

HARLECH STRATEGIC GUIDE



Ariennir yn Rhannol gan
Lywodraeth Cymru
Part Funded by
Welsh Government





In partnership with

Macgregor - Smith
Landscape Architecture



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PURPOSE

1. Purpose

Study Aims & Objectives

The overall key objective is to “*deliver a clear set of robust proposals that identify how the public sector can facilitate and work collaboratively with private businesses and the community, and add value to the town’s economic development whilst maximizing the town’s sustainable economic potential*”.

Gwynedd Council with the support of Welsh Government appointed Chris Jones Regeneration in May 2017 to work with the local partnership and community to establish a definitive Vision and a document that will establish the strategic priorities to guide the multi-sector partnership in supporting the regeneration of Harlech.

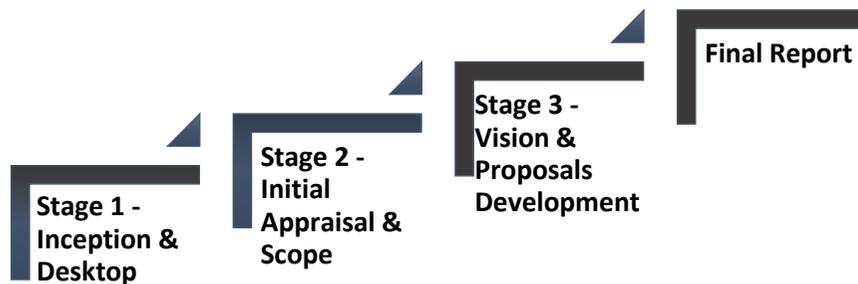
Gwynedd Council’s brief for the study identified a number of major threats facing Harlech which this study needs to address, being:

- Adult Learning Wales has confirmed its intention to close the College;
- There is an uncertainty over the investments required to regenerate the Theatre;
- The St David’s hotel site continues to deteriorate, creating a prominent eyesore for residents, visitors and potential investors;
- The Golf Club’s infrastructure has had a lack of investment to enable them to compete at the highest level;
- There are connectivity and parking constraints for coaches that limits the number of visitors that can take advantage of the investment in the Castle;

- There is uncertainty regarding the future of some public services due to the change in the population profile and change in service delivery arrangements;
- Visitor trends have changed with a growing number of day visitors to the town and a challenge is faced to increase overnight stays.

Specific objectives of the work are therefore to:

- Identify a clear and jointly agreed vision for the regeneration of Harlech and the surrounding area (which is based on national, regional and local strategic considerations, data analysis and trend forecasting);
- Explore potential projects that will deliver against all threats and opportunities identified;
- Prioritise and develop the opportunities within timelines and provide lead bodies for the action;
- Identify opportunities of how the public sector can facilitate and strengthen the opportunities identified;
- Establish a document that would identify the strategic priorities for the multi-sector partnership to support the regeneration of Harlech and its wider context (short/medium/long term).
- Identify a model of co-operation between public, private and community organisations.



Study Process

The following tasks and activities have been completed:

Stage 1 – Inception & Desktop

- Inception meeting held and note issued with town walkabout in Harlech with client officer

Stage 2 – Initial Appraisal & Scope

- Desktop appraisal of previous studies, adopted plans or strategies and other baseline documents, such as:
 - Any Welsh Government policies and programmes e.g. Snowdonia Enterprise zone strategy
 - Gwynedd Council and Snowdonia National Park Authority key strategies and plans: economic development, local development plan, tourism/destination management, etc.
 - Heritage, character assessments of town - Cadw
- Analysis of socio-economic data (provided by client):
 - Census ward data
 - STEAM data and other visitor data for Harlech Castle
- Key stakeholder Interviews with:
 - Welsh Government
 - Gwynedd Council
 - Snowdonia National Park Authority

- CADW
- Adult Learning Wales – Coleg Harlech
- Theatr Ardudwy
- Royal St David’s Golf Club
- Harlech a’r Cylch
- Harlech and District Tourism Association
- Harlech in Action
- Workshop session with local stakeholders on the 12th June at Harlech Castle Visitor Centre café to understand key issues and areas of opportunity
- Physical assessment of the town and area that has looked at:
 - Key strategic sites and areas outside of the town area;
 - Key arrival points. Is Harlech well announced and what are the main routes in for local and visitor based traffic?
 - Connectivity between new and old town.
 - What is the quality of the town centre environment?
 - How do we entice the visitors to the Castle to stay on and visit the town?
 - Which key tourism sectors should Harlech seek to develop and enhance – heritage and cultural, outdoor activity and sports, conference activities?

A separate baseline report has been produced which brings together all of the initial findings and analysis. This was presented to Harlech in Action and its constituent organisations.

Stage 3 – Vision & Proposals Development

- Development of draft vision, ideas and proposal
- Organisation and hosting of community consultation event held on the 26th July in Memorial Hall, Twtil, Harlech
- Provision of an online and paper based survey for feedback on ideas and proposals
- Development of final strategic vision and priorities



HARLECH NOW

2. Harlech Now



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Setting and Relationships

Location

The town is on the Cambrian coast midway between Barmouth 10 miles to the south and Porthmadog 10 miles to the north, on the A496 set between the hills and the sea.

Community

Harlech has a resident population of 1,931¹. It has a higher-than-average population above the age of 65 (27% Harlech, 20.7% Gwynedd) and a smaller-than-average (51%) Welsh-speaking population.

This reflects the town's popularity as a retirement settlement, itself a reflection of its stunning location on the Cambrian coast and history as a holiday destination since the coming of the railways in the 1860's.

The nature of the community is physically shown in the topography of Harlech that can be summarised as three distinct areas of settlement, clearly layered upon the steep hillside location.

Residential development that has taken place in lower Harlech off the arterial A496 has been largely since the 1970's and provides affordable housing, largely occupied by locally-raised and based families. Architecturally this area comprises estate-style development but also the prominent Glan Gors housing development that was constructed as holiday apartments, rather than permanent dwellings. A three-bedroom masonette with communal garden and off-street parking in Glan Gors is typically valued at approximately £65,000.

Older established settlement has centred around the castle and the steeply sloping streets connecting directly to the High Street. This architectural and visual delight of descending terraces of roof tops,

¹ 2011 Census

winding lanes and historic terraced houses responding to the town's horseshoe setting is the core of the designated Conservation Area. A small three-bedroom terraced house in this area is valued at £180,000 plus, with no off-street parking and gardens limited by adjacent properties and rock face. It is occupied by a mix of local residents of typically older age profile, with a high concentration of holiday homes. In the Edwardian period, this long-established settlement was infilled as the terrain allowed, with much larger properties with extensive gardens, spreading the settlement along the hillside to the south. These substantial, self-contained properties were built for incoming residents with considerable wealth. They have become an attractive element of the townscape, infilling and complementing the local vernacular with Arts and Crafts inspired architecture and large mature gardens.

Above this area lies much of the more affluent new build that has developed along the old top road to Llanfair in the last 40 years. Extensive sea views, off street parking and substantial gardens are characteristic of this area, with high house prices to match. A three-bedroom house on the Old Llanfair Road area of Harlech will typically start at £450,000 plus. This area is popular with retirees and affluent holiday homers.

Other key characteristics and assets from within the community include:

Caravan Sites

There are three caravan sites within Harlech itself – Min Y Don, Woodlands and Merthyr Farm, plus very large facilities at nearby Shell Island, Llanbedr.

Cultural, Educational and Leisure Provision

Coleg Harlech

Plas Wern Fawr was originally built as a country home in 1907–10 for the photographer and managing-director of Kodak, George Davison, designed in the Arts and Crafts style by the architect George Walton. It became Coleg Harlech in 1927, offering second-chance education to working men and women. Coleg Harlech is run by Adult Learning Wales (ALW). Recent changes to funding of students and the greater use of IT and work-place

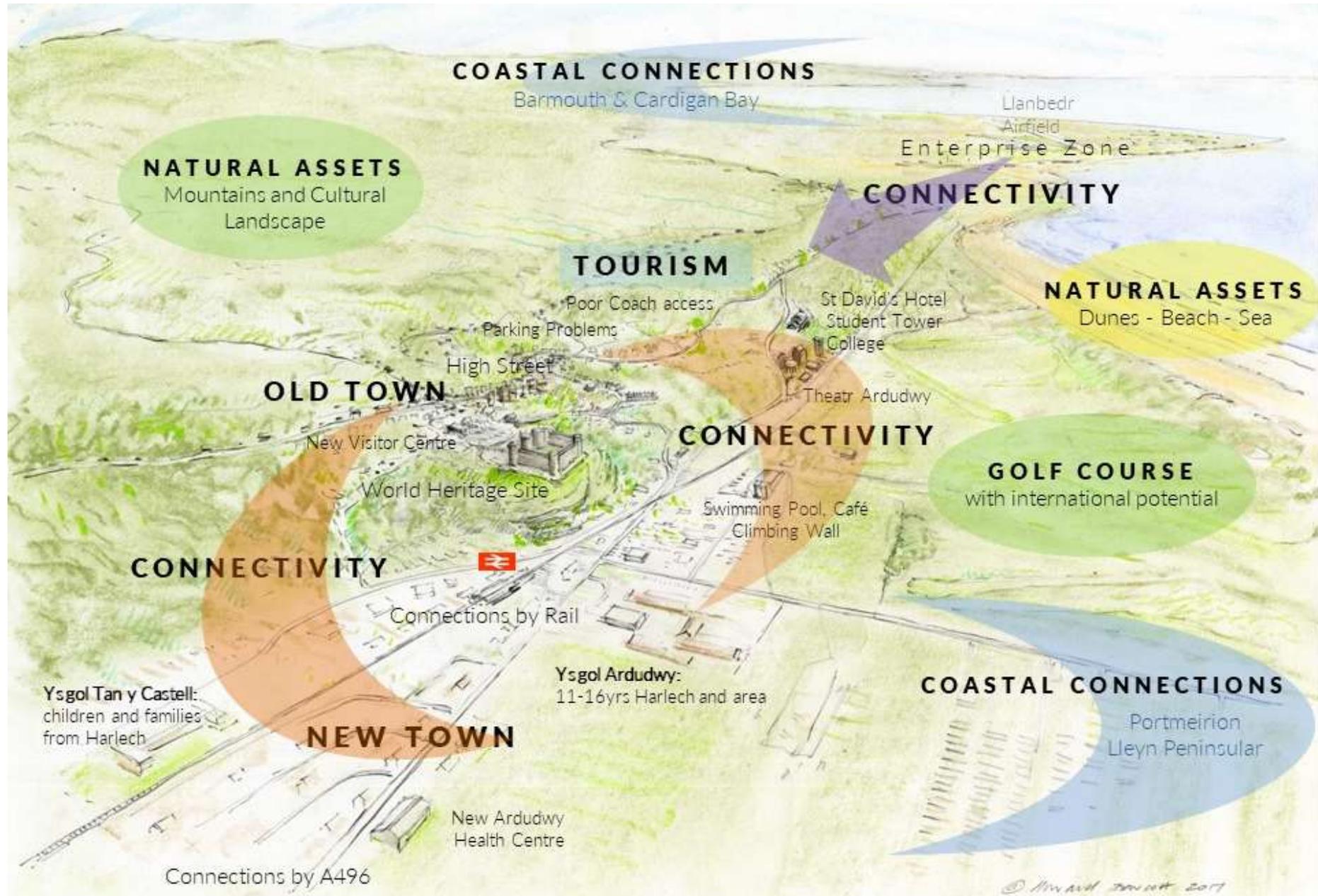
learning have combined to make it no longer viable to run Coleg Harlech as a residential college. There is also competing offer from the successful Coleg Llandrillo/Meirion Dwyfor at Dolgellau and Pwllheli. The college and building is seen by local residents as a key asset for Harlech. This is a building that has passionate advocates and potential developments need to acknowledge and embrace this positive attribute.



Theatr Arduwy

Designed by the architect Ralph Colwyn Foulkes and completed in 1972, the Theatre is a fine example of classic British Brutalist architecture, recognised in its own right by Cadw as two star graded property, as from 2016. It retains virtually all its original features and centres around a 256-seat auditorium, suitable for both live performance and film.

Unfortunately, this public aspect is not realised by current use of the building. Furthermore, concerns about safety of some of the decorative concrete façade has led to protective mesh being installed on prominent public aspects of the building.



Whilst, the theatre is open for business it does not present itself with an active, public frontage. The full potential of this asset is yet to be tested.

The theatre is run by a board of volunteer officers and staffed by a mix of some paid staff, but mainly by volunteers. The theatre building is directly attached to the Coleg building. The Coleg will instead be vacating the college building in summer 2017 and moving into part of the theatre building.

Library and Old Library

Harlech Library closed in May 2017. The library area of the building is awaiting further use, whilst the Ysgol Feithrin/Nursery School still occupies the other half of the building. The former Old Library on the High Street is used as a basic community facility for occasional evening classes and drop-in day centre type provision.



Harlech & Ardudwy Leisure Centre

Harlech's leisure centre is situated in the lower town close to access to the beach, schools and caravan sites. It comprises a 25m pool, 40 seat café with external sun terrace and 400 square metre climbing wall with 50 routes up to

10m in height. The centre is based around the previous pool and was opened in 2012. It is run as a co-operative trust, being a social enterprise managed by a Volunteer Board of Directors made up of people from the community and supported by a group of volunteers.

Education Provision

Both schools are situated in lower part of town. Ysgol Tan y Castell provides for 4 to 11 year olds from Harlech and Ysgol Ardudwy provides secondary education for 11 to 16 year olds from Harlech and a wider catchment area. Ysgol Ardudwy has extensive playing fields and the sports hall is open to community use depending upon school hours.

Health Centre

The new Health Centre was completed in 2015 and is in the lower part of town. The health board refused permission for it to be a dispensing surgery. Whilst this inconveniences patients it does benefit the High Street offer, since those wishing to obtain their prescription in Harlech use the chemist on the High Street. The stakeholder workshop identified that parking outside the chemist is vital.

Cultural Context

The World Heritage Site status centres upon the Castle built in the 1280's but the history of the area predates this considerably. The area features significantly as Ardudwy in the ancient Welsh tales of the Mabinogi, particularly with regard to Branwen and Bendigeidfran. In the hills behind the town there are Iron Age standing stones and ancient trackways. These tracks were used by drovers for centuries to drive animals over the Rhinogydd mountains to markets in England. The coming of the railways in the 1860's brought the end of the drove roads but the slopes of the Rhinogydd with their distinctive stone walls and historic field patterns maintain an archetypal form of Welsh upland sheep grazing, with some cattle.

This landscape, the relative isolation and the non-conformist chapels combined to preserve the Welsh language; the language is very much alive in the local population and is a distinct cultural asset of the area. To this socio-landscape a layer of English settlement added its own cultural interpretations. In the early decades of the 20th century the wealthy holiday homers and incomers held grand pageants in the town that featured elaborate fancy dress and sets. The building of Wern Fawr by George Davison with its Great Hall and the subsequent building of Theatr Ardudwy sit within this context, adding to the cultural richness of the area.

The potential in Harlech is to address economic and physical issues within this cultural context, adding to the heritage of the area and the quality of provision for both resident and visitor.

Physical Place

The place was designed as an impregnable fortress in a spectacular setting and many of these qualities remain. They at once give the castle and town its unique sense of place, as well as the difficulties of its approach. The UNESCO designation as a World Heritage Site quotes the essential qualities of Harlech as follows:

The essential relationship between their coastal landscapes and each castle remains intact and the intimate interrelationship of castle and town remains a striking feature of the present day urban landscape

Harlech Castle is sited on a steep, almost vertical rocky promontory, an outlying spur from the inland hills which come close to the coastal plain at this point. The subsequent development of the town, recorded in historic maps, followed an ancient street pattern developed to cope with the terrain, so that some of the steepest inhabited streets in Wales are found here.

This is a place of spectacular vistas which include the castle itself, the wide panorama of the sweeping coastline, and dramatic views of Snowdonia and the Llŷn Peninsula.



The foil in this dramatic setting lies at the base: a level plain of grass and dunes, now partly used as a golf course and stretching away north for 3 miles. The sea, or at least foreshore, once reached to the base of the castle rock but this has been replaced by sandy deposition. The sandy beach, broad at low tide, is unusually wide with a gentle gradient, and is backed by a dune system. The gap between hills and the shore contains the main arterial transport links, north and south: the A496 coastal route and the Cambrian Coast railway linking the towns along the west coast from Pwllheli via Porthmadog to Shrewsbury and links to the national rail network.

The individual importance of these elements is given official status and recognition by a rare combination of national and local planning designations: the Castle is a World Heritage Site, the town is encapsulated within the Snowdonia National Park, the upper town is a

Conservation Area with a number of Listed Buildings, the Golf Course is rated the second in Wales and also contains an SSSI, the coastal dunes are recognised as a National Nature Reserve, the Theatre attached to the College is a well-founded and respected local asset. The town is even the source of a well-known song.

Even the view has a measure of protection: there are recognised and protected view arcs from the Castle. The UNESCO description, referring to the four castles in the area, notes that:

All four are protected by Local Plans, Planning Guidance and their World Heritage Management Plans which are reviewed regularly; Harlech is within the Snowdonia National Park while all four are within Conservation Areas that cover the immediate setting of the Castles and Town Walls. Their wider setting has been defined as 'essential settings' and key views are protected.

