



Be kind



Byddwch yn garedig

COWBRIDGE (ANCIENT BOROUGH) with
LLANBLETHIAN TOWN COUNCIL
CYNGOR TREF
Y BONTFAEN (Bwrdeistref Hynafol) gyda
LLANFLEIDDAN

Report to Full Council

June 16th, 2024

Placemaking Update

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This report updates the council on the progress being made by Optimised Environment the consultants appointed to write the plan.
- 1.2. As previously reported, they have met the Placemaking Group on their first site visit in April and have since been analysing the data from the community engagement undertaken to date and identifying any gaps in the demographics of consultees responses and identifying ways of filling these gaps.
- 1.3. Meeting are being arranged with the Cowbridge Charter Trust (CCT) and Town Councils Placemaking Group The CCT meeting to discuss specifically with the Charter Trust to discuss your work and interests, potential future projects etc and the Placemaking Group community building usage, such as the Town Hall, Scout Hut etc.
- 1.4. The consultants presented to the Vales Placemaking team at the beginning of June and attached at Appendix!1is their presentation covered:
 - Introduction
 - What the plan will do and what it can't do
 - Context
 - Spatial Appraisal
 - Access and movement
 - Green space and public realm
 - Heritage and landscape
 - Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
 - Engagement update
 - Next steps
- 1.5. We continue to meet the Vale Creative Communities team every two weeks to monitor progress.

APPENDIX ONE:



COWBRIDGE PLACEMAKING PLAN

SWOT Analysis

3rd June 2024

open
optimised environments

PART OF  SLR

 SLR

 thinkingplace
years +

Agenda

- **Introduction**
- **Cowbridge Placemaking Plan**
- **Context Appreciation**
- **Spatial Appraisal**
 - **Access and Movement**
 - **Green space and Public Realm**
 - **Heritage and Landuse**
- **SWOT Summary**
- **Engagement Update**
- **Next steps**

Introduction

- The team and introductions
- Work to date since inception



Masterplanning & Urban Design

- Mark Foster, Director
- Catherine McCormick, Associate



Transport & Movement

- Matt Thomas, Sector Lead
- Sasha Respini, Principal



Engagement & Consultation

- John Till, Director
- Sarah Perry, Associate

Cowbridge Placemaking Plan

- **What will it do?**
 - Set out town centre specific projects / areas of intervention
 - Provide a coordinated framework for change, showing how the projects relate to each other and contribute to Cowbridge
 - The placemaking plan will support the Council and community to seek additional funding
- **What can't it do?**
 - Provide detailed designs/ business cases for projects - this may take place at a later stage
 - Respond to areas beyond the Town Centre in any great detail

