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Transforming Towns

Placemaking Grant Framework of Interventions – Revised March 2025 - effective 1 April 2025

The Placemaking Grant, forming part of the Transforming Towns programme, affords Local Authority partners in Wales the broadest and most flexible package of support aimed at revitalising town centres throughout Wales. It is the responsibility of regional partners to decide upon the most appropriate mix of interventions and how they are deployed effectively. This support is available in any town centre prioritised by Local Authority partners.

Any project to be supported from this Framework need to be part of a holistic Placemaking Plan or master plan for a town centre and not supported as standalone projects. These interventions need to be strategic in nature and the activity needs to be planned. Further, the projects need to 'knit together' in the context of both Transforming Towns and wider interventions taking place or planned in selected towns including Housing, Green and Digital Infrastructure, transport as well as circular economy interventions such as repair and re-use cafés in town centres.

A key and important consideration for Welsh Government is that there is a strategic Placemaking Plan in place for a designated town centre. This plan should be bottom up, community driven and needs to involve key partners such as BIDs, Town and Community Councils and local third sector organisations amongst other local groups.

The maximum allocation of Welsh Government grant support to an individual Placemaking project is £300,000. If works are phased and grant is awarded on a phased basis, the total allocation to a single property cannot exceed the £300,000 limit. If a project subsequently requires more than £300,000 grant the additional request must be submitted to Welsh Government as a strategic application. A project must therefore be endorsed by the Place Division Investment Panel and approved by the Cabinet Secretary to receive over £300,000 grant. There is no guarantee of further Transforming Towns support.

Where a project delivers a facility or resource that requires ongoing management and maintenance, applicants must demonstrate that there is a long-term plan for its upkeep.

Applicants are encouraged to pursue all available funding options rather than solely relying on Placemaking Grant. This includes dedicated Welsh Government funding streams such as active travel or the Community Facilities Programme. Non-Welsh Government funding sources should also be considered.

If you need any clarity in interpreting the below or need clarity on project eligibility, please contact your local Welsh Government Regeneration Manager.

Placemaking Plans

A pre-requisite of funding place making activity through Welsh Government Transforming Towns is that appropriate Placemaking Plans are in place or being developed. These plans should be designed in line with the 6 principles of the Placemaking charter: [Design Commission for Wales](#).

- People & Community
- Movement
- Public realm
- Location
- Mix of uses
- Identity

Placemaking Plans should consider a holistic view of the requirements of towns and cities and therefore should include all the current and planned funding interventions from Local Authorities, differing Welsh Government portfolio areas and key private and public sector developments. Further to this, place making plans should not focus solely on WG Regeneration funding and should identify all sources of funding such as housing, tourism and health as examples of opportunity in order to show totality of investment in settlements.

Placemaking Plans are unique to each place but should address the following:

- A clearly identified area within the town or city centre which illustrates the focus of support in delivering the Placemaking Plan objectives. This will be required for each settlement. The intervention area should be restricted to the core town centre with sufficient detail to include streets & landmark buildings/features. The Placemaking Plan and its associated Delivery and Implementation plan should also identify wider development activity and opportunities;
- Detail of the key stakeholders, such as BIDs and/or Town & Community Councils currently operating in the area. Please keep a record of the consultation with these groups and also consultation with other parties such as local Members;
- Evidence of initial and continued engagement and consultation with town centre identified user groups and stakeholders such as young people, older people, ethnic minority groups or disability groups;

- Alignment with wider economic recovery plans, regional strategies and other WG investment plans such as transport and active travel;
- Identification of the issues to be addressed which limit the full potential of the town centres and/or opportunities to be explored such as green infrastructure, housing, health, public realm, vacant shops, and commercial improvements. The outcome of this work will be shared across Welsh Government portfolio areas and key partners such as NRW;
- Development of a community Engagement Strategy as part of the plan, where the community are included at all stages of the Placemaking Plans development and delivery;
- Consideration of the wider threats posed by out-of-town shopping, changing consumer habits, TAN15, phosphates in water impacting Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and wider Climate Change considerations;
- A shared vision for the town centre developed through consideration of the identified issues and feedback from the engagement process with an agreed Action Plan;
- Local Authorities plans will establish a baseline for the defined town centre using available digital technologies in order to establish as a minimum footfall and dwell time metrics at the beginning of the funding period;
- Placemaking Plans should be evolving documents with regular review and evaluation of deliverability. There should be identified actions agreed with the WG and other key stakeholders and partners, through ongoing engagement; and
- Ongoing regional and all-Wales feedback and learning.

