

# Barry Chamber of Trade - Barry Beyond 2000

CONTENTS	PAGE
<i>PREFACE</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>1 INTRODUCTION</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>2 LOCALITY</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>3 CATCHMENT AREA</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>4 BROAD OPINION</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>5 KEY AREAS</i>	<i>4</i>
5.10 The Waterfront	4
5.20 The Town Centre - Holton Road and Kings Square Sector	4
5.30 The Town Centre - Broad Street and High Street Sector	5
5.40 Barry Island	5
<i>6 ENVIRONMENT, IMAGE AND SOCIAL ISSUES</i>	<i>7</i>
6.10 Physical Environment	7
6.20 Services and Maintenance	7
6.30 Crime and Security	7
<i>7 COMMUNICATIONS, LINKS AND VISITOR FLOW</i>	<i>8</i>
7.10 Access	8
7.20 Links to Key Areas	8
<i>8 MARKETING</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>9 INTERACTIVE COMMUNICATION</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>10 CIRCULATION</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>11 CONCLUSION</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>12 KEY DEVELOPMENTS</i>	<i>11</i>

## **PREFACE**

The Barry Chamber of Trade has traditionally sought to debate the economic and social issues that influence the growth and development of the town. Through its depth of experience and expertise the Chamber is able to offer informed opinion on a broad spectrum of issues.

In recent years the Chamber has become increasingly concerned at the lack of any meaningful consultation with successive Local Authority Administrations and the gradual decline in the economy and stature of Barry despite the towns enviable location and underlying strengths.

In this document the Barry Chamber of Trade has noted an opinion on the future economic development and environmental regeneration strategy for Barry. This Opinion attempts to consider some of the complex issues involved and concentrates on tourism, leisure and retail, which form a

major part of the town's economic structure. Limitations dictate that it cannot be expected to provide a more detailed view.

It is hoped this Opinion will signal the start of much greater communication between the Barry Chamber of Trade and the Vale of Glamorgan Administration.

Meaningful debate over issues effecting the town will undoubtedly be beneficial and help to establish sound policy for the future of Barry.

## **BARRY - A TOWN IN NEED OF AN IDENTITY AND DIRECTION**

### **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.10 The Barry Action Partnership between the Welsh Development Agency and the Vale of Glamorgan Council has commissioned URBed (Urban and Economic Development Group) to report on the progress and direction of the regeneration and development of the town.
- 1.20 URBed is actively seeking the views of every section of the community in respect of Barry's long-term direction and identity.
- 1.30 To this end the Barry Chamber of Trade has prepared this Opinion that reflects the collective view of its members on how to develop the regeneration strategy and action plan for Barry.
- 1.40 The Chamber also sees this Opinion having a much wider circulation. It welcomes debate on any issue raised in the contents and actively seeks to participate in meaningful dialogue and involvement in active partnership.
- 1.50 No specific reference has been made for the responsibility for the overall delivery of points raised in the Opinion. Barry Chamber of Trade sees this as the next step.
- 1.60 This document represents Chambers' broad view of the future economic and urban regeneration of Barry. It is intended to provide a basis on which to develop and expand opinions and policies further.

### **2 LOCALITY**

- 2.10 Barry is located on the best stretch of Welsh Heritage Coastline this side of the Mumbles. It offers a rare variety of outstanding geographical features which include Porthkerry Country Park, The Knap Gardens and Lake, Pebble Beach, The Old Harbour and Watch Tower Bay, Whitmore Bay with Friars Point and Nell's Point, Jackson's Bay, The Waterfront and Docks.
- 2.20 The area backs onto the outstanding natural beauty of the Vale of Glamorgan.
- 2.30 Within three miles of the town is Cardiff Wales National and International Airport which has still to realise its full potential.
- 2.40 Barry's proximity to Cardiff and the M4 is significant. The massive investment and expansion of the Capital, which attracts millions of visitors, should be capitalised upon to have a positive knock-on effect for the town.

2.50 There are very few localities within a wide area that offer as much or have so much potential.

### **3 CATCHMENT AREA**

3.10 Traditionally the catchment area for shoppers is the Vale of Glamorgan. It is hoped the regeneration of the Town Centre will not only help to reverse the trend for out of town shopping but also attract shoppers to Barry from a wider area.

