

# Pontarddulais Heritage Centre Project Feasibility Study



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**Mae'r ddogfen hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg / This document is also available in Welsh**

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## Executive Summary

To achieve the end goal of a Heritage Centre in Pontarddulais, the Town Council has been leading the way in facilitating funding to carry out a feasibility study to assess the costs and steps required to create a centre. Pontarddulais Town Council has been looking into utilise the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor space at the Institute for a museum as there is no dedicated area for the learning of the history of Pontarddulais.

The focus for Pontarddulais is to build on the area's industrial and cultural heritage and assess the potential of creating a Heritage Museum / Centre. Led by Planning Solutions Consulting Ltd, a feasibility study has been undertaken to explore the case for establishing a Heritage Museum, looking at location options and providing a high-level financial model for the museum in the preferred location.

The research, consultation and site assessment demonstrate strong support for a physical centre within the Institute building, which celebrates the history and heritage of the town. There is an opportunity to utilise the space on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor to create a heritage experience that celebrates Pontarddulais as a place and broadens the appeal of the town with a strong focus on delivering community benefits. The space is in sound condition and able to be adapted for this use. It will be important to ensure the development meets community needs particularly health and wellbeing as well as celebrating the rich history of Pontarddulais.

The suggested way forward is a phased approach, with the immediate focus on creating a re-freshed, unmanned space with interpretation boards / exhibits to celebrate the town's history and heritage. This would provide a 'taster' experience inspiring visitors to explore the rich cultural heritage and stories of the county. If successful, over time, the space could be developed into a Community Heritage Centre with a mix of permanent exhibits and flexible display space.

The preferred option enables the design and development of an interesting, compelling and accessible narrative based on human impact over time on Pontarddulais and vice versa in terms of the ways the townscape, landscape and bio-diversity have inspired and influenced the development of the town.

The feasibility study identifies a number of themes that could become the focus of a valued community resource:

- Introduce the Pontarddulais ‘timeline’: highlights of the town’s human story from past to present, in an engaging and entertaining way
- Act as a signpost to other sites, attractions, monuments and activities across the town, specifically the Heritage Walk
- Cover intangible as well as tangible heritage: include the quirky, the current and everyday
- Link Pontarddulais events, personalities and places to wider national and global impacts

A range of interpretation panels, display cases, multi-sensory, innovative and interpretive techniques as well as temporary collections will be used. A detailed interpretative plan will need to be developed.

It will be necessary for the Town Council to put in place a Funding Strategy which will provide an overview of actions, timescales and possible funding sources/approaches to achieve the preferred option. There are a range of funding opportunities that will need to be investigated including:

- UK Shared Prosperity Fund
- National Lottery Heritage Fund – National Lottery Project Grants • Brilliant Basics – Visit Wales / Business Wales ([gov.wales](http://gov.wales))

There is little doubt that the success of the project is dependent on the Town Council taking on a leadership, promotion and operational management role to take forward the approach recommended in the feasibility study. In order for the project to be taken forward, a number of key decision and actions are needed:

- Pontarddulais Town Council needs to consider the feasibility report and agree that it will take a leadership role in driving the project forward.
- The Town Council will need to develop a Risk Register to assess the implications of refurbishing the space to create a Heritage Centre for the town.
- A professional design team needs to be procured to prepare an interpretive plan for the space.
- Early discussions are needed with the City and County of Swansea to identify potential funding to support both the design and refurbishments and interpretation costs associated with creating the Heritage Centre.
- A community engagement plan needs to be developed to ensure community involvement in the development and future operation of the programme.

- Discussions are needed with the tourism team at the council to find out the current status of the Pontarddulais Heritage Trail (both in terms of maintenance and promotion).

## Crynodeb Gweithredol

Er mwyn cyflawni'r nod terfynol o gael Canolfan Dreftadaeth ym Mhontarddulais, mae'r Cyngor Tref wedi bod yn arwain y ffordd o ran hwyluso cyllid i gynnal astudiaeth ddichonoldeb i asesu'r costau a'r camau y mae eu hangen i greu canolfan. Mae Cyngor Tref Pontarddulais wedi bod yn ystyried defnyddio'r gofod ar yr ail lawr yn yr Institiwt ar gyfer amgueddfa gan nad oes yna fan pwrpasol i ddysgu am hanes Pontarddulais.

Ffocws Pontarddulais yw adeiladu ar dreftadaeth ddiwydiannol a diwylliannol yr ardal ac asesu'r potensial i greu Amgueddfa/Canolfan Dreftadaeth. Cynhaliwyd astudiaeth ddichonoldeb, dan arweiniad Planning Solutions Consulting Ltd, i archwilio'r achos dros sefydlu Amgueddfa Dreftadaeth, gan edrych ar opsiynau o ran lleoliadau a darparu model ariannol lefel uchel ar gyfer yr amgueddfa yn y lleoliad a ffefrir.

Mae'r ymchwil, yr ymgynghoriad a'r asesiad o'r safle yn dangos cefnogaeth gref i ganolfan ffisegol yn adeilad yr Institiwt, a fydd yn dathlu hanes a threftadaeth y dref. Mae yna gyfle i ddefnyddio'r gofod ar yr ail lawr i greu profiad treftadaeth a fydd yn dathlu Pontarddulais a'i hymdeimlad o le, ac yn ehangu apêl y dref gan roi pwyslais cadarn ar sicrhau manteision cymunedol. Mae'r gofod mewn cyflwr da a gellir ei addasu ar gyfer y defnydd hwn. Bydd yn bwysig sicrhau bod y datblygiad yn diwallu anghenion y gymuned, yn enwedig o ran iechyd a llesiant, yn ogystal â dathlu hanes cyfoethog Pontarddulais.

Awgrymir y dylid bwrw ati fesul cam, a chanolbwyntio gyntaf ar greu gofod wedi'i adnewyddu, heb ei staffio, a fydd yn cynnwys byrddau dehongli/arddangosion i ddathlu hanes a threftadaeth y dref. Byddai hyn yn rhoi profiad 'blasu', gan ysbrydoli ymwelwyr i archwilio treftadaeth ddiwylliannol gyfoethog a straeon y sir. Os bydd yn llwyddiannus, dros amser, gellid datblygu'r gofod yn Ganolfan Dreftadaeth Gymunedol a fyddai'n cynnwys cymysgedd o arddangosfeydd parhaol a gofod arddangos hyblyg.