Further clarity on the Placemaking Plan requirements for your specific town or city should be discussed with your respective Regeneration Manager.

Evaluation will be a key element of the Transforming Towns delivery. To demonstrate the impact of Placemaking Grant funding Local Authorities will be expected to produce an annual update report (including project case studies) to show the projects' delivered and their impact on prioritised town centres.

Intervention	Scheme Detail	Eligible Applicant	Key Strategic and Policy Linkages	Associated Programme for Government Commitments
<p>Residential Units in Town Centres</p> <p>Where the proposals are intended to deliver affordable or social housing, the applicant should consider whether they can access Welsh Government funding streams specifically for that purpose, including Social Housing Grant by partnering with a social landlord.</p>	<p>To convert vacant floor-space on upper floors into new residential accommodation. The minimum requirement from each scheme is 1 x 1 bedroom self-contained flat.</p> <p>Schemes are expected to deliver accommodation of different sizes to cater for the range of identified housing needs and contribute to the development of sustainable and cohesive communities.</p> <p>Schemes should comply with the Welsh Development Quality Requirements 2021 (WDQR 2021) “Creating Beautiful Homes and Places”, published in July 2021, including meeting</p>	<p>Occupiers or property owners of properties within town centres who either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Own the freehold, or • Hold a lease with a seven year minimum period remaining at the planned grant payment date and who have secured their landlord's written consent to the proposed works. 	<p>Welsh Development Quality Requirements 2021 (gov.wales)</p> <p>Beyond Recycling – a strategy to make the circular economy in Wales a reality: beyond-recycling-strategy-document.pdf (gov.wales)</p> <p>Planning Policy Wales</p>	<p>Make our cities, towns and villages even better places in which to live and work</p>

	<p>the “space requirements” as set out in Appendix A and Appendix B.</p> <p>Where homes are being provided by refurbishment, providers should (if practicable and cost effective to do so) take all opportunities to meet the standard. Where this is not possible and before obtaining planning permission, it must be demonstrated to Welsh Government that homes have adequate space and facilities for everyday living.</p> <p> development-quality-requirements-for-hou</p> <p>Where acceptable to Local Planning Authorities potential conversion of ground floor, as well as upper floors may be considered</p>			
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	<p>for areas not considered to be core retail, where no alternative commercial use can be found.</p> <p>Regard should be given to local authority local Housing Needs Assessments when considering/assessing project proposals</p> <p>What is not eligible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student accommodation (excluding commercial elements of developments which may be supported through other interventions in this framework); • bedsits and studios are not eligible for grant funding; or • Holiday accommodation is not eligible but may be considered for support under Commercial 			
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	Property Improvement Grants.			
Commercial Property Improvement Grants	<p>The Commercial Property Improvement Grant is available to enhance commercial premises in town centres.</p> <p>Its purpose is to enhance building frontages together with the upgrade of vacant or occupied commercial floor space.</p> <p>New/upgraded floor space must be for business use, with each scheme determined on its individual merits at the discretion of local officers and then approved by local and regional project boards. In particular offices, independent leisure, retail, food and drink uses will be considered. Mixed-use schemes will also be considered, but private student lets, will not be considered.</p>	<p>Occupiers or property owners of commercial properties within the designated area who either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Own the freehold; or • Hold a lease with a seven year minimum period remaining at the planned grant payment date and who have secured their landlord's written consent to the proposed works. • For projects that receive up to £100,000 in grant a legal charge is not required, so a lease with three years remaining at the final grant payment date is acceptable. 	<p>Beyond Recycling – a strategy to make the circular economy in Wales a reality: beyond-recycling-strategy-document.pdf (gov.wales)</p> <p>https://wrapcymru.org.uk/resources/guide/low-carbon-resource-efficient-construction-procurement</p> <p>Route map to net zero carbon Wales (claw.wales)</p> <p>Consideration under this theme can be given to the establishment of 'Repair and Re-use Cafes' where other funding routes are not available.</p> <p>Planning Policy Wales</p>	<p>Make our cities, towns and villages even better places in which to live and work</p> <p>Enable our town centres to become more agile economically by helping businesses to work co-operatively</p>

