


# Llanelli

## PLACEMAKING STRATEGY

March 2026

Cyngor Sir Gâr
Carmarthenshire
County Council

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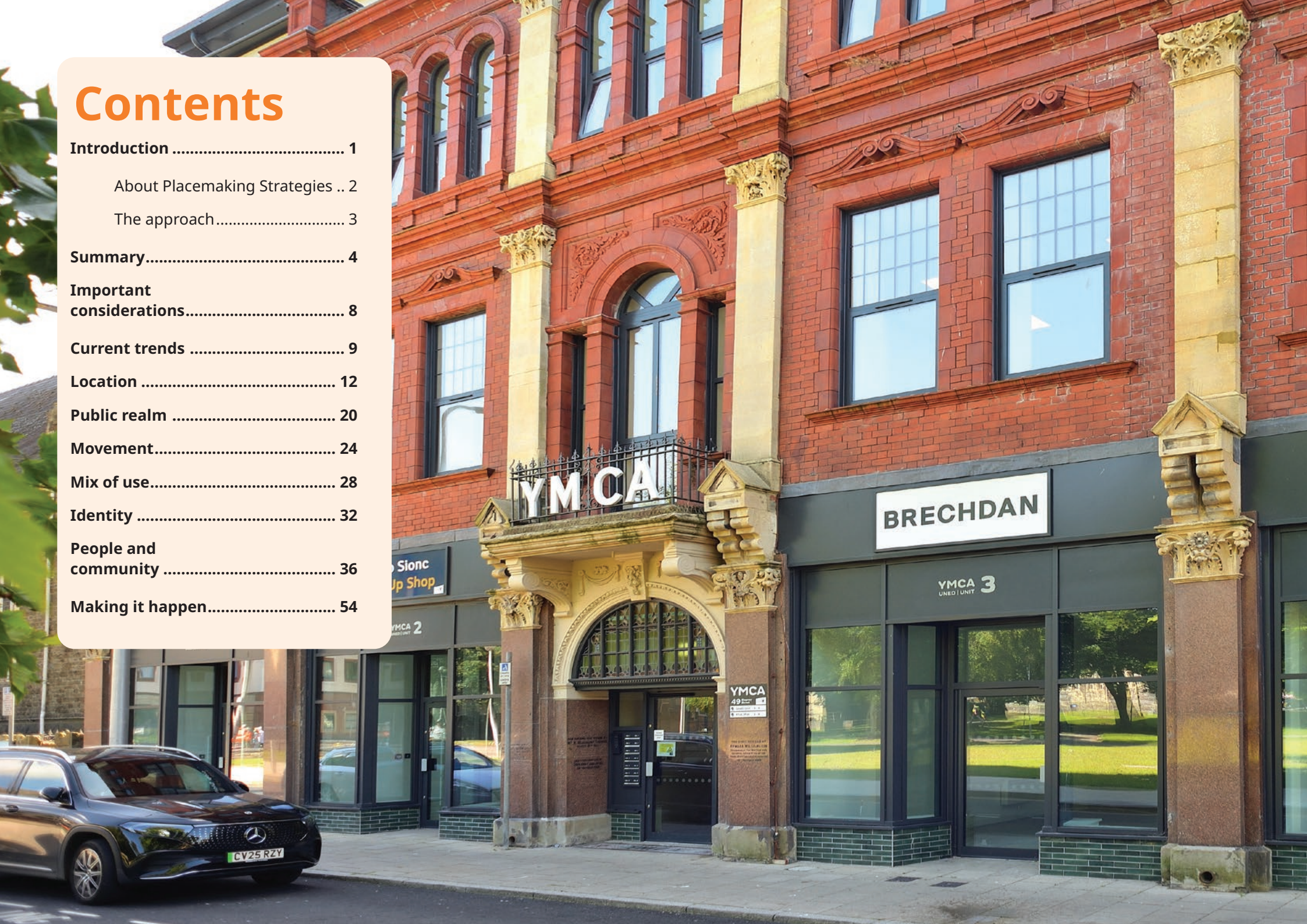
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# Introduction

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

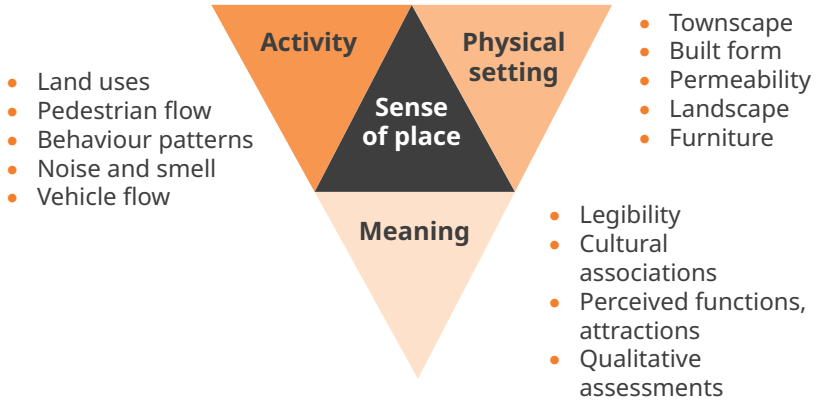
# About Placemaking Strategies

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 Llanelli 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 Llanelli. This was then developed into a list of priority outcomes and actions. These were then further consulted on and refined, first with the Llanelli Task Force and then through a public consultation.

This document provides the overall findings from the work.

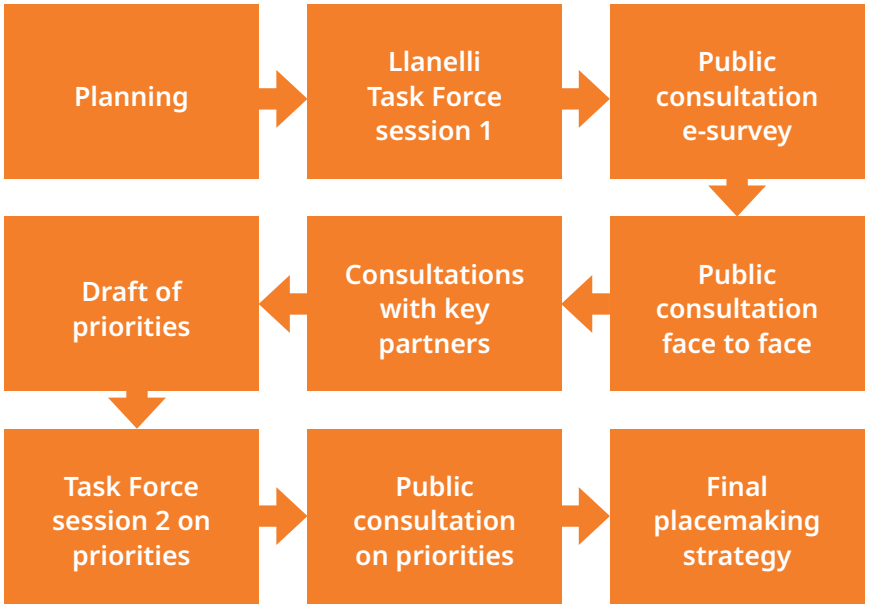



*Figure 1 - Co-production approach to placemaking strategy*

## How to use this document

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

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 Llanelli. This includes:

- **Llanelli Task Force** – providing a framework for priority areas for the Task Force to focus on
- **Llanelli Town Council** – providing evidence for projects and activities and to help guide priority activities in the town
- **Llanelli BID** – providing evidence for existing and planned work
- **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 Llanelli 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

Llanelli has strong assets. It is close to the coast, has good transport connections and benefits from strong communities, a respected indoor market, cultural organisations and the Scarlets. But the town centre is not making the most of these assets or acting as a hub for the wider area.

