

Ammanford

PLACEMAKING STRATEGY

March 2026

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Carmarthenshire
County Council

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Introduction

In September 2025, Carmarthenshire County Council set out to develop placemaking strategies for three primary towns across the County. Placemaking is central to the Welsh Government's approach to planning. Placemaking helps to shape development, rather than simply approving, and seeks to involve communities in a meaningful way. It also helps to create a joined-up approach between partners seeking to work in a place and focuses not just on buildings but how people move around the place and what makes them want to spend time there.

This placemaking plan will support the key stakeholders of Ammanford to apply for funding from funding bodies which will include Welsh Government and UK Government. Each of Ammanford's stakeholders will have a part to play in the delivery of this placemaking plan.

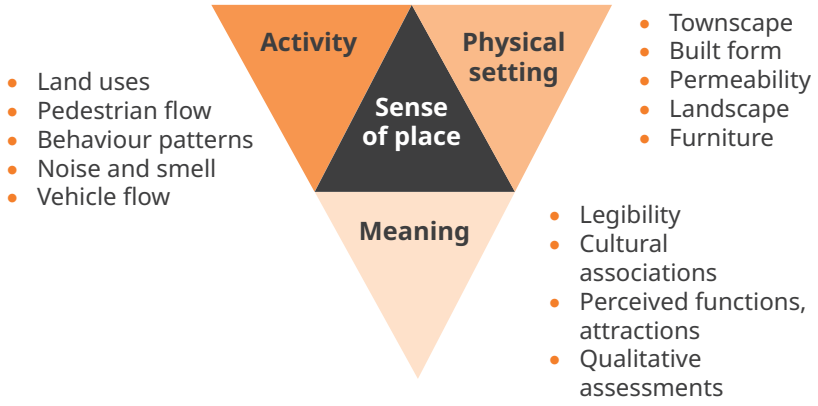
About Placemaking Strategies

Placemaking is all about creating healthy, sustainable places that support community wellbeing. The Design Commission for Wales has helped clearly set out what placemaking is by developing the Placemaking Wales Charter. The charter sets out six placemaking principles that help contribute to creating and maintaining good places. These are:

People and community – the local community is involved in the development of proposals. The needs, aspirations, health and wellbeing of all people are considered at the outset. Proposals are shaped to help meet these needs as well as creating, integrating and protecting and/or enhancing a sense of community and to promote equality.

Identity – the positive, distinctive qualities of existing places are valued and respected. The unique features and opportunities of a location including heritage, culture, language, built and natural physical attributes are identified and responded to.

Movement – walking, cycling and public transport are prioritised to provide a choice of transport modes and avoid dependence on private vehicles. Well designed and safe active travel routes connect to the wider active travel network and public transport stations and stops are positively integrated.



Source: Design Commission for Wales Placemaking Guide, adapted from Sense of Place Model, Punter (1991)

Mix of uses – places have a range of purposes which provide opportunities for community development, local business growth and access to jobs, services and facilities via walking, cycling or public transport. Development density and a mix of uses and tenures helps to support a diverse community and a vibrant public realm.

Public realm – streets and public spaces are well defined, welcoming, safe and inclusive with a distinct identity. They are designed to be robust and adaptable with landscape, green infrastructure and sustainable drainage well integrated. They are well connected to existing places and promote opportunities for social interaction and a range of activities for all people.

Location – places should grow and develop in a way that uses land efficiently, supports and enhances existing places and is well connected. The location of housing, employment and leisure and other facilities are planned to help reduce the need to travel.

Placemaking strategies are not, nor should they try to be, detailed masterplans. They may consider some matters of more detailed design, but the principal function is to provide a clear summary of the key issues for a place, provide justification for which issues are the priority, and provide solutions to those issues in terms of a series of actions. They should also be used as a framework. The world does not stand still for the life of a plan, and so they need a degree of flexibility, they should be agile, providing a clear framework, but without being too prescriptive in terms of the details. Some of the proposed actions in a placemaking plan will be simple and straightforward to achieve, some elements will require more detailed design consideration and further engagement to make them a reality.

The approach

Urban Foundry Ltd were appointed to coproduce the placemaking strategy for Ammanford working closely with the local community and the Economic Development team at Carmarthenshire County Council to achieve this. Figure 1 shows what this involved.

The approach involved a first round of consultation to understand what people felt the issues and opportunities were in Ammanford. This was then developed into a list of priority outcomes and actions. These were then further consulted on and refined, first with the Ammanford Task Force and then through a public consultation.

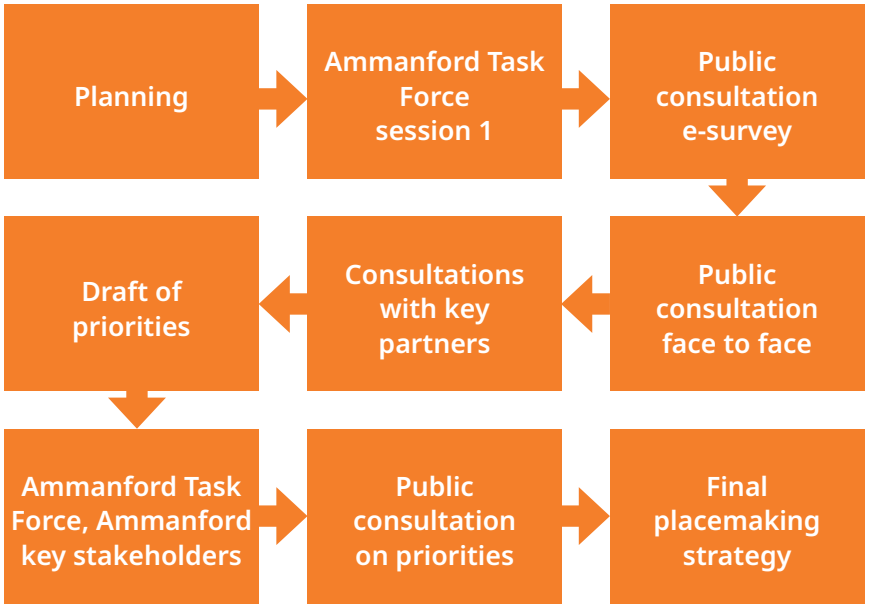


Figure 1 - Co-production approach to placemaking strategy

How to use this document

The strategy starts with a summary of the wider factors that will influence the placemaking strategy for Ammanford.

The remainder of the report is then structured around each placemaking theme setting out:

- **Now** – what are the issues, challenges and strengths in the town
- **Where** – what do people want to change and strengthen over the coming months and years
- **How** – what are the practical actions that will deliver this change

The document can be used by anyone, but it is intended as a shared set of priorities and actions for key partners working in Ammanford. This includes:

- **Ammanford Task Force** – providing a framework for priority areas for the Task Force to focus on
- **Ammanford Town Council** – providing evidence for projects and activities and to help guide priority activities in the town
- **Carmarthenshire County Council** – guiding priority actions for the Towns Team and other Council departments
- **Community and Voluntary sector** – providing evidence and support for projects and programmes
- **Businesses, Developers and Investors** – showing where there is strong support for developments
- **Individuals** – understanding what the Task Force and County Council are prioritising to improve the town and providing an accountability framework for this work

Each year Carmarthenshire County Council will prepare a report for the Ammanford Task Force helping to set out the progress being made towards delivering the strategy.

Summary

This is a brief summary of the current situation, what we want the impacts of this strategy to be, and how we can achieve those impacts. The subsequent sections in this strategy provide greater detail in each of these areas.

How things are

Ammanford is an important centre with good connections to Swansea and a strong Welsh and mining heritage. It is relatively compact, has valuable green spaces at the edges of the town centre, and a community that wants the town to do well. But the assets in the town, both people and places, are not working together as effectively as they could.

The town centre lacks a clear sense of direction, and it has become physically and economically fragmented. The park, railway station, Quay Street, the Arcade and College Street do not feel well connected. Out of town developments and free parking have drawn activity away from the town centre. There are also vacant and underused buildings in prime locations in the town.

The town centre also has a limited mix of shops, leisure activities and community facilities and insufficient residential accommodation. There is relatively little for young people to do, and people need more to encourage them to stay into the evening. People generally feel safe during the day, but the town can feel less welcoming after dark.

Movement is a challenge. The Cross is dominated by through traffic, some walking and cycling routes feel unsafe, and public transport services are not always frequent or well connected. The railway is an important asset but is disconnected from the town centre.

Ammanford's distinctive identity is not visible. The mining history and Welsh language and culture are not reflected in its public spaces, although people across the town are involved in a regular programme of events.

People also feel they are not sufficiently involved in decisions about the future of the town and that partners could work together more effectively.

What we want to improve

Location outcomes:

- Improved connectivity throughout the town
- Greater action around town centre first planning policy
- Better measurement/communication of goals and progress

Mix of use outcomes:

- Improve the mix of uses in the town centre
- Greater number of vacant or underutilised spaces are actively used
- More emerging businesses receive support

Public realm outcomes:

- More opportunities for play in the street scene
- Improved signage and the creation of safe routes across the town
- Improve management of public realm
- Greater amounts of green infrastructure throughout the town
- Maintain and improve existing spaces

Movement outcomes:

- Improve options for people walking and cycling
- Improve public transport
- Greater access to the rail network
- Improve options for town centre deliveries
- Reduce pressure on central junction
- Improved access to Ammanford Town Centre for short stay trips

Identity outcomes:

- Greater sense of pride in the town
- More opportunities to celebrate the towns heritage
- Greater strength of the Welsh language through placemaking activities

People and communities outcomes:

- More opportunities for people to be involved in the town development
- Greater use of placemaking to deliver healthier towns
- Better coordinate internal Council policies/ processes to support town's centre development

How we will get there

The key areas of work identified in the placemaking strategy include:

Reconnecting the town –

The strategy supports projects that improve connections between Quay Street, the arcade and College Street. This includes better routes, crossings and signage and pedestrian crossings, plus safer walking and cycling connections from the surrounding areas. Parking and deliveries will also be more effectively managed.