3.20 As a seaside town Barry has drawn in visitors not only from the Vale and the Welsh Valleys but also from South East Wales, the Midlands, Bristol and the near South West. Whilst the appeal of the Barry Island and the Town has diminished in recent years, comprehensive regeneration can reverse the trend.

### **4 BROAD OPINION**

4.10 Decades of industrial decline and the effects of the recession of the 1980's have had a lasting effect on the economy of Barry with a significant decline in the prominence of the port and manufacturing based industries. Major economic changes and reluctance to invest has resulted in large scale job losses in the area with the inevitable reduction in local spending power having a negative effect on local businesses and the town in general. The delay by successive local administrations in recognising the need to place more emphasis on effective economic regeneration, in response to changes in the local economy, has also had its effect. The considerable economic development potential for the town, created by the reclamation of the dock area, finally represents a major opportunity to kick-start the town's regeneration process and must be fully capitalised on.

4.20 In order to return to lasting prosperity, Barry must expand a comprehensive economic and environmental regeneration strategy that takes into account all aspects of the town's diverse economic profile that includes industry, administration, commerce, tourism, leisure and retail. To secure new job opportunities and the town's future prosperity, we should strive to regenerate the local economy by attracting large national and international companies to the area, encouraging the growth of existing and new businesses and by recognising tourism, leisure and retail as an integral and significant part of the town's economic structure.

4.30 Whilst encouraging new industry and commerce is critical to the successful regeneration of the town, Barry's identity lies with the sea. By capitalising on an enviable coastal location offering a wealth of outstanding natural features, and regenerating the Town Centre shopping areas, Barry has a unique chance to develop an identity as a major attraction for shoppers and visitors seeking a wide variety of leisure activities. A coastline theme park if you like.

4.40 To achieve this we must recognise the town's strengths and develop them. Whilst Barry is made up of a number of smaller communities, each with its own local identity, the thrust of regeneration should be concentrated in the three key areas of the Waterfront, Town Centre Areas, and Barry Island, where the opportunity for economic development is greatest. Each should be viewed with equal importance as collectively they reflect the spirit of the town, and if fully exploited, will help regenerate the town's economy and establish Barry as a major leisure destination.

- 4.50 By channelling resources and energies into these key areas to create an inviting and appealing environment for business and consumers alike, the town will attract inward investment, secure job opportunities and reduce leakage from shoppers to other areas ensuring all of Barry's individual communities and the town as a whole will benefit and prosper.

## **5 KEY AREAS**

### **5.10 *The Waterfront***

- 5.11 Hopefully the regeneration of the Waterfront will result in an enviable mixed use development the town can be proud of providing a combination of commercial activity, quality housing, prime shopping, tourism and other leisure uses which will help to establish Barry as a major shopping and leisure destination.
- 5.12 It is vitally important the Waterfront development embraces the major commercial centres to unify the town. Strong road, rail and pedestrian links must be established from the Waterfront to the Town Centre, Broad Street and Barry Island if the whole of the town is to benefit.
- 5.13 The Barry Dock Railway Station should become the hub of an integrated transport system linking all key areas of the town. The station should be the start for rides on the Vale of Glamorgan Steam Railway to Broad Street and Barry Island. This will also provide opportunities for the Valley Lines and the Steam Railway Company to offer joint ticketing and marketing opportunities etc.

### **5.20 *The Town Centre - Holton Road and Kings Square Sector***

- 5.21 The simultaneous regeneration of Holton Road and Kings Square with strong links to the Waterfront is essential if Barry is to improve its image and attract shoppers. Construction of the planned Thompson Street bridge link to the Waterfront should therefore be a priority. Regenerating the Town Centre will greatly help restore pride in the town and should be considered an essential goal in any regeneration plan.
- 5.22 Redevelopment of the Town Hall and Kings Square area with a new enlarged Library is crucial in creating a proper focal point and an anchor for future development.
- 5.23 Redevelopment of the RCT site with a quality development will greatly assist the process of regeneration.
- 5.24 An improved pedestrian precinct should be created by extending the existing area along Holton Road to the junction of Thompson Street. However, to be successful this process needs to be preceded by the provision of adequate free car parking. A Precinct must have the ability to service properties from the rear and provide for a sensible re-routing of bus services.
- 5.25 The increased appeal of pedestrianisation could be achieved by sensitive landscaping, quality street furniture, public conveniences and improved lighting. This will also help to create a safe, attractive environment which is essential to attract shoppers.

