

The means: to change places for the better.

Cwmaman: *Legendary people, legendary landscapes*

Economic Growth Plan

August 2021 (final)

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Context setting

This plan is the culmination of a suite of documents and technical reports that have been prepared (pre and during COVID) to engage, inform and stimulate discussion on the direction of an Economic Growth Plan for Cwmaman.

This plan focuses on:

- Realising our growth potential
- Challenges and opportunities
- Our Economic Growth Vision
- Economic Growth Priorities
- Priority projects and action planning
- Governance, Funding and Delivery

It draws upon a range of Technical Reports including:

- Draft Local Economy Recovery and Action Plan (extract / summary paper)
- Draft Local Economy Recovery and Action Plan

- Assessing the impact of COVID 19 on the town's local economy
- Summary of Evidence and Position Paper
- Performance, Viability and Vitality Summary of Evidence report
- High Level Urban Design Analysis (HLUDA)

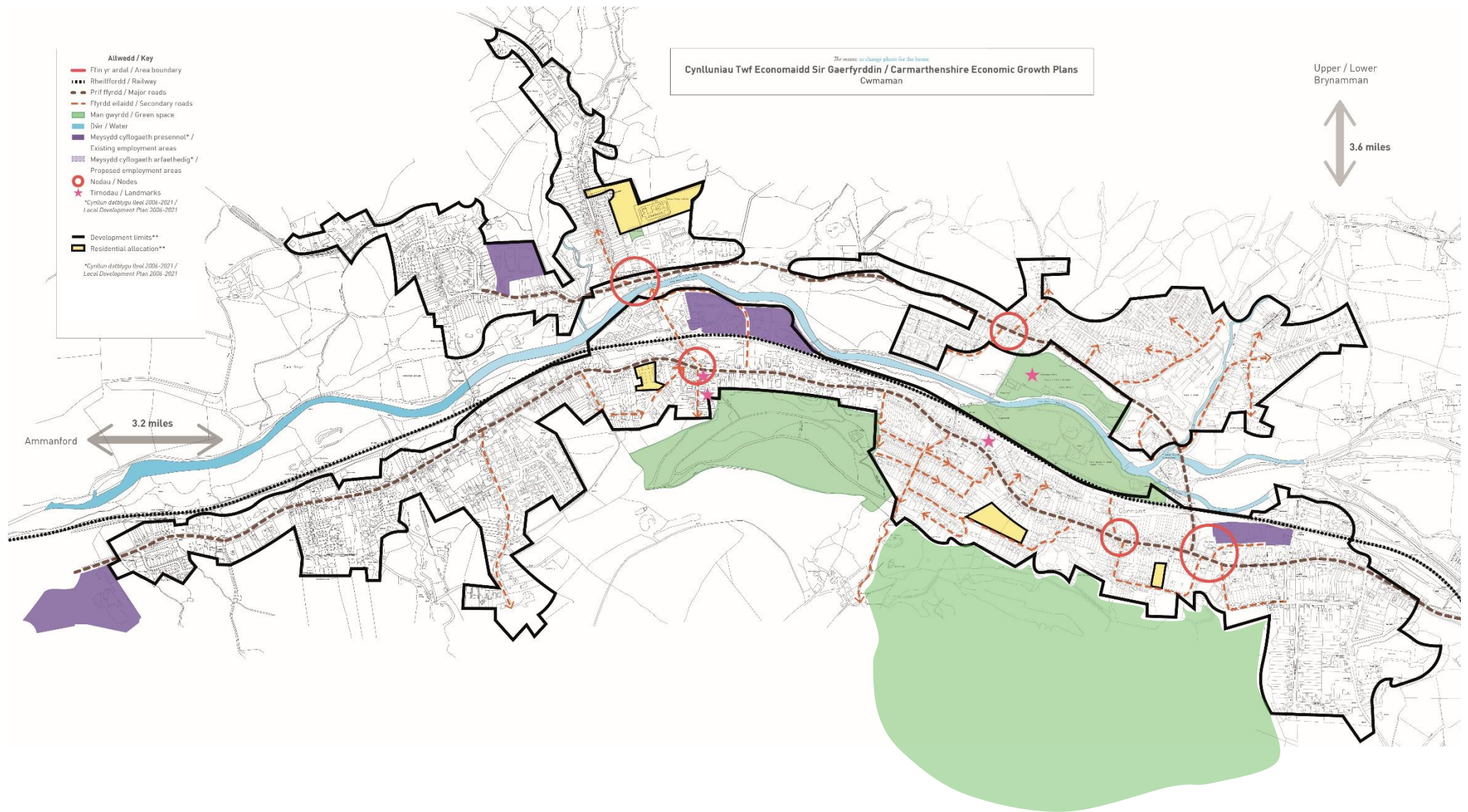
Cwmaman – realising our growth potential

Cwmaman is a community which encompasses the villages of Garnant and Glanamman, at the foot of the Black Mountain, bordered by Betws, Llanybyie, Dyffryn Cennen and Quarter Bach (in Carmarthenshire) and Gwaun-Caer-Gurwen and Pontardawe (in Neath Port Talbot). Cwmaman, meaning Amman valley, takes its name from

the River Amman which runs through the area. The once sparsely populated agricultural area experienced a population boom in the C19th due to coal mining and tinplate. The eastern end became known as Garnant and the western as Glanamman as a result of the area gaining two stations along the Llanelly Railway line. The Amman Valley became the hub of West Wales' mining community. Coal mining has since been lost to the area with the last major mine closed in 1947. While the population is significantly smaller than the turn of the C20th Cwmaman it is one of the largest conurbations outside of Carmarthen, Llanelli and Ammanford. Re-landscaping of the area following the mine closures has resulted in hillsides rich in vegetation with parks and trails along the River Amman.



