

BARGOED

APPROVED TOWN CENTRE ACTION PLAN

BARGOD

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TREF BARGOD CYMERADWY



AUGUST
2003

AWST
2003

Preface

The Council's vision is to maintain Bargoed's status as a 'District Town Centre' by enhancing the retail vitality and viability of the Town.

Bargoed is the key to the regeneration of the Upper Rhymney Valley. It is the only district centre in the north of the County Borough and the only settlement with the potential to support the large number of service sector enterprises.

Funding has now been allocated by the Welsh Assembly to design the long awaited Bargoed Bypass.

The Bargoed Bypass is central to the strategy to attract private and public investment, create public and private transport improvements and environmental improvements to the town

Provision of the Bargoed Bypass is essential to link the deprived communities in the north of the County Borough with job opportunities to the south. The 11 wards in the Greater Bargoed and Upper Rhymney and Sirhowy Valley areas are all among the 100 most deprived wards in Wales.

Comprehensive transport improvements are planned which will give the town a new bus station linking with the railway station which was comprehensively upgraded in 2000.

In the town centre 5 new civic spaces are planned, to give the town a high quality environment. The first of these, overlooking the developing Bargoed Country Park was completed in 1998. In 2000 it was complemented by a grand flight of steps linking the town's main car park to Hanbury Road, the main shopping street. 2001 saw the completion of the Bargoed Northern Gateway, an environmental scheme that improved the northern approach to the town by opening up views of the church and provided additional car parking

Central to the regeneration of the district centre, however, is new retail provision, of which the key element would be a new food store with associated parking provision - providing Bargoed with modern convenience food shopping for the first time.

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The Need for an Action Plan

Bargoed town centre serves as an important district centre within the County Borough, particularly for local residents living within walking distance of the town centre and for residents living settlements to the north such as Brithdir, New Tredegar, Tirphil and Fochriw.

Over a period of time Bargoed has experienced a decline in the number of shoppers attracted to the town mainly due to the limited opportunities for new development and the improved transport links to other nearby shopping centres within and outside of the County Borough. The general topography of the town, rising sharply from the east to the west results in a shortage of suitable land for development purposes.



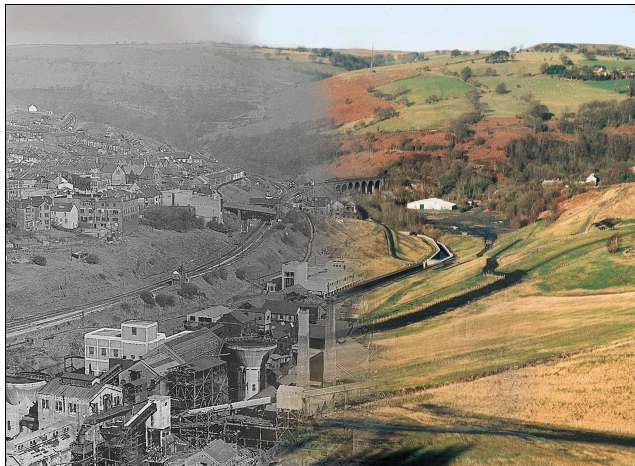
- The provision of the Bypass will create opportunities for new development, traffic calming and other environmental improvements, which could regenerate the town centre. This plan sets out how that could be achieved.

This plan incorporates a number of proposals the majority of which were identified on previous plans. However, there are two major alterations identified with the new plan.

- 1) The reclamation of the bus station to the northern end of the town incorporates pedestrian links to the main shopping street and also providing a pedestrian link to the refurbished Railway Station.
- 2) Bargoed is desperate for a modern food store with associated car parking and previous plans have identified the southern car park as a suitable location. The private investment sector have in the past expressed reservations about the size and the restricted nature of the site. The amendments to this plan now under consideration result in a larger retail area which will be more economically viable and attractive to the private sector.

Why is Bargoed Town Centre So Important ?

