

Town Centre Action Plan

Approved Plan
April 2001



*Cynllun
Gwelthredu
Canol Tref*

*Cynllun Cymeradwyedig
Ebrill 2001*

Blackwood *Coed Duon*

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PART 1 ANALYSIS

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The purpose of this document is threefold:

- to comprise a “town centre strategy” for purposes of planning policy
- to provide a framework for Urban Regeneration projects in a defined “Action Area”
- to provide a basis for funding bids

1.2 The document is divided into two parts. Part 1 contains a **summary analysis** of Blackwood town centre, its characteristics, needs and opportunities. Supporting survey data is contained in separate appendices. Part 2 contains Action Plan **proposals** in response to the issues identified in Part 1.

2. THE NEED FOR AN ACTION PLAN

2.1 Caerphilly County Borough has a limited range of shops to serve its residents, many of whom shop outside the County Borough. Some of these needs could be met by expanding Blackwood from a district to a sub-regional centre with a greater range of facilities.

2.2 Although Blackwood has the potential to grow into a sub-regional centre serving a wide area of the mid-valleys, this growth needs to be carefully planned so that one part of the town centre does not prosper at the expense of the other parts. An action plan is therefore needed to identify locations for new development, locations for improvements and ensure that there are strong links between them.

3. POLICY FRAMEWORK

3.1 The Action plan proposals form a key part of the Unitary Development Plans (UDP) strategy for growth in the mid-valleys corridor. Part of the UDP strategy is to concentrate retail growth in Blackwood.

4. LOCAL AREA INITIATIVES

4.1 Progress has already been made. In 1990, Islwyn Borough Council and the Welsh Development Agency commissioned consultants Halcrow Fox and Associates (HFA) to carry out a planning study of Blackwood town centre. The report identified a number of opportunities for improving access, car parking, the environment, properties, pedestrian safety and for the introduction of town centre management initiatives.

4.2 Both the Islwyn Local Plan (1996) and the Mid Ebbw Valley Strategy (1994) contain projects for the enhancement of the town centre, based on the findings of the HFA study. Projects carried out to date include:-

- Town Improvement grants to properties along the west side of the High Street

- Improved High Street layout.
- Environmental improvements at the town gateways.
- The appointment of a manager for the Market Place.
- Introduction of a bylaw prohibiting consumption of alcoholic liquor in designated areas of the town.

5. ACTION AREA ANALYSIS

Retail appraisal

- 5.1 Blackwood is one of the two largest shopping centres in the county borough. Within the Deposit Unitary Development Plan it is proposed that Blackwood retailing provision be expanded to achieve the status of a sub-regional retail centre.
- 5.2 A survey of retail units in Blackwood was undertaken in 1999 and retail attitude surveys were carried out in each of the six largest town centres in the county borough in 1994 and in 1997. Detailed survey data is contained in appendix 1. A summary of the results is as follows:
- The surveys confirm Blackwood's position in the county borough's retail hierarchy – on a par with Caerphilly and above Bargoed, Ystrad Mynach, Newbridge and Risca

Blackwood has the second highest pedestrian flows in the County Borough



- Blackwood has the second highest pedestrian flows in the county borough and there was a 40% growth in flows between 1994 and 1997.
- Blackwood is the most car dependent of the county borough's six town centres making access and the provision of car parking very important to the success of the town
- There has been a reduction in the number of people shopping for food in Blackwood over the period of 1994 - 1997 suggesting that residents are beginning to be dissatisfied with the level of provision available locally.

- Blackwood has increased its percentage of non-food shopping, indicating that it has the potential for further development of non-food shopping facilities
- Significant proportions of residents from the Bargoed, Ystrad Mynach and Newbridge areas chose Blackwood for their non food purchases, pointing to the town's potential as a sub regional centre

5.3 The Isochrone Plan 1 indicates the five and ten minute drive times to and from Blackwood town centre.

Environmental appraisal.

5.4 In common with many valleys towns Blackwood has developed along the valley floor. The main lines of communication follow the natural contours of the land. The High Street, the river and the line of the disused railway all run from north to south. With the town's development constrained by the steep sided valley to the west and by the railway and river to the east, retail activity has been confined to a relatively narrow corridor, concentrated along the High Street.

5.5 The closure of the railway allowed parking to be provided at the rear of High Street and this is seen as one of the reasons for the success of the town centre. In 1989 the development of the Market Place had a major impact in increasing the floorspace of the town centre and also broadening the town centre from its original one street basis.

5.6 A summary of the environmental issues in the town centre today is as follows:

- North - south through traffic still has no alternative other than to travel along the High Street. As a result one of the main problems of the town centre is the amount of traffic moving through the main street. This causes traffic congestion and can frequently make crossing the road a difficult experience. Though some footpaths are wider than in many valley towns congestion occurs at certain points (e.g. outside Boots) and there is potential for further pavement widening.
- Other than the new shopping centre (The Market Place) and some inappropriate 1960s infill buildings the majority of shops along the High Street were constructed prior to 1919 and many of them have been converted from their previous residential use. This has led to variety in the style and form of individual buildings and groups of buildings which coupled with some inappropriate external alterations gives a disjointed appearance to much of the High Street.
- Blackwood is punctuated by a number of key buildings, including the Miners Institute and the Little Theatre which give the town a special character. Focal points such as the entrance to the market on High Street and the junction of Hall Street and High Street also contribute to local identity. There is potential to enhance the setting of these buildings and spaces so that their prominence in the street scene reflects the valuable contribution they make to the character of the town.

The Miners Institute - a local landmark



- The quality of the public realm has deteriorated in parts of the town centre, notably at the seating area alongside the Institute and in the area fronting the Blackwood Methodist church. There is scope for environmental improvements to the public realm throughout the town.
- In general, the town benefits from an attractive backdrop of rolling countryside to the east with many fine long views on the approaches to the town and glimpses at various locations throughout the High Street. The rural approaches to both the north and south help to give the impression of a contained and well defined town centre.