The Town Centre lacks a clear sense of direction and has become physically and economically fragmented. The station, centre, surrounding neighbourhoods and coast are not well connected. Some gateway routes are unattractive, the historic street pattern has been disrupted, and several prominent buildings and sites are vacant or underused.

The town centre has a limited mix of shops, leisure activities and community facilities and is struggling to compete with out-of-town and online retail. Public spaces are seen as dirty, poorly maintained and lacking greenery.

Empty buildings, antisocial behaviour and poor lighting add to a feeling that the centre has been neglected. Many people do not feel safe, particularly after dark. Traffic volume and speed, unsafe cycling and scooter use, inconsistent public transport and concerns about parking also affect how people experience the town.

Llanelli's distinctive identity is no longer clearly visible. Its industrial history, Welsh language, sporting identity, music and creative culture provide strong foundations, but people feel the town has lost pride and purpose.

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:

- Greater action around town centre first planning policy
- Improve connections between the town and coast
- Improve spatial organisation of town
- Improve key buildings
- Increase residential density in surrounding town
- Better coordinate internal Council policies/processes to support town centre development
- Improve measurement and communication of progress

### Mix of use outcomes:

- Improve the mix of uses in the town centre
- Increase use of public realm for leisure
- More emerging businesses receive support
- Improve key buildings around the town

### Public realm outcomes:

- Maintain and improve existing spaces
- Greater amounts of green infrastructure throughout the town
- More opportunities for play in the street scene
- More people making more use of public spaces (with the consequence of reducing anti-social behaviour)
- Improved safety and security on street (particularly in the evening)

### Movement outcomes:

- Improve the pedestrian environment
- Improve cycling infrastructure
- Improve connections to train station and beyond
- Improve public transport
- Safer roads
- Improve access to Llanelli town centre for short stay trips

### Identity outcomes:

- Greater sense of identity for the town
- Strengthen the local cultural sector
- Improve the place brand
- Strengthen the Welsh language through placemaking activities

### People and communities outcomes:

- More opportunities for people to be involved in the town development
- Better coordinate internal Council policies/processes to support town centre development
- Improve connections with the voluntary sector
- Improve working between Town and County Council
- Create healthier towns

# How we will get there

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

### Supporting a wider mix of uses –

Independent and emerging businesses will be supported through pop-up and meanwhile spaces, business support and quicker routes to smaller grants. The plan also seeks more shops, food, leisure, cultural activity and evening opportunities for different ages.

### Reconnecting the town with surrounding communities, the station and coast –

The strategy supports better routes, crossings, signage and public transport between the town centre, railway station, waterfront and surrounding communities.

### Creating safer, greener and more welcoming spaces –

Priorities include improving Spring Gardens, adding greenery with a town level green infrastructure strategy, play and lighting and creating more activity around Vaughan Street, Stepney Street and Cowell Street. Better maintenance and visible policing are central to helping people feel safer.

### Putting the town centre first –

Future planning, investment and decisions about public buildings and services should consider their effect on the centre. This includes exploring whether more civic functions can move into town and coordinating Council services to better support local business. A simple design guide will help ensure that new developments and building improvements strengthen the character, quality and connectivity of Llanelli

### Strengthening Llanelli's identity –

The strategy will build on existing assets including the market, local arts organisations, music and choral traditions, creative industries, the Scarlets and the Welsh language. Events, cultural activity, heritage lighting and stronger branding will help create a renewed sense of identity and pride.

### Bringing key buildings and sites back into use –

The strategy identifies opportunities to redevelop prominent sites and repair the town's fragmented layout. More homes, including above shops, and of a mix of type and tenure, will bring activity and natural surveillance into the centre.

### Turning community involvement into action –

The Task Force will bring partners together to drive the strategy, supported by regular engagement with residents, traders, young people and voluntary organisations. Progress will be measured and reported so people can see what is changing.

# 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 Llanelli. Between 2011 and 2021 the population in Llanelli increased by 3%. But there have been changes in the demographics. The proportion of young people (aged 15 and under) has increased by 1% and those of working age (16 to 64) has increased by 1%. The number of older people (aged 65+) has increased by 10%. The number of Welsh Speakers is falling with 25% Welsh Speakers in 2011 falling to 23% 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 Llanelli are economically active and unemployment stands at 3%.

These are important trends. It helps show that Llanelli 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 is increasing slightly. 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

Llanelli has a shop vacancy rate of 26.4%, which is the highest vacancy rate in the County. There is a reasonable mix of national multiples and small independent shops, although the main focus of national multiples is within the out of centre retail parks. The Carmarthenshire Retail Study in 2023 helped highlight a desire among users of Llanelli town centre for fewer vacant shops, improved security and an update or revamp.

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 Llanelli 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 Wellbeing 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 Llanelli.

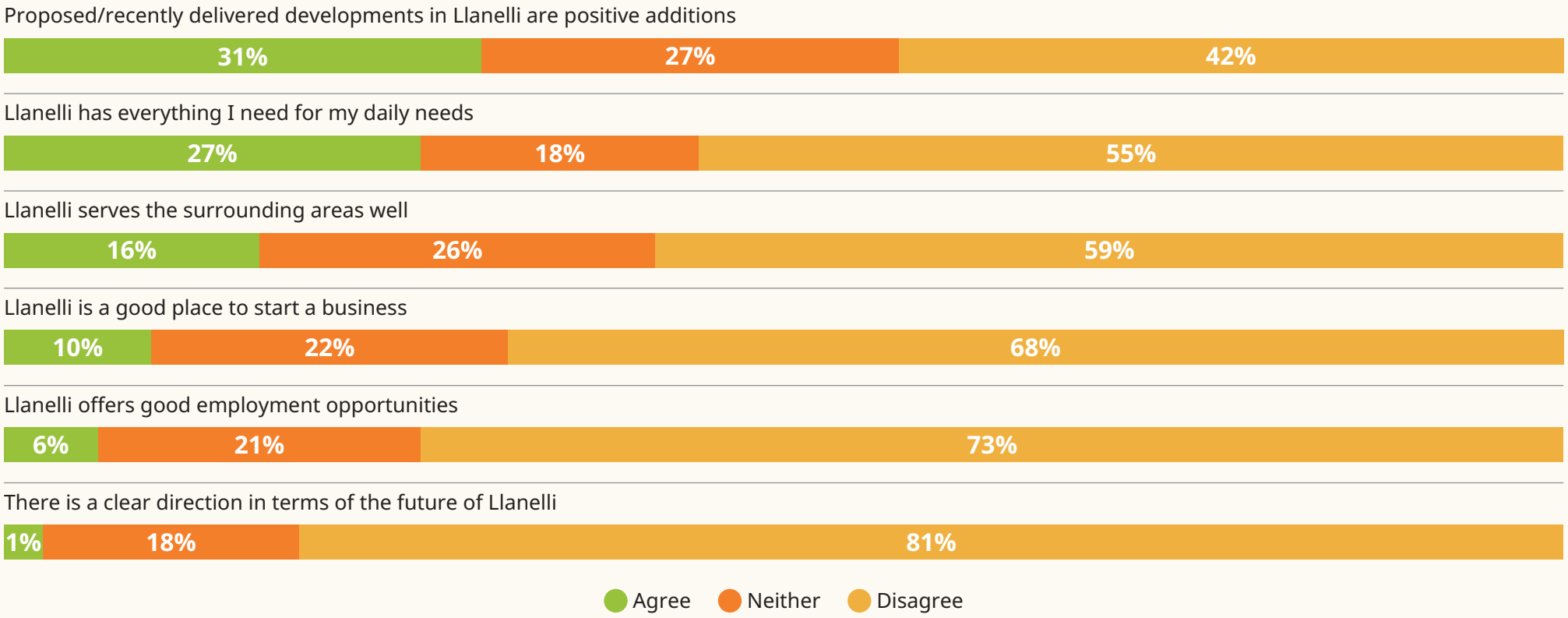
**The placemaking principles define this area as:**

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 3.5 out of 10 in Llanelli**

The more detailed analysis identifies a strong feeling there is not a clear direction for the future of Llanelli. People also felt it was not a good place to start a business and there was a lack of good employment opportunities.