Townscape appraisal - place characteristics, features and assets (mapping / visualisation)



Townscape appraisal - place characteristics, features and assets (photography / visualisation)



Cwmamman Community Centre



Cwmamman Community Centre (High Street frontage)



Allotment / play space adjacent to Community Centre



Cwmamman Road street view



Cwmamman Youth Council



Managed workshops (depot to the rear)



Managed workshops yard



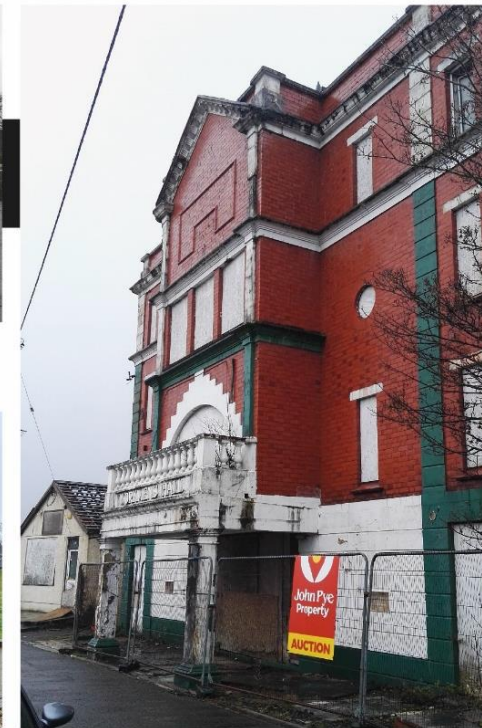
The old signal box and railway



Parc Golwg Yr Aman



Hen Felin (holiday homes)



Workmens Hall

Challenges and opportunities

Cwmaman is a rural area situated to the East of Carmarthenshire, comprising two wards of the same name as its villages; Garnant and Glanamman. Cwmaman covers 27.37km² which accounts for 1.2% of the area of Carmarthenshire. The population of Cwmaman at 4,597 is 2.5% of the county.

Considerably more enterprises and local units are at the micro level in Cwmaman compared to local and national averages. There are marked differences between the main settlements of Garnant and Glanamman. Health and construction account for 70% of employment in Glanamman. In Garnant health (at 25%) accounts for the largest proportion of employment followed by higher than average figures for education and public administration & defence.

Self-employment accounts for less economic activity than county averages.

Administrative & secretarial, skilled trades occupations, caring, leisure and other service occupations and process plant & machine operatives account for over 52% of occupations. There are significantly less professional occupations.

Economic activity and employment is lower than county and national averages and unemployment is significantly higher. Economic inactivity rates are noticeably higher and those suffering from long-term illness account for a third of this. Low earnings impact on choice and are a reflection of the low-wage sectors that dominate the area.

The area's skills profile is challenging in terms of supporting growing businesses. The number of people with no qualifications is higher than county and national averages. Those with National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 4 and above is significantly lower.

The area is seeing modest population growth, but an aging population (as in many areas) is a concern. Whilst the area is seeing a slight rise in youth and working age populations there is a significant increase in the ageing population which will place more demand on local services. Since 2011 Cwmaman has seen an increase in population of 2.1% compared to 2% across the county. The area's population density at 168 people per km² is substantially

higher than that of the county average of 79 people per km².

Although the statistics do not yet show this the limitations of local transport may create difficulties in the near future for the area to retain young people. Train and bus services are infrequent and tend to not provide viable commuting options. There are issues around the frequency and interconnections of public transport services. Timings and regularity of services don't adequately support employment patterns and impact upon after school and extra-curricular opportunities held in nearby areas.

Potential impact of COVID

Extrapolating the percentage jobs at risk in Carmarthenshire (24-26%) for Cwmaman suggests that of the 675 employment jobs 162-176 would be at risk. The impact across sectors is uneven with a smaller proportion of businesses in the area in shut-down sectors (as categorised by the Institute of Fiscal Studies). Whilst the lockdown in response to the COVID-19 pandemic has effectively shut down a number of sectors its impact in Cwmaman statistically is less severe. Of the 675 employee and employment jobs, 60 employee (9.5%) and 60 employment (8.9%) jobs are within the most at risk sectors (17.9% in Garnant and 2.5% in Glanamman). The 'most at risk' occupations (Administrative and secretarial; Caring, leisure and other services; Sales and customer services; Elementary) employ over 45.3% of the workforce in Cwmaman. However, food banks were formed in both Garnant and Glanamman and have had high demand.

Skilled trades have seen logistical / supply issues along with social distancing measures which are impacting their ability to perform their trades. This will likely impact upon the local business / industrial units at Glanamman.

Looking forward

There remain a number of council-owned (county and town council) facilities in Cwmaman. The area should be supported to retain and distribute a greater element of public services and, wherever possible, use its **assets** to sustain economic growth e.g. rationalising public sector property in ways that retain or attract employment. Cwmaman Town Council has explored community needs and how these can be met through existing town council assets. The challenge and opportunity is achieving this in a sustainable manner that can contribute towards skills

development, business development and economic growth. These assets can play a significant role in realising the area's potential around **business and community enterprise development**.

Access to workspace, local services and effective broadband and mobile communications will be critical in growing a sustainable economy. Actions should be taken to further develop quality **business infrastructure** to realise future potential. This includes ensuring physical provision is made for small and micro businesses including incubators and 'makerspaces'. Provision of a reliable and accessible digital network is also critical. Co-working and incubation space would be welcomed. As would additional industrial units. The business / industrial units at Glanamman have been a success with a demand for more. The number of empty and derelict buildings has been referred to as a 'blight'. Buildings that are currently empty could serve dual uses but the scale of challenge for some of the buildings may prove difficult.

Developing **employment and skills** to ensure local people are able to access local jobs and equipping people with skills for key sectors is an important element and one which the identified assets can play a role in delivering.

Frequency and timing of **bus and train services** has been raised as an issue. Whilst extending these may not be commercially viable there is a role that community transport can play alongside these services to support employment, shopping and school patterns. Amman Valley line improvements have also been identified – with the potential to re-create a passenger line, attract tourists and link with South West Wales Metro proposals.

The visitor economy is a relatively under-developed market. Cwmaman could make more of its **natural environment** (walks, trails and activities); proximity to the Amman Beacons National Park and being part of the Amman Valley. The growth of supporting facilities and accommodation would be of benefit and should be supported. Demand has grown in the last year.

Achieving this in an environmentally sustainable way will be a key consideration such as reducing carbon footprints and net zero carbon.

Our Economic Growth Vision

Our Economic Growth Plan focuses on how to support Cwmaman's economy, **make the most of its assets, support business and community enterprise development and grow the visitor economy.** It aims to give the local business community a strong voice in the recovery of the area.

Our emerging long-term vision and priorities are based on the assessment of local impacts and provide a foundation to create longer-term stability, growth, investment and jobs for the people and businesses of Cwmaman.