5.7 An analysis of the town's main characteristics is shown on Plan 2.

Parking appraisal

5.8 The locations of existing town centre car parks are shown on Plan 3 and more detailed information on parking provision is contained in appendix 2. The main findings in relation to car parking are as follows:

- a number of the car parks (1,6 and 7) are quite a distance from the High Street and therefore tend not be utilised as overflow car parking.
- access between a number of the car parks and the High Street is poor in terms of safety, the overall environment and signposting.
- the locations of the car parks either below or above the level of the High Street result in difficulties for the disabled and people with pushchairs.
- the "shopmobility" facility is located at the southern edge of the town, some distance from the main retail core.
- At present car parks in the centre of town are congested on Friday and Saturdays. A new car parking strategy would encourage outlying car parks to be used by commuters thereby releasing central car parks for shoppers.

Blackwood is heavily car dependent but access from many car parks to the High Street is poor



6. WEAKNESSES AND STRENGTHS

6.1 The analysis highlights several **weaknesses**, as follows:

economic viability under threat

- notwithstanding the town's strengths, there is still a limited choice of goods available for purchase;
- in particular, existing anchor food stores are too small. Compared with today's standards, there is a need for a large foodstore to maintain catchment area trade within the town and provide choice and competition to the benefit of shoppers;
- through traffic inhibits the crossing of High Street with a consequent negative effect upon trading, particularly on the eastern side of the High Street;
- lack of leisure and restaurant facilities.

quality of environment

- volume of traffic and congestion creates poor quality environment;
- perceived lack of amenity space within main shopping area.

car parking

- poor quality pedestrian links between car parks and the town centre and shortage of centrally located car parks.

6.2 In contrast, the area offers a number of **strengths**, as follows:

buoyant town centre focused on range of support services

- a major district retail centre in the Mid Valleys catchment area
- enjoys some representation of national multiples
- an established market three times a week

potential for town centre enhancement

- key buildings at northern end of High Street with scope for improvement and creation of a new civic space
- developer interest in the centre
- sites with development potential north and south of the town centre
- potential for pavement widening and/or traffic management measures on completion of the Sirhowy Enterprise Way and rear service road
- space for a riverside park to be created adjacent to Willow Drive

The town has a backland site to the north with retail development potential



7 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 Blackwood is a vibrant shopping area but suffers from some basic weaknesses. The main concern is to manage its future expansion. The proposals need to address three basic issues; land to cater for the town's expansion, the relief of traffic congestion and the improvement of the shopping environment and highway safety.
- 7.2 Accordingly, in part 2 of this action plan, over 13 Ha of land is allocated for retail and leisure development. The proposed Sirhowy Valley Enterprise Way will allow through traffic to bypass the town and improve the accessibility of the centre for a wider catchment area. There are proposals to improve retail servicing, parking and the environment following implementation.

PART 2 VISION, OBJECTIVES & POLICIES

Vision
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- 1.1 The Council's vision is to make Blackwood the best shopping centre in the heart of the valleys.

Objectives
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- 2.1 The objectives of the Blackwood Town Centre Action Plan are as follows:

1. **To strengthen the retail and leisure provision.**
2. **To maintain a variety of appropriate developments and activities.**
3. **To reduce the impact of traffic and create pedestrian dominated areas.**
4. **To improve linkages within the town centre and particularly between existing shops and new developments.**
5. **To increase and improve car parking provision particularly on the edge of the town centre.**
6. **To improve the built environment and enhance areas of public open space in the town centre and the approaches to it.**
7. **To protect key areas from theft and vandalism.**
8. **To improve public transport facilities and accessibility to them.**
9. **To introduce car parking management measures to maximise efficiency of use of car parking facilities.**

Policies

- 3.1 The Action Plan policies are categorised in terms of **development opportunities, environmental enhancement, leisure and recreation, transport and security measures.** These proposals are shown on Plan 4.

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Retail

- BW1 6.5 HECTARES OF LAND TO THE NORTH OF HALL STREET IS IDENTIFIED FOR RETAIL DEVELOPMENT, CAR PARKING, CIVIC SQUARES AND ROAD IMPROVEMENTS.**

(Objectives 1,2,3,4 & 9)

- 3.2 Blackwood town centre is a busy vibrant shopping centre. To ensure continued growth planning permission was granted in March 2001 for the development of land to the north of Hall Street for retail uses, providing an opportunity to extend the principal shopping area. The approved layout is shown on Plan 5.
- 3.3 The site is located on the edge of the existing centre in recognition of the lack of space for expansion in the town and easier vehicular access on the periphery. The development will involve the diversion of Hall Street to form a new junction with High Street, further to the North. Three new pedestrianised civic spaces will be created; at the present Hall Street / High Street junction, opposite the Miners Institute and within the development itself. The developer will be expected to contribute to the funding of these spaces and also to fund appropriate highway improvements, replacement car parking, playing fields and civic amenity site.
- 3.4 The proposal is designed to complement and strengthen the existing town centre by providing additional retail premises, car parking and improvements to rear servicing of existing premises.
- 3.5 The proposed civic spaces would provide shoppers and visitors to Blackwood with valuable amenity areas whilst acting as connection points between the existing shopping centre and the proposed retail developments east of High Street. They may also be used as events areas, providing Blackwood with arenas for community events.

Retail Warehousing / Leisure Development

- BW2 5.4 HECTARES OF LAND TO THE SOUTH OF THORNCOMBE ROAD IS IDENTIFIED FOR RETAIL WAREHOUSING / LEISURE DEVELOPMENT.**

(Objectives 1,2 & 4)

- 3.6 Not all of Blackwood's retail and leisure needs for the future can be met within the defined retail area boundary, particularly those stores selling bulky goods such as DIY, carpets and furniture, and leisure activities such as bowling and restaurants. In recognition of this, 5.4 Ha mainly to the south of Thorncombe Road has been identified for retail warehousing / leisure

development. The site also includes parts of the highway on Thorncombe Rd and the public car park to the north. The proposed land uses will complement the existing town centre uses by adding diversity and thus vibrancy to the town. The development will also contribute to extending Blackwood's catchment area.

