



ELEMENT
URBANISM & LANDSCAPE

Llanfair Caereinion

Town Centre Placemaking Plan

Consultation Draft



Funded by
UK Government



LLANFAIR
CAEREINION
TOWN
COUNCIL



Trawsnewid Trefi
Transforming Towns



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



CONTENTS

| | |
|------------------------------|----|
| Background & Purpose | 2 |
| Health Check | 5 |
| 1 Key Issues & Opportunities | 9 |
| Objectives | 10 |
| Key Projects | 11 |
| Feedback & Next Steps | 27 |



BACKGROUND & PURPOSE

Introduction



Llanfair Caereinion is a small, historic market town nestled along the scenic banks of the River Banwy in northern Powys. Known for its picturesque surroundings and rich heritage, the town has long been a focal point for rural communities in the Montgomeryshire. Historically, Llanfair Caereinion served as an agricultural hub, with its market and livestock sales providing vital services to local farmers and villages. Over the decades, its role as a service centre grew, supported by its central location and a strong network of community institutions.

Today, like many rural towns, Llanfair Caereinion faces a series of interconnected challenges shaped by broader economic and societal trends. Shifts in consumer behaviour, such as the move toward online shopping, have contributed to a declining retail offer. The closure of traditional high street services, including banks, has reduced the variety of amenities available in the town centre, leading to a decrease in footfall and daytime vibrancy. At the same time, pressure on public sector budgets has heightened concerns about the sustainability of essential services.

Despite these challenges, Llanfair Caereinion retains a strong foundation of essential services that sustain its role as a local service hub. The town is home to a well-regarded medical centre, a Welsh-medium through school, a leisure centre, and a library—all of which serve the needs of residents from surrounding villages. Its sports facilities, community spaces, and active volunteer organisations also underpin a vibrant community life that fosters social cohesion and engagement.

The town's appeal extends beyond its role as a service centre, attracting visitors through its rich heritage and key

tourism assets. The Welshpool and Llanfair Light Railway, a nationally significant heritage attraction, draws over 26,000 visitors annually. This charming narrow-gauge railway not only boosts the local economy but also helps to put Llanfair Caereinion on the map as a destination for enthusiasts and families. However, while the railway and its surrounding amenities are well-used by visitors, there is limited integration with the town centre, presenting a missed opportunity to capture additional economic benefits.

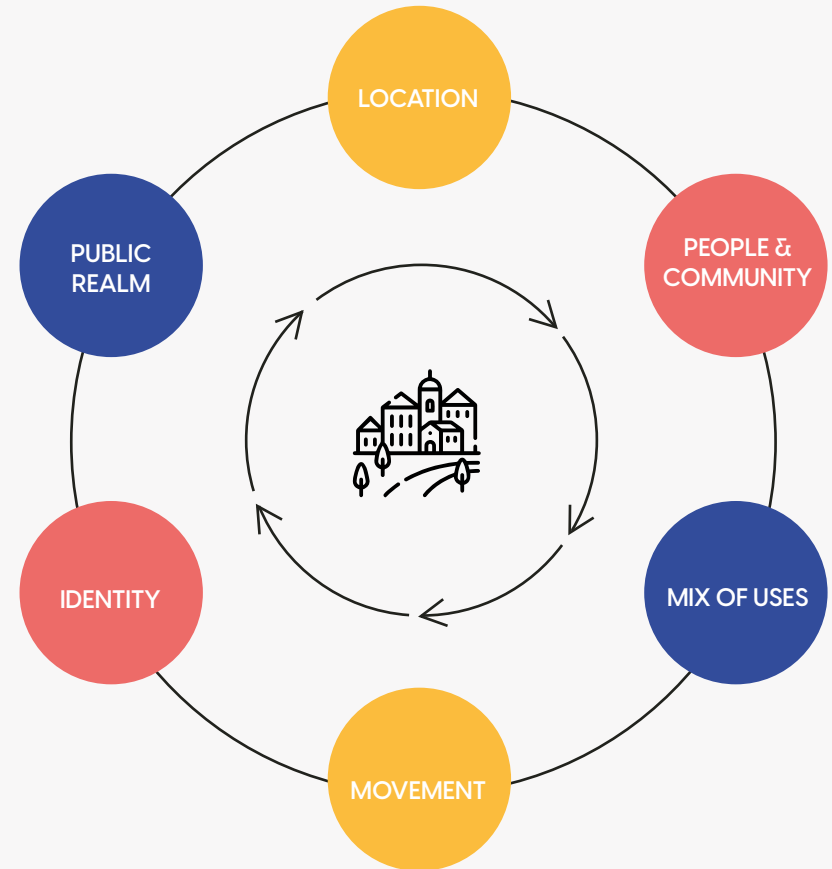
The decline in retail and hospitality offerings within the town centre has created a gap in its ability to cater to both residents and visitors. With fewer businesses open during the day and limited opportunities for leisure and dining, the town centre struggles to sustain vibrancy and provide compelling reasons for people to linger. Addressing these challenges while building on Llanfair Caereinion's existing strengths is at the heart of the Placemaking Plan's mission. By celebrating its heritage, enhancing connections, and creating opportunities for growth, the Plan aims to revitalise the town as a thriving, resilient, and inclusive centre for the local community and visitors alike.