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

- **Making the most of assets** – People identified that Llanelli has excellent surrounding assets — the coast, parkland, communities, heritage — yet the town centre fails to act as a gateway or hub
- **Variety of issues** – People identified the gateway routes as unattractive, especially the approach from the west
- **Strengthening connections** – Concerns identified included poor gateways into town, unattractive approaches, underused central areas and disconnection between neighbourhoods and the centre
- **Supporting flow** – People identified the layout doesn't support flow or visibility: the most attractive assets feeling hidden rather than linked

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

- Greater action around town centre first planning policy
- Improve connections between the town and coast
- Improve spatial organisation of town
- Improve key buildings
- Increase residential density in surrounding town
- Better coordinate internal Council policies/processes to support town centre development
- Improve measurement and communication of progress

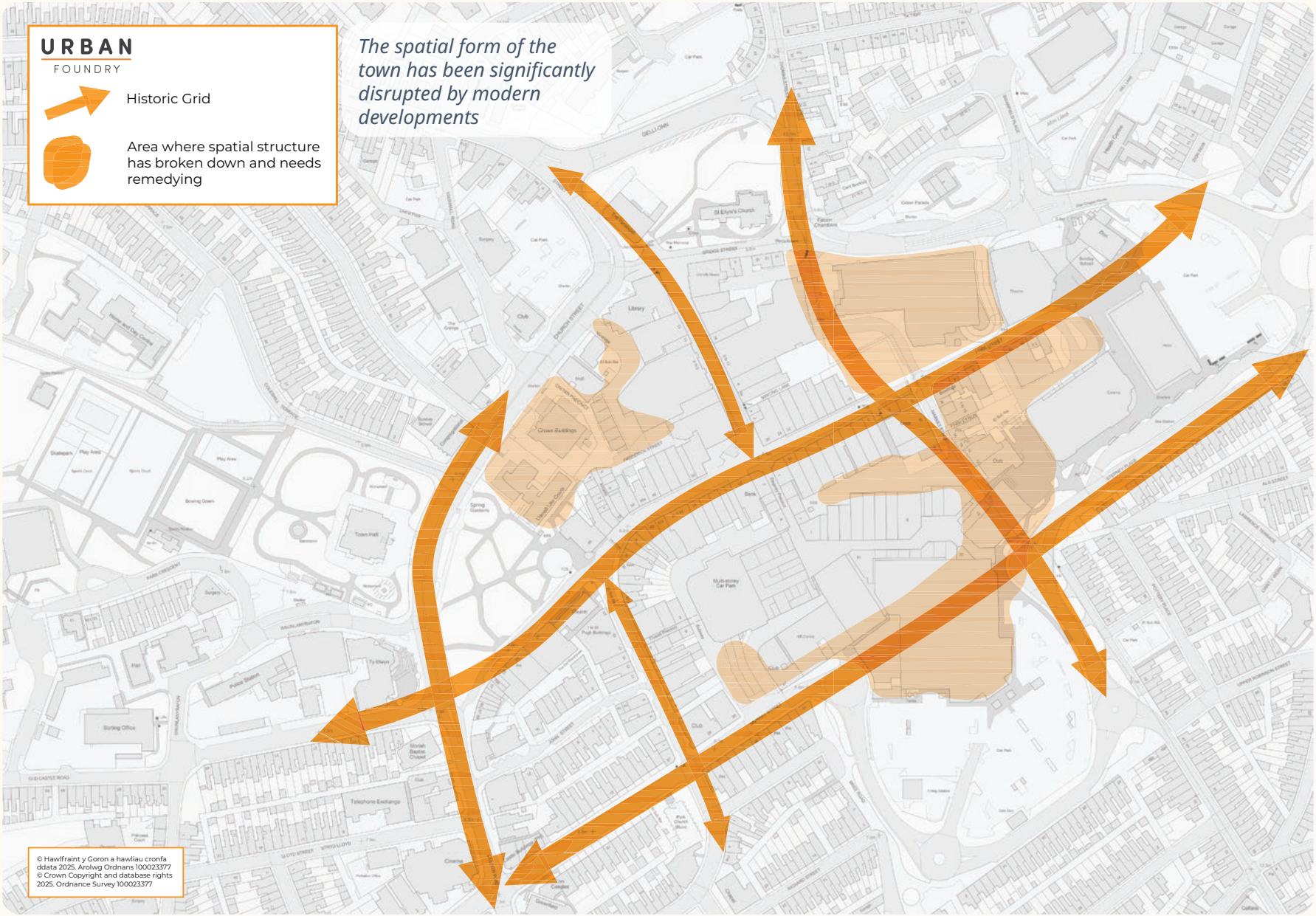
Feedback we heard through the consultation included:

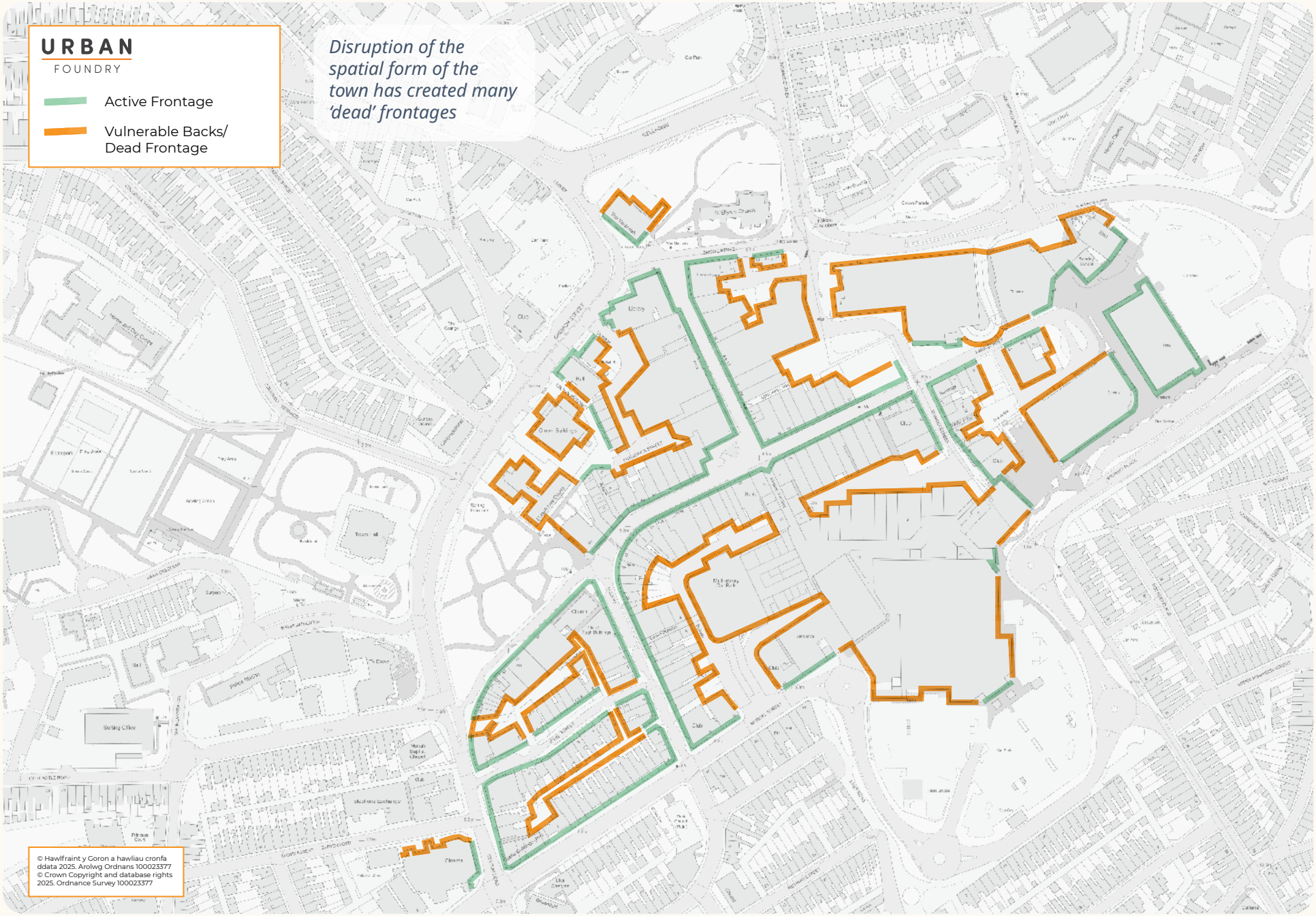
*"Llanelli Market is a fantastic town resource. How well is it marketed as a whole?"*

