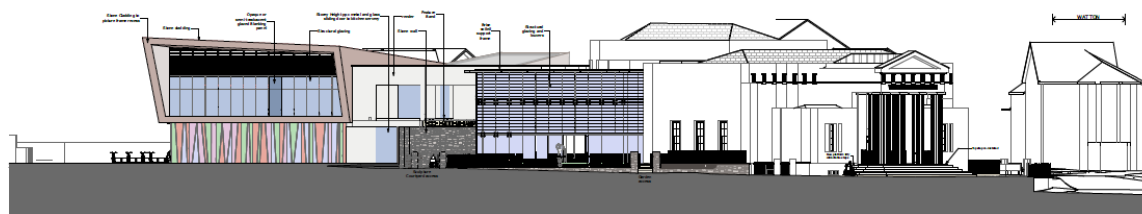


CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL

BRECON CULTURAL HUB Project

BEACON¹ – a cultural hub for Brecon

Opportunities, value & benefits



PROPOSED SOUTH ELEVATION

Economic boost • Culture • History • Community engagement
 Hub • Restored Grade II* Listed Museum • Access & inclusion
 Café • Regeneration • Arts • Exhibitions / Talks / Presentations
 Education • Volunteers • Health & wellbeing • Jobs • New Library
 Customer service • Tourist Information • Increase in VISITORS
 Dementia friendly space • Learning • Enhanced built environment
 Youth Service • Events • Active & healthy lifestyles • Participation

1. Brecon Cultural Hub – introduction

The Brecon Cultural Hub project has been in development for many years and has manifested in a consented major capital development scheme based on a quality design and construction specification.

The 'Beacon' comprises of an extensive restoration of the Grade 2* listed Brecknock Museum & Art Gallery building, and the construction of a new modern building following careful demolition of adjacent buildings and the re-development of the site. The Heritage Lottery Funded museum works will involve the restoration and conservation of the Assize Court and court room, the opening of the subterranean cells and new dedicated gallery spaces. The new build element will include a brand new library, a large public atrium space with café, Tourist Information point, education, community and conference rooms, function rooms, a shop, a local history studies room and a new controlled environment museum store.

¹ BEACON is a 'working title'

The services provided to the public will include access to the museum collections, including items borrowed from national collections, exhibitions, education and outreach activities as well as events, talks and performances. The library will provide a full range of library services, including customer services, access to computers and other media based devices. More generally the hub will accommodate visitors needs by providing tourist and local information services, refreshment facilities and seating areas, public events including presentations & performances, training & meeting spaces available for hire.

The 'Beacon' is a flagship colocation project for the Council and aspires to fulfill a state of the art building which will act as a local public feature destination and a draw for visitors to the town of Brecon. As such, it is expected to contribute to the wider regeneration of Brecon, and the region, which like many rural market towns are suffering particularly in the deteriorating townscape environment and retail offer.

2. Regeneration

Brecon is one of three LGZ's (Local Growth Zones) in Powys and the development will support the LGZ recommendations of developing Brecon as a tourist centre, and its role as a boutique or niche shopping location.

Other regeneration contributory factors will include: - provision of visitor information services & facilities, local employment, local procurement of goods and services, local retail and catering offer.

More broadly the 'Beacon' will be a high profile, iconic public building of national importance which will serve the local community needs and provide a boost to tourism.

The Beacon will provide a boost to the local 'offer' for the local community and for visitors. By bringing more tourism trade into Brecon, providing a welcome, local information and signposting, local businesses will benefit.

3. Brecknock Museum & Art Gallery

Extensive restoration and refurbishment of Grade 2* Listed Brecknock Museum & Art Gallery building located in the historic town of Brecon.

