

Transforming Towns

Placemaking Grant Framework of Interventions

Revised May 2022

The Placemaking Grant, forming part of the Transforming Towns programme, affords Local Authority partners in Wales the broadest and most flexible package of support aimed at revitalising town centres throughout Wales. It is the responsibility of regional partners to decide upon the most appropriate mix of interventions and how they are deployed effectively. This support is available in any town centre prioritised by Local Authority partners.

Any items to be supported from this framework need to be part of a holistic place making plan or master plan for a town centre and not supported as standalone projects. These interventions need to be strategic in nature and the activity needs to be planned. Further, the projects need to 'knit together' in the context of both Transforming Towns and wider interventions taking place or planned in selected towns including Housing, Green and Digital Infrastructure, transport as well as circular economy interventions such as repair and re-use cafés in town centres.

A key and important consideration for Welsh Government is that there is a strategic plan in place for a designated town centre. This plan should be bottom up, community driven and needs to involve key partners such as BIDs, Town and Community Councils and local third sector organisations amongst other local groups.

The maximum allocation of Welsh Government grant support to individual Placemaking projects is £250,000. If works are phased and grant is awarded on a phased basis, the total allocation to a single property cannot exceed this £250,000 limit.

Any funding allocated through the Placemaking Grant should be considered as a last resort. In the first instance all other funding avenues need to be explored, particularly where dedicated funding streams are identified such as active travel, Community Facilities Programme.

If you need any clarity in interpreting the below, or need clarity on the eligibility please contact your local Welsh Government Regeneration Manager.

Place Making Plans

A pre-requisite of funding place making activity through Welsh Government Transforming Towns is that appropriate place plans are in place or being developed. These plans should be designed in line with the 6 principles of the Placemaking charter: [Design Commission for Wales](https://dcfw.org/placemaking/placemaking-charter/) <https://dcfw.org/placemaking/placemaking-charter/>

- People & Community
- Movement
- Public realm
- Location
- Mix of uses
- Identity

Place plans should consider a holistic view of the requirements of towns and cities and therefore should include all of the current and planned funding interventions from Local Authorities, differing Welsh Government portfolio areas and key private and public sector developments. Further to this, place making plans should not focus solely on WG Regeneration funding and should include all sources of funding such as housing, tourism and health as examples in order to show totality of investment in settlements.

The Place Plans as a minimum should include:-

- A map with a red line boundary identifying the settlement area. This will be required for each settlement. The intervention area should be restricted to the core town centre with sufficient detail to include streets & landmark buildings/features. A second map showing the area on the periphery of the town, identifying the wider development activity and opportunities.
- Detail of the groups, such as BIDs and/or Town & Community Councils are currently operating in the area. Please keep a record of the consultation with these groups and also consultation with other parties such as local members.
- Evidence of engagement and consultation with town centre identified user groups such as young people, older people, ethnic minority groups or disability Groups;
- Alignment with wider economic recovery plans, regional strategies and other WG investment plans such as transport and active travel;
- Identification of the issues to be addressed which limit the full potential of the town centres and/or opportunities to be explored such as green infrastructure, housing, health, public realm, vacant shops, and commercial improvements. The outcome of this work will be shared across Welsh Government portfolios areas and key partners such as NRW;
- Development of a community Engagement Strategy as part of the plan;


- Consideration of the wider threats posed by out of town shopping, changing consumer habits, TAN15, phosphates in water impacting Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and wider Climate Change considerations.
- A shared vision for the town centre developed through consideration of the identified issues and feedback from the consultation process; with an agreed Action Plan.
- Local Authorities plans will establish a baseline for the defined town centre using available digital technologies in order to establish as a minimum footfall and dwell time metrics at the beginning of the three year funding period;
- Regular review and evaluate deliverability and identified actions of the action plan with the WG and partners, through ongoing consultation.
- Ongoing regional and all-Wales feedback and learning;

Further clarity on the Placemaking Plan requirements for your specific town or city should be discussed with your respective Regeneration Manager.

Evaluation will be a key element of the Transforming Towns delivery. In order to demonstrate the impact of Place Making funding Local Authorities will be expected to produce an annual update report (including project case studies) to show the projects delivered and their impact on prioritized town centres.

At the end of the three year funding cycle all individual Local Authorities in receipt of funding will be expected to commission an independent evaluation of Transforming Towns delivery covering all Placemaking and Strategic projects. Where Transforming Towns has been deployed over a grouping or clustering of smaller towns a single independent review may be commissioned to cover multiple town centres.