Mae'r opsiwn a ffefrir yn galluogi'r broses o ddylunio a datblygu naratif diddorol, cymhellol a hygyrch, sy'n seiliedig ar effaith pobl ar Bontarddulais dros amser, ac i'r gwrthwyneb, o ran y ffyrdd y mae'r treflun, y dirwedd a bioamrywiaeth wedi ysbrydoli a dylanwadu ar ddatblygiad y dref.

Mae'r astudiaeth ddichonoldeb yn nodi nifer o themâu a allai ddod yn ffocws i adnodd cymunedol gwerthfawr:

- Cyflwyno 'llinell amser' Pontarddulais': uchafbwyntiau stori ddynol y dref o'r gorffennol i'r presennol, a hynny mewn modd diddorol a difyr

- Bod yn arwyddbost i safleoedd, atyniadau, henebion a gweithgareddau eraill ledled y dref, ac yn benodol y Llwybr Treftadaeth
- Cwmpasu treftadaeth anniriaethol yn ogystal â threftadaeth ddiriaethol: cynnwys yr hynod, y cyfredol a'r cyffredin
- Cysylltu digwyddiadau, personoliaethau a lleoedd Pontarddulais ag effeithiau cenedlaethol a byd-eang ehangach

Bydd ystod o baneli dehongli, casys arddangos, technegau amlsynnwyr, arloesol a deongliadol, yn ogystal â chasgliadau dros dro yn cael eu defnyddio.

Bydd angen datblygu cynllun deongliadol manwl.

Bydd angen i'r Cyngor Tref roi Strategaeth Gyllido ar waith a fydd yn rhoi trosolwg o'r camau gweithredu, yr amserlenni a'r ffynonellau/dulliau ariannu posibl i gyflawni'r opsiwn a ffefrir. Mae yna ystod o gyfleoedd ar gyfer cyllid y bydd angen ymchwilio iddynt, gan gynnwys y canlynol:

- Cronfa Ffyniant Gyffredin y DU
- Cronfa Treftadaeth y Loteri Genedlaethol – Grantiau Prosiect y Loteri Genedlaethol • Cronfa'r Pethau Pwysig – Croeso Cymru/Busnes Cymru (llyw.cymru)

Nid oes fawr o amheuaeth bod llwyddiant y prosiect yn dibynnu ar y Cyngor Tref yn ymgymryd â rôl arwain, hyrwyddo a rheoli gweithredol i fwrw ymlaen â'r dull gweithredu a argymhellir yn yr astudiaeth ddichonoldeb. Er mwyn symud y prosiect yn ei flaen, mae angen rhoi nifer o benderfyniadau a champau gweithredu allweddol ar waith:

- Mae angen i Gyngor Tref Pontarddulais ystyried yr adroddiad dichonoldeb a chytuno y bydd yn cymryd rôl arweiniol wrth symud y prosiect yn ei flaen.
- Bydd angen i'r Cyngor Tref ddatblygu Cofrestr Risgiau i asesu goblygiadau adnewyddu'r gofod i greu Canolfan Dreftadaeth i'r dref.
- Bydd angen cyflogi tîm dylunio proffesiynol i baratoi cynllun deongliadol ar gyfer y gofod.
- Bydd angen cynnal trafodaethau cynnar â Dinas a Sir Abertawe i nodi cyllid posibl i gefnogi'r costau sy'n gysylltiedig â chreu'r Ganolfan Dreftadaeth o ran dylunio ac adnewyddu, a dehongli.
- Bydd angen datblygu cynllun ymgysylltu â'r gymuned i sicrhau bod y gymuned yn cymryd rhan yn natblygiad y rhaglen a'i gweithrediad yn y dyfodol.
- Bydd angen cynnal trafodaethau â thîm twristiaeth y cyngor i ddarganfod statws presennol Llwybr Treftadaeth Pontarddulais (o ran cynnal a chadw a hyrwyddo).



# Contents

	Page
1.0 Introduction	8
2.0 Concept proposition and site review	10
3.0 Area profile	13
4.0 Consultation	16
5.0 The visitor economy and product opportunity	19
6.0 SWOT	22
7.0 Development option	23
8.0 High-level financial analysis and delivery options	31
9.0 Concluding remarks	36

## 1.0 Introduction

### 1.1 The brief and general approach

The extension of the Rural Development Plan and funding package provides an opportunity to address some of the issues and challenges facing the northern rural wards in the City and County, particularly in Pontarddulais, Llangyfelach, Mawr and Penclawdd.

Over the past four months, the Means in partnership with Planning Solutions Consulting, has been undertaking a series of feasibility studies on behalf of the Swansea Rural Development Partnership to support sustainable community regeneration in northern rural Gower. Although different in terms of required outcomes, a common methodology has been applied across feasibility studies for each area, which will enable them to have a platform to apply for funding. This is summarised in the chart below.



In terms of the feasibility studies:

- The commission started with a mobilisation workshop to discuss the background and key issues, collect relevant information, confirm key stakeholder/partner contact details and refine and finalise the full work programme.
- A detailed Engagement Plan has been implemented for each of the four area to ensure that local community groups and key stakeholders have been involved in the feasibility work.
- The feasibility studies are founded on evidence. Each study has involved an analysis of need, opportunity and targeting in the form of an analysis and profile with appropriate econometric analysis and market demand assessment for each area.
- The output has been a range of options around the development opportunities and recommendations regarding the way forward.
- A core feature of the studies has been to align with the LDS aims, objectives and One Planet vision.

## 1.2 Pontarddulais Heritage Centre

The focus for **Pontarddulais** is to build on the area's industrial heritage and assess the potential of creating a Heritage Museum. Led by **Planning Solutions Consulting Ltd**, the feasibility study has explored the case for establishing a Heritage Museum, looking at location options and providing a financial model for the museum in the preferred location.