Our vision is that Cwmaman:

Has made the most of its geographical location (proximity and access to key conurbations within Carmarthenshire, Neath Port Talbot and Swansea) and through investment in capital infrastructure has seen a growth in businesses in a number of industrial estates who are able to take advantage of transport routes.

With a plethora of public sector assets Cwmaman has realised its growth potential through enterprise development – supporting the community through the Amman Valley Makerspace and developing facilities for an embryonic activity-based tourism.

A clear plan for activity-based tourism has supported growth in the area's share of the visitor economy. Through working alongside a number of providers Cwmaman has maximised its proximity to the Brecon Beacons National Park and being part of the Amman Valley with its range of walks and trails.

Economic Growth Priorities

Our Economic Growth Priorities focus on achieving sustainable local economic growth which is shared by all whilst at the same time protecting, maintaining and celebrating our high-quality natural environment. To deliver the vision we set out **three Priority Themes and a Cross-cutting Priority** which are outlined in this section and provide a framework for our priority actions.

We cannot ignore Covid-19 and its impact on economic and social life. The pandemic has shifted priorities and business models to an immediate focus on business survival and recovery. Hence an immediate priority will be to work closely with key public sector partners and the business community to mitigate the impacts of Covid-19 on the local economy and take advantage of opportunities, particularly in accessing new funding, as they emerge. Whilst the plan for Cwmaman rightly has a focus on economic growth, the need to nurture and support the local economy in response to the 'new normal' and to reflect longer term trends that transcend current circumstances, it also sets out a range of immediate requirements and responses to this crisis.

Priority 1: Supporting business resilience and future growth

Priority 2: Business and community enterprise development

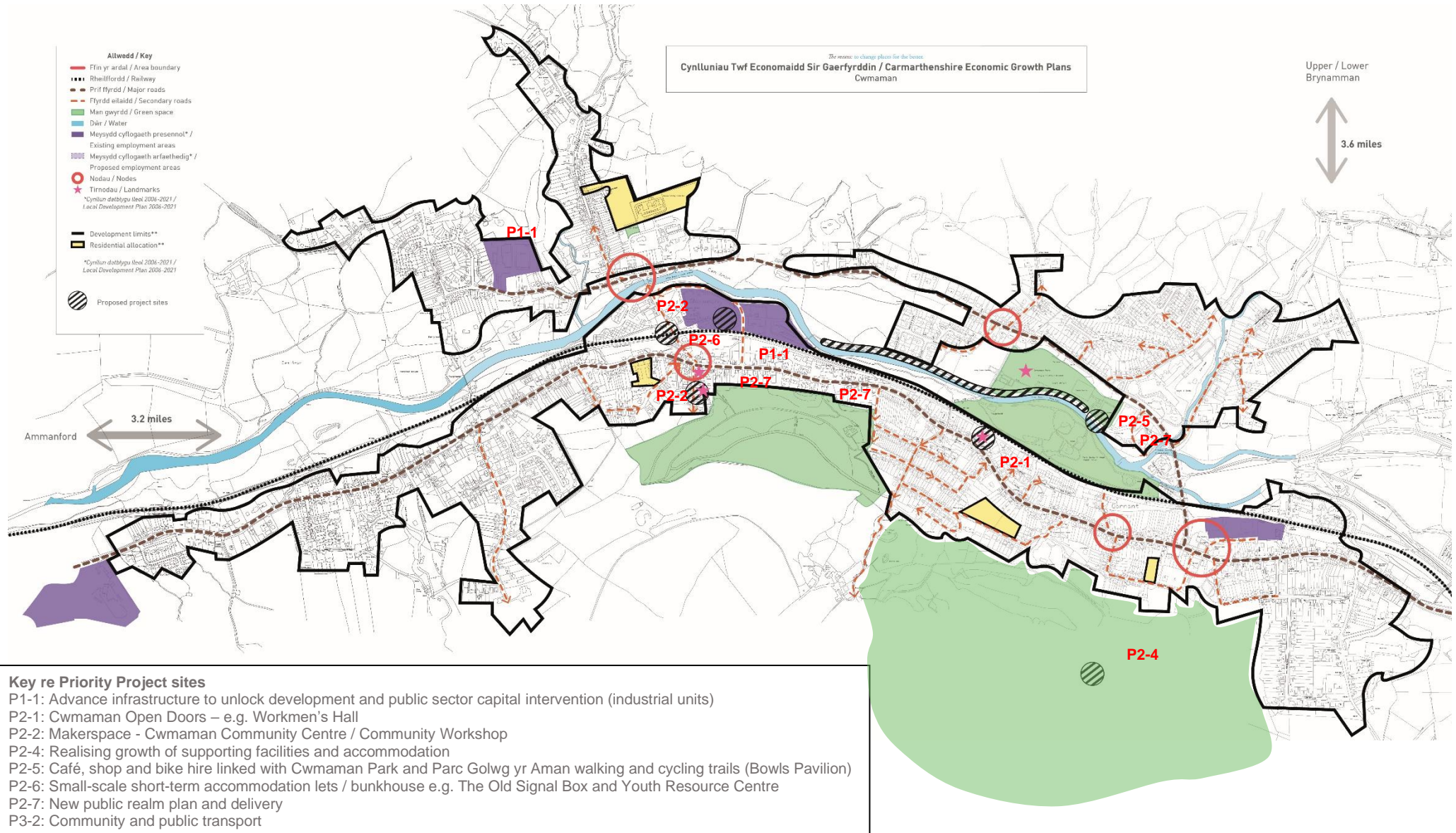
Priority 3: People and Skills – enabling people to access work and develop skills to achieve their potential

Cross-cutting Priority: Communication, collaboration and empowerment

The investment priorities are underpinned by three county-wide cross-cutting priorities: Ultra-reliable digital connectivity, digital culture and skills; Fair and equal economy and support for the Welsh language and culture; Green economy and skills.

Recovery and growth actions are described in the following section for each priority theme along with more detailed information for transformational projects.

Proposed Priority Project sites





Economic Growth Priorities, Projects and Recovery Planning

Priority 1: Supporting business resilience and future growth

Growth in the local economy needs to be facilitated specifically amongst key sectors. Actions should be taken to support business birth rates through diversification and entrepreneurship. The business / industrial units at Glanamman have been a success with a demand for more.

