



Holyhead: A culture and heritage driven transformation

Levelling up Fund Bid
August 2022



CYNGOR SIR
YNYS MÔN
ISLE OF ANGLESEY
COUNTY COUNCIL



UK Government Wales
Llywodraeth y DU Cymru

www.ynysmon.llyw.cymru
www.anglesey.gov.wales

Contents

Summary of Investment.....	3
Holyhead: A cultural and heritage driven transformation	5
A town centre that is failing its community	7
Building on Opportunity.....	9
A visibly vibrant town centre	10
Outcomes – delivering change	14
Our experienced delivery team.....	15

Summary of Investment

The Holyhead bid is low-risk and will make a visible difference quickly. It will bring forward £22.5m of public and private investment that will deliver over £54m of benefits to the local community.

Beach Frontages

Run down beach shelters will be refurbished to be used as tourist information for local attractions and food and beverage outlets.



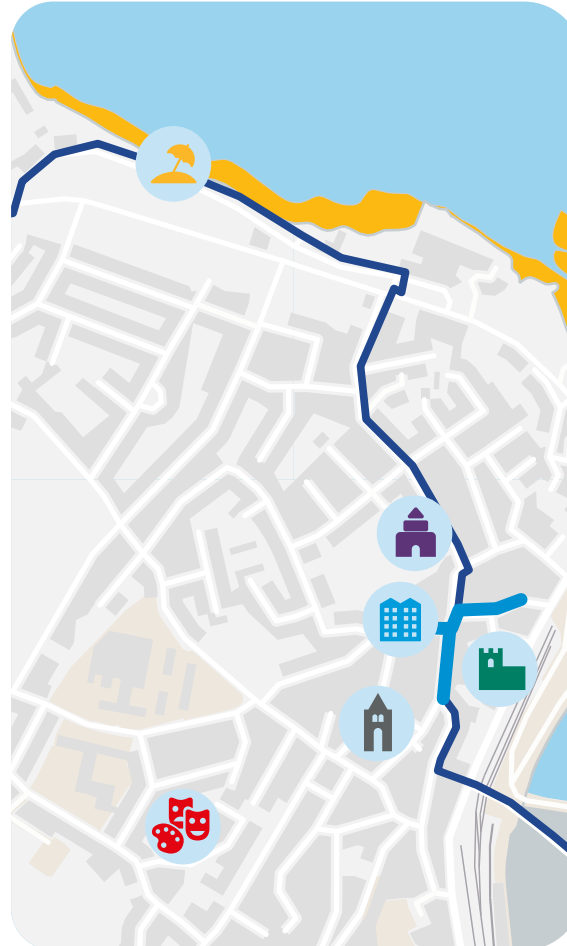
Townscape Transformation Project

A continuation of a highly successful project of refurbishment of neglected town centre properties. Investing in visual improvement of buildings to restore pride in place, reduce vacancy, increase occupancy and footfall and reverse town centre decline.



Ucheldre Expansion

Ucheldre Centre is the town's main arts and cultural asset. It currently struggles with a lack of space and capacity. Expansion of the centre will provide space for the extensive events programme which ranges from children-parent activities to theatre and opera screenings.



Vacant Property Programme

The Programme involves the purchase and refurbishment of derelict/vacant town centre properties and builds on the success of the Empty Shops Initiative. Five key buildings will be purchased and brought back into use for the benefit of the community.



Play Centre Expansion

The Empire Play Centre is one of the few indoor attractions in Holyhead. Visitors currently exceed capacity. Bringing forward the extension project will meet the needs of local people and tourists (targeting children and families) for an indoor/bad weather attraction.



St Cybi's Church

The Church is a Grade I listed building and the main heritage asset of Holyhead. The funding will turn the Church into a more flexible, community-oriented space and create a social enterprise deli/cafe.



Public Realm and Visitor Experience

A new visitor centre for the Breakwater Country Park and improvements to the signage and the routes to the town centre. These go via the beachfront, and include public realm improvements around St Cybi's and the Roman Fort.



Our bid objectives

The overarching objective is to reverse the decline of the Town Centre, and increase pride of place for residents.



Reducing the number of vacant or dilapidated buildings



Increasing footfall and spending



Increasing employment and reducing unemployment



Providing modern floorspace to meet business needs



Increasing and improving access to arts, culture and leisure



Diversifying the town centre offer and improving visitor experience

Holyhead:

A culture and heritage driven transformation

Holyhead: making a visible difference

Holyhead's history, culture and outstanding natural setting are strengths that serve its local community well.