On the face of it, this should be the poster boy of Welsh destinations. Even the microclimate is in its favour. Yet despite this it lies in a kind of no-man's land between the thriving resorts – Porthmadog and the Llŷn Peninsular, Barmouth, Aberdovey, and Cardigan Bay - and the adventurous attractions of Snowdonia. Harlech lacks a place in the national mind map and the signposting does not help: often the road signs are small, obscure and give little hint of the wealth of attractions to be found there.

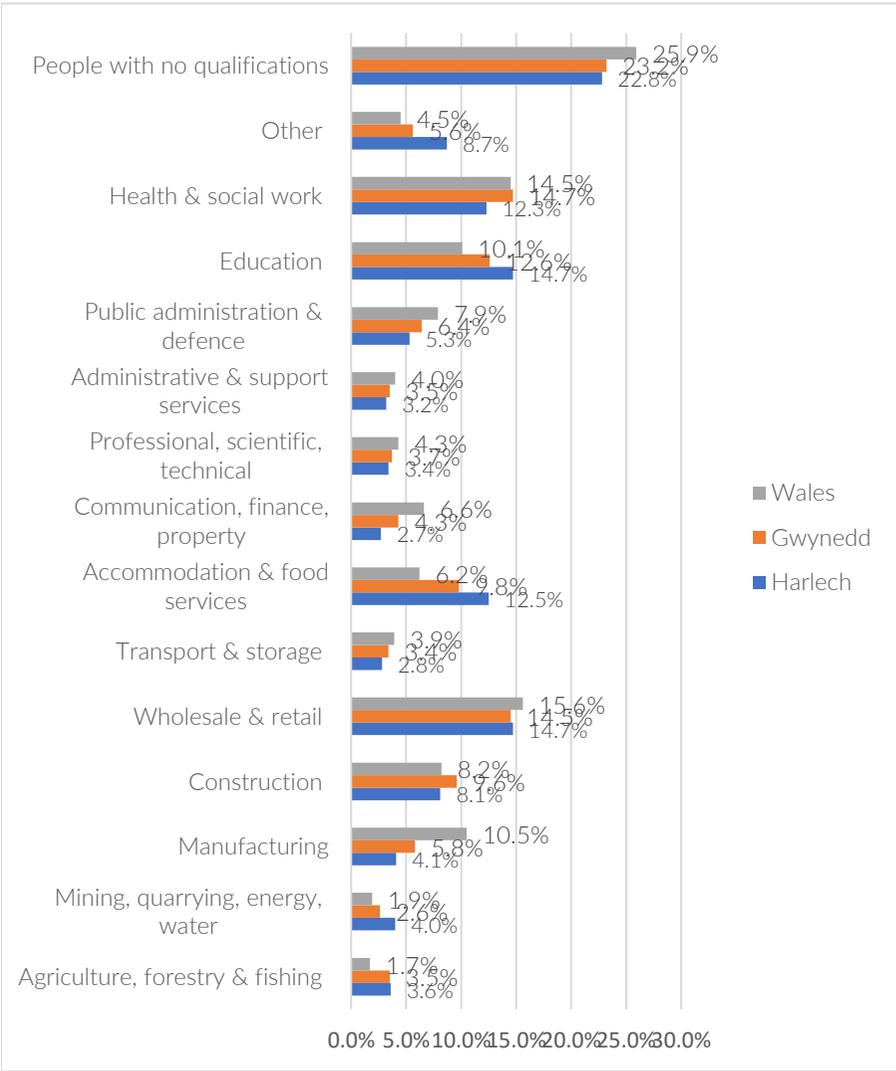
The following sections represent a summary of the study's baseline report,

Baseline Key Findings

Physical and Policy Setting

- Cambrian Coast – Harlech between hills and sea – setting is key unique selling point
- Harlech Castle – World Heritage site – UNESCO status
- Town within Snowdonia National Park
- Royal St David’s Golf Course – rated second in Wales
- Welsh Government’s Strategy for Tourism 2013:2020 identifies strategic need in Wales for luxury, high-end and reputation-changing which is supported by Gwynedd Council’s Destination Management Plan
- Gwynedd Council’s corporate plan identifies a need for high value jobs and enhanced digital infrastructure which is supported by Enterprise Zone specifically Llanbedr Airfield
- Harlech is identified as a service settlement within National Park with a dual role for its community and as a visitor destination
- Cadw want to use the World Heritage site status to support sustainable economic diversity and growth in local and regional economy
- The main industry of employment is accommodation and food services
- There is a higher proportion of retired people living in Harlech than the Welsh average with a key challenge in retaining people of student population age
- Llanbedr Airfield has potential to generate benefits for Harlech by creating demand for accommodation, short supply chains and increased use of local services, food and drink and extending

Figure 1 - Industry of Employment

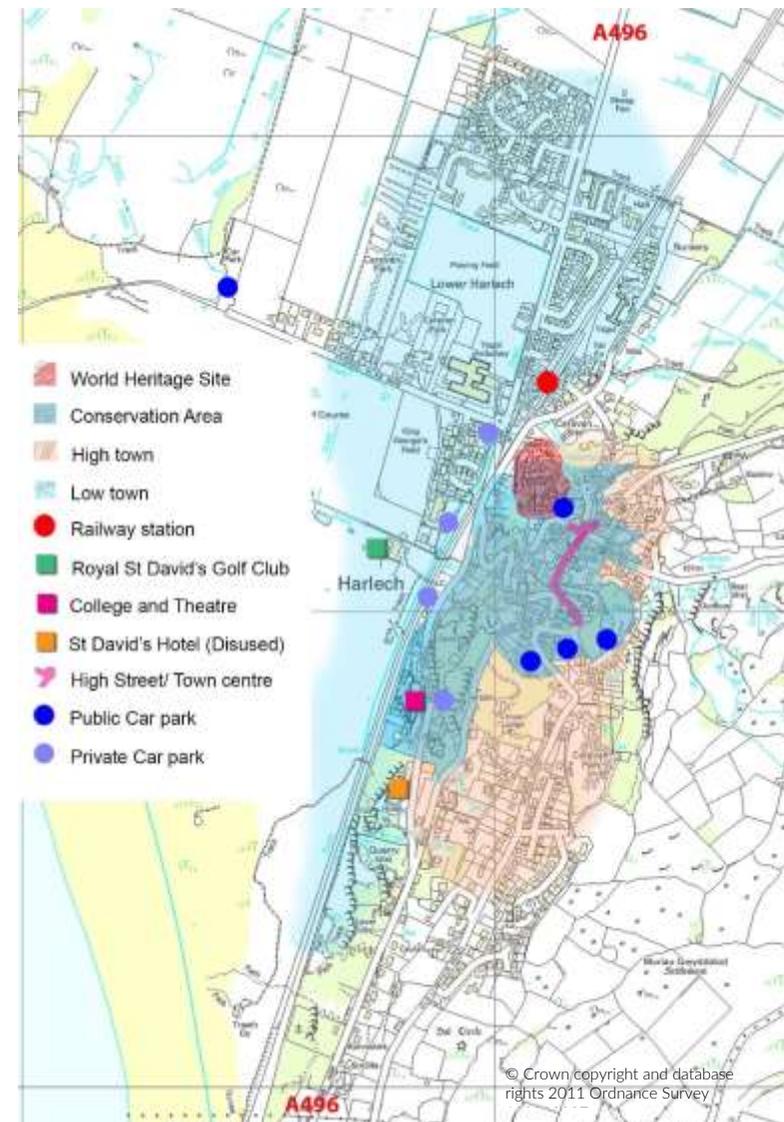


Source; 2011 Census

Current Town Offer and Experience

- Investment on Harlech Castle has created renewed appeal and increase in visitors
- The town centre is relatively strong on comparison goods but weak on convenience although non-food does lack some daily goods and products that are probably found in Porthmadog
- 16% vacancy rate with empty properties scattered across the town centre with some keynote buildings under-utilised
- There is an emerging cluster of household, homeware, antiques and collectables
- Food and drink offer is dominated by cafes with a need to improve the night time economy and food offer including local provenance and the experience of eating within a World Heritage site setting
- Visitors: 89% staying away from home or on holidays; 52% families, 32% couples; average stay at Castle ½ hour to 1 ½ hour stay; 103,000 visitors to castle in 2016, an increase of over 30%
- The coast and mountain experience in Snowdonia tends to contain visitors within a 25-mile area from their accommodation base to their places of visit
- Only 7% of accommodation in Gwynedd is serviced with only three hotels being 4 star and above
- St David's Hotel detracts greatly; demolition order now expired
- Residential tower detracts but is not covered by demolition order
- Uncertain future of Grade II* listed Coleg Harlech building and Theatr Ardudwy could lead to loss of key assets – cultural, heritage and visual.
- Theatre has state of the art digital cinema and provides wet-weather offer, but looks closed
- Despite the significant investment by Cadw in Harlech Castle and associated visitor facilities, there is still a negative community perception that Harlech has been overlooked by regeneration and investment

Figure 2 - Town Assets and Facilities



Source: Gwynedd Council OS; Chris Jones Regeneration

Hotel Research

One of the key issues to emerge from discussions with officers and local stakeholders has been that of the lack of quality serviced holiday accommodation in Harlech town. This is for several reasons:

- a) the demise of the former St David's' Hotel which used to offer over 60 bedrooms to a wide range of clients, including golfers, coach parties and general visitors to Harlech
- b) the consequent lack of accommodation for those wishing to play golf as day visitors and especially participating in competitions and tournaments at the Royal St David's' Golf Club
- c) recent significant investment by Cadw in the new visitor centre, restaurant and entrance to Harlech Castle, resulting in a significant increase in day visitor numbers to the town who now have a greater awareness of Harlech and its products
- d) a potentially valuable domestic and overseas staying visitor market, capitalising on the World Heritage Site Status of the castle and links with the other three locations in the World Heritage site
- e) Gwynedd's success in developing itself as a year-round outdoor tourism destination based on its stunning natural attractions and recent highly popular adrenalin sports attractions
- f) future prospects for Wern Fawr, the current base for Coleg Harlech adult education college, alongside Theatr Ardudwy as a cultural facility
- g) Llanbedr Airfield's potential to attract aerospace and high-grade remote piloted aircraft systems (RPAS) technology businesses and clients to the area who will need accommodation

Approach to Supply & Demand

Our approach to understanding supply and demand for a new hotel is as follows:

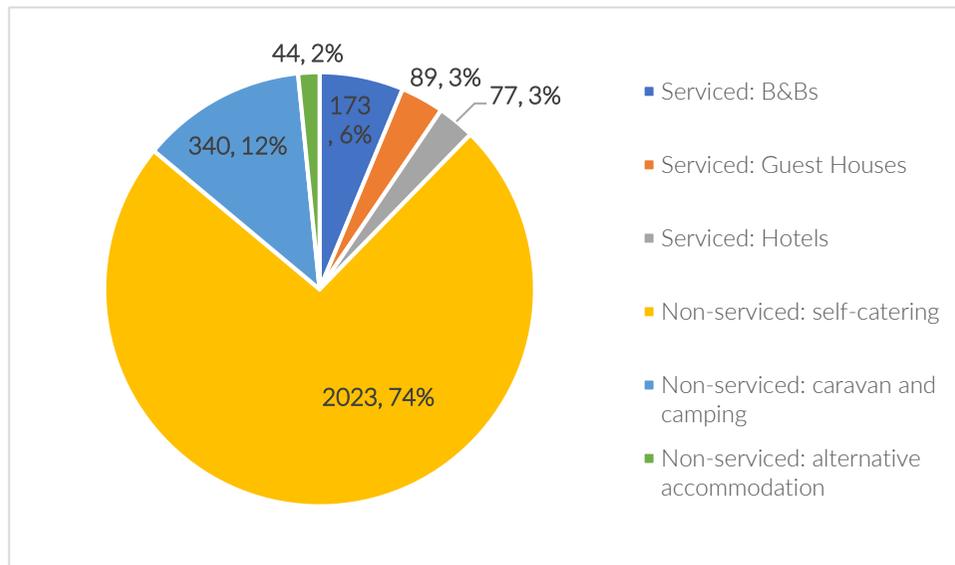
1. Analysis of Gwynedd's bed stock survey
2. Analysis of Gwynedd's STEAM tourism data
3. Interviews with hoteliers located within the Harlech catchment
4. Knowledge of existing accommodation offer
5. Analysis of potential sites in Harlech

The Evidence Base

Developed in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders and supported by a considerable body of empirical evidence, the Gwynedd Destination Management Plan 2013-2020 showed that according to the 2011 Gwynedd Bedstock Survey, over 78% of its 125,000 tourist bed spaces were within the caravan and camping sector, almost 13% in self-catering, just over 6% in serviced accommodation and the rest in other forms of accommodation. It concluded that the limited range of serviced accommodation (particularly quality hotels) restricts opportunities to extend the season through short breaks (and to increase average spend per head by staying visitors).

The DMP goes on to state: *The current economic climate is not conducive to attracting investment, particularly where returns on investment may be longer-term, as in the tourism sector. However, given Gwynedd's limited range of serviced accommodation and the likely continued growth in the type of visitors who find Gwynedd attractive (such as activity enthusiasts and empty-nesters seeking a tranquil escape in scenic countryside), a weather eye should be kept out to attract investment in quality serviced accommodation – and particularly hotels. An increase in quality serviced accommodation could help Gwynedd grow its tourism by attracting visitors from a market segment that currently underperforms in Gwynedd, compared to its performance elsewhere in the UK.*

Figure 3 - Breakdown of Accommodation type



Source: Tourism Bedstock Survey 2010/2011, Gwynedd Council

From STEAM (a model for assessing trend, volume and value of tourism activities) 2015 data for Gwynedd, there were 7 hotels with 50+ bedrooms in the county, 51 with 10-50 bedrooms and 272 with fewer than 10 bedrooms. In total, these offered an estimated 6185 beds, compared to 98442 beds in non-serviced accommodation.

Recent Visit Wales graded hotel data show there to be 10 no. three star hotels in Gwynedd, 2 no. four star and 1 no. five star establishment. Six hotels have received Gold Award recognition.

² Distance equates to average 1-hour drive time for visitors exploring an area from an accommodation base

A TripAdvisor or Bookings.com online search for Harlech reveals a limited number of small hotels, restaurants with rooms, guest houses and B&Bs, the nearest larger establishments being 8-10 miles distance from Portmeirion or Porthmadog. Plans for the redevelopment of the nearby Maes Y Neuadd Hotel have yet to emerge and can therefore not be factored in at this stage.

Discussions with Harlech Castle regarding its coach-borne visitors has indicated a demand by some of the major coach operators for a coaching hotel in the Harlech vicinity. This would enable them to stay overnight locally and give them a more strategic stopover point than that currently used in Caernarfon. That said, coach tourism, although a potential volume market, is known not to be a high spend category, customers tending to be older and on a limited all-inclusive budget.

Hotelier Research

As part of the research process, a number of accommodation providers were interviewed that were located within a 25 mile² drive time that were identified from a number of sources, being Visit Wales accommodation search facility³ and a selection of accommodation providers through the Welsh Rarebits collection⁴. Owners and managers were asked about

- current visitor numbers
- visitor profile - who, where from, reasons for visiting etc,
- occupancy (including seasonal variations) if willing to supply
- any displacement concerns and views on critical mass in relation to a hotel proposal for Harlech

Summary of views led to a consensus that a hotel of the right standard and range of facilities would add to the strategic appeal of Gwynedd and

³ <http://www.visitwales.com/accommodation-search/accommodation-search-results?location=harlech&industry=Hotels&arrivalDate=01%252>

⁴ <http://www.rarebits.co.uk/hotels.php>

within Meirionnydd would bring about a more cohesive offer and confidence in visiting the area as a base. Hoteliers did not see displacement as a concern with competition as being healthy and also drawing in visitors to the shoulder part of the tourism season. Having the right skills set to develop and run a successful hotel was emphasised by a number of those interviewed, citing previous local failures, in addition to having the labour pool to employ the right type and number of hotel staff.

Size and Sites

A suggested format and size of the hotel is indicated below, based on 40 bedrooms, but has flexibility to increase to 50-70 bedrooms dependent on the site.

Welcome	Foyer reception-back office General toilets/welfare Bar area Restaurant area (approx. 120 covers)
Accommodation	10 exec/family rooms @50m2 each 30 twin double rooms@ 30m2 each
Well-being	Spa/treatment rooms Small gymnasium Well-being space: tai chi, yoga Small plunge pool/infinity
Other	Conference area/meeting rooms
Ancillary	Kitchen, dry and cold storage Drying room: golfers, walkers Cycle storage Back of house - linen, storage, office

A number of sites were appraised that are located along the A496. A footprint of 3,000 square metres (32,000 square foot) was been applied to three sites shown below.

An analysis of their suitability is shown overleaf.



