

CALDICOT TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION



TARGETED REGENERATION INVESTMENT PROGRAMME 2018-2021 STRATEGIC PROJECT FRAMEWORK



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1. Introduction

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide a framework for those projects that Monmouthshire County Council is seeking support from Welsh Government's Targeted Regeneration Investment programme (TRI).

The Council's approach to regeneration in Caldicot is holistic and integrated in order that the town centre relates directly to its settlement so that residents, local enterprise and other key stakeholders are aligned and have mutually benefit in the future.

This document sets out our framework of projects that we wish to apply for funding support over the coming months through individual applications. It outlines our need for development funding, in addition to physical strategic projects as well as the thematic Urban Centre Property Enhancement Fund (UCPEF).

The document should be read alongside the Caldicot Town Centre Regeneration Action Plan & Delivery Strategy (April 2018).

Caldicot – A Key Priority for Monmouthshire

Monmouthshire County Council has adopted a strategic decision to unlock new economic opportunities in the south east Severnside area, being the largest area of urban population (circa 20,000), specific emphasis being placed on Caldicot. After a full assessment of priority towns by Cardiff Capital Region, Caldicot has been identified as a key priority for the region. This is in response to growth opportunities with the confirmation to abolish Severn Bridge Tolls in December 2018, its enviable centrality, road infrastructure and close proximity to the high growth border areas of the South West and the 'Midlands Engine', future demand is already placing pressure on affordable and market housing with 439 households on



the register wishing to live in Caldicot. Economically, the town centre is not fit for purpose to meet the needs of future residents with a 9% drop in non-food shops and a 13% vacancy rate in primary frontages. Although the rise of 10% in the service sector is following a UK trend in leisure and social activity, the town centre's infrastructure is not of the right quality to meet the future needs of retail, food and drink, housing, enterprise and other activities.

Caldicot has the potential to be a major beneficiary of the influx caused by these factors and as a consequence, there is a need to invest in infrastructure, specifically commercial property, in-town living, and visitor economy led activity. The focus shall be on the town centre whilst also ensuring an integrated approach to neighbourhoods and their holistic well-being; creating an opportunity for a modern and thriving hub which can attract private sector investment and business re-locations from Bristol and beyond.

Monmouthshire County Council's Focus for Caldicot

The projects detailed in this strategic framework provide the opportunity to re-purpose and raise the economic potential of Caldicot town centre as a strategic hub so that local and regional growth is retained, and sustainable impacts are achieved with long lasting benefits.

This strategic document frames an overall investment of £8.99 million into Caldicot town centre with an investment of approximately £3.065 million¹ from Welsh Government in addition to private sector and County Council contributions.



¹ Estimate at September 2018, subject to change and dependent on property acquisition strategy and final UCPEF scheme

2. Need



The Town Centre

Caldicot, like many towns in South Wales, has been badly affected by shrinkage of traditional heavy industries causing a rise in unemployment and move towards a low-wage economy - factors which can have an adverse effect on retail in town centres. The problem has been compounded by the structural changes in the way high streets function, as well as the peripheral and slightly isolated location of the town in relation to the motorway. Specifically, Caldicot High Street is particularly affected by the strong competition from Chepstow and the Newport Retail Park with its wide range of shops and services, in addition to the ASDA superstore.

There is currently limited quality offering within the town centre and limited reason for footfall to move around the town. The

presence of a Waitrose store in the town centre would normally attract high spend visitors and similarly high-quality occupiers in adjoining units. This has not been the case due to the demographics of the surrounding area and the perceived quality and suitability of the retail premises on offer.

There are some positive attributes to the town centre with the Waitrose store, the new comprehensive school, the Community Hub in the Library building, the attraction of the new Asda store and the leisure opportunities from the Caldicot Castle, however, the linkages, arrival points and urban fabric of the town centre are visually very poor.

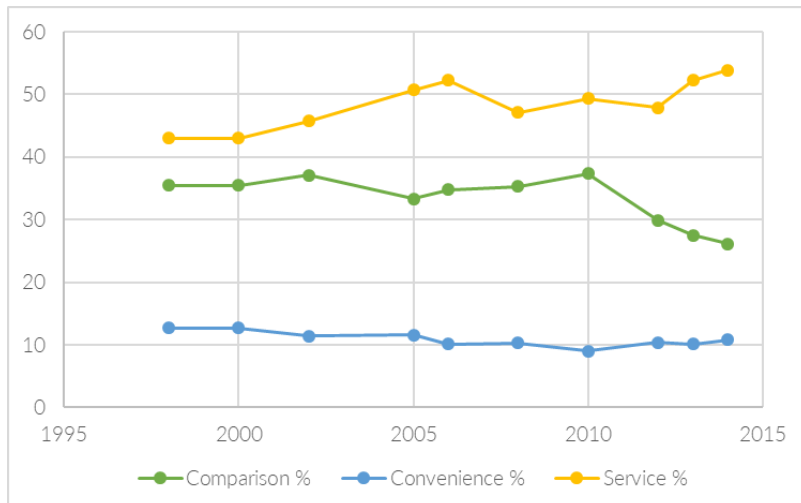
The Market which is held on Tuesday in the town centre has the potential to bring much needed footfall into the town centre, however, the range and quality of produce on offer has scope for improvement. Comments from local retailers suggest many of the market stalls are in direct competition with their stores in terms of what they are selling. Going forward, the market needs to provide a different offer to the existing town retailers, and sellers of local, quality produce should be encouraged.

There needs to be a focus on providing 'Drivers' within the town centre that will bring increased footfall which will in turn encourage new traders and retailers. It is most likely that these new traders will be local independents, due to the limited size of the vacant space, which would be less attractive to national retailers.

Despite the negatives described above, there are still some positives with strong interest in the vacant premises in Wesley Buildings, with the Agents hopeful that there will be new lettings in the near future to good quality Café/ Restaurant uses, which will greatly assist in extending the use of the town, as currently there are very few people around after 4pm. The

lettings have required some incentives and rental values are relatively low at £10.00- 12.00 per square foot, however, the reduction in vacancies is a welcome positive to the town.

The town is well supported with food convenience in the form of Asda and Waitrose, with food and drink represented through sandwich bars, takeaway, an Italian restaurant, Indian restaurant and a number of public houses.