Putting the town first –

The strategy sets out how future planning, investment and decisions about public buildings and services should consider their effect on the town centre. This approach will include considering how decisions about schools, healthcare facilities and other public assets could better support the town centre. A simple design guide will help ensure that new developments and building improvements strengthen the character, quality and connectivity of Ammanford.

Bring buildings back into use –

The strategy will support vacant and underused buildings and sites to be considered for new uses. There are also opportunities for a community and young person centre, support for emerging businesses and more activities for people to do in the evening. Meanwhile spaces would provide opportunities for people to test new ideas.

Creating greener and more welcoming spaces –

Priorities identified in the plan include greening Quay Street, improving Market Square, developing a town-level green infrastructure strategy and ensuring that new planting is properly maintained.

Strengthening Ammanford's identity –

Implementing the plan will see the identity strengthened with its mining history, Welsh language, local stories and cultural connections becoming more visible through signage, public art, events, buildings and online promotion. A continuing programme of festivals, markets and cultural activity will help bring people into the town.

Turning community involvement into action –

The strategy supports all partners including the community working together to lead on different parts of the strategy. Progress towards different elements will be measured and reported annually.

Important considerations

In this section we set out some global, national and local trends that will inform the placemaking strategy. Please remember we have provided a simple summary of trends to help set the scene for this report. More detail including the data and information underlying these trends is set out in the technical appendix.

Current trends

Trends around people

Overall Carmarthenshire as a whole has a growing population and this is also the case in Ammanford. Between 2011 and 2021 the population in Ammanford increased by 3%. But there have been changes in the demographics. The proportion of young people (aged 15 and under) has decreased by 0.7% and those of working age (16 to 64) has decreased by 1.9%. The number of older people (aged 65+) has increased by 2.6%. The number of Welsh speakers is falling with 43.9% Welsh Speakers in 2011 falling to 39.9% in 2021.

The overall health of people in Carmarthenshire as a whole is improving. In 2021, 47.2% of Carmarthenshire residents described their health as “very good”, increasing from 45.7% in 2011. While those describing their health as “bad” fell from 6.0% to 5.2%. The percentage of people who were identified as being disabled and limited a lot in Carmarthenshire fell from 13.0% to 10.5%, while the percentage of people who were identified as being disabled and limited a little decreased from 11.4% to 11.1%. Current data for Carmarthenshire suggests a slight fall in life expectancy. 51% of people in Ammanford are economically active and there are low levels of unemployment at just 2%.

These are important trends. It helps show that Ammanford is growing, but it is also changing. People are older but there is improved health and the number of Welsh Speakers is falling. Unemployment is low and levels of economic activity are remaining stable. This is important to placemaking as it helps highlight the importance of strengthening the Welsh language through all activities and recognising how the population is changing over time.

Trends around town centres

In Ammanford there is a reasonable mix of nationals and small independent shops that is consistent with towns of a similar size. But the Carmarthenshire Retail Study in 2023 helped highlight a desire among users of Ammanford town centre for more independent shop with more and better non-food options and too many empty shops.

There is strong Welsh Government support for 'town centre first' approaches and an emphasis on placemaking, but with continuing pressure from out of town developments (some of it new, some from legacy pressures). Coupled with this there are also significantly increased capital costs of both materials and labour, making development more costly, inflationary pressures on revenue costs for staffing plus increases to Employers' National Insurance, and significant rises in other overhead costs (notably utilities), combined with the reduction or removal of post-Covid reliefs on business rates.

At the same time, purchasing power within the economy has been squeezed for individuals but also for many companies and also public sector bodies. The major casualties of Covid were the large nationals, which dominated high streets in larger towns and cities, which are very unlikely to be replaced by other nationals, creating multiple impacts that includes negative perceptions about how towns appear and the loss of a high street offer that would drive footfall.

Five years after the Covid-19 pandemic changed the way we work, in Wales 42% of workers are working from home at least some of the time[1]. More people are working from home permanently and many more working in a hybrid fashion. Welsh Government's current policy is aspiring to have approximately 30% of the workforce working at home at any one time to reduce commuter traffic. It is too early to say, but whilst there will be clear environmental benefits to doing this, it may also result in reducing demand for the hyper-local economy in town centres.

But across Wales and the UK there is substantial research showing how we want to spend our time and the impact this has on town centres. It helps show that towns that embrace a mixed-use, community focused approach buck the national trends around declining town centres. The research also shows modern consumers want an experience when they visit town, not just an errand. They might get a coffee, do some shopping, see an exhibit, and meet friends all in one trip[2]. Town centres that facilitate these varied activities are seeing loyalty and dwell-time increase.

These trends point to a change in how we use our leisure time and what we want from our town centres. They are increasingly becoming destinations that people visit for multiple reasons in a single visit. This is important to placemaking as the strategy needs to consider not just how people are using Ammanford now, but how that is likely to change in the medium to long term.

1 https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/pdf-versions/2026/2/3/1770823261/remote-working-national-survey-wales-april-2024-march-2025.pdf
2 https://retail-focus.co.uk/community-hubs-shopping-centres-of-the-future/#:~:text=She%20notes%20research%20by%20Gensler%2C,day%20such%20as%20cookery%20classes

Wider trends

The ability of Carmarthenshire County Council and other partners to deliver on the placemaking strategy will be influenced by national decision making. Much of the strategic context provided by Welsh Government supports the ethos behind placemaking. In particular, the Welsh Government has a strong focus on sustainable development enshrined in the Well-being of Future Generations Act (2015). This act requires local authorities to carry out sustainable development and to do that by following five ways of working:

- **Long term** – thinking beyond short term fixes
- **Prevention** – stop problems before they happen
- **Integration** – join up different objectives
- **Collaboration** – work with other organisations
- **Involvement** – involve people and communities

This has been fully built into Carmarthenshire County Council's approach to producing this placemaking strategy.

However, this supportive strategic environment for creating places underpinned by sustainable development may be buffeted in the coming years by wider global events. The previous town level strategies were produced as a direct result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Prior to that global event, was the 2008 financial crash, and following Covid-19 have been the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East.

These events have a direct impact on placemaking. They impact on how stressed and strained households are because of the cost of living and rising fuel prices. They impact on businesses' willingness to take on risk and they can make it harder to sustain the vibrant town centres this strategy is aiming to support.

They will also impact how much progress is made over what time frame with the strategy. This is an important part of understanding placemaking, it is a local approach but is directly linked to wider events and an everchanging strategic environment.

Location

For the location theme we are interested in understanding how good we are at ensuring all developments make the place better and understanding if we have the right mix of developments in Ammanford.

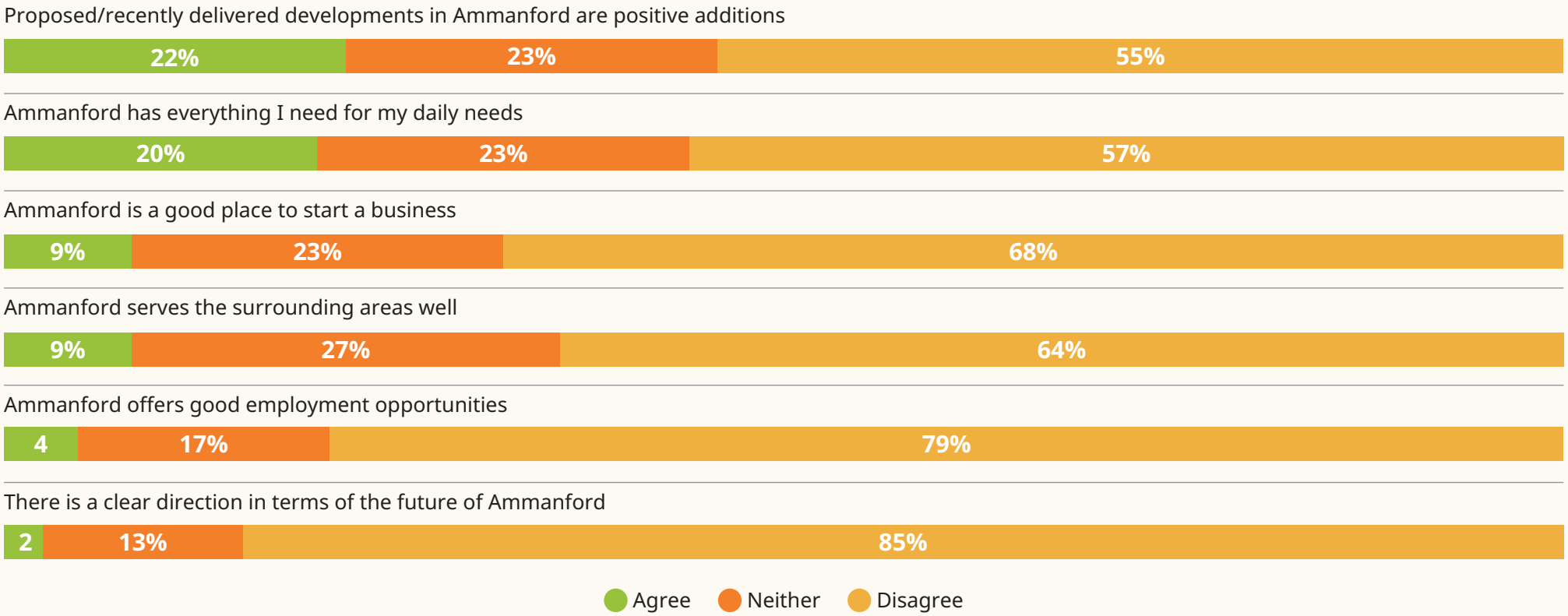
The placemaking principles define this area as:

Places should grow and develop in a way that uses land efficiently, supports and enhances existing places and is well connected. The location of housing, employment and leisure and other facilities are planned to help reduce the need to travel.