Options Appraisal

Option 1 – Former St Davids Hotel Site

Positive	Negative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Precedent for a hotel from previous provision Site has consent for planning that has been implemented with bat barn footings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perception that owner is not being proactive and that the site is dormant Demolition order has expired with no action taken by landowner and court proceedings commenced by the local planning authority
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site is seen as an eyesore within the local community and its enhancement would be welcomed within the setting of the World Heritage site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Various land charges and interests on the land has implications for public sector in directly meeting demolition with high risk of not recovering costs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demolition order (S215) has been issued to landowner Site could accommodate the 30-40 bedroom hotel on upper level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adjacent residential tower, which is owned by the owner of the former St David's hotel, is not subject to order but is seen locally as an eyesore and is impacting on visual appeal of sites along the A496 to future investors

Option 2 – Royal St Davids Golf Club

Positive	Negative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accommodation would directly support Golf Club and present it as a golf tourism package and support future growth, viability and fulfill Golf Club's status 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Location and association with Golf Club would not appeal to other visitor markets e.g. families, coach Would require agreement on access through leisure centre site Footprint of building would be significant for site, setting and could over-power the neighbouring golf club-house

Option 3 – Redevelopment of Amenity Buildings, Coleg Harlech

Positive	Negative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Buildings are redundant and in need of reuse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Would require significant internal remodeling and refurbishment to convert from amenity to quality serviced holiday accommodation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Buildings owned by party willing to find an alternative use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Currently understood to be available on a leasehold basis only and therefore unlikely to attract capital investment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to site established Close to golf club Would help to meet accommodation demand for competitions and tournaments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restricted access for larger vehicles

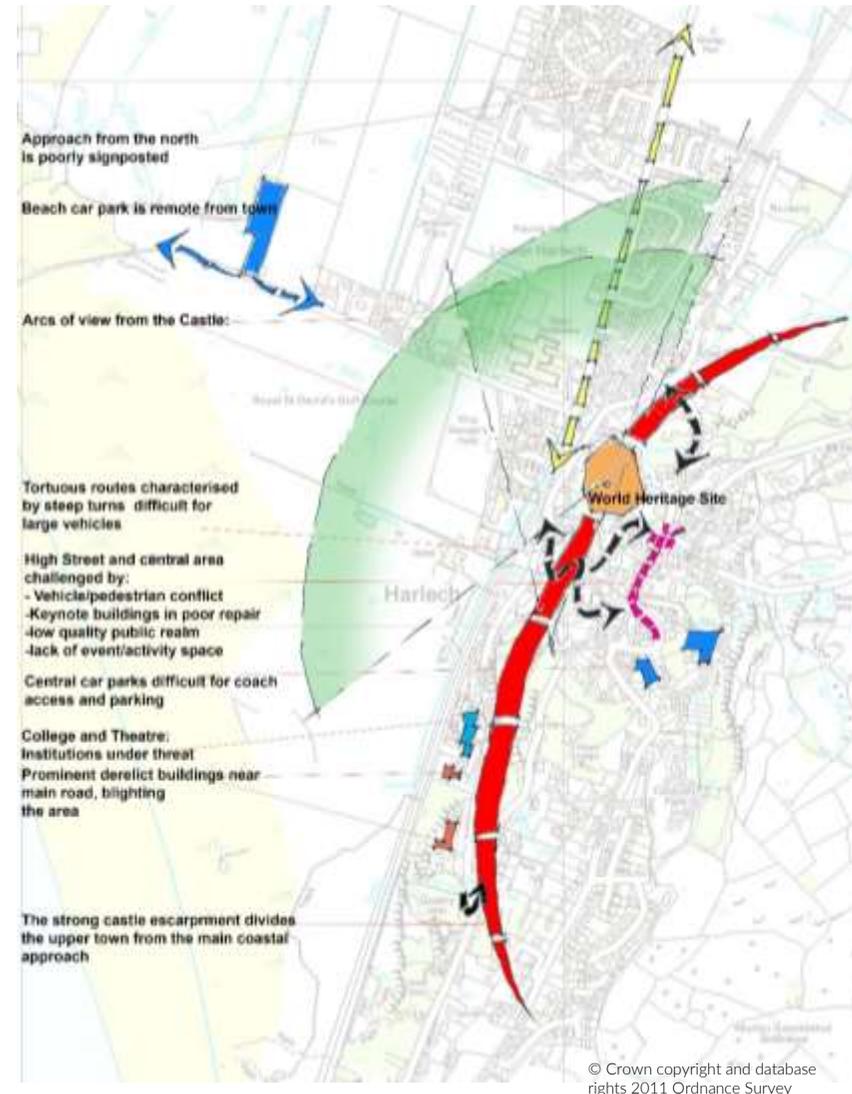
Option 4 – Coleg Harlech Site	
Positive	Negative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Buildings owned by party willing to find an alternative use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conversion of costs on Grade II* listed building would be significant compared to new build
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Theatre building could provide dual purpose activity for conference market as well as providing continuity for Theatre Arduwy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Theatre building may not be seen as complementing hotel offer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Site has a direct relationship between lower and upper town 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consideration to site levels and how main building and annex would work
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Coleg Harlech owns neighbouring car park and woodland that could contribute to facilities and experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Retention of some adult learning provision may impact on footprint of building and viability of a hotel proposal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Safeguarding of grade II* listed building with unique character and in keeping with heritage led tourism, providing a bespoke character for redevelopment 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Retention of adult learning provision or training may support demand for hotel provision 	
Option 5 – Other Sites	
Positive	Negative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dependent on site and planning status, other sites may be easier to deliver 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Town development boundary may limit new build opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ May bring into use redundant or underused buildings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Possible constraints in relation to infrastructure, services, setting, size of site or building
Option 6 – Dispersal Approach	
Positive	Negative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some available property e.g. Lion Hotel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Would not provide a 4* hotel that plugs gap in market as well as associated facilities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Individual building constraints in relation to physical size, setting, parking, etc.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Would not meet Visit Wales investment criteria

Physical Assets and Public Realm

- Historic upper town with lower town expansion on coastal plain
- Street and terraces grew around the Castle which adds to views and roofscape
- Some buildings in the town centre display their heritage and origins, others jar through poor signage and extensions
- Difficult place for pedestrian movement within Stryd Fawr
- Few civic spaces and poor floorscape materials
- Bottom road has several redundant buildings and eyesores, contrasted by Arts and Crafts period college building and historical Golf club and course
- Problem of moving between lower and upper town especially for first time visitors, with car parks poorly signed with opportunity for better access and space off bottom road
- Striking viewpoints but paths not well known



Figure 4 - Character Analysis



Source: Gwynedd Council OS; Chris Jones Regeneration

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cardigan Bay Coast and Hills setting ▪ Location on the main Cambrian rail line ▪ Harlech Castle – UNESCO World Heritage Site ▪ Royal St Davids Golf Club – top 100 golf course in UK ▪ Extensive beach which is designated as a National Nature Reserve and Site of Special Scientific Interest ▪ Snowdonia brand – well known and attracting wide range of visitors: heritage, landscape, activity – Snowdonia Mountains and Coast ▪ Cadw investment has seen a rise in visitors to the Castle of 103,000 with enhanced visitor provision and experience ▪ The winding, ascending and descending street pattern of narrow streets and terraces adds to sense of place ▪ The quality of the architectural legacy from the early twentieth century, and the social and cultural heritage associated with it ▪ Active community that is sustaining local services e.g. leisure centre, theatre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lack of an integrated approach to advanced and directional visitor signage from A496 and A487 ▪ Poor first impressions in lower town with derelict sites and buildings such as former St David’s Hotel ▪ Town is physically split due to its topography ▪ Visitors are day trippers, staying less than 2 hours ▪ Lack of quality hotel accommodation in the town ▪ Town centre offer lacks a coherent identity through its uses and environment ▪ The ever-changing dynamic context of the town ▪ Parking is hard to find with coaches finding visits difficult ▪ 16% vacancy rate with some keynote buildings needing active uses ▪ Consolidation of adult learning provision at Coleg Harlech could result in main building being empty and underused
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maximise position of Harlech in Castles and Town Walls of King Edward in Gwynedd ▪ Bid for Slate World Heritage site status and resultant visitor draw ▪ The unique, history, form and architecture of the Wern Fawr and Theatre building ▪ Links to other key destinations such as Portmeirion and Barmouth ▪ Opportunity to realise a quality hotel that changes Harlech from a day trip destination to a place to stay ▪ Established and emerging town centre businesses that can build quality and reputation of offer ▪ Enterprise Zone at Llanbedr Airfield has potential to bring high value jobs and resultant benefits to town e.g. accommodation need, supply chain ▪ Strong community participation and engagement in the future of Harlech 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Nearby destinations that developing their destination identity and infrastructure ▪ Perception that Harlech is not being invested in ▪ Viability and sustainability of key attractors and local services ▪ Progress of hotel provision is in the control of other parties ▪ Funding climate is changing with a need for public sector to enable private sector investment ▪ Focus solely spent on hotel need and not on whole town issues and solutions

Strengths



Weaknesses



Achievements to Date

Before moving into the strategic focus and ideas for Harlech, it is worth noting the activity and investment in the town to date. This includes:

Harlech Castle

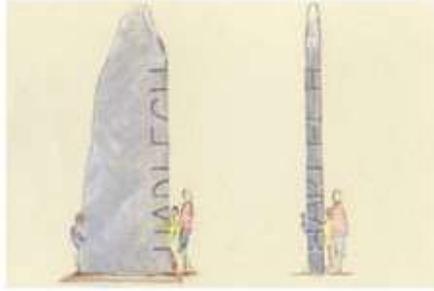
- £5.9 million refurbishment to Harlech Castle which has been supported by the Welsh Government's historic environment service (Cadw) with funding from the Heritage Tourism Project (HTP). Improvements have included the instalment of a "floating" footbridge with the former Harlech Castle hotel seeing its ground floor transformed into a modern visitor centre complete with a shop, café, toilets and interpretation area. The first and second floors were refurbished into five 4-star apartments.
- The project has received recognition at the regional and all-Wales Local Authority Building Control Awards, as well as winning the Institution of Civil Engineers' coveted George Gibby Heritage.
- A play area has been refurbished and improved alongside the visitor centre for the local community and visitors involving wholesale landscaping including repair and installation of new fencing, seating and re-commissioning of the main play equipment.
- A community resource facility has been provided by Cadw in the former visitor centre.

Tourism Support

- Harlech Tourism Association has been successful in securing a Visit Wales Tourism Product Innovation Fund grant for creative led installations and promotion including community art installations, processions, a storytelling chair that links the beach with the World Heritage site and the town, as well as bridging the Year of Legends in 2017 and the Sea in 2018.
- Local community organisations with the support of Gwynedd Council are developing funding applications for the Great Place programme through Heritage Lottery funding and Tourism Amenity Investment Scheme from Visit Wales, including enhancement to coach parking at Bron y Graig Uchaf, toilet improvements at Bron y Graig Isaf, visitor signage and a pilot heritage/culture programme for the town.



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FOCUS AND IDEAS

3. Focus & Ideas

Focus

The following outlines the suite of strategic themes and key objectives for this strategic guide:



Putting Harlech on the Map

- Positioning Harlech as a world class place to visit, invest and live



Maximising Local Assets

- To focus activity on existing assets to ensure future sustainability
- To help build the community's capacity



Announcing Harlech

- Setting the Identity, Sense of Place and Signposting to Key Attractions



A Hotel for Harlech

- To realise additional accommodation that complements and presents Harlech as a base to stay and explore from



Exploring Harlech

- Creating an Experience that Extends Stay, Enjoyment and Activity



Enterprise in Harlech

- To realise the investment at Llanbedr Airfield generates local employment opportunities and mutually supportive activity
- Providing training and support for local businesses, community organisations and people that provide services across the town



Revitalising the High Street

- Enhancing the Distinctiveness, Diversity and Quality of the Environment and Offer

Ideas



The following pages suggest a series of ideas and solutions within the various strategic themes.

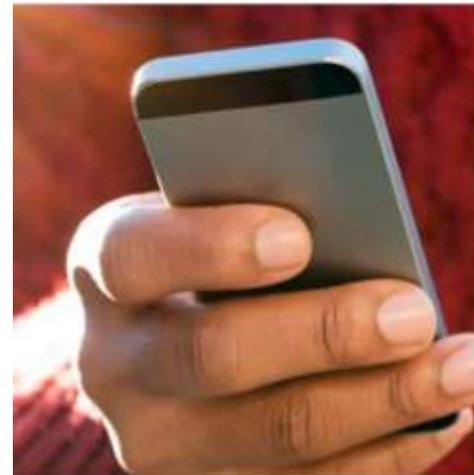
Key actions for going forward are identified in the Vision and Priorities section to this report.

Putting Harlech on the Map

- **Key Routes to Harlech**
 - Adopt Visit Wales “Wales Way” approach
 - Cambrian route: announcement at Llanelltyd (A470) Maentwrog and Penrhyndeudraeth (A487)
 - Use Ogham stone concept to announce and re-enforce
- **Approaching Harlech**
 - Llanfair viewpoint: explore potential for a safe layby area and photo opportunity
- **Harlech - Identity**
 - Directing visitor to existing web and social media such as Harlech Castle and Cadw’s website
 - Destination identity on all marketing and interpretation linking into existing strategies and campaigns
 - Link with nearby destinations of Barmouth and Porthmadog
- **Outer and inner announcement to the town**
- **Use in town at key nodes/meeting points**
- **Marketing: web, social media, leaflets, maps, aprons, t-shirts, ambassadors, the “H” trail etc**
- **Marketing Destination**
 - Build on identity with local tourism association, Gwynedd destination partnership, Cadw and Visit Wales - cross-marketing opportunities
 - Specific targeting of overseas market - use UNESCO World Heritage status as main focus - joint promotion with other Cadw castles built by Edward I
- **Harlech Tourism Association**
 - Continue to signpost possible grant funding opportunities to community groups such as the Tourism Association
 - Further development of Visit Harlech website to include webcam link for famous Harlech views and direct booking service



- **Harlech app Linking to free town Wi-Fi**
 - Link this to QR codes through the use of “ibeacons” at key points of interest - animate activities and stories, e.g. local makers, the Mabinogion, the building of Harlech Castle
- **Harlech Ambassador Scheme**
 - Based on Welcome Host but tailored to local characteristics
- **Events & Activities**
 - Further development of international/high quality events programme, especially in shoulder season period. To include:
 - Roaming – castle to the sea
 - Music – ‘Men of Harlech’ theme reinterpreted to a modern audience - choir performances and electronic beats
 - The development of a Mabinogion event
 - Heritage food festival across the town
 - Arts and crafts open doors/festival – artists, writers, potters, weavers, woodworkers
 - Self-guided and guided trails - landscape and wildlife offer – the beach and coast, geology and woodlands



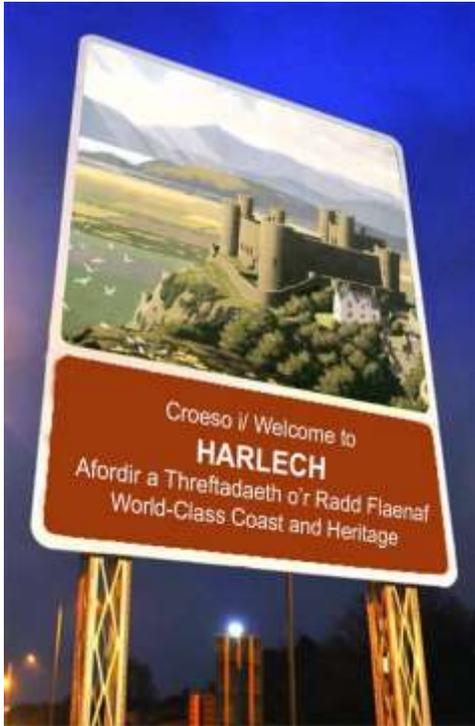
Announcing Harlech

- Inner Town Gateways
 - A496 and Ffordd Isaf junction
 - B4573 -Stryd Fawr - castle view
 - A496 – announce golf club, leisure centre, beach, etc
 - Create focus and enhance corridor
- Town Signage Information
 - Advanced and directional signage from A496 and B4573
 - Tourism attractions - brown and white visitor signs
 - Advanced coach signage and repeaters to drop off/pick up points and layover areas
 - Dynamic event signage
- Create a Suite of Signage
 - Echo Visit Wales theme of Ogham Stone fonts and writing
 - Make it distinct to Harlech
 - Use identity and build on it