- Firstly, because it is the only district centre - ie the only centre which serves a wider locality than its immediate settlement - in the north of Caerphilly County Borough. It contains, for example, 151 Commercial premises , compared to 29 in the next largest centre in the area. The future prospects for the Upper Rhymney Valley are therefore bound up with the future of Bargoed and in particular its town centre.
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- Secondly, in an area in which enterprise and business development is poorly developed, the centre contains over 100 independent, locally owned businesses. If an enterprise culture is to grow and thrive in the upper Rhymney Valley, Bargoed town centre is the obvious starting point.
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- Thirdly, the town centre, being the most visited location in the upper Rhymney Valley, is inevitably a strong component of the overall image of the area as a whole. For regeneration to take hold in the area as a whole, there has to be change in image and the town centre has to be the focal point.
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- Fourthly, as the local district centre, Bargoed is the hub of the various transportation networks serving the area and plays a crucial role in the general accessibility of services to the catchment population.

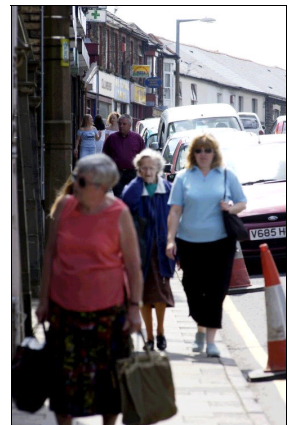


(the changing image of Bargoed)

The Current Situation

There are six district centres in Caerphilly county borough, two larger than Bargoed and three smaller. The county borough carries out triennial health checks on all six centres, involving extensive telephone and on street surveys and pedestrian flow counts. The latest survey was carried out in June 2000 and makes generally grim reading for Bargoed. The surveys show that:-

- The proportion of the catchment area buying their weekly convenience goods in Bargoed has fallen consistently from 22% in 1994 to 12% in 2000.
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- Bargoed has maintained its share of non-food trade but at a low level (11%)
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- The proportion of residents regarding the town centre "favourably" has slumped from 39% in 1994 to 20% in 2000 - by far the lowest approval rating in the county borough (next lowest was 49% whilst the highest was 80%).
- 49% of persons interviewed in the town centre had arrived on foot - by far the greatest proportion of any of the six centres.
- Average pedestrian flows in Bargoed on the Friday surveyed were exceptionally high - even higher than those in Caerphilly, though Saturday flows were lower.
- Despite it's location on a railway line, only 2% had arrived by train, compared to 18% by bus.



SWOT Analysis

Strengths

In contrast, the town offers a number of strengths as follows;

Retail Status

- large number and variety of shops and service units for a district centre.
- established weekly market.
- extensive walk-in trade from adjacent high density residential areas.
- retains a number of national chain stores.



Potential for Town Centre Enhancement

- close proximity of new country park and potential views across it;
- environmental opportunities presented by the bypass proposal
- potential for new civic spaces.

Weaknesses

The analysis highlights several weaknesses as follows:-

Economic Viability Under Threat

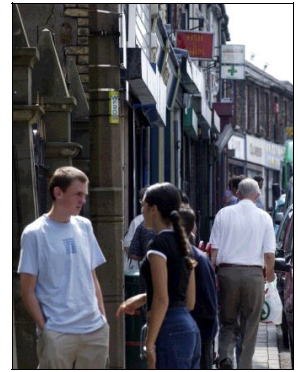
- lack of investment in new shopping provision whilst competing centres have grown.
- no modern food store with associated parking.
- high vacancy rate - too many commercial units overall.
- very poor and worsening image amongst both users and non-users of the town centre.
- no large, level sites for new development or redevelopment.
- declining pedestrian flows.

Quality of Environment

- the shopping streets are dominated by traffic with shoppers

confined to narrow pavements.

- a linear, "strung out" shopping centre with no obvious "heart".
- lack of amenity space in the town centre.
- centre "hemmed in" by residential streets to west and railway to east.



Pedestrian and Vehicular Movement

- through traffic has to pass through the shopping streets.
- narrow, congested highway system in the town centre.
- congested bus station.
- inadequate pedestrian access from main car parks to shopping areas.
- bus station and railway station located at opposite extremities of the town.



Opportunities

Development Potential

The potential of a land reclamation scheme to create land for a new food store and associated car parking.

Improved Pedestrian/Vehicular Movement

- Potential of planned bypass to remove through traffic and improve access to the town centre.
- plenty of free car parking.
- Plans for increased frequency of rail services.
- potential for improved bus facilities, including a new bus station.