What we found

Through the consultation, overall 'Location' was rated as 3.8 out of 10 in Ammanford

The more detailed analysis of people's feedback shows that people feel the town is lacking a clear direction in terms of its future. It also showed people felt the town did not offer good employment opportunities or support new businesses and was not serving the surrounding areas well.



The consultation and our own analysis identified the following key points:

- **Hub** – People recognise Ammanford's strategic position near the M4, Brecon Beacons and as a hub for the Amman Valley, but feel this is not capitalised on
- **Improving flow** – A lack of flow and legibility between key areas: Quay Street, the Arcade, College Street, the park and station feel disconnected
- **Out of town** – There is concern that out-of-centre developments with free parking pull activity away from the historic core
- **Strengthening connections** – There are suggestions to reconnect the town with its park and railway, and improve gateways and key viewpoints
- **Spatial form** – The spatial form of the town is fragmented, with some poorly defined areas, vulnerable 'backs' of buildings, and residential density is low

Our own review and the consultation identified the following placemaking outcomes for location in Ammanford:

- Improved connectivity throughout the town
- Greater action around town centre first planning policy
- Better measurement/communication of goals and progress

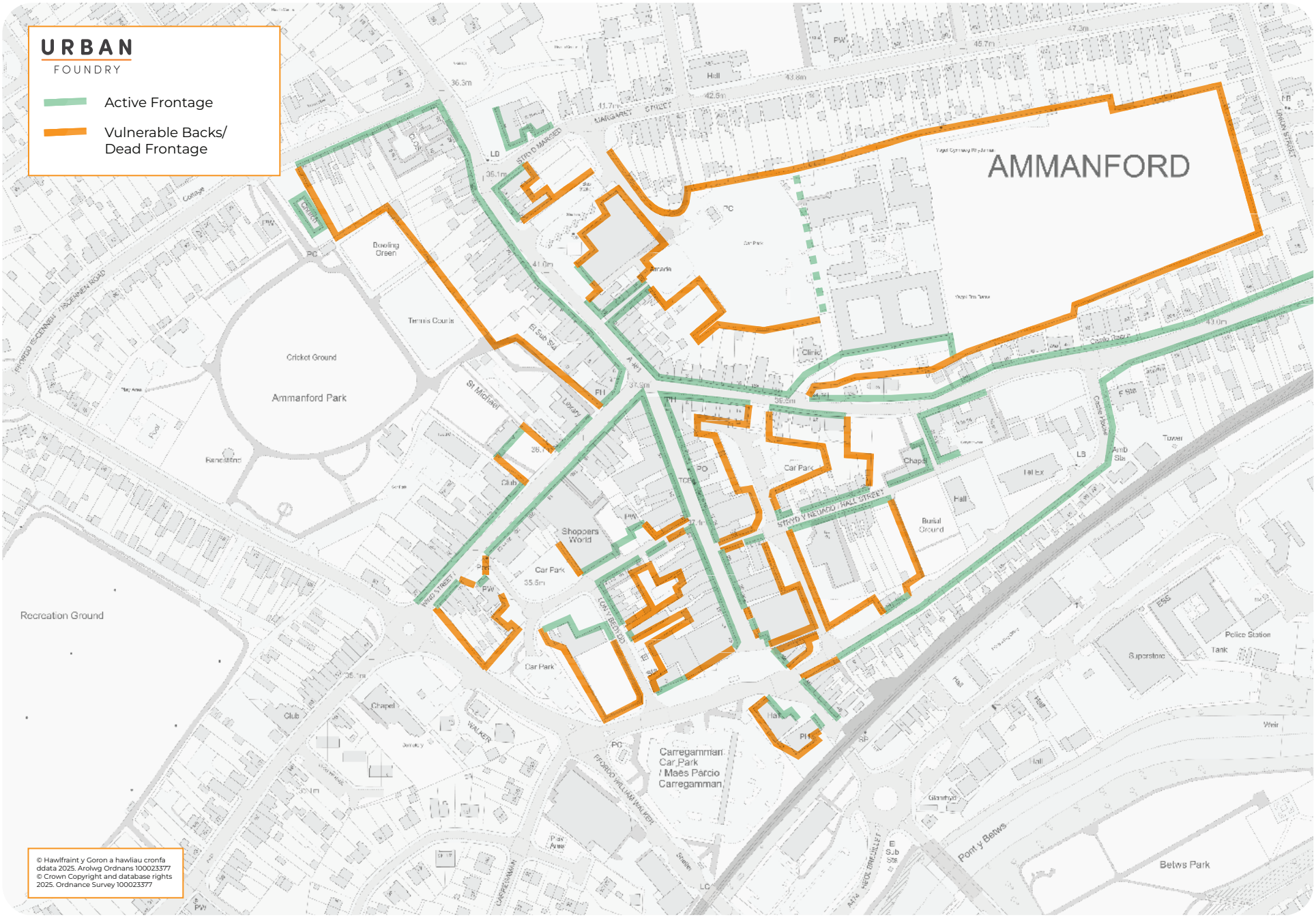
Feedback we heard through the consultation included:

"Recent planning decisions appear to be drawing footfall away from the town centre's independent shops and businesses"

"Promote Ammanford's location as a base for walking/cycling; family friendly tourism"

"Improving gateways to Ammanford. Improving key public viewpoints. Promoting/reposition Ammanford strategically to improve its fortunes. Walking and cycling need to be more viable and safer to and from the centre. To vitalise the centre and make it as easy as possible for shoppers to want to come and spend money/eat there. Shops might want to stay then."

"Use underused spaces for markets and community events"


URBAN
FOUNDRY
Active Frontage
Vulnerable Backs/
Dead Frontage
AMMANFORD
Cricket Ground
Ammanford Park
Tennis Courts
Bowling Green
Recreation Ground
Shoppers World
Car Park
Carregamman Car Park / Maes Parcio Carregamman
Burial Ground
Superstore
Police Station
Betws Park
Pont y Betws
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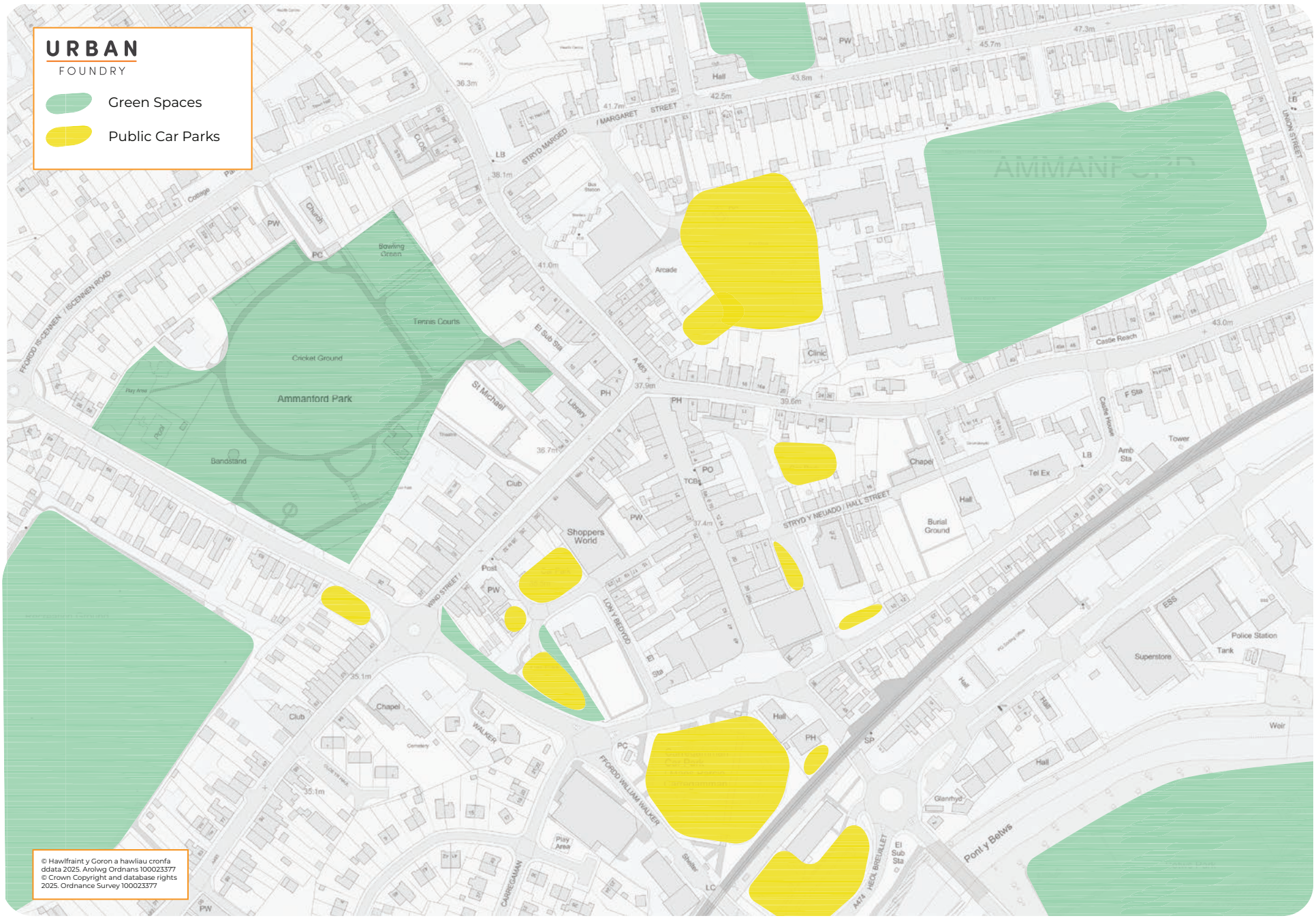
URBAN
FOUNDRY
Green Spaces
Public Car Parks
AMMANFORD
Ammanford Park
Cricket Ground
Tennis Courts
Bowling Green
Bandstand
Shoppers World
Arcade
Clinic
Chapel
Burial Ground
Tel Ex
Tower
Police Station
Superstore
Tank
Weir
Pont y Betws
Glanrhyd
Play Area
Club
Post
Library
St Michael
Church
Hall
PH
PC
PW
PO
LB
LC
SP
ESS
STRYD MARGED / MARGARET STREET
STRYD Y NEUADD / HALL STREET
WIND STREET
LON Y BEDYDD
FFORDD WILLIAM WALKER
FFORDD IS-CENNEN / ISCENNEN ROAD
CARREGAMAN
HEOL BREUILLET
UNION STREET
Castle Reach
Castle House
A 483
A474
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Public realm