Key Challenges

The key challenge is the lack of comparison retail (non-food) which does reduce the appeal of the town centre having a resultant impact on footfall, dwell and confidence in the place. It should be noted that this challenge is not solely unique to Caldicot with a trend in the UK moving away from comparison to leisure as on-line sales increase and larger retail centres retain activity.

The growth in social uses on UK High Streets needs to be embraced in Caldicot with new housing developments on the edge of the town providing demand for food and drink. The

need to address gaps in comparison shopping should be met in partnership with landowners with the abolition of bridge tolls and resultant housing growth being an opportunity for retailers and investors. The chart alongside shows the growth in the service sector from 1998 to 2014 with a diminishing comparison offer and relatively good range and choice of convenience.

In summary, there are some strong positives going forward for the town, but there are also some serious issues that need to be addressed as the current passing rents will not provide an adequate return for any new investment, refurbishment or redevelopment in the town without public sector intervention.

Housing

As is the case across the country, Caldicot is suffering from a substantial housing shortfall. In spite of its convenient location close to major cities such as Newport & Cardiff, it's access to surrounding scenery, and close proximity to popular towns such as Chepstow and Monmouth, the property market is not booming as it should. With the impending abolition of the Severn Bridge tolls, Caldicot is going to become an even more desirable potential location for commuters to Bristol & Gloucester.

There currently exists a substantial affordable housing waiting list, housing need register and the private sector has a very low turnover due to lack of available property. More sustainable, in-town housing could serve to fill the current void in Caldicot and promote town centre growth. This should take the form of high quality new-build property of all types and sizes within the town centre, and more so conversion of redundant existing buildings within the town centre. Wherever possible, developers should be given as much flexibility as possible to convert buildings such as empty offices, which can fast-track access to residential influx.

SWOT Analysis

The following SWOT outlines a summative analysis of where Caldicot is in terms of its current performance as a town centre within South East Monmouthshire and within the Cardiff Capital Region.

Strengths	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Strategic location in South East Wales <input type="checkbox"/> Road and rail connections <input type="checkbox"/> Largest town population in Monmouthshire c 12,000 <input type="checkbox"/> A flat and accessible town <input type="checkbox"/> Significant County Council investments e.g. 21C schools programme, Caldicot Comprehensive School <input type="checkbox"/> Housing investment at Oakley Way from Monmouthshire Housing Association <input type="checkbox"/> Close to rural area and Living Levels area <input type="checkbox"/> Convenience food offer has the right range and quality <input type="checkbox"/> Some signals of investment in food and drink offer in the town centre <input type="checkbox"/> Some active community and voluntary organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Removal of Severn Bridge tolls in December 2018 <input type="checkbox"/> Housing growth will lead to greater demand from town centre if offer is of the right quality and range <input type="checkbox"/> Cardiff Capital Region Regeneration Plan <input type="checkbox"/> Key employers within the area that form part of economic sector <input type="checkbox"/> Caldicot Castle and Country Park has potential to become a key visitor attraction within the region <input type="checkbox"/> Local and regional walking and cycling routes e.g. Wales Coastal Path
Weaknesses	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Town centre environment is poor and having an impact on user and investor confidence <input type="checkbox"/> Some notable voids that are persistent and large in size <input type="checkbox"/> As per UK, comparison shopping is declining in the town centre <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of enterprise space for creatives, knowledge sector and other emerging businesses <input type="checkbox"/> Significant waiting lists for social and market housing in the town <input type="checkbox"/> Poor connectivity across the town 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Changing behaviour in UK "High Street" <input type="checkbox"/> Growth in larger towns and cities is resulting in diversion of trade from Caldicot and Severnside <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of investment in town centre will lead to greater costs and time in regaining ground

3. Strategic Fit



Monmouthshire is the second most competitive authority in Wales. However, Monmouthshire's economy (GVA) in the last 15 years has performed below its full potential; it has a small scale, dual economy when compared to others in the CCR, whereby the occupational profile of residents is skewed towards high skill occupations with resident earnings higher than workplace earnings; it's working age population is low in relation to comparators, with a Median age of 48 (the oldest in the CCR). The county is therefore not currently geared towards strong economic growth which if unchanged, will result in the future economic inactivity rate growing. Monmouthshire therefore has an economic imperative to address these issues by unlocking the new opportunities in the south east Severnside area, its largest area of urban population (circa 20,000). With the recent confirmation to abolish the Severn Bridge Tolls, its enviable centrality, road infrastructure and close proximity to the high growth border areas of the South West and the 'Midlands Engine' – Monmouthshire has opportunity to be a key economic growth area in the Cardiff Capital Region.

