

# Pontypool's SMART Town Action Plan Reviewed by



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**Lywodraeth Cymru**  
Funded by  
**Welsh Government**

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<b>Town / High Street</b>	Pontypool
<b>County</b>	Torfaen
<b>Intended Start Date of SMART project</b>	
<b>Date of Plan</b>	4 <sup>th</sup> November 2021

**1. Description of the Town**

- Setting the scene
- Provide an overview on innovative activities

Situated in the valley of the Afon Llwyd River, Pontypool is the administrative centre of Torfaen. Pontypool as a whole has a population of just under 30,000, with an average household size of 2.2. 17.35% are 14 years of age and under with 19.3% being over 65. White is the major ethnic group at 98.6% which also reflects the South Wales Valleys as a whole. The town also has an even larger percentage of people who have no Welsh language skills at all with 87.4%.

The economic inactivity rate is 36.68%, this is worse than the Welsh national average of 26% and the UK national average of 22% in the same year. Community safety, employment, income, health and education are all in the lowest quartile of the whole of Wales.

Historically, Pontypool was an industrial town. Whilst iron-making flourished in Blaenavon, Pontypool specialised in the production of tin-plate. With the decline in production of the heavy industries across south Wales in the twentieth century, this had a direct impact on the economy of Pontypool.

Although Pontypool has areas of deprivations, there are other areas which are more affluent. The more affluent residents are not currently attracted to shop in Pontypool but are more likely to travel past the town on their way to Cwmbran in the south.

Cwmbran provides residents with a larger and more diverse shopping experience, with mainly multi-national retail offering. Pontypool lacks in any identity, which has been highlighted through recent workshops with businesses across Torfaen. An identity needs to be developed and promoted to increase visits to the town centre.

Although there is a loyal hub of independent traders in the town, many of whom have been trading for 40 years, there is clear evidence of absent landlords, properties purchased by private investors at auction using pension funds, who have no connection to the area. Engagement with the landlords, high rents and poor condition of the properties, are all barriers to encouraging businesses to locate themselves in the high street.

There is evidence of lack of services that bring local people into the town centre, such as soft-play areas for children; restaurants; quality coffee shops etc. The town has recently lost some multi-national businesses such as Argos and New Look. It is difficult to fill these units with independents due to their size/rent/rate barriers.

## Innovative Activities

Pontypool Town has been the recipient of investment in recent years, including the £1m refurbishment of the Victorian Indoor Market; improvements to the public realm such as a pedestrianisation scheme; and investment into building through the Townscape Heritage Project.

There are active groups/organisations in the town who all have the shared goal of improving Pontypool town for residents, businesses and visitors. The groups work in partnership to get the best value out of funding and activities.

- The Community Council are located in the town centre and support and invest in improvements to the town as well as deliver events, such as the Christmas Cavalcade.
- The Friends of Pontypool Town is a group made up of local businesses, community council members and individuals. Discuss opportunities and issues in the town; arrange litter picks; engage with the local schools and nursery; successful in securing funding to deliver town centre events such as Easter and Halloween.
- Pontypool Regeneration Partnership – made up of members from the Community Council, Development Trust, Friends of Pontypool Town, Borough Council, TCBC Officers. All partners work together to strategically plan regeneration activities in the town centre.
- Pontypool Development Trust - was formed with the aim of regenerating the town of Pontypool through the purchase and renovation of properties that are of no interest to the private sector. A number of properties have been purchased and renovated in the town centre, now occupied by businesses.

The TRI Programme (20/21) has been successful in bringing 4 buildings and redundant floorspace back in to beneficial re-use as well as supporting 1 business through a Covid Recovery Grant that has enabled the business to adapt to new ways of trading as result of the pandemic. The total public and private sector investment within Pontypool in the last financial year was in excess of £1 million.

The Council recognises the need to create vibrant, viable town centres that meet the needs of residents, businesses and visitors, that are sufficiently resilient to adapt to future needs. As a result it is currently in the process of developing a Place Plan for Pontypool Town Centre that will set the strategic direction for future investment. Place Plans are a pre-requisite to securing funding and enables the Council to incorporate a multi-faceted approach to regeneration. (green infrastructure, energy housing, foundational economy etc)

Pontypool Indoor Market provides businesses with Test-Trade opportunities, with a 10-30% rent reduction in the first 6 months, allowing the business to test their product, build their customer base and test the market as a location from which to trade.