Opportunities should be investigated to accelerate infrastructure investment and identify cases for the delivery of advance infrastructure to unlock development and public sector capital intervention to safeguard employment. Sites that lend themselves to business / industrial units should be investigated.

Whilst the scale of Government intervention, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, cannot be replaced at the local level the council and partners can support businesses through access to advice and information (business services, advice and support) along with a more targeted approach / programme. The programme could focus on: Securing and sustaining investment; Sector specific support; Innovation and growth; New business starts / early-stage businesses. The local authority's contacts database (which has been significantly bolstered during the pandemic) can be used to best effect at a time when channels to reach target audiences have never been more varied or powerful.

The appointment of Market Town Officers by Carmarthenshire County Council as part of the 10 Town's Initiative will be an important and welcomed resource.

Objectives and Outcome	Actions	Indicative resources	Working with
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure businesses are aware of and access national, regional and county-wide support programmes Support businesses in the area to start-up, invest and thrive within clean, high-value and growing sectors <p>Key Outcome - Business failure rate minimised and jobs safeguarded</p>	Review and assess the impact of support measures on local businesses	In-kind (CCC)	CCC – Business Support Recovery Group Cwmaman Town Council Growth Team Business Wales Menter Dinefwr
	Appointment of Market Town Officers	tbc	
	Launch an integrated business support campaign to ensure every business knows how to access the support they need to renew, reshape and sustain their business plans	£2,000	
	Develop and implement a Cwmaman Business-to-Business local procurement initiative developing an online business directory	£5,000	
	Advance infrastructure to unlock development and public sector capital intervention (industrial units)	tbc	
	With support from Mentor Dinefwr (the local provider and advisor for the Helo Blod scheme) provide Welsh medium support such as translation and advice services.	tbc	
	Promote and support environmentally sustainable development and services.	tbc	

Priority projects

Project: Advance infrastructure to unlock development and public sector capital intervention (industrial units)

Description

Investigate opportunities (and funding levers) to accelerate infrastructure investment to unlock development land around Old Glanamman Workshops, Ravens Industrial Estate, Old Coal Yard and other appropriate sites within Council ownership. The objective will be to provide new light industrial and/or office space for growing SMEs or inward investment.

Options analysis should be undertaken to include qualified opinion, supplemented with relevant supporting evidence i.e. demand analysis, accurate total project cost projections, alignment with emerging market trends etc. to draw conclusions on the long-term viability of the proposed projects.

Rationale

The business / industrial units at Glanamman have been a success with a demand for more. The 2nd of three phases is being implemented. Demand is outstripping supply. Infrastructure is a vital component including employment sites and premises. Actions should be taken to develop a quality business infrastructure to realise future potential and address constraints in relation to limited workspace.

Lead

CCC (Capital infrastructure + Land and assets)

Indicative cost

TBC

Timeframe

Short-medium term



Priority 2: Business and community enterprise development

The means: to change places for the better.

Access to workspace, local services and effective broadband and mobile communications will be critical in growing a sustainable economy.

Actions should be taken to further develop quality business infrastructure to realise future potential. This includes ensuring physical provision is made for small and micro businesses including incubators and 'makerspaces'. Provision of a reliable and accessible digital network is also critical. Co-working and incubation space would be welcomed.

In order to attract and retain talented people, there needs to be sufficient provision and access to key services and facilities which are slowly being lost in many rural towns and villages. There remains a number of council-owned (county and town council) facilities in Cwmaman.

The area should retain and distribute a greater element of public services and, wherever possible, use its assets to support economic growth e.g. rationalising public sector property in ways that retain or attract professional / skilled employment.

Significant work has been undertaken by Cwmaman Town Council to explore community needs and how these can be met through existing town council assets. These assets can play a significant role in realising the area's potential around business and community enterprise development but will require significant partner support in order to develop and operate sustainably.

Supporting the growth and development of the visitor economy will play an increasing role in improving economic performance. The visitor economy is a relatively underdeveloped market despite the area's proximity to the Brecon Beacons National Park and being part of the Amman Valley with its range of walks and trails. Cwmaman could make significantly more of this natural environment (walks, trails and activities).

The number of empty and derelict buildings has been referred to as a 'blight'. Buildings that are currently empty could serve dual uses but the scale of challenge for some of the buildings may prove difficult.

There is support for development of renewable energy and community energy schemes.

Objectives and Outcome	Actions	Indicative resources	Working with
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support communities and business to access better digital connectivity Secure successful delivery of investment in the digital infrastructure in the area Capital intervention / accelerating infrastructure investment to safeguard employment <p>Key Outcome - Successful delivery of economic growth outcomes through improvements to the area's digital and physical infrastructure</p>	Design and implement a digital business 'springboard' to deliver bespoke digital diagnostics and interventions according to business need.	tbc	CCC – Digital connectivity
	Assess and bring forward plans to improve business and community connectivity through increased ultrafast broadband	in-kind	CCC – Capital infrastructure
	Raise awareness of options available to rural businesses and residents relating to their connectivity options, including support to access WG broadband initiatives, e.g. ABC voucher scheme, Rural Gigabit scheme	In-kind	CCC – Land and assets
	Cwmaman Open Doors (pilot)	£10,000 (capital refurbishment pot – not allowing for significant alteration / repair)	Cwmaman Town Council
	Amman Valley MakerSpace (Cwmaman Community Centre)	£8,000 feasibility	Growth Team
	Understanding the potential for activity-based tourism	£130,000 development	Broadband providers
	Realising growth of supporting facilities and accommodation e.g. collaboration between The Brecon View Eco Village Scheme and Garnant Park Golf Club	£10k + £40k WRL. £340,000 Adventure	Land owners
	Café, shop and bike hire linked with Cwmaman Park and Parc Golwg yr Aman walking and cycling trails (Bowls Pavilion)	tbc	Developers
	Small-scale short-term accommodation lets / bunkhouse	£5,000 revenue – options appraisal	
	Assess opportunities for development of renewable energy and community energy schemes. Cwmaman Town Council would be interested in as/when their assets are developed. Collaboration with The Brecon View Eco Village Scheme (adjacent to Garnant Park Golf Club).	£50k redevelopment	
New public realm plan and delivery	£18k Bunkhouse. £55k short-term lets		
	Tbc		
		£20,000	

Priority projects

Project: Cwmaman Open Doors (pilot)

Description

The project will pilot the use of redundant properties in the area for new retail and / or service activities. Open Doors will be a partnership between the public and private sector (property owners) that will offer young entrepreneurs and community groups spaces in empty premises to test business ideas, make products and bring positive change to the area.