Through a detailed programme of research and engagement, the work has included:



- Engagement with the local community and a range of stakeholders and interested parties;
- Market demand assessment to identify and quantify the potential need of the Heritage Museum proposal;
- Analysing the opportunity for a Heritage Centre, including advising on core elements of the experience (e.g. interpretation, collections, exhibits etc) and revenue generating centres
- Prepare a trading profile to test the financial viability for a Heritage Centre, and □ Setting our recommendations for a route map to take forward the proposal.

## 2.0 Concept proposition and site review

### 2.1 Project background

Over the past 5 years, Pontarddulais Town Council has been exploring ways of how best to showcase the historic, cultural and industrial heritage of the town. Pontarddulais has a rich cultural history. The Rebecca Riots reached a peak with the first and only pitched battle between the Rebeccaites and the civil forces at the Pontarddulais gate in September 1843. The town was also a key service centre for the once prosperous steel and mining industry. The town's Male Voice Choir has also won the National Eisteddfod on a number of occasions. However, the town doesn't have a dedicated area to showcase this cultural history.

To achieve the end goal of a Heritage Centre in Pontarddulais, the Town Council has been leading the way in facilitating funding to carry out a feasibility study to assess the costs and steps required to create a centre.

Museums and cultural heritage centres are powerful assets for local development. As facilities, they can inspire creativity, boost cultural diversity, help generate local economies, attract visitors and bring revenue. There is also increasing evidence that they can contribute to social cohesion, civic engagement, health and wellbeing. There are several reasons which drive the ambition to create a facility to celebrate the town's history and heritage, including:

- 1) **Space for children to learn** – young people will form an integral part of this project. Though engagement with local schools, the aspiration is to create an area where young people can learn about the history of their community.
- 2) **New and existing members to the community** – for someone who has moved to the area it is difficult for them to find out about the history of the town. The intention is that the centre will act as a community hub for new members. For existing members

of the community, the development of a dedicated area for the history of the town could also provide the same purpose.

- 3) **Increase tourism of to the town** – although recognised as not being a visitor destination, it is hoped that the centre will act as an attraction for the town. This could support local businesses and improve the employment prospects of the town indirectly.
- 4) **Local identity** – Local museums are able to provide a sense of community and place by celebrating a collective heritage, offering a great way to know the history of the town / surrounding area, whilst also generating a feeling of pride within the local community.

The councillors at Pontarddulais Town Council have been looking into utilise the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor space at the Institute for a museum for a number of years as there is no dedicated area for the learning of the history of Pontarddulais. The fact there are no close museums relating to coal and steel, for example, means the younger generation within the community and people who move to the Pontarddulais area do not know the industrial history of the Town.

## 2.2 Pontarddulais Institute

The Institute is owned by the Town Council and is hired out to support a range of local organisations as well as providing space for a Local Produce Market (second Wednesday of each month).

The Town Council was successful in obtaining a substantial RDP grant to undertake a major refurbishment of the Institute. This included provision of a lift and the refurbishment of the top floor as flexible space. The ambition has been to develop this space in the Institute to become a Heritage Museum and focal point within the community.



*Pontarddulais Institute: Top Floor refurbishment*

The refurbished area provides a good quality, light, accessible space to accommodate a new heritage and cultural centre for the town. The Institute is in a prominent location on the High Street. Despite some technical issues, the lift provides access for people with mobility issues. There is limited space to provide some of the ancillary services and facilities associated with museums and heritage centres, for example retail and café space.



**Planning Solutions Consulting**

*Experts in visitor experiences*



## 3.0 Area profile

### 3.1 Introduction to the town

For centuries, Pontarddulais (or ‘The Bont’ as it is locally known) was a small hamlet built around a crossing point of the River Loughor. The first railway arrived in 1839 to transport anthracite from the Amman Valley to Llanelli, followed in 1866 by another line from Swansea and the Graig Merthyr coal mine in 1867. Heavy industry transformed Pontarddulais into a thriving industrial town, with six tinsplate works opening between 1872 and 1910.

Substantial population and housing growth followed in the early 20th century, although the general ‘de-industrialisation’ of the area in the post war years has had a significant impact on the town. Pontarddulais’ housing market is closely linked with that of adjoining Hendy (Carmarthenshire), with both benefiting from proximity to the M4 motorway. Due to its location and close proximity to Junction 48 of the M4 motorway, significant housing growth is projected for the town including housing development on brownfield and greenfield sites, including a major proposed development of 700 homes by Persimmon Homes on land north of Pontarddulais.

### 3.2 Area profile

Pontarddulais is identified as a ‘traditional district shopping centre’ in the Swansea UDP. The town centre is located the furthest distance from Swansea City Centre and lies adjacent to the boundary with Carmarthenshire in the north west of the County. It a large district centre, with over 140 units and has a very linear form that extends along St Teilo Street, which is one way in a westerly direction. There has been investment in environmental and public realm works along this street including upgraded paving, as well as tree planting and street furniture. In addition to a range of retail units, the town also benefits from a good representation of non-commercial premises/facilities including a public library, police station, place of worship and a GP surgery.

Pontarddulais is served by regular bus service. Off street parking facilities are few with the majority of vehicle parking opportunities restricted to on-street bays on St Teilo Street. Parking is time limited in these spaces. The main off street car park is located off the centre at Water Street (36 spaces).

## Population

	Pontarddulais	Swansea
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>6,691</b>	<b>246,563</b>
0-15	19.8%	16.9%
16-64	61.4%	63%
65+	18.8%	19%

Annual Small Area Pop Estimates, ONS Sept 2021

- 15th largest ward population in Swansea (of 36), but 7th least densely populated.
- Slightly higher proportions aged 0-15 but lower percentage age 16-24.
- Birth and death rates marginally lower than Swansea averages (2020).
- Pontarddulais has a high proportion of people able to speak Welsh and born in Wales.
- The ward also has a relatively high proportion of couple households.