Cisco Meraki units to be fitted around the town and indoor market to collect data that can be used to inform business support and regeneration activities.

Recent Foundational Economy Challenge Fund project provided businesses with small marketing grants. In addition 12 month subscriptions were provided to businesses to have a presence on the

UDDR app, promoting local businesses to both the consumer and other businesses to encourage local supply chains.

Development of the Hyb2 business workspace in Pontypool Indoor Market. For use by local businesses to access a workspace/networking/meeting venue/training sessions.

CRF Funding has been approved for the Foundational Economy Project, which is the continuation of the Challenge Fund project, widening out the delivery area to include Blaenavon. The project will provide us with 4 stalls in the indoor market to be utilised as pop-up/test trade units at no cost to the business, as well as a commercial rental space on the high street. In addition, a grant will again be offered to small businesses to support marketing activity. A full training programme delivered from the Hyb2 and development of networking forums to encourage local supply chains.

Knowledge Partnership will be further developed through the CRF project, extending membership out to some key members of the Pontypool business community who can mentor and support new start-up businesses, sharing knowledge, experiences, best practice and advise. Partnership includes the Community Council, Regeneration Partnership, Development Trust and Friends of Pontypool Town, who all have local knowledge that can be used to support start-up, small businesses in the town.

Fibre to the box has recently been increased from 2mbps to 30/40.

Electric charge points are now available on Osbourne Road

Osbourne Lodge Day Nursery, located in Pontypool town centre has been in receipt of WG funding, from the Child Development Fund which supports families.

## 2. Building your SMART Team

- Who?
- Resources?
- Experience?

### Who

Businesses – sharing knowledge/best practice  
 Regen Partnership/Community Council/Friends of Pontypool Town/Torfaen County Borough Council  
 Support from Shared Resource Service (internet/tech/IT)  
 Cardigan Town– sharing good practice  
 Blaenau Gwent – sharing good practice  
 Knowledge Partnership  
 ArtRegen

### Resources

External funding  
 Regeneration Partnership  
 Development Trust  
 Businesses  
 Torfaen Council  
 Pontypool CC

TVA – third sector  
Knowledge Partnership  
Integrated into Place Plan

**Experience**

Experienced in delivery of externally funded regeneration projects  
Experienced business owners  
Uddr Team – IT/Mobile and Website dev experts, can provide insight from a tech/delivery aspect  
Friends of Pontypool Town – wealth of community knowledge  
Well established third sector support organisation  
Trader expertise

**3. Collecting Data – Measuring the Health**

- What data needs to be measured / recorded and analysed

Footfall  
Vacant properties  
Occupied properties  
Business type/size/growth  
Business needs/gaps/barriers  
Spend data against footfall data  
Dwell times  
Access points for visitors  
Who are our visitors/how far have they travelled/purpose of visit  
How do people use the town – routes/mapping – heat mapping  
Consumer needs – gaps and barriers

**4. Existing SMART Technologies**

- What technologies are in place?

1. Public Wi-Fi on council operated sites e.g., indoor market, inside libraries, Civic ground floor  
Currently:

- SRS public - capped to 2 Mbps per connection and accessed by a pre-shared key (PSK)
- Govwifi – also capped to 2Mbps per connection uses same network just with a username and password and you need to text a number to get username and password.

Possibility of moving to BT Wi-Fi at some point in the future.

Currently no splash-page or data capture capabilities, push download of Uddr app

- 2. Finalising the installation of Cisco Meraki access point units to record real time location analytics data

**3.** Uddr a technology company based in Pontypool and has already established a successful mobile app that allows residents to simply find, contact and review local services and trades. Uddr will be digitally levelling up 200 businesses through 2021/22, providing each of them with new websites and their own business profiles promoted on the Uddr platform, these are all to be delivered specifically within Torfaen.

- What data is being collected?

No data collected re: Wi-Fi

Currently footfall data collected via units in the Indoor Market, as well as 2 units in the high street (Argos/HSBC). Cisco Meraki units will replace these.

Occupied/vacant commercial premises in town centre and indoor market (data manually collected and recorded on Excel spreadsheet)

Business engagement data is collected from previous issue of marketing grants

- What is use being made of the data?