- 5.26 The consumer increasingly expects to park close to a chosen shopping venue. The provision of ample free car parking by establishing convenient pocket car parks is critical to the future success of the Town Centre.
- 5.27 The Tuesday Market and monthly Farmers Market should be nurtured to provide continued vitality and variety for the Town Centre, as well as attracting new shoppers to the area.
- 5.28 The top end of Holton Road has been blighted by a high level of vacant and derelict shops. Schemes should be pursued with Housing Associations to restore these properties to domestic dwellings.

### **5.30 *The Town Centre - Broad Street and High Street Sector***

- 5.31 The Hood Road Tunnel is an important link from the Waterfront and the Steam Train Terminal to the West End shopping centre of Broad Street and High Street and deserves particular attention. The tunnel should undergo a complete and thorough face-lift worthy of its importance to the commercial success of the West End. Thought should be given to painting, lighting, landscaping and signage to create an appealing thoroughfare.
- 5.32 A planned Steam Train Terminal at Hood Road should be sympathetically designed to encourage passengers travelling from Barry Island (and eventually Barry Dock) to embark and explore the West End.
- 5.33 To add further emphasis to the Hood Road stop, the development of the EWS depot, possibly as a steam related attraction, could be explored.
- 5.34 The provision of combined shoppers and rail travellers car park close to Hood Road is vitally important to the long-term success of the West End shopping area. Concerted efforts should be made to identify suitable sites for a car park.
- 5.35 The reversal of vehicular priorities in Island Road will make a large difference in terms of encouraging shoppers to enter the Island Road / High Street area when leaving the Waterfront development from under the tunnel. Priorities in High Street itself and surrounding roads should be studied carefully to ascertain whether any change would be of benefit.

### **5.40 *Barry Island***

- 5.41 The decline of Barry can be partially attributed to a change in the fortunes of Barry Island. Whilst it is recognised there has been a sharp fall in the number of traditional seaside holidays taken in this country, Barry Island still continues to draw in day visitors in significant numbers when the weather is favourable.
- 5.42 The Beach and Promenade at Whitmore Bay are now Barry Island's only attractions. The resort is in desperate need of an indoor attraction having become too weather dependent. It is essential Barry Island is recognised as an equal key element in the future success of the town and fully exploited. Great urgency and emphasis should be placed on encouraging the development of both indoor and outdoor attractions. Appropriate sites should be identified for leisure facilities and generous funding and incentives made available to attract investors.