	<p>Offices or commercial premises above retail units will also be considered for support.</p> <p>Grant funding of over £100,000 awarded by LAs to third parties must be secured by way of a restriction and a legal charge (in the LA's name) to cover the value of the grant. For local authority schemes, a restriction only is required (in the name of the Welsh Ministers).</p> <p>WORKS</p> <p>Energy efficiency Any opportunities to improve the energy efficiency of the building energy efficiency should be explored.</p> <p>External External works to the building can include work deemed necessary for</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a project is phased and the total grant award is over £100,000 a minimum seven year lease and a charge/restriction will be required. 		
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	<p>the structural integrity of the property. Items might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shopfronts; • Signage; • Windows & doors; • External lighting; • Roofs and chimneys; Rainwater goods (guttering and down pipes); • Rendering, stone cleaning and repairs, re-pointing; and • Structural works. <p>Internal Internal works to the building can include all work, visible or structural, necessary to complete the project to Building Regulations. This might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Windows & doors; • Improved accessibility; • Walls, ceilings, lighting; • Energy Efficiency measures when 			
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	<p>included as part of the overall scheme;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilities and services, including heating; • Showers and Hygiene facilities; • Bike Storage facilities; • Welfare facilities (e.g. essential washroom and cleansing facilities only); and • Structural work. <p>New Build New build commercial floor-space could be eligible, where a local need for this has been identified, particularly where there are gap sites in town centres.</p> <p>Holiday accommodation Holiday accommodation could be eligible, where a local need for this has been identified, and where there is no</p>			
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	alternative funding available.			
Green Infrastructure	<p>The provision of Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity projects in town centres. Specifically but not exclusively:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green Walls; • Green Roofs; • Rain Gardens; • Greening; • Pocket Parks • Wildflower areas • Street trees • Sustainable urban drainage (SUDs). <p>Other GI or general greening measures are eligible subject to approval of the Welsh Government. Any intervention needs to be strategic and underpinned by a Placemaking Plan and/or Town Centre Green Infrastructure Audit.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Authorities • Business Improvement Districts BIDs • Town and Community Councils • Private Sector occupiers or owners of commercial properties within the designated area who either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Own the freehold, or ○ Hold a lease with a seven year minimum period remaining at the planned grant payment date and who have secured their landlord's written consent to the proposed works. ○ A private sector led green infrastructure project must be 	<p>Factsheet 1 overview of the Environment (Wales) Act English (gov.wales)</p> <p>Beyond Recycling – a strategy to make the circular economy in Wales a reality: beyond-recycling-strategy-document.pdf (gov.wales)</p> <p>Nature Recovery Action Plan https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-05/nature-recovery-action-plan-2015.pdf</p> <p>Local Places for Nature The National Lottery Heritage Fund</p> <p>Local Nature Partnerships Cymru - Home (lnp.cymru)</p> <p>Local Places for Nature Community Packages</p>	<p>Embed our response to the climate and nature emergency</p> <p>Build a stronger, greener economy as we make maximum progress towards decarbonisation</p> <p>Create more community green space in town centres</p> <p>Expand arrangements to create or significantly enhance green spaces.</p>