Site south of Thorncombe road identified for retail warehousing / leisure development



- 3.7 An equivalent or higher number of public car parking spaces will be provided in the development to those presently on the site. Inclusion of part of the existing car park into the site allows the development to be more closely integrated with the retail area to the north and gives scope for a new civic space on to the High Street.
- 3.8 Within the defined area on the Blackwood Proposals Plan large stores selling durable goods will be approved in principle, subject to detailed considerations, provided it can be demonstrated that such proposals will not undermine the vitality and viability of Blackwood's existing town centre. Large stores selling durable goods are generally defined as those of 1,000 sq.m. or more gross floorspace. The developer will be required to provide access to the new retail/leisure development by means of a new junction with the A4048. A new section of highway, which has been identified as part of the favoured Sirhowy Enterprise Way alignment, will also be provided by the developer, as well as an access point to the north of the site with the potential to link the development to the proposed rear service road and the existing town centre, if required.
- 3.9 This proposal provides the opportunity to develop leisure facilities in an edge of centre location. The site is suitable for activities such as cinema, pubs / night club / bowling but not a facility which would threaten the viability of the town centre's existing leisure provision.
- 3.10 The different, but complementary uses, during the day and in the evening can support each other, making the town more attractive to residents, shoppers and visitors.

Community facilities

BW3 A NEW BUILDING INTENDED FOR COMMUNITY USES WILL BE LOCATED AT THE NORTHERN END OF THE CAR PARK NO. 4, EAST OF THE HIGH STREET (Objective 2)

- 3.11 This area will become an important pedestrian thoroughfare between the main car park, the new retail development to the north and existing shops and services on the High Street. A focal building of at least two storeys is needed which could house a range of community facilities and services for the public, including the Citizens Advice Bureau, Shopmobility unit and public toilets. The new building will provide a strong visual link between the new and existing retail areas and the car park.

ENVIRONMENT

Environmental Improvements

BW4 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS WILL BE UNDERTAKEN IN BLACKWOOD TOWN CENTRE TO SECURE THE UPGRADING AND ENHANCEMENT OF PROPERTIES AND HIGHWAYS. (Objective 6)

- 3.12 An improvement scheme will be undertaken within the area indicated on the Action Plan when funding becomes available. The scheme will involve a general improvement of the shopping environment and streetscape through the introduction of planting, pavement improvements, street furniture, sympathetic signing and undergrounding overhead services. Funding will be sought to assist commercial property owners and those responsible for key buildings to upgrade their premises. Environmental improvements will enhance the overall image of the town, complementing the developments at the market place.

Public art

BW5 THE INTEGRATION OF PUBLIC ART IN TOWN CENTRE ENHANCEMENT PROJECTS WILL BE ENCOURAGED. (Objective 6)

- 3.13 Public art adds quality and individuality to regeneration schemes and can be used to reflect aspects of local history or culture. A positive precedent for the inclusion of public art has already been set in Caerphilly town centre. There are opportunities to incorporate artwork in Blackwood, particularly in the proposed new squares. An example might be a freestanding sculpture as a tribute to internationally acclaimed local musicians. Equally valid art projects have included specially designed seating, signs and railings.

Signposting

BW6 VEHICULAR/PEDESTRIAN SIGNPOSTING WILL BE IMPROVED THROUGHOUT BLACKWOOD TOWN CENTRE.

(Objectives 4 & 6)

- 3.14 In the interest of the safety of town centre users, both vehicular and pedestrian, signposting is necessary throughout the core shopping area. This however, must be looked at comprehensively to ensure unwarranted signage is removed and all other signage is uniform and positioned in an appropriate and sympathetic manner.

BW7 BLACKWOOD WILL BE SIGNPOSTED AS A MAJOR DESTINATION ON THE COUNTY BOROUGH'S PRINCIPAL ROAD NETWORK.

(Objectives 4 & 6)

- 3.15 Blackwood is one of the largest shopping centres in the County Borough, yet is poorly signposted within its region. The town's profile as a sub-regional shopping centre means that it is important to the viability of the town centre that signage guidance to shoppers and service vehicles is provided. In future Blackwood will be included on all new signage to be erected in the region, consistent with national guidance/best practice.

LEISURE AND RECREATION

BW8 A PUBLIC PARK WILL BE CREATED ADJACENT TO WILLOW DRIVE TO PROVIDE AN ADDITIONAL RECREATION FACILITY FOR THE TOWN OF BLACKWOOD.

(Objectives 2 & 6)

- 3.16 The proposed riverside park will include land currently in use as public open space together with a new area of land adjacent to the proposed retail / leisure development (BW2). The development of the North of Blackwood site (BW1) will result in the loss of a playing field. Land adjacent to Willow Drive includes a playing field but due to poor drainage the facility is under utilised. To ensure that no facilities are lost to the area the developers of development site BW1 will fund improvements to the drainage on the site to enable the full use of the facility.
- 3.17 The development of the retail warehousing / leisure site (BW2) provides an opportunity to extend the existing recreation area. As part of the proposal a pleasant walkway will be developed linking the residential area situated to the east (Woodfieldside) to the retail / leisure site (BW2). The scheme will involve the provision of a footbridge over the Sirhowy River, which runs through the site.

TRANSPORT

Car Parking / Rear Servicing/ Pedestrian routes

BW 9 THE CAR PARK AND ADJACENT LANE TO THE EAST OF HIGH STREET WILL BE COMPREHENSIVELY UPGRADED TO MAKE BETTER USE OF THE AVAILABLE LAND FOR CAR PARKING, SHOP SERVICING AND PEDESTRIAN ACCESS.