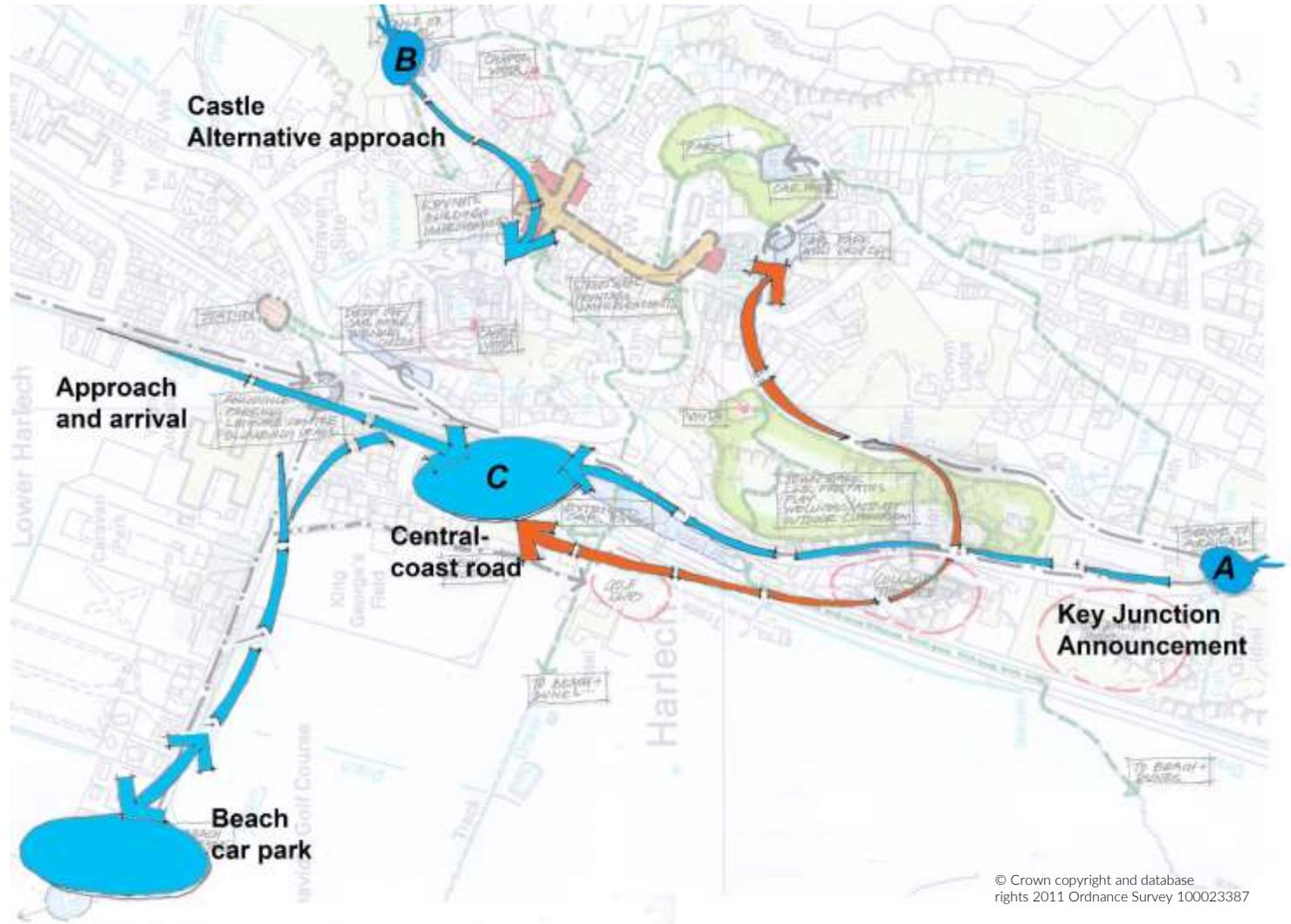


Note: Illustrative Concepts



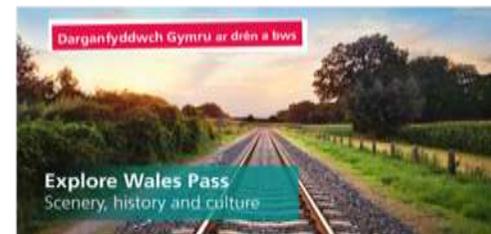


Note: Illustrative Concept



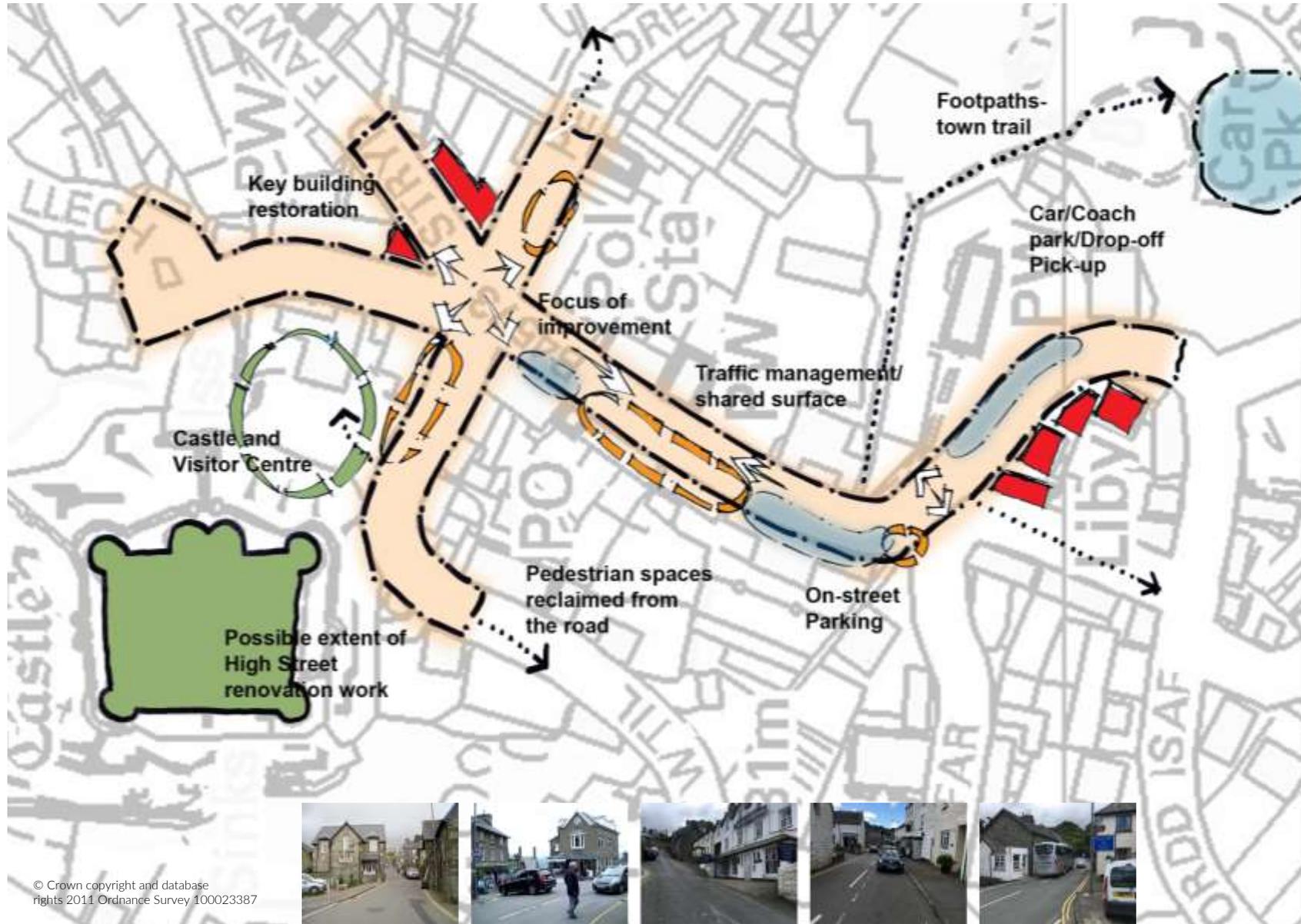
Exploring Harlech

- **Coach Management**
 - Drop off/pick up, layover area – driver facilities
 - “Passport” for coach passengers-map, vouchers, marketing
- **Hoppa Bus – Passport Scheme**
 - Explore ways of directing current bus service to key pick up points at lower car parks
 - Provide long stay in bottom part e.g. £5 for the day
 - Park – ride – map and vouchers for town through a multi partnership approach
- **Train Station**
 - Promote more rail visitors - Birmingham 4 hours away
 - Connect with other holiday destinations
 - Cambrian Coast link to Wales Coastal Path
- **Viewpoint**
 - Clear, manage and signpost
 - Include augmented reality tag
- **Promote Green Spaces**
 - King George V Playing Fields
 - Support Parks Group with ideas e.g. large map
 - Parc Bron y Graig
 - Signage/gateway/bespoke benches
 - Woodland above Coleg Harlech site
 - Outdoor well-being classes
 - Community art, hammocks, chill out area, idea for yurts
- **Town Trails and Circuits**
 - Physical and app based - 10,000 steps walk
 - Woodland Trust and National Trust woods
 - Themes - heritage, photography, nature
- **Beach Hub area**
 - Improve boardwalk access
 - Explore potential for seasonal cafe/hub near to toilets



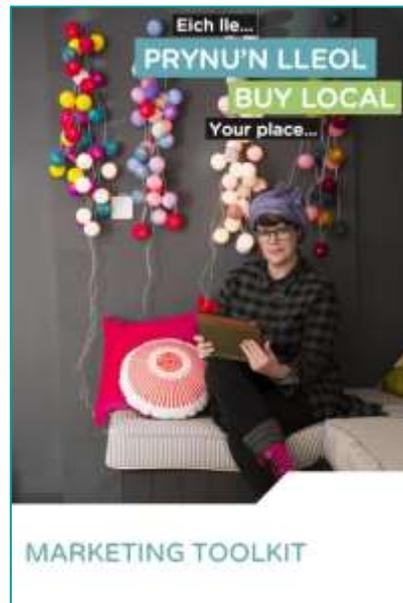


Revitalising High Street

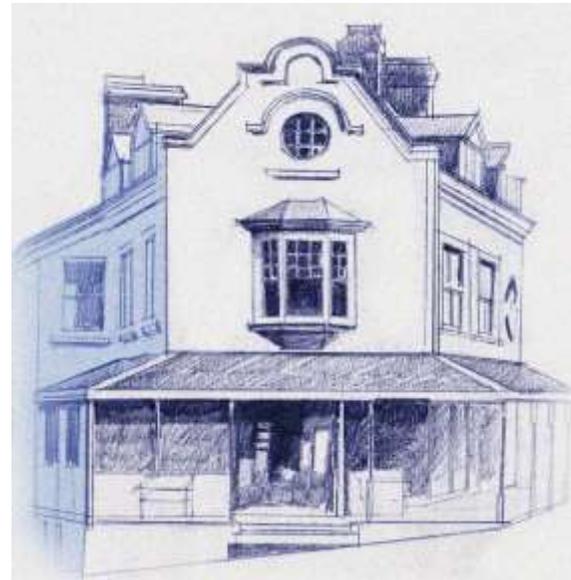
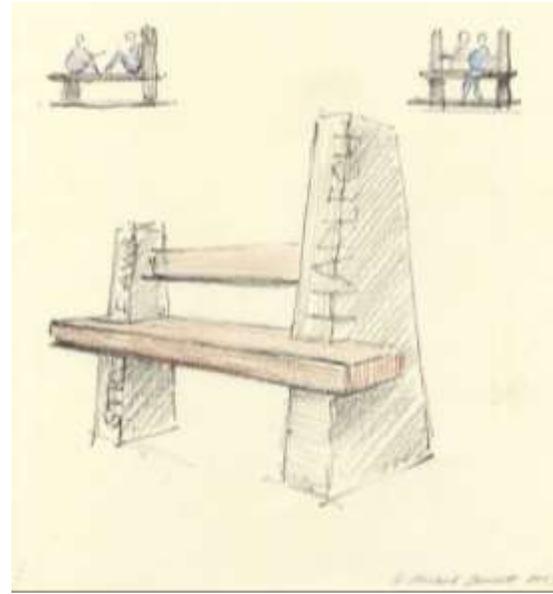
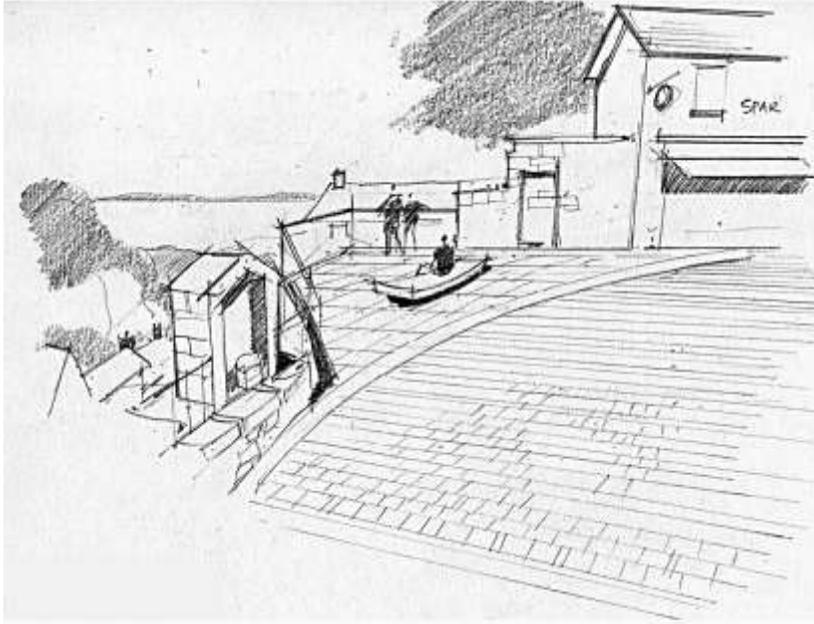




- **The High Street – Space, Dwell, Animate**
 - Carriageway treatment from inner gateways – pedestrian priority area
 - Retain on-street short term parking
 - Extend footway to create central space
 - Simple natural paving material
 - Street furniture – co-ordinated and in character
- **Target Keynote Buildings**
 - Design guidance on commercial frontages that are significant in street scene
 - Meanwhile scheme with landlords to provide short term leases for arts and crafts, food, produce and test trading



- Continue Ogham Stone Markers, refined to fit around town centre – linking woodland, paths and trails
- Institute – Community Hub
- Tourist information point in town – explore presence with Cadw in Castle Visitor centre
- Ensure 3G/4G and Broadband is Fit for Business
 - Ensure Superfast Broadband Cymru is rolled out for town centre
 - Town centre Wi-Fi scheme
 - Develop a town centre Wi-Fi system that provides open access through sign up and directs users into other town information
- Manage on-street parking: duration, location
- Manage off-street parking: Bron Y Graig car park, coach set down/pick up point, signage, information points, app/QR trails
- Lighting: keynote buildings, outcrops
- Develop a “Harlech Local” campaign that is directed towards the local community that supports shop, eat, buy, enjoy...local
 - Local organisations and partners to co-deliver on-line and traditional suite of promotional material, including:
 - Buy Local guide and poster campaign
 - Promotions, taster events
 - Continue to use Facebook and social media, web promotion and use of short promotional films
 - Explore feasibility of a loyalty card amongst local businesses



Maximising Local Assets

- **Harlech Institute – Community Hub**
 - Align town centre activity to support Hub use for wide range of users – community, business
 - Provision of a free WIFI point
 - Office/co-working space
 - Visibility of meeting/communal space/kitchen from the street
 - Close to Bron Y Graig car park – meet n greet – tourist information point

- **Theatr Ardudwy**
 - Connects directly with Wern Fawr
 - An early 1970's timepiece with potential yet to be fully exploited
 - State of the Art digital cinema has increased audience numbers
 - Regional performance space
 - Wet weather facility
 - Wonderful acoustics and great views
 - Current condition needs significant investment
 - Needs more activity on elevations visible from road
 - Scope for diversification into wider offer than only theatre and cinema
 - Potential for conference facilities (digital)



- **Harlech & Ardudwy Leisure Centre**
 - Community-run social enterprise
 - Swimming Pool - climbing wall - café
 - Resource for local schools to provide swimming lessons for coastal community
 - Popular wet weather facility
 - Relies on limited supply of volunteers
 - Lacks resources to develop further grant funding for improvements
 - Major works needed to improve visitor appeal – changing rooms and glazing
 - Potential for photo-voltaic panels on roof
 - Build corporate membership offers with guest houses and caravan sites
 - Develop current marketing to outdoor education centres, guided walks, taster events
 - Develop a ‘passport’ or ‘Harlech Card’ for residents and visitors that brings together other attractions, to generate subscriptions and regular income
- **Las Ynys Fawr**
 - Home of Ellis Wynne – ‘The Sleeping Bard’
 - 1 mile north of Harlech but part of rich cultural offer of the area
 - Tours for visitors and venue for small recitals
 - Strengthen links with Harlech
 - Promote Welsh language as a unique element of tourist offer
- **Harlech Community Co-ordination**
 - Community groups to find ways to co-ordinate, enable, jointly market, deliver projects that lead to integration. Proposed project manager role in Great Places project could fulfil this role.
 - Develop ‘Harlech Card’ – promote, manage and distribute income across the community
 - Develop strategic products/campaigns across arts, leisure, community and heritage