They mean the town is well-placed to capture the benefits of being one of the UK's busiest ports, with direct connections to both Dublin and via rail to London, and the gateway to a world-famous tourist destination.

But to do so, the town centre needs to be fit for visitors, and public investment in this now will make an immediate visible difference, leveraging private investment and visitor spending, to the benefit of local communities.

This bid brings together strong local partners and a coherent, comprehensive package of well-chosen interventions. Together they will put the town on a new and more sustainable path.

As one of the most deprived places in Wales, and the top-ranked priority Level 2 area in Round 2 of the Levelling Up Fund, the opportunity to make a difference here is huge, and urgent.



A town centre that is failing its community

Ynys Môn faces multiple economic challenges, with low productivity and income, as well as high unemployment - it is ranked as the top priority of all Level 2 areas in Wales.

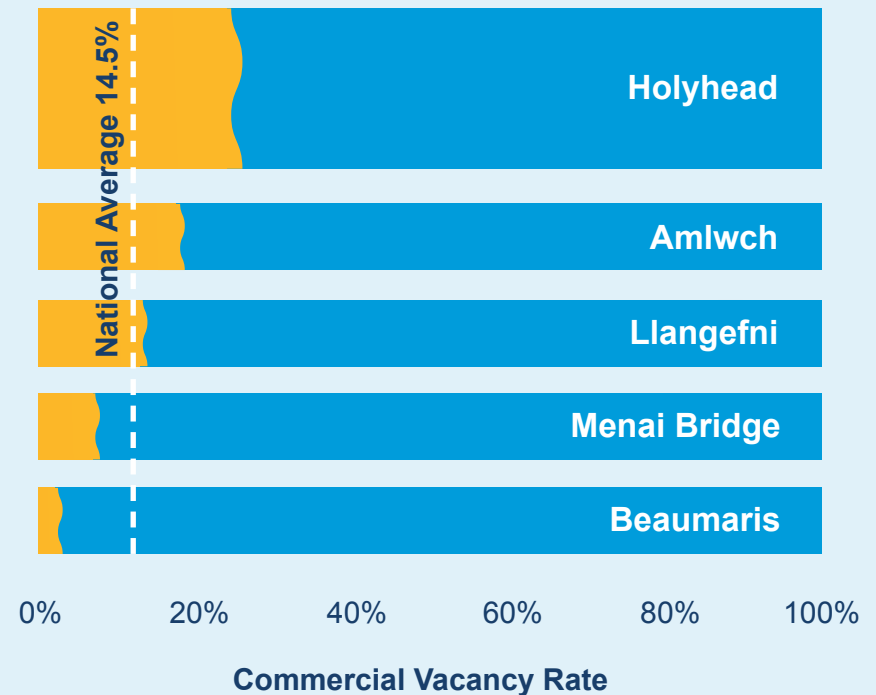
The island's largest town, Holyhead, is the one most in need of investment, with some of the worst-deprived neighbourhoods in Wales.

This is more and more visible in the town centre, with vacancy rates as high as 26%, over double the average of the Island's four other town centres. Empty properties are blighting Holyhead and deterring visitors, while low rents make refurbishment and redevelopment unviable.

Public investment is urgently needed to tackle market failure, bringing activity back to Holyhead and kick-starting private sector investment.



Ynys Môn's largest town centre is suffering





The Opportunity

Building on Opportunity

There is an enormous opportunity for change in Holyhead – with great underlying strengths waiting to be unlocked. Its history and culture make it an ideal destination for visitors, if the investment is made.

And those visitors are already here – Holyhead is well connected compared to most peripheral coastal communities. A direct train to London and a direct ferry to Dublin, as well as a cruise port, mean two million visitors pass through the town each year.

It is a tourism gateway for Snowdonia and North Wales, while Ynys Môn itself is already a much-loved tourist destination in its own right. Holyhead, as its largest town, should be a natural stop for visitors, our plans will give visitors a reason to do so.

There is enormous civic pride in Holyhead, but the community's spirit is let down by the fading fabric of the town centre. Investment will change this, making pride of place a visible reality.



A visibly vibrant town centre

Residents and tourists alike will benefit from the co-ordinated investment plan from the Levelling Up Fund.

Reducing vacancy rates and attracting new uses will provide jobs for local residents and improved options for eating, drinking, shopping and leisure.

It will also boost tourism and take advantage of the growth of cruise ships visiting the port.

The natural beauty of Ynys Môn and North Wales needs attractive town centres to complete the all-weather visitor experience. We will do that in Holyhead by combining improvements to the cultural and heritage offer, better access to the seafront, and a package of changes to bring activity and a facelift to create a town centre less dependent on retail.