For the public realm theme we are interested in understanding how safe public spaces feel in Ammanford, how green it is and how good the public spaces feel as 'people places'.

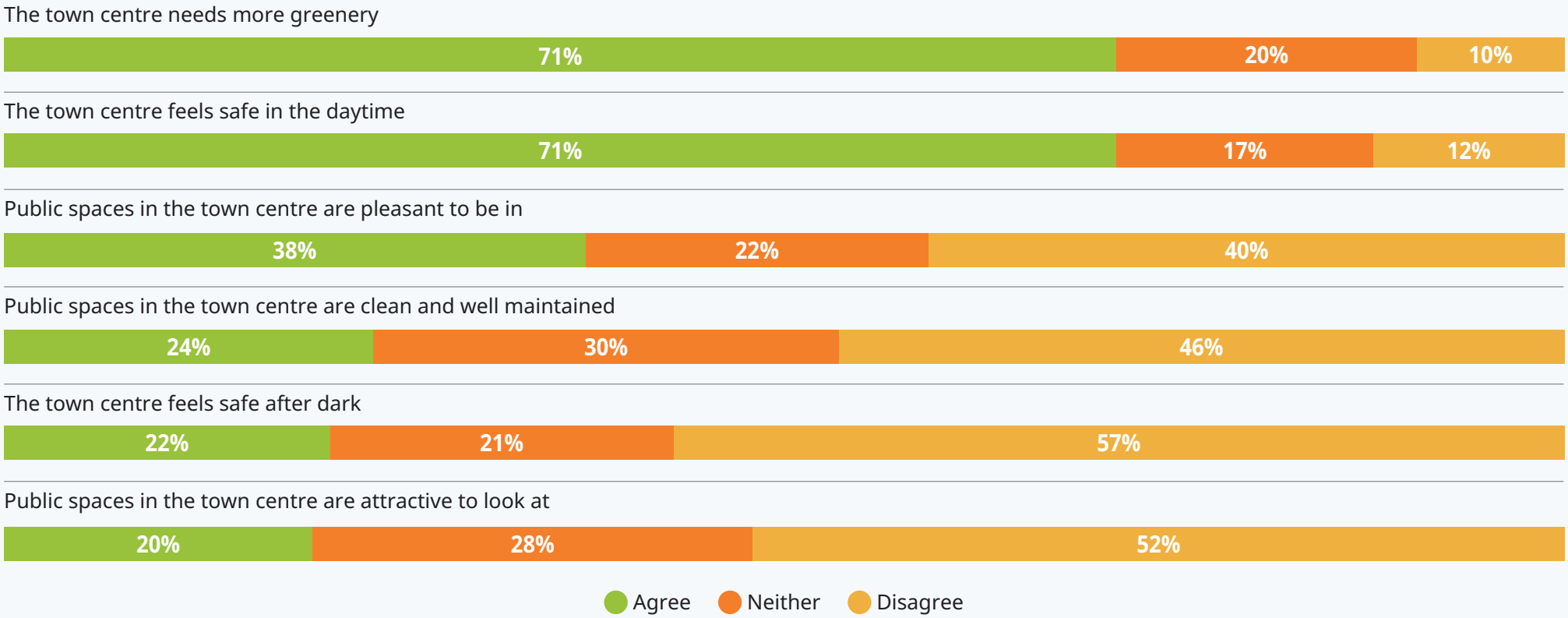
The placemaking principles define this area as:

Public realm – streets and public spaces are well defined, welcoming, safe and inclusive with a distinct identity. They are designed to be robust and adaptable with landscape, green infrastructure and sustainable drainage well integrated. They are well connected to existing places and promote opportunities for social interaction and a range of activities for all people.

What we found

Through the consultation, overall 'Public realm' was rated as 4.1 out of 10 in Ammanford

The more detailed analysis shows that people feel the town feels safe in the daytime but this changes as it gets dark. It also shows people feel the town would benefit from more greenery and could be more attractive.



The consultation identified the following key points:

- **Maintenance** – Many described the town as dirty, tired and run down with dirty buildings, poor paving and neglected planting
- **Key spaces** – An opportunity to redesign key spaces to be greener, brighter and more inviting with more seating and to ensure upkeep of investment not just new surfaces
- **Greenery** – A desire for more greenery, trees, flowers, seating and bins, plus better maintenance of what already exists
- **Welcoming spaces** – Concerns about trip hazards, slippery surfaces and lack of benches for older people

Our own review and the consultation identified the following placemaking outcomes for public realm in Ammanford:

- More opportunities for play in the street scene
- Improved signage and the creation of safe routes across the town
- Improve management of public realm
- Greater amounts of green infrastructure throughout the town
- Maintain and improve existing spaces

Feedback we heard through the consultation included:

“Ensure ongoing maintenance is in place for any plants or trees so they aren’t just planted and left to die”

“The town is in dire need of a clean up. The buildings are dirty and need painting”

Movement

For the movement theme we are interested in understanding how easy it is to get to Ammanford, how easy it is to move around the town and if this is easier or harder depending on the level of mobility. We are also interested in understanding how the different bits of the transport system link together.

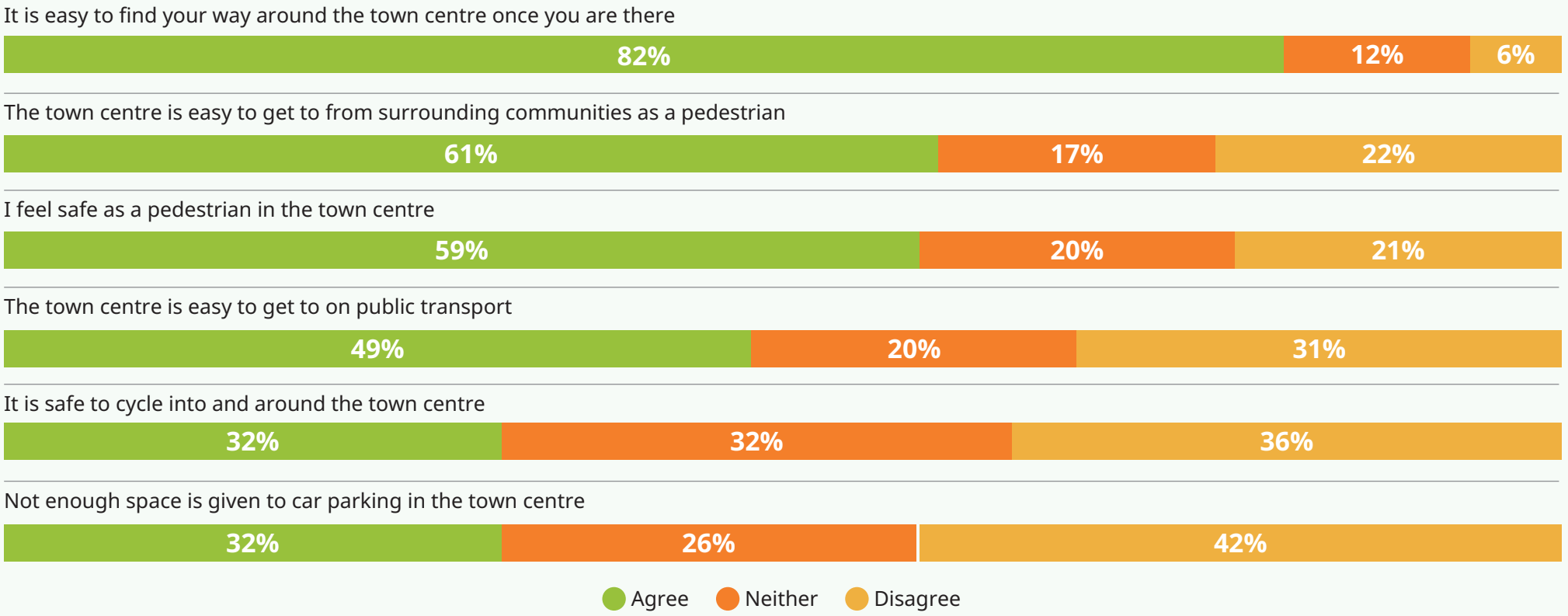
The placemaking principles define this area as:

Walking, cycling and public transport are prioritised to provide a choice of transport modes and avoid dependence on private vehicles. Well designed and safe active travel routes connect to the wider active travel network and public transport stations and stops are positively integrated.