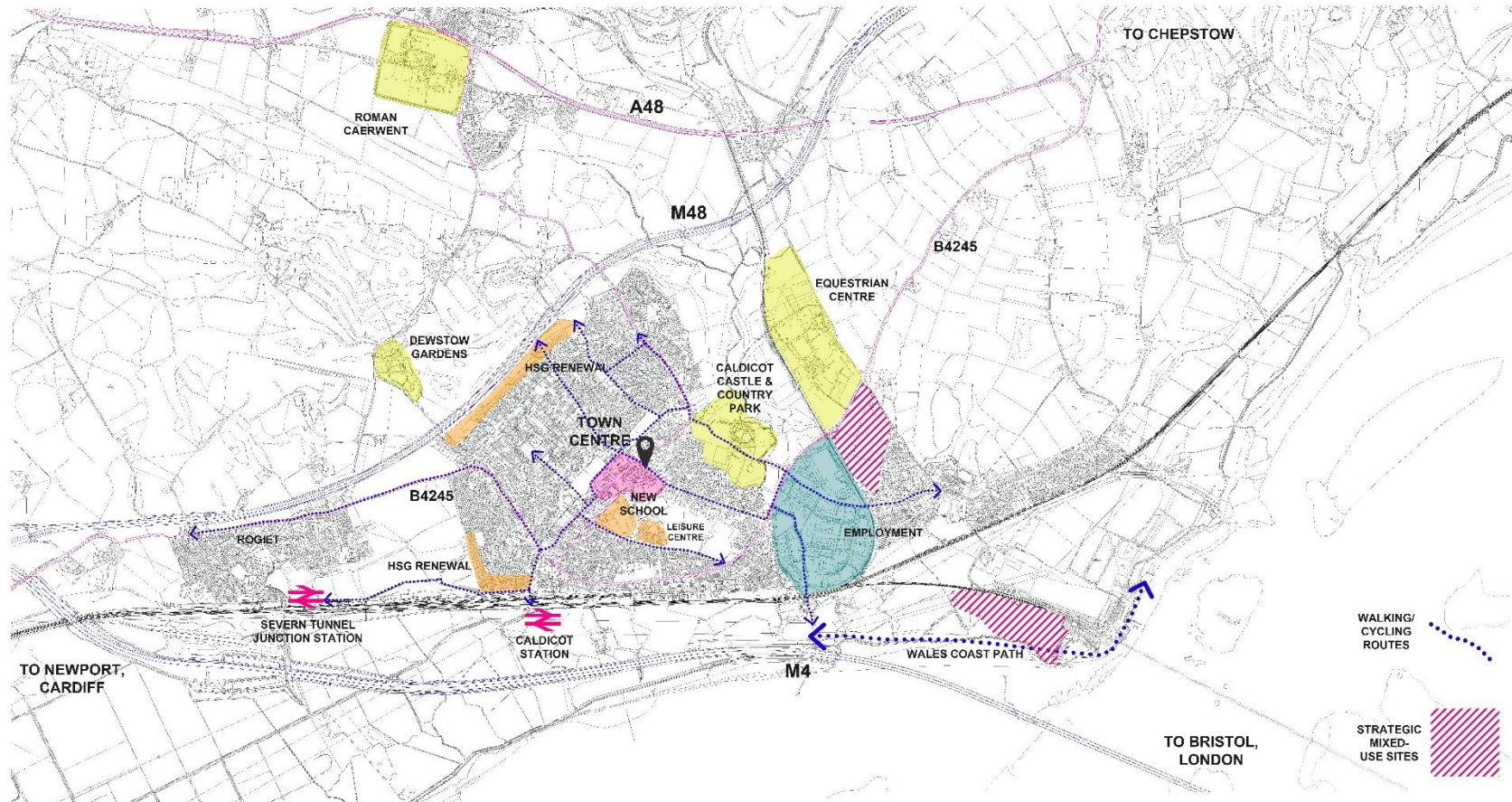
Severnside and the town of Caldicot specifically, has the potential to be a major beneficiary of the influx caused by these factors and as a consequence, there is a need for to invest in infrastructure, specifically commercial property, in-town living and visitor economy led activity. This is focussed on the town centre but also ensuring an integrated approach to neighbourhoods and their holistic well-being. Creating an opportunity for a modern and thriving hub which can attract private sector investment and business re-locations from Bristol and beyond.

The Targeted Regeneration Investment Programme (TRIP) offers the opportunity for the region to capitalise on Monmouthshire's new opportunities whilst also addressing further strategic regeneration priorities which include the expansion of the digitally connected community hubs network throughout the County. Consideration will also need to be given to our strategic employment sites particularly those with a focus on the circular economy. Our focus meets the regional ambitions in the following way:

- **Prosperity and Opportunity** – enabling a more productive local economy that is reaching out in terms of connectivity
- **Inclusion and Equality** - a vibrant and sustainable economy which contributes to the well-being and quality of life of the people in Caldicot, now and in the future
- **Identity, Culture, Community and Sustainability** – creating a more coherent identity and reputation as a strategic hub

The plan overleaf shows the location of the town centre within the strategic hub with road, rail and national walking/cycling routes linking Caldicot with South Wales and South West England. The plan also shows housing allocations within the settlement area as well as connections into visitor attractions.