The Beacon will provide: -

- Increased Volunteering opportunities for local people, improving people's wellbeing and ownership of their heritage – in 2015-16 the Museum received 2530 volunteer hours, providing £37,878 worth of work, equivalent to one and a half FT posts
- The new facilities will include galleries with 'closed control' environments thus allowing world class artworks and objects to be displayed in Powys for the first time – this will attract more visitors to Brecon and the surrounding area and extend their stay and spend in the local area
- Combined services in the BCH will bring together local studies and historic collections under one roof for the first time – significantly improving visitor access to their history
- Average Museum attendances are expected to more than double – from 21,000 per year to closer to 50,000
- The new displays will link the Museum collections to the local landscape – enticing

the visitor to search out the heritage of the county, increasing spend across the region

- Development of the Teaching Collection and Dementia Boxes will increase social engagement and promote education and wellbeing
- The project will save for future generations a Grade II* Listed building, creating a new future for this iconic building at the Heart of the Brecon Beacons

4. Brecon Library

The Brecon Cultural Hub project involves the re-location of Brecon Library from its current 1960's building into new purpose built facility.

Brecon Library will benefit from co-locating with other compatible services in order to create a thriving, inspirational community hub meeting a range of needs and outcomes, for example to develop the library's health outcomes through working together to expand services for those living with Dementia.

The library's educational offer and provision through the space to deliver additional courses, workshops and learning opportunities for all ages will be enhanced in the new higher profile location, e.g. building on sessions currently delivered by library staff and with partners such as the Workers Educational Association in developing ICT skills.

Moving into the new space will address the currently inadequate DDA provision which is a major barrier to users in the existing building, with no lift access to the upper floor, and poor disabled toilet facilities.

By providing car parking for customers adjacent to the building, including disabled parking bays, will address an issue which does feature heavily in dissatisfied comments about the current library.

Increased usage of the library service is expected, as reported to Welsh Government under the Welsh Public Library Standards framework, for example, it is envisioned that footfall will increase exponentially, from 76,000 in 2015/16 to an estimated 120,000 in the new location. Improved resources for local studies research through the combined library and museum collections under one roof will be of great benefit to users – providing a greater & more natural synergy between resources.

The library will include a specially designed children's section and with associated events such as storytelling, 'meet the author' etc., computer facilities for public use, student study areas, IT training support, families will be encouraged to make more regular use of the wider cultural offer.

Customer services functions, including the hosting of Careers Wales and Job Centre Plus will also feature within the available offer.

5. Tourist Information

Brecon Tourist Information Centre is currently providing highly valued and greatly used services to visitors and local people, being one of the top 5 most visited TIC's in Wales. It is intended that the transfer of the service to the 'Beacon' will maintain this high standard of visitor information & interpretation provided, albeit delivered differently on a collation basis.

The information provided below outlining the Brecon Tourist Information Service gives an indication of the customer demand in Brecon which the Beacon will be able to accommodate.

- Total Visitors 2015 = 81,196
 - Local visitors = 14,378
 - UK Visitors = 51,438
 - Overseas visitors = 15,380
 - Total number of enquiries (phone/email/web/social media etc.) = 87,363
 - Number of bed nights booked = 897
 - Value of bed bookings to local economy = £34,268
-
- Visitor numbers to Brecon TIC are consistently above 80,000 p.a. making it among the top 5 most visited TIC's in Wales, and staffing levels to maintain expected levels of service are 3 staff on duty 7 days per week between April and the end of September, with 2 on duty daily between October and March. The centre is open 7 days per week all year around.
 - The centre staff also provide a variety of services to support the Council's main tourism and marketing activity, such as events information gathering, social media and email monitoring, brochure distribution, database management.
 - A refurbishment of the TIC in November 2014 funded through the Rural Development Programme ensured that its facilities are geared towards the main visitor enquiries, which are based around walking and outdoor activities accessible within the National Park – this focus will transfer to the hub contributing to the wider offer.
 - A high volume of visitors enquiries are also received for the County's many and varied events, and for public transport information, servicing the local population as well as visitors who have difficulty accessing online information.

