

Distinctiveness and Regeneration: Regeneration Report

Gabriella Jones- 2404975

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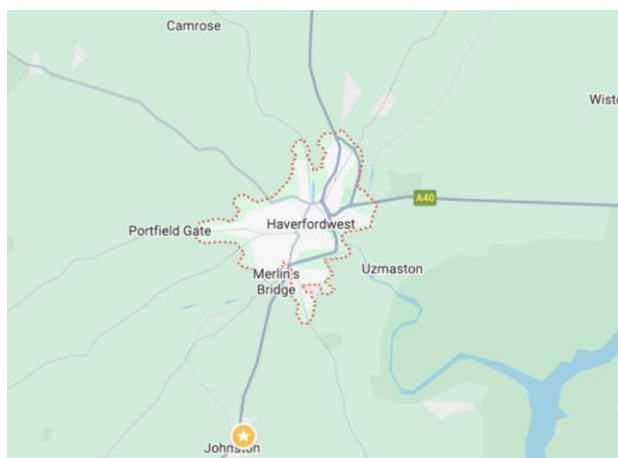
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Part A

Introduction

This report will consider the regeneration opportunities for the town of Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire. 3 ideas will be proposed in aims to improve the economic, social, and environmental well-being of this area.

Haverfordwest is the county town of Pembrokeshire and has been established for nearly 1,000 years, with a population of around 12,086 people. (Pembrokeshire, 2015) (Population, 2021).



The Western Cleddau river runs through the centre of the town that is surrounded by retail, nightclubs, pubs, and restaurants, a skatepark, as well as a 12th century castle. Haverfordwest has one secondary school, ten primary schools, and the only college in Pembrokeshire. Haverfordwest contains three shopping centres: Withybush Retail Park, Springfield Retail Park and Riverside shopping centre, an industrial estate, seven supermarkets, a hospital, a leisure centre, a library, train station, bus service, and four hotels (Council, 2017)

Both Withybush retail park and Springfield retail park have substantial footfall and occupied buildings, however, Riverside shopping centre has poor footfall and many vacant buildings (shown in the pictures below)

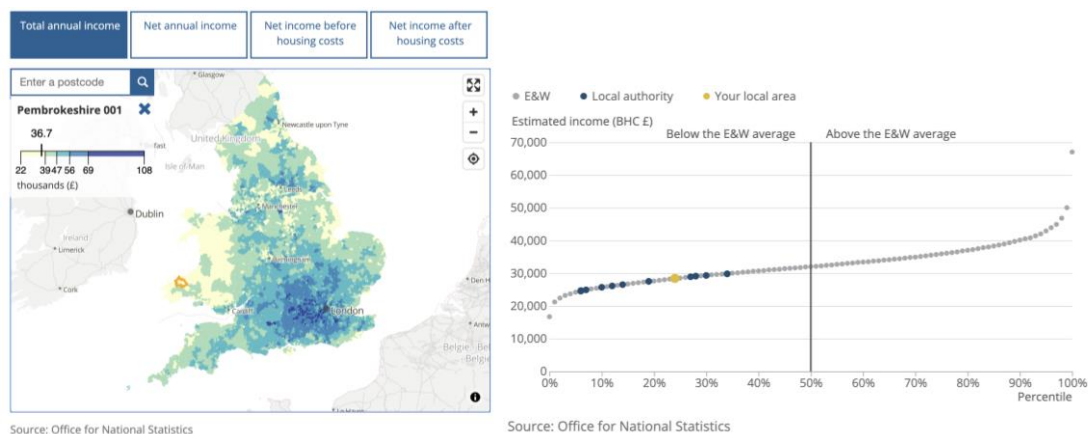


Appraisal

Changing fortunes

Haverfordwest was the 2nd largest port in Wales, and a main west Wales port, dispatching £100,000 worth of goods each year, however, after the introduction of the railway in 1853 the port was significantly dismissed (Points, 2025). The port made the town very profitable and created large amounts of footfall.

As of 2020, Haverfordwest/Pembrokeshire's total annual income and disposable income was recorded as below average, this could influence the poor amount of footfall and economic character of the area. The low number of job opportunities and development may influence the low levels of income.