Workmen's Hall is a prominent building, centrally located, which has been empty for many years. The site has expired planning permission to demolish the building and build a care home. Whilst the future options of the site are considered by the owner and subject to the state of repair of the building this location should be further investigated (subject to potential use compared to other assets in the area).

Bryn Seion Chapel is another prominent building which should be considered.

Rationale

Actions need to be taken to re-use empty spaces in the town centre to support businesses to re-open and build confidence.

Lead

CCC (Capital infrastructure + Land and assets) and land owners

Indicative cost

£10,000 (including capital refurbishment pot – not allowing for significant alteration / repair)

Timeframe

Short-medium term

Project: Amman Valley MakerSpace

Description

Working alongside Cwmaman Town Council (as the land owners) the project will utilise part of the Cwmaman Community Centre to build upon services currently being provided, create and provide co-working spaces, small studios, community café and a Community Information / business Hub alongside office space for the Town Council. The space will be one of the central pillars of re-imagining

the area. It will create new opportunities for local entrepreneurs in the creative and craft sector including facilities for start-up and micro businesses. The MakerSpace will generate year-round economic activity and redefine a significant building seeking sustainable uses. The MakerSpace will maximise sustainable growth, supporting collaboration, increased innovation and productivity.

Rationale

The Community Centre occupies a central position within Cwmaman. The Town Council use the building as their base of administration and provide some onsite community services. The proposal provides an opportunity to re-imagine Cwmaman and re-purpose the area along with the use of existing buildings as a dynamic, entrepreneurial and sustainable focal point for the wider resident and business communities.

Case Study Example

www.buildbrighton.com

Lead

CCC and Cwmaman Town Council (possible joint venture with private sector development partner)

Indicative cost

£8,000 feasibility
£130,000 development

Timeframe

Short-medium term

Project: Understanding the potential for activity-based tourism

Description

Opportunities should be pursued to make more of nearby walks, trails and activities and links to Brecon Beacons National Park and the Amman Valley:

- Further development and promotion of the area's history and links with the story of Twrch Trwyth (magical wild boar), Arthur and the battle that extended from Pembrokeshire to the Severn Estuary and eventually to Cornwall.
- Further development and promotion of the area's heritage regarding mining

- Outdoor spaces – woodland recreation and learning; woodland management and development; adventure and alternative sports provision

This should firstly consider the feasibility, demand and options for the area linked to activity-based tourism. This should include a) understanding visitor and target market interests and needs through customer research b) a plan for how the area can best achieve this. As part of this process work already undertaken to identify options should be reviewed: Woodland Recreation and Learning – Woodland “Schools” and Woodland Learning; Woodland Management and Development; Adventure and “Alternative Sports” Provision – Gelli Werdd BMX Track, Gelli Werdd Woodland Play Area, and Garnant Extreme Play Zone.

Rationale

The visitor economy is a relatively underdeveloped market despite the area's proximity to the Brecon Beacons National Park and being part of the Amman Valley with its range of walks and trails. Cwmaman could make significantly more of this natural environment.

Lead

CCC and Cwmaman Town Council

Indicative cost

£10,000
Plus £40,000 Woodland Recreation and Learning
£340,000 Adventure and “Alternative Sports” Provision

Timeframe

Short-term and on-going

Project: Realising growth of supporting facilities and accommodation

Description

Aligned to the understanding of activity-based tourism in the area. Work alongside providers, organisations and groups in the area to encourage and support the growth of facilities and accommodation linked to the visitor economy. Some of which already have progressed plans and are developing reciprocal arrangements with neighbouring providers.

Rationale

To attract the short-break market, Cwmaman needs to build accommodation capacity within the area with attractive, high quality units in accessible locations.

Lead

CCC and Cwmaman Town Council with private sector and enterprise buy-in

Indicative cost

Tbc + private

Timeframe

Medium-term

Project: Café, shop and bike hire linked with Cwmaman Park and Parc Golwg yr Aman walking and cycling trails

Description

The Bowls Pavilion is located on the edge of Parc Golwg Yr Aman, overlooking the river Amman, next to walking and cycling trails spanning the length of Cwmaman to Ammanford and close to a multi use games area (MUGA) and Amman United RFC.

The project will investigate the suitability of the Bowls Pavilion to be reconfigured to provide sustainable income linked with the use of the nearby trails, park and MUGA.

This will include:

- A cafe – 3rd party operator or run by volunteers from the bowls club, parents groups or family centre
- Small shop / items of sale within the cafe – aimed at the range of users of the park, trails, MUGA and sports pitches
- Bike hire - adult, child, trikes, courier/shopping bikes and carriage bikes for toddlers.

Discussions should be had with an existing provider, based near the Council yard, re collaboration.

Rationale

The area should use its assets to support economic growth. The Bowls Pavilion is conveniently located to provide a range of services to users of the park and trails which will support its sustainable operation.

Lead

CCC and Cwmaman Town Council (possible joint venture with private sector development partner or procure a 3rd party operator)

Indicative cost

£5,000 revenue – options appraisal
£50,000 redevelopment

Timeframe

Short-medium term

Project: Small-scale short-term accommodation lets / bunkhouse

Description

Support and encourage the provision of self-catering accommodation (including activity-based tourism friendly accommodation) through providing a toolkit / guide linked to quality grading and development of accommodation facilities including short-term lets (such as The Old Signal Box) and Bunkhouse (Youth Resource Centre).

The short-term let of the derelict Old Signal Box would see its conversion into a “niche” holiday property which would support local tourism, exploit the local proximity to the Brecon Beacons National Park.

The Bunkhouse concept would see the YRC being made available during weekends, school holidays and during special events for rental to visitors to the area.

Rationale

Given the proposed developments for the Community Centre, Community Workshop, Youth Resource Centre and other assets within the community, there is a need for at least a modest supply of accommodation for visitors.