Footfall data used to measure impact of events on visitors to the town/market

Occupancy data in indoor market is used as a performance indicator

Businesses engaged with – opt in to sign up to Economy & Enterprise businesses e-news to present opportunities in the borough such as joining Torfaen business voice (business networking forum); grants available; training.

5. Use Case Priority List		
Use Cases	Top 3 (1 being biggest priority; 3 being lowest priority)	Suggestions (to be completed by SMART Towns team)
Location Analytics (Footfall/Dwell time) (Town Technology)	2	<p>The Cisco Meraki equipment will ensure that this data will be captured. Please find our video providing an overview of the equipment: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UjS6Gpr8TXs">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UjS6Gpr8TXs</a></p> <p>Additionally, feel free to watch for our webinar with Cisco Meraki: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kV5KC6LyFrk">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kV5KC6LyFrk</a></p>
Maintenance of Green Infrastructure		<p>Consider using a citizens engagement platform, such as <a href="#">Hello Lamppost</a> to encourage residents and visitors to provide feedback on current green infrastructure. Having a platform like this could also allow you to know if citizens would like more green infrastructure in the town, which could be valuable data to support a funding bid for more green infrastructure.</p> <p>Please feel free to watch for our webinar with Hello LampPost: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wOSzig9y2mq">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wOSzig9y2mq</a></p> <p>Also consider using <a href="#">IoT sensors to monitor soil moisture</a> to ensure that during dry seasons that green infrastructure is maintained sufficiently.</p>
Waste management		<p>Internet of Things sensors has been used for waste management in several towns and cities. Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council are currently considering using this technology for several towns and the YOST would be more than happy to arrange an introduction.</p> <p>YOST also recorded a webinar with a company called <a href="#">SENSEi Networks</a>, who provide end-to-end IoT solutions and could assist with waste management sensors. Feel free to watch the webinar <i>via</i> this link: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O8D2YRjyLO8">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O8D2YRjyLO8</a></p> <p>Lastly, there are several other companies who provide a SMART waste management service including: <a href="#">BrighterBins</a>, <a href="#">Mr Fill</a> and <a href="#">Sensoneo</a>.</p>
Air quality		<p><a href="#">Think Air</a> is a company based in Wales that specialize in air quality technology, which is accessible, affordable, and easy to</p>

		<p>understand. Superfast Business Wales produced an article on Think Air which can be accessed here: <a href="https://businesswales.gov.wales/superfastbusinesswales/case-studies/improving-air-quality-across-wales-iot">https://businesswales.gov.wales/superfastbusinesswales/case-studies/improving-air-quality-across-wales-iot</a></p> <p>Monitoring indoor air quality has become more important since the COVID-19 pandemic, thus having sensor in key building in the town, could give citizens the confidence needed to return to the high street.</p> <p>Outdoor air quality can be used as evidence to support decarbonization initiatives, such as Active Travel projects which promotes a Healthier Wales.</p>
Parking		<p>YOST are planning to host a webinar with a SMART Parking solution company, <a href="#">AppyWay</a>. This is one company that offers a SMART solution for parking, however, another company called <a href="#">SMART parking</a> has deployed their technology in Cardiff, case study can be accessed here: <a href="#">Cardiff SMART Parking case study</a></p>
Crowd management		<p>Consider looking at a project called '<a href="#">How Busy is Toon</a>', which is project based in Newcastle that provides an insight into how busy the city is.</p> <p>The project has a very helpful onboarding guide that can be accessed on their website <i>via</i> this link: <a href="https://urbanobservatory.github.io/howbusyistoon/">https://urbanobservatory.github.io/howbusyistoon/</a></p>
Wayfinding		<p>A free and open to use audio technology called Microsoft Soundscape can be piloted in your town. It uses audio cues to help guide people in your area. The technology uses Open Street Map which allows the town community to upload and edit some of the locations, such as new businesses. Microsoft Soundscape presented at one of our webinars, and would welcome enquiries: <a href="https://youtu.be/bTGyF7_iRIQ">https://youtu.be/bTGyF7_iRIQ</a></p> <p>Digital screen is another option to support wayfinding in towns. Examples of such screen include the <a href="#">Pulse SMART Hub</a> which was mentioned in the YOST, 'Become a SMART Town' workshop. We are looking to host a webinar with this company in the future.</p>
Anti-social behaviour	3	<p>Internet of Things <a href="#">people counters</a> and a <a href="#">noise sensors</a> in combination can be used together to be an indicator of anti-social behavior. For example, in an area that is vulnerable to anti-social behavior and alert could be sent to the local police department when 4+ people exceed noise levels of 90dB.</p>
Flood monitoring		<p>Floods is another problem in many rural areas of Wales that the Internet of Things sensors can be used to support flood monitoring. For example, consider looking into <a href="#">rain sensors</a> to collect local data on annual rain patterns.</p>