	This support will not contribute to ongoing maintenance costs in future financial years.	part of a wider regeneration project.	https://keepwalestidy.cymru/our-work/conservation/nature/	
Public Realm	<p>The provision of small-scale public realm enhancements where they are aligned with a natural clustering of regeneration activity in town centres. Where there is demonstrable social and economic impact. Specifically:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The removal or dropping of kerbs for access and egress; • The widening of pavement areas so as to provide outdoor seating and amenity areas; • Permanent planters and screening provision; • Public art as part of a wider place plan and public realm scheme and which support cultural objectives, for 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Authorities. • Business Improvement Districts BIDs • Town and Community Councils. 	Planning Policy Wales	<p>Make our cities, towns and villages even better places in which to live and work</p> <p>Repurpose public space for outdoor events, markets, street vendors, pop up parks and parklets</p> <p>Create more community green space in town centres</p>

	<p>example murals on walls where GI is not deliverable.</p> <p>Other measures may be eligible for support subject to approval of the Welsh Government.</p> <p>What is not eligible:</p> <p>Large scale public realm projects that can be supported from other sources, e.g. public realm delivered as part of a transport scheme.</p> <p>Large scale public realm projects can apply for TT strategic funding subject to regional endorsement.</p>			
<p>Strategic Acquisition</p> <p>Subject to approval and budget capacity, strategic acquisitions supported through Placemaking Grants can become part of larger strategic projects if further grant</p>	<p>Small Scale acquisitions within town centres. This support should not be used to acquire properties that are subject to, or could benefit from, enforcement action. Specifically, this support could be utilised to:-</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Authorities • Business Improvement Districts BIDs • Town and Community Councils • Social Businesses and B – Corps 	<p>Community Asset Transfer (CAT): guidance for applicants GOV.WALES</p> <p>Active Travel Network Maps</p>	<p>Make our cities, towns and villages even better places in which to live and work</p> <p>Support the development of a register of empty buildings and help small businesses move into vacant shops</p>

<p>would take the total awarded to over £300,000.</p> <p>However, there is no guarantee of further Transforming Towns support, so applicants who proceed with a strategic acquisition ahead of receiving an award letter from Welsh Government do so at their own risk.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquire properties in order to complete land assembly for larger strategic proposals; • Acquire vacant properties to bring them back into productive use; • Acquire properties for demolition in order to deliver improved connectivity and permeability in town centres; • Utilise for meanwhile uses/markets/childcare/business starts • acquire properties in order to provide greenspace, play facilities or enhanced public realm; • Support demolition costs. <p>For grants awarded over £100,000:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A restriction in the name of the Welsh Ministers should be placed on the title of a 			<p>Continue our strong partnership with voluntary organisations across the range of our responsibilities.</p>
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	<p>property acquired by a local authority;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A legal charge and restriction is required in the name of the local authority awarding the funding for acquisition by other parties. <p>Valuations A recent valuation (less than 6 months prior to the application date) must have been carried out by a RICS registered surveyor.</p>			
Town Centre Markets	<p>The delivery of the ‘Every Town a Market Town’ philosophy. The development and enabling of local markets for the provision of produce, crafts, food and value added products. This capital only funding will deliver:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The provision of permanent electricity connections to enable market trading. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Authorities • Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) • Town and Community Councils • Social Businesses and B – Corps 	<p>Factsheet 1 overview of the Environment (wales) Act english (gov.wales)</p> <p>Beyond Recycling – a strategy to make the circular economy in Wales a reality: beyond-recycling-strategy-document.pdf (gov.wales)</p> <p>https://www.urbanfoundry.co.uk/wp-</p>	<p>Continue our strong partnership with voluntary organisations across the range of our responsibilities.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The acquisition of trading stalls, stands and platforms. <p>Works must conform and be aligned with the Welsh Government best practice guide for the establishment of local markets (prepared by Urban Foundry).</p>		content/uploads/urban-foundry-markets-guide-short.pdf	
Town Centre Meanwhile Uses	<p>The establishment of temporary meanwhile or pop – up uses in currently vacant premises in town centres. The support should be wholly aligned with the Welsh Government Meanwhile Uses Best Practice Guide (prepared by Urban Foundry).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Authorities Business Improvement Districts BIDs Town and Community Councils Social Businesses and B – Corps 	<p>Factsheet 1 overview of the Environment (wales) Act english (gov.wales)</p> <p>Beyond Recycling – a strategy to make the circular economy in Wales a reality: beyond-recycling-strategy-document.pdf (gov.wales)</p> <p>https://www.urbanfoundry.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/meanwhile-space-guide-short.pdf</p>	
Town Centre External Trading support	<p>The provision of outdoor seating, planters,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Authorities Business Improvement Districts 		<p>Make our cities, towns and villages even better</p>