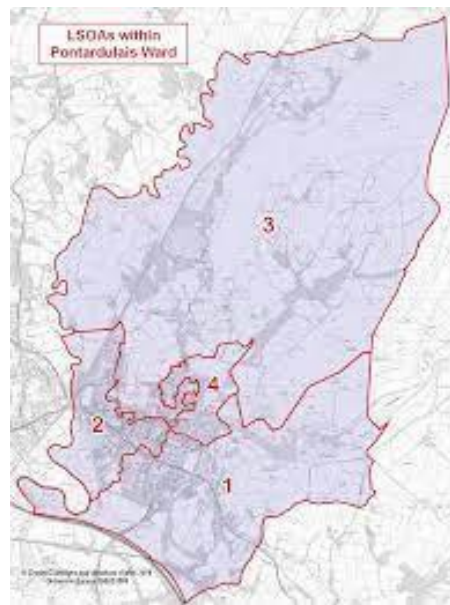
## Socio-economic characteristics

- Estimates of household income for Pontarddulais are available via ONS Model-based estimates at MSOA (Middle Super Output Area) level for 2011/12. The figure for Swansea 001, the MSOA which most closely aligns to the ward (see map adjacent), is £26,900; the 16th highest (of 31 MSOAs) in Swansea and equal to the Swansea median value of £26,900
- NS-SeC data (socio-economic position based on occupation) generally follows Swansea, but indicates an above average proportion of routine and manual occupations (NS-SeC classes 5-7) and fewer people in the 'never worked/not classified' category

The town has an economic activity rate (16-74) of 68.6%, which is slightly higher than for the whole of Swansea (63%). The Claimant Count of 4.5% (August 2020) is also slightly lower than for Swansea (6%).

## Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation

Pontarddulais consists of four Lower Super Output Areas.



- Pontarddulais 4 is the ward's most deprived LSOA overall (ranking 34th of 148 in Swansea, 374 of 1,909 in Wales).
- Pontarddulais 1 is the least deprived of the ward's LSOAs.
- The relatively higher deprivation attributed to Pontarddulais 4 is reflected in the education, physical environment and income domains.
- While overall deprivation is lower in the other LSOAs, Pontarddulais 2 and 3 also rank highly in the physical environment

#### Other Key Statistics

- Location: Approximately 12 km north west of the city centre
- Neighbouring Wards (Swansea): Mawr, Llangyfelach, Penyrheol
- Regeneration Designations: Rural Development Plan eligible ward
- Area: 1,558 hectares / 15.58 km<sup>2</sup> (ONS, 2020)
- Population Density: 429 people per km<sup>2</sup> (2020)
- Population Change (2015 to 2020): +100 / +2% (ONS estimates, rounded) □  
Employment: 1,500 (ONS workplace estimate, 2020).
- Major employers: Tesco, district shopping centre, Pontarddulais Industrial Estate businesses, Macmillan Distribution, Swansea Council (schools).

## 4.0 Consultation and Engagement



## 4.1 Consultation plan

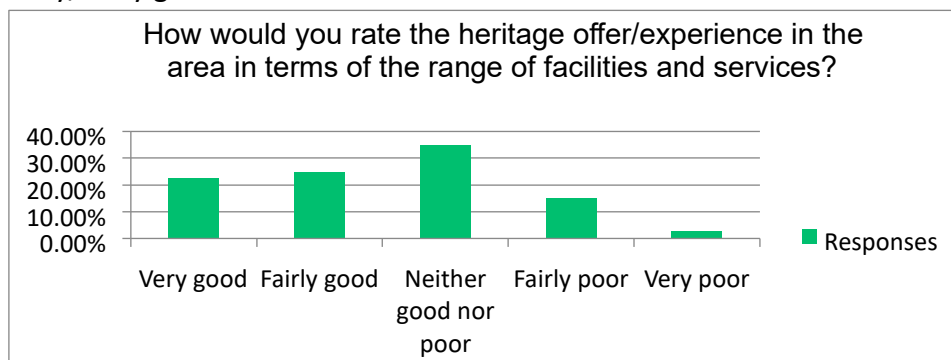
The work has included a detailed programme of engagement and consultation to understanding the needs and aspirations of the local community and key organisations/stakeholders in the area regarding the feasibility of creating a heritage facility in Pontarddulais. The programme, which was agreed with the client project team, is included as Appendix 1.

## 4.2 Community survey

In partnership with the client team, an online survey was designed and promoted widely within the local area (Appendix 2). In addition, hard copies of the questionnaire were available at the Town Council offices and at Canolfan Y Bont. In total, 40 completed questionnaires were returned.

The main outcomes of the survey are summarised below.

- Just under 92% of the respondents were a resident living in Pontarddulais of which 63% were female and 37% were male
- The majority of respondents were over the age of 55 (80%)
- The majority of respondents had visited a range of local heritage attraction including:
  - National Waterfront Museum (95%)
  - Swansea Museum (92%)
  - Gower Heritage Centre (68%)
  - Glyn Vivian Art Gallery (64%)
- Just under half of the respondents had experienced the Pontarddulais Heritage Walking Trail
- There was a small majority of respondents who rated the heritage offer/experience in the area in terms of the range of facilities and services to be very/fairly good



- A range of suggestions were made in terms of what the main components of a new Heritage Attraction in Pontarddulais. The most popular suggestions were:
  - Space to display permanent exhibits about Pontarddulais, specifically its history and heritage

- Exhibits that would appeal to children / younger people
- Space for temporary exhibits
- The most popular heritage themes that local people would like to see featured within the new centre were:
  - Historic Pontarddulais
  - Social history
  - Industrial heritage
  - Pontarddulais past and present
- The majority of respondents would like to see the heritage centre use a range of ways to display exhibits, specifically collections in display cases (80%); interactive displays (65%) and multi-media displays including graphic panels

### 4.3 Stakeholder engagement

In addition to the local survey, discussions about the project have taken place with a range of stakeholders (Appendix 2). In terms of discussions with stakeholders, some of the key themes that emerged are summarised below.

#### Overall support for the proposition

- There was support and enthusiasm for the heritage centre proposition for Pontarddulais.
- The town has an interesting and compelling socio-economic history and the proposition provides an opportunity to celebrate this to a wider audience.
- It is important that the centre has the support (and is led by) the local community.
- More promotions could help increase town centre footfall as would wider investment in destination marketing and more events in the Institute itself.