MAKING THE TOWN CENTRE A GREAT PLACE

3

Historic places like Llanfair Caereinion have been a focal point for communities for centuries, and this contributes to their individual identity and that of the wider area and its population. Places shape us and we continue to shape them. This Plan provides the opportunity to help celebrate and grow the best features of Llanfair Caereinion whilst reinvigorating the less-loved ones.

A great place also needs to deliver on several fronts simultaneously. The Placemaking Wales Charter describes of these as six key themes which work together to make a great place:



STAKEHOLDER AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

4

We are consulting with the public on this **Draft Placemaking Plan** following local research, stakeholder meetings and consultations with numerous local organisations including Llanfair Caereinion Town Council, Llanfair Partnership, and the Powys County Councillor. The local community, businesses and organisations are invited to comment on the following ideas. We want to understand your priorities and the level of support for changes and improvements before taking forward any proposals. The final Plan will be a blueprint for guiding investment and attracting funding for the next 5+ years.

HEALTH CHECK

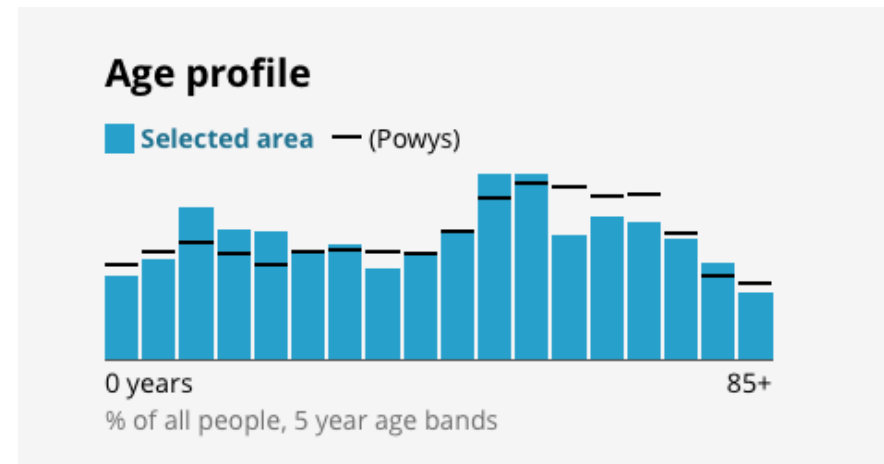
The information in this section provides the context for the analysis and ideas in later sections of this Placemaking Plan. It is a summary of the Llanfair Caereinion Baseline Health Check Report 2024, produced as part of the Placemaking Plan development process and available on request.

5

PEOPLE AND COMMUNITY

About 970 people live in the town itself, with over 2,100 in the surrounding area. The population includes more young people than the Powys average, partly due to the presence of Ysgol Bro Caereinion, the all-age school. Nearly a third of residents speak Welsh, significantly higher than county and national averages, making the town an important Welsh-speaking community.

Age profile, Llanfair Caereinion (blue) and Powys average (black bar)



Source: Office for National Statistics

The town benefits from active community groups, including the Friends of Deri Woods and Llanfair Institute Committee, which organise various cultural and social activities. While these groups enrich local life, maintaining volunteer numbers remains challenging.