	coverings, server areas and building canopies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Centre Businesses • BIDs • Town and Community Councils 		places in which to live and work
Shop Frontage Enveloping Schemes	<p>External shop front enhancements where no internal modification or redevelopment is undertaken.</p> <p>Adjacent or closely situated properties need to be targeted to achieve a critical mass and greater impact. Single properties can be considered in smaller district centres where the scheme will deliver significant impact in that locality.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occupiers or property owners of commercial properties within the designated area who either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Own the freehold, or ○ Hold a lease with a 3 year minimum period remaining at the planned grant payment date and who have secured their landlord's written consent to the proposed works. 		Make our cities, towns and villages even better places in which to live and work
Digital Towns	The furthering of the 'digital towns' agenda through the provision of capital items to support baseline digital infrastructure capabilities such as Wi-Fi analytics and LoRaWAN and IoT.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Authorities • Business Improvement Districts BIDs • Town and Community Councils. 	Home Trefi Smart Town (smarttowns.cymru)	<p>Continue our strong partnership with voluntary organisations across the range of our responsibilities.</p> <p>Enable our town centres to become more agile</p>

	<p>Consider how this can be integrated into other interventions such as public realm, Active Travel or the creation of new green space.</p> <p>Investing in digital infrastructure alone will not yield any results, the generation and exploitation of data will be key to the success of this.</p> <p>Interventions will need to ensure culture change, and (working with Smart Towns), demonstrate the value of data and embedding “what does the data say” approach, ensuring it is always used as an evidence base in making strategic decisions that benefits the high street and further afield.</p> <p>To ensure town centres are working towards a</p>			<p>economically by helping businesses to work co-operatively, increase their digital offer and support local supply chains, including local delivery services.</p>
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	recognised baseline of activity, LAs will be required to nominate an officer to consider SMART Towns activity inclusive of implementation, monitoring, analysing and reporting. Any applications of funding to the WG need to incorporate digital baseline activity of footfall and dwell time in town centres.			
Supporting Active Travel	Provisions supporting or facilitating active travel routes in town centres where this cannot be funded through other means . Specifically, the provision of bicycle storage, lockers and retrofit of showers and hygiene facilities in commercial premises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Authorities • Business Improvement Districts • Town and Community Councils • Social Businesses and B – Corps • Private sector partners 	Active Travel Act guidance GOV.WALES sets out the standards and planning requirements for active travel infrastructure.	
Toilet Provision	Dedicated support to provide toilet provision in town and city centres. This may also include baby changing and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Authorities • Business Improvement Districts • BIDs 	Home - One Voice Wales	Make our cities, towns and villages even better places in which to live and work

	<p>‘changing places’ provision where there is a clear identified strategic need.</p> <p>The demand for this provision needs to be identified within Placemaking Plans. The applicant must confirm they will provide the revenue funding for ongoing cleaning and maintenance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town and Community Councils 		<p>Continue our strong partnership with voluntary organisations across the range of our responsibilities.</p>
Recreational Facilities	<p>The provision of outdoor play facilities, multi-use games areas (MUGAs) and outdoor recreational pursuits. Support awarded through this element of the Placemaking grant will need to be consulted upon locally and part of a place making plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Authorities • Town and Community Councils 	<p>https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-07/wales-a-play-friendly-country.pdf</p> <p>Play sufficiency toolkit GOV.WALES</p> <p>Children and young people's plan GOV.WALES</p> <p>Play Wales Chwarae Cymru</p> <p>Home - Children's Commissioner for Wales (childcomwales.org.uk)</p>	<p>Make our cities, towns and villages even better places in which to live and work</p>