Caldicot Strategic Hub Location



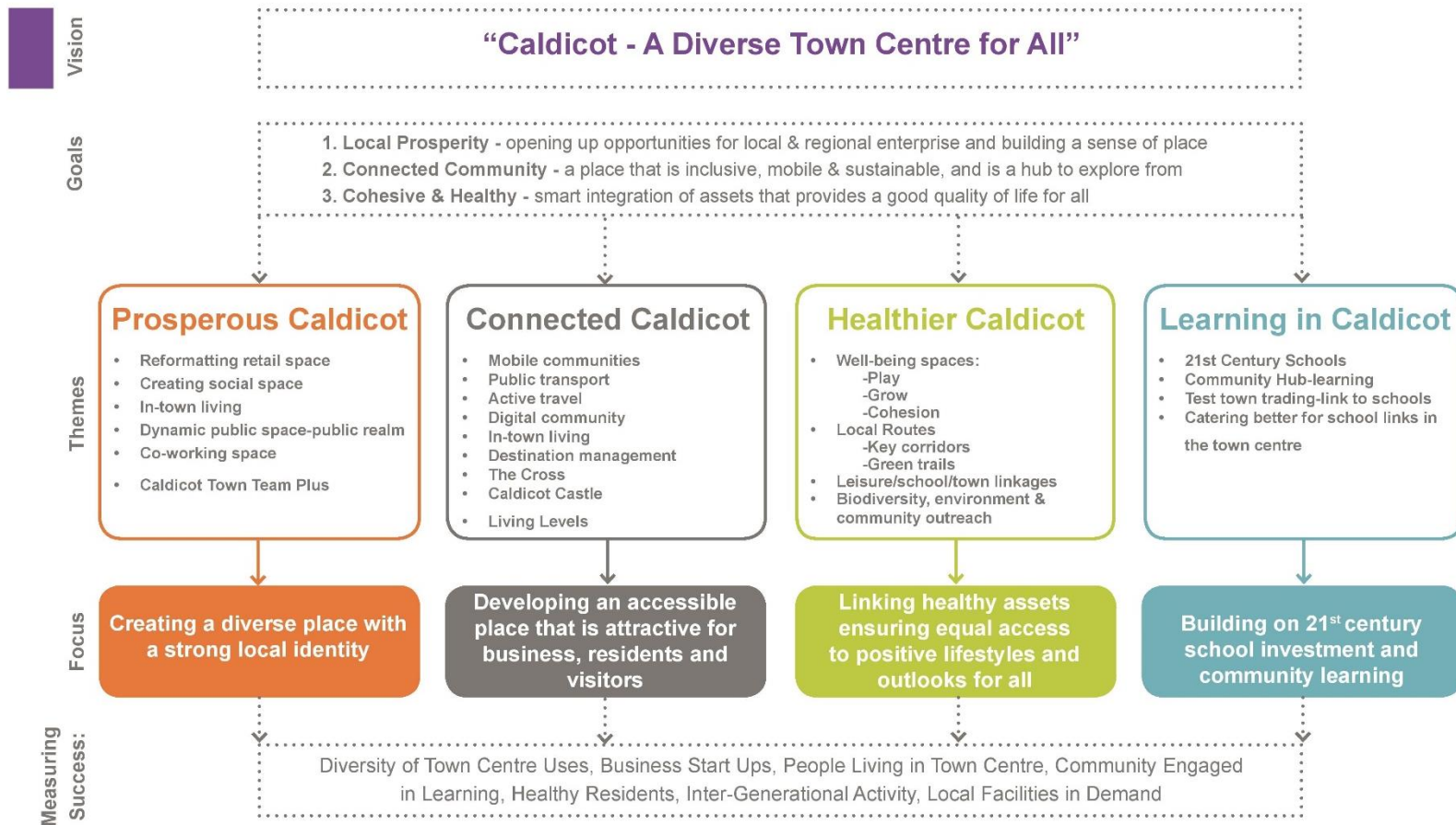
Key Investments/Future Developments

- ❑ Recent £36.5m investment in Caldicot Comprehensive School as part of 21st Century Schools modernisation programme.
- ❑ In Spring 2018, a £7 million regeneration by Monmouthshire Housing Association in Oakley Way and Oakley Close area of Caldicot, with work to build 37 new homes. This consists of replacing three blocks of flats built in the 1960s with homes that meet the housing needs of local people, made up of 21 two-bedroom houses, 5 three-bedroom houses, 8 one-bed flats and 3 two-bedroom bungalows.
- ❑ The £4m Living Levels Landscape Partnership aims to promote and reconnect people to the heritage, wildlife and wild beauty of the historic landscape of the Gwent Levels, with a £2.5 million grant secured from the Heritage Lottery Fund.
- ❑ A green infrastructure project to enhance main town centre corridors with trees, planting and improved well-being linking into active travel and Sustrans routes.
- ❑ In meeting carbon reduction targets, the Council has plans to develop a clean-burning hydrogen gas energy network for Caldicot.
- ❑ The 10.95 hectares strategic site at Crick Road, Portskewett which has been allocated for mixed use residential and employment development is progressing with Melin Homes and Monmouthshire County Council seeking planning permission for 300 new homes, along with a new care facility and a network of public open spaces.



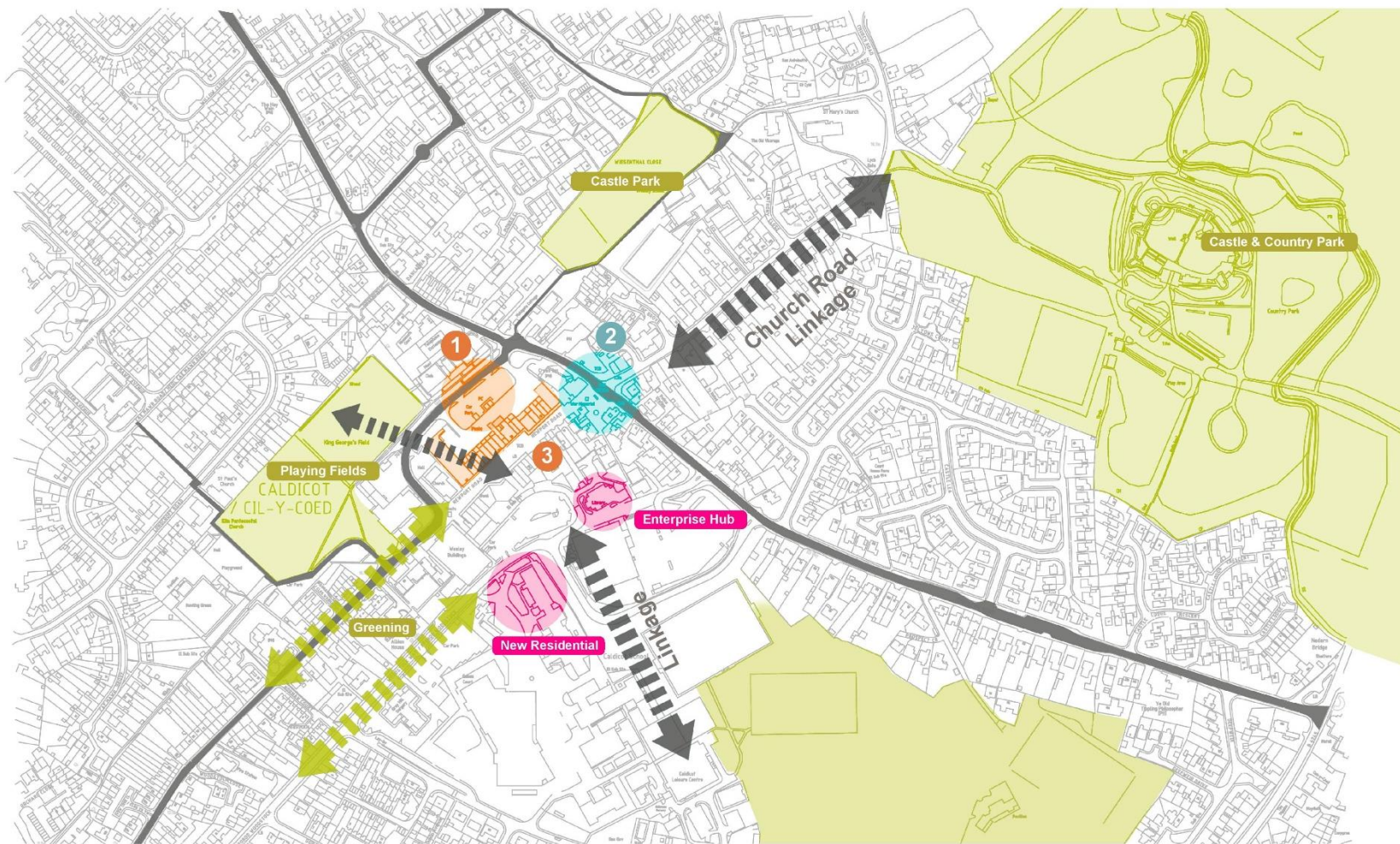
4. Strategic Framework

The following diagram outlines the Vision, aims, themes and focus of the wider Action Plan & Delivery Strategy (April 2018) from which we are seeking support from the Targeted Regeneration Investment Support programme.