The new spending and employment opportunities will revitalise a failing local economy and town centre, re-use assets and reduce crime. The community improvements will bring visible change for local people.





Bringing culture and heritage to the fore

- **St Cybi's Church** The Grade 1 listed star of Holyhead's heritage assets will expand into a community hub, helping local people and bringing more activity into the heart of the town.
- **Ucheldre Arts Centre** Better facilities and greater capacity will enable this key cultural institution to grow its programme and reach more people.
- **Roman Fort and Swift Square** The public realm around St Cybi's will be transformed with upgraded visitor facilities including a viewing platform.
- **Empire Play Centre** Completing the mix for all ages, one of the town's main indoor attractions will be expanded to cater for already high demand.





Making the most of natural assets

- **Newry Beach Frontages**
Improved facilities for locals and visitors alike, to access and enjoy the town's seafront. The beach frontages are part of the Breakwater Heritage Trail to guide cruise ship passengers into the town centre.
- **Breakwater Heritage Visitor Centre**
Improved routes from the Country Park on the edge of Holyhead will allow more people to learn about the heritage of Holyhead and Ynys Môn. Public realm improvements will direct tourists into the town centre and the local heritage assets.





New life for the Town Centre

- **Townscape Transformation**

This will enable us to extend our highly successful programme of refurbishing dilapidated heritage town centre properties - reversing the decline of the town centre.

- **Vacant Property Programme**

Môn CF will buy some of the largest and most prominent vacant properties and create vibrant new community uses. This will create a visible difference to the town centre and attract more people in.



Outcomes

Collectively all these interventions are designed together to make the town a better place to visit and to spend time in, restoring pride of place.

In total the bid will bring forward £22.5m of investment, including £17m from the Levelling Up Fund which will deliver £54m of benefits (NPV).

Breaking the cycle of retail decline by offering alternative heritage and community attractions will bring footfall and spending that create further momentum.

It will also contribute to Net Zero targets by renovating existing buildings, leading to a big reduction in embedded carbon compared to new build.



An improved culture, arts and leisure offer

- allowing more people to engage with their heritage

An expanded arts and culture offer (c. 575 sqm) at the Ucheldre Centre attracting 17,500 additional visits a year

A new dance studio (114 sqm) allowing 60 more dancers every week

An expanded play centre (c. 190 sqm) reducing the waiting list and allowing for 16,000 additional visits per year

Improved offer at St Cybis and a better presentation of heritage to allow the church to realise its potential as a key visitor attraction



A vibrant, sustainable town centre

25 Vacant / dilapidated buildings brought back into use

8 Shop front improvements in the conservation area

20 new or refurbished homes and 7 holiday lets

Over 65 new (FTE) jobs, 6 new apprenticeships and over 85 volunteering opportunities

Land Value uplift (direct of £1.2m and indirect of £4.7m)



Impacts

High spending in the town centre

Lower unemployment

Higher engagement with arts / leisure / heritage

Increased wellbeing of residents

Reduced crime

Increased pride in place

Tackling food poverty and social deprivation

Promoting community cohesion

Encouraging active travel

Our experienced delivery team

Isle of Anglesey County Council

This project builds on previous work by the council, including National Lottery Heritage Fund and Welsh Government funding. The council has responsibility for many of the assets in the project, including Townscape Transformation and Public Realm and Visitor Experience projects.



Holyhead Town Council

The Town Council and Mayor Have been closely involved in specifying these projects, and developed the Play Centre expansion and Beach Frontages proposals.

Môn CF

A charity owned by the community, supporting deprived areas, upskilling the local population and helping people into work.

Môn CF already has excellent track record in bringing vacant town centre properties into use.

Môn CF has ready-to-go plans for town-centre properties, once funding is secured.

Diocese of Bangor

The Diocese of Bangor is a registered charity. It manages the capital assets of over 170 church buildings, including all necessary renovation and development works. St Cybi's Church is part of the Stones Shout Out project of preserving, renewing and improving five of the Diocese's most beautiful, historic churches.

Ucheldre Centre

Ucheldre is a community arts centre and has the status of a registered charity. It is the only performing arts venue on Ynys Môn and plays a valuable role in providing access to a range of artistic activities to the local community.

Ynys Môn

THE ISLE OF

Anglesey



CYNGOR SIR
YNYS MÔN
ISLE OF ANGLESEY
COUNTY COUNCIL



UK Government Wales
Llywodraeth y DU Cymru