(Statistics, 2023)

The beaches and coastal areas surrounding Haverfordwest, such as newgale and Broadhaven, encourage tourism in the area, especially during the summer months and school holidays. During these periods Haverfordwest becomes more prosperous and

seasonal jobs are required for many businesses. However, this does create more traffic and crowds, affecting local's routines.

Haverfordwest has a farmers' market that has run every Friday since 1999, it is located in the centre of the town where stall owners sell their products, including a lot of local and homemade produce and products (Birt, 2024)

Existing assets, structures, and economic character

Currently, there are many empty buildings to let within the town, some smaller shop buildings as well as the shire hall (building on the left) an old court room and the masonic centre (building on the right) a lodge turned to night club (Society, n.d) (Buildings, 2005) (Staff, 2003).



Haverfordwest also has an empty snooker hall which is a large amount of space. A proposal was made in 2019 to turn the space into 16 apartments with parking; however, the idea did not go forward (Jenkins, 2019).



All three of these larger buildings are grade ii listed buildings which makes it harder to gain renovation permission or building permission, as well as being older buildings, increasing the likelihood of damage and poor infrastructure.

In addition to the businesses, social areas, schools and non for profit organisations mentioned in the introduction, Haverfordwest has a community hub space; “Haverhub” which was established in 2017 as a not-for-profit social regeneration project which acts as venue for social events such as open mic nights, indoor markets, exhibitions, and coffee mornings (Hub, 2024) (Hub, 2025).

Haverfordwest has a mixture of small businesses and chain businesses. Some of the chain businesses include;

- Costa
- Wetherspoons
- Tesco
- TX Maxx
- Dominions
- Clarie's
- Boots

Regeneration plans were made to regenerate Haverfordwest's old library and turn it into an office space, community space, cafe, and residential development. This idea was proposed in 2022, and the building was purchased by ATEB, but since, there have been no further developments or spoken plans about the project (Waters, 2022).

Pembrokeshire county council offers funding for businesses in Pembrokeshire, including;

- Business Growth Grant
- Business Start-up Grant
- Carbon Reduction Grant
- Mirco Grant

(Council, 2017)

The Welsh Government also have a range of business loans and grants that could be used to support Haverfordwest's regeneration plan.

Key stakeholders and interest groups

4 key stakeholders for this project would be;

- Residents
- Current businesses in Haverfordwest
- County council
- Community groups

Residents are a key stakeholder as they will be the ones consuming the service or product that this regeneration plan will provide. If residents are not interested in the idea there will not be any demand to go forward with the idea. Considering if residents think that the plan is wasting valuable space, time and money also needs to happen. Being open with residents and engaging them in the project can help secure loyalty and support for the project.

Current and local businesses are also a key stakeholder as they may be concerned that the project will be taking customers away from their business and increasing competition in the area . This project should consider if there is a way that it could work with surrounding businesses to promote each other, hold events, or use each other's resources.

Local authorities such as Pembrokeshire County Council are a key stakeholder. The council may need to provide planning permission as part of this project, so it needs to be something that they are on board with and believe will benefit the town and promote the same values and atmospheres that is currently present. As mentioned earlier the council can provide financial support, which this project might be looking to use.

Community groups such as Haverhub are a key stakeholder as they have already produced and followed through with a regeneration project. If Haverhub have already got something similar, this project needs to consider what aspects they do not provide to fill in gaps of demand. They also need to ensure that they are respecting Haverhub as a business and not copying ideas or taking business from them. There are community groups in Haverfordwest that advocate for Haverfordwest history, this project needs to ensure that they are respecting this as it could cause uproar if grade ii buildings are altered or heritage is not included.