What we found

Through the consultation, overall 'Movement' was rated as 3.6 out of 10 in Ammanford

The more detailed analysis shows that people find it easy to find their way around and they feel safe in the town centre. Cycling and public transport are areas for improvement.



The consultation identified the following key points:

- **Cycling** – Concerns about cycling safety, youths cycling in pedestrian areas, and a need for safer walking routes and better crossings. The Cross is not a pedestrian friendly space, dealing with high volumes of through traffic
- **Public transport** – Public transport seen as poor, infrequent and badly connected (especially to Carmarthen, Llanelli, Swansea and villages). It is not currently easy to commute from Ammanford
- **Car parking** – Calls for free or cheaper parking (especially short-stay) and more disabled parking close to the centre
- **Traffic management** – Specific suggestions about traffic management including reopening or reconfiguring Quay Street, removing or enforcing on-street parking, junction changes, small town-shuttle / minibus
- **Railway** – The railway crossing is an opportunity and could be improved

Our own review and the consultation identified the following placemaking outcomes for movement in Ammanford:

- Improve options for people walking and cycling
- Improve public transport
- Greater access to the rail network
- Improve options for town centre deliveries
- Reduce pressure on central junction
- Improved access to Ammanford Town Centre for short stay trips

Feedback we heard through the consultation included:

"I am able to walk safely to all parts of town – including pleasant walk through park"

"I do feel safe and walk everywhere"

"Pedestrian movement toward the town centre is not safe: narrow pavements where two pedestrians cross with difficulties due to hanging bushes/trees, cars/vans parked on pavement. Add to that the absence of road infrastructure for the safe cycling/scootering of children to school makes children resort to using the pavements for cycling to school."

Mix of use

For the mix of use theme we are interested in understanding how good Ammanford is as a mix of living, learning cultural/ leisure and office functions alongside retail.

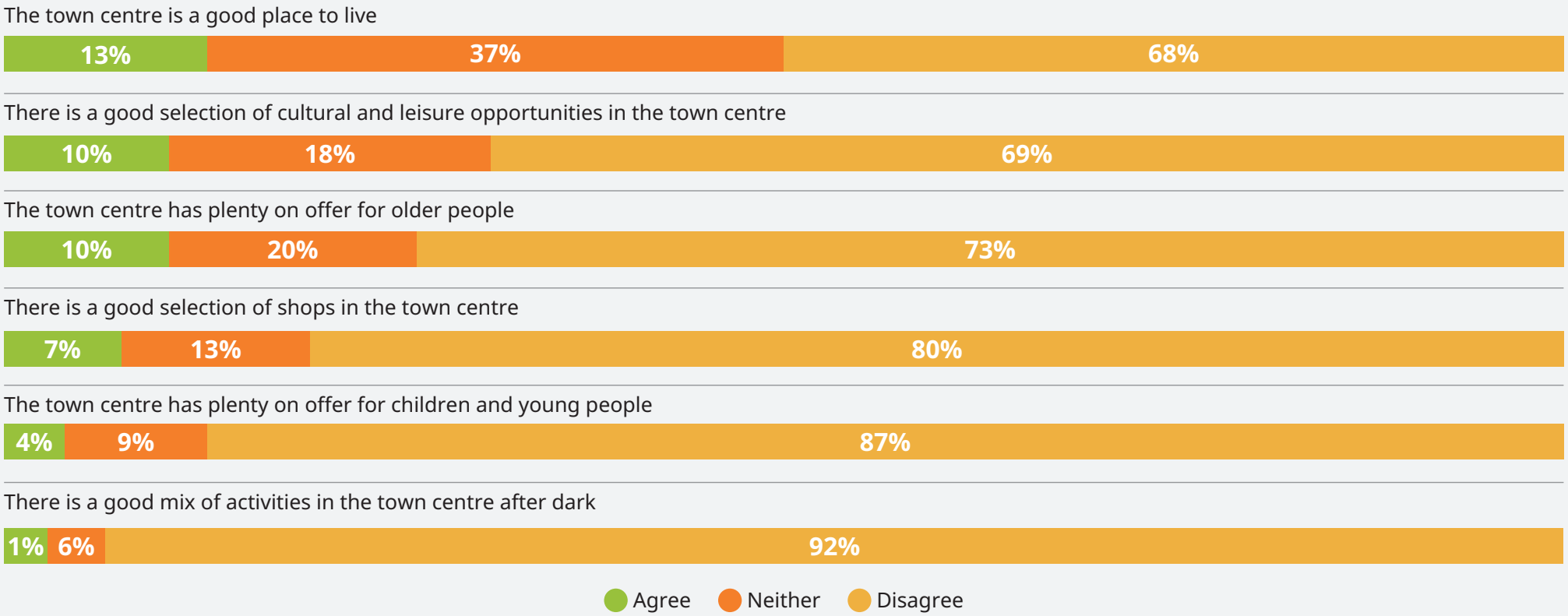
The placemaking principles define this area as:

Places have a range of purposes which provide opportunities for community development, local business growth and access to jobs, services and facilities via walking, cycling or public transport. Development density and a mix of uses and tenures helps to support a diverse community and a vibrant public realm.

What we found

Through the consultation, overall 'Mix of use' was rated as 3.9 out of 10 in Ammanford

The more detailed analysis shows that people feel strongly the town does not have a good mix of opportunities that allow a range of people to make use of the town centre at different times of the day. A key theme throughout the consultation was the lack of diversity in the retail offer.



The consultation identified the following key points:

- **Variety** – Strong feelings that there are too many barbers, vape shops, cafés and charity shops, and not enough everyday or quality retail
- **Bigger brands** – Many comments on variety (clothes, shoes, sports, crafts, DIY, food, bank services) and for big anchors (e.g. Aldi, Primark, Sports Direct) alongside independents
- **Leisure and youth** – Huge appetite for leisure and youth facilities: cinema, bowling, soft play, family leisure centre, better theatre, more events, markets and evening activities.
- **Empty buildings** – Many want empty buildings reused (old Co-op, Wilko, Poundland, banks) for mixed leisure, community hubs, markets and small business units
- **Housing** – Some support more town-centre housing

Our own review and the consultation identified the following placemaking outcomes for mix of use in Ammanford:

- Improve the mix of uses in the town centre
- Greater number of vacant or underutilised spaces are actively used
- More emerging businesses receive support

Feedback we heard through the consultation included:

"More independent shops, less hairdressers and cafes"

"Lots of empty shops; rents too high for new businesses"

"There are far too many empty shops and commercial buildings in all areas around the Town... The shopping areas... look uncared for and run down."

"I think Ammanford caters for most things – we have good facilities in lots of areas"

"People can't get what they want in Ammanford... such a shame."

Identity

For the identity theme we are interested in understanding what are the features of Ammanford that make it unique and whether Ammanford makes the most of these features.

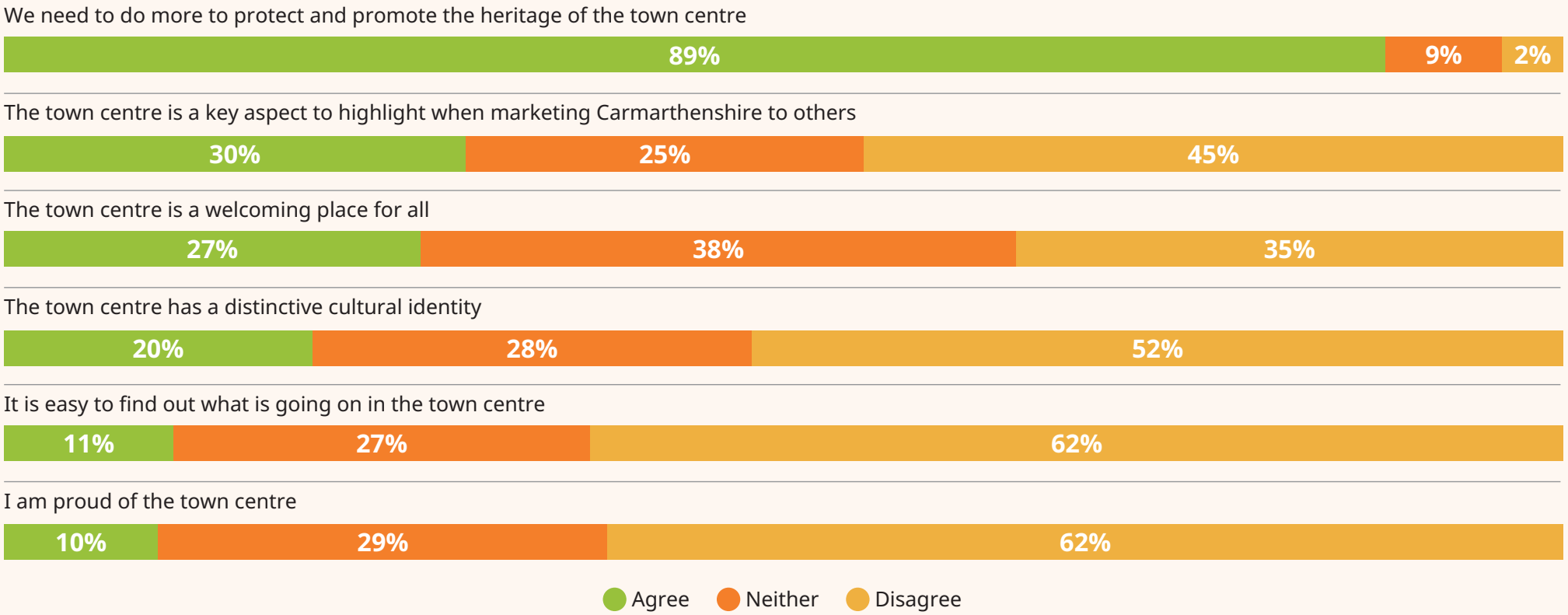
The placemaking principles define this area as:

The positive, distinctive qualities of existing places are valued and respected. The unique features and opportunities of a location including heritage, culture, language, built and natural physical attributes are identified and responded to.