SERVICES AND BUSINESS

The town centre provides practical everyday services including two convenience stores, a butcher's, a hardware shop, and a post office within the Spar. Essential services include a Medical Practice serving over 5,000 patients, a dental practice, and an insurance broker. For dining and accommodation, there are pubs, a small hotel, and takeaways.

Types of businesses in Llanfair Caereinion as proportion of all occupied units (excluding vacant), in comparison to Wales and Powys averages.

| Type of business | Llanfair Caereinion (%) | Wales CLG average (%) | Powys average (%) |
|------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Comparison | 0 | 29.3 | 35.4 |
| Convenience | 21.4 | 4.3 | 0.1 |
| Leisure | 21.4 | 25.6 | 25.0 |
| Miscellaneous | 0.0 | 9.0 | 2.5 |
| Service | 42.9 | 31.8 | 27.0 |

Though the town has lost some services like banks and cafés over the past decade, it continues to serve local needs well. The main challenge is increasing activity during daytime hours and attracting more visitors into the town centre. Banwy Industrial Estate, though small, provides important local employment and includes agricultural suppliers and a veterinary practice.

ENVIRONMENT AND CHARACTER

The historic town centre lies within a Conservation Area, with many attractive 19th-century buildings. The River Banwy flows through the town but remains somewhat separate from daily life. Some areas, including parts of the centre, face flood risks which limit development opportunities.

The town sits off the A458 trunk road running between Welshpool and Dolgellau. The sometimes narrow and steep streets in the town centre create challenges for large vehicles and pedestrians. Recent improvements include electric vehicle charging points and town centre Wi-Fi.



KEY ASSETS AND ATTRACTIONS

The Welshpool and Llanfair Light Railway is the town's main tourist attraction, bringing 26,000 visitors annually. The station includes a café, gift shop, railway museum and the Cloverlands Model Car Museum. A £400,000 investment will soon enhance these facilities further. However, poor connections between the station and town centre mean most visitors don't explore beyond the railway.

Goat Field and Deri Woods provide valued green space for recreation and wildlife, with recent investment improving their paths and features. However, access points from the town centre could be clearer.

- 7 The surrounding area hosts numerous caravan parks, with around 800 pitches within five kilometres. These visitors support local businesses but could be encouraged to use the town centre more.

MOVEMENT AND ACCESS

While the town's compact size makes walking possible, steep hills and some missing pavements create accessibility challenges. Pedestrian connections to attractions like the Light Railway need improvement. Bus services to nearby towns are limited, though may improve in future. Car parking is a challenge and a key area of concern for local stakeholders: due to the historic street layout, on-street parking is limited and time-restricted, and the main public car park off Watergate Street, although currently free, is not conveniently located for arriving visitors and people seeking to use local services or community facilities like the Institute. It is poorly signed and laid-out but does provide EV charging.



KEY SITES

Morgan's Yard, a half-hectare site in the north of the town centre and near the river and local facilities like the public toilets and Llanfair Institute, offers significant development potential despite flooding challenges.

The former **Market Square**, now the area comprising the junction of Broad Street/ Bridge Street, Mount Street, and Parsons Bank, is an area that virtually all users of the town centre must either go through or pass by. Formerly the historic heart of the town, it remains the location of most of its day-to-day commercial activity and contains a prominent former bank and vacant premises.

- 8 The current site of **Llanfair Medical Practice**, located above Morgan's Yard will become available for re-use or development if the relocation of the Practice to a purpose-built Medical Centre on the edge of the town goes ahead as planned in the next few years.

IDENTITY AND PROMOTION

While known for its historic charm and community spirit, the town lacks a unified brand that promotes its appeal effectively. The bilingual Llanfair Chronicle newsletter and social media help local communication, but better coordinated promotion could attract more visitors.

Traditional events like the Carnival and Show have faced recent challenges with rising costs and volunteer shortages. However, the town's various sports clubs and community activities contribute to its distinctive character and could help create a stronger identity that appeals to both residents and visitors.



KEY ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES



Strengths

Population: The town has a higher proportion of school-aged children and young people compared to the Powys average

Essential Services: The town retains key services, including a Medical Practice, dentist, leisure centre, and school, which attract daily footfall from the surrounding rural communities.