Lead

CCC and Cwmaman Town Council (possible joint venture with private sector development partner/operator)

Indicative cost

In-kind with support from strategic accommodation fund re toolkit / guide
£18-55,000
£18,000 Bunkhouse (Youth Resource Centre)
£55,000 short-term lets (The Old Signal Box)

Timeframe

Short-medium term

Project: New public realm plan and delivery

Description

Review options for implementing a public realm plan for the area (particularly sites close to Cwmaman Road and those that support identified priority projects) such as signage (directional and informative such as to facilities e.g. river walk and parking areas), wider pedestrian routes and ‘pocket-parks’ to provide a safe and vibrant environment for shoppers and visitors.

Rationale

Actions need to be taken to support organisations to re-open, realise new opportunities and grow, build confidence and welcome back shoppers and visitors to Cwmaman including focused efforts on place marketing and capturing the gains from a return to trade.

Lead

CCC (Capital infrastructure + Land and assets)

Indicative cost

£20,000 (excluding capital funding pot)

Timeframe

Short-medium term

Project: Cwmaman Community Centre

Description

Support Cwmaman Town Council to continue to deliver a range of community services. Assist the expansion of existing and introduction of new services run within or allied to the Cwmaman Community Centre.

Rationale

Linking broader community services and benefits to economic growth. The area should be supported to retain and distribute a greater element of public services and, wherever possible, use its assets to sustain economic growth e.g. rationalising public sector property in ways that retain or attract employment.

Lead

Cwmaman Town Council

Indicative cost

Tbc

Timeframe

Short-medium term



Priority 3: People and Skills – enabling people to access work and develop skills to achieve their potential

The area’s skills profile is challenging in terms of supporting growing businesses. Low earnings impact on choice and are a reflection of the low-wage sectors that dominate the area. Although the statistics do not yet show this the limitations of local transport may create difficulties in the near future for the area to retain young people.

Actions need to ensure that the local labour market is developed to meet the growth needs of the rural economy including promoting self-employment and entrepreneurship as a route to work.

The Action Plan will focus on developing employment and skills schemes to ensure local people (particularly young people) are able to access local jobs, including equipping people with skills for key sectors.

Objectives and Outcome	Actions	Indicative resources	Working with
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure all local residents are aware of and able to access appropriate support scheme Ensure that local residents have the skills to meet the existing and future needs of local businesses <p>Key Outcome - Unemployment and under-employment minimised including amongst the most disadvantaged socio-economic groups</p>	<p>Ensure local providers design and deliver programmes to support people to find employment in those sectors that have grown during the crisis</p> <p>Engage with the South West and Mid Wales Regional Learning and Skills Partnership (RLSP) to inform discussions.</p> <p>Work with colleges and training providers to promote apprenticeship recruitment in local businesses</p> <p>Skills gap analysis and accessing learning opportunities</p> <p>Review physical and remote infrastructure that would enable better access for learning opportunities including frequency and interconnections of public transport services and what role community transport could play.</p> <p>Work with train and bus service providers and explore options for improving frequency and timing of services alongside community run services in an effort to provide viable commuting options to support employment patterns and after school and extra-curricular opportunities held in nearby areas. Amman Valley line improvements have also been identified. Explore linkages with potential project to re-create passenger line – linking with emerging South West Wales Metro proposals.</p>	<p>In-kind</p> <p>In-kind</p> <p>£2,000 skills gap analysis £16,000 Youth Resource Centre (Education Centre) £60,000 Community Workshop and Education Space (not including potential for extension in to rear yard)</p> <p>In-kind (initially)</p>	<p>CCC – Skills</p> <p>Cwmaman Town Council</p> <p>Growth Team</p> <p>Coleg Sir Gar</p> <p>Ysgol y Bedol</p> <p>CAVS</p> <p>CCC – Capital infrastructure</p> <p>CCC – Land and assets</p> <p>South West and Mid Wales Regional Learning and Skills Partnership (RLSP)</p> <p>Menter Dinefwr</p>

Priority projects

Project: Skills gap analysis and accessing learning opportunities

Description

There is a need to review physical and remote infrastructure that would enable better access for learning opportunities including frequency and interconnections of public transport services and what role community transport could play. This can include working with train and bus service providers to explore options for improving frequency and timing of services in an effort to provide viable commuting options to support employment patterns and after school and extra-curricular opportunities held in nearby areas.

Allied to this a research project should be undertaken to identify and highlight the most prominent skills gaps and recruitment challenges faced by businesses in Cwmaman. The South West and Mid Wales Regional Learning and Skills Partnership (RLSP) should be engaged to inform discussions. Regional industry priorities include: Advanced Materials, Manufacturing and Energy; Construction; Creative Industries and ICT; Food and Land-based; Financial and Professional Services; Health and Social Care; Leisure, Tourism and Retail; and Public Services. Working in conjunction with Cwmaman Town Council Carmarthenshire County Council should review educational and training requirements and provision in the area and consider options for reconfiguration including utilising local premises such as the Cwmaman Community Centre, Youth Resource Centre and Community Workshop. Also building upon current service and training provision locally – identifying where opportunities exist to

link directly with people and industry e.g. developing skills around tech learning and use of new equipment that can be brought back from employees to business.

Rationale

The area's skills profile is challenging in terms of supporting growing businesses. There is a reliance on out of area educational and extra-curricular activities which poses a considerable issue for those that do not have access to private transport. Although the statistics do not yet show this the limitations of local transport may create difficulties in the near future for the area to retain young people.

Lead

CCC and Cwmaman Town Council

Indicative cost

£2,000 skills gap analysis

£16,000 Youth Resource Centre (Education Centre)

£60,000 Community Workshop and Education Space (not including potential for extension in to rear yard)

Timeframe

Short-medium term

Project: Community and public transport

Description

Work with train and bus service providers and explore options for improving frequency and timing of services alongside community run services in an effort to provide viable commuting options to support employment patterns and after school and extra-curricular opportunities held in nearby areas.

Review physical and remote infrastructure that would enable better access for learning opportunities including

frequency and interconnections of public transport services and what role community transport could play.

Explore linkages with potential project to re-create passenger line (Amman Valley line improvements) and the South West Wales Metro proposals. Due to the complexity, cost and timescales of the passenger line project a number of options should be reviewed alongside discussions with key partners and a preferred business case developed. This should include smaller scale interventions alongside larger-scale regional links e.g. mothballing, representation to Network Rail with support from Carmarthenshire County Council and Neath Port Talbot CBC, light service (possibly smaller number of carriages, tram type, electric), understanding how other lines such as Gwili Railway operate in terms of tourism, identifying how the line may link to emerging South West Wales Metro proposals.