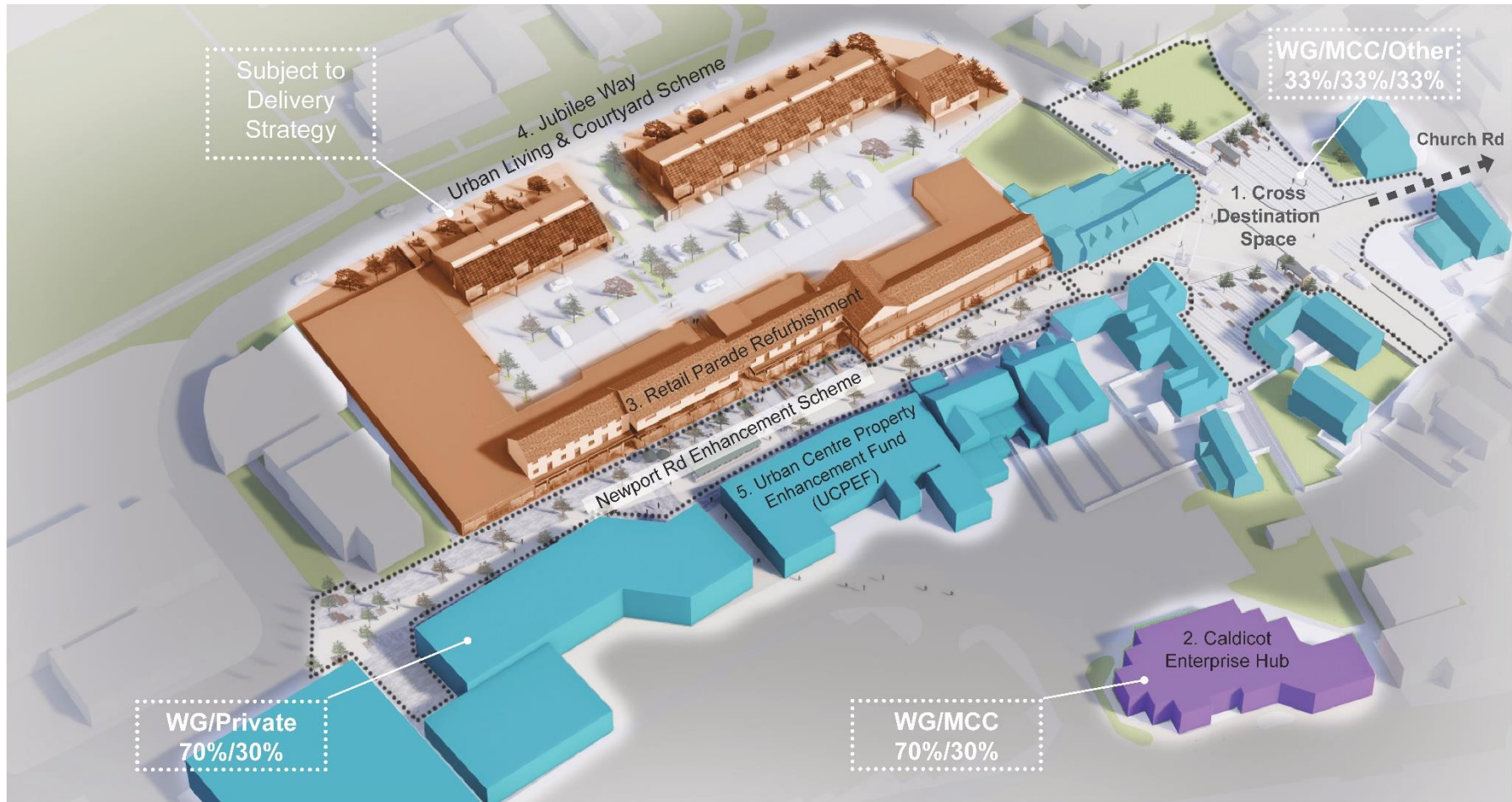
5. Regeneration Projects

Physical Context and Location

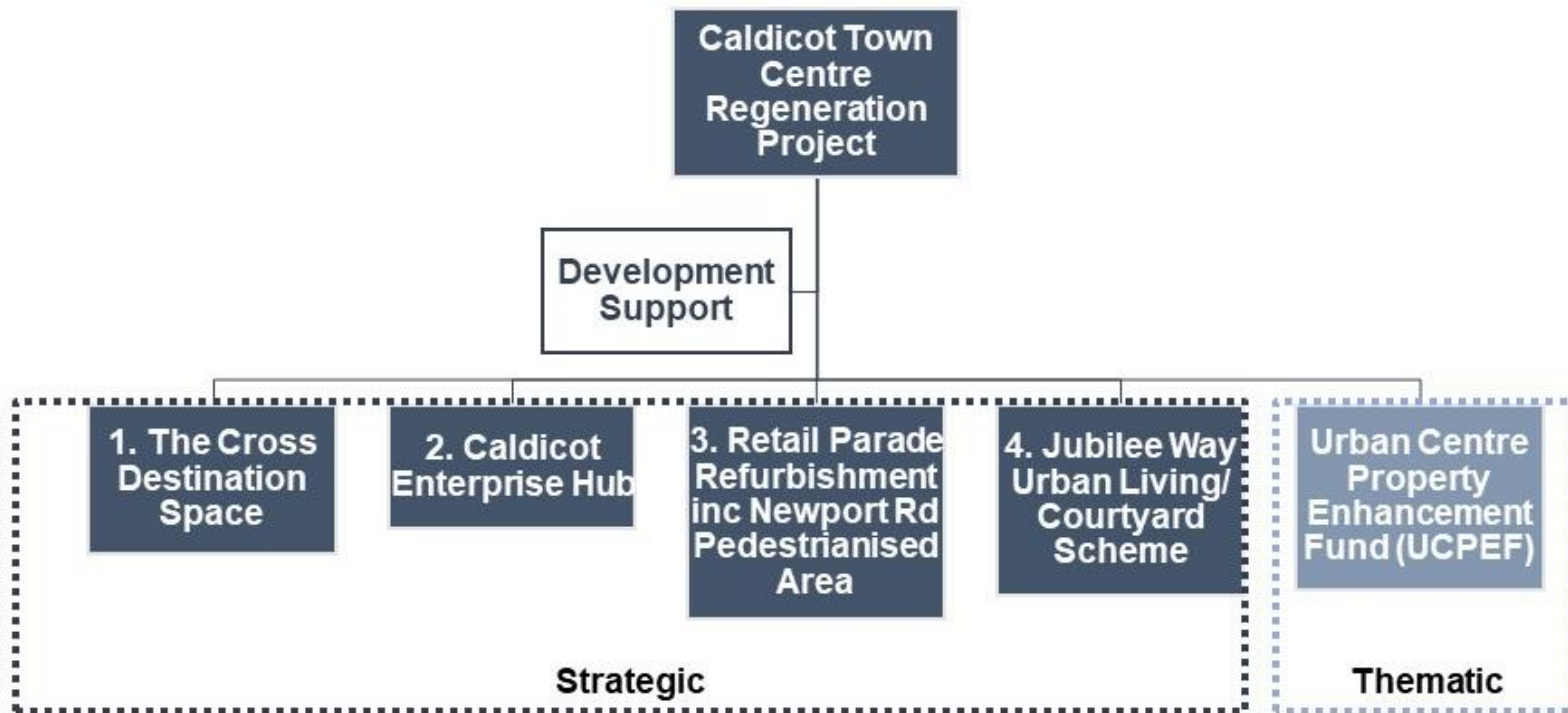


- 1 Jubilee Way Urban Living & Courtyard Scheme
 - 2 The Cross Destination Space
 - 3 Newport Road Retail Parade Refurbishment
- Active Travel Network
 Green Infrastructure

DELIVERY ACTION PLAN FRAMEWORK



Targeted Regeneration Investment Projects



Strategic Projects

1. The Cross Destination Space



The need to enhance this commercial area of the town is key to drawing in visitors from attractors such as the Castle and Country Park and also provide a space that generates greater economic activity for the town. A better setting, a space for events and activity will lead to local growth in existing and new businesses.

The proposed Cross Destination Space project is located on the eastern side of Caldicot town centre.

In addition, the space will improve accessibility for local residents and knits into other community spaces and routes that ensures the wider economic and social well-being of Caldicot. The proposals would provide greater connectivity with neighbourhoods and increase activity within the area.

The need to therefore announce this part of the town centre a destination space that directly creates stronger linkage to

Caldicot Castle through the introduction of shared space and greater priority to pedestrians is key to the future economic development of the town. This would be achieved by:

- The creation of functional space for local enterprise, events, markets, etc;
- A quality space that is distinctive, accessible and frames the town centre better;
- New street furniture and opportunities to dwell on both sides of Chepstow Road and Sandy Lane;
- The introduction of trees and planting to enhance green infrastructure;
- The relocation of bus stops within the space to enhance accessibility for bus users and also enhances views in and out of the town centre;
- Links into immediate active travel network and local/regional Sustrans network routes;
- Measures to protect the War Memorial from vehicle damage.

2. Caldicot Enterprise Hub



With a growing population and changes to working practices there is an opportunity to create an agile co-working space for sole workers and micro-businesses or for people that working across sites and places. The space can also accommodate town centre business networks and provide more dedicated meeting space for organisations. It can provide a stepping stone for growing local entrepreneurs and a pathway to more established office and enterprise space within the town and area.

This proposal is centred on repurposing and investing an area with the existing Community Hub in the town centre that will provide a specific space for co-working and enterprise, specifically work stations, digital facilities and links to business support.

Situated on a key link between Asda supermarket and the town centre, the Hub is well used with it's core purpose as a library, signposting service for the County Council and a place for community learning as well as meeting room space.