Threats

- Competing retail outlets, at e.g. Merthyr and Blackwood.
- Internet shopping

Conclusion

There are numerous danger signals, which indicate that Bargoed is the most vulnerable of the County Borough's shopping centres with local residents being attracted to other nearby retail areas.

The centre still retains a wide variety of shops and services but desperately needs a modern food store and associated car parking.

Objectives

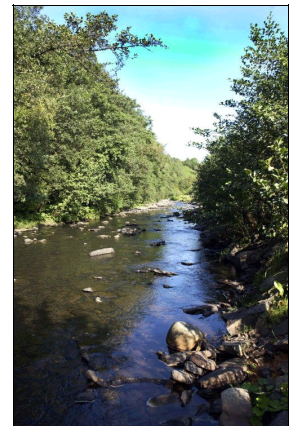
The objectives of the Bargoed Town Centre Action Plan are as follows:

1. To strengthen the retail provision.
2. To support a wide range of shops and services in to the town centre with appropriate facilities 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 car parking areas.
5. To encourage retail and employment investment in 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.

The Bargoed Bypass is central to the strategy for creating public and private transportation improvements and environmental improvements within the Town Centre. Although certain town centre improvements are possible prior to the bypass construction, the complete list of proposals cannot be implemented until through traffic is diverted from Hanbury Road.

Pre Bypass Proposals

- A1** The Bargoed ByPass will be designed
- A2** An area east of Cardiff Road on the southern car park is identified as an area of opportunity for retail development
- A3** Environmental improvements will be undertaken at the entrance to the retail site
- A4** A new civic space will be provided at the front of the police station on Hanbury Road
- A5** A public square will be created at the Hanbury Road end of Capel Street by closing a section of it to vehicles
- A6** A Public Square will be created on High Street (near the SPAR).
- A7** Environmental improvements will be undertaken to Hanbury Road/High Street. This will include a road improvement scheme will be undertaken along Church Place and Bristol Terrace, effectively reducing congestion around the emporium junction
- A8** landscape improvements and private parking provision will be investigated at the rear of the properties on the east side of Hanbury Road
- A9** The built fabric of the shopping centre will be enhanced through grant aid
- A10** A country park is to be developed on the reclaimed Bargoed Colliery site in the river valley below Bargoed
- A11** A long distance cycleway/footpath will be constructed within the country park
- A12** A promotional document for the town will be produced to entice private investment into the town.



Post Bypass Proposals

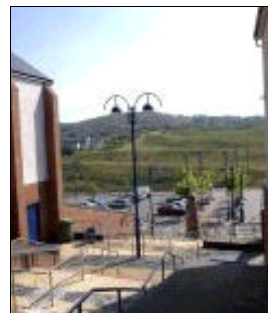
- B1** A new bus station with passenger facilities will be provided between the rearproperties of Hanbury Road and the railway line. pedestrian links with the town centre will be established, in addition to a pedestrian link to the railway station
- B2** Hanbury Road will be restricted to one way traffic movement, which will enable environmental improvements to be undertaken along its length
- B3** A public square will be created to replace the existing bus station area
- B4** A public space will be constructed on the pedestrian route between Hanbury Road and the new retail site

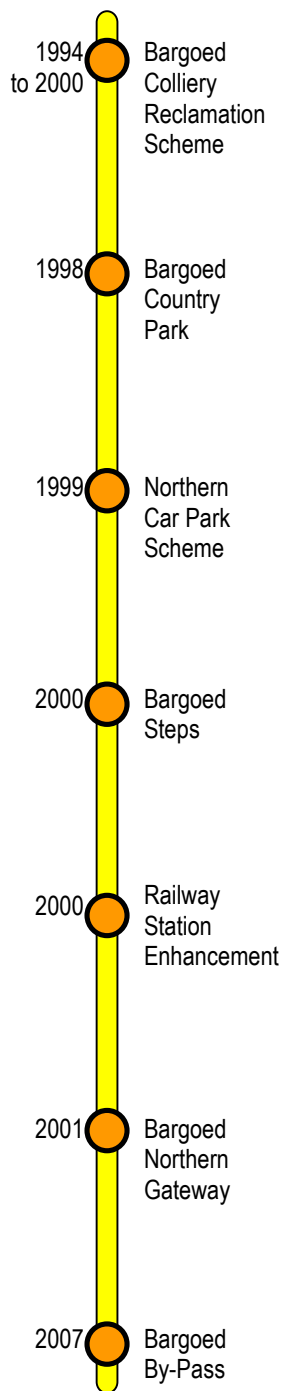
Maintaining The Momentum

Bargoed has a chance to break out from the steady spiral of decline which has affected the area since the colliery closed in 1968.