What we found

Through the consultation, overall 'Identity' was rated as 3.5 out of 10 in Ammanford

The more detailed analysis shows that people feel strongly the town should do more to protect and promote the town's heritage. The consultation suggests there is an identity to the town but more needs to be done to strengthen this.



The consultation identified the following key points:

- **Strong heritage** – People feel Ammanford's identity is weak or being lost, despite strong coal-mining heritage and Welsh culture
- **Local history and stories** – There is a desire to celebrate Welsh language, history and local stories (e.g. mining, Twrch Trwyth, John Cale) through branding, art and events
- **Maintaining heritage** – There is also some anger and sadness over the neglect of historic buildings (Town Hall, old library, Lloyds Bank, old post office), which are seen as symbols of the town
- **Prioritising the town** – Concerns were raised about how decisions like out of town retail and bank closures erode pride and reinforce a sense of decline

Our own review and the consultation identified the following placemaking outcomes for identity in Ammanford:

- Greater sense of pride in the town
- More opportunities to celebrate the town's heritage
- Greater strength of the Welsh language through placemaking activities

Feedback we heard through the consultation included:

"Encourage artistic and cultural activities to attract people from beyond Ammanford – also businesses that promote Welsh produce/ products"

"We have a great mix of architecture – highlight arcade; use colours on the square building like Llandeilo; more hand painted signs, fewer big plastic boards"

"It has a weak identity, although it is steeped in history, the coal mining, Twrch Trwyth [Arthurian Legend]."

"More heritage on view – mining town – let's be proud of our past"

People and community

For the people and community theme we are interested at how good the key partners in the town are at creating genuine community involvement as an ongoing process.

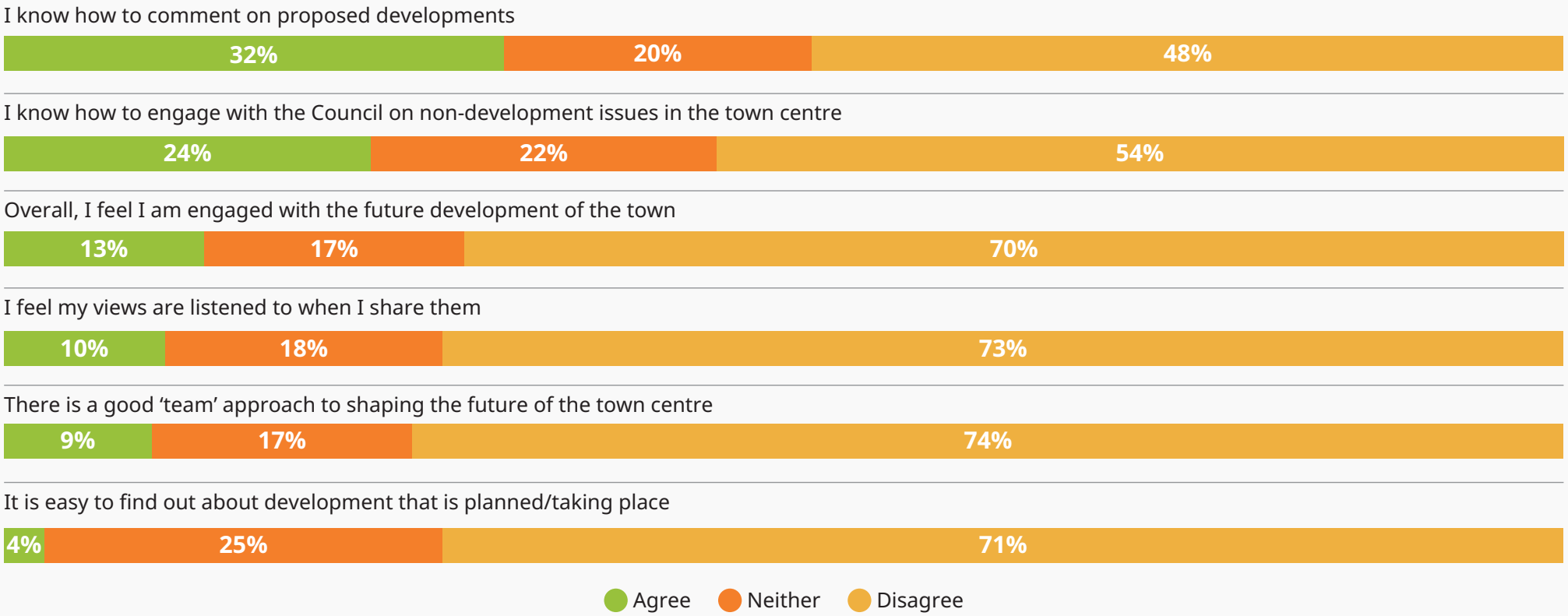
The placemaking principles define this area as:

The local community is involved in the development of proposals. The needs, aspirations, health and wellbeing of all people are considered at the outset. Proposals are shaped to help meet these needs as well as creating, integrating and protecting and/or enhancing a sense of community and to promote equality.

What we found

Through the consultation overall ‘People and community’ was rated as 3.8 out of 10 in Ammanford

The more detailed analysis shows that people don’t feel engaged with the future of the town but are reasonably clear on how they engage with development and non-development issues in the town.



The consultation identified the following key points:

- **Box ticking** – People have a perception that councils do not listen, consultations are perceived box-ticking and communication is felt to be poor or opaque
- **Decision making** – There are frustrations about decisions seen as imposed even when they are outside of the control of local decision makers (e.g. closure of banks)
- **Different ways to engage** – People identified a desire for regular, face-to-face engagement: town-hall meetings, newsletters, better publicity for events, and clearer information about plans and responsibilities
- **More involved** – There is also a desire for local voices (residents, businesses) to shape decisions on investment, services and the town's future

Our own review and the consultation identified the following placemaking outcomes for people and community in Ammanford:

- More opportunities for people to be involved in the town development
- Greater use of placemaking to deliver healthier towns
- Better coordinate internal Council policies/ processes to support town centre development

Feedback we heard through the consultation included:

"Generally people are very proud of our town and want it to flourish"

"People tend to be very town proud and are willing to be supportive"

"More visible plans, action rather than promises, more encouragement for community engagement"

"Too many empty buildings that could be reused for community"

"There is little to no engagement with locals for the future of Ammanford"

The Strategy

We set out the priorities for action across each of the six placemaking principles. You can read all sections or skip to the ones that are of most interest

Actions

We have colour coded the actions to help consider who is most likely to lead on these actions and so who to connect with if you have an interest in making the action happen:

- **Green** are actions that Carmarthenshire County Council can lead on
- **Orange** are actions that can only be delivered in partnership with others

Location

Outcome	Action (See page 39 for Key to colours)	Priority
Improved connectivity throughout the town	Improve connections between the park, station, Quay Street, Arcade and College Street through routes, signage and design	Medium
	Create a simple 'design guide' for developments to ensure the basic rules of urban design are followed – provide as planning supporting guidance, but also attach to any requests for grant finance for buildings as a quality control criteria	Medium
	Explore improvements to the pedestrian environment at the Cross	High
Greater action around town centre first planning policy	Wherever possible adopt a town centre first planning approach. This does not mean that out of town is ruled out, but is only considered if the town centre is demonstrably unviable	High
	Assess new developments, including the future of existing assets owned by the Council, for the impact they have on the town centre	High
	Assess all new developments for the impact they have on the town centre. Where this is negative but unavoidable, require mitigating actions	High
Better measurement/ communication of goals and progress	Develop a town centre health check tool with a clear set of measurable outcomes and report against these annually and hold a 'State of the Union' meeting each year as part of the wider engagement process. Highlight successes, acknowledge the problems, and seek coproduced solutions	High