*"Not been a good place to live for many years. Neglected. Needs more nightlife for everybody to enjoy. Needs policing"*

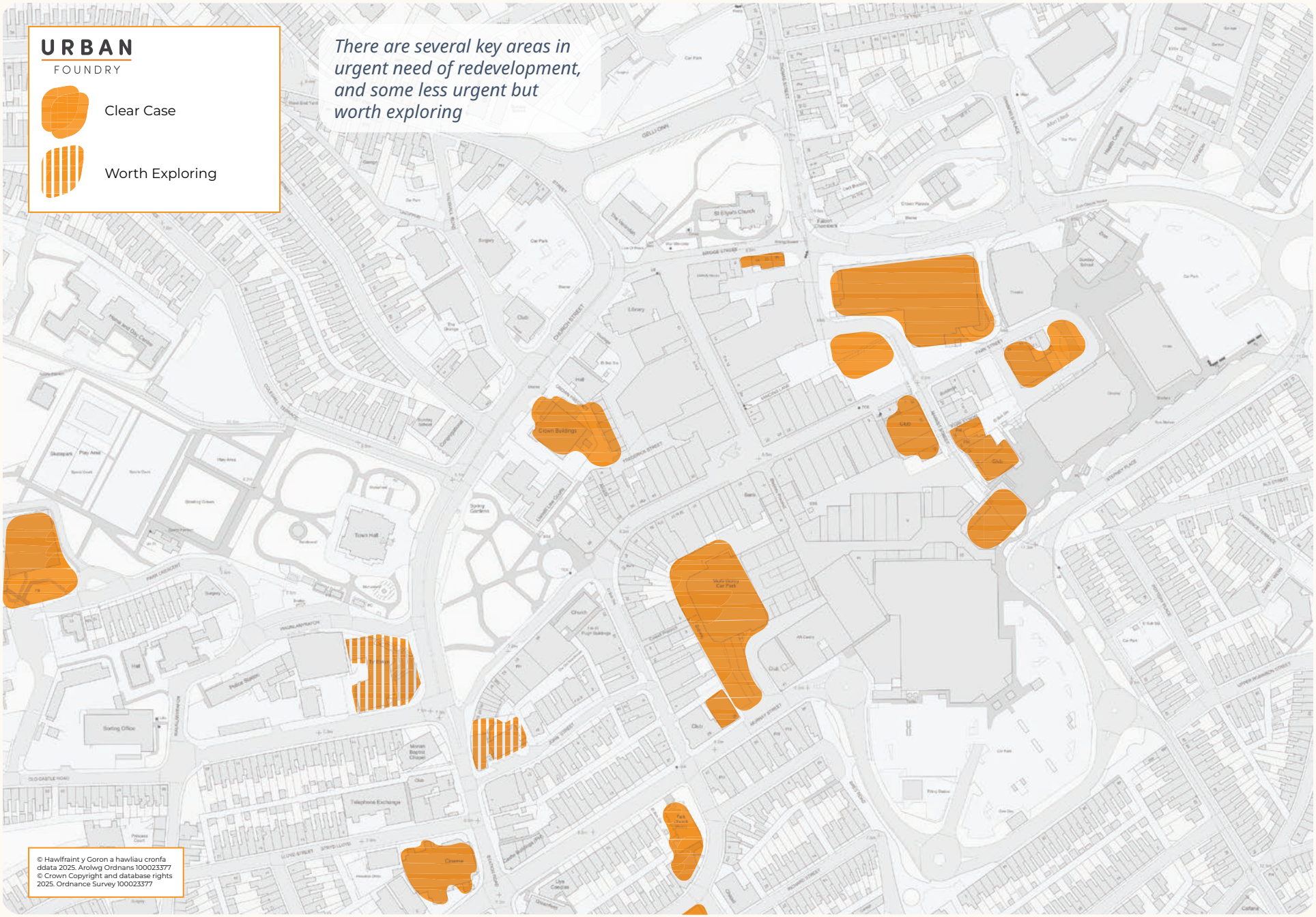
*"Feels like all leisure is out of the town centre. ASB is a big problem. DDAS in middle of the town doesn't help. I don't think people are violent to strangers but regardless it's not nice to walk past loud arguments"*

*"Llanelli is forgotten about. County trying to do too much, all comes through Carmarthenshire"*


URBAN
FOUNDRY
Historic Grid
Area where spatial structure has broken down and needs remedying
The spatial form of the town has been significantly disrupted by modern developments
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URBAN
FOUNDRY
Active Frontage
Vulnerable Backs/
Dead Frontage
Disruption of the spatial form of the town has created many 'dead' frontages
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URBAN
FOUNDRY
Car Parking
(Not all public)
Private Parking
A significant amount of valuable land is given over to car parking, much of it surface car parking
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URBAN
FOUNDRY
Clear Case
Worth Exploring
There are several key areas in urgent need of redevelopment, and some less urgent but worth exploring
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# Public realm

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

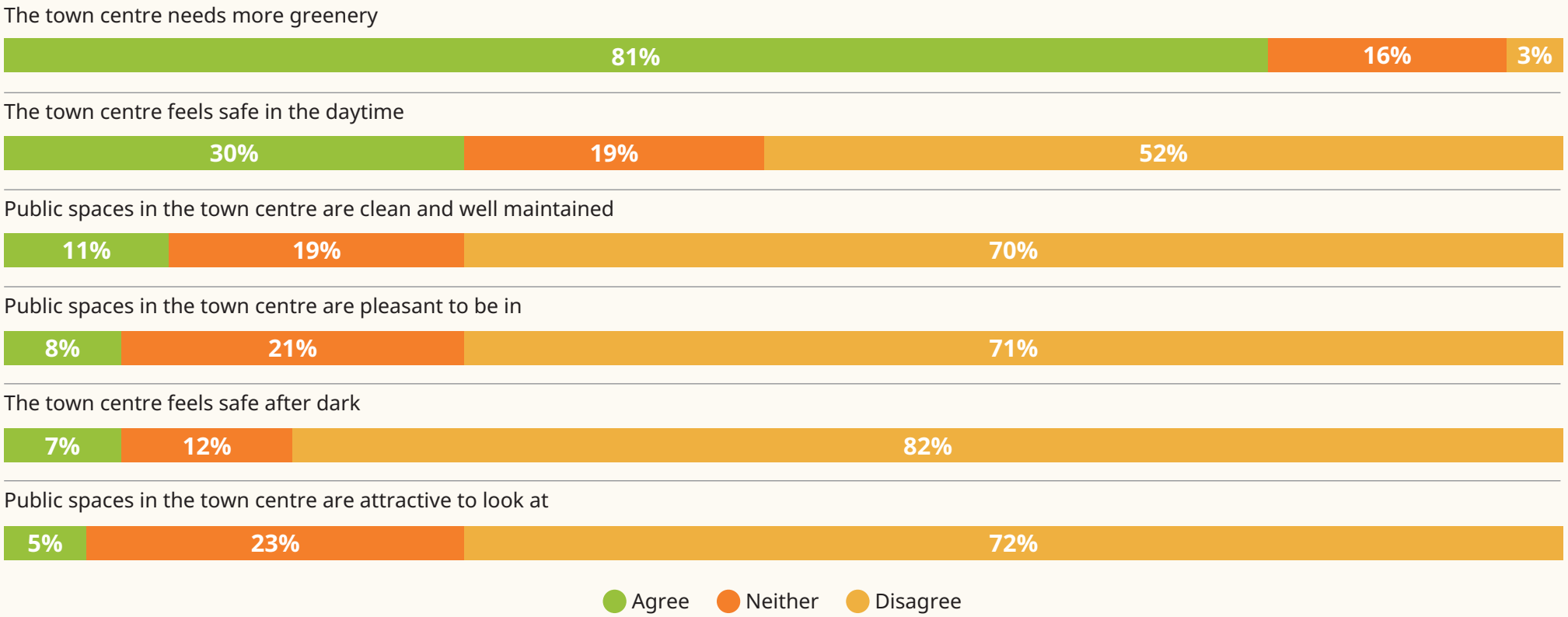
**The placemaking principles define this area as:**