#### Focus on the town's history and heritage – broad interpretation 'mix'

- All consultees were keen to ensure that the focus was on the history and heritage of Pontarddulais to attract visitors and provide a quality local space for the local community.
- Any design solution will need to ensure that the facility is accessible and will avoid conflicts between circulation of visitors and other activities happening at the Institute.
- The offer and interpretation must be a strong enough anchor to attract visitors – so needs a good mix of interpretation techniques.
- Clever and innovative animation of the space will be essential: resources need to be allocated to prepare an Interpretation Plan for the space (including costing)

### Museum accreditation will be difficult to achieve in the short – medium term

- Although recognised as a potential ambition, securing museum accreditation is seen as a step too far due to the resource requirements needed to achieve the necessary accreditation standards.
- This is not to say that the heritage centre is not of a high-standard in terms of governance, management and inspiration.
- The centre should seek to work closely with the Museum Service managed and delivered by the County and City of Swansea.

### Connect with the surrounding townscape and landscape

- A number of consultees are keen to link the centre with the Pontarddulais Heritage Trail.

### Priority markets

- To underpin viability the project, the priority market is likely to be the local community and ‘learners’.
- Day trippers are the major part of the market with a strong Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) sector.

## 5.0 The Visitor economy and product opportunities

### 5.1 The visitor economy in rural Swansea

Tourism and recreation have become increasingly important sectors of the local economy of rural Swansea. The wider Swansea Bay area welcomes more than four million visitors every year, most of who would have visited the AONB. In 2016, visitors spent over £400m, supported 5,674 jobs. Around 4.6m visitors came to the area of which 1.5m were staying visitors<sup>1</sup>.

Visitor surveys have found that the factors which most influenced visitors to choose the area were the coast (44%), scenery/landscape (44%), beaches (35%), The most popular activity undertaken by visitors was low level walking (2-8 miles) (45%), which has been the most popular activity undertaken by visitors every year since 2005 (52% of visitors in 2012). Natural beauty and tranquillity were identified as the main reasons for visits. Interpretation off and on site can add to visitors’ enjoyment, understanding and appreciation<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Monitor (STEAM) 2016

<sup>2</sup> Information from City and County of Swansea Beaches Management Plan, the Tourism Company, March 2015

The beaches of Gower are seen by visitors, tourism businesses and managers as one of the most important tourism assets not only for Gower itself but also for rural Swansea and the City and County of Swansea and Swansea Bay as a whole. The four current Blue Flag beaches on Gower are all managed by the City and County of Swansea are:

- Port Eynon and Horton
- Caswell Bay
- Llangland Bay
- Bracelet Bay

All four Blue Flag beaches lie within the Gower Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and each comes with its own unique characteristics and qualities.

Total bed stock figures for Gower, where the majority of visitor accommodation is located, are estimated at 21,500, with the majority (87%) accounted for by camping and caravan parks. There is a significant number (c.250) of self-catering properties. Bed and Breakfasts have been declining in number and there are very few hotels in the rural area<sup>3</sup>.

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The area includes a number of popular attractions, many of which continue to invest and develop their product offer in line with future trends and visitor aspirations. The main attractions include:

- Gower Heritage Centre
- Perriswood Archery and Falconry Centre
- A range of castles, e.g. Oxwich, Weobley, Pennard and Oystermouth
- National Trust Visitor Centre, Rhossili
- Penllergare Valley Woods

A wide range of recreational activities take place on Gower, many of which are associated with its special qualities, and especially associated with the sea. Water based recreation activities include surfing, diving, fishing, boating and canoeing. A number of small enterprises have been established to promote and run a number of activities, for example the Welsh Surfing Federation Surf School at Llangennith, Gower Surfing, Oxwich Watersports etc.

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<sup>3</sup> Gower AONB Management Plan 2016

Land based activities include walking, cycling, horse riding, climbing, caving, golf (including Pennard Golf Club, which is listed in the top 100 golf courses in the UK & Ireland), archery, and less active ones such as bird watching, archaeology, and visiting historic sites.

The area includes a number of walks highlighting interesting locations and features along the way. Swansea Council has recently launched four new walking guides as part of a Gower Coast Walks series. A key emphasis is the All Wales Coast Path initiative, which includes the 55-mile-long coast path, which stretches around the entire length of the Swansea and Gower coastline. There are also a selection of walking trails to explore rural Swansea, including the Mawr and Pontarddulais Heritage trails, which tell the story of the area's past.

The area hosts a number of events, many of which add to the visitor product. These include:

- Gower Food Festival
- Wales National Air Show (Swansea)
- Gower Cycling Festival
- Gower Festival (classical music)
- BHF Gower Bike Ride
- Gower Triathlon
- Medieval Fun Week
- Gower Show
- October Cider Festival.

The area has a developing food and drink offer, offering a wide variety of places to eat and drink, many of which serve locally sourced produce. The area has also developed a number of food tours and food foraging trails to explore through initiatives like the Swansea Bay Good Food Circle.

The Leader programme has made investment to grow and develop the tourism product, including the RDP Rural Accommodation Growth Scheme, which secured investment to improve accommodation provision in rural Swansea.

## 6.0 Summary SWOT

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☐ Interesting history and heritage</li> <li>☐ Population catchment (30 and 60 mins)</li> <li>☐ Few cultural alternatives</li> <li>☐ Light, accessible space in good condition</li> <li>☐ Commitment of Town Council, stakeholders and the community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☐ Limited destination appeal</li> <li>☐ No curatorial experience at the Town Council</li> <li>☐ Limited opportunity for revenue generation</li> <li>☐ No standout exhibits / collections</li> <li>☐ Limited resources (capital and revenue)</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☐ Opportunity to extend heritage and cultural reach in the town and boost footfall in the town centre</li> <li>☐ Potential to support community cohesion, e.g. volunteers to assist run the Centre</li> <li>☐ Partnership and community support could open up funding opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☐ Increased competition for public sector finances</li> <li>☐ Lacks of a project champion</li> <li>☐ Inability to refresh exhibits</li> </ul>

## 7.0 Development option

### 7.1 Market opportunity

The research, consultation and site assessment demonstrate strong support for a physical centre within the Institute building, which celebrates the history and heritage of the town. There is an opportunity to utilise the space on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor to create a heritage experience that celebrates Pontarddulais as a place and broadens the appeal of the town with a strong focus on delivering community benefits. It will be important to link development to meet

community needs particularly health and wellbeing as well as celebrating its historic context.