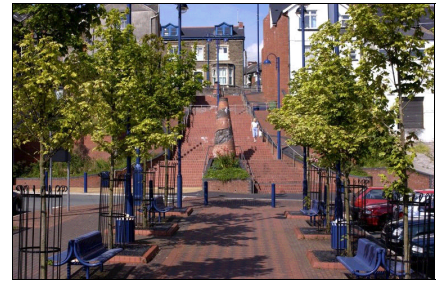
Substantial steps have taken place to release the potential of the local community over the past five years;-

- 1994-2000 (in two phases) the £12 million funded by the welsh Development agency Bargoed Colliery Reclamation Scheme
- 1998 and ongoing - Bargoed country park. - 89 hectares. of country park centred on the River Rhymney and serving the communities of Bargoed, Aberbargoed, Gilfach and Brittonia
- 1999 - the Bargoed town centre Northern Car Park scheme, which provided a high quality new 170 space car park for the town centre plus a new civic space overlooking the valley.





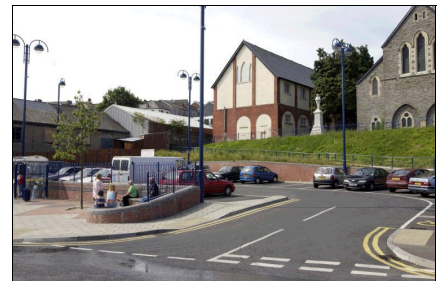
- 2000 - Bargoed steps - a spectacular new improved pedestrian link from the new car park to the main shopping street. Accompanied by the provision of 20 disabled parking spaces and a new ramped route to the town centre.



- 2000 - Bargoed northern railway station enhancement, including a new disabled lift/bridge across the railway lines plus a taxi rank and environmental enhancements.



- 2001 - Bargoed Northern Gateway - a vastly improved entrance to the northern part of the town centre, opening up spectacular views of St Gwladys Church through replacing run down and derelict commercial premises with a landscaped car park, bus stop and disabled ramp access to the Church.