- 5.43 The demise of the traditional British seaside holiday has resulted in the closure of the holiday camp. Few now mourn its passing. Many if not all, however, recognise the urgent need for a new attraction to replace it and an equally urgent need for alternative accommodation for short-stay visitors.  
Part of the old Butlins Holiday Camp site has been sold off for domestic housing. The remainder must be retained for leisure use and not allowed to be swallowed up by residential development. Plans to demolish what remains as the Holiday Camp should be resisted until all options for the site have been fully explored.
- 5.44 Establishing a small scale and select touring caravan complex, possibly sited to the east of the Causeway, is considered a vital ingredient in the quest to attract greater numbers to the town. It could be one of the many new features in Barry to attract visitors. The Wales Tourist Board recognises an increasing market in short-stay holidays and a booming touring caravan sector with the Caravan Club membership at an all time high.
- 5.45 To capitalise on the coastline fully we should look to improve the link between each seafront feature and strive to incorporate the town with the coast. The aim should be to promote Barry as an integrated coastline theme park to attract the consumer. A marina and leisure development at the Old Harbour would consolidate Barry Island with the Knap and the West End. It would vastly improve the image of the seafront and the town as a whole. A marina would undoubtedly be another attraction in its own right and act as a catalyst in turning Barry Island into an upmarket leisure destination with all the commercial benefits it would bring to Barry as a whole.
- 5.46 Investors will undoubtedly be attracted to High Street and Broad Street owing to their close proximity to a marina development. The area could become a bustling shopping and leisure centre providing a mix of more specialist shops, quality restaurants and bars etc. A fashionable West End offering yet another attraction for the visitor.
- 5.47 Conservationists who want to preserve a natural harbour should be persuaded of the much greater benefits a marina development would bring to the town. A marina would not destroy the Harbour. On the contrary, it will ensure the Old Harbour is always portrayed at its best - with a flooded basin permanently hiding many unsightly views. A physical link between Barry Island and The Knap across the headlands would extend the coastal walk, further adding to the appeal of Barry as a destination for leisure pursuits.
- 5.48 The Barry Athletic Club and grounds offers a physical barrier between the Old Harbour and Whitmore Bay. Efforts have been made to relocate the Club. Every option should be explored again to re-site the facility. Financial incentives could be offered to encourage the release of this key site to enable direct access to Barry Island seafront from the car parks and Old Harbour.  
The site is strategically important to the regeneration of Barry Island and any marina development. Acquiring this site could also enable a new traffic system to be created around Paget Road removing a severe bottleneck in front of the Promenade. It would also offer greater flexibility in the provision of car parks and the development of the Old Harbour generally.
- 5.49 Of equal strategic importance is Friars Point House. Moves to auction this property should be resisted until a clear strategy has been developed for the area.  
Consideration might be given to apply to de-list the house to help attract investors.

- 5.50 Barry Island can no longer be thought of purely in seasonal terms. The demand for leisure activities continues to grow and the resort should look to develop as an all year round attraction. By improving the environmental appearance of the seafront and increasing the quality and choice of product range Barry can capitalise on an expanding leisure market. Innovative developments should be encouraged to at least include a premier indoor day-visitor complex providing for wet weather conditions, an image improving marina development and a landscaped touring caravan centre to attract short-stay visitors.

## **6 ENVIRONMENT, IMAGE AND SOCIAL ISSUES**

### **6.10 *Physical Environment***

- 6.11 Barry has been slow to capitalise on its strengths and opportunities and continues to have an image reflecting decay and deprivation. A general appearance of neglect, particularly in the commercial areas of the town with derelict sites and empty shop units greatly contributes to the image of Barry as a poor relative of Cardiff and the Vale. Improving the physical environment and general appearance of the commercial centres will help change this perception and restore pride and confidence in the town.

### **6.20 *Services and Maintenance***

- 6.21 A high level of general maintenance and cleansing must be provided if the town is to successfully promote a new positive image. Also a graffiti squad that reacts immediately to repaint defaced areas should be operated. Failure to remove graffiti speedily merely encourages proliferation and exaggerates the issue.
- 6.22 The proper maintenance of Public Open Spaces and Parks for recreational use by the local population and visitors alike will contribute to the appeal of the town and the social well-being of the community.
- 6.23 Well maintained and accessible public toilets, including toilet facilities for the disabled and baby changing facilities is a most basic requirement of any modern society. The town's lack of reliable facilities must be rectified as a matter of urgency. Consideration should be given to alternative methods of maintaining and managing this service.
- 6.24 It is important to provide a forum for the youth of the town to socialise and play. Regeneration must provide for good recreational facilities and other social related activities aimed specifically at the younger population. This provision will also help to prevent anti-social behaviour in the town.

### **6.30 *Crime and Security***

- 6.31 Barry must create a safe and friendly environment for the well being of the local community and visitors alike.
- 6.32 The introduction of a Council controlled CCTV system and more active policing has resulted in a large reduction in crime and the creation of a safer environment within the town. Consideration should be given to extend the successful CCTV system. The

recent fall in crime figures is welcomed and the Police should be given every encouragement and support to further improve on these statistics and help rid Barry of its crime-related image.