In terms of market analysis, it is likely that key user groups will be primarily formed of the following:

### **Primary**

#### **Local residential marketplace**

- From within 30-minute drivetime contour. The lead audience is likely to be retired people and families but it will also have some appeal across the age groups as a place of interest and learning.
- This is alongside people attending smaller scale historical events and talks linked to the local history (alongside special interest and guest talks)

#### **Learning education visits**

- Range of formal and informal learning opportunities including visits heritage interest. Education visits would be pre-booked and programmed in advance.
- Specialist interest groups, for example heritage market

### **Secondary audiences**

#### **Visitor market**

- The visiting friends and relatives (VFR) market is likely to form an important part of overall visitor mix

## **7.2 Development Principles**

We have used the following development principles, which have underpinned the options generation and appraisal process.

**A heritage resource and centre for local people and visitors based at the Institute:**

- **to understand and embrace the heritage and culture of Pontarddulais**
- **that links with the surrounding townscape and landscape**
- **that presents exhibits in an accessible and informative way**
- **that maintains flexibility to allow community groups use the space to present stories, photographs and displays**
- **that is not a financial drain on Town Council’s resources**
- **that avoids conflicts between circulation of visitors and other activities happening at the Institute**

All of the options will require a degree of place-making and public realm enhancements to address the following essential requirements:

- A positive sense of welcome from the High Street
- Interpretation
- Offsite signage
- Connection to the town centre

### 7.3 Development Options

We set out below the three levels of intervention discussed with Pontarddulais Town Council. The options are of different scale and form, which impacts on the project in terms of capital cost, risk and delivery programmes.

#### Option One: Flexible Heritage Space

**Description**

- Refreshed, unmanned space with some interpretation boards / exhibits to celebrate the town’s history and heritage
- Providing a ‘taster’ experience inspiring visitors to explore the rich cultural heritage and stories of the county



<b>Rationale</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited capital investment</li> <li>• Utilise existing space</li> <li>• Flexible</li> </ul>
<b>Key markets</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Immediate local community</li> </ul>
<b>Disadvantages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lacks a 'WOW' factor</li> <li>• Does not actively support visitor market</li> <li>• Limited revenue generating opportunities</li> </ul>



## Option Two: Community Heritage Centre

<b>Description</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dedicated space highlighting the changing aspects of the history and cultural heritage of Pontarddulais</li> <li>• Mix of permanent exhibits and flexible display space</li> <li>• Connection with the town's built and natural landscape through refreshed Heritage Trail</li> <li>• Managed by Town Council with support from volunteers and local community</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Rationale</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited capital investment</li> <li>• Provides some community facilities</li> <li>• Animates space to celebrate the town’s cultural heritage</li> <li>• Provides an interesting wet-weather facility for locals and visitors</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key markets</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Immediate local community, including education visits</li> <li>• Limited penetration of the visitor market</li> </ul>
<p><b>Disadvantages</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited space</li> <li>• Lack of strong appeal to attract visitor market</li> <li>• Limited revenue generating opportunities</li> </ul>



## Option Three: Accredited Heritage Museum

<p><b>Description</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accredited heritage museum with a range of exhibits and collections</li> <li>• Maximise the opportunities to encourage visitors to participate in, appreciate and value the local heritage;</li> <li>• Operated by the Town Council (supported by paid curator/manager or equivalent)</li> <li>• Appropriate governance and management model in place</li> <li>• Designated opening: seasonal and weekends</li> <li>• Providing space for lectures / talks</li> </ul>
<p><b>Rationale</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flagship facility to promote Pontarddulais' history and cultural heritage</li> <li>• Boost town centre footfall</li> <li>• As with Option 2, provides a wet-weather facility for locals and visitors</li> <li>• Potential to attract stop-over visits from car-based leisure traffic using the M4</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key markets</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism market and local community</li> </ul>
<p><b>Disadvantages</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant resource commitment to fulfil museum accreditation</li> <li>• Little/no experience with Town Council of running museum facility</li> <li>• Limited revenue generating opportunities</li> <li>• High level of ongoing revenue support required</li> </ul>



7.4 Evaluation of options

As set out in the table below, each option was assessed and scored under a criterion. The scores are appraised and allocated based on a range of zero to five where:

- Zero (0) reflects no real impact / high degree of difficulty to deliver •
- Five is the maximum positive impact / low risk of delivery

	Option One	Option Two	Option Three
Strategic fit	3	4	4
Market	3	3	3
Project delivery	5	3	1
Management	4	3	2
Impact	3	4	5
	18	17	15

There is little difference in the overall evaluation score between Options One, Two and Three. The main reason why Option Three generates the lowest scores is the significant resources involved in pursuing museum accreditation and ongoing revenue support required. Option One provides an opportunity to bring an attractive, well animated range of heritage interpretation for the town, which is of a scale and scope that is deliverable.

There is strong support and commitment from the local community and stakeholders to the preferred option, which is seen as being pragmatic and deliverable whilst having the potential to raise the profile of Pontarddulais and to provide a new 'heritage' facility in the town. The suggested way forward is a phased approach, with the immediate focus on Option One, which could lead over time to Option 2 and ultimately Option 3, depending on its success and usage.

Option One still enables the design and development of an interesting, compelling and accessible narrative based on human impact over time on Pontarddulais and vice versa in terms of the ways the townscape, landscape and bio-diversity have inspired and influenced the development of the town. A journey through the history of Pontarddulais does not need to be an old-style timeline of dates and facts but can be interactive and presented according to the visitor's interest in a variety of ways e.g. thematically, geographically or by historical period. We recommend a primarily thematic approach for the permanent exhibition using a variety of interpretive techniques.