Community Assets: A range of indoor community venues, such as the Llanfair Institute and the library, support vibrant local activity and events, and outdoor sporting facilities make it a sporting hub.

Compact Layout: The town's size and central facilities make it easily navigable for residents and visitors.

Historic Character: The Conservation Area and well-preserved 19th-century architecture provide an attractive and distinctive townscape.

Digital and Infrastructure: Recent investments, including town Wi-Fi and electric vehicle charging points, enhance accessibility and modernise the town's offer.

Tourism Appeal: The Welshpool and Llanfair Light Railway is a nationally significant heritage attraction, drawing over 26,000 visitors annually and supporting the local economy.

Caravan Parks: an estimated 800 static pitches are located within a five-kilometre radius and residents frequently support local businesses, including the town's pubs, hotels, takeaways, and convenience stores.



Weaknesses

Declining Retail Offer: Loss of banks, a café, and other businesses has reduced the town's vibrancy and retail variety.

Limited Daytime Hospitality: Few daytime hospitality options discourage daytime visitors from spending time in the centre.

Poor Connections: Indirect and poorly maintained walking and wheeling routes between key assets, such as the Light Railway and town centre, hinder visitor integration.

Flood Risk: Parts of the town, including Morgan's Yard, face significant flood challenges, limiting redevelopment potential.

Parking: Poor on- and off-street parking options make life difficult for many residents, limits use of community assets like the Institute, and makes it harder for visitors to explore the whole town centre.

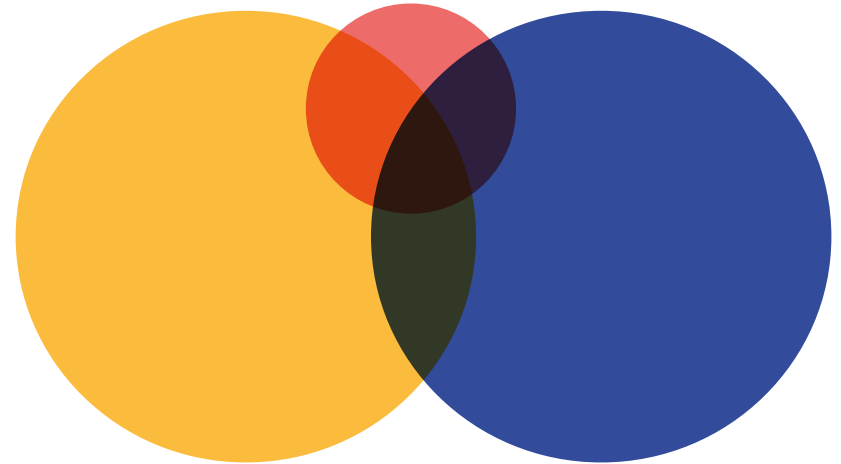
Traffic Congestion: Narrow streets, parked cars and large agricultural or industrial vehicles create temporary traffic flow issues and noise and air pollution in the town centre.

Unrealised Potential: The town centre does not feel connected with a prominent natural asset, the River Banwy, and one of the few potential development sites in the town centre, Morgan's Yard, has laid dormant for many years.

OBJECTIVES

Llanfair Caereinion offers a rich mix of assets, including leisure facilities, historic charm, pubs, community venues, and nearby woodlands and trails, making it a vibrant rural hub.

While the Light Railway plays an important role in the town's economy and there is potential for the surrounding caravan parks to generate visits and spend by tourists/temporary residents of the area, the focus should be on creating a town centre that is used daily by its residents and those of the surrounding rural communities. This will naturally enhance the town centre's appeal to visitors and help its long-term sustainability.



10

1. Activate the town centre, by increasing opportunities for the local community to use it, protecting its role as a rural hub:

Support essential community facilities, health and beauty businesses, pubs and providers of daily essentials.

Encourage leisure use of the centre by designing public spaces that invite people to walk around and linger

Promote sports and recreation through investing in facilities within easy reach of the centre to make them as high-quality and accessible as possible

Support residential uses within the centre that are affordable and intergenerational

2. Better connect the town centre with the surrounding area:

Ensure the centre provides easy to find and convenient parking, particularly for those with reduced mobility.