Rationale

Maximise Cwmaman's proximity and access to key conurbations within Carmarthenshire, Neath Port Talbot and Swansea.

There is a reliance on out of area educational and extra-curricular activities which poses a considerable issue for those that do not have access to private transport.

Lead

CCC (Capital infrastructure + Land and assets + Skills)

Indicative cost

TBC

Timeframe

Short-medium term for review

Medium-longer term for planning and implementation



Cross-cutting Priority: Communication, collaboration and empowerment

Whilst there is no single organisation responsible for restarting, reviving and renewing the economy government responses have relied to a greater extent on local authorities alongside select key partners to engage and support the business community. Ongoing success will be dependent upon the extent and effectiveness of communication and coordination between these partners

and business – strengthening collaboration, building a robust evidence base and developing a communications plan. It is vital that the economic recovery plan has buy-in of the business and local community. While the plan currently aligns with national and county plans (to maximise impact) it will be crucial for partners to be flexible and amend and reset priorities in light of any future changes including the ongoing pandemic and Brexit. The

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appointment of Welsh speaking Market Town Officers by Carmarthenshire County Council as part of the 10 Town's Initiative will be an important and welcomed resource.

Objectives and Outcome	Actions	Indicative resources	Working with
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand and respond to local business needs through effective consultation and engagement Communicate Cwmaman's recovery plans and action programme to key partners and the business community <p>Key Outcome - The local business community has a strong voice on shaping recovery programmes and a new Economic Development vision and strategy</p>	Launch the Growth Plan to key partners and the business community in Cwmaman	In-kind	CCC – Town Centre Recovery Group Cwmaman Town Council Growth Team
	Appointment of Market Town Officers	tbc	
	Develop a Cwmaman business database (CMS) to improve business intelligence and support future economic development activities	In-kind	
	Maintain up-to-date local economic health trends and impacts dashboard with inputs from local businesses and key partners to assist future policy and programme planning	In-kind	
	Support the development of the embryonic Cwmaman Economic Growth Team; providing secretariat and administrative support alongside Cwmaman Town Council	In-kind	

Governance, Funding and Delivery

Carmarthenshire County Council, through the Business Economy Community Recovery Groups, will have a key role in implementing and monitoring delivery of the Action Plan; providing strong civic and community leadership, helping to foster an engaged and informed business community and using its assets, influence and expertise to deliver a recovery that creates quality employment and a sustainable, inclusive and resilient local economy.

The experience of Covid-19 has highlighted the importance and success of collective actions. Working in partnership will be crucial and the Cwmaman Local Economy Recovery and Action Plan should be considered and reviewed within the wider context particularly the National Recovery Plan and Carmarthenshire Recovery Strategy.

An early consideration will be what actions and projects can be delivered across a number (or all) of the 10 Towns to secure economies of scale and efficiencies.

The embryonic Cwmaman Economic Growth Team alongside the Town Council will have an important role in shaping and prioritising actions, championing the emerging plan and engaging with the business community through this 'recovery' phase.

When finalised, detailed performance metrics will need to be developed, which will be dependent upon the specific interventions undertaken.

It will be crucial for partners to be flexible and amend and reset priorities in light of any future changes including another wave of the pandemic.

An important aspect is how this is communicated amongst the business community. The local authority's response around financial support (alongside regional and national partners) has had several positive impacts; enabling businesses to get through this period, secure their survival (at least during the immediate future) and maintain a positive mood. The local authority's contacts database (which has been significantly bolstered during the pandemic) can be used to best effect at a time when channels to reach target audiences have never been more varied or powerful.

A significant amount of funding has been allocated to the immediate crisis. Delivery of the Cwmaman Growth Plan and Recovery Plan is likely to be funded through a range of sources, including national programmes and the private sector.

Where local authority funding is required, the Council will likely seek to ensure that any investment is prioritised to deliver those projects that will have the greatest impact on the local economy.

New initiatives and business support

In response to COVID-19, the County Council has established underpinning resources to support the recovery and growth of rural towns. Working with Welsh Government and the RDP Leader programme, a range of new initiatives and business support will be made available.

The recovery and growth plan are important because they provide the supporting evidence of the local needs and identify the range of opportunities these new funds and resources could help to deliver, which include:

- The appointment of **Market Town Officers** who will work with towns to take forward actions identified within the economic recovery and growth plans.
- New **seed funding** to assist the town's growth plan teams to develop innovative solutions to meet both their immediate needs and future growth ambitions.
- New **capital funding** to support ideas identified in the recovery and growth plans and also to support the development of much-needed start-up and grow on employment space.

Ten Towns Funding - £1m

- Carmarthenshire County Council **Business Grant Funds** – opportunities for businesses to apply for direct support through the Recovery Fund, Revenue Support Fund, Rural Enterprise Fund, Transformational Commercial Property Development Fund, Business Start-Up Fund and Business Growth Fund.

Carmarthenshire Transformational Commercial Property Development Fund - £1m

Carmarthenshire Rural Enterprise Fund £500,000 Transforming Towns Programme (previously Targeted Regeneration Investment) - £1.2m Business Renewable Energy Fund - £500,000 Business Start-up and Growth Grants - £500,000 Business Skills Support Fund - £200,000

- **Town digital solutions** – a series of initiatives to support businesses and communities to obtain faster and more reliable internet connectivity, and adaptation including a series of webinars to help to build a successful business online and application of digital SMART towns.
- **Cycle Friendly Infrastructure** including cycle storage provision at key locations including public transport interchanges and exploring the potential to introduce E-Bike charging.
- Funding has been secured for **local marketing/distinctiveness** including branded promotional material, prepared social media content for every town.
- A strategy to support local investment in **circular economy** businesses and enterprises.
- **Local energy plans** - Carmarthenshire Energy Limited will support communities to identify and scope potential sites for new energy generation.

Appendix 1: Rural Carmarthenshire

Carmarthenshire is situated within the Swansea Bay City region in West Wales. Covering an area of 2,370km² the County has a population of 187,568 (2018 ONS midyear population estimates) and a population density of 79 people per km². The County has seen a 2% growth of population between 2011 and 2018 compared to a Wales average of 5%. Population projections to support Carmarthenshire County Council's review of its Deposit LDP range between a 7.6% and 9.6% growth during 2018-2033. Carmarthenshire is the 3rd largest Local Authority by area and has the 4th highest population in Wales. It comprises of 58 electoral wards which are further divided into 112 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs).