Sarlat la Caneda



Reims

Public realm

Outcome	Action (See page 39 for Key to colours)	Priority
More opportunities for play in the street scene	Look at opportunities to introduce play activities within the town centre	Medium
Improved signage and the creation of safe routes across the town	Develop signage to help people navigate between the train station and town centre	High
	Map regularly used routes by people on foot and cycle and look at improvements to make them safer	High
Improve management of public realm	Establish destination management action plan that is cross-sectoral	High
	Incorporate the heritage of the town into the streetscape. For example, Ammanford's coal mining history is almost invisible	High
	Create a user-friendly guide for town centre frontages	High
	Utilise funding sources to support façade improvements in key areas	High
	Fund feature lighting of key buildings	High
	Provide infrastructure e.g. power points to help bring public spaces in the town to life and support events to take place in them	High
	Encourage more activation of public spaces by third parties by establishing a simple strategy to ensure that barriers to third party activations are removed whilst retaining reasonable regulatory control	High
Greater amounts of green infrastructure throughout the town	Add green infrastructure to Quay Street and identify other key interventions around town through a town-level green infrastructure strategy	High
	Encourage applicants for funding to include green infrastructure within their applications	High
Maintain and improve existing spaces	Explore opportunities for community ownership of public realm spaces	Medium
	Improve landscaping on Market Square at the bottom of Quay Street	High



Temporary sculpture in Plymouth



Image credit: Robert Bray Associates

Multi-functional sustainable urban drainage in London



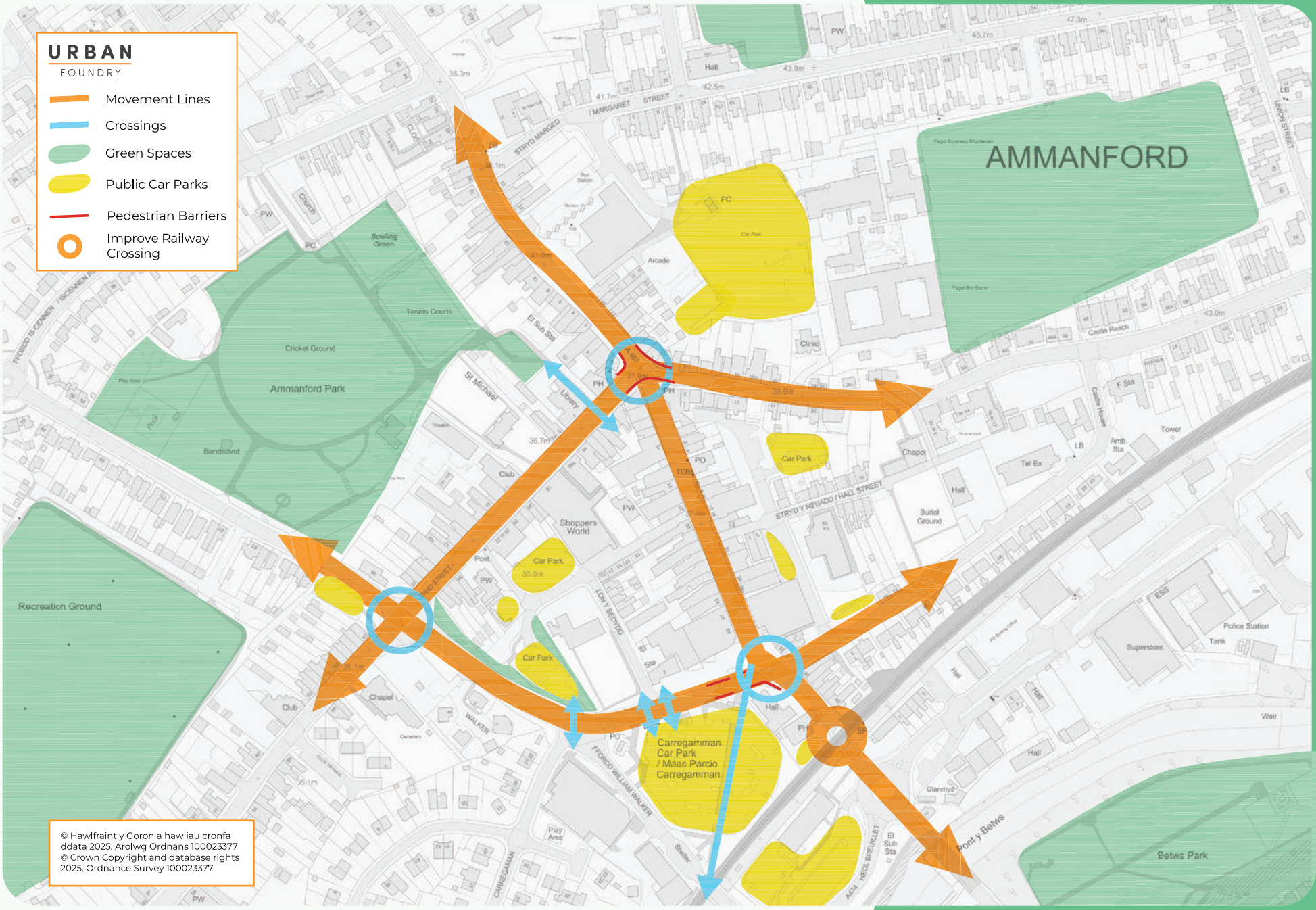
Downpipe disconnection to rain gardens – simple, low cost green infrastructure in Swansea



Small scale urban drainage in Portland, Oregon

Movement

Outcome	Action (See page 39 for Key to colours)	Priority
Improve options for people walking and cycling	Work with Active Travel to identify opportunities for new cycle routes	Medium
	Improve key crossing points for surrounding residential communities	Medium
	Make it easier to walk to town from the out of town retailer car parks located to the south	Medium
Improve public transport	Work with public transport providers to improve the frequency and reliability of the public transport offer	High
	Better publicise public transport options	High
Greater access to the rail network	Improve the rail crossing	Medium
	Explore accessibility of the railway	Medium
Improve options for town centre deliveries	Restrict vehicular access to pedestrianised areas for deliveries to early mornings/set evening times	High
	Create delivery-only bays within easy reach of core town centre for small scale deliveries by courier services who need to deliver throughout the day	High
Reduce pressure on central junction	Develop alternative routing options to reduce through traffic pressure on the Cross	Low
	Further slow traffic through the junction by design – explore a shared surface model that forces reduced vehicle speed, allowing for the removal of pedestrian barriers	Medium
Improved access to Ammanford town centre for short stay trips	Introduce 30 mins of free parking in all car parks	High
	Provide ultra-short stay pick-up/drop-off points and police their use	Low
	Rationalise car parking to fewer sites to reduce speculative car journeys around town (some sites may be converted to disabled parking only) with people looking for spaces	Low
	Work with the secondary school to explore how Sixth Former parking can be accommodated elsewhere/reduced to ease pressure on spaces in key parking locations. For example, a permit system that only applies in certain car parks (off centre) that can be accessed by Sixth Formers	Medium



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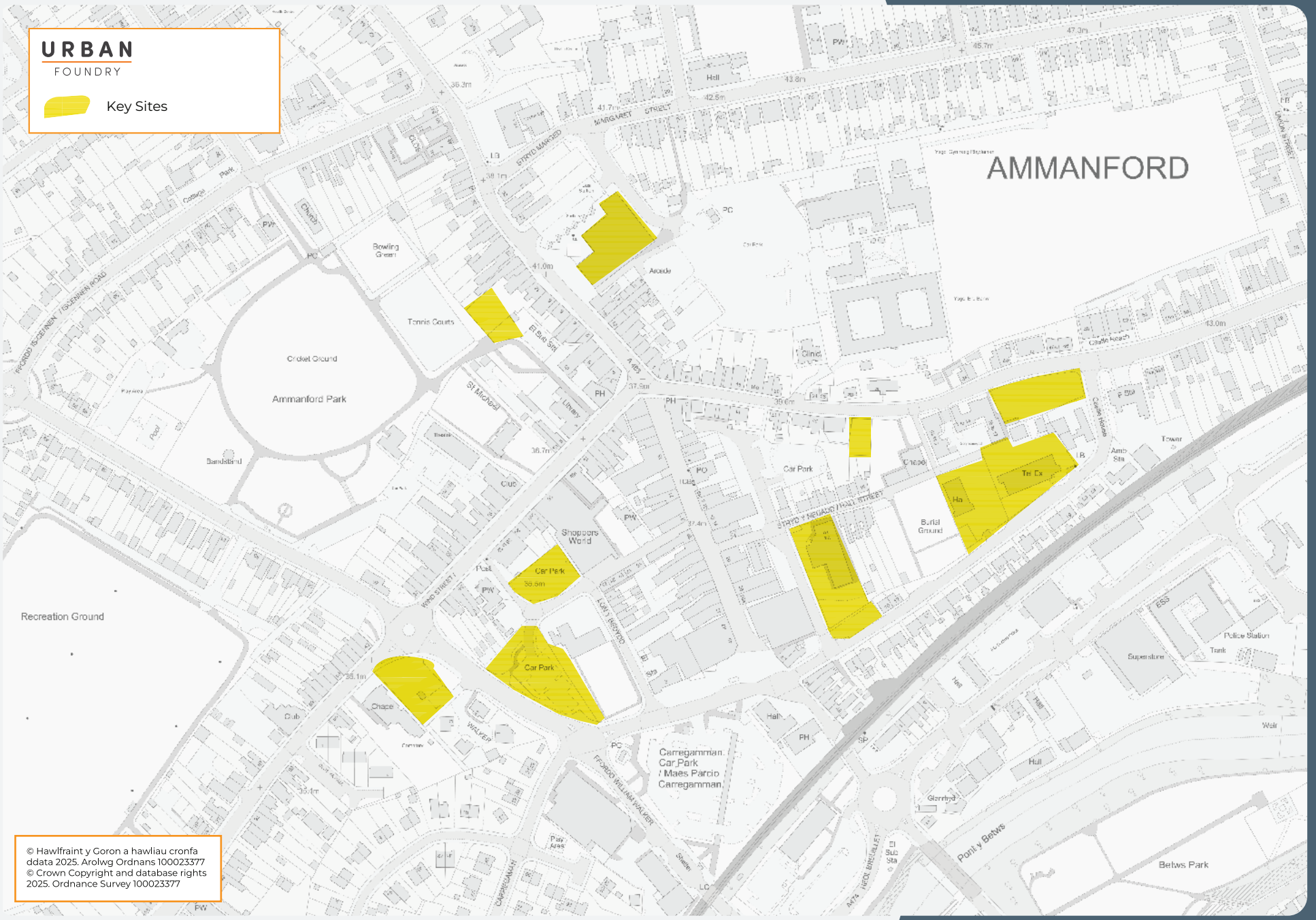
Mix of use