Sample: Droitwich Spa Town Centre Spatial Strategy



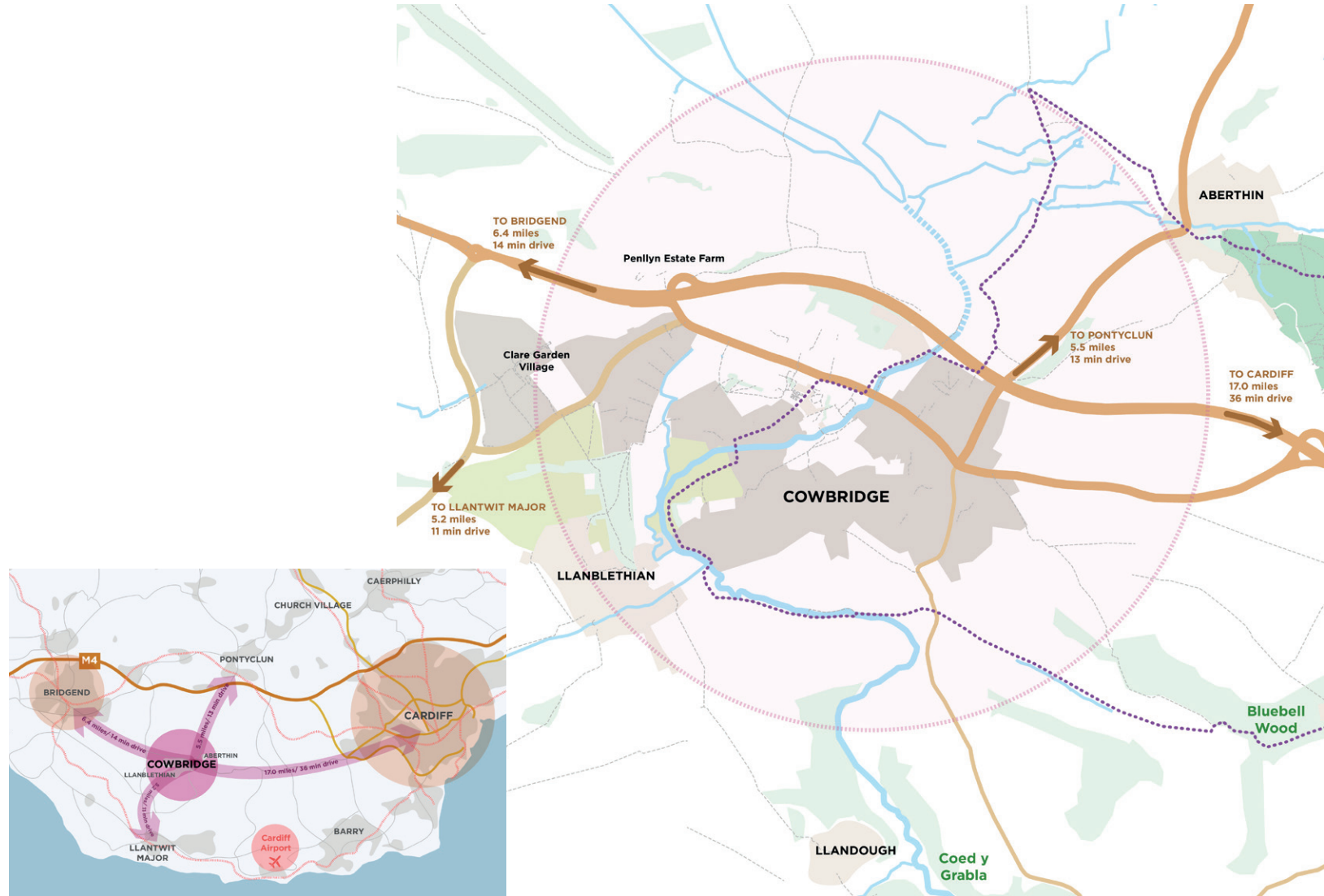
Context Appreciation

Location

- Well connected on foot - 4.4% travel to work on foot
- Prime location for commuting to Bridgend and Cardiff - 45.6% drive to their workplace

People & Community

- Approx 6,552 population
- 33% of the community are over age 65
- 52% of the population have Level 4 or above qualifications
- 82% own their home



Spatial Appraisal- Access and Movement

Streets and Parking

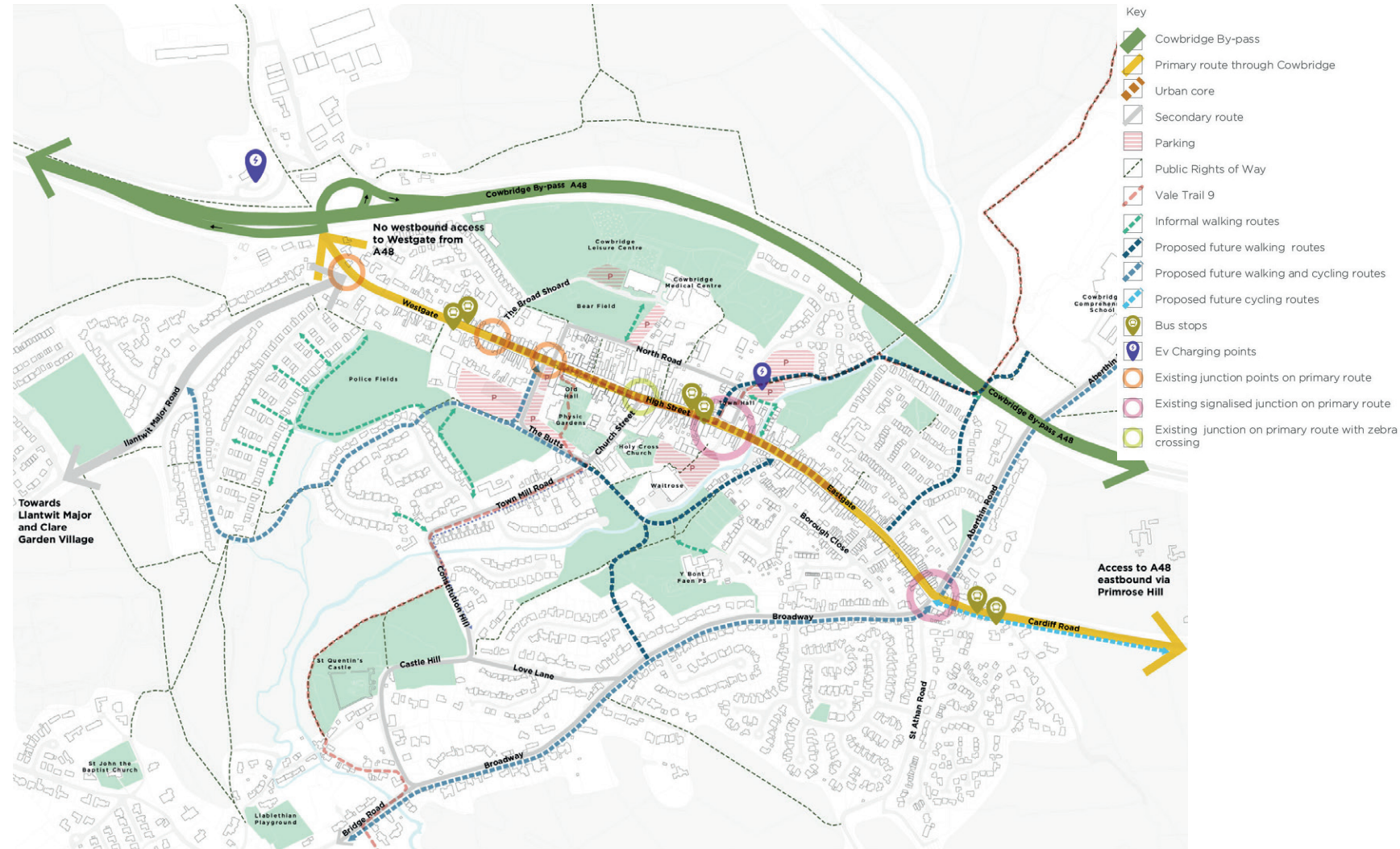
- Car dominated town centre with multiple areas of surface parking
- Hot spot for congestion at Town Hall / Waitrose junction
- Limited safe crossings for pedestrians along Westgate, Eastgate and High Street - one noted zebra crossing
- Convoluted arrangement behind the town hall and the bus station – dangerous for pedestrians

Walking and cycling

- Lots of attractive walking routes
- No current cycle infrastructure
- Limited cycle parking
- Narrow footways with street clutter