## **7 COMMUNICATIONS, LINKS AND VISITOR FLOW**

### **7.10 Access**

- 7.11 Good communications are essential to Barry's economic regeneration. With an ever increasing number of vehicles on the roads, urgent consideration should be given to improving access to the town. Whilst recent improvements have helped, access is still poor with severe traffic congestion particularly at Culverhouse Cross and Dinas Powys.
- 7.12 The road network into Barry must be further improved to ease current congestion and cater for the inevitable increase in traffic volume in the years ahead. All possible solutions should be considered. Establishing a more direct link to the motorway systems of Cardiff and the M4 and creating a Dinas Powys by-pass would improve access and greatly reduce congestion.
- 7.13 Barry should also look to encourage the development of existing air, sea and rail communications.

### **7.20 Links to Key Areas**

- 7.21 The benefits of scale, central location and close proximity of the Waterfront development to the commercial centres should be capitalised on by establishing strong road, rail and pedestrian links to the Town Centre Sectors and Barry Island. The Waterfront scheme must be an integrating force and not be developed in isolation from the rest of the town.
- 7.22 The planned extension of the Waterfront access road to Barry Island will provide a much needed additional route to the resort and significantly help to link Barry Island to the rest of the town. It is important that White's Corner and the immediate surrounding area is comprehensively redeveloped to create the right impression as visitors approach the resort via the causeway or the new access road.
- 7.23 The expected reinstatement of some regional train services and the planned extension of the Steam Railway from Hood Road to Barry Dock, adds to the importance of the Barry Dock Railway Station as the centre of an integrated transport system linking all key areas of the town. Sufficient car parking should be created at terminals to be able to provide park and ride facilities.
- 7.24 Good pedestrian links from Barry Dock Station and the Hood Road Terminal to the respective Town Centre sectors should be established.

## **8 MARKETING**

- 8.10 Barry must promote a positive image if it is to encourage investment and growth. An effective marketing strategy is essential to the success of the town's regeneration aspirations. The Vale Council must pursue an aggressive campaign to promote the opportunities for development and business presented by the regeneration programme.

- 8.20 As economic and urban regeneration progresses an increasing emphasis will need to be placed on marketing Barry as a major leisure destination and a place to live and work. Out of date, negative perceptions of the town will need to be challenged.
- 8.30 Event-led tourism, particularly for Barry Island would be a powerful tool in putting Barry back on the map and help drive visitor figures up. To be effective, events would need to be many and varied ranging from small local activities to larger national events that could develop over a number of years into multi-day festivals to encourage visitors to stay in the town.
- 8.40 Barry's association with boats, planes and trains provides an opportunity for the town to be linked with events based on a transport theme. Jersey, Hay-on-Wye, Brecon and Glastonbury are known respectively for their flower, book, jazz and pop festivals. Barry could equally benefit from event-led tourism.
- 8.50 A marketing and event plan is needed to give strategic direction and focus. The key question is how the marketing of Barry can be delivered most effectively. At present, marketing is carried out piecemeal by business operators, the Vale Council and the Wales Tourist Board through its regional companies. The messages are often mixed and disjointed. A study should be undertaken to examine the benefits of out-sourcing the marketing of Barry to a specialist private company or creating a partnership marketing vehicle. e.g. Cardiff Marketing Ltd.

## **9 INTERACTIVE COMMUNICATION**

- 9.10 The Barry Chamber of Trade welcomes the restoration of the Town Centre / Resort Manager in April 2001 and looks forward to working closely with the post holder. The Barry Chamber believes the Town Centre manager should attend monthly Chamber meetings in order to build and maintain dialogue between the organisation and the Vale Council.
- 9.20 It is hoped one value of this document is to improve communication between the Vale administration, the commercial sector, developers and their respective advisors etc.
- 9.30 This Opinion should also act as a catalyst for action. The more Local and Regional government departments are aware of commercial support for various schemes, the more confident they can be that the planned developments will benefit the community.
- 9.40 The report could also be used as a means to measure the progress made in the implementation of the whole regeneration policy for the area. The Chamber of Trade believes it would be of value to periodically review this Opinion to reflect the improvements and changes in the overall regeneration process.
- 9.50 For these aims to reach fruition there would be a requirement that regular meetings be scheduled between the Vale administration, regional government officials, the Chamber and any other party who, from time to time may be invited. This would ensure that the main thrust of this Opinion, albeit amended and improved along the way, would not be lost in time.