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 3.3 out of 10 in Llanelli**

The more detailed analysis shows a strong feeling the town needs more greenery. There were also strong feelings about the town feeling unsafe after dark and that public realm spaces were unattractive.



## The consultation identified the following key points:

- **Maintenance** – People identified the town centre as rundown and dirty, but crucially lacking in pride. Lighting, greenery, and landscaping are all described as insufficient or poorly maintained
- **Environment** – Unkept buildings, shop fronts, antisocial behaviour and rubbish were all identified as contributing to a sense of the town centre being abandoned
- **Welcoming** – There is widespread demand for a cleaner, safer, better-kept environment that feels welcoming rather than intimidating

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

- Maintain and improve existing spaces
- Greater amounts of green infrastructure throughout the town
- More opportunities for play in the street scene
- More people making more use of public spaces (with the consequence of reducing anti-social behaviour)
- Improved safety and security on street (particularly in the evening)

Feedback we heard through the consultation included:

*"More investment into improving street scaping. More well maintained greenery. Police presence for safety and security"*

*"Think a lot of the street art looks scruffy and is making the town look worse. Any street art should be complementary, nice vibrant colours and designs. Not random, thrown together collages"*

*"The town is not clean and maintained. Public spaces are not pleasant, need more greenery. The whole town has rubbish in alleyways and looks very neglected and in need of painting etc. I never go along to town in the dark, even in daylight groups of people are hanging around making it not feel safe. Too many empty places adding to the neglect. New places being built, with so many old empty buildings and shops"*

*"No matter what problems a town has it should be clean. People don't want to visit to look at litter and muck"*

# Movement

For the movement theme we are interested in understanding how easy it is to get to Llanelli, 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.

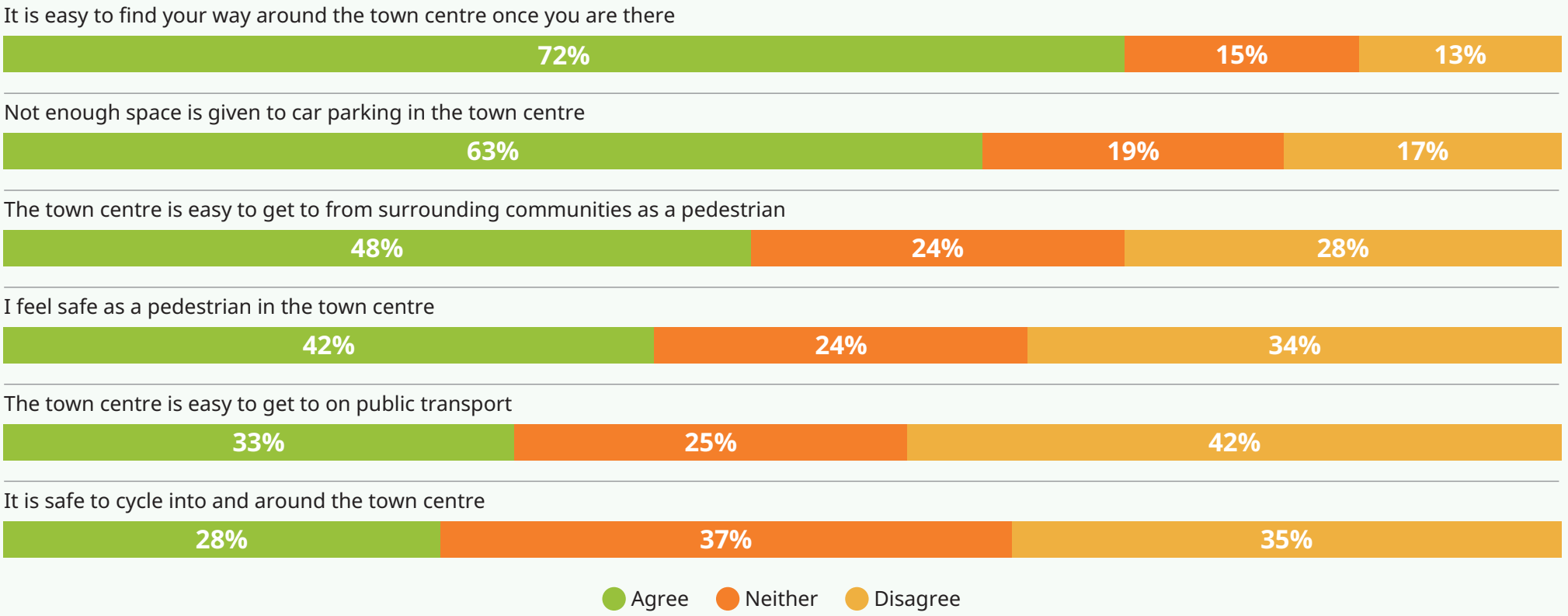
**The placemaking principles define this area as:**

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 Llanelli**

The more detailed analysis shows that people find it easy to get around the town centre once they are in. But people identified a desire for more car parking and did not feel it was safe cycling in and around the town centre.



## The consultation identified the following key points:

- **Lack of safety** – People had concerns about unsafe behaviour relating to people on scooters, e-bikes and speeding and with heavy traffic around the town centre
- **Parking** – This was a source of frustration for many people with there being not enough, too expensive or poorly managed
- **Car prioritisation** – People felt the town centre was focused on cars making it unpleasant and unsafe for pedestrians
- **Public transport** – This was identified as inconsistent and inconvenient with a desire for better bus provision and more reliable links into and round town
- **Cycling** – There were two issues identified through the consultation. A lack of safe cycling routes but also a fear of cyclists and scooters moving unpredictably in pedestrian areas

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

- Improve the pedestrian environment
- Improve cycling infrastructure
- Improve connections to train station and beyond
- Improve public transport
- Safer roads
- Improve access to Llanelli town centre for short stay trips

Feedback we heard through the consultation included:

*"Llanelli's movement experience should make people want to walk, linger, and explore. Right now, much of the town centre feels fragmented and car-oriented in some parts and disconnected for pedestrians or cyclists. The goal should be to create connected, human-scale routes that link key destinations (the train station, Stepney Street, the market, East Gate, and the coastal path) through attractive, safe, and activity-filled corridors."*

*"Wonderful location, close to Gower. Also close to M4 and mainline railway so good links"*