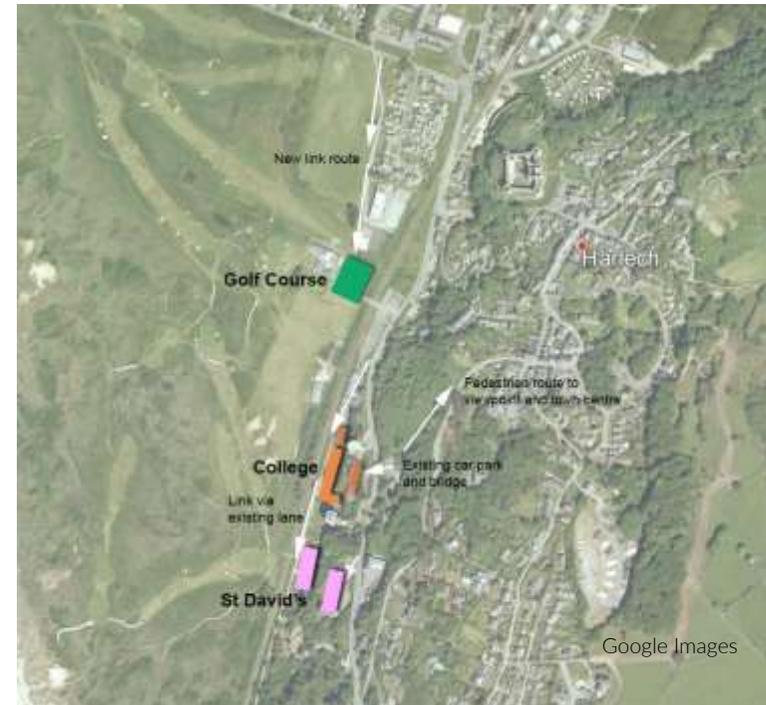
A Hotel for Harlech

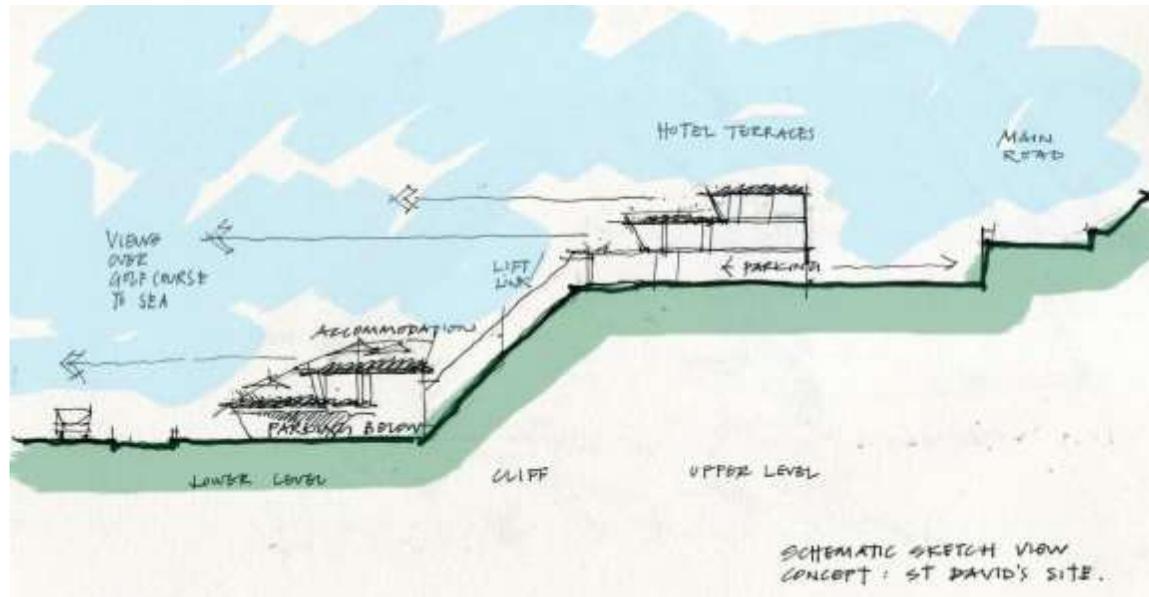
A Hotel

- Embraces Harlech’s sense of place and setting and provides a quality experience
- Is a hotel for a broad segment of visitors including:
 - Families and couples exploring the area – walkers, castles and heritage
 - Coach based parties
 - Golf parties and tournaments
 - Business and conference market
- A place for well-being and engaging with the natural beauty of the area
- Showcases the provenance of the town and area through its culinary offer and warm hospitality
- Approximately 50-70 bedrooms

Suggested Location

- Study has reviewed a number of sites
- Need to look at whole envelope of former St David’s Hotel and Coleg Harlech site on A496 corridor with the aim to:
 - Provide an integrated solution
 - A location that services golf club and town
 - Linkage through woodland up to town centre
 - Skills and training opportunities
 - Retention of Theatre for complementary activities





Enterprise in Harlech

Llanbedr Airfield

- High Value jobs in Aerospace and Space Technology
- Future accommodation need in the town linked to test and evaluation “campaigns”
- Need to develop short supply chains with existing and emerging businesses such as hotels, guest houses, food and drink, local traders and crafts
- Opportunities for ultrafast broadband and 4G mobile coverage
- Collaboration with the Wales Academic Space Partnership (WASP) with partners at Aberystwyth and Bangor Universities – accommodation needs
- Potential for additional research and development space – town based
- Proposed Spaceport has future potential to add to facility and benefits to the town

Innovative Town

- Town Wi-fi scheme: Wireless Access points
- Linked to “VisitHarlech” website, invites email information, builds database and markets events, campaigns and incentives
- Linked to an integrated town app and opportunities to develop augmented reality to realise heritage sites and enhance educational value to schools





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Re-energising Town

- Consider feasibility of a Community Energy scheme
- Use of small reservoir – hydro linked to a battery back up
- Linked to LPG hoppa town bus service

Training & Support

- Global host training: across the town plus sense of place: town ambassadors – link to time credits – guiding visitors etc
- Use of resource centre at the old visitor centre at the Castle as a community training facility
- Superfast broadband opportunities: Wi-Fi, increased web presence and marketing collateral, online communication/social media, quicker online bookings and customer relationship management systems
- New hotel: need to look at employment pool, recruitment, catering/hospitality apprenticeships links to Further Education at Dolgellau and other North Wales colleges
- Meet the buyer/supplier event – linked to Llanbedr Airfield





CONSULTATION

4. Consultation – What People Said

As part of the study process and on completing the initial research and stakeholder engagement, ideas and proposals were shared with the local community for comment.

Publicity for consultation was provided in the following ways:

- Publicity posters in the town
- Email notification through Harlech a'r Cylch network
- Press article in the Cambrian News
- Gwynedd Council's website with a purpose-built page for the project
- Gwynedd Council's social media accounts
- Chris Jones Regeneration social media accounts

Opportunities to participate included:

- An open community consultation event that was held on the 26th July at the Memorial Hall, Twil in Harlech which attracted **155** people
- A publicity poster for the event led to **12** people emailing the consultancy team with issues and ideas
- A bi-lingual survey was provided on-line and in printed versions with **145** people using this form of feedback

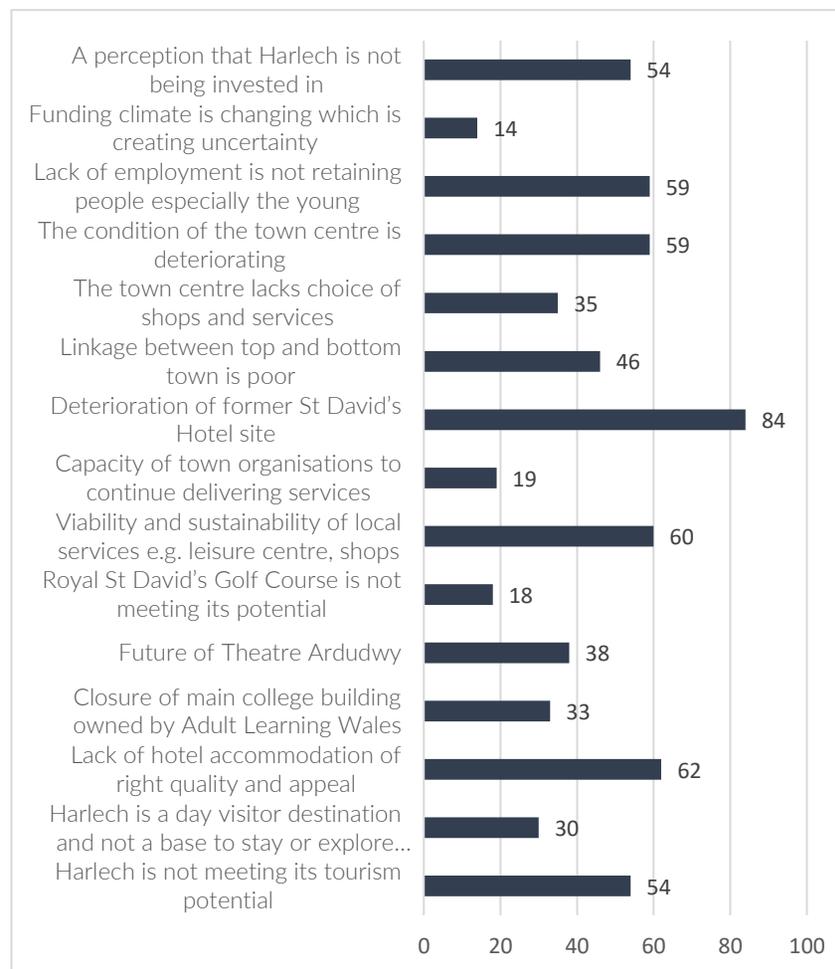
BBC Cymru Wales also attended the event, with S4C's Newyddion presenting a piece on the town and study, in addition to Radio Cymru.

The following charts provide a summary of the main comments members of the public and stakeholder groups made through the survey and face to face.

Figure 5 indicates that the top priority for the community is to address the deterioration of St David's Hotel with the lack of hotel accommodation of the right quality and appeal being a linked challenge for the town. Amongst a cluster of secondary but still important issues is the viability and sustainability of local services, the condition of the

town centre and importantly the lack of employment in the town and area. Cross-cutting themes of the town not meeting its tourism potential and a perception that there has been some disinvestment is linked to the primary issues and challenges.

Figure 5 - Main Issues and Challenges



Source: Online Survey n=145



GWNEUD I BETHAU DDIGWYDD YN HARLECH



Beth yw'r cyd-weledigaeth ar gyfer Harlech?

Yd'i'r cynigion yn ymatebi ofynion lleoli ac ymwelwyr?
Yd'i'r cynigion yn realistig ac ymarferol?

Beth yw'ch blaenoriaethau chi ar gyfer Harlech?

CYFLE I DDWEUD EICH DWEUD!

**Dydd Mercher
26ain Gorffennaf**
11yb - 7yh
Neuadd Goffa, Twll

I gael fwy o wybodaeth
cyswllt i'r hysbysu eiddoedd a chyswllt
Ffôn: 01873 890666



MAKING IT HAPPEN IN HARLECH

What's the joint vision for Harlech?

Do proposals meet local needs and visitors?
Are the proposals realistic and deliverable?

What are your priorities for Harlech?

HAVE YOUR SAY!

**Wednesday
26th July**
11am - 7pm
Harlech Memorial Hall, Twll

To find out more contact
cfn@dwr.gov.wales or 01873 890666



Figure 8 - Harlech Future



Source: Online Survey n=145

Figure 8 above shows where people see Harlech in the future with some positive expression of the town being thriving, promising, exciting and vibrant. Other respondents are less hopeful with words such as bleak, stagnant, declining, amongst others. Overall there is a sense of optimism if specific action is taken and the town meets its potential.

General Comments

Members of the public also had the opportunity to provide open comments on the future of the town. The areas of focus have been summarised under the following headings.

Better Promotion and Publicity

- Co-ordinated communication amongst organisations on awareness of activities, events,
- Promote local amenities and facilities
- Exploit walking offer, off road cycling routes
- Open a tourist information centre in an empty shop

The High Street

- Target the Lion pub, improve properties
- Manage parking and enhance High Street – weekly market
- Buy local campaign, improve food and drink offer (day and evening)
- Look at short leases with landlords
- Include the Church in the High Street experience
- Set up a business network

Destination

- Demolish St David's hotel and residential block
- Hotel is the key to activity
- Improve beach access and facilities
- Park and ride or hoppla bus service good idea
- Managing parking – cars, coaches, charges, part of experience
- Improve connections

Community Assets

- Place for community groups such as Ti a Fi amongst others
- Help community cohesion and use of key buildings

Trails and Links

- Manage the Goat Track (woodland) owned by Coleg Harlech and create trails and places to dwell

Employment

- Involve young people in digital inclusion and tourism/leisure
- Courses in the arts, creative industries
- Supply chains and opportunities from Llanbedr Airfield

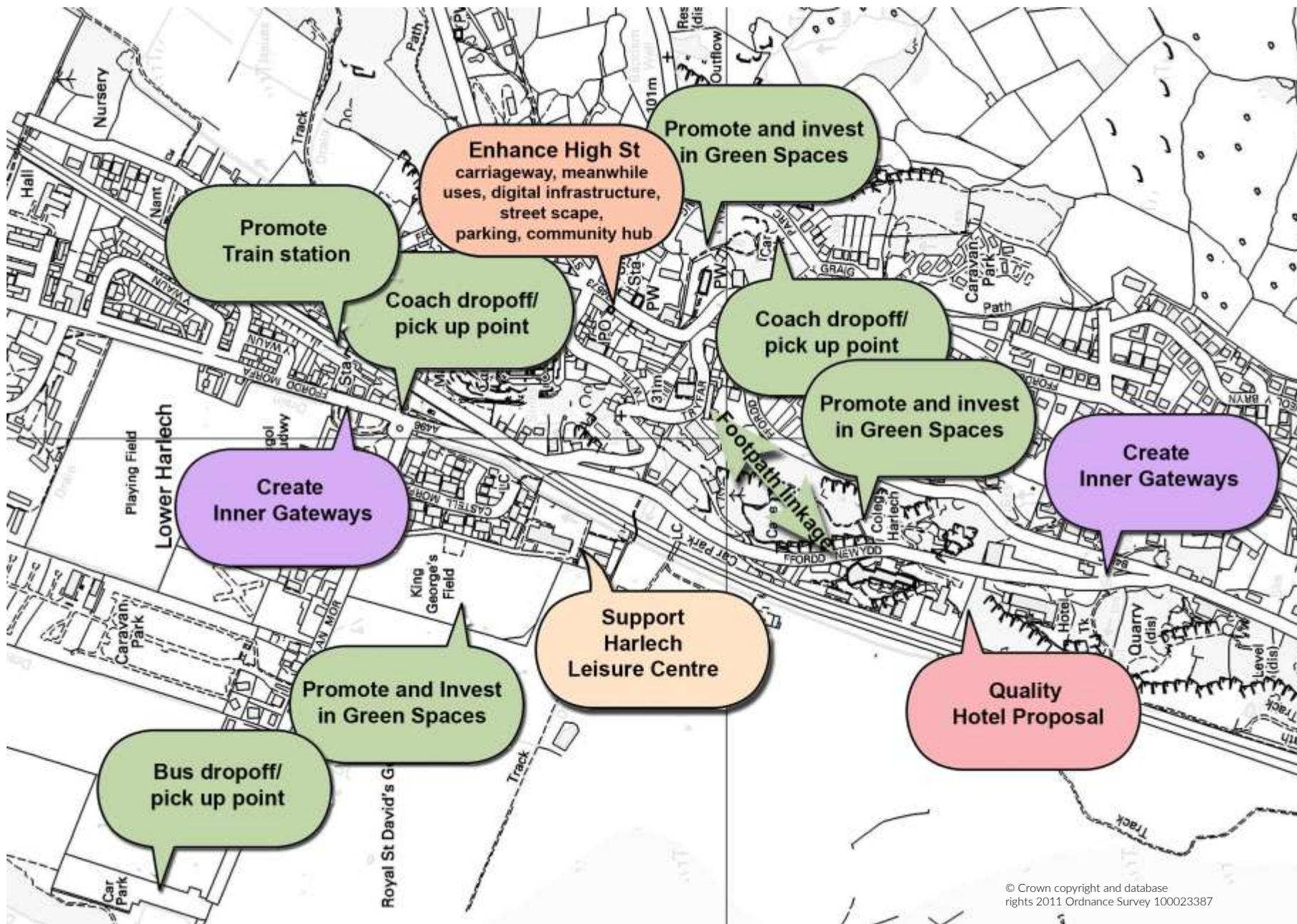


VISION & PRIORITIES

5. Our Vision & Priorities



Vision: Harlech – from sea to castle to hills – a place where the landscape, its heritage and culture helps empower community and promote enterprise



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Strategic Priorities

In developing a set of strategic priorities and a future guide for investment and aligning activity, the study process has assessed ideas and proposals against a set of criteria which resolves the long list to a focused list of projects.

Baseline Need Rating

This relates to whether the proposal was identified as part of the baseline research. This is informed through current policy, previous studies, well-being statistics or through physical assessment and stakeholder engagement.

Community Consultation Rating

Analysis of the community consultation responses helps to understand the need and rating of ideas and proposals.

Sustainability Rating

The definition of sustainability centred on sustainable development and whether the proposals can be developed and delivered with either a minimal or managed impact on resources e.g. use of existing buildings, promotion of public transport or use of renewables.

Value for Money Rating

It should be stated that due to the strategic scope of the study, no cost estimates have been developed. Value for money has therefore been assessed on previous project experience and likely cost ranges. A view has therefore been taken on the cost effectiveness of resource input and anticipated outcomes.

Deliverability Rating

A key factor with any project, this rating assesses identifiable risks, ownership of land or activity, likely delivery bodies, knowledge of current processes and any external factors that could hinder delivery.

Impact Rating

A reflection to what degree the activity could generate tangible impacts within the town and community.