## **10 CIRCULATION**

- Urbed

- Pride in Barry
  - Barry Action
  - Barry Round Table
  - WDA
  - Rotary Club of Barry
  - Vale of Glamorgan Councillors
  - Barry Lions
  - Assembly Members and M.P.
  - Barry Police
  - VOG European Funding Partnership
  - Cardiff Chamber of Commerce
  - Vale of Glamorgan Council Directorates
  - Press
  - Consultancies
  - Barry Town Council
  - National Chartered Surveyors - Commercial
  - Barry Public Reference Library
- Copies available from Barry Chamber of Trade - [www.barrywales.co.uk](http://www.barrywales.co.uk)

## **11 CONCLUSION**

- 11.10 To ensure a successful and lasting regeneration of Barry's economy to secure jobs and growth, the town must attract large-scale employers to the area and also develop its natural identity with the coast.
- 11.20 Barry's impressive and diverse coastline has several unique qualities and offers a variety of opportunities for economic development. Tourism, retail and leisure related activities form an integral part of the town's economic structure and identity and should be developed to help boost economic growth.
- 11.30 Whilst the regeneration of the Waterfront presents great opportunities for economic development and improving Barry's image as a place to live, work, shop, visit and invest, the Town Centre areas and Barry Island have an equally important role to play in the future success of Barry. The town's complex character and geographical make-up should ensure a regeneration strategy that gives equal emphasis to all three key areas if Barry's future success is to be assured. Developing one area at the expense of the other two will have little or no lasting impact and not significantly improve the economy or image of the town. Improving the poor environmental appearance of the Town Centre areas and Barry Island will generate pride and enthusiasm in the community. A thriving Town Centre will create confidence and reflect a positive image to attract shoppers, visitors and business investment. It is imperative Barry attracts sufficient funding to achieve comprehensive regeneration.
- 11.40 Increased leisure time, more spending power and higher expectations suggests Barry should rebuild on an image of quality if it is to attract shoppers and visitors in any numbers. Lifestyle is the buzzword in the new millennium. Offer the consumer a choice of quality leisure activities by providing a variety of shopping opportunities and premium seafront attractions which competes with and surpasses the appeal of other provincial towns and Barry's economy will expand. Idealistic maybe, but that should be the goal - Barry has the raw materials.

- 11.50 Providing we attract industry and commerce to create significant job opportunities and capitalise on the qualities of the Heritage Coast by complimenting the natural environment with sensitive, consumer led, commercial development, Barry should feel confident about its economic and social future with a re-invented identity as a major leisure destination offering a wealth and variety of shopping and seafront activities.

## 12 KEY DEVELOPMENTS

<b><u>The Waterfront</u></b>	<b>Ref</b>
Development of Barry Dock Railway Station.	5.13, 7.23, 7.24
Extension of the Vale of Glamorgan Steam Railway.	5.12, 5.13, 7.23
New road link to Barry Island.	5.12, 7.22
Touring Caravan Centre (short stay accommodation).	5.43, 5.44, 5.50
Development of the EWS Depot.	5.33
<b><u>The Town Centre - Holton Road and Kings Square Sector</u></b>	
The Town Hall and Kings Square development	5.22
RCT block, Holton Road	5.23
Provision of Pocket Car Parks	5.24, 5.26
Pedestrianisation	5.24, 5.25
Thompson Street Bridge Link	5.21
<b><u>The Town Centre - Broad Street and High Street Sector</u></b>	
Steam Railway terminal at Hood Road	5.32, 7.24
Rejuvenation of Broad Street Tunnel at Hood Road	5.31
Shoppers / Steam Railway Car Park	5.34, 7.23
Reversal of Island Road one-way system	5.35
<b><u>Barry Island</u></b>	
Indoor and outdoor attractions at the Holiday Camp site	5.42, 5.50
Marina development at the Old Harbour	5.45, 5.46, 5.47
Barry Athletic Club Site	5.48
Friars Point House	5.49
Development of Whites Corner	7.22
Promotion of other leisure related attractions – Events	8.30, 8.40, 8.50
Restrictions on domestic housing development on headlands	5.43