Externally, the building only has one main entrance from the Asda side and does not engage directly with the town centre. Whilst the building has a large, flexible open plan space this limits provision for personal interaction such as personal advice and specific training with no separation from the main core communal use.

This proposal specifically involves:

- The repurposing of internal bays within the Community Hub through internal division by glazing, doors, services, furnishings and digital equipment to facilitate a diverse range of uses that are outlined above;
- Creation of a second entrance into the Community Hub from the town centre side that announces the Hub

through a new doorway, external signage, lighting and treatment of the side elevation that animates this link into the town centre, thereby providing more direct access;

- Improve accessibility to the building, daytime and evening through the use of access control systems for registered users that opens up the Hub to users across the whole day.

3. Retail Parade Refurbishment



Nos 7 to 43 Newport Road is a key retail parade in town which has diminished over the years due to a lack of investment and changing retail patterns. Its dual aspect onto Jubilee Way and Newport Rd provides poor first impressions and is in urgent need of refurbishment if the town centre is to meet future needs of residents, local businesses and visitors. This proposal will see space for existing and new enterprises, jobs safeguarded and new employment opportunities for a diverse range of uses.

This proposal is focused on the retail block within private ownership, specifically Nos 7 to 43 Newport Road in the town centre.

The 1960s block is in need for enhancement for a number of reasons.

The size of the existing ground floor retail units is not right for medium to larger format occupiers with frontages being set back under canopies, and not engaging with shoppers and town centre users. At first and second storey level, ancillary storage space for retailers and residential units require refurbishment with front and rear elevations in need of enhancement.

The aesthetics of the block does not contribute well to the streetscene and the overall town centre experience and is impacting on investor/occupier confidence.

Finally, the immediate public realm does not relate to respective shops and uses with the need to manage the space better so that people can dwell and stay longer.

In response this proposal is centred on the refurbishment of the block that brings shop frontages further into the main street, introducing a co-ordinated approach to signs and facias, treatment of upper storey elevations and enhanced social space in front of respective premises. The reconfiguration of ground floor units would take place with an enhanced pedestrian access to and from Jubilee Way car park.

This proposal would need to be a joint venture between the owner and Monmouthshire County Council and could form part of wider redevelopment approach linked to the proposed residential/courtyard car park on Jubilee Way.