Intervention	Scheme Detail	Eligible Applicant	Key Strategic and Policy Linkages	Associated Programme for Government Commitments
Residential Units in Town Centres	<p>To convert vacant floor-space on upper floors into new residential accommodation. The minimum requirement from each scheme is 1 x 1 bedroom self-contained flat. Schemes are expected to be a mix of one and two bedroom units with ratio determined by layout of building and planning consent.</p> <p>Schemes should comply with the Welsh Development Quality Requirements 2021 (WDQR 2021) “Creating Beautiful Homes and Places”, published in July 2021, including meeting the “space requirements” as set out in Appendix A and Appendix B.</p> <p>Where homes are being provided by refurbishment, providers should (if practicable and cost effective to do so) take all opportunities to meet the standard. Where this is not possible and before obtaining planning permission, it must be demonstrated to Welsh Government that homes have adequate space and facilities for everyday living.</p>	<p>Occupiers or property owners of properties within town centres who either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Own the freehold, or • Hold a lease with a seven year minimum period remaining at the planned grant payment date and who have secured their landlord's written consent to the proposed works. 	<p>Welsh Development Quality Requirements 2021 (gov.wales)</p> <p>Beyond Recycling – a strategy to make the circular economy in Wales a reality: beyond-recycling-strategy-document.pdf (gov.wales)</p> <p>Planning Policy Wales Edition 11</p>	<p>Make our cities, towns and villages even better places in which to live and work</p>

	 <p>development-quality-requirements-for-hou</p> <p>Student accommodation, bedsits and studios are not eligible for grant funding</p> <p>Where acceptable to Local Planning Authorities potential conversion of ground floor, as well as upper floors may be considered for areas not considered to be core retail, where no alternative commercial use can be found.</p> <p>Regard should be given to local authority local Housing Needs Assessments when considering/assessing project proposals</p>			
<p>Commercial Property Improvement Grants</p>	<p>The Property Improvement Grant is available to commercial building occupiers and owners within town centres. Its purpose is to enhance building frontages together with the upgrade of vacant commercial floor space to bring it back into beneficial business use.</p> <p>New/ upgraded floor space must be for business use, with each scheme determined on its individual merits at</p>	<p>Occupiers or property owners of commercial properties within the designated area who either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Own the freehold, or • Hold a lease with a seven year minimum period remaining at the planned grant payment date and who have secured their landlord's written consent to the proposed works. 	<p>Beyond Recycling – a strategy to make the circular economy in Wales a reality: beyond-recycling-strategy-document.pdf (gov.wales) https://wrapcymru.org.uk/resources/guide/low-carbon-resource-</p>	<p>Make our cities, towns and villages even better places in which to live and work</p> <p>Enable our town centres to become more agile economically by helping businesses</p>

