.

4. Evaluation Plan

The purpose of strategy evaluation is to provide a mid term and end of project assessment of the impacts of the ITS initiatives in terms of the quantitative and qualitative changes and the processes involved in securing holistic regeneration. At this stage, the intention is to build the evaluation into the learning processes of the ITS. Attention thus far has been devoted to devising the appropriate monitoring arrangements on which the evaluation will be based. The inclusion of baseline data will form an important part of the overall evaluation at the mid term and end term of the ITS strategy. We anticipate a mid term evaluation to be undertaken in summer 2015 and a final evaluation of ITS activity in Spring 2017 to help inform longer term area development. We propose both mid and final evaluations be undertaken by an independent third party and have budgeted in project costs for this.

5. Current Strategies - Baseline Studies

As has been set out above, the monitoring and evaluation arrangements include a baseline study of Neath. Data will be collected to provide an insight into the regional, place and community conditions at the outset of the ITS initiative together with information about the actions/ projects already in place. An initial comparative analysis of key census data at the area, county and Wales level (appendix 1) forms the basis for the wider baseline work.

6. Administrative arrangements for monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation is central to the overall management of the ITS strategy. Responsibility for monitoring and evaluation will rest with the ITS Monitoring and Evaluation Group, overseeing its implementation, which will report to the formal management structures of the Neath Strategy Partnership.

Neath ITS Monitoring and Evaluation Group

A ITS Monitoring and Evaluation Group will be established to manage and oversee the arrangements for implementing the monitoring and evaluation plan. Its remit includes the production of, and dissemination of monitoring and evaluation material up through the formal management structures of the Neath Strategy Partnership and down to the communities and groups operating at field level. The group will comprise key players from both the Council and the other partners and is central to administering elements of the plan, bringing together the community, key workers from the different partnership agencies and those with an interest in the monitoring and evaluation process.

CREW

The group will seek to work with the Centre for Regeneration Excellence in Wales (CREW) to share progress and good practice and benchmark the Neath approach alongside other approaches across Wales.

7. Monitoring and evaluation at the centre of what we do

The local Partnership have, through the establishment of a structured monitoring and evaluation plan, begun to put in place the necessary arrangements for high quality monitoring and evaluation. This will underpin the Neath ITS strategy in ways which ensure involvement at every stage of those businesses and communities whom the strategy is targeted towards.

Appendix 5 - Neath Integrated Strategy Programme – Stakeholder Communications and Engagement plan

Introduction

Effective communications with all stakeholders is a crucial component to the successful implementation of the Neath Integrated strategy. By definition "integration" implies a need for interaction with a wide range of officials, partner organisations, councillors, community groups, residents and businesses. This plan sets out the proposed approach to structure the management and delivery of project communications, in order to ensure that all necessary information to support the implementation of the project is secured and all stakeholders are fully informed of project progress, conclusions and can remain engaged with the ongoing implementation of the programme.

Set out below are the main stakeholder groups to benefit from this communications and engagement plan, specific audiences to be targeted within the groups, expected outputs from communications in terms of project implementation and the intended medium of contact. Following this is a summary of the main objectives for the stakeholder communications and engagement plan along with the proposed activities to deliver them within the overall timeframe set out in the Strategic Operational programme. The stakeholder communications and engagement plan will be subject to the same monitoring and reporting arrangements agreed for the overall programme as set out in the strategy.

The main mediums of contact aim to be live in by the end of January 2015 and operate throughout 2015-20 with invitation links sent to all project contacts.

Stakeholder group	Audience	Analysis	Medium of contact
<p>Neath Residents</p>	<p>Service Users General public Carers Older people Children and young people Marginalised/hard to reach groups Community groups Residents Community forum</p>	<p>Characteristics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the centre of an integrated approach • Receiving a service • Council Tax payers • Have wide and varied influence • Have wide and varied interest • See only one “council” organisation • Young people can be hard to reach <p>Needs and interest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good service experience • Knowledge of and/or access to the right information in the right place at the right time • Accessible information to make choices about quality of life • Assurance they will get help when and where they need it • Know how and where to raise concerns • Opportunity to be listened to/involved in planning of services <p>Benefits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help achieve intervention success • Offer valuable feedback • Ambassadors- share good experiences • Help to shape services/plan responses based on first hand experience 	<p>Project blog available via NPTCBC website</p> <p>Twitter -project wall/Facebook group #neathfuture</p> <p>Microsite containing project information</p> <p>Council newspaper/ e-zine</p> <p>“Better Neath” discussion groups in informal community locations</p>

		<p>Risks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop interventions in the programme that do not meet need • Raising /managing expectations that cannot be met • Don't improve as not listening potentially continue to make the same mistakes • Accused of not delivering/wasting public money • Disengage from services 	
<p>Representatives</p>	<p>MP ,AM County councillors/Neath members Town council Pressure groups</p>	<p>Characteristics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protecting the interest of constituents/local population • Supporting political beliefs • Key opinion formers • Highly influential <p>Needs and interest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular updates and briefings on key issues • Involvement in issues and hot topics at an early stage to ensure they have a full picture <p>Assurance around patient experience/improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assurance that org responds to constituents issues and concerns <p>Benefits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to influence publicly if supports a project/issue • Able to influence politically • Can contribute to 	<p>Project blog available via NPTCBC website</p> <p>Microsite containing project information</p> <p>Swot workshop</p> <p>Committee/cou ncil meetings</p> <p>One to one discussions</p>