*"Stop idiots flying through on e- bikes and scooters"*

*"I walk everywhere because buses are unreliable. No information on routes"*

# Mix of use

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

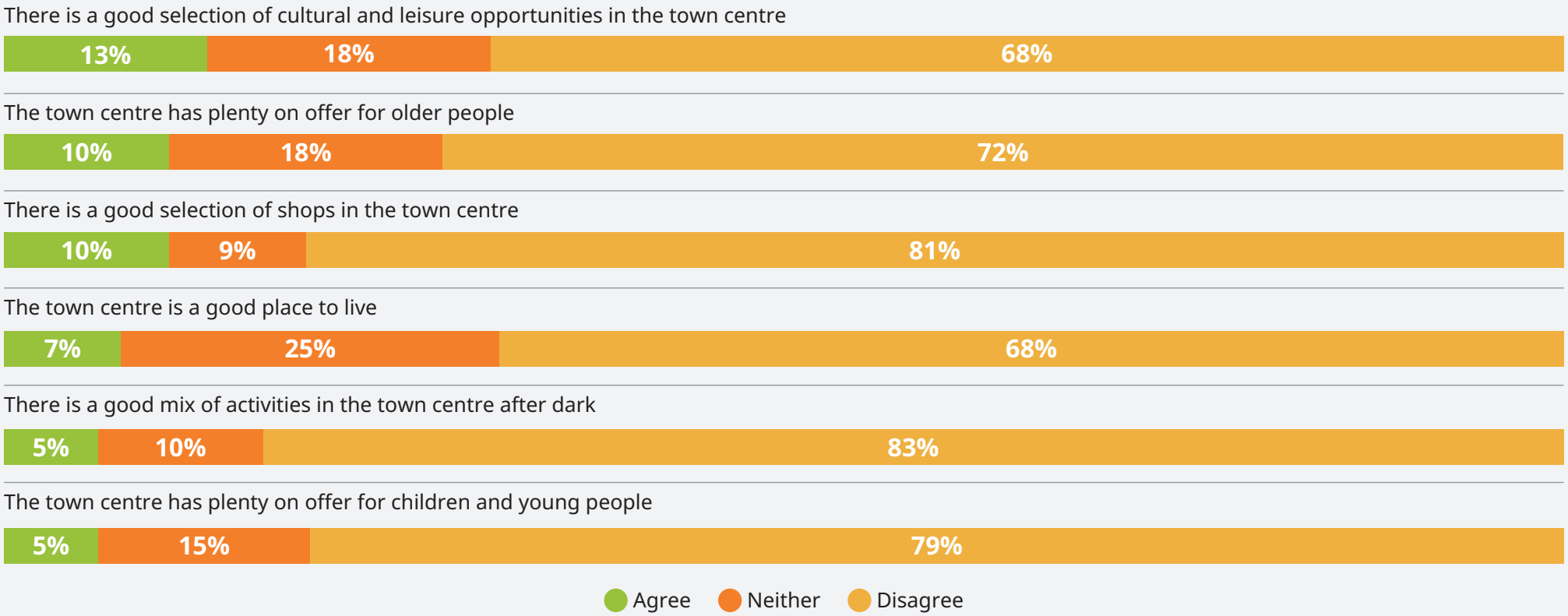
**The placemaking principles define this area as:**

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 3.6 out of 10 in Llanelli**

The mix of use in the town centre was viewed negatively through the consultation. People did not feel there was a good mix, or that the town centre was a good place to live.



## The consultation identified the following key points:

- **Retail offer** – There was a perception the retail offer had collapsed with too many empty units and vape shops and not enough 'real' retail opportunities
- **Greater blend** – People wanted a better mix and blend of shops, food, leisure, community uses and evening economy
- **More opportunities** – There was a strong desire for more independent businesses, new retailers, updated facilities, and more cultural or social activities for families, children and young people
- **Indoor leisure** – A lack of safe, indoor, particularly leisure, opportunities and things for people to do locally

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

- Improve the mix of uses in the town centre
- Increase use of public realm for leisure
- More emerging businesses receive support
- Improve key buildings around the town

Feedback we heard through the consultation included:

*"Need more independent shops, that will stay, to give people a chance to shop local. Nothing much on offer for children or older people, if there is more advertising needed. Leisure activities much reduced now the leisure centre has moved out to... Extra special events needed to bring people into the town from surrounding areas. Extra outside cafe seating in good weather to bring extra good atmosphere to the centre. Popup events around culture/ music/crafts/dance/arts to bring the centre alive."*

*"The town has deteriorated, lack of variety in shopping experience, no main chains other than Asda, no real choice in clothing generally travel to Carmarthen or Swansea/ Cardiff for variety and quality. Too many charity shops and closed shop fronts. A few nice cafes, it would be great to see more of a coffee culture in Llanelli, better restaurants and variety other than pubs. Not aware of anything on offer for young people and children. Older people - Llanelly House offers some courses other than that not aware of any activities on offer for older people. Limited food shops, no butchers/ fishmongers etc.,"*

# Identity

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

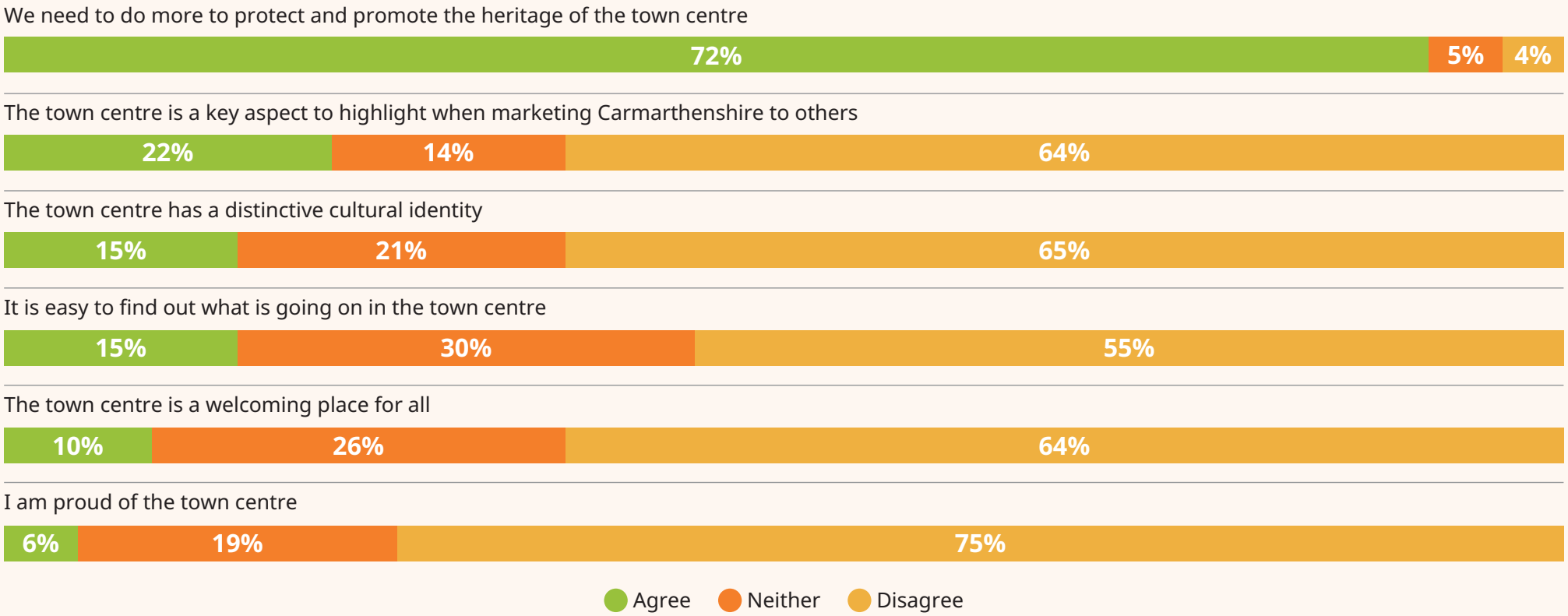
**The placemaking principles define this area as:**

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 3.3 out of 10 in Llanelli**

Identity shines out clearly as an area of opportunity identified through the consultation. People overwhelmingly agreed that more should be done to protect and promote the heritage of the town centre and to make it a place people felt proud of.