The suggested delivery objectives are set as follows:

- Introduce the Pontarddulais ‘timeline’
- highlights of the town’s human story from past to present, in an engaging and entertaining way, e.g.:

Themes	Stories
Origins: where we started	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Early development</li> <li>□ The development of Bont and Hendy</li> </ul>
Age of Saints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ The Old Church on the Marsh</li> <li>□ Relocation to St Fagans</li> </ul>
Rebels with a cause	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Rebecca Riots</li> </ul>
Path to industrialisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Transformation from a rural settlement into an industrial community</li> <li>□ Coal and tin mining</li> <li>□ The railways</li> </ul>
Expansion and Decline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Developments at Trostre and Felindre</li> </ul>
Defence of the Realm: the War Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Pontarddulais war memorial (WW1)</li> <li>□ Tunnelling</li> </ul>
Music, culture and sport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Pontarddulais Male Choir</li> <li>□ Pontarddulais Town Band</li> <li>□ Literary and sporting figures</li> </ul>
Pontarddulais Today	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Pontarddulais Today</li> </ul>

- Act as a signpost to other sites, attractions, monuments and activities across the town, specifically the Heritage Walk
- Cover intangible as well as tangible heritage: include the quirky, the current and everyday
- Link Pontarddulais events, personalities and places to wider national and global impacts
- Use a range of interpretation panels, display cases, multi-sensory, innovative and interpretive techniques as well as temporary collections

A detailed interpretative plan will need to be developed based on the Good Practice

Guidance framework provided by Heritage Lottery Fund, which will typically include:

- Interpretation aims and objectives
- Core Audience
- Themes and Topics
- Interpretive mix
- Management
- Evaluation

## 8.0 High-level financial analysis and delivery options

### 8.1 Financial considerations

#### 8.1.1 Capital

The main capital costs associated with Option One relate to:

- I. the development of an interpretive design strategy for the centre and II. the capital costs associated with developing the space

A key consideration is to get the content right in terms of quality, design and presentation. The overall budget will need to include resources to use specialist consultants and designers that have an appropriate track record in the field of heritage interpretation and visitor attraction development. The overall goal of the interpretive strategy is to generate a description and design for the heritage centre including guiding principles, themes and messages, significant stories and modes of display including detail costs for the centre development and maintenance.

It is suggested that a budget between £15,000-£25,000 will be required to appoint a consultancy with the right experience and skills to prepare a detailed interpretive design strategy and plan for the space.

Clearly, fit-out costs will be determined by the plan. We set out below indicative costs for interpretation:

- **High Technology fit out:** benchmark data is circa £5,000 per m<sup>2</sup>. This budget would allow for an intense AV experience in high technology gallery. The majority of displays would be interactive, with a significant hands-on experience.
- **Medium Technology fit out:** benchmark data is circa £3,500 per m<sup>2</sup>. A medium fit out will have an element of AV and the visitor will be able to interact with the experience. This would include an element of feature lighting and film
- **Lower Technology fit out:** benchmark data is circa £2,000 per m<sup>2</sup>. This budget would allow for very little AV. Exhibits and objects tend to be displayed in showcases with minimal control. Lighting would be limited to track and spot lights.

Option One would entail a low technology fit-out interpretation although it is important to recognise that exhibition costs are increasing. There will be a need to secure funding to refresh the exhibits during Year Three.

### 8.1.2 Revenue

One of the core principles is to ensure that the centre is financially viable and not an ongoing drain on Town Council's funding. There central assumptions underpin the revenue plan for the preferred option:

1. The centre will be free to enter
2. Over the short term, opening hours will be limited (e.g. weekends and when the Institute is open)
3. The facility will be unmanned

The results of the community consultation highlighted that there is little or no support for a café or retail space within the centre. The rationale is that there is a strong desire to support the town centre, particularly on St Teilo's Street and not great 'competition' within the Heritage Centre space. However, this does impact on revenue generation at the Heritage Centre.

The table below outlines an indicative expenditure and income profile for Option 1 based on an established year of operation<sup>4</sup>.

<b>Annual Expenditure</b>	<b>Indicative £</b>
Additional overheads	3,000
Utilities	2,500
Alarm	1,200
Cleaning	1,500
Management time	6,000
Marketing and promotion	3,000
Volunteer expenditure	1,500

<sup>4</sup> Indicative figures based on small scale operation (in the absence of any cost figures from PTC)



<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>18,700</b>
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<b>Annual Income</b>	
Room hire	1,500
Friends / sponsorship	3,000
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>4,500</b>

We have not included any sums for maintenance, insurance or for refreshing the exhibits / collections.

The indicative trading plan will mean that the majority of costs will need to be borne by the Town Council in advance of the development of a detailed revenue trading plan. It is likely that the centre will require an on-going subsidy due to the limited revenue generating opportunities.

## 8.2 Funding

It will be necessary for the Town Council to put in place a Funding Strategy to provide an overview of actions, timescales and possible funding sources/approaches to achieve the preferred option. This may include the appointment of a dedicated Fundraiser to be responsible for identifying and applying for capital funding. At this initial stage, the priority is to secure funds to appoint professional support for the design and development of an interpretive plan for the Heritage Centre (as set out in 8.1.1). The plan will identify and recommend the interpretive techniques and act as a guide to ensure that the site offers visitors and the local community an experience that meets their needs and is affordable both to develop and maintain.

There are a range of funding opportunities that will need to be investigated including:

### UK Shared Prosperity Fund

The allocation for Swansea is £34.4m to support the three core themes of the Fund. The Communities and Place theme is likely to include support for local arts, cultural, heritage and creative activities as well as enhanced support for existing cultural, historic and heritage institutions. It will be important that Pontarddulais Town Council starts a dialogue with City and County of Swansea to explore future opportunities through UKSPF.

### National Lottery Heritage Fund – National Lottery Project Grants

Not-for-profit organisations across the UK can apply for grants for projects connecting people and communities to UK heritage. Applications are invited from Accredited and nonAccredited museums.

### Brilliant Basics – Visit Wales / Business Wales ([gov.wales](http://gov.wales))

Brilliant Basics is a capital fund to deliver basic small-scale tourism infrastructure improvements across all of Wales in order to ensure that visitors and memorable experience throughout all aspects of their stay. The scheme is open to local authorities (Pontarddulais Town Council would need to work with Swansea Council on an application). The total grant available is £300,000, with a maximum intervention rate of 80%. A priority theme is to support projects that remove obstacles and barriers within a destination and improve access to facilities for all. Closing date for Expression of Interest in 16<sup>th</sup> March 2023.

### Museums Association

The Museum Association provides in excess of £1m in funding every year to support projects that make a real impact on in terms of museum development and communities. The majority of awards are for museums, which have either achieved museum accreditation or are working towards it.