Short Term

Strategic Proposal	Local Tourism Development				
Theme	Putting Harlech on the Map				
Description	<p>To continue joint working between local community organisations such as Harlech Tourism Association, signposting opportunities for resources and funding building on their grant awarded activity. Activity to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Developing their local identity through on-line and physical visitor management information within Harlech that complements the World Heritage Site setting. ▪ Working with strategic partners such as Cadw, developing visitor information through town guides, a heritage phone app and other interpretation. ▪ To support event led activity planned through TPIF support through the Year of Legends and Sea. ▪ To support the organisation and hosting of visitation trips for travel journalists as part of a marketing campaign and other direct awareness raising activity. ▪ To enhance toilet provision within Bron Y Isaf car park. ▪ To explore the provision of a pilot Tourism Information Centre (TIC) within Harlech Castle's Visitor Centre. ▪ Support three-year community project that raises awareness of heritage through local interpretation, oral history projects and relationship between town and rural area and industry. Activities to include self-guided trails, workshops, use of social media, pop-up displays in empty shops, signature events and minor capital works. 				
Suggested Partners	Harlech Tourism Association, Gwynedd Council (Tourism), Cadw				
Funding Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tourism Product Innovation Fund (Visit Wales) - awarded ▪ Tourism Amenity Investment Scheme (Visit Wales) – stage 2 pending ▪ Great Places Programme (Heritage Lottery Fund) – stage 2 pending 				
Resource/Costs	<p>Event activity costs met by TPIF from Visit Wales Continued signposting and officer support from Gwynedd Council (Tourism) TIC costs met by existing Cadw staff and operational costs; minor capital costs for shelving, signage, etc</p>				
Timetable	2017-2018	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2022 onwards

Strategic Proposal	Making the Connections				
Theme	Announcing Harlech/Exploring Harlech				
Description	<p>Through a multi-agency partnership there is a need to announce Harlech through transport, parking and signage for local residents and visitors so that the town feels connected in both a physical sense and through marketing. Activity to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A co-ordinated campaign to promote the Cambrian train line and the positioning of Harlech and neighbouring destinations on the line e.g. Barmouth and Porthmadog. Consider use of 1930s railway poster branding, and relationship to World Heritage site and other attractors such as Wales Coastal Path. ▪ Learning from previous Cadw “Hoppa” bus service, understand existing bus routes, parking locations (cars and coaches), key attractions and explore if routes and timetables can be adjusted to accommodate residents and visitors. Strategic partners to work with community organisations and the private sector on a partnership approach. Signage and information would need to be provided if feasible. ▪ To enhance coach parking provision at Bron Y Graig car park in upper Harlech. ▪ Advanced visitor signage that announces the town from the north and south complementing Visit Wales’ Wales Way approach, to include gateway/information, directional and repeater signs. ▪ To develop the principles of the Wales Way Ogham Stone signage, making them distinct to Harlech, celebrating heritage but with a contemporary feel. Strategic partners to develop design thinking and procure next design stage. ▪ To develop a plan for town trails and circuits that connects lower and upper town, procure and develop designs. 				
Suggested Partners	Arriva, Gwynedd Council (Transport Unit), Cadw and the private sector				
Funding Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Coach parking - Tourism Amenity Investment Scheme (Visit Wales) – stage 2 pending ▪ Other items - Tourism Amenity Investment Scheme (Visit Wales) ▪ Local Transport Fund – Welsh Government 				
Resource/Costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Multi sector funded approach to train and bus package – Arriva, Cadw, Gwynedd Council and private sector 				
Timetable	2017-2018	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2022 onwards

Medium Term

Strategic Proposal	The High Street
Theme	Revitalising High Street
Description	<p>An integrated approach to enhancing Harlech's High Street is recommended if it is to viable and appealing to local residents and visitors. Importantly it needs to form part of the World Heritage site experience and present itself as a coherent sense of place through its physical environment and visitor products. Activity is divided into <u>physical</u> and <u>business development</u>:</p> <p>Physical</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gwynedd Council, Snowdonia National Park Authority and Cadw jointly prepare design brief for the High Street area of town with local heritage, environment and tourism organisations to specifically develop design thinking on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Inner gateways to the High Street and World Heritage Site. ○ The relationship of paths and trails, opportunities for interpretation and how they can extend stay, education and enjoyment of Harlech. ○ To undertake a parking study in order to understand current on and off-street needs, with an output to propose ways of managing on-street parking and identify ways of increasing pedestrian space. ○ To develop detailed design for carriageway treatment and pavements with an objective to create a pedestrian priority area. Consider street furniture and lighting as part of scheme. Procure design consultant and use to secure capital grants. ○ Target keynote buildings and produce design guidance on commercial frontages that are significant in street scene possibly through a Town Scheme Partnership. ○ To work with the Institute as they develop their People and Places lottery bid for their Community Hub on the High Street. <p>Business Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Find ways of bringing together town wide businesses and enterprises (in addition to tourism) into a network that can discuss issues, needs, training, promotion, temporary uses in vacant buildings etc; provide training and support: digital, sense of place and local distinctiveness, food, etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Meanwhile scheme with landlords to provide short term leases for arts and crafts, food, produce and test trading. ○ Ensure 3G/4G and Broadband is Fit for Business. ○ Explore a town centre Wi-Fi scheme that provides open access through sign up and directs users into other town information.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop a “Harlech Local” campaign that is directed towards the local community that supports shop, eat, buy, enjoy...local. ○ Local organisations and partners to co-deliver on-line and traditional suite of promotional material, including i) buy local guide and poster campaign ii) promotions, taster events iii) continue to use Facebook and social media, web promotion and use of short promotional films and explore feasibility of a loyalty card amongst local businesses. 				
Suggested Partners	Cadw, Gwynedd Council, Snowdonia National Park Authority, local Community Organisations				
Funding Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Great Places Programme – Heritage Lottery Funding ▪ Townscape Heritage - Heritage Lottery Funding ▪ Vibrant and Viable Places 2 – Welsh Government 				
Resource/Costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Design development costs ▪ Capital cost for improvement works ▪ Initial revenue costs ▪ Signposting/alignment of Business Wales and Superfast Broadband Cymru programme 				
Timetable	2017-2018	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2022 onwards

Strategic Proposal	Harlech Castle Investment - Phase 2				
Theme	Revitalising High Street				
Description	<p>With the initial phase of refurbishment at Harlech Castle completed, there are opportunities for Harlech to build upon the opportunities around heritage led regeneration with further investment at the Castle as well extending the World Heritage site experience across the town. Activity to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Refurbishment of Castle Gatehouse. This would involve further feasibility into the roofing of the gatehouse and insertion of floors that could be used for several possible functions and uses that could provide direct benefits for the community such as covered space for indoor events. The package could need to consider how this complements Theatr Arduwy's activity and future viability. ▪ To improve accessibility around the castle, including works to handrails. ▪ To raise awareness and promote the use of the resource centre located at the old visitor centre at the Castle which could be used as a community training facility ▪ To extend the education and learning experience within and beyond the castle through on-line and physical interpretation, use of augmented reality game apps such as Little Dragons available at Harlech Castle ▪ To support community run events at the Castle e.g. unveiling of giant storytelling chair based on Branwen's story ▪ To explore the provision of a Tourist Information Centre within the Castle Visitor Centre 				
Suggested Partners	Cadw, Harlech Tourism Association, Gwynedd Council				
Funding Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tourism Product Innovation Fund (Visit Wales) - awarded 				
Resource/Costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Capital refurbishment costs to Gatehouse and other accessibility works ▪ Free use of community training facility ▪ Existing Visit Wales grant funding (TPIF) 				
Timetable	2017-2018	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2022 onwards

Strategic Proposal	Community Facilities/Amenities Support
Theme	Maximise Local Assets
Description	<p>A strategy that maximises Harlech’s assets will benefit both community cohesion and add to the visitor offer. Harlech & Ardudwy Leisure Centre and Theatr Ardudwy both provide important wet-weather facilities. The Institute Community Hub, King George Playing Fields and various Woodlands across Harlech likewise combine community and visitor draw.</p> <p>Harlech & Ardudwy Leisure Centre Explore potential and help resource requirements for funding applications for capital works, specifically changing rooms and double glazing. Develop a cross community passport scheme and integrate into visitor offer.</p> <p>Theatr Ardudwy Short term: ensure current skeleton programme will meet criteria for continued support from existing funding bodies. Develop marketing. Promote and exploit digital cinema asset. Promote active frontage. Develop artistic programme that can access Arts Council of Wales project funding. Explore creative initiatives that link with other cultural venues and events, regionally, nationally and internationally, reflecting WHS status of Harlech and setting.</p> <p>Long term – closely align Theatr with the future potential use of Wern Fawr. Diversify use and exploit Grade 2* Listed status and scenic setting. Explore potential for café/bar/fine dining experience.</p> <p>Institute – Community Hub Continue to support proposals for Community Hub through People and Places application. Mix of community resource space, a refurbished kitchen, workspace for small businesses and digital infrastructure such as Wi-Fi will provide an active use on Harlech’s High Street and contribute to local enterprise and community activity.</p> <p>King George Playing Fields To support Harlech Community Parks with proposals to enhance the playing fields such as Welsh Legend Map, play area and wider management of space.</p> <p>Woodland To enhance the access and amenity woodland, owned by Coleg Harlech and managed by Harlech Community Council, that links the college site and Ffordd Isaf with cleared and improved paths,</p>

	artwork trails and areas for outdoor well-being classes, community art, hammocks, chill out area and ideas for yurts. Other woodlands such as those owned by the Woodland Trust and National Trust.				
Suggested Partners	Harlech & Ardudwy Leisure, Theatr Ardudwy, Harlech Library & Institute, Harlech Community Park, Harlech Community Council, Coleg Harlech, Woodland Trust and National Trust.				
Funding Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Historic Theatres Trust ▪ Paul Hamlyn Trust ▪ Heritage Enterprise fund - Heritage Lottery Fund ▪ People and Places - Big Lottery Fund ▪ Tourism Amenity Investment Scheme - Visit Wales 				
Resource/Costs	Explore potential for capital works and building repairs				
Timetable	2017-2018	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2022 onwards

Long Term

Strategic Proposal	Hotel Proposal				
Theme	Hotel for Harlech				
Description	<p>The need for a quality hotel has been called for by the local community and has been validated through this study. Such an investment would have multiple significant benefits for Harlech in changing the length of visitor stay, food and drink businesses, evening time activity and wider economic benefits for the town such as sustaining activity at Royal St.David's golf course, servicing the family visitor market and positive impact for town businesses. The options appraisal directs opportunity to the two sites that are located on the A496 which are outside of key strategic partners land ownership. Continued discussion with respective landowners needs to ascertain the following:</p> <p>Former St David's Hotel site</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A view from the landowner on the Section 215 order, its present non-compliance and resultant legal proceedings. The current state of this site is the No.1 issue for the local community and needs to be urgently addressed. A discussion on the future of the former residential block is also required as it does impact on the immediate setting and commercial appeal. ▪ The status of the approved 130-bedroom hotel for the site and its implementation. <p>Coleg Harlech site</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Coleg Harlech's board and trustees need to take a decision on the future of their asset, with a need to resolve on what terms occupation of the building is being offered i.e. will they require a freehold disposal of the property or will they be offering a long leasehold interest, and if so, what would be the proposed terms. The board would have to take a view on any proposed uses within respective offer, specifically if they meet their financial and ethical requirements for disposal and whether these complement the future well-being of the town. ▪ Proposals will need to consider the grade II* listed status of the Wern Fawr site including the Theatre building as well as wider site context and masterplanning issues along the series of sites on the A496. 				
Suggested Partners	Respective landowners				
Funding Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Heritage Enterprise – Heritage Lottery Funding dependent on site and model for delivery 				
Resource/Costs	Site disposal, assembly and delivery costs Off-site costs S106 agreements for community benefits				
Timetable	2017-2018	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2022 onwards

Harlech – Cycle of Growth

In setting the strategic priorities for Harlech, there is a logic and sequence to action and investment that needs to take place.

Aligning Place-Based Activities, Marketing & Connectivity

The need to add value and align projects that meet existing activity within community organisations such as Harlech Tourism Association and other Harlech in Action constituent groups is an immediate objective. Successful local projects funded through Visit Wales's Tourism Amenity Investment Scheme and interest in linking heritage and culture through a Great Places bid⁵ all help build place based experiences. Planned coach infrastructure and signage improvements will also support visitor management with a need to look at how to manage visitor growth when larger strategic investments take place. Small physical improvements such as pedestrian signage, seating, trails and paths and local interpretation can also be implemented as part of minor capital works.

Whilst Harlech is located within the Snowdonia Mountains and Coast destination area there is a need to project a stronger identity for the town and its tourism assets, with a need for a multi-agency approach to help build the story and brand messages. The recently refreshed Visit Harlech website provides a strong foundation for reaching out to visitors with the need to look at how social media and other marketing tools e.g. Cambrian Coast train service, can draw in people year-round.

How the visitor product relates to the physical place is equally important so that Harlech's perceived experience is realised on the ground. There is therefore a need for a more integrated business network that works with existing membership bodies such as the tourism association but engages with non-tourism businesses that may not be public facing yet still have an economic role to play in the town. This is important when looking at ways of presenting a consistent and



⁵ Heritage Lottery Programme scheme

quality offer to customers, as well as ensuring businesses are dynamic and resilient to change. Training and support in sense of place and digital marketing are areas to ensure businesses act as champions as well as considering multi-channel ways of marketing and selling products and services.

In conjunction, small digital projects such as town Wi-Fi schemes can support visitor experiences, engage with users, extending stay and building expenditure and loyalty. Recognising, that the larger strategic investments take time to materialise, some trialing of activity and the stimulation of local economic development can happen through activity such as meanwhile projects, working with landlords and agents on temporary uses such as pop-up arts and crafts shops, local produce markets, tourist information points, amongst other ideas.

In parallel to these community based projects, design development on keynote and capital projects can take place, such as the High Street, hotel site development, etc., thereby preparing the ground for major funding.

Strategic Investments

There are a number of strategic investments of clear benefit to Harlech that will require strategic partners to play a role in delivery.

Llanbedr Airfield located within the Snowdonia Enterprise Zone is about attracting high value economic activity and jobs through remote piloted aerospace systems (RPAS) and its potential as a spaceport site is being promoted by Welsh Government and Snowdonia Aerospace Company. On the southern edge of Harlech, the Airfield has the opportunity to create demand for additional accommodation need during test and evaluation campaigns for RPAS. Furthermore, if approved the spaceport would attract high-value tourists that would want to stay in Harlech, pre and post flight. The airfield also has the potential to service the needs of golf tourism and high-spend visitor needs to Harlech and Gwynedd, though this needs to be balanced against sustainability issues looking to the future.

In the immediate future, opportunities to develop short supply chains with the town such as catering, hospitality, transportation, and other business sectors should be facilitated. Any digital investment in the Airfield should also benefit the town and immediate community such as improved phone signal, broadband speed and use of Wi-Fi technology. Whilst the Airfield may wish to contain some activity, for commercial reasons, there are opportunities for related activity to be located in Harlech town, such as training, conference facilities, off-site enterprise space that supports product development and research, etc. This will help to set the developments at the Airfield in a wider economic framework, presenting it as a positive contribution to Harlech and the area, in addition to broadening the scope of funding bids.

Hotel. Developing Harlech as a place to stay and from which to explore is a key priority if the town is to sustain a number of key attractors. The development of a 50 to 70 bed destination hotel would provide multiple benefits for the town. Firstly, it would increase high quality, serviced bed space and appeal to visitors for short stay and longer breaks. Staying in the town would also bring secondary benefits for day and evening time businesses, with extended time to explore, eat out and enjoy Harlech, resulting in increased visitor spend. Presenting Royal St David's Golf Course as a place for tailor-made golf tours, a golf weekend away and hosting tournaments is also dependent on the provision of a high-quality hotel in Harlech. This would support the Club's viability and additionally support the cluster of golf courses along Cardigan Bay, increasing the integrated offer of the area. With regard to Llanbedr Airfield, there is a need to plan for future accommodation demand from contractors, engineers and potentially spaceport users. Finally, such an investment would generate employment, open up local supply chains and have a wider multiplier impact across Harlech.

This strategic priority has been a key priority for Harlech in Action in recent times. The need for a holistic approach to site development is needed so that any scheme is integrated and looks at the wider

context of the town, key approaches, design quality and respects the historical character of Harlech. The former St David's Hotel site and Coleg Harlech site are key opportunities on the A496 with them both situated on the strategic axis between the upper town, golf course and beach.

As both sites are in separate ownership, they require some facilitation in reaching an integrated solution that addresses whole site issues and opportunities.

Coleg Harlech's board and trustees need to take a decision on the future of their asset. If they decide that its current use is surplus, then it would need to be clear on what terms occupation of the building is being offered.

The relationship of the former St David's Hotel to Coleg Harlech site is significantly important, in terms of its current state of dilapidation and whether the landowner has any plans in implementing its current planning consent or to make any material changes to the design.

Its current condition has been identified by the local community as one of the top issues facing the town, with people seeking clarity on the landowner's intentions, as the site is perceived to be a significant eyesore close to the World Heritage Site and widely visible from the beach and golf course. A demolition order has been issued on the site and has subsequently expired, with the local planning authority invoking further penalties and resultant costs to the landowner. A clear understanding on the future of the St David's Hotel site is needed if an holistic approach is to be taken towards this series of highly visible, sensitive sites and assets along such a major corridor within Harlech.