	<p>the discretion of local officers, and then approved by local and regional project boards. In particular offices, independent leisure, retail, food and drink uses will be considered. Mixed-use schemes will also be considered, but private student lets, will not be considered.</p> <p>Offices or commercial premises above retail units will also be considered for support.</p> <p>Grant funding of over £50k awarded by LAs to third parties must be secured by way of a restriction and a legal charge to cover the value for the grant. For local authority schemes, a restriction only is required.</p> <p>WORKS</p> <p>External External works to the building can include work deemed necessary for the structural integrity of the property. Items might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shopfronts; • Signage; • Windows & doors; • External lighting; • Roofs and chimneys; • Rainwater goods (guttering and down pipes); 		<p>efficient-construction-procurement</p> <p>Route map to net zero carbon Wales (claw.wales)</p> <p>Consideration under this theme can be given to the establishment of ‘Repair and Re-use Cafes’ where other funding routes are not available.</p> <p>Planning Policy Wales - Edition 11 (gov.wales)</p>	<p>to work co-operatively</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rendering, stone cleaning and repairs, re-pointing; and • Structural works. <p>Internal Internal works to the building can include all work, visible or structural, necessary to complete the project to Building Regulations. This might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Windows & doors; • Improved accessibility; • Walls, ceilings, lighting; • Energy Efficiency measures when included as part of the overall scheme; • Utilities and services, including heating; • Showers and Hygiene facilities; • Bike Storage facilities; • Welfare facilities (e.g. essential washroom and cleansing facilities only); and • Structural work. <p>New Build New build commercial floor-space could be eligible, where a local need for this has been identified, particularly where there are gap sites in town centres.</p>			
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<p>Green Infrastructure</p>	<p>The provision of Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity projects in town centres. Specifically but not exclusively:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green Walls; • Green Roofs; • Rain Gardens; • Greening; • Pocket Parks • Wildflower areas • Street trees • Sustainable urban drainage (SUDs). <p>Other GI or general greening measures are eligible subject to approval of the Welsh Government. Any intervention needs to be strategic and underpinned by a Town Centre Green Infrastructure Audit.</p> <p>This support will not contribute to ongoing maintenance costs in future financial years.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Authorities • Business Improvement Districts BIDs • Town and Community Councils • Occupiers or property owners of commercial properties within the designated area who either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Own the freehold, or ○ Hold a lease with a seven year minimum period remaining at the planned grant payment date and who have secured their landlord's written consent to the proposed works. 	<p>Factsheet 1 overview of the Environment (Wales) Act english (gov.wales)</p> <p>Beyond Recycling – a strategy to make the circular economy in Wales a reality: beyond-recycling-strategy-document.pdf (gov.wales)</p> <p>Nature Recovery Action Plan https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-05/nature-recovery-action-plan-2015.pdf</p> <p>Local Places for Nature The National Lottery Heritage Fund</p> <p>Local Nature Partnerships Cymru - Home (lnp.cymru)</p> <p>Local Places for Nature Community Packages https://keepwalestidy.cymru/our-</p>	<p>Embed our response to the climate and nature emergency</p> <p>Build a stronger, greener economy as we make maximum progress towards decarbonisation</p> <p>Create more community green space in town centres</p> <p>Expand arrangements to create or significantly enhance green spaces.</p>
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			work/conservation/nature/	
Public Realm	<p>The provision of small scale public realm enhancements where they are aligned with a natural clustering of regeneration activity in town centres. Where there is demonstrable social and economic impact. Specifically:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The removal or dropping of kerbs for access and egress; • The widening of pavement areas so as to provide outdoor seating and amenity areas; • Permanent planters and screening provision; • Public art as part of a wider place plan and public realm scheme and which support cultural objectives, for example murals on walls where GI is not deliverable. <p>Other measures may be eligible for support subject to approval of the Welsh Government.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Authorities. • Business Improvement Districts BIDs • Town and Community Councils 	Planning Policy Wales - Edition 11 (gov.wales)	<p>Make our cities, towns and villages even better places in which to live and work</p> <p>Repurpose public space for outdoor events, markets, street vendors, pop up parks and parklets</p> <p>Create more community green space in town centres</p>
Strategic Acquisition	<p>Small Scale acquisitions within town centres. This support should not be used to acquire properties that are subject to, or could benefit from planning enforcement measures. Specifically, this support could be utilised to:-</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Authorities • Business Improvement Districts BIDs • Town and Community Councils • Social Businesses and B – Corps 	Community Asset Transfer (CAT): guidance for applicants GOV.WALES Active Travel Network Maps	<p>Make our cities, towns and villages even better places in which to live and work</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquire properties in order to complete land assembly for larger strategic proposals; • Acquire vacant properties to bring them back into productive use; • Acquire properties for demolition in order to deliver improved connectivity and permeability in town centres; • Utilise for meanwhile uses/markets/childcare/business starts • acquire properties in order to provide greenspace, play facilities or enhanced public realm; • Demolition costs are eligible. <p>For grants awarded over £50k:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A restriction in the name of the Welsh Ministers should be placed on the title of a property acquired by a local authority; • A legal charge is required in the name of the local authority awarding the funding for acquisition by other parties. 			<p>Support the development of a register of empty buildings and help small businesses move into vacant shops</p> <p>Continue our strong partnership with voluntary organisations across the range of our responsibilities.</p>
<p>Town Centre Markets</p>	<p>The delivery of the ‘Every Town a Market Town’ philosophy. The development and enabling of local markets for the provision of produce, crafts, food and value added products. This capital only funding will deliver:-</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Authorities • Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) • Town and Community Councils • Social Businesses and B – Corps 	<p>Factsheet 1 overview of the Environment (wales) Act english (gov.wales)</p> <p>Beyond Recycling – a strategy to make the</p>	<p>Continue our strong partnership with voluntary organisations across the range of our responsibilities.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The provision of permanent electricity connections to enable market trading. • The acquisition of trading stalls, stands and platforms. <p>Works must conform and be aligned with the Welsh Government best practice guide for the establishment of local markets. This work should be aligned with any post Covid – 19 Town Centre works and planning.</p>		<p>circular economy in Wales a reality: beyond-recycling-strategy-document.pdf (gov.wales)</p> <p>https://www.urbanfoundry.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/urban-foundry-markets-guide-short.pdf</p>	
<p>Town Centre Meanwhile Uses</p>	<p>The establishment of temporary meanwhile or pop – up uses in currently vacant premises in town centres. The support should be wholly aligned with the Welsh Government Meanwhile Uses Best Practice Guide.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Authorities • Business Improvement Districts BIDs • Town and Community Councils • Social Businesses and B – Corps 	<p>Factsheet 1 overview of the Environment (wales) Act english (gov.wales)</p> <p>Beyond Recycling – a strategy to make the circular economy in Wales a reality: beyond-recycling-strategy-document.pdf (gov.wales)</p> <p>https://www.urbanfoundry.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/meanwhile-space-guide-short.pdf</p>	