		Furthermore, in areas vulnerable to flooding, <a href="#">sensors to measure fluid levels</a> could be installed to monitor under bridges or wells to assess relationship between rainfall and water levels.
Workspace management		Towns and cities are increasingly investing in having co-working spaces. If this is something that Llanddysul might be considering for the future of the town, consider looking into applications such as <a href="#">District Technology</a> as a workspace management tool. Earlier this year, YOST recorded a webinar with this company that can be accessed following this link: <a href="https://district-tech.com/">https://district-tech.com/</a>
Tourism trails		A <a href="#">North East Wales Digital Trails</a> app is currently active in Denbighshire, Wrexham and Flintshire. Once the app is downloaded, visitors will receive push notifications when pacing key locations of the trail, such as historic landmarks. Consider contacting with Rhyl's tourist information center to find out more about this app and to discuss the scope of having a trail for Llanddysul.
Local economy	1	<p>Consider developing the local voucher scheme digitally. Companies such as MICONEX produce <a href="#">digital local Gift Cards</a> that can only be spent in the local area. Every time a local Gift Card is bought or used, data on local spend is generated. Alternatively, this data can also be capture by using digital Loyalty Schemes such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Reward-it</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Local Rewards by Maybe*</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">MI-Reward by MICONEX</a></li> </ul> <p>It is also possible to use digital Loyalty Scheme to gather data on where and when money is being spent in the town.</p> <p>Watch a webinar with recorded with MiCONEX where Gift Cards and Loyalty Schemes gets discussed: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eahs8PIPqRs">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eahs8PIPqRs</a></p>
Urban traffic monitoring		<p><a href="#">Vivacity Lab</a> have been helping communities to analyse pedestrian, cyclist, and traffic flows, in order to optimise their networks with regards to the implementation of schemes such as Active Travel, Low Traffic Neighbourhoods, High Street Regeneration and School and Streets programmes.</p> <p>YOST hosted a webinar on this technology that can be viewed <i>via</i> this link: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i1jQBf2KhoQ">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i1jQBf2KhoQ</a></p> <p>YOST will also be putting together a case study some towns in Wales that is already making use of this technology.</p>
Other technology/data/use		

cases (please explain):	
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6. SMART Town Action Plan Tasks		
Intended Start Date of SMART project		
Action	Timescale	By Whom
BT Internet – fibre to buildings (rather than to box)		BT
Lorwan Gateway activity		Foundational Economy Team
Establishing partnerships		Foundational Economy Team
Analysing Data		Foundational Economy Team
Identifying projects out of data		Pontypool Regeneration Partnership
Requirement for town app		Uddr
HyB2 – development		Foundational Economy Team
Free wifi with splash page for town		SRS
Working with Uddr to create town centre products		Uddr/Foundational Economy Team
Support from other SMART towns – what worked; lessons learnt; good practice		Cardigan/Blaenau Gwent/Pontypool Town Partners
Interpretation of heritage trail/art trail/art works in town centre using technology (Talk to the Lampost)		Regeneration Team

**ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDED (TICK BOX)**

What additional resource do you need to support your SMART Town project

Resource (✓)			
x	Wi-fi Terms & conditions example	x	Wi-fi Installation Agreement example
x	Data protection Impact Assessment example	x	Wi-fi privacy policy example
x	Meraki Wi-fi Guidebook	x	Comprehensive Action Plan template
	Other (fill in the box below)		

## 7. SMART Town Action Plan Review (to be completed by SMART Towns team)

Firstly, the SMART Towns team want to thank Pontypool for completing a SMART Action Plan for their town. We consider this to be the first step to making your town SMART. In this Action Plan, the team has provided feedback and provided guidance wherever possible (all the comments are in **red**).

Here is a summary of our comments and support.