High Street. Recent, high quality investment at Harlech Castle by Cadw demonstrates how an integrated approach to heritage, visitor management, in-town accommodation and to the under-pinning of a sense of place can work. The proximity of the High Street area to the World Heritage Site is important, for local residents as well as visitors. Building on the community place-based activities, there is a need for an



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integrated approach to the High Street area by developing a design code for keynote buildings (Lion Pub, Charity Shop, Institute building), the streetscene, public realm and the road itself. Further consideration needs to be given to bringing visitors into Bron Y Graig car park and from Ffordd Isaf through the Coleg Harlech woodland that links with the town centre, so that footfall is drawn through the

whole street. Through a combination of the proposed community hub in the Institute, meanwhile use, street markets and the creation of more pedestrian space, local people and visitors could spend more time in the town. Enhancing the physical environment also stimulates private sector investment (e.g. through frontage improvements), building town identity and business confidence simultaneously. Design development work would need to look at the whole envelope of the High Street, working with building owners as well as the highway authority on design guides, a parking strategy and a sensitive yet sustainable way of creating more public space and maintaining vehicular access.

Connectivity will be key to the regeneration of Harlech. Better connection between upper and lower town and between Castle and beach will make for a more cohesive experience for resident and visitor alike. It will also solve many of the issues of car parking and access to the Castle. There is clear potential for a park and ride scheme that could benefit all users of the town. CADW instigated a Hoppa Bus scheme whilst building the Visitor Centre and this was regarded as successful. Detailed exploration of this potential should be prioritised. In addition, the experience of making the journey on foot from lower town to High St also needs to be improved, through town trails and animation of the routes. Detailed design would be simple to develop.

Aligning/Supporting Community Assets

In parallel to the strategic investments, the need to support cultural, leisure, sports and community facilities is a challenge during a difficult financial climate.

These community run facilities are vital to local people in terms of well-being as well as providing wet weather resources for visitors and residents. Physical improvements through small community grants for refurbished dressing rooms and double glazing at the leisure centre can help future costs with a need to also look at ways of generating renewable energy. These types of investments would also help trustees in focusing on the strategic direction of these community assets,

providing time to concentrate on marketing and working with other partners.

The hotel proposal can also promote and signpost visitors to activities at the pool and climbing wall as well as to the in-house theatre with it acting as a portal to the town. If the Theatre can provide complementary activities to the hotel then this is likely to be the most viable way to ensure the continuation of Harlech's contemporary cultural venue.

The proposed community hub in the Institute on the High Street will provide complementary facilities such as enterprise space, meeting rooms with free Wi-Fi and other community resources.

The need to integrate and cross market facilities within the town is a smart way for community and voluntary organisations to promote themselves to residents and visitors. Our proposal for a "Harlech Card" could provide incentives for residents and visitors to use the local pool, climbing wall and theatre, pooling and re-distributing annual subscriptions to respective organisations. The Card could also be used in local shops and services as a way of promoting 'buy local'.

Harlech has a passion for community action but within this there are a multitude of groups and organisations. We would recommend that strategic and local partners find ways of coordinating and find ways for joint working, marketing and assisting with funding applications. Strategic partners such as Gwynedd Council can continue to support and signpost groups to resources and grants but there is still a need for local co-ordination.

Harlech – A Cohesive Community & Destination

All of the above proposals can work towards:

- Retaining and growing facilities for residents and visitors
- Maximising the appeal of the World Heritage Site and linked benefits to the town
- Creating a year-round, diverse and quality destination
- Improving the local economy and community cohesiveness.

Strategy Actions & Recommendations

Immediate Actions

1. Encourage community organisations that are leading on approved or proposed applications for Tourism Amenity Investment Scheme, Great Places Lottery and People and Places Lottery bids for visitor, heritage and community infrastructure; to explore ways of integration if funding approved.
2. Encourage Harlech Tourism Association with their marketing and place-brand development, building on their voluntary work to date: social media, media visitations, strategic PR, on-site visitor management.
3. Find ways of bringing together town wide businesses (in addition to tourism) into a network that can discuss issues, needs, training, promotion, temporary uses in vacant buildings etc; provide training and support: digital, sense of place, food, etc
4. Gwynedd Council, Snowdonia National Park Authority and Cadw jointly prepare design brief for the High Street area of town with local heritage, environment and tourism organisations; secure funding, procure design consultant and use to secure capital grants.
5. Cadw, Gwynedd Council and local partners scope potential for Park and Ride scheme that uses Hoppa bus or similar to connect upper and lower town. Examine termini, route, pick up points, timetable, seasonal aspects, infrastructure, users and costs. Scope potential for 'green' or imaginative alternatives to bus.
6. Gwynedd Council, Snowdonia National Park Authority and Cadw Devise design package that brings together i) inner gateways ii) town trails and circuits, procure and develop designs.
7. Await outcome of Spaceport proposal; Welsh Government to facilitate discussions with Snowdonia Aerospace Company on opportunities for local supply chain development, off-site training/research activity.
8. Hotel Proposal
 - a. Recommend demolition of former St Davids Hotel and former residential tower block on the following grounds:
 - i. The community has identified the deteriorated site as the number one issue facing the town, in terms of it being a significant eyesore
 - ii. Impact on setting of World Heritage site and key vistas, approaches into town
 - iii. The site is perceived to be blighting commercial confidence in Harlech
 - iv. Potential risk to public health and safety
 - b. Continue to maintain dialogue with Coleg Harlech on their strategy for the future use of the Wern Fawr building, specifically whether meeting hotel accommodation needs is a priority for them.
 - c. To facilitate discussions between the two respective landowners in order to achieve an integrated solution in land use and design quality.

Programme

Timetable

Theme	Proposal	Timescale					Cost/Resource
		2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2022 onwards	
PRIORITY PROJECTS							
Putting Harlech on the Map	1. Invest in on-line and physical visitor management information – local and strategic partners						£
	2. Event led activity – Year of Legends and Sea (TPIF)						£
	3. Visitor management improvements (subject to approval)						£
	4. Provision of pilot TIC in Harlech Castle Visitor Centre						£
	5. Great Place (Culture & Heritage) project (subject to approval)						££
Announcing Harlech/ Exploring Harlech	1. Cambrian Train Line Campaign and WHS Harlech						£
	2. Develop integrated transport service						££
	3. Enhance coach parking provision						£
	4. Install advanced visitor signage and Ogham stone concept						£
	5. Develop town trails and circuits						£
Revitalising High Street	1. Physical environment – High Street						£££
	2. Business development – High Street						£
	3. Harlech Castle Investment – Phase 2						££
Maximising Local Assets	1. Harlech & Ardudwy Leisure Centre						££
	2. Theatr Ardudwy						£
	3. Institute – Community Hub						££
	4. King George V Playing Fields						£
	5. Woodland						£
Hotel for Harlech	1. Enable hotel proposal at key strategic sites						£££
Enterprise in Harlech	1. Institute – Community Hub						££
	2. Business development – High Street						££



OUTPUTS & OUTCOMES

6. Outputs & Outcomes

Proposal Related Outputs & Outcomes

The following outputs have been identified that would be generated from the package of strategic proposals.

Jobs Accommodated

Not known due to lack of data.

New Enterprises Created

This is difficult to quantify with a new hotel filling the former educational provision at the college. Dependent on investment in the High Street area some new enterprises could be accommodated in vacant premises.

Number of Local Businesses Supported

There are approximately 35 businesses located in the High Street with a further 25 additional businesses within the accommodation or retail sector outside of the town centre. We have not accounted for businesses in Llanfair or Llanbedr.

Jobs Created (FTE)

Hotel Proposal. The industry norm for four-star hotels is one member of staff per two guests (five-star normally requires a 1:1 ratio). Using our 50-guest target, this equates to 25 members of staff, the actual allocation of which will depend on the preferred management model.

We would suggest approximately 25 full-time job equivalents (FTEs), which can include some part-time roles such as portering and restaurant service, and possibly some cleaning tasks during peak periods.

The aim would be for maximum occupancy and a year-round offer. However, seasonality will still be a factor and some additional staff may still be required during e.g. the school holiday period. There may also be a need for extra staff during special events when extra activities are provided and where occupancy should be at a 100% level.

Premises Created or Safeguarded

At the time of writing this report 4 no. commercial premises are vacant in the town centre. If targeted investment was made available and improvements to the town centre implemented, there is a greater likelihood of these premises being used for complementary uses.

Vacancy Rate

Harlech presently has a 16% vacancy rate of its total stock, which is slightly higher than the Welsh average of 2016, and significantly more than British Retail Consortium figure of 10%. If targeted investment was made we would expect the rate to drop to be between 8% to 4% with 4% the natural churn rate for properties.

Community Enterprises Safeguarded

Subject to support and investment, the following community enterprises (2no.) would be safeguarded or enhanced through this strategic guide:

- Harlech & Ardudwy Leisure Centre (pool and climbing wall)
- The Institute (community hub proposal)

Land Improved

Potential land improvements depend upon the extent of works, but will include the High Street, connecting streets and areas adjacent, as well as the Watergate area below the castle. Town trails and associated initiatives will bring additional land improvements to areas such as the Coleg Harlech woodland, the Goat Track and the Viewing Point, as well as existing footpaths and streets that connect upper and lower town.

Number of Digital Infrastructure Projects

1 no. town Wi-Fi scheme would be implemented and hosted to help build local business growth and engagement with visitors.

Projected Visitors

Given the most recent figures for attendance at Harlech Castle as 103,000, and factoring in those visitors who may not visit the castle and go to, say, Morfa Harlech beach instead, we can estimate visitor numbers currently at c.200,000 p.a. Visit Wales has a growth target for tourism predicated on:

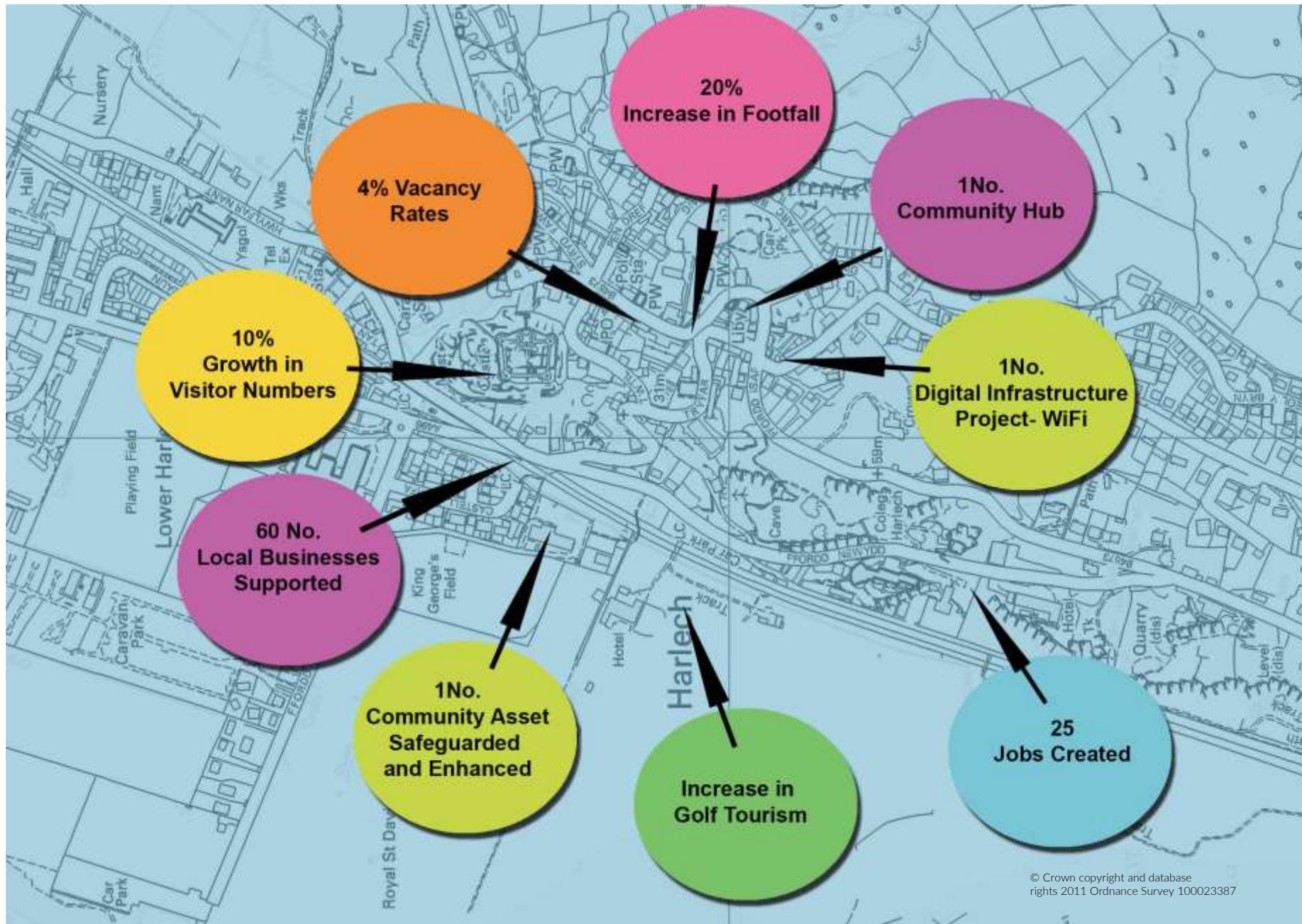
- more luxury and branded hotels
- more well-being facilities, such as spas
- more heritage hotels that utilise historic and distinctive buildings
- more all year-round attractions, activities and cultural experiences
- more innovative, unusual and distinctive products.

Its ambition is for a 10% growth in tourism earnings by 2020. This is not purely a projected increase in visitor numbers, but a plan to increase market share, spend per head, length and frequency of stay. This is an important consideration for Harlech given its physical limitations and restricted carrying capacity. With improved access and parking and the introduction of visitor management schemes such as a park and ride service, it should be possible to accommodate more visitors to the town and subsequently increase economic benefit from tourism whilst achieving a sustainable year-round balance between visitors and residents.

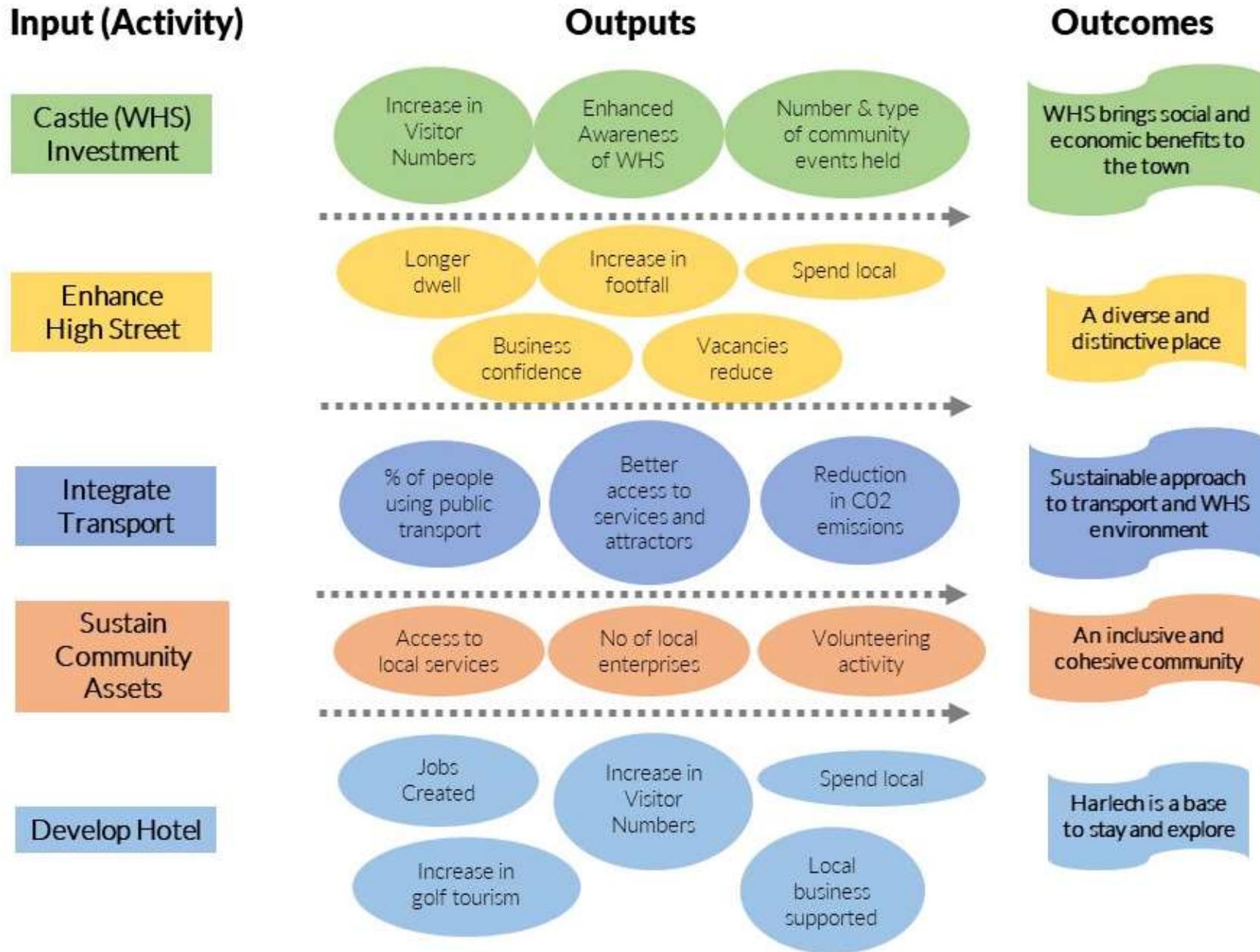
Overseas Visitors

International visitors are generally regarded as a relatively high spending market but historically have been of lower importance for Wales, accounting for just 8% of all staying trips and 16% of all staying visitor expenditure. Scotland, Ireland and the English regions attract significantly more international visitors than Wales. As a result, Wales' market share of all international trips has been gradually falling from 3.6% to 2.7% and share of spending from 2.15% to 1.86% between 2002 and 2012.