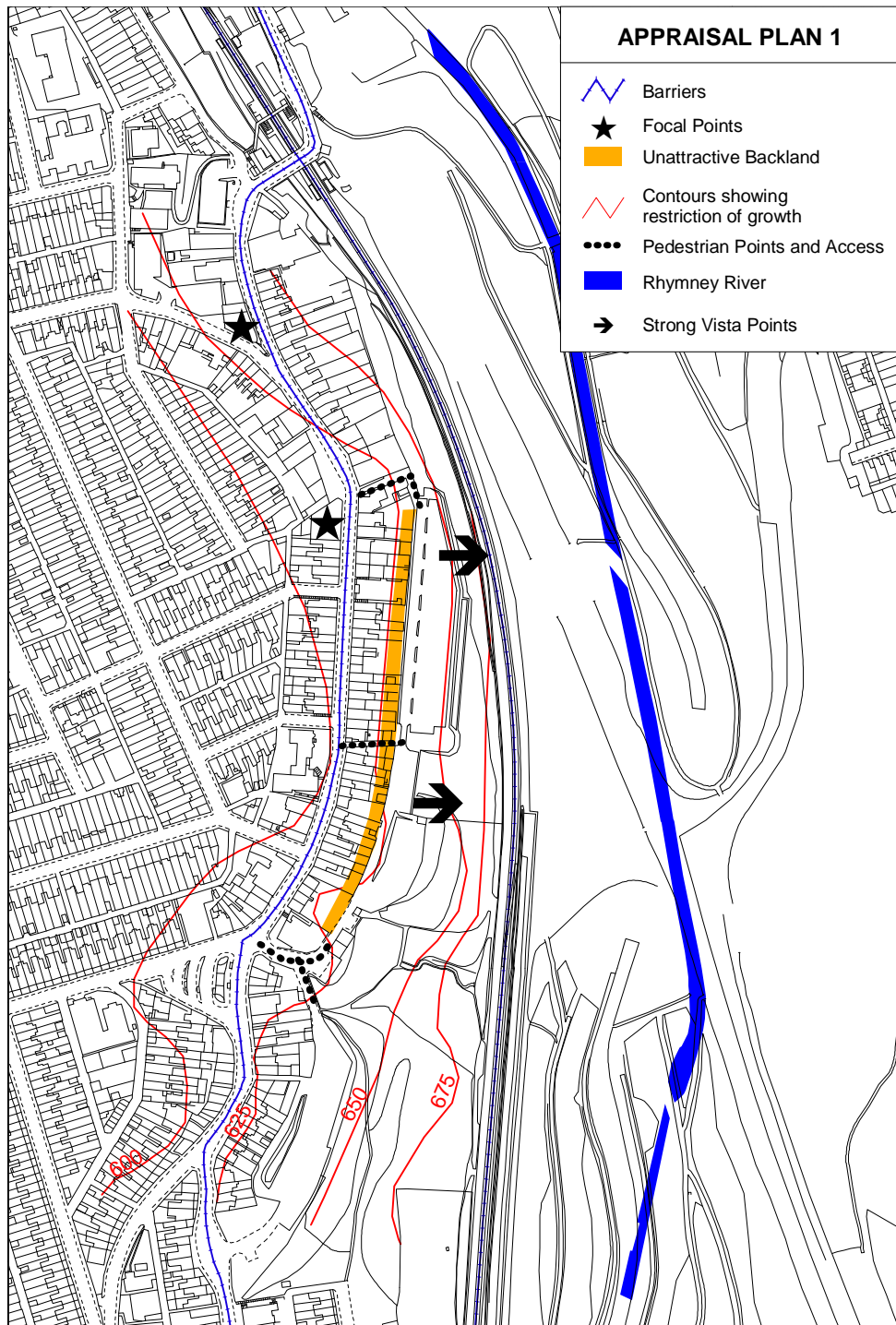
- It is essential to keep up the momentum with further improvements, culminations in the construction of the By-Pass itself, currently programmed to commence in 2007

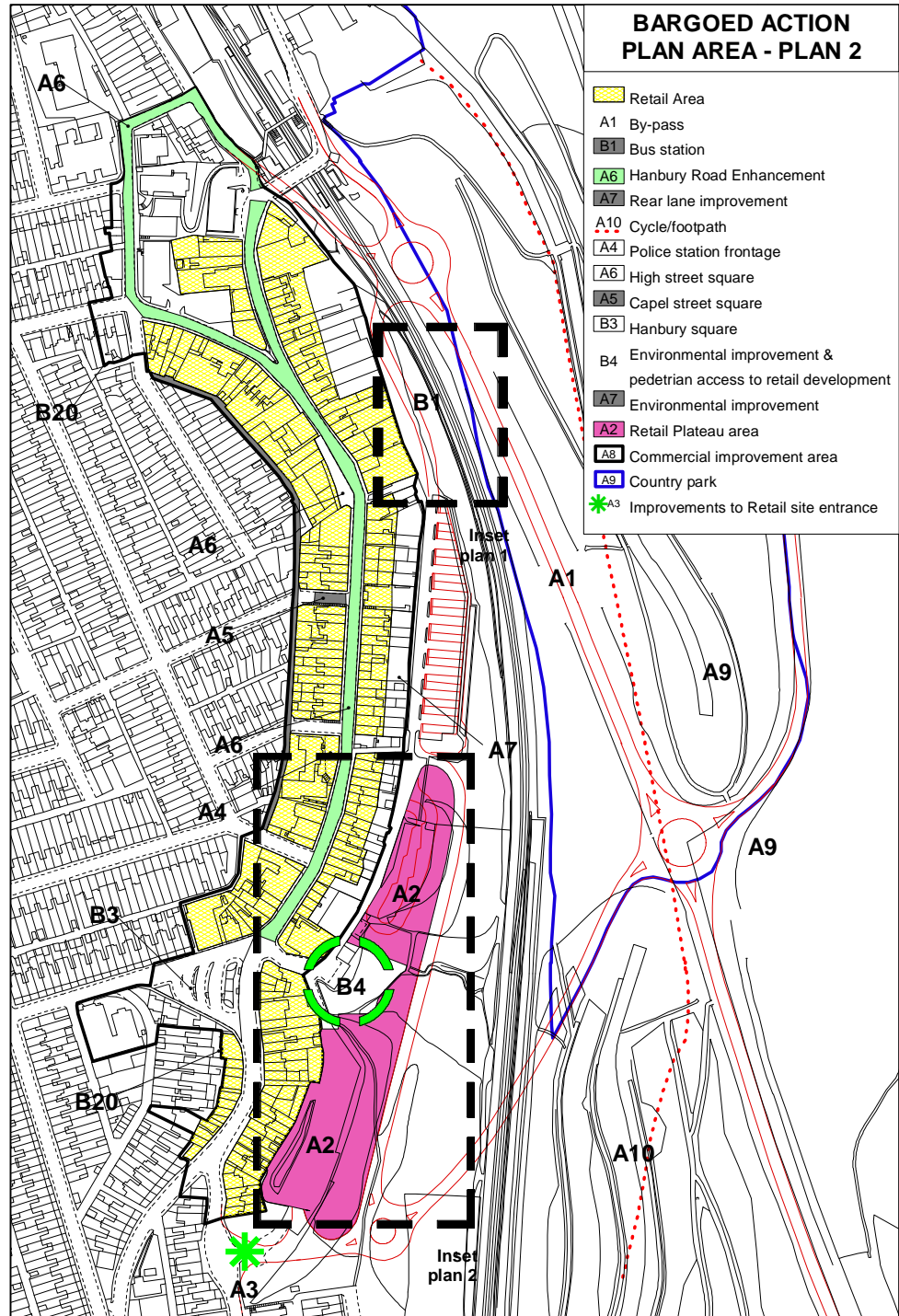
Summary :