Outcome	Action (See page 39 for Key to colours)	Priority
Improve the mix of uses in the town centre	Explore options through the planning system and direct action to support residential density around the town. This should include above the shops but also infill developments around the town centre, it is essential that these are of a mix of type and tenure	High
	Look at working in partnership to develop a community/ young person centre in the town	High
	Work with key local businesses to explore mechanisms for strengthening the night time economy	High
Greater number of vacant or underutilised spaces are actively used	Establish uses for key empty/under-utilised buildings/sites within the town, including feasibility studies for key sites	High
More emerging businesses receive support	Support stakeholders to develop pop up and meanwhile space	High
	Link emerging businesses with existing business support (e.g. through a business forum)	High
	Explore if a business incubation unit would work	High



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Popup spaces previously delivered in Ammanford





Y Banc popup in Caerphilly



Unit Nineteen popup in Swansea

Identity

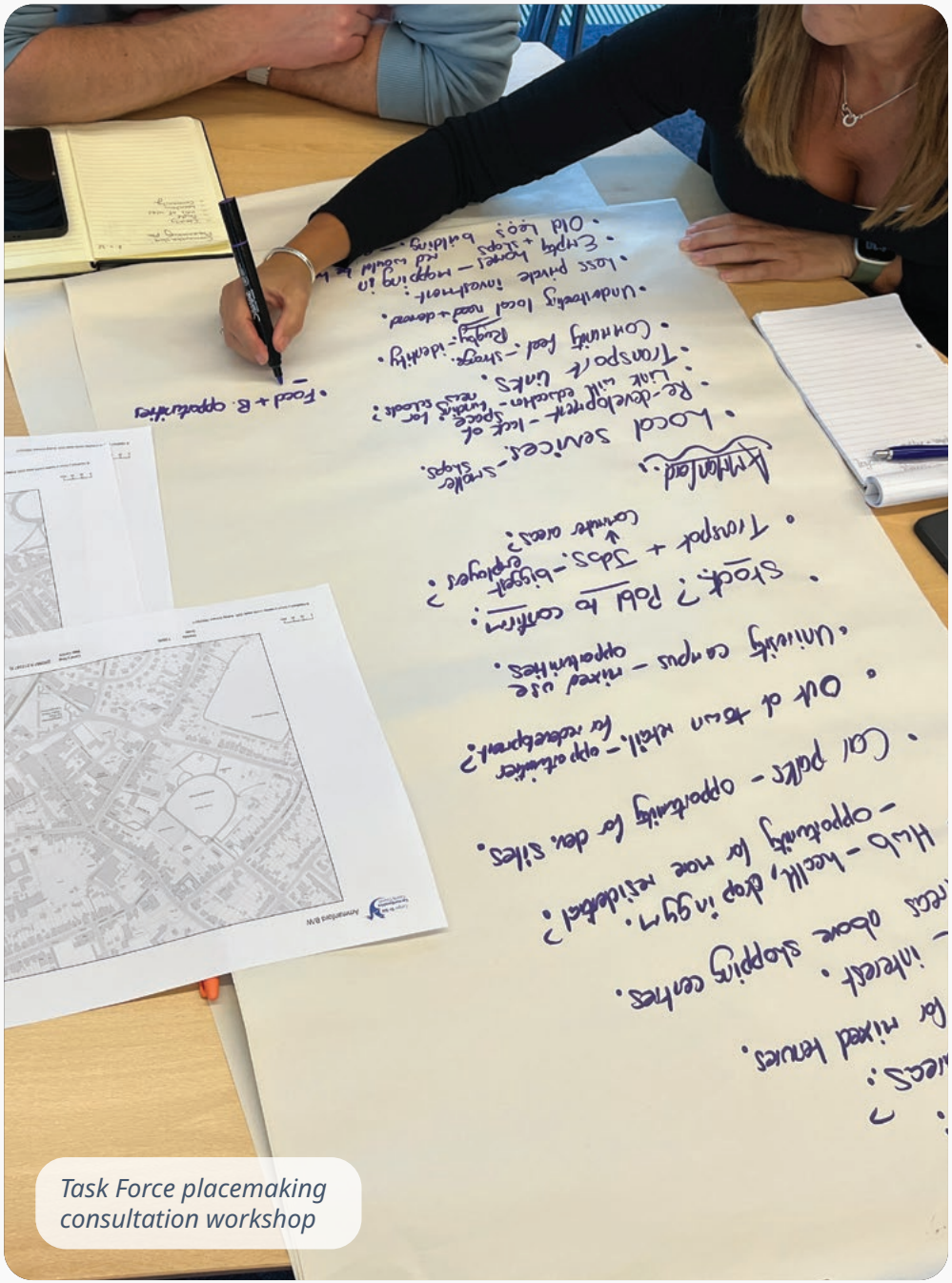
Outcome	Action (See page 39 for Key to colours)	Priority
Greater sense of pride in the town	Develop a clear town brand rooted in its Welsh heritage and with Ammanford as a gateway town	High
More opportunities to celebrate the town's heritage	Continue with a festival, market and cultural programme to develop the town	High
	Establish an annual events calendar to include events inspired by Ammanford such as Twrch Trwyth, Helo Hanes and John Cale (Velvet Underground)	High
	Explore how 'out of town' retailing to the south can better integrate with signage and cross-promotion	Medium
	Develop a design colour palette and font for signage and ensure consistent application	Medium
Greater strength of the Welsh language through placemaking activities	Promote existing Welsh language opportunities and use funding as a lever to create an easy to action Welsh language strategy designed with all partners in mind to help promote and support the everyday use of the language	High



Junior traders market in Ammanford

People and community

Outcome	Action (See page 39 for Key to colours)	Priority
More opportunities for people to be involved in the town development	Refocus the Task Force. Ensure that it is focused on driving change (proactive rather than reactive). Develop a culture of a 'team' approach, which needs to come with an understanding of the constraints under which local authorities operate	High
	Create a forum of local managers for the retailers to the south to consider how they can further support the town centre to become complementary rather than competitive	High
	Create a programme of regular community engagement around the town development	High
	Help forums develop as action orientated programmes	Medium
	Identify and seek to remove barriers to local initiatives (whilst retaining reasonable regulatory controls) e.g. encouraging tables and chairs on street, events and activities, arts initiatives and similar	Medium
	Develop a clear set of measurable outcomes and report against these annually and hold a 'state of the union' meeting each year as part of the wider engagement process. Highlight successes, acknowledge the problems, and seek co-produced solutions	High
Greater use of placemaking to deliver healthier towns	Bring healthcare closer to people by adopting a 'town centre first' question for all future decisions related to health care facilities	High
Better coordinate internal Council policies/processes to support town centre development	Explore how procurement can be enhanced to consider how it can be used to strengthen town centre businesses (and more generally Carmarthenshire based businesses)	High
	Adopt social value into all procurement	High



Task Force placemaking consultation workshop



Image supplied courtesy of Mess up the Mess

Making it happen

Placemaking is delivered by a partnership. Carmarthenshire County Council and Ammanford Town Council, alongside other public sector bodies clearly have an important role. But it is wider partners including residents, the community, voluntary sector and the private sector that will help deliver the change set out in this strategy.

Making it happen in Ammanford

Ammanford already has a Task Force. This group brings together people from across the town and they will take responsibility for driving key actions within the strategy. But anyone can get involved. If you have an idea of how to take forward one of the actions set out in this strategy contact Carmarthenshire County Council to discuss the first steps of how to move forward.

The Task Force will review key metrics to understand the progress being made across each of the areas. A detailed framework is provided in the technical appendix, but progress will be judged on the following areas.

Placemaking theme	Indicator	Key points
Location	Footfall Economic activity level Unemployment level	This will help us understand how people are using the town and what the underlying strength of the town is
Public realm	Is the local environment pleasant and well looked after (Carmarthenshire Residents' survey)	This will give us an overall sense of how the public realm is being viewed
Movement	Satisfaction with transport (Carmarthenshire Residents' survey) Metres of cycle lane created or improved	Public transport is managed outside of local authorities. This will help us understand whether progress is improving
Mix of uses	Number of vacant units Buildings brought back into use	This will help us understand whether key buildings are being used in the town centre and if there is strong demand or otherwise for available spaces in the town
Identity	Increase in visits to webpage Increase in visitor numbers Do you like living in Carmarthenshire Percentage of Welsh Speakers	This will help us understand whether the actions are supporting local residents, visitors and the Welsh language
People and community	Does the Council give opportunities to participate in decisions (Carmarthenshire Residents' survey)	This will give us an understanding of the overall perception of the Council's offer

If you would like to discuss how you can get involved in delivering elements of the plan, you can contact us at: towns@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

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FOUNDRY