With the improved visitor facility at Harlech Castle, enhancement of its status as a World Heritage destination and the addition of new high-quality visitor accommodation, it should be possible to make inroads into the overseas market, reversing the trends illustrated above and providing real growth in this sector of the market.



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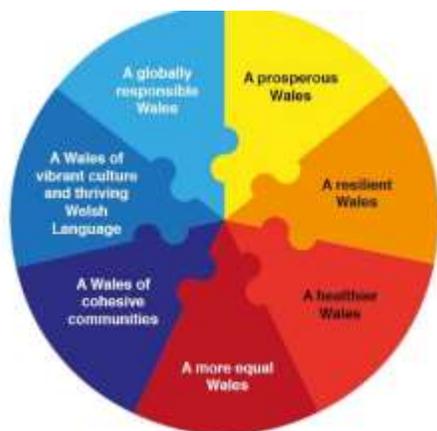
Measuring Success

It is important for any future activity and investment to be monitored as part of the development and delivery process. A selection of indicators is outlined below which range from National type indicators down to core economic and added social and economic value.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	METHODOLOGY
Local Indicators	
Economic	
Visitor activity e.g. spend, accommodation type	STEAM, bed stock survey
Diversity of use class/trader type	Visual survey
Pedestrian activity (footfall-daytime and evening)	Counters
Vacancy rates	Visual survey
Business confidence surveys	Online/postal survey
Employment rates	NOMIS - ONS
Industrial classification	Census
Environment	
No of buildings actively contributing to streetscene	Visual survey
Quality of buildings and public space	Visual survey
Cleanliness of town centre	Visual survey
Social/Community	
Change in Age Cohort	Census
Town Centre User Satisfaction Surveys	On street/online surveys

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	METHODOLOGY
Well Being and Future Generations "national indicators"	
Environment	
Levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO2) pollution in the air.	Transport roadside pollution counts
Percentage of dwellings with adequate energy performance.	Household energy performance surveys
Economic	
Percentage of businesses which are innovation-active.	Business Wales/local business survey
Percentage of people in employment, who are on permanent contracts (or on temporary contracts, and not seeking permanent employment) and who earn more than 2/3 of the UK median wage.	Local business survey
Social/Community	
Percentage of people living in households in material deprivation.	Census/well-being survey
Percentage of people in employment.	Census
Percentage of people in education, employment or training, measured for different age groups.	Census
Percentage who feel able to influence decisions affecting their local area.	Well-being survey
Percentage of people satisfied with their ability to get to/ access the facilities and services they need.	Well-being survey
Percentage of people feeling safe at home, walking in the local area, and when travelling.	Well-being survey
Percentage of people satisfied with local area as a place to live.	Well-being survey
Percentage of people agreeing that they belong to the area; that people from different backgrounds get on well together; and that people treat each other with respect.	Well-being survey
Percentage of people who volunteer.	Well-being survey
Percentage of people attending or participating in arts, culture or heritage activities at least three times a year.	Well-being survey
Percentage of people who speak Welsh daily and can speak more than just a few words of Welsh.	Well-being survey
Percentage of people who can speak Welsh.	Census/well-being survey

Fit with Future Generations & Well-Being Act



Whilst the economic prosperity of a place such as Harlech is a key indicator of its success, these days the social and environmental aspects are of equal importance, as the role and function of town centres are changing and diversifying.

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 places emphasis on public bodies to think more about the long term, work better with people and communities and each other, look to prevent problems and take a more joined-up approach. This strategic guide meets the broad objectives and outcomes of the Act in the following ways.

Integration

The need to bring together Harlech together in a physical and organisational sense is key to its role as a place to live as well as visit. Whilst some of the proposals are about linking and connecting the built and natural assets, there is a need to develop a coherent identity for the town that presents an integrated offer. There is also the need within a town of this size to develop a cohesive and co-ordinated way of working that adds value and maximises community benefits.

Long-term

This strategic guide is about positioning the town and its community with several proposals that will take time to realise yet converge on common objectives. Some immediate actions can build relationships as well as deliver incremental change, contributing to integrated actions. The programme indicates a 5-year timetable, with some of the larger strategic actions realistically going beyond 2022.

Prevention

Places such as Harlech are about a diversity and equality of opportunity. The community needs to be able to access basic services, advice, healthcare as well as providing space to socialise and interact. A number of proposals are about training provision, community services, healthy living and lifelong learning and accessing green space.

Collaboration

This strategic guide plan has been developed through a collaborative and participatory approach through a series of local stakeholder events and through accessible community consultation. Going forward, there is heightened need for collaboration and partnership working, and also to deliver projects through community activism and volunteering that helps realise the use of under-utilised assets.

Involvement

Continued involvement of the community and local organisations is important in retaining a local audience and following, with a belief and a need to engage with a place such as Harlech. Shaping the design of services and proposals is key for the next five years, so that there is a resultant effect on activity, dwell, loyalty, general well-being and a sense of wanting to be part of the town experience.



DELIVERY THROUGH CO-OPERATION

7. Delivery Through Co-operation

Governance and Management

In a place based strategy, such as this; half of the proposals depend on close involvement of the local authority and other strategic bodies; half can be achieved by local organisations taking the lead in project development and delivery.

In going forward, a delivery structure needs to be developed that responds to the size of the Harlech and also understands specific skills, knowledge, roles and responsibilities.

There should also be respect that the umbrella group, Harlech in Action, has been formed and its role in delivery needs to be maintained to ensure cross-organisation representation and for continuity. The group's focus has been on "campaign", with the hotel issue being rightly at the centre of their agenda in recent times. If this key issue is addressed, then we would suggest it can widen its efforts into other areas for attention and help by working together

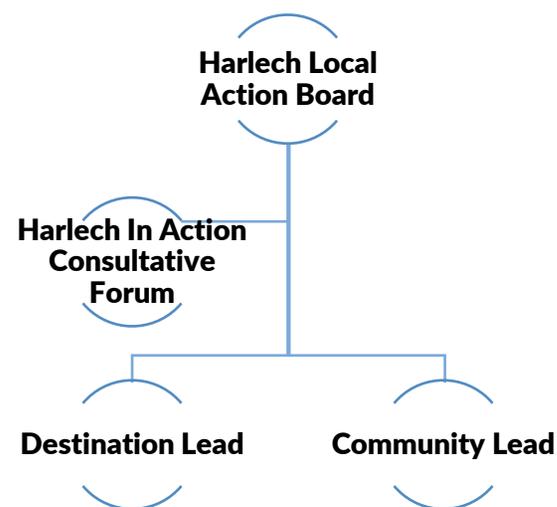
This strategic guide document therefore requires co-ordination that is not top down but deliverable in an equitable way that maintains in-depth engagement with organisations and individuals at the local level. This needs to be achieved in a way that seeks to coordinate activity through a Harlech Local Action Board and by building the local capacity by strengthening the role of local organisations.

As the strategic guide work moves into development and delivery, it will be important to build on this approach, developing a delivery model that evolves the role of the Local Action Board and suggested local, themed-based "task" groupings of i) Destination and ii) Community. Such a model for project development and delivery should ensure:

- Creating local capacity to deliver projects, especially 'quick wins'
- Integrating strategic thinking and solutions between Council and public services
- Utilising resources that may arise through projects such as the Great Places project (pending approval)

- Fund raising and financial management at the appropriate level to maximise resources
- Coordinating communications within partner organisations, between partners and wider promotion of the town and area

Figure 9 - Delivery Structure



The Local Action Board would have lead representatives from the Consultative Forum and from each of the "lead" task groups. The Board would also have representation from Gwynedd Council, Snowdonia National Park, Cadw and Welsh Government with advisors/observers invited in relation to a specific project or item. Further discussion on the constitution and membership of the Board would be needed, outside of this commission.

Thematic Task Groups

We recognise the existence and voluntary efforts of a number of organisations in Harlech to date and their independence needs to be respected. There is however value in pooling their respective knowledge, skills and resources into two thematic task groups to help co-deliver some of the proposals outlined in this document. We have suggested two grouping based around destination and community, with some of the larger strategic projects e.g. Llanbedr Airfield, seen as cross-cutting and which may need to be led at a higher board level.

Suggested roles and responsibilities within these task groups would include:

- Review of skillset and capacity
- Receive training and support
- Development of project proposals with partners
- Looking at ways of integration and meeting strategic outcomes
- Identifying funding opportunities
- Co-ordination of delivery
- Monitoring progress
- Reporting to Board

In looking at the specific task groups, some suggested areas of focus are outlined below.

Destination

- Support for local tourism initiatives
- Hotel proposal and associated actions
- High Street and World Heritage site development
- Announcement, gateways and signage
- Walking trails and paths
- Transport and connectivity

Community

- Supporting local community assets and facilities
- Community networking, advice, outreach
- Building local ambassadors
- Developing the “Harlech Card” idea

Community Co-ordination

As identified by the community through our consultation process, there is a need to plug a current gap in provision and provide a community development co-ordinator who would support the Harlech Local Action Board, respective task groups and local organisations. We would suggest that this type of post is created through a project based route and forms part of management costs e.g. Great Places project, Community Hub proposal.

Such a role would help facilitate

- a. Inter-organisational working
- b. Cross-marketing and promotion
- c. Building capacity and up-skilling
- d. Funding and sustainability

Funding

Some examples of available funding for this Harlech strategic guide are outlined below.

Welsh Government

Vibrant and Viable Places 2

A successor programme to Vibrant and Viable Places 1 is soon to be announced in the autumn of 2017 with bidding open in April 2018.

Key criteria to include:

- A targeted approach to regeneration to include delivery of a holistic place plan with bespoke actions reflecting unique local circumstances;
- That projects are transformative, large scales investments that encourage clustering of activity and align with regional plans e.g. Cardiff Capital Region City Deal and need to be targeted to areas less likely to benefit directly from economic development projects;
- A collaborative approach with partners developed through local consensus e.g. private sector, third sector, FE/HE, registered social landlords, etc.;

- Demonstrable outcomes in terms of how they support economic, social and environmental well-being objectives with a combination of place and people measures and revenue and capital activities;

Community Facilities Programme

This capital grant fund aims to develop and improve facilities for communities in order to tackle poverty and its effects. Up to £500,000 is available for facilities which are:

- needed and used by the community and offering services not duplicated in the surrounding area
- providing services which prevent or mitigate poverty and its effects
- reintroducing or preventing the loss of community services
- supported by and developed along with the local community
- strategic and can demonstrate this by evidencing it has the support of the local authority, local County Voluntary Council, Local Health Board or similar partner
- sustainable over the medium to long term
- providing, safeguarding or re-introducing a valuable community service such as access to a credit union, post office, library, last shop/retail outlet in the area, amongst other eligibility criteria

<http://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/communities/grants/community-facilities-programme/?lang=en>

Tourist Amenity Investment Scheme (TAIS)

The Tourism Amenity Investment Support scheme (TAIS) is available for public, third sector and not for profit organisations.

TAIS is an investment fund targeting amenity projects in the tourism sector in Wales. Support of between £25,000 and £128,000 will be considered.

The cap on total eligible project expenditure is £160,000. The aim is to:

- develop quality sustainable tourism facilities

- add value to visitor experience
- deliver quality, innovation and a sense of place

<https://businesswales.gov.wales/sites/business-wales/files/tourism/TAIS%20-%20Guidance%20Document%20E%20130617.pdf>

Tourism Investment Support Scheme (TISS)

Up to £500,000 is available for eligible capital investment projects. TISS is an investment fund comprising a mix of repayable and non-repayable finance, targeting eligible capital investment projects in the Tourism Sector in Wales. It can be used either to upgrade existing or create new high-quality product. The fund range is from £25,000 to £500,000 (support) with job outputs, economic benefit and quality being key criteria and considerations.

<http://gov.wales/topics/tourism/tourism-investment-support-scheme/?lang=en>

Tourism Product Innovation Fund (TPIF)

The purpose of the TPIF fund is to work with tourism sector partners across Wales to deliver the 10% growth target set out in the tourism strategy. The fund aims to encourage closer joint working between tourism consortia, partnerships and trade groups and to develop and improve the product offer to visitors which will benefit the tourism sector, local communities and critically, help to grow the tourism economy in a sustainable way.

Project proposals will need to:

- develop or enhance tourism products that have been identified as priorities within the tourism strategy and action plan
- be in line with Visit Wales' thematic 'Years of Experience' approach

- meet the needs of one or more of Visit Wales' target market segments
- demonstrate the ability to have an impact in the market place over a longer period of time

<https://businesswales.gov.wales/zones/tourism/finance>

Rural Development Programme for Wales 2014-2020

This programme is funded by the European Union's European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and by the Welsh Government. The Welsh Government Rural Communities – Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 was adopted by the European Commission on 26 May 2015.

<http://gov.wales/topics/environmentcountryside/farmingandcountryside/cap/ruraldevelopment/wales-rural-development-programme-2014-2020/?lang=en>

Lottery Funding

People and Places Programme

The People and Places programme has an annual budget of £17.8 million to fund capital and revenue projects that support co-ordinated action by people to make their communities better places to live. It will support local projects and projects that operate in more than one geographical area, regionally or throughout Wales. People and Places aims to: "Enable people to work together for strong communities, social justice and better rural and urban environments." People and Places can fund projects that achieve one or more of the following programme outcomes:

- revitalised communities
- improved community relations
- enhanced local environments, community services and buildings.

Organisations can apply for funding between £5,001-£1 million over a period of up to five years. The programme can fund a mix of revenue and capital projects

<https://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/global-content/programmes/wales/people-and-places>

Rural Programme: Community Grants

The Lottery Programme is inviting community groups to apply for funding to tackle rural poverty in Anglesey, Gwynedd, Conwy, Denbighshire, Powys, Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire and Monmouthshire.

Grants of between £10,000 and £350,000 are available for groups whose work will benefit a community with a population of 10,000 or less. Although the types of activities that could be funded are not being prescribed, applications would need to show how groups are doing any of the following to address poverty:

- Improving well-being
- Raising aspirations
- Building social capital – enhancing skills available in the community
- Increasing resilience to challenging circumstances.

This could include themes like employment and income, transport and access to services, poor broadband and digital exclusion, housing and fuel poverty and demand for welfare and advice services.

<https://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/global-content/programmes/wales/rural-programme-community-grants>

Townscape Heritage

The Townscape Heritage programme is for schemes which help communities improve the built historic environment of conservation areas in need of investment across the UK. They support partnerships of local, regional and national interests that aim to regenerate economically disadvantaged historic areas for the benefit of local residents, workers and visitors. You can apply for a grant from £100,000 to £2million. The application process is in two rounds.

It funds schemes that make a lasting difference for heritage, people and communities in the UK. A Townscape Heritage scheme is made up of a balanced portfolio of projects that together have the potential to regenerate and transform conservation areas in need of investment.

<https://www.hlf.org.uk/looking-funding/our-grant-programmes/townscape-heritage>

Heritage Enterprise

The Heritage Enterprise programme is for projects that seek to achieve economic growth by investing in heritage. It is primarily for enterprising community organisations to help them rescue neglected historic buildings and sites and return them to a viable productive use.

Heritage Enterprise is designed to bridge the funding gap that prevents a historic asset in need of repair from being returned to a beneficial and commercial use. The case for grant funding will depend on there being a conservation deficit. This is where the existing value of a heritage asset plus the cost of bringing it back into use is greater than the value of the asset after development has been completed.

Through Heritage Enterprise it funds:

- the purchase of a heritage asset in need of investment;
- essential conservation work, such as structural repairs to a historic building;
- work to bring vacant and derelict buildings and sites back into commercial use.

It also funds activities to help people engage with the heritage, including:

- training in conservation, mentoring, learning, management or digital skills for people delivering the project;
- providing activities or information that allow people to learn about the heritage of the buildings or sites in your Heritage Enterprise project.

It also supports work to help you develop and manage your project, such as:

- valuations, professional fees or the costs associated with obtaining the necessary statutory consents;

- specialist research to ensure the conservation and development works are properly informed by a thorough understanding of the significance of the heritage asset and its repair needs;
- preparing a development appraisal;
- employing project staff.

<https://www.hlf.org.uk/looking-funding/our-grant-programmes/heritage-enterprise>

Others

Trusthouse Charitable Foundation

Trusthouse gives grants for running costs or one-off capital costs to charities and not-for-profit organisations in accordance with criteria that are regularly reviewed and decided by the Trustees.

In July 2008, the Trustees reviewed its grants policy and decided to concentrate on projects addressing Rural Issues and Urban Deprivation. Specific areas relevant to Harlech include

Community Support. For example: work with young people; community centres; support for carers; older people's projects; help for refugees; family support; community transport; sports projects; rehabilitation of ex-offenders; alcohol and drug misuse projects; domestic violence prevention and aftermath.

Arts, Education and Heritage. For example: arts projects for people with disabilities; performance or visual arts with a clear and strong community impact; alternative education projects; supplementary teaching; heritage projects in marine or industrial areas which involve local people and have a demonstrable community benefit.

www.trusthousecharitablefoundation.org.uk