Public Transport

- Served by X2 bus route



Spatial Appraisal- Access and Movement



Bus routing to rear of Town Hall



Surface parking along The Butts



Existing zebra crossing at Church Street / High Street Junction



Poor pedestrian access along The Broad Shoard



Pedestrian routes from Police Fields to Llantwit Major Road



Waitrose / High Street Junction

Reactions - Access and Movement

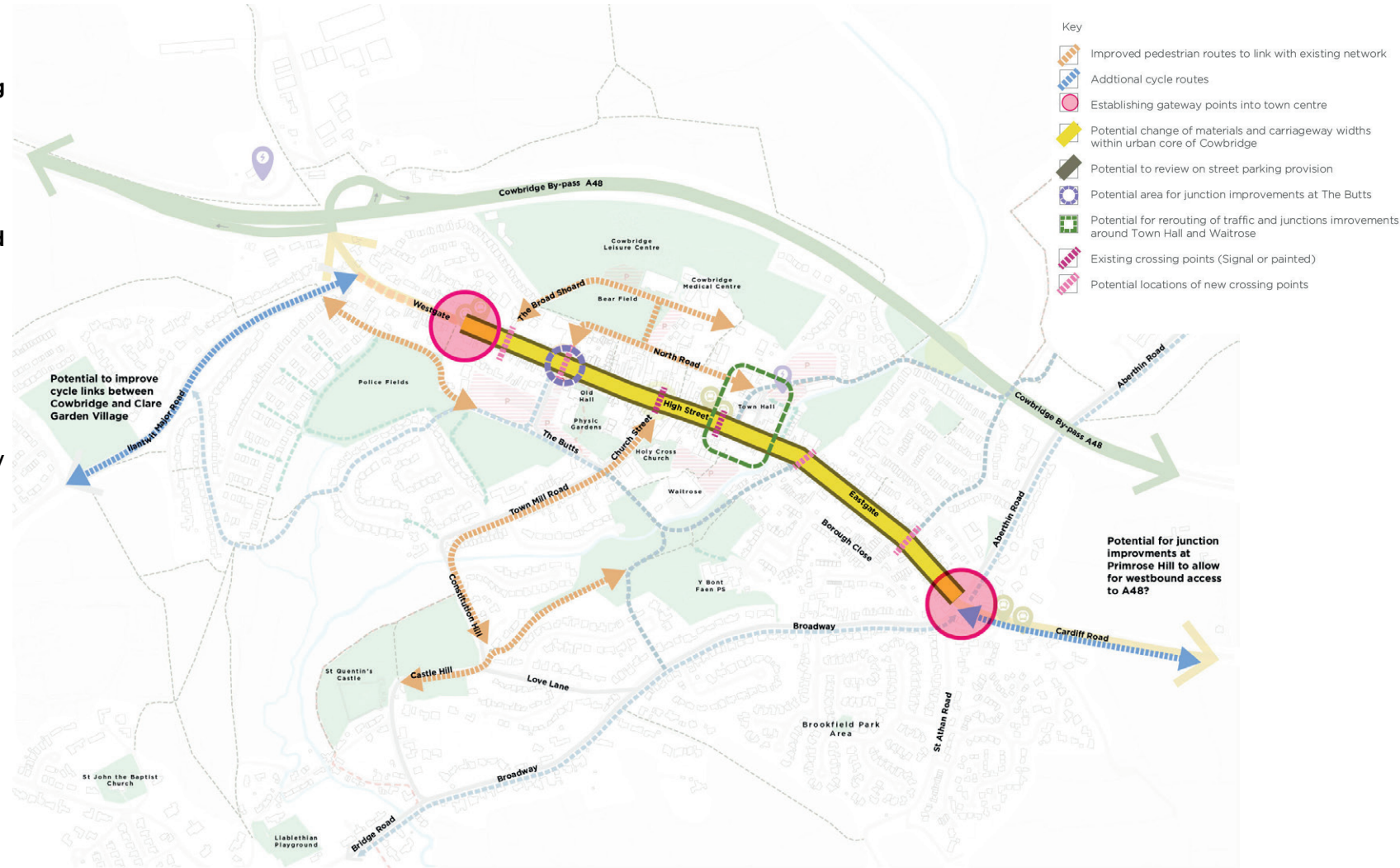
Streets and Parking

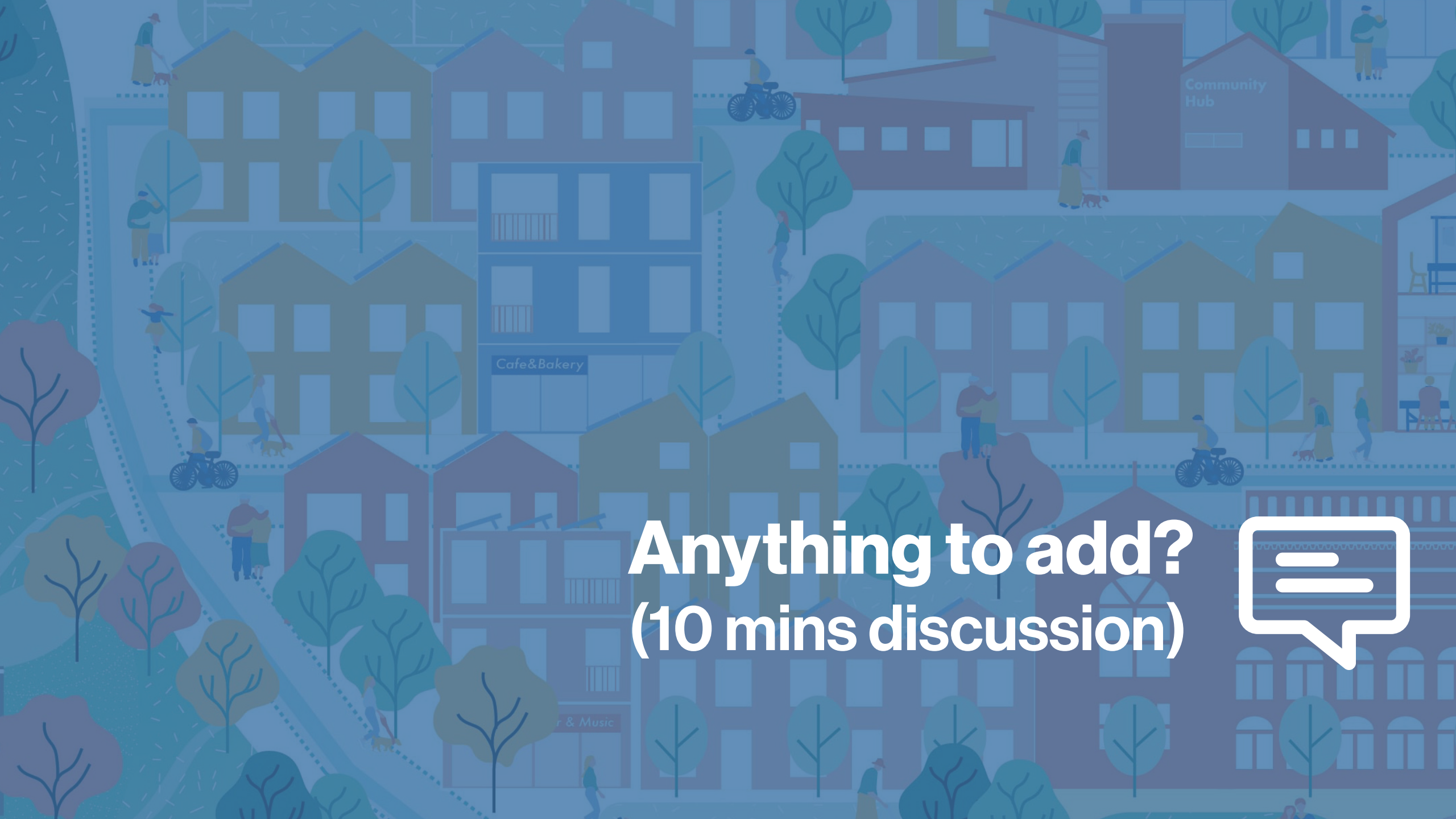
- Review and potential removal of some on street parking on High Street
- Potential reconfiguration of carriageway on high street to allow for localised narrowing and widening of footpaths
- Potential material change along eastgate, westgate and High Street
- Establishing gateway / arrival points into Town Centre
