Launch of multi-million pound Regeneration Programme

The £25m housing-led regeneration programme is underway with the start of construction on the first development at Green Park in Port Talbot.

Neath Port Talbot Council secured funding from the Welsh Government’s Vibrant and Viable Places (VVP) programme to undertake a number of Regeneration projects in the town centre, working alongside key partners.

The three-year programme for Port Talbot will transform the living and working environment of the town centre. It will link up with developments at Harbourside and Aberavon Seafort, and other regeneration activities that are underway in the Sandfields and Aberavon Communities First areas.

The Regeneration programme will deliver a transformed town centre with 140 new homes, 2,000 m² of additional commercial space and environmental improvements to more than 350 residential properties.

A key aim of the Vibrant and Viable Places programme is to ensure that this investment will deliver significant local employment, training and community benefits. It is anticipated that training placements will be offered for apprentices and local jobseekers and temporary construction jobs will be created throughout the programme.

Ten projects will be delivered as part of the programme. In addition to the development at Green Park, there will be housing developments on the Port Talbot Police Station site and the Gianafan School site will also be redeveloped, once the new school is built in Baglan Bay.

Projects also include an Employability Centre utilising the old Fire Station building in Water Street, a Centre for Culture and Arts based in the Plaza Cinema, and an integrated transport hub at Port Talbot Parkway which is currently undergoing a multi-million pound redevelopment.

There will also be environmental schemes which will create new pedestrian and cycling linkages between the town centre and Green Park and Harbourside. In addition, a ‘Homes above Shops’ scheme will see under-utilised upper floors in Station Road converted into new apartments.

Launching the Programme in Port Talbot, Council Leader, Cllr Ali Thomas DBE, said: “I am pleased to announce that the Vibrant and Viable Places regeneration programme in Port Talbot is underway. It is good news for the residents and businesses of Port Talbot and surrounding areas. This Regeneration programme will complement other recent successes such as the completion of Harbour Way, the first phase of the town’s Harbourside quarter and the redevelopment of the Parkway station. It will bring about a genuine transformation of the town, ensuring Port Talbot plays a major role in the future of the Swansea Bay City Region.”

Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty, Lesley Griffiths, said: “We are working hard to make Welsh communities better places to live, work and visit and I’m delighted construction work on the first development at Green Park is underway. The multi-million pound regeneration of Port Talbot is set to have a transformative effect on the area. The programme will create a thriving, vibrant town centre with fantastic living and working facilities – I look forward to seeing the results of our continued investment in the area.”

For more information on regeneration in Neath Port Talbot visit: www.npt.gov.uk/places
**Vibrant and Viable Places**

1. **Employability and information centre**
   The former fire station will become a new employment and advice centre. It will be managed by New Sandfields Aberavon, a Communities First grant recipient body and serve the Port Talbot and Aberavon wards. The building is owned by Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council and is next to the Green Park housing development. The centre will help improve the employability of local people through skills training and personal development. It will complement other programmes operating in the area.

2. **Green Park redevelopment**
   The £4.5m investment at Green Park will be delivered by Coastal Housing. It will complement the Neath Port Talbot Housing Renewal and Neath Port Talbot Homes Improvement programmes in the area.
   34 affordable homes including houses, bungalows and flats will be built on a brownfield site in close proximity to the town centre, near the River Afan. It will create a new community open space and improve links between the town centre and seafront. The development is in a Communities First area.

3. **Connections and linkages**
   A series of schemes in and around the town centre will improve links and accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists. It will create easy access to employment, housing, retail and leisure areas including access to Aberafan seafront and the Afan Valley. Two schemes are already under development which will improve links between the Aberafan and Green Park Communities First areas and the town centre and between the Harbourside area, the town centre and Port Talbot Parkway transport hub.
4 Glanafan School site housing development
Glanafan School will be closed in July 2016 and relocated to a new, purpose built facility. This is a key town centre site where £6.8m investment will see the development of a mixture of homes and shops. The site will be redeveloped by Coastal Housing and will provide a new housing development with new commercial units. The site is in a prominent location in the main shopping area of the town and the creation of new accommodation and commercial space will rejuvenate this part of Port Talbot.

5 Homes above shops
Over £1.2m will be invested to target commercial buildings with under-used upper floor areas at the heart of the town centre, to create a minimum of 15 new residential dwellings. This project will be delivered by Grwp Gwalia and will help to rejuvenate and repair existing buildings which are part of the history and heritage of Port Talbot. It will also help to meet local housing demand in a prominent area of the town centre.

6 Parkway integrated transport hub
A new integrated transport hub will be created in the town centre at the lower end of Station Road and next to Port Talbot train station. The hub will provide a link to employment and residential areas in and around the town, improving accessibility. It will also help communities in the nearby valleys access the employment, learning and other opportunities in the town. The £4m project is already identified in the Regional Transport Plan and City Region Strategy. It will also be supported by European Structural Funds.

7 Former police station redevelopment
Apartments and commercial units will be developed on the site of the old police station in Port Talbot town centre. The site occupies a major gateway location to the town centre, in close proximity to the Port Talbot Parkway station currently under redevelopment.

Grwp Gwalia will deliver a £3m investment which will result in 30 new residential units on the two upper floors and commercial floorspace on the ground floor.
8 Centre for Culture and Arts

The iconic former Plaza cinema in the town centre will be transformed into a centre for culture and arts. The Grade II listed building is at the lower end of Station Road, close to the train station and other Vibrant and Viable Places projects. The building is owned by Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council which is working closely with local groups and organisations on the development. It is seeking match funding opportunities and a detailed business plan is being prepared by an independent consultant.

9 Neighbourhood renewal

This project is focused on improving houses in the Port Talbot area that have a high level of dilapidation and fuel poverty. £1.5m will be invested in the first year of the scheme with the aim of providing renovation and upgrade works to over 300 properties over the three year period of the VVP programme ensuring homes are secure, weather proof and more energy efficient helping to bring residents out of fuel poverty.

The project will be delivered by Neath Port Talbot Council using local building contractors.

10 Houses into Homes Initiative

This project offers home owners and landlords within the VVP area the opportunity to apply for an interest free loan to carry out renovation works to their property.

£600,000 has been made available with a loan value of between £1,000 and £25,000 which will be repayable over a period of up to five years for landlords and 10 years for owner occupiers.

Works are aimed at making the property safe, warm and secure to improve the housing stock in this area.

As loans are repaid, they can be used again allowing more people an opportunity to benefit. The scheme will be administered by Neath Port Talbot Council.