Strengthen the walking and cycling links between the Light Railway, town centre, and surrounding areas.

Enhance the public realm connections to integrate the river and woodland into the town centre experience.

Ensure good active travel and public transport connections between the centre and the proposed new Medical Centre location.

3. Protect and enhance existing community assets and attractions:

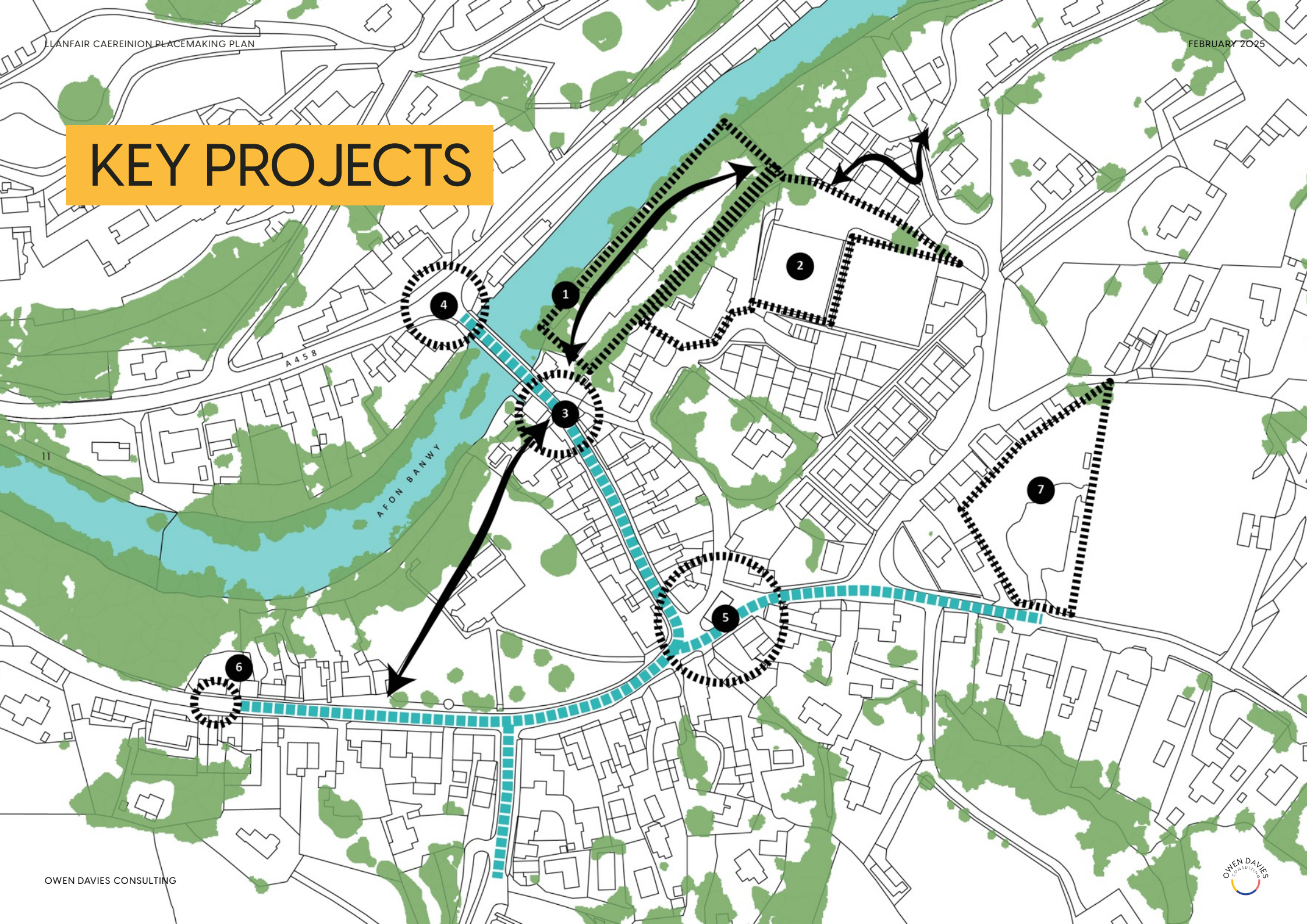
Improve the access, usability and appeal of key community buildings and spaces like the Institute and former Market Square.