(Objective 4,5 & 9)

- 3.18 The town centre of Blackwood is bisected by the A4048 strategic highway. The free flow of traffic is often compromised by inappropriate on-street parking and shop servicing. A car park has been provided on the former railway line to the east of High Street. This car park is the main point of arrival in the town for car borne shoppers although the area presents a poor image of backland development with unattractive pedestrian links to the shops through narrow service lanes.
- 3.19 The present arrangement of the car park and the adjacent rear lane is not utilising the land to best effect. A comprehensive upgrade of the car park would include reducing the level of the embankment, increasing the available car parking area and allowing for future rear servicing of the shops. Improved rear servicing would also help improve traffic conditions along High Street.
- 3.20 The inset plan 6 shows in more detail how the Hall Street / High Street area could be redesigned.

Pedestrian routes

BW10 A NEW PEDESTRIAN ROUTE WILL BE CREATED BETWEEN THE CAR PARK AND THE HIGH STREET.

(Objective 4)

- 3.21 In conjunction with the proposal to expand the car park, a new pedestrian route is proposed linking the car park and the High Street, giving direct and attractive access between new shopping facilities north of Hall Street and existing High Street shops. The demolition of no. 121 High Street is required to create the pedestrian route. Access at this point in the High Street allows pedestrians to arrive at a central location away from main traffic junctions. The focus of the pedestrian link to the east will be the new community building proposed in Policy BW3.
- 3.22 The existing pedestrian access from the car park to Hall Street will also be improved to serve the proposed new retail development to the north (BW1).

BW11 THE COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL WILL SUPPORT THE PROVISION BY THE PRIVATE SECTOR OF PEDESTRIAN LINKS FROM THE CAR PARK THROUGH TO THE SHOPS IN THE SOUTHERN PART OF HIGH STREET, SHOULD AN OPPORTUNITY ARISE.

(Objective 4)

- 3.23 All of the pedestrian links between the main public car park east of High Street are currently located in the northern half of the car park. The Council is keen to spread the benefits of new retail development throughout the town and to encourage economic activity in the southern part of High Street in particular. To this end the Council would support private sector proposals which would create an additional pedestrian link between the car park and the High Street in the area to the south of 121 High Street, should such a proposal arise in the future.

Traffic Management**BW12 TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT MEASURES WILL BE USED WHERE APPROPRIATE IN BLACKWOOD TOWN CENTRE TO REGULATE TRAFFIC MOVEMENT, IMPROVE ROAD SAFETY AND ENHANCE THE ENVIRONMENT.****(Objective 3)**

- 3.24 Blackwood is a vibrant shopping centre which is bisected by the busy A4048 strategic route. Consequently there is scope for a high degree of pedestrian/vehicle conflict. Pedestrians benefit through the provision of wide pavements along much of the length of High Street. However, the high traffic flow and accompanying vehicle turning movements, parking and loading activity militates against a pleasant shopping environment.
- 3.25 Significant measures can only be considered once the strategic highway importance of High Street is reduced by the diversion of through traffic onto an alternative route. Construction of the proposed Sirhowy Enterprise Way (Policy BW12) is therefore a vital component in the future economic enhancement of the town. In the meantime, the opportunities for short term management measures on High Street to aid free flow of traffic, improve servicing and pedestrian access will be pursued.

Sirhowy Enterprise Way**BW13 CONSTRUCTION OF THE SIRHOWY ENTERPRISE WAY.**

- 3.26 The proposed Sirhowy Enterprise Way is the Authority's first priority on the core highway network and will help to secure the long term economic well-being of the town. Whilst this major road scheme lies outside the town action plan area, its construction will have a major impact on the shopping environment. Extraneous and strategic traffic passing through the town centre will be diverted away from High Street and so improve its environment. The reduced highway status of this street would then enable traffic management measures to be considered (Policy BW11) which will provide further environmental benefits. The proposed retail / leisure development (BW2) will fund an element of the proposed Sirhowy Enterprise way route.

Cycling**BW14 THE SIRHOWY VALLEY FOOTPATH WILL BE UPGRADED TO CYCLEROUTE STANDARD**

- 3.27 A section of the Sirhowy Valley footpath extends along the eastern boundary of the Action Plan. This footpath will be upgraded to form a local cycleway link between the Upper Sirhowy Valley and the National Cycle Network route at Gelligroes. Provision of a coherent first phase section of cycleroute between Hall Street Blackwood and Gelligroes, via the riverside park (Policy BW8), will be pursued.

TOWN CENTRE SECURITY

BW15 CCTV (CLOSE CIRCUIT TELEVISION) CAMERAS WILL BE INTRODUCED INTO THE TOWN CENTRE.

(Objective 7)

- 3.28 The introduction of CCTV cameras covering key areas such as car parks and the bus station should improve security for all users of the Town Centre. Its introduction will not only reduce vandalism and theft but also make the retailers feel more confident about further investment in the town.
- 3.29 In November 1998 a bylaw was introduced prohibiting the consumption of alcoholic liquor in designated areas of the town centre and this will complement the CCTV initiative.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1**Retail survey data****SURVEY OF OUTLETS**

- 1.1 A survey of retail unit use was carried out in October 1999. It identifies the diversity of operators in the town centre.

Units & floorspace	Units	floorspace / sq m
Convenience	16	4540
Comparison	81	8670
Service	65	5590
Vacant	18	1990
Total	180	20790

- 1.2 **Food retailing**

Larger foodstores (over 300 net sq m)

Outlet	floorspace / sq m
Somerfield	1530
Aldi	760
Tesco	690
Iceland	500
Kwik save	420

- 1.3 **Comparison goods retailing**

List of national retailers

Anglian windows	Lloyds Chemist	Richeleys
Argos	Mister Minit	Road User
Boots	Nefertiti	Shoe Fayre
Curry's	New Look	Specsavers
Dorothy Perkins	Olivers Shoes	Stead & Simpson
Granada TV	Peacocks	Woolworths
Homestyle Fads	Poundstretcher	

- 1.4 **Services**

List of National Service Outlets

Abbey National	J D Weatherspoon	Principality BS
Barclays	Klik & Bollam	Sun Valley Amusement
Co op bank	Lloyds TSB	Top Rank Bingo
Going Places	Lunn Poly	William Hill
Halifax	HSBC Midland	World Choice

RETAIL ATTITUDE SURVEY

- 1.5 The following types of survey were carried out in each of the six largest town centres in the county borough including Blackwood in 1994 and again in 1997.