4. Jubilee Way Urban Living/Courtyard Scheme



Providing a positive engagement with Jubilee Way at a key entrance into the town centre, urban living would be provided through a 27-unit residential through 9no. 1 bed units and 18no. 2 bed units would be provided that would meet housing needs in the locality, specifically for 1 and 2 bed houses. Additional opportunities to provide a dual aspect to the existing Store 21 store to enhance its viability and attractiveness to an end occupier, in addition to enhancement of the car park area and amenity space.

The scheme would also involve a dedicated undercroft parking of 47 spaces for residents, in addition to cycle parking provision.

Secondly, working in partnership with the landowner of nos 7 to 43 Newport Road, the opportunity to provide an enhanced store format for the end unit (formerly Store 21) that would be more attractive to an end occupier and create more of a dual aspect onto Jubilee Way and the car park.

Finally, an enhanced courtyard car park would provide for 77 no. public parking spaces (subject to relaxation on residential parking standards due to sustainability checklist). Public toilet provision would be relocated from the existing central site to a new location. Parking to rear of Newport Rd premises (currently in private ownership) would also provide 12 no. spaces, providing an overall total of 89 parking spaces (public and private).

In addition to the active street frontage a stronger link between the town centre and onto Jubilee Way and onwards to King George V Playing Fields area would be provided. The site would be landscaped with additional tree planting and enhanced green infrastructure.

Thematic Project

5. Urban Centre Property Enhancement Fund (UCPEF)



The need to enhance the town centre offer and environment needs to be consistent in quality of design with the UCPEF project providing opportunities to enhance the external appearance of properties on the southern side of the town centre and at key entrances so that there is economic resilience that sustains trading and opens up opportunities for new business opportunities and activities.

Complementing the Retail Parade Refurbishment is the need to equally enhance the southern side of Newport Road so that the town centre projects a quality environment for users and provides a stimulus for landowners that maintains their investment and builds economic growth in terms of jobs, new products and also helps animate the wider town centre offer.

The 1970s/80s built additions do not positively contribute to the street scene with some of the stronger Victorian properties lost within the overall poor townscape. This condition, as well as the set back nature of some of the buildings does not actively engage with public space, with a number of vacancies not adding to the retail confidence. Like the northern side of the town centre, first impressions are poor with rear service yards and poor design at upper storey level, with key commercial frontages dated, inconsistent and not contributing positively to the street scene. Nevertheless, there are some signals of investment with food and drink, takeaways and some charitable organisations recently opening.

In addition to the series of buildings on the southern side of Newport Road, there are some outlying properties on Sandy Lane, Chepstow Road and Church Road, as well as parade of businesses on the western edge of Newport Road. These are at key gateways into the town centre and set the tone for the town centre experience.

A property enhancement grant scheme is therefore proposed to address and enhance these identified properties, so that there is a co-ordinated approach to town centre property that meets the planned refurbishment of the northern Retail Block, nos 7-43 Newport Road. This will lead to a design language that is consistent in terms of quality and responsive to the built form and setting.

This will safeguard and attract national, regional and local occupiers as well as opportunities for upper floor uses that adds to the diversity of the town.

6. Programme & Development Activity

The following development and delivery programme is indicative and subject to change.

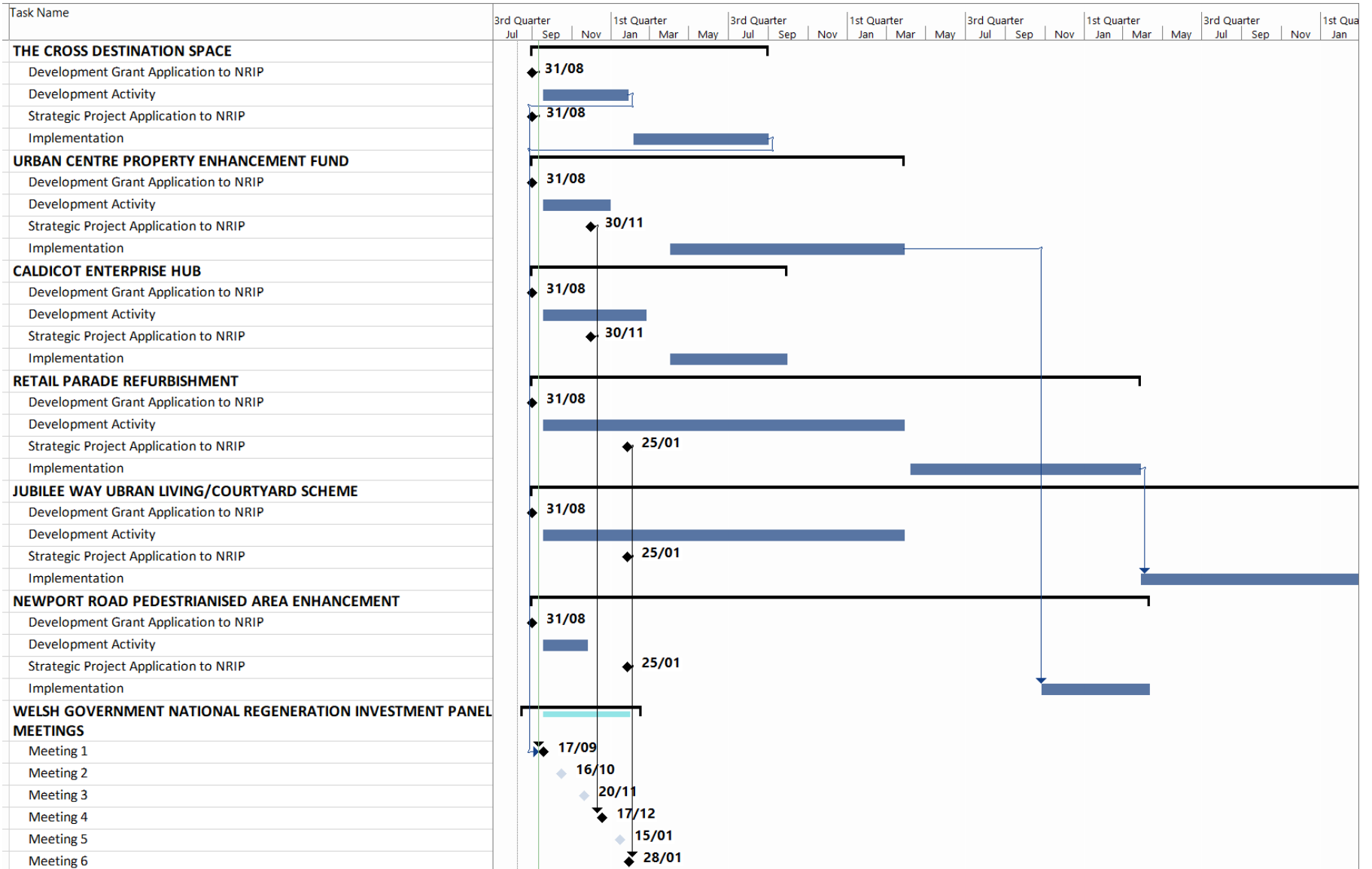
The programme overleaf outlines a timeline for initial development activity leading to implementation across the range of projects previously described.