Encourage and influence the development of Morgan's Yard as a mixed-use site to deliver public parking, recreation, and connectivity.

Strengthen the visibility, wayfinding and pathways connecting the centre with Goat Field and Deri Woods

Invest in shop frontage improvements and business property improvements for businesses to protect and enhance their use and appearance.

KEY PROJECTS



KEY PROJECTS

1: MORGAN'S YARD:

RIVERSIDE PARK, CAR PARKING & DEVELOPMENTS

12



PRESENT SITUATION

Morgan's Yard is a half-hectare vacant site at the bottom of Bridge Street, alongside the River Banwy. Previously an ironmonger's depot and builders' merchants, it has been unused since 2003. Though the site has planning permission for housing, flood risks and riverbank stability issues have prevented development.



POTENTIAL

The site's location between the town centre, river, and Light Railway makes it ideal for creating new connections and spaces that could benefit both residents and visitors. Development here could address the town's parking shortages and provide much-needed public spaces for community activities.



VISION

The project aims to transform Morgan's Yard into a vibrant destination that better connects the town centre with its key natural asset, the River Banwy, and its nearby tourism asset, the Light Railway. The development would create a multi-purpose public space featuring car parking, a relocated children's play area, and picnic facilities. The space would be designed to host community events and markets, with power supplies enabling flexible use throughout the year. The development could include residential apartments and/or light industrial or craft units with their own associated parking.

1: MORGAN'S YARD: RIVERSIDE PARK, CAR PARKING & DEVELOPMENTS



PROPOSED ACTIONS

Carry out Feasibility Study, including:

- Independent valuation of site
- Discussion with landowner
- Discussion with potential development partners (explore combining/aligning with potential development of the current Medical Practice site)
- Development of costed concept designs, developed through public consultation
- Identification of potential funding sources

13



KEY PROJECTS

2. MEDICAL CENTRE & TENNIS COURT AREA:

NEW HOUSING THAT STRENGTHENS THE TOWN CENTRE

14



PRESENT SITUATION

Caereinion Medical Practice is expected to relocate in the next few years from its current building on Parsons Bank to a new purpose-built facility on the edge of the town. The site of the current Practice building is adjacent to tennis courts and a play area owned by the Town Council, and a small area of land owned by Powys County Council and currently used for parking, presenting an opportunity for comprehensive redevelopment that addresses the needs of the town.



POTENTIAL

This area could provide much-needed new housing near the town centre. The inclusion of the Town Council-owned tennis courts and playground is an option that would make the prospective development site more financially viable and so more attractive to investors/developers. Subject to further feasibility, if this option is viable it would generate funds that the Town Council can use to catalyse developments elsewhere in the town. The redevelopment could also help alleviate town centre resident parking pressures and improve pedestrian access to the town centre for those coming from the north east of the town and the Light Railway.



VISION

The project would create a new residential area that brings more people closer to local shops and services. It could include a mix of housing types suitable for different generations and could look to create vehicle access via Eithinog Lane, reducing traffic pressure on Parsons Bank.

2. MEDICAL CENTRE & TENNIS COURT AREA: NEW HOUSING THAT STRENGTHENS THE TOWN CENTRE



PROPOSED ACTIONS

Carry out Feasibility Study, including:

- Discussion between all landowners to explore joint development opportunities
- Discussion with potential development partners (explore combining/aligning with potential development of Morgan's Yard)
- Development of costed concept designs, including plans for relocation of recreational facilities
- Identification of potential funding sources

15



KEY PROJECTS

3. NORTHERN BRIDGE STREET:

AN IMPRESSIVE ARRIVAL AREA

16



PRESENT SITUATION

The north of Bridge Street is many visitors' first interaction with the town centre, but it currently lacks visual appeal and clear signage. The area around the Institute, public toilets and the path through the churchyard to High Street and on to Goat Field feels disconnected and underutilised.



POTENTIAL

Improving this gateway could create a better first impression and encourage more people to explore the town centre. Improved connections would make it easier for visitors to find key facilities and attractions. Should Morgan's Yard be developed, the importance of this part of Bridge Street will increase further.