## The consultation identified the following key points:

- **Identity loss** – There was a strong sense from people that Llanelli had lost its identify, pride and purpose
- **Lack of uniqueness** – People feel it has declined from a thriving historic town to a neglected centre with little cohesion, appeal or uniqueness
- **Restore and celebrate** – There was a strong sense that people wanted the town's character, culture, history and community spirit to be restored and celebrated
- **Vision** – There is a feeling that Llanelli could be a distinctive, attractive place again — but needs vision, arts, heritage, and community energy to drive it

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

- Greater sense of identity for the town
- Strengthen the local cultural sector
- Improve the place brand
- Strengthen the Welsh language through placemaking activities

Feedback we heard through the consultation included:

*"Promote the Welsh language. Would be nice to see more of the language displayed/ used"*

*"The identity of the town is a bit of a mishmash, which is natural for the type of town we are. But pulling in some more heritage and arts based projects would be a positive..... Maybe we need to look a little more at residential opportunities with these older properties, as we are flooded with commercial units at the moment."*

*"The Council has removed any identity Llanelli had in demolishing all its lovely buildings and infrastructure. It used to be such a lovely looking place to live and now it just looks haphazard and ugly with no go areas and a mess. Just clean it all up please."*

*"We had an identity through our works/ industries. We need to forge a new identity. Still strong communities. A range of skills from previous employment"*

# 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.

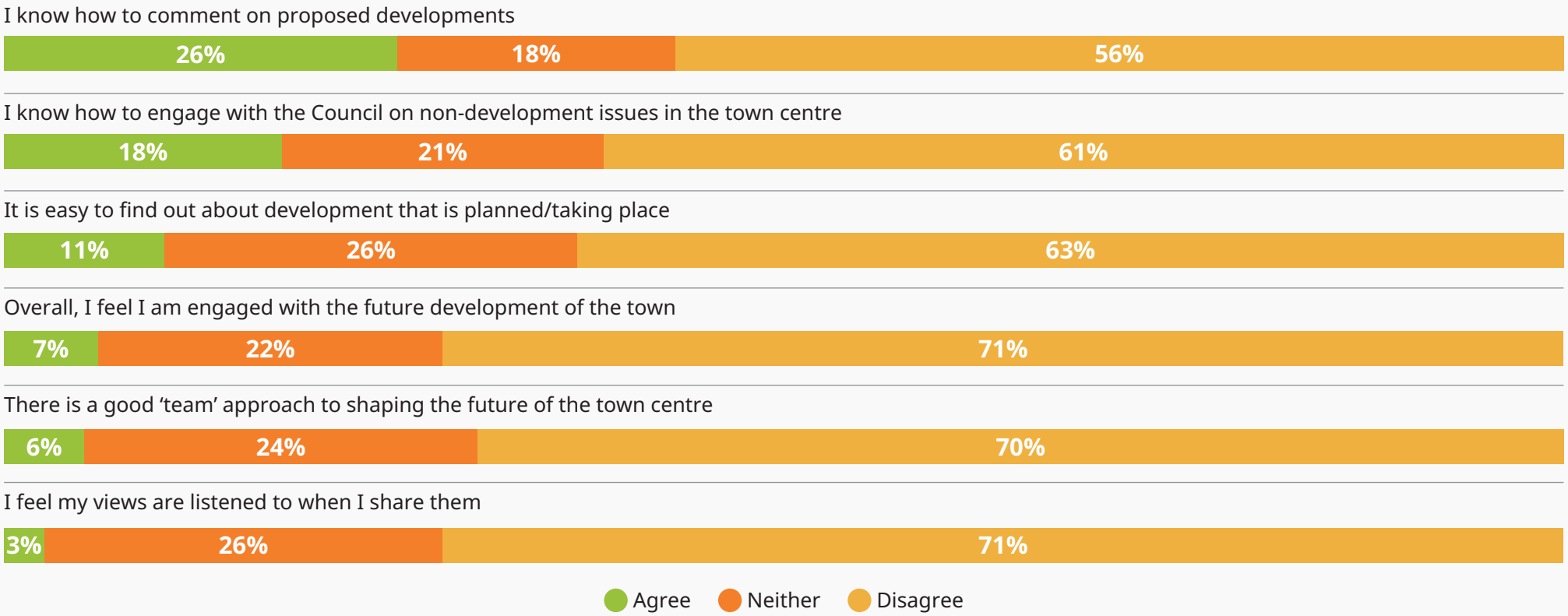
**The placemaking principles define this area as:**

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 3.5 out of 10 in Llanelli**

The strong feeling through the consultation was that people did not feel engaged in the future of the town and a strong sense that people did not think their views were listened to.



## The consultation identified the following key points:

- **Lack of trust** – People highlighted a lack of trust in local decision making. People felt that consultation was tokenistic
- **Greater transparency** – People wanted more transparency, clearer communication, and real opportunities to influence the future of their town
- **Listening** – People felt investment was directed to projects they see as ineffective or irrelevant, and they wanted the Council to listen and invest in what locals actually say they need

Our own review and the consultation identified the following placemaking outcomes for people and communities in Llanelli:

- More opportunities for people to be involved in the town development
- Better coordinate internal Council policies/processes to support town centre development
- Improve connections with the voluntary sector
- Improve working between Town and County Council
- Create healthier towns

Feedback we heard through the consultation included:

*"Generally it feels that we're not listened to as local residents. This doesn't encourage one to engage which is then a self-perpetuating cycle"*

*"Community engagement in Llanelli needs to move beyond one-off consultations and become a genuine, ongoing partnership between local people and those leading regeneration projects. Too often, engagement feels like a passing gesture something done to the community rather than with it. The people of Llanelli should be involved in the entire design process from early visioning to prototyping, testing, and ongoing iteration. This means regularly bringing residents, traders, and young people back into the conversation as plans evolve, so they can see their ideas reflected in real outcomes. When people can point to something in the town centre and say "that was our idea" or "we helped make that happen," it builds genuine ownership, pride, and trust."*

# 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 41 for Key to colours) | Priority |
|---|---|---|
| Greater action around town centre first planning policy | Assess new developments, including the future of existing assets owned by the Council, for the impact they have on the town centre | High |
| | Work with the Health Board to understand their longer term plans for the Dyfed Drug and Alcohol Services | High |
| Improve connections between the town and coast | Develop a dedicated strategy for Station Road to improve connections | High |
| Improve spatial organisation of town | Explore options for Market Street South | High |
| | Address vulnerable backs across the town. Strengthen frontages and connections to achieve this | 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' | High |
| Improve key buildings | Redevelop former Iceland site and improve the block with active frontages | High |
| | Create infill developments for the current multi-storey above market | High |
| | Redevelop the Leisure Centre site | High |
| Increase residential density in surrounding town | Redevelop bus station site to south with residential of mixed type and tenure. This is technically outside the red line of town centre but will 'feed' town centre vitality | Medium |
| | Explore the future of the Courts site and develop a strategy that fits with the town's future | Medium |
| | Explore options for Crown Buildings and Crown Precinct | Medium |

| Outcome | Action (See page 41 for Key to colours) | Priority |
|---|---|---|
| Better coordinate internal Council policies/processes to support town centre development | Look at permitted development rights and how these might be further leveraged to encourage further town centre development by building owners | High |
| | Create fast track grant routes to enable quicker decision making on lower risk projects that will bring swift returns through business start-ups/growth projects | High |
| | Coordinate licensing, enforcement and environmental services to ensure that there is a shared set of supportive management principles. Create a single point of contact for Carmarthenshire County Council | High |
| | Develop a combined 'team' approach for approaching external investors. This includes being unified around a clear brand and goals as a cross-sectoral team approach | High |
| | Support the digital transition for small businesses to better compete in an online world | Medium |
| | Assist with micro-renewables to help mitigate climate change but also reduce town centre costs. This could include bio solar roofing at larger sites | High |
| Improve measurement and communication of progress | Establish a 'town centre health check' tool | High |
| | Provide a 'State of the Union' report via Task Force each year | High |