- 1.6 **Street survey** - in which visitors to the town centre were questioned.

Telephone survey- in which the county borough was divided into six catchment areas and 250 households in each were contacted.

Pedestrian flow survey - in which the numbers of people passing various points in the town centre were recorded during the day (10am - 4pm)

- 1.7 **Street survey**

Reasons

- Just over half of those surveyed were in Blackwood to buy food and groceries
- Another 28% were there to buy comparison goods
- The remainder were going to the bank, their workplace, or simply window shopping

Origins

- Only 28% were from Blackwood
- 21% took under 5 minutes to reach the town centre; 40% took more than 15 minutes
- Blackwood has the widest catchment area of the six main town centres in the county borough

Mode

- 55% came by car, 28% arrived by bus, and only 14% walked to the town centre
- Blackwood is the most car dependent of the six town centres

Spend

- 26% estimated that they would spend less than £10, while 18% said more than £40
- This was the lowest percentage of “low spenders” and the highest proportion of relatively “big spenders” in the six town centres

Likes / dislikes

- 43% cited “convenience” when asked what they most liked about the town centre
- 17% liked the range of shops, 15% the compactness, and 9% the market
- 41% had no dislikes about the centre, but 18% disliked the inadequate / expensive car parking, 13% the poor choice of shops, and 9% the volume of traffic / poor access

- 1.8 **Telephone survey**

Food shopping

- The proportion of the catchment population making their main food purchase in Blackwood declined from 87% in 1994 to 75% in 1997.
- Residents may be becoming dissatisfied with the existing range of local provision
- 62% of the catchment population normally did their food shopping once a week and 30% normally combined their food shopping trip with visits to other shops

Food shopping mode

- 85% of the catchment population had access to a car for shopping in 1997
- 77% usually made their main food shop by car in 1997, this being a significant increase in car use compared to 1994

Non food goods

- 45% of the catchment population chose Blackwood in which to buy these goods in 1997; an increase of 12% on 1994
- The other main destination choices in 1997 to buy these goods were Cardiff (25%) and Newport (22%)
- Compared with 1994, there was increased use of Blackwood and Cardiff town centres in 1997, balanced by reduced dependence on Newport and other centres
- This increasing polarisation in choice of centre might be due to the growing success of Blackwood in meeting the needs of the catchment residents.

Bulky goods shopping

- only 29% of the county borough's whole population shopped within its borders for these goods in 1997
- only 10% of the county borough's population shopped in Blackwood for these goods in 1997
- this is very largely a function of the dearth of stores in the area compared with fairly comparable centres such as Cwmbran, Merthyr Tydfil and Pontypridd

Attitude to Blackwood

- 84% of people rated the centre very or fairly favourable for both surveys; the highest of the six centres

1.9 Pedestrian flow survey

- Blackwood has the second highest pedestrian flows in the county borough area, after Caerphilly
- there was a 40% growth in pedestrian flows in the centre between 1994 and 1997
- Blackwood has consistent and regular flow levels on the Friday and Saturday counts
- it would appear that, unlike other centres in the county borough, Blackwood is not losing trade on Saturdays to other centres such as Newport

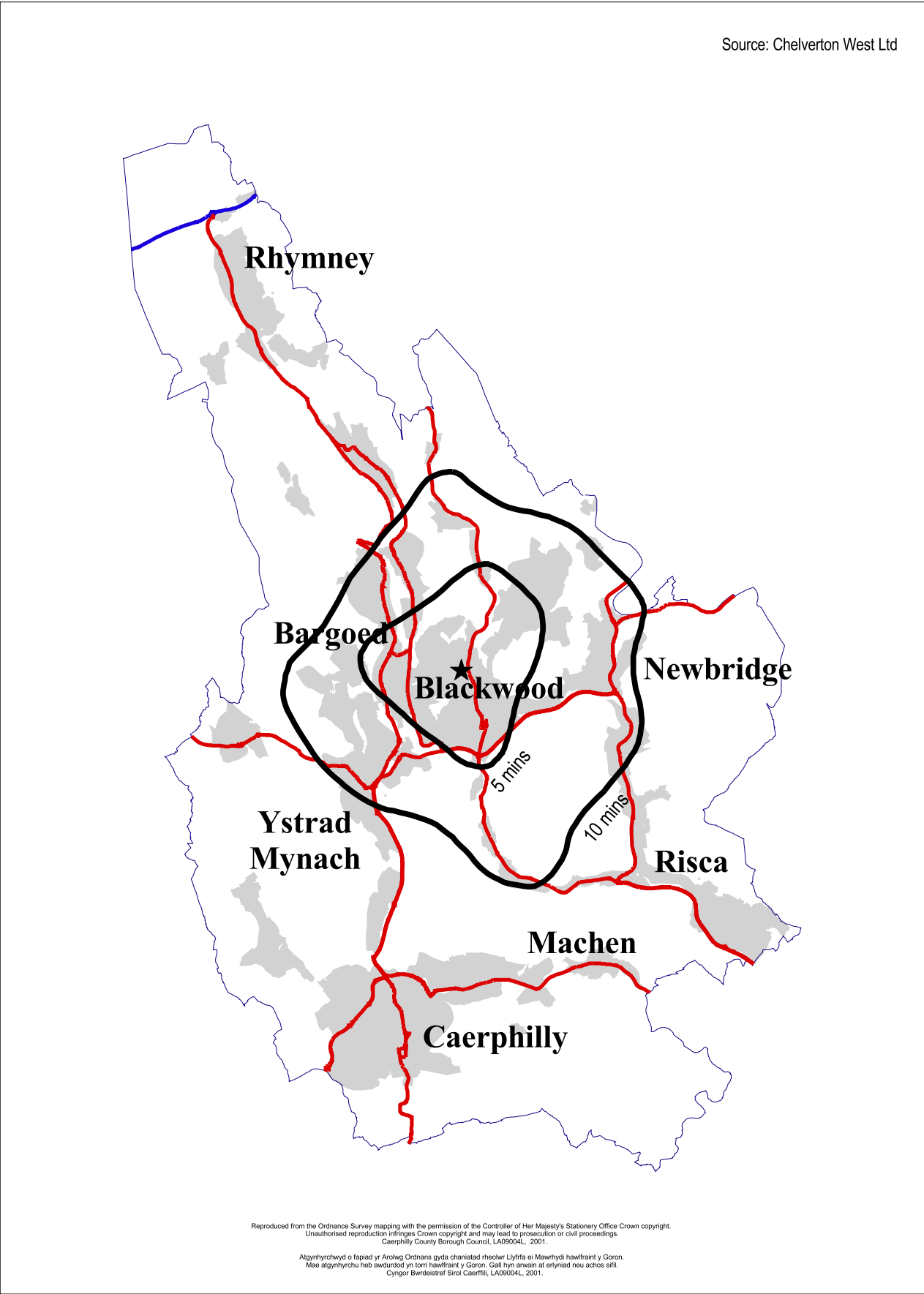
Parking provision in Blackwood town centre