- Explore locations for additional crossings
- Potential to explore junction improvements at Primrose Hill to allow for westbound access to A48 - understanding how much traffic is through traffic
- Junction redesign and re-routing of traffic at Town Hall / Waitrose junction
- Turn side roads into ped/cycle priority over cars ie continuous pavements – Great for older generation crossing the side roads and on point re Active Travel

Wales policy

Walking and cycling

- Additional enhanced walking routes to connect to local network
- Extension of cycle routes to connect to local network
- Provide sheltered , secure cycle parking
- Consider an Ebike hire scheme





Anything to add?
(10 mins discussion)



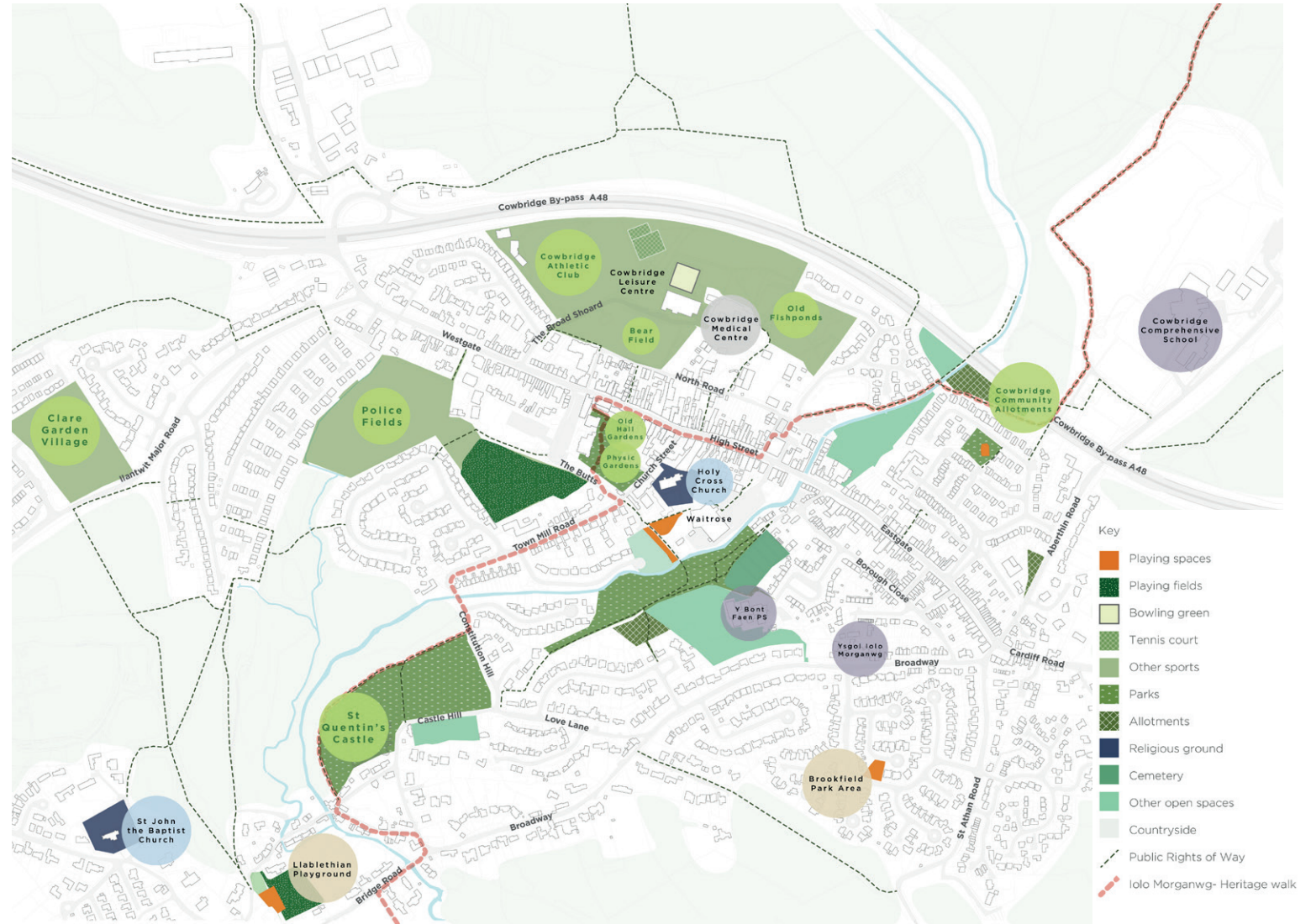
Spatial Appraisal- Green space and Public Realm