Town Centre External Trading support	The provision of outdoor seating, planters, coverings, server areas and building canopies. This support is in line with the Covid – 19 response grant 2020/21.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Authorities • Business Improvement Districts • Town Centre Businesses • BIDs • Town and Community Councils 		Make our cities, towns and villages even better places in which to live and work
Shop Frontage Enveloping Schemes	External shop front enhancements where no internal modification or redevelopment is undertaken. Adjacent or closely situated properties need to be targeted in a given town to achieve a critical mass and greater impact. Single properties can be considered in smaller district centres where the scheme will deliver significant impact in that locality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occupiers or property owners of commercial properties within the designated area who either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Own the freehold, or ○ Hold a lease with a seven year minimum period remaining at the planned grant payment date and who have secured their landlord's written consent to the proposed works. For projects that request less than £50k in grant a legal charge is not required so a lease with five years remaining at the final grant payment date is acceptable. 		Make our cities, towns and villages even better places in which to live and work
Digital Towns	<p>The furthering of the 'digital towns' agenda through the provision of capital items to support baseline digital infrastructure capabilities such as Wi-Fi analytics and LoRaWAN and IoT.</p> <p>Consider how this can be integrated into other interventions such as public realm, Active Travel or the creation of new green space.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Authorities • Business Improvement Districts BIDs • Town and Community Councils. 	Home Trefi Smart Town smarttowns.cymru	<p>Continue our strong partnership with voluntary organisations across the range of our responsibilities.</p> <p>Enable our town centres to become more agile economically by helping businesses</p>

	<p>Investing in digital infrastructure alone will not yield any results, the generation and exploitation of data will be key to the success of this.</p> <p>Interventions will need to ensure culture change, and (working with Smart Towns), demonstrate the value of data and embedding “what does the data say” approach, ensuring it is always used as an evidence base in making strategic decisions that benefits the high street and further afield.</p> <p>In order to ensure town centres are working towards a recognised baseline of activity, LAs will be required to nominate an officer to consider SMART Towns activity inclusive of implementation, monitoring, analysing and reporting. Any applications of funding to the WG need to incorporate digital baseline activity of footfall and dwell time in town centres.</p>			<p>to work co-operatively, increase their digital offer and support local supply chains, including local delivery services.</p>
<p>Active Travel</p>	<p>Provisions supporting or facilitating active travel routes in town centres where this cannot be funded through other means. Specifically the provision of bicycle storage, lockers and retrofit of showers and hygiene facilities in commercial premises</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Authorities • Business Improvement Districts BIDs • Town and Community Councils • Social Businesses and B – Corps • Private sector partners 	<p>Active Travel Act guidance GOV.WALES sets out the standards and planning requirements for active travel infrastructure.</p>	

	<p>Active Travel measures should be considered at the earliest opportunity in relation to all development schemes, and be fully integrated with other investment activity in the area to create well-connected spaces and bolster and complement wider active travel provision supported by the WG Transport Department.</p> <p>Local authorities have to plan networks of active travel routes and related facilities which are to be shown on Active Travel Network Maps. The Active Travel Fund is the main source of funding to create these routes and facilities, where they are identified on the maps.</p> <p>Close liaison with Active Travel leads in local authorities and TfW regional Active Travel Lead is required.</p>			
<p>Toilet Provision</p>	<p>Dedicated support to provide toilet provision in town and city centres. This may also include baby changing and 'changing places' provision where there is a clear identified strategic need. This provision needs to be identified as part of the place making planning process. Local Authority partners will need to confirm there is an ongoing maintenance and cleaning commitment prior to award of funding.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Authorities • Business Improvement Districts BIDs • Town and Community Councils 	<p>Home - One Voice Wales</p>	<p>Make our cities, towns and villages even better places in which to live and work</p> <p>Continue our strong partnership with voluntary organisations across the range of our responsibilities.</p>

Recreational Facilities	<p>The provision of outdoor play facilities, multi-use games areas (MUGAs) and outdoor recreational pursuits. Support awarded through this element of the Placemaking grant will need to be consulted upon locally and part of a place making plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Authorities • Town and Community Councils 	<p>https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-07/wales-a-play-friendly-country.pdf</p> <p>Play sufficiency toolkit GOV.WALES</p> <p>Children and young people's plan GOV.WALES</p> <p>Play Wales Chwarae Cymru</p> <p>Home - Children's Commissioner for Wales (childcomwales.org.uk)</p>	<p>Make our cities, towns and villages even better places in which to live and work</p>
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