# Public realm

| Outcome | Action (See page 41 for Key to colours) | Priority |
|---|---|---|
| Maintain and improve existing spaces | Explore opportunities for community ownership for public realm spaces | High |
| | Develop on-street interventions/activations in the public realm at Vaughan St/Stepney St and Cowell St/Stepney St junctions – these may be in 'popup' form in the early stages and may take the form of arts/cultural or play projects but also temporary events like street markets/stalls/vendors | High |
| Greater amounts of green infrastructure throughout the town | Identify opportunities for greening across the town with a town level GI strategy | High |
| | Improve Spring Gardens as a town centre park | High |
| More opportunities for play in the street scene | Consider opportunities for play activities within the town centre | High |
| More people making more use of public spaces (with the consequence of reducing anti-social behaviour) | Introduce more regular visible policing | High |
| | Create attractive spaces for people to enjoy | High |
| | Develop a Welcome to Llanelli scheme. Provide on street ambassadors whose function is enabling and welcoming rather than regulatory (but who can assist when there's a problem) | High |
| Improved safety and security on-street (particularly in the evening) | Significantly increase town centre residential above shop and ensure natural surveillance is maximised | High |
| | Improve lighting of dark spaces for safety | 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 41 for Key to colours) | Priority |
|---|---|---|
| Improve the pedestrian environment | Improve crossing points on the ring road, particularly strengthening the east-west connections to residential communities beyond Stepney Street, and then north-south connections through Spring Gardens and down Cowell Street to residential communities. Better connect eastern end of Church Street and improve pedestrian environment at Murray Street crossroads | High |
| Improve cycling infrastructure | Work with Active Travel to identify opportunities for new cycle routes. Focus on immediately surrounding residential communities reducing their car journeys into the town centre with alternative travel means | Medium |
| | Create secure cycle storage in town centre for privately owned cycles | High |
| | Assess feasibility of cycle hire with nodes at Pentre Awel, Train Station and town centre, allowing for one-way trips where cycles can be left at destination | High |
| Improve connections to train station and beyond | Establish a circular bus route and/or land train that improves the public transport between the train station and waterfront and the town centre | High |
| | Improve signage and visual cues to both physically and thematically better link train station/waterfront and town centre | High |
| Improve public transport | Work with public transport providers to improve the frequency and reliability of the public transport offer | High |
| Improve access to Llanelli town centre for short stay trips | Provide standardised 30 minutes of free parking | High |
| | Create a deliveries policy emphasising out of hours wherever possible | High |
| | Provide live signage publicising available spaces to reduce speculative journeys to find parking | High |
| | Create ultra short-term (free) pickup/drop off bays | High |
| | Encourage car sharing and incentivise public transport schemes for town centre workers | High |


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Key movement lines
Broken movement lines
Design interventions for significantly improved pedestrian crossings
Create/improve straight line pedestrian/cycle crossings
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# Mix of use

| Outcome | Action (See page 41 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 in the town of a mix of type and tenure particularly above shops recognising the particular challenges associated with nitrates in the town | High |
| | Consider aspiration of a significantly increased town centre residential population in relation to schools' policy to ensure this does not hinder long-term goals | High |
| | Seek to develop and retain 'exporting industries' in and around the town centre – professional services and creative industries notably | Medium |
| | Activate the former EE shop as a key corner site, as it is facing a key part of the public realm | High |
| | Explore mechanisms for strengthening the nighttime economy and the experience economy with a specific focus on opportunities that bring older people and younger people into the town | High |
| | Explore options for approaches that help diversify the retail offer | High |
| More emerging businesses receive support | Continue developing pop up and meanwhile spaces with a specific focus on Stepney Street | High |
| | Link emerging businesses with existing business support | High |
| Improve key buildings around the town | Continue working to bring into use and re-develop key sites in the town | High |
| | Consider how enterprises currently outside the town centre could bring a presence into the town centre | High |
| Increase use of public realm for leisure | Further enhance existing relationships with key local partners to better activate public spaces, making space for people to dwell and enjoy informally, as well as more formal organised events | High |



*Unit Nineteen popup in Swansea*




*Popup spaces previously delivered in Llanelli*




*PopUp uses of empty units*

# Identity

| Outcome | Action (See page 41 for Key to colours) | Priority |
|---|---|---|
| Greater sense of identity for the town | Develop a specific programme of events that aim to bring people into the town and recognise and value its strengths | High |
| Strengthen the local cultural sector | Consider the creation of a creative / cultural forum. Explore potental with the Pride in Place Neighbourhood Board | High |
| | Support stakeholders to apply for Town of Culture when appropriate | High |
| | Apply for funding to develop an arts programme for the town in partnership with a voluntary sector lead. Include a dedicated music programme that helps reestablish the home of the land of song as an identity and builds on choral traditions | High |
| | Build on local assets such as Ffwrnes, Carmarthen Bay Film Festival, Ymlaen Llanelli, People Speak Up and others already delivering to strengthen them and their existing activities but also to coproduce through enhanced partnership working | High |
| | Seek to create a creative industries cluster based on local creative industry strengths of Tinopolis and Carmarthen Bay Film Festival | High |
| | Explore feasibility of 'cultural quarter' proposals for John Street | High |
| Improve the place brand | Create a brand identity that plays on what is there and can be built on | Medium |
| | Create a town level cultural strategy that focuses on building on existing assets | High |
| | Explore how the Scarlets identity can be better brought into the town | High |
| | Create thematic links (as well as physical ones) with the out-of-town retail and Scarlets. Establish the identity of the centre culturally, which includes independent shops, leisure, food and beverage experiences, and arts | High |
| | Light all heritage buildings | High |
| | Consider lighting events and activities in darker winter months | High |
| | Explore how Y Ffwrnes can drive further food and drink sales by linking promotion and ticket sales - 'dinner and a show' with a particular focus on SMEs | Medium |
| Strengthen the Welsh language through placemaking activities | 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 | Medium |



*Feature lighting on buildings of significance in Lille*



*Street markets bringing life to public spaces as well as trading opportunities for small local businesses in Llanelli*



*Image supplied courtesy of Ymlaen Llanelli*




*Image supplied courtesy of Carmarthen Bay Film Festival*

# People and community

| Outcome | Action (See page 41 for Key to colours) | Priority |
|---|---|---|
| More opportunities for people to be involved in the town development | Continue the refocus of the Task Force. Ensure it is focused on driving change (proactive rather than reactive). Develop a culture of a 'team' approach, including increasing the understanding of the constraints under which local authorities operate and focusing on actions | High |
| | Support more activities with young people | High |
| | Create a programme of regular community engagement around the town development | High |
| Improve connections with the voluntary sector | Support voluntary sector organisations and explore how they can be engaged as community partners | High |
| Improve working between Town and County Council | Create a more joined-up strategy between County and Town Councils for placemaking delivery and financing | 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 | Hold regular cross sector meetings within the Council focused on placemaking actions | High |
| | 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*

# Making it happen

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

# Making it happen in Llanelli

Llanelli 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<br>Economic activity level<br>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)<br>Meters 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<br>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<br>Increase in visitor numbers<br>Do you like living in Carmarthenshire<br>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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