Green Space

- Lots of good quality open space but limited function
- Green spaces feel somewhat disconnected from each other
- Need for more space for teens and young people
- Potential to enhance green space at leisure centre, Police fields, Bear field
- Attractive gardens; Physic Gardens, Old Hall Gardens
- Underpass creates a great space - consider options with school uses - outdoor climbing walls?

Public Realm

- Contemporary and pleasant public realm at Old Hall
- Over grown public rights of way
- Limited seating opportunities beyond immediate town centre
- Limited street planting along High Street
- River Thaw feels hidden in parts
- Rear of Town Hall could be reactivated by the public not just traffic
- Parking dominated area around The Butts is not inviting for pedestrians
- A mix of both contemporary and historic signage - new signage could be more interpretive of the town centre



Spatial Appraisal- Green space and Public Realm



Physic Gardens provides a central visitor attraction



Skate park requires updating



Underutilised underpass space



Contemporary public realm outside Old Hall



Local routes connecting to residential areas

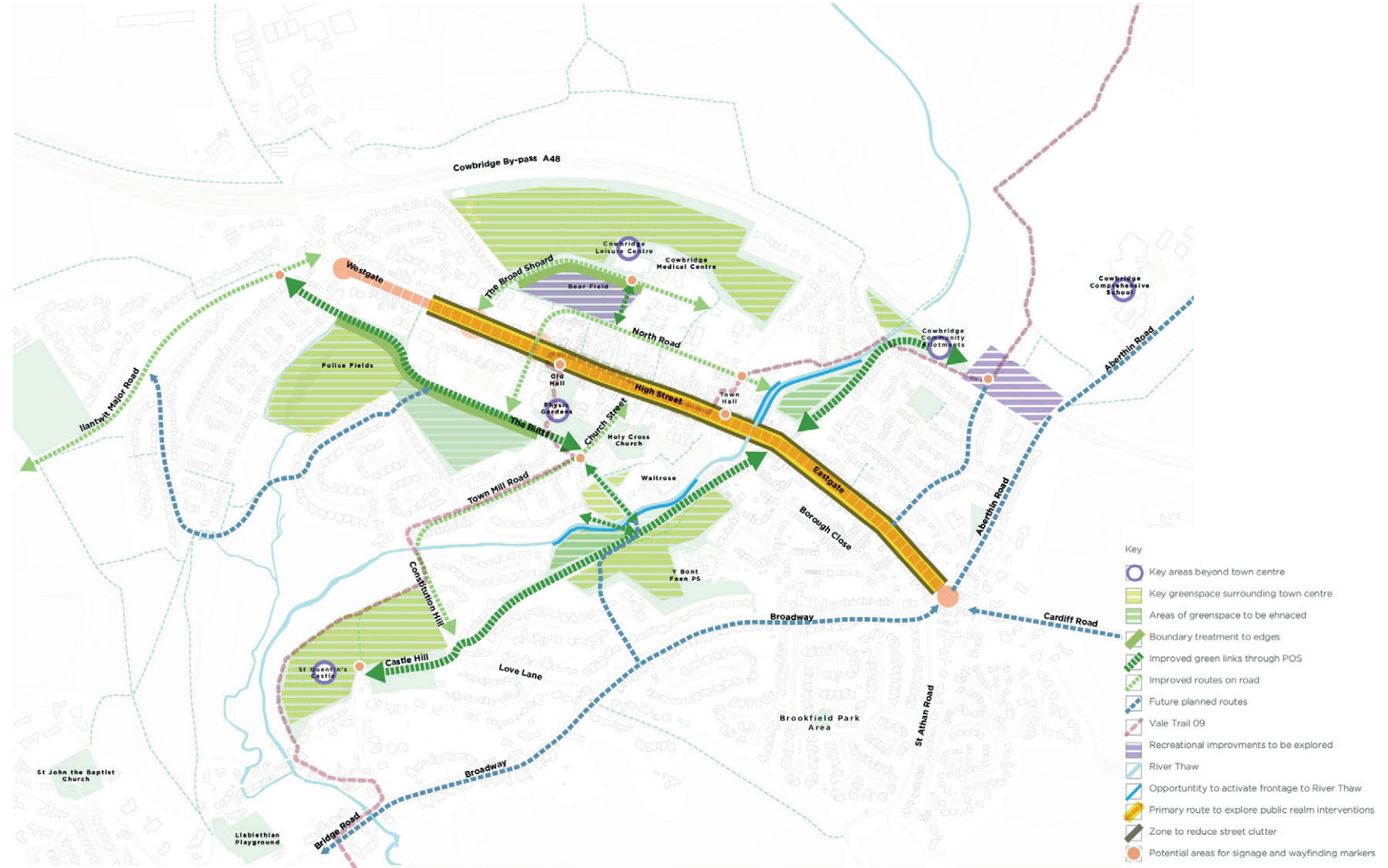


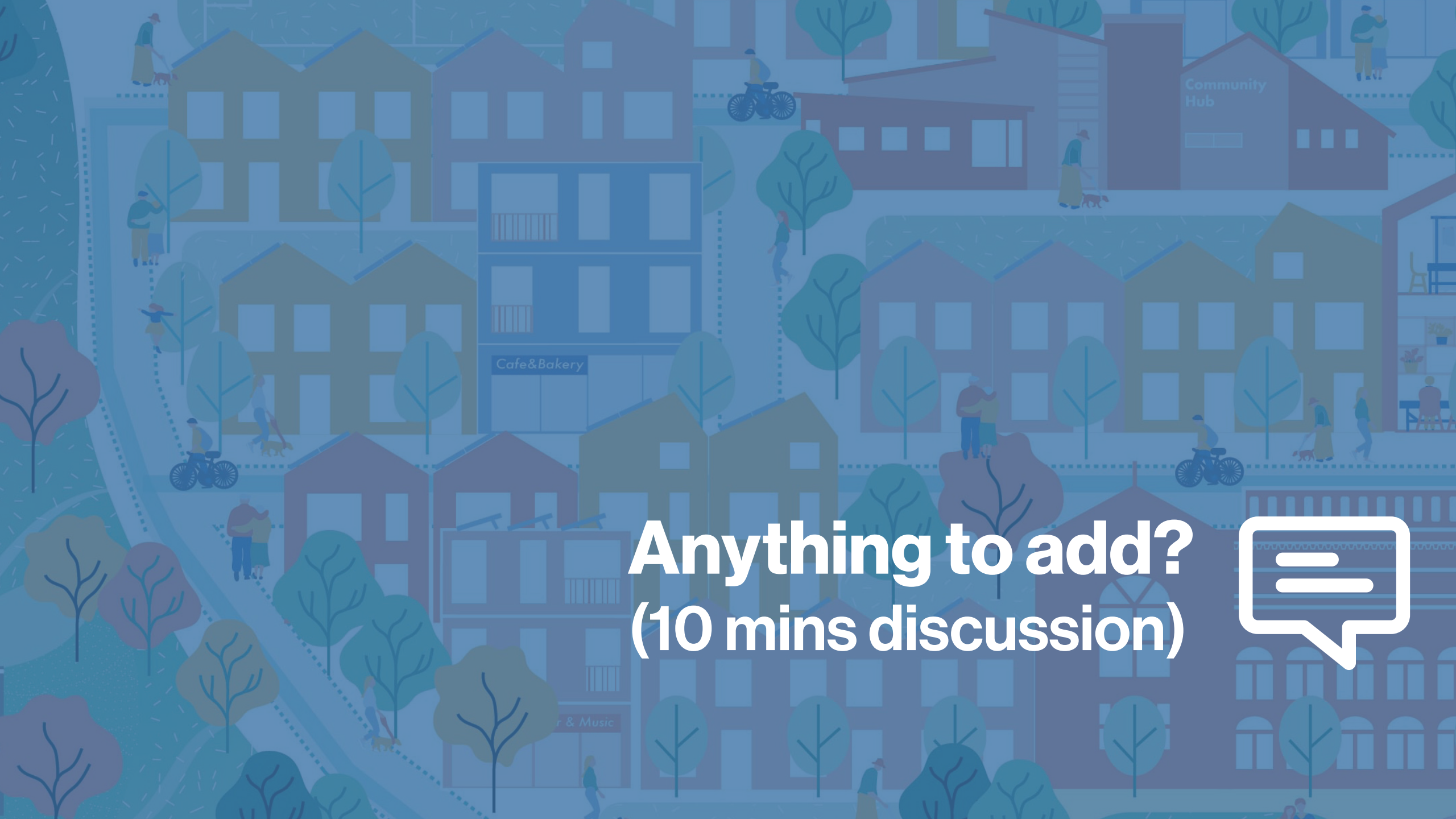
Signage and wayfinding could be improved

Reactions - Green space and Public Realm

Green Space and Public Realm

- New signage and wayfinding could be place branded
- Activate green spaces - give purpose and avoid 'green deserts'
- Improvements to offer at Leisure Centre / Bear Field - could skate park be enhanced? Could Bear Field provide space for running tracks and defined pitches?
- Opportunity to connect pathways from River Walk across River Thaw to allow residents access to green space network
- Enhancements to boundary treatments at Police Fields - could explore meadow planting
- Definition and improvements to PROWs through green spaces - e.g. route from Police Fields to Llantwit Major Road
- Explore options for the underpass - could a community project start here? Outdoor climbing etc.
- Green space network to be stitched together by movement and access strategy