On street	<i>spaces</i>		
Waiting limited to 30 mins.			
Return prohibited within 1 hour	52		
Mon - Sat 8.00am - 6.00pm			
Disabled Parking	5		
Off Street	Pay/display	Free private	proposed season ticket
1)Court House	40		
2)Thorncombe Road (No.2)	37		
3)Thorncombe (No.3)	90		
4) High Street	128		
5)Cliff Road	117		
6)Red Lion	16		
7)Aldi		101	
8)Wesley Road	35		
9)Woodbine Road	40		
10)Bus Station	80		
11)Somerfield		200	
12)Libanus			20
Total car parking	583	301	20

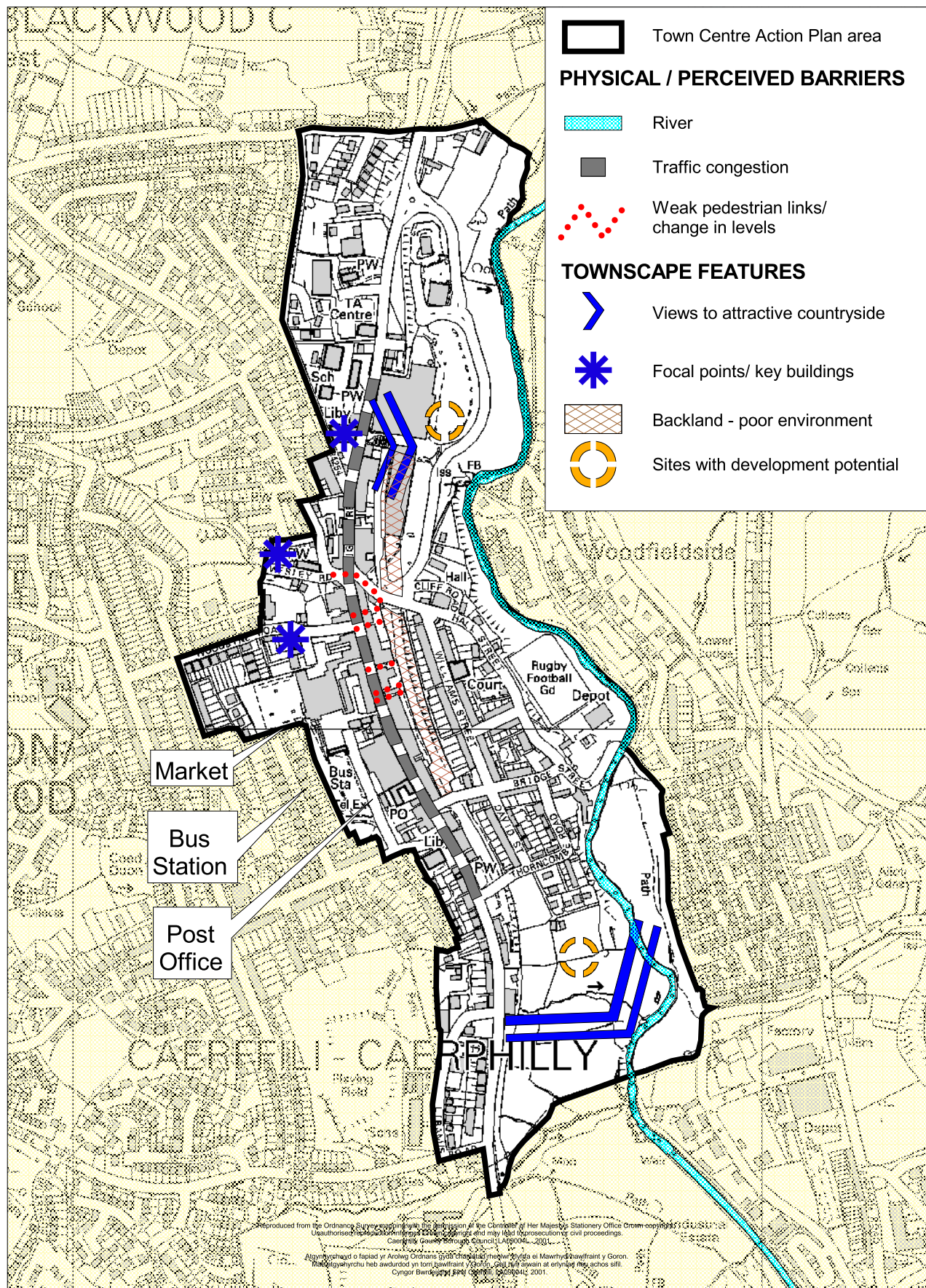
Blackwood Town Centre Action Plan

Isochrone Plan 1

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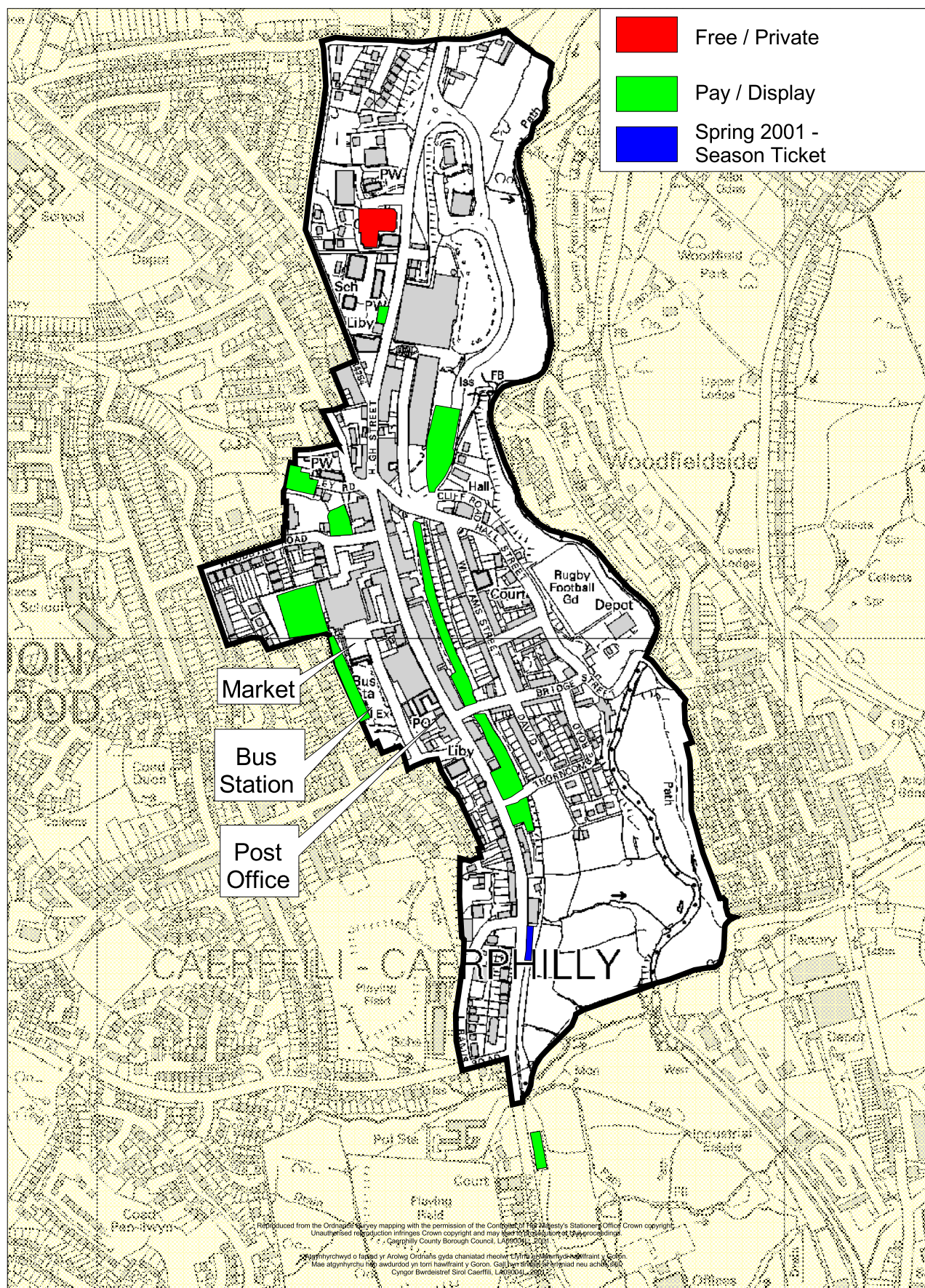
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Blackwood Town Centre Action Plan