Our first suggestion would be to encourage active groups in the town, such as a business group, town council and/or community group to discuss forming a SMART Towns group to drive the initiative forward in the town. Once a group has been formed, roles can be assigned to turn the data into information and provide insight, distribute this information monthly maybe to the business community members plus local government and town council. Ensure a frequent reporting and also report back to stakeholders on the impact of events for dwell and footfall to show things are working, alternatively provide access to the dashboard to certain members.

Encouraging to hear that plans have already been made to install the Cisco Meraki Wi-Fi equipment in Pontypool. Resources to help with the installation and launch of this equipment has been supplied in addition to this Action Plan review. In addition to the location analytics feature of the Cisco Meraki, the equipment can also be used to provide public internet access. Here's an example of software to enhance the Wi-Fi scheme including the splash page if using the Cisco Meraki equipment – [www.splashaccess.com](http://www.splashaccess.com). The Splash Page will be an area to allow people to gain access to the Wi-Fi, however, consider developing a landing page to welcome people to the town and provide them with an opportunity to opt-in to a town newsletter perhaps.

Consider installing Internet of Things sensors network for future use of sensors for monitoring and alerting in the town.

- If you plan to create a LoRaWAN/IoT infrastructure to monitor weather and parking, then you need to consider your LoRaWAN network coverage. This network is supported by LoRaWAN Gateways. For information of your current LoRaWAN coverage visit: <https://ttnmapper.org/>
- To use LoRaWAN sensors you will also need to create a dashboard for capturing LoraWAN IoT sensors – look at Tago lot as an example [Cloud IoT Platform | Internet of Things - TagoIO](#)

Here are some specific suggestions in addition to the ones mentioned in the SMART use case table:

### Temperature and humidity example:

- <https://www.alliot.co.uk/products/sensors/environment-sensors/netvox-r712/>

### Parking sensors

- <https://www.alliot.co.uk/products/sensors/parking-management-sensors/bosch-lorawan-parking-sensor/>

### Bin sensors

<https://www.brighterbins.com/request-a-sample> (set-up instruction video: [watch here](#))

To get on the ground information on what could benefit the town in those empty premises, consider using of [Hello Lamppost](#) to gather people's views to support the vinyls in vacant buildings. Potentially, Pontypool could take this a stage further or use a slightly different approach, by looking into [Grand Bequest Historical Real Estate Platform](#). A digital marketplace for vacant buildings to be redeveloped and put back into use. They are currently looking for areas to trial their platform.

Furthermore, YOST have recorded a webinar that can be watched *via* this link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mer7SewCTdw>

With footfall, dwell time and repeat visitor data being collected for Pontypool, consider using a digital Loyalty platform such as [Mi-REWARDS](#) (by [MICONEX](#)) to provide valuable insights into spend patterns that can be compared against town footfall data sets. Additionally, this platform could also encourage local spend, by creating monthly prize draws for customers who registered with the platform. For more information on this, YOST recorded a webinar that can be accessed via this link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eahs8PIPqRs>

A task for the business group – look into what use is being made across the towns businesses for social media. [Maybe\\*](#), is a technology company that offers a set of social media engagement and insight tools. We are currently trialling technology in another town in Wales and are looking to produce a report that can be shared. If this is something that you are interested in, feel free to watch a webinar YOST produced with the company:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qdVO99T2nCQ&list=PLSamvMtOI0QvEQKe\\_XnsRXRvtzWYUgFU9&index=16](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qdVO99T2nCQ&list=PLSamvMtOI0QvEQKe_XnsRXRvtzWYUgFU9&index=16)

Resources and skills are sometimes a barrier that many towns have addressed in their SMART Action Plans. We advise that you create a survey to what skills members of the SMART Town Action Team have and what training is needed. Here is access to a range of digital skills training resources:

- [Digital Skills - Microsoft UK](#)
- [Learn Digital Skills with Free Training - Google Digital Garage](#)
- [IBM Skills - Free Events, Courses and Training Programs](#)
- <https://www.digitalcommunities.gov.wales/>
- <https://businesswales.gov.wales/superfastbusinesswales/>
- <https://businesswales.marketinginfohub.co.uk/topic-overview/branding>

Thank you for engaging with the 'Year of SMART Towns' project. Please feel free to contact us directly with any question, and we will try our best to support you.

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