		<p>discussions and developments from a wide perspective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequent contact with constituents and media; able to act as ambassador/spokesperson in some areas <p>Risks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very high profile, particularly leading up to council elections; could delay/stop intervention if not kept informed and involved • Able to influence the media/ source of comment for media 	
Businesses	<p>Large “anchor” type companies with /without growth plans/opportunities</p> <p>SME clustered in and around town and industrial estates</p> <p>Service companies /sole traders and embryonic start ups</p> <p>Business Improvement district steering group</p>	<p>Characteristics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employers – local and regional • Growth sectors • Lifestyle service provision <p>Needs and Interest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive business environment • Recruitment • Skills and education quality • Infrastructure <p>Benefits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring investment and jobs • Improved amenities and services <p>Risks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding of needs identified 	<p>Project blog available via NPTCBC website</p> <p>Twitter and Facebook groups</p> <p>Microsite containing project information</p> <p>One to one discussions</p> <p>“Neath business” – Linked in group</p> <p>Business Breakfast</p>
Staff	Project core group	<p>Characteristics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission and 	Project blog available via

	<p>Key officials group</p> <p>Wider staff living or working in the Neath area</p> <p>Service/Division management teams</p> <p>Schools</p>	<p>deliver services that meet needs of local population.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influence over other groups • All are service users; some residents <p>Needs and interest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular info to enable them to do their job well • Understand what is expected of them from customers • Understand what they can expect from the organisation • Need to be valued <p>Benefits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ambassadors for the organisation • Committed to achieving organisation's vision • Employer of choice <p>Risks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undervalued; demotivated • May be reluctant to change such as transforming area services 	<p>NPTCBC website</p> <p>Microsite containing project information</p> <p>–no need for this as you could use blog referred to above</p> <p>Also could do regular updates in the staff newsletter 'in the loop'</p>
<p>Partner organisations</p>	<p>Health - LHB, GP practices/community services</p> <p>South Wales police</p> <p>Welsh Government and NDPBS -NRW</p> <p>Third sector groups</p> <p>Housing associations/RSLs</p>	<p>Characteristics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide services • Work alongside other services • Support initiatives <p>Needs and interest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To feel influential; having a role in decision making • To understand where TPP going; i.e. strategic direction plans • To understand how they fit into the strategic 	<p>Project blog available via NPTCBC website</p> <p>Microsite containing project information</p> <p>SWOT workshop</p>

		<p>direction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have an overview of our priorities and challenges • Understand position/opinions on specific issues that impact on them • Influence our direction of travel with specialist knowledge and experience <p>Benefits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supportive direction of travel makes it easier to take forward • More co-ordinated approach • Better proposals with more contributions from front line staff and service users • Cross organisational sharing and support <p>Risks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic plans may conflict with ITS • Less likely to work in partnership • Always be conflicts around finance/funding • May block proposals/projects 	
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Objectives

1. To enable the widest possible cross section of stakeholders to be made aware of the Neath Integrated programme and interact with the work

ACTIVITY	
1.1	Email introduction and open communication channel with Neath members
1.2	Officials information gathering sessions
1.3	Core project group meetings and regular reports
1.4	One to one interviews – face to face and by telephone with key stakeholders
1.5	Programme blog set up on NPTCBC website
1.6	Twitter wall and Facebook group set up via NPTCBC
1.7	Discussion thread on Neath Port Talbot business Linked in and Facebook groups
1.8	Internal project blog and micro site set up via NPTCBC
1.9	Construct community contact database from council/CVS and email introduction to programme Facebook and Twitter groups
1.10	Stakeholder workshop - June
1.11	Member presentation - June
1.12	Community forum meetings

2. To enable programme partners and other stakeholders to use project information to develop services and /or further project interventions as part of ongoing programme development and implementation

ACTIVITY	
2.1	Information gathering on current and proposed activity via blogs and one to one meetings
2.2	Stakeholder workshop - November
2.3	Development and publication of SWOT analysis highlighting areas of need and opportunity for potential development of interventions
2.4	Proposed project mailbox and comment facility
2.5	Project evaluation matrix

3. To secure feedback on potential project proposals and establish a system of ongoing dialogue with stakeholders as part of programme implementation

ACTIVITY	
3.1	Stakeholder workshop –June
3.2	Members, Communities First clusters, Town council workshops
3.2	Informal discussion groups in community locations - thematic linked to youth groups and older persons forums
3.3	Steering group/core project group meetings
3.4	Draft programme

3.5	Final programme and project portfolio setting out how feedback secured influenced final plan
3.6	Email link to plan to all project contacts including description of plan ownership and means of continuing engagement
3.7	Establish systems for continuing engagement as part of plan ownership/implementation/governance arrangements eg Neath panel
3.8	Develop Neath future campaign working with local press
3.9	Community forum meetings