Before any delivery can commence there is a critical path of development activity that requires support from TRI that will support a number of areas, including:

- Design development and cost assessments for infrastructure and projects such as the Urban Centre Property Enhancement Fund and the Cross-Destination Space;
- Property, valuation and legal advice on the Retail Parade (Nos 7-43 Newport Rd) and the associated Jubilee Way Urban Living and Courtyard scheme.

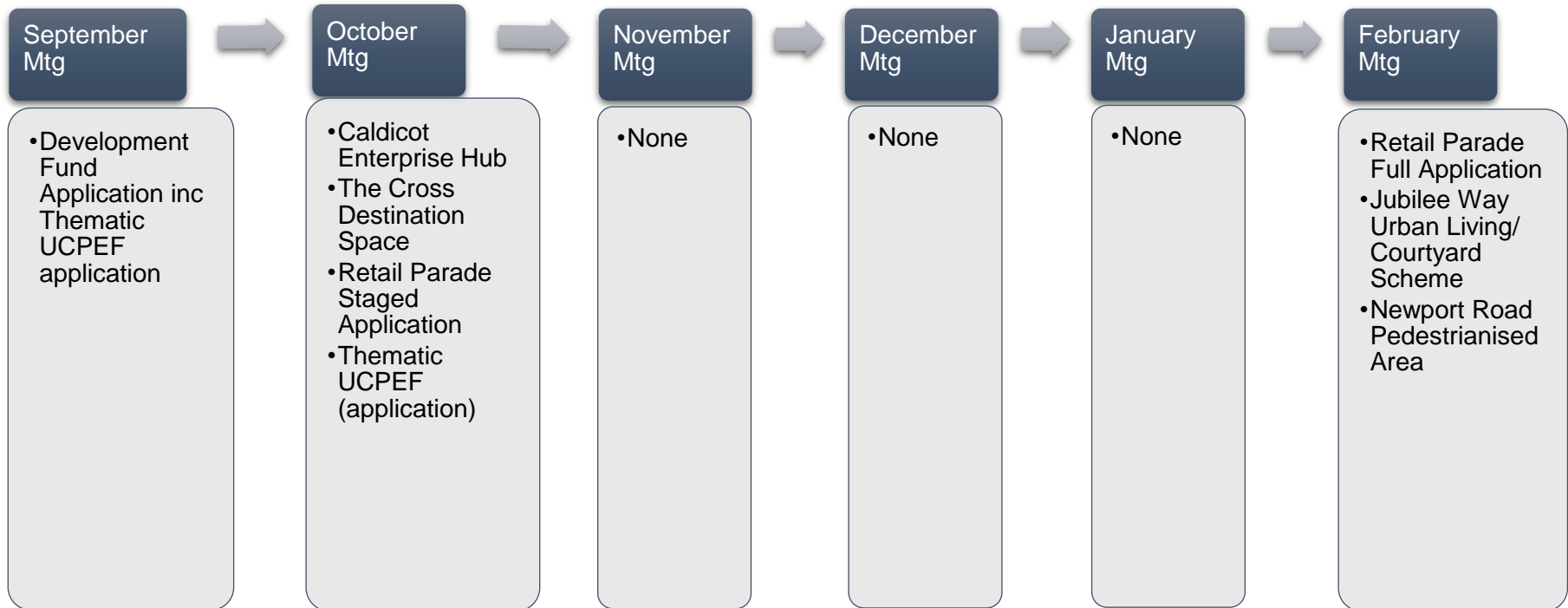
The next six months is therefore important in developing projects to a stage that are robust and ready for implementation in line with TRI funding availability and future commitments.

2018-2021 Programme



TRI Project Application Programme

In relation to the TRI application process, specifically their consideration at future National Regeneration Investment Panel meetings, we anticipate the following order to our respective project applications.



7. Outcomes

Targeted Regeneration Investment fund is focused on providing a programme of smaller investments in a number of 'regeneration areas', to have a combined effect with the City Deal Wider Investment Fund that will deliver sustainable economic development, growth and outcomes across the region. In addressing the regional issues and challenges, Caldicot's suite of projects aims to address i) job creation ii) tackle economic inequality for individuals and communities iii) reverse social, environmental & physical decline iv) enhancing skills & employability v) economic regeneration and vi) affordable housing. The integrated nature of Caldicot's projects demonstrates an integrated approach to town centres that is about economic and social well-being through infrastructure improvements.

Indicator	1. The Cross-Destination Space	2. Caldicot Enterprise Hub	3. Retail Parade Refurbishment	4. Jubilee Way Urban Living/Courtyard Scheme	5. Urban Centre Property Enhancement Fund (UCPEF) ²	Totals
TRI02 Number of jobs accommodated (no)	0	0	37	0	10	47
TRI06 Enterprises accommodated (no)	0	0	8	0	8	16
TRI07 Hectares of land developed	0.17	0	0	0.525	0	0.695
TRI08 Non-residential premises created or refurbished (sqm)	0	53	888	0	250	1,191
TRI09 Non-residential premises created or refurbished (no)	0	1	15	0	8	24
TRI10 No. of additional housing market units	0	0	0	0	0	0
TRI11 No. of additional social housing units delivered	0	0	0	27 ³	0	27
TRI12 No of additional intermediate housing units delivered	0	0	0	0	0	0
TRI15 No of non-residential units brought back into use	0	0	4	0	2	6

² UCPEF outputs subject to final scheme scope and approval

³ May be subject to change in terms of procurement strategy for housing scheme e.g. mix of social and market