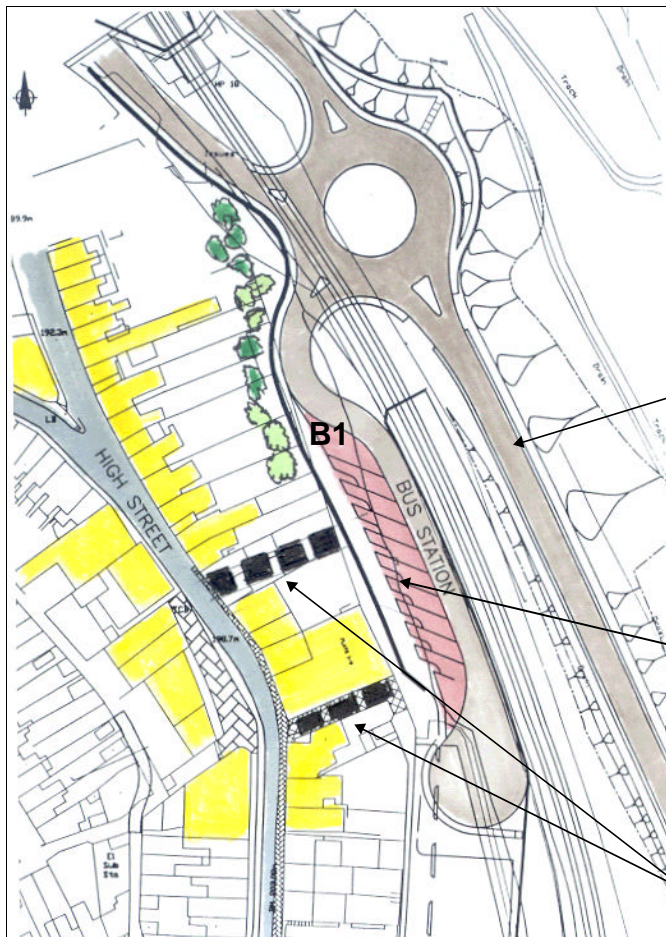
The action plan identifies the aims and goals of the Council for Bargoed Town Centre. It is envisaged that private investment will be attracted to the town as a result of the proposals identified. Of equal importance will be the Council's ability, together with the WDA, to input their own financial investment to progress the projects and sources identified.

Plans :

1. appraisal
2. proposals
3. insert plant
4. Supplementary appendice project details







Inset Plan 1

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L

By Pass

New Bus Station area

New/ improved pedestrian links to High Street

Inset Plan 2

R
A

Environmental improvement & pedestrian access to retail area

Proposed retail area

Retail properties