VISION

The project would transform Bridge Street into an attractive arrival area that welcomes visitors and clearly guides them to town centre destinations. New artwork, planting and signage would create an eye-catching arrival point that reflects the town's character.

3. NORTHERN BRIDGE STREET: AN IMPRESSIVE ARRIVAL AREA



PROPOSED ACTIONS

- Design and install new welcome signage
- Improve pedestrian connections and crossings
- Install clear directional signs to key destinations
- Consider opportunities for public art that fit with the town's character
- Enhance lighting and street furniture

17



Churchyard Pathway



Examples of public art and banner signs

KEY PROJECTS

4: NEW ROAD/BRIDGE STREET JUNCTION:

A GATEWAY TO THE TOWN

18



PRESENT SITUATION

The junction of New Road (A458) and Bridge Street north of the river serves as the main vehicle entrance to the town centre but appears cluttered and uninviting. Current signage fails to adequately inform passing visitors of the town centre's offer and entice them to turn off and visit.



POTENTIAL

A more attractive gateway could encourage more people travelling on the A458 to call in and visit the town centre, benefiting local businesses and attractions and increasing the resilience of the town centre.



VISION

The project would create a clearer, more appealing entrance to the town centre through decluttering, new signage and visual improvements like painting the bridge railings. This would help capture the attention of passing traffic and guide visitors to the town's parking and attractions.

4: NEW ROAD/BRIDGE STREET JUNCTION: A GATEWAY TO THE TOWN



PROPOSED ACTIONS

- Remove unnecessary signs and street furniture
- Design and install new welcome signage
- Improve the appearance of the bridge
- Create clearer directions to public parking options
- Enhance pedestrian crossing points

19



KEY PROJECTS

5: MARKET SQUARE & HIGH STREET:

ENCOURAGING PEOPLE TO DWELL AND SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESSES

20



PRESENT SITUATION

The historic Market Square area around the Presbyterian Church, chip shop and Red Lion pub forms the commercial heart of the town centre but is dominated by the roads that pass through it and lacks a clear identity and vitality, particularly because of the vacant prominent former bank building.

High Street is the part of the town centre closest to the main public car park and contains some attractive historic buildings including the Grade II-listed Goat Hotel and the entrance to Goat Field closest to the town centre. It feels disconnected from the rest of the town centre, however, and the condition of some of the buildings decrease its attractiveness.



POTENTIAL

Enhancing the former Market Square area could create a stronger centre for commercial and community activity that encourages residents and visitors to spend more time in the town centre, supporting existing businesses and enabling the occupation of the former bank building.

Improving the public realm along High Street, potentially enabled by creating some off-street parking, could address the challenges with narrow pavements and accessibility and improve links to Goat Field and Deri Woods.



VISION

The project would make small-scale public realm improvements to Market Square, making it a more attractive and pedestrian-focused area with outdoor spaces for use by local hospitality businesses. Enhanced pavements and crossing points would make it easier and safer for people to walk between the car park and town centre, particularly those with mobility challenges, whilst maintaining some on-street parking to support local businesses and access for large agricultural vehicles and buses. Targeted support would be provided to improve the former bank building and encourage its reuse.

5: MARKET SQUARE & HIGH STREET: ENCOURAGING PEOPLE TO DWELL AND SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESSES



PROPOSED ACTIONS

Market Square

- Develop designs for public realm improvements
- Provide targeted support to enable the reuse of the former bank building

High Street

- Develop designs for public realm improvements
- Explore the feasibility of creating off-street parking from surplus space within the churchyard, considering key challenges including listed buildings status, protection of trees within a Conservation Area, and nearby telecommunications infrastructure.



Examples of pedestrian friendly spaces

KEY PROJECTS

6: GOAT FIELD ENTRANCE:

CAPTURING ATTENTION

22



PRESENT SITUATION

The entrance to Goat Field from High Street is tucked away and unwelcoming, despite being an important recreational space and route to Deri Woods.



POTENTIAL

Better access could encourage more people to use these green spaces and create stronger connections between the town centre and its natural assets.