Part B

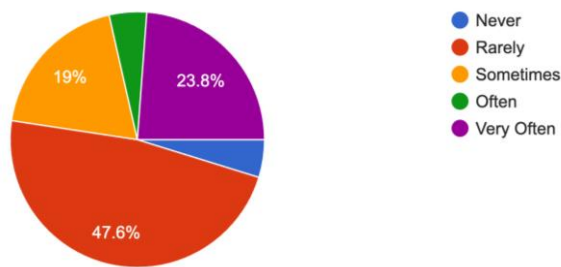
Market research

Primary Research

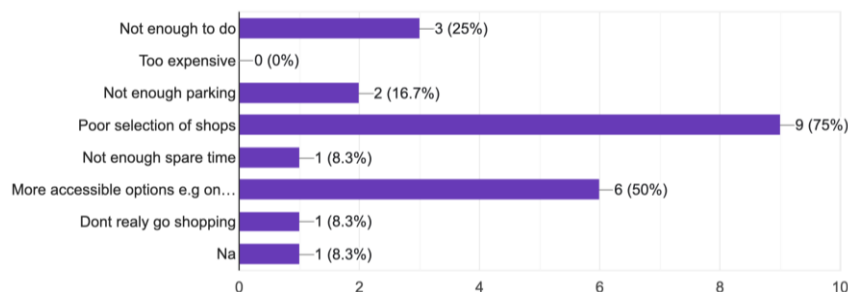
A questionnaire was conducted as primary research to help identify what people in Haverfordwest want and to understand their behaviours as consumers. 21 people completed the questionnaire.

90% of respondents live within a 10-mile radius of Haverfordwest, with the other 10% still living within Pembrokeshire.

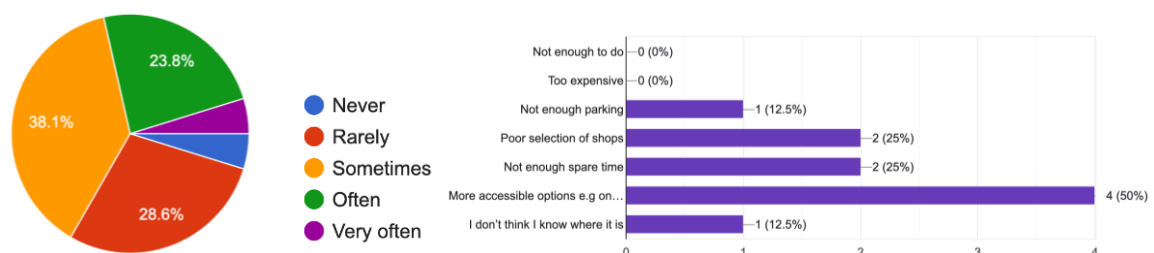
Participants were asked how often they visit Riverside Shopping Centre/Bridge Street, with the most common answer being “rarely”.



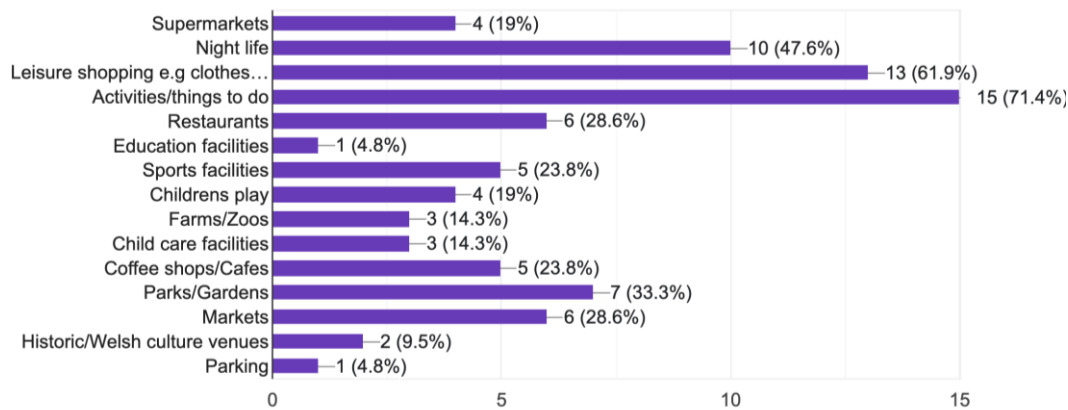
Continuing from that question, if answered “never” or “rarely”, participants were asked why this is. Results varied with “poor selection of shops” and “more accessible options” being most popular. From this question it was also identified that prices were not a contributing factor.



The same questions were asked about Withybusch Retail Park, which seems to be more popular. However, 50% of respondents said there are more accessible options. Again, there is not an issue with pricing.



Respondents then proposed what they think Haverfordwest needs more of. The top 3 answers were; Nightlife, Leisure shopping, and Activities/things to do. When asked if they would feel more inclined to visit Haverfordwest if these services were available, 95.2% said