Rural Carmarthenshire consists of highly distinctive and attractive locations with a mix of market towns and modern retail along with stunning landscapes and a richness and diversity of heritage and culture¹. Rural areas account for c.94% of the County by size and c.62% by population.

In terms of the economy and employment rural Carmarthenshire has a **predominance of small and micro-businesses** which are critical to the sustainability of the local economy. **Tourism, education, health and creative industries** are increasingly the backbone of the rural economy alongside **traditional sectors such as agriculture**. Much of the established **business base does not fall into the high growth category** (importantly this does not mean that businesses have no growth potential), with many **family owned**. The region as a whole has a relatively **low proportion of its employment in knowledge intensive** businesses and even less in rural areas. Whilst the rate of unemployment across the working

age population has remained stable over recent years the trajectory of **economic recovery and growth is projected to follow a pattern of jobless growth**. This is compounded by a **high proportion of the working age population being classed as economically inactive**. It has been recognised at county level that in order to attract and retain talented people there is a need to ensure sufficient access to key services which are slowly being lost in many rural towns and villages.

Key characteristics and challenges of rural Carmarthenshire are²:

- A predominance of small and medium sized businesses with 87% of businesses employing less than 9 employees
- Higher proportions are employed in low value added services such as agriculture
- Migration of talented and skilled young people is a key issue for rural areas which exhibit a lower proportion of 20-39 year olds
- Limited penetration of public transport provision and frequency of service
- Limited and slow speed broadband access in the more remote rural areas
- Shortage of employment space
- All rural wards, except Carmarthen town and Llandeilo, are within the top 30% most deprived in relation to access to services
- The number of Welsh speakers has declined by 6.2% to 43.9% which is a loss of 11,165 Welsh speakers in the county between 1991 and 2011

Proposed actions to support Rural Carmarthenshire include:

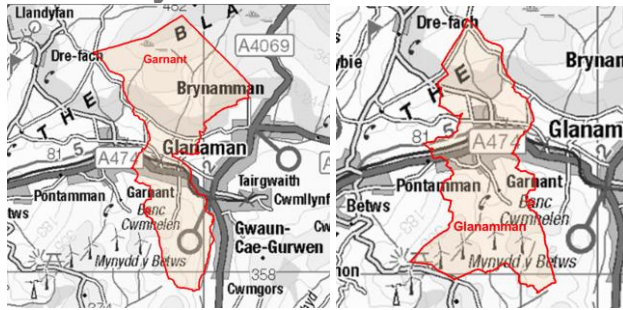
- Support business growth, retention and specialisation
- Support a skilled and ambitious workforce
- Seek to maximise job creation and employment prospects
- Support the development of a knowledge economy
- Develop the distinctiveness and attractiveness of the area in terms of tourism, business investment and addressing rural poverty



¹ Local Development Strategy for Rural Carmarthenshire – Summary Document

² A strategic regeneration plan for Carmarthenshire 2015-2030 – Transformations

Appendix 2: Socio-economic summary for Cwmaman



Area and population

- Cwmaman accounts for 2.5% of the county's population and 1.2% of its landmass
- While Carmarthenshire has seen a population increase of 2% (3,607) between 2011 and 2018 Cwmaman has seen a population increase of 2.1% (95) from 4,502 to 4,597.
- Cwmaman (comprising Garnant and Glanamman) has a slightly higher proportion of working age population than the county average but less than national averages
- With modest growth amongst 0-15 and 16-64 age groups
- And a larger (7.7%) growth in those aged 65+

Labour Supply

- Economic activity and employment is lower than county and national averages
- Unemployment is significantly higher than county and national averages
- Economic inactivity rates are noticeably higher in Garnant and Glanamman than county and national averages...
- Those suffering from long-term illness account for a third of this
- Administrative & secretarial, skilled trades occupations, caring, leisure and other service occupations and process plant & machine operatives account for over 52% of occupations in Garnant and

Glanamman, higher than county and national averages

- There are significantly less professional occupations.

Labour Demand

- The highest proportion of jobs in Garnant are in the health, education, public administration & defence and retail sectors
- The highest proportion of jobs in Glanamman are in the health, and construction sectors
- The area has considerably less proportion of jobs across all other industries compared to local and national averages
- Full-time workers weekly earnings working in Carmarthen East & Dinefwr are below local and national averages
- Whilst part-time workers earnings are higher than local and national averages their hourly pay indicates this is due to more hours being worked
- The median household income for Garnant, based on CACI's 2018 'PayCheck' data, is £22,456 which is the 10th lowest (of 58 wards) in Carmarthenshire and 13.5% below the Carmarthenshire median of £25,488. The estimated median household income for Glanamman is £22,379 which is the 9th lowest in Carmarthenshire and 13.9% below the county median

Businesses

- Considerably more enterprises and local units are at the micro level in Cwmaman compared to local and national averages

Out of Work Benefits

- The percentage of claimants in Garnant and Glanamman are substantially higher than local and national levels

Qualifications and Skills

- The number of people with no qualifications is higher than county and national averages. Those with National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 4 and above is significantly lower than county and national averages

Welsh Language

- Carmarthenshire has significantly more Welsh speakers than the national average, almost twice as much
- Garnant and Glanamman are significantly higher than county and Wales averages for those with the ability to speak Welsh

Housing

- The area's housing comprises of mostly of semi-detached and detached houses. The smallest category is caravan or other mobile temporary structure (which is in Garnant).
- The two wards have 290 local authority owned properties and 109 Housing Association properties.

Indices of Multiple Deprivation

- Garnant ward comprises of one LSOA (Garnant) and Glanamman ward comprises of two LSOAs – Glanamman 1 (Glanamman Workshops, Grenig Rd.) and Glanamman 2 (Amman Valley Hospital). Garnant ranks 33rd in Carmarthenshire and 636th in Wales. Glanamman 1 ranks 30th in Carmarthenshire and 557th in Wales. Glanamman 2 ranks 25th in Carmarthenshire and 525th in Wales. Income, employment, health and education are of particular concern with isolated issues around access to services, physical environment and housing



The means: to change places for the better.

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