### Trusts and Foundations

There are a range of Trusts and Foundations that are potential funding sources for the project, e.g. Paul Hamlyn Foundation, Eranda Rothschild Foundation etc

## 8.3 Delivery

There is little doubt that the success of the project is dependent on the Town Council taking on a leadership, promotion and operational management role to take forward the approach recommended in the feasibility study. Indeed, councils have been vital players in the museum scene since the birth of the modern museum in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Across the UK, a number of councils have (and continue) to look at new models for providing this service, including off-loading the museum to an independent trust. However, the vast majority are still reliant for the majority of funding on a local authority grant, and most would fold instantly without ongoing support.

Utilising the space on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Institute for a heritage facility would add to the regeneration and vibrancy of the town, be a focus for community pride and act as a resource that is accessible for all. The preferred option is of a scale which hopefully will not

be a drain on the finances of the Town Council; however, a robust risk assessment will be required to ensure future viability.

The Pontarddulais Heritage Centre will need to be at the heart of the community. A further recommendation is for the Town Council to develop an engagement plan to involve the local community and community groups in the development and future operation of the space. This will include developing a meaningful volunteer programme, offering ways for local people to become involved in the centre.

## 9.0 Concluding remarks

There is clear support to develop the 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor at the Institute into a centre that will celebrate the history, heritage and people of Pontarddulais. The space is a good size and location to allow a local heritage-type facility to be developed. The space is in sound condition and able to be adapted for this use. An incremental approach, beginning with Option One, provides a pragmatic way of moving the project forward.

The feasibility study identifies a number of themes that could become the focus of a valued community resource.

In order for the project to be taken forward, a number of key decision and actions are needed:

- Pontarddulais Town Council needs to consider the feasibility report and agree that it will take a leadership role in driving the project forward.
- The Town Council will need to develop a Risk Register to assess the implications of refurbishing the space to create a Heritage Centre for the town.
- A professional design team needs to be procured to prepare an interpretive plan for the space.
- Early discussions are needed with the City and County of Swansea to identify potential funding to support both the design and refurbishments and interpretation costs associated with creating the Heritage Centre.
- A community engagement plan needs to be developed to ensure community involvement in the development and future operation of the programme.
- Discussions are needed with the tourism team at the council to find out the current status of the Pontarddulais Heritage Trail (both in terms of maintenance and promotion).

## Appendix 1: Pontarddulais Town and Heritage Centre Consultation activities

GROUP	PURPOSE	METHOD	TIMESCALE
<p><b>Internal Stakeholders</b></p> <p>Geraldine Williams, LAG Tourism  <a href="mailto:Geraldine.Williams@swansea.gov.uk">Geraldine.Williams@swansea.gov.uk</a> Tracey            McNulty, Head of Cultural Services  <a href="mailto:cultural.services@swansea.gov.uk">cultural.services@swansea.gov.uk</a>            Swansea Museum            Exhibitions Officer: Karl Morgan  <a href="mailto:Museum.Swansea@swansea.gov.uk">Museum.Swansea@swansea.gov.uk</a>            West Glamorgan Archives Kim            Collins  <a href="https://www.swansea.gov.uk/contactarchives?lang=en">https://www.swansea.gov.uk/contactarchives?lang=en</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☐ Views on the proposal</li> <li>☐ Evidence of need and opportunity ☐ Views on visitor / heritage market</li> <li>☐ Opportunity for the museum, specifically potential component of the experience in terms of stories, collections, exhibits, interpretation etc</li> <li>☐ Link with Pontarddulais Heritage Trail (any monitoring information?)</li> <li>☐ Examples of good practice re town museums</li> </ul>	<p><b>1-1 discussion (Teams or telecon)</b></p>	<p><b>Oct</b></p>
<p><b>External Stakeholders</b></p> <p>National Waterfront Museum</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☐ General view on the proposal</li> <li>☐ Views on local heritage market</li> <li>☐ Opportunity for the museum, specifically potential component of the experience in terms of stories, collections, exhibits, interpretation etc and relationship with NWM (mobile exhibits?)</li> </ul>	<p><b>1-1 discussion (Teams or telecon)</b></p>	<p><b>Oct</b></p>

<p><b>Community Groups</b></p> <p>U3A</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☐ Views on the proposal</li> <li>☐ Views on visitor / heritage market</li> </ul>	<p><b>1-1 discussion (Teams or telecon)</b></p>	<p><b>Oct</b></p>
<p>Mrs Carol Thomas - <a href="mailto:carol.thomas67@sky.com">carol.thomas67@sky.com</a> 01792 936361.</p> <p>Canolfan Y Bont Cath Harris <a href="mailto:canolfanybont@gmail.com">canolfanybont@gmail.com</a></p> <p>Graig Merthyr Memorial Committee (ex-colliery) <a href="mailto:kelvin.williams@pontarddulaistowncouncil.gov.uk">kelvin.williams@pontarddulaistowncouncil.gov.uk</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☐ Opportunity for the museum, specifically potential component of the experience in terms of local stories, collections, exhibits, interpretation etc</li> <li>☐ Links with other local heritage groups</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Local Community</b></p>	<p>Local engagement to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☐ assess support for local town museum which celebrates its past, present and future</li> <li>☐ areas of interest</li> <li>☐ market for museum</li> </ul> <p>(</p>	<p><b>Local community survey via:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- survey monkey (*)</li> <li>- selfcompletion questionnaire</li> </ul>	<p><b>Oct-Nov</b></p>

<p><b>Town Council Members</b></p>	<p>Initial discussion with TC to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ review project concept</li> <li>□ aims and objectives</li> <li>□ agree focus – a focal point which celebrates the town’s past, present and future?</li> <li>□ target market for museum</li> </ul>	<p><b>Teams or face-toface workshop</b></p>	<p><b>Nov</b></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ interpretation and exhibits</li> </ul> <p>Following feasibility study</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ share outcome of study</li> <li>□ proposed way forward</li> <li>□ role of TC</li> </ul>		<p><b>Jan 2023</b></p>

**(\*) to be widely promoted by CCS, PTC. LAG and other local community groups. Hard copy to be available at Stories of a Changing Landscape exhibition**