6. Other Council Services

The Council's Youth Service is currently undergoing review and plans are being formulated to include future Youth Service provision within the hub, where young people will be exposed to, and can take advantage of, the range of services, activities and facilities provided there – cultural; social; educational.

Customer Services, Powys Training, Job Centre Plus are additional public services which will be available in the Beacon.

7. Café

The hub building will accommodate an attractive, well designed, commercially driven café style food outlet and catering service featuring high quality, locally sourced ingredients, home-style prepared food and other light refreshments. Staff will be well trained, friendly and efficient providing a great service ensuring that the customer experience is excellent and enjoyable.

The café is envisaged as being operated independently of Powys County Council by a Franchise on a lease rental basis thereby bringing an income into the building and contributing to running costs, with a priority on a community focused / social enterprise involving the provision of training and local employment creation opportunities. A variety of business models will be explored on the basis of the café not only providing an excellent service within the hub but in support of developing a thriving business opportunity for Brecon.

The café will provide a lively environment within the building – a resting place; a meeting place; a social space.

8. Car Park

Car parking will be available adjacent to the site in a re-furnished, easily accessible town centre location. Local bus transport links are available directly adjacent to the site.

9. Accessibility

The entire building, both restored elements and new build aspects, are fully accessible complying with DDA standards and Welsh Language Standard regulations.

The Brecon Cultural Hub will also provide a 'Changing Places' facility for the use of disabled visitors, the first of its kind in Powys and one of a very few in Wales. The Changing Places accommodation will provide enhanced toilet facilities suitable for people with disabilities of all types. The provision of this amenity, whilst not required by law, is in line with advice and guidance within the Public Sector Equality Duty and has the potential to make a dramatic difference to the lives of thousands of people who desperately need these facilities to be available in public places. It is worthy of note that, the Changing Places facility will make the Brecon Cultural Hub building able to meet the needs of all its visitors including pupils of the local Penmaes School who are expected to be welcomed as regular users.

The building design, including facilities, displays, interpretation, fit out, routes and signage will be 'Dementia friendly'.

10. Partnerships

The BCH Project has, from inception, been developed as a partnership project led by Powys County Council. The scheme has attracted a range of funding partners with shared interests and objectives, as well as organisation partners with vested interests in the project ranging from the education, leisure, youth, local history, arts & culture, local business and community sector.

Funding partners include: - Powys County Council; Brecon Beacons National Park Authority; the Heritage Lottery Fund; Brecon Society & Museum Friends; Brecknock Art Trust; MALD (formerly CyMal); CADW.

Design and planning has involved careful, detailed consultation with the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority, the Design Council for Wales, CADW and the Heritage Lottery Fund – strong partnerships with these organisations have been formed through planning and beyond.

Local community benefit – the Beacon will be a hub for cultural community events; access

to information, training, learning & resources; social / meeting place; base for local organisations to meet & hold events.

11. Stakeholder engagement

An active, supportive and interested Stakeholder Group has grown throughout project development, starting with early consultation through to involvement in contributing and responding to proposed detailed designs, facilities, exhibition interpretation and services. The membership of the group is broad, inclusive and evolving and their ongoing involvement provides highly valuable input and feedback into project planning.

The services involved in the project have already well established and dedicated user group representatives and strong engagement from volunteer associates. This commitment will be crucial to the success of the project long term.

12. Summary

In summary, the Beacon will be a draw for local people and visitors to Brecon to enjoy and make use of state of the art facilities, to access services and to benefit from the multiple cultural offer available in a building designed specifically for the purposes of facilitating the communities cultural, educational, social needs.

BEACON def.

A source of guidance or inspiration: *a beacon of hope. A beam of light.*
v 'shine like a beacon'.

Type of:

beam shine

emit light; be bright, as of the sun or a light

v 'guide with a beacon'

Type of:

conduct direct guide lead take

take somebody somewhere

Visual design renderings of the consented scheme



West Elevation



South East Elevation



East Elevation



North Streetscape Elevation



South Elevation



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