Car Parking Plan 3

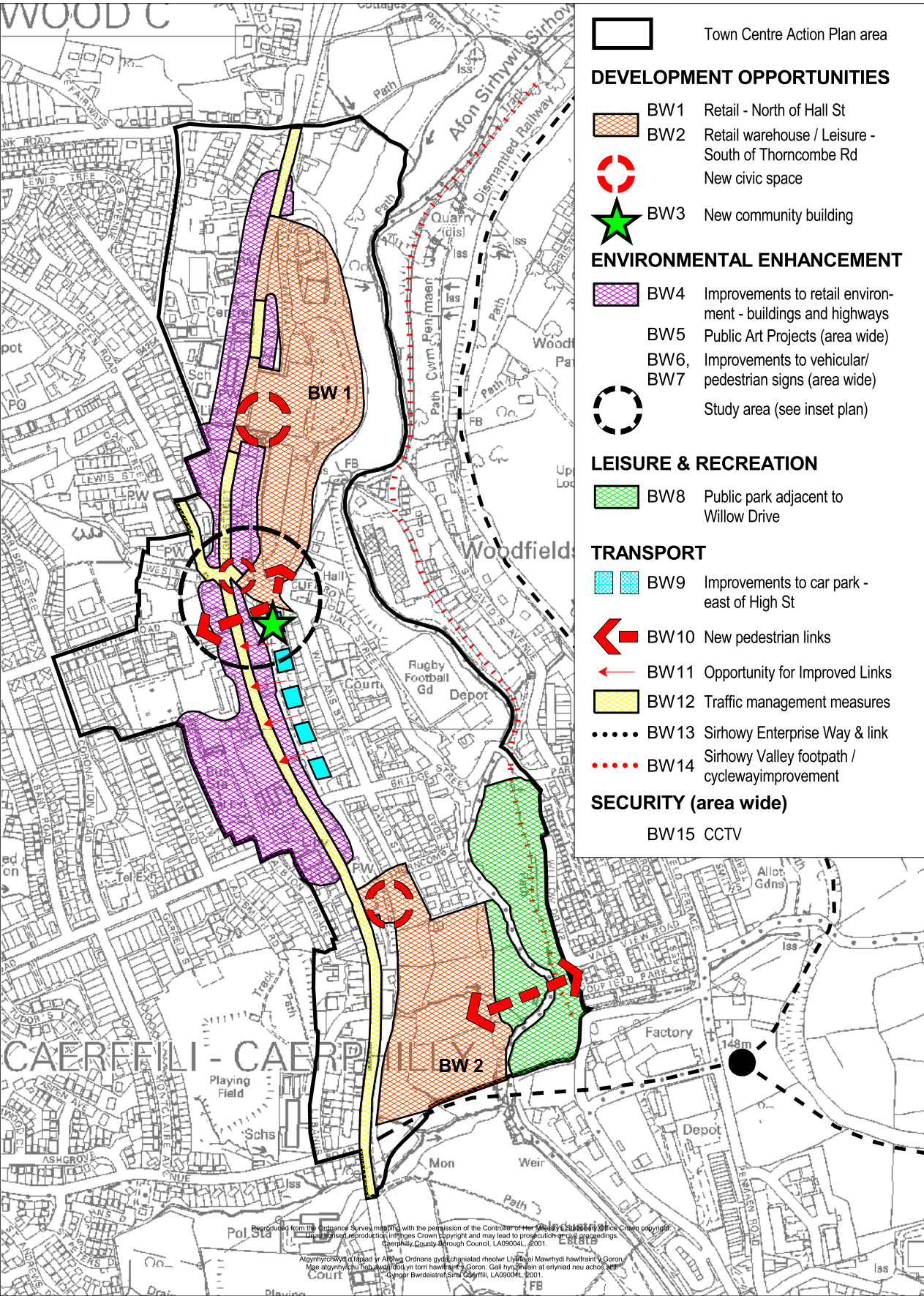
1:8000



Blackwood Town Centre Action Plan

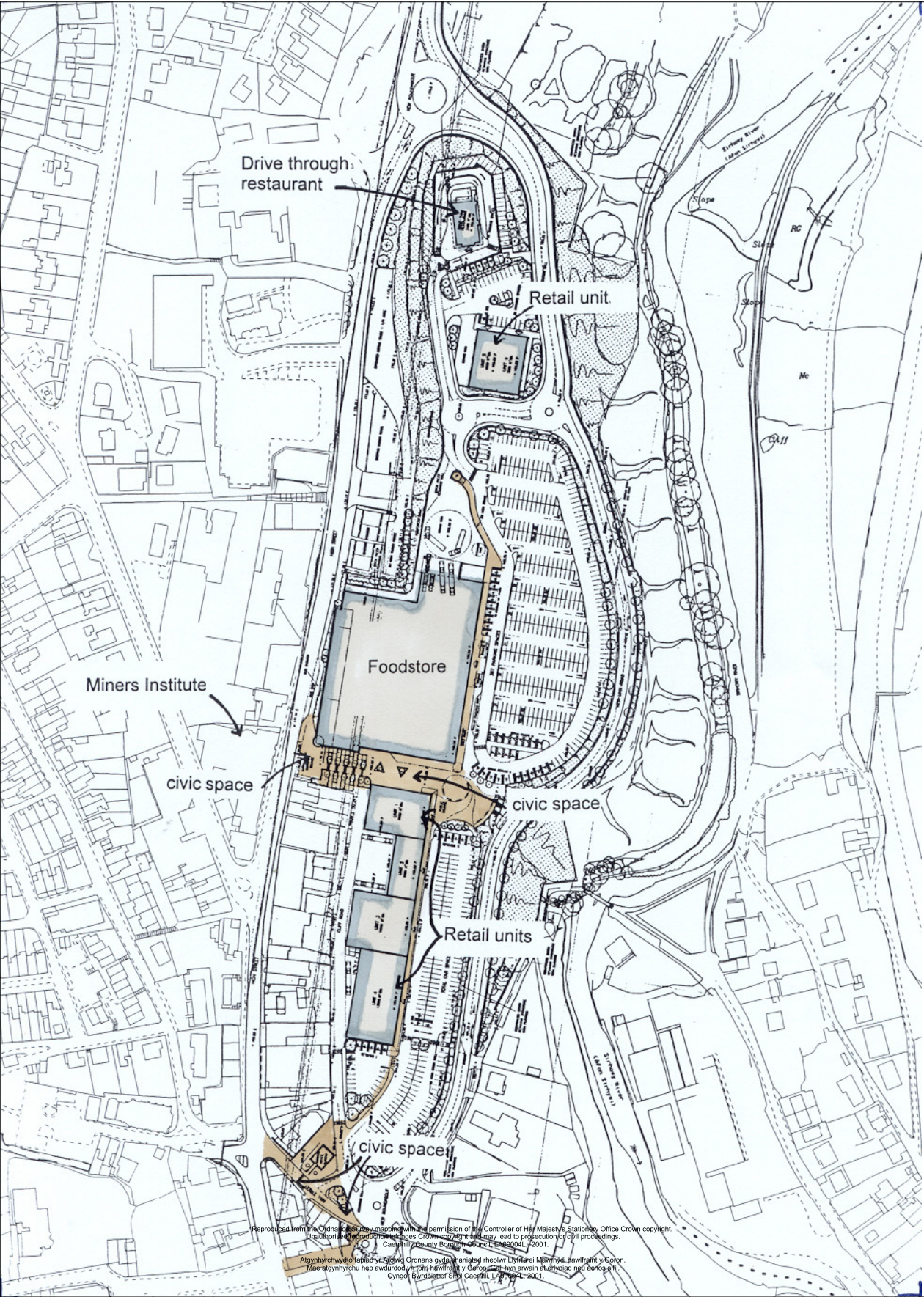
Proposals Plan 4

1:8000



Blackwood Town Centre Action Plan

Retail Development Site Plan 5



Blackwood Town Centre Action Plan

Study Area Plan 6