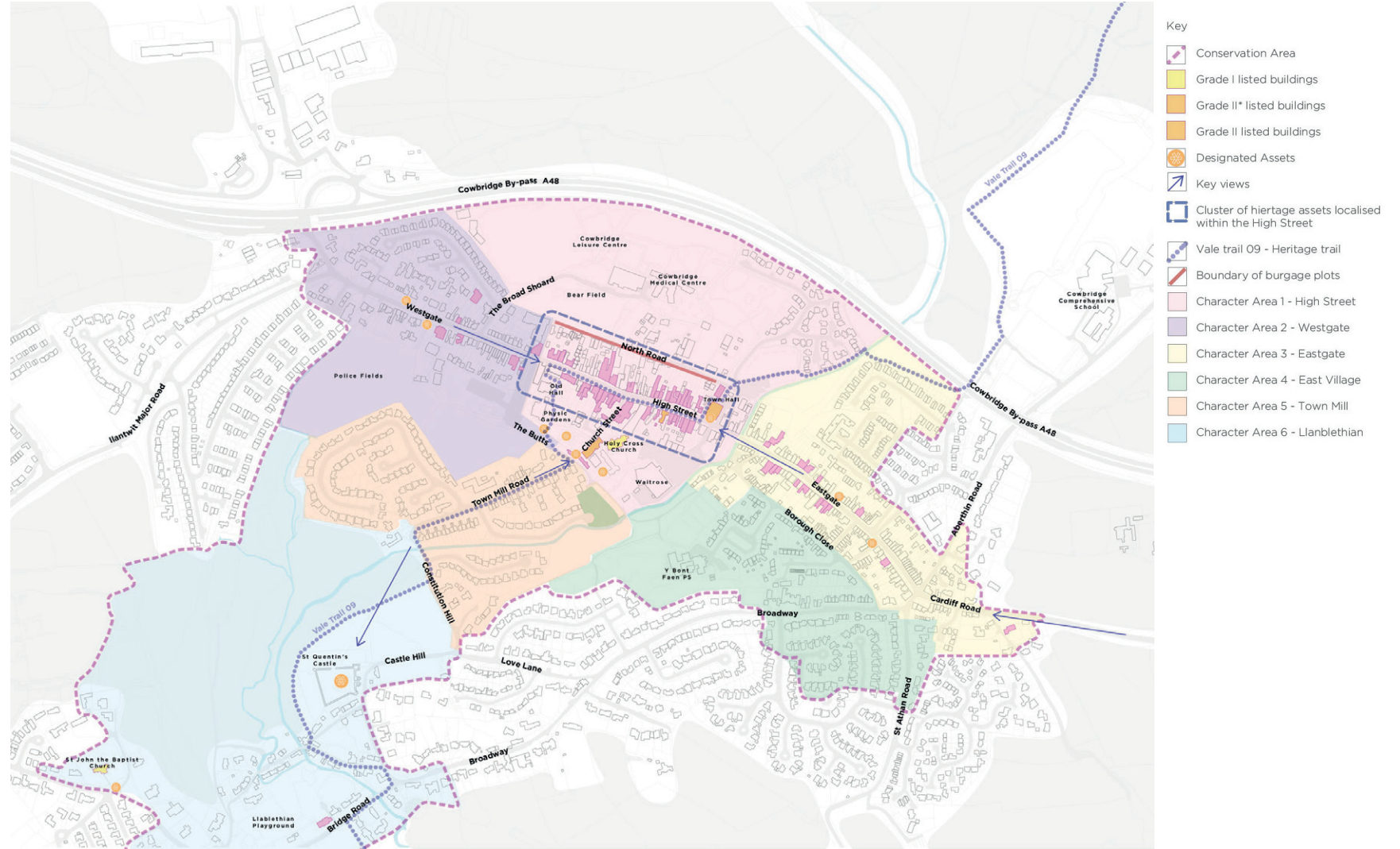
Anything to add?
(10 mins discussion)



Spatial Appraisal- Heritage and Landuse

Heritage and Character

- Mix of building styles - Victorian, Georgian, contemporary which are widely captured by a conservation area
- Distinctive main street with a ranging variety of materials
- Retained burgage plots on North Road
- Character and heritage is well maintained and celebrated
- Quaint alleys that spark interest
- Notable amount of blue plaques on a variety of buildings
- Heritage trail through town - Vale Trail 09
- Localised cluster of heritage assets along High Street



Spatial Appraisal- Heritage and Landuse

Town Centre Uses

- Large retail offer within Town Centre
- Large range of independents
- Some high street brands - Costa, Greggs, Specsavers, Waitrose
- Community facilities within a walkable distance
- Limited evening offer
- Limited offer for teenagers and young people
- Leisure centre provides a good hub