VISION

The project would create a clear, attractive entrance that draws people toward these important green spaces. New signage and landscaping would help integrate Goat Field more closely with the town centre.

5: MARKET SQUARE & HIGH STREET: ENCOURAGING PEOPLE TO DWELL AND SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESSES



PROPOSED ACTIONS

- Design and install new entrance features
- Improve path surfaces and accessibility
- Add clear directional signage
- Enhance landscaping around the entrance
- Consider lighting improvements for safety

23



Examples of entrance features

KEY PROJECTS

7: MOUNT FIELD:

IMPROVING COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SUPPORTING INFRASTRUCTURE

24



PRESENT SITUATION

Mount Field provides important sports facilities but requires infrastructure improvements to meet the needs of the community and local clubs.



POTENTIAL

Enhancing these facilities could strengthen the town's role as a sporting hub and provide better amenities for residents of all ages, but particularly for young people.



VISION

The project could create improved sports facilities such as an all-weather multi-use games area (incorporating replacement tennis courts, should they be included in development related to the current Medical Practice building) and/or cycling pump or BMX track. New shared infrastructure would include improved car parking and potentially a building like a clubhouse.

7: MOUNT FIELD: IMPROVING COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SUPPORTING INFRASTRUCTURE



PROPOSED ACTIONS

- Engage further with sports clubs and users
- Design new sports facilities and supporting infrastructure
- Plan car parking improvements
- Explore funding opportunities
- Consider phasing of improvements
- Develop sustainable management arrangements

25



TOWN-WIDE PROJECTS

In addition to the key projects described above, several smaller interventions across the town centre could help the delivery of the Placemaking Plan's objectives



PROTECT AND SUPPORT COMMUNITY VENUES

- 26 Llanfair Caereinion's community venues play a vital role in local life but face various challenges. This project could support their long-term sustainability through targeted investment in buildings, improved access arrangements, and support for reducing running costs through improving energy efficiency. Improvements would help venues welcome more users and host a wider range of activities. The project could include helping venues work together more effectively and promote their facilities to potential users.



TARGETED PROPERTY IMPROVEMENT GRANTS

A grant programme would help owners enhance the appearance and condition of important town centre buildings. Funding could support repairs, improvements to traditional features, and work to bring empty spaces back into use. The scheme would include guidance to ensure changes enhance the town's historic character. Priority would be given to buildings in prominent locations that contribute to people's impression of the town centre.



WALKING AND WHEELING CONNECTIONS

This project would make it easier for people to find their way around Llanfair Caereinion, with a particular focus on improving the connection between the Light Railway and the town centre. Currently this important route is difficult to follow in places and uninspiring, discouraging railway visitors from exploring the town centre. New signs would clearly guide people between key destinations, show walking times, and highlight points of interest along the way. The project would create a cohesive signage system that helps both visitors and residents better understand how different parts of the town link together and discover its various attractions and facilities.



PUBLIC TRANSPORT ENHANCEMENT

Making public transport more attractive and easier to use would help reduce car dependency and parking issues, and support those who cannot or prefer not to drive. This project would improve facilities for bus passengers throughout the town, making services more accessible and comfortable to use in all weather conditions. Better information about services would help people plan their journeys more easily.

FEEDBACK & NEXT STEPS

Comments on the draft Plan can be submitted online using the comment form or interactive map to post ideas:

www.powystowninvestmentplans.info/llanfaircaereinion/

27

There will be a drop in event held in the town centre providing an opportunity to meet the team and discuss the Plan. Details will be advertised locally.

Following the consultations on the draft Plan, all comments received will be reviewed and discussed with the local stakeholders before agreeing a final Plan. The Plan will include an action plan describing how proposals with the wider community's support could be taken forward, funded and within what timescales.





Contact Owen Davies Consulting,
43A&B Frogmore Street, Abergavenny, NP7 5AN.

Owen Davies - owen@owendaviesconsulting.co.uk and
Adam Greenwood – adam@owendaviesconsulting.co.uk

Owen Davies Consulting Ltd is the owner or the licensee of all intellectual property rights in connection with the study and the material published with it. These works are protected by copyright laws and treaties around the world. All such rights are reserved and should not be reproduce, duplicated, copied, sold, resold, or exploited for any commercial purposes, products or service.