Spatial Appraisal- Heritage and Landuse



Notable amount of blue plaques



Characterful buildings along the main street



Long range views along High Street from Westgate



Wide range of independent retailers



Limited evening offer



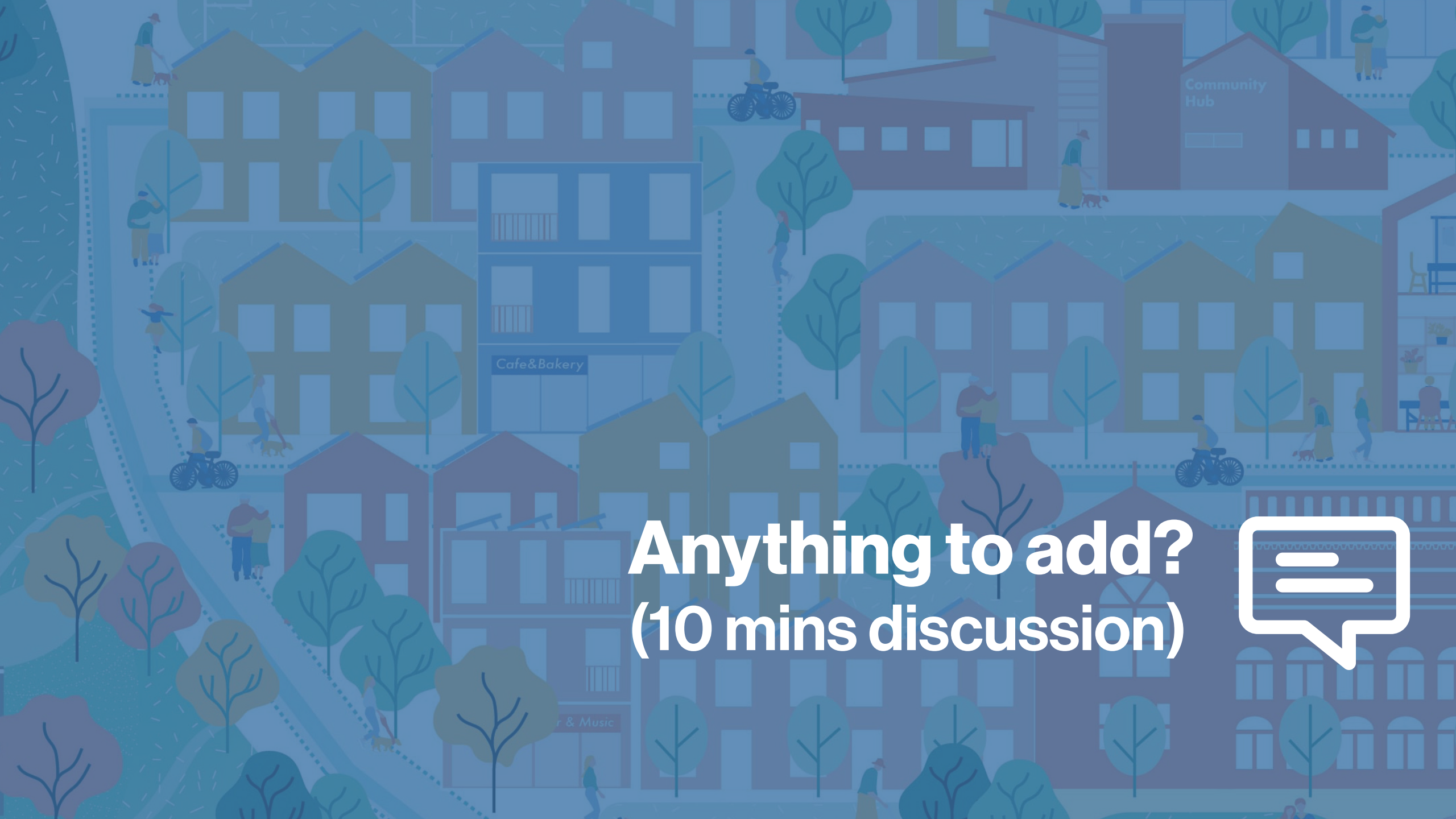
Convolutd and limited activity to rear of Town Hall

Reactions - Heritage and Landuse

Heritage and Landuse

- Heritage and character defines the identity of Cowbridge and is something to be celebrated
- Creation of sense of arrival from Westgate and Eastgate
- Sequencing of arrival spots - identify buildings of significance along the route
- Highlight the importance of long range views
- Creation of localised heritage trails that cater for all ages
- Uses at leisure centre to be enhanced for greater appeal to younger groups
- How can the appeal and offer of the town stay alive after 5pm?
- Redefining the space to the rear of the town hall - uses and routing
- Enhancement of dwell space along the main street





Anything to add?
(10 mins discussion)



SWOT Summary

Strengths

- Historic Market Town where buildings maintain a lot of character and range of independents appeals to a wide demographic
- Physic Gardens and St Quentin's Castle are great visitor attractions and easily accessible from the town
- Vale Trail 09 brings walkers to the town
- Appeal of town differs from that in the surrounds
- Programme of events throughout the year to attract visitors and residents
- Strong sense of community within Cowbridge which will continue to grow with Clare Garden Village
- Lots of open space surrounding the town centre which is easily accessed
- Active community groups who take pride in their centre
- Relatively easy to access on foot or by car

Weaknesses

- No clearly defined arrival gateway
- Large areas of on street parking
- Limited safe crossing points
- Convoluted routing around Town Hall
- Limited cycle storage and infrastructure
- Narrow footways and street clutter
- Disconnect between green spaces
- Difficult to recognise where key areas are as a visitor
- Overgrown pathways and informal routes which could be improved as part of a wider network
- River Thaw hidden in part
- Limited evening offer
- Lack of a defined congregation space
- Difficulty accessing A48 from Cowbridge

Opportunities

- Potential to enhance area around town hall to create a congregation space and build the social elements of the town
- Improvements to green space at Leisure centre
- Creation of a green space strategy to connect spaces via accessible routes and signage
- Improved place branding and celebration of identity
- Opportunity to coordinate events with local businesses to maximise footfall and offer
- Pop-ups in vacant units
- Additional crossing points along High Street
- Carriageway narrowing to allow for wider footpaths on High Street
- Review of on street parking and quality of surface car parking
- E bike / bike hire opportunities
- Encourage heritage trails
- Improvements to carriageway materiality
- Creation of gateways and arrivals to Cowbridge
- Improved signage and wayfinding

Threats

- Continual move from shopping in shops to online shopping may threaten independent retailers
- Current offer in town centre doesn't appeal to all - teenagers and young people are less catered for - threat to businesses and local residents
- Impact on servicing and delivery if on street parking is to be redefined on High Street
- Potential conflict with those living on High Street / Westgate / Eastgate if evening economy is to grow
- Potential rise in anti social behaviour if younger demographics have less places to hang out / feel safe

Engagement Update

- **Review of consultation work to date**
- **Established emerging themes**
- **Gap analysis and identification of additional groups to meet - local businesses, teenagers, tourism colleagues and leisure centre managers**
- **School session to be undertaken mid June**
- **Business 1 to 1 sessions to be held through June**

Next steps

- **Identify action areas and draft strategy for Placemaking Plan**
- **Establish test projects**
- **1st Consultation Period - July / August**
- **Feedback and Placemaking Plan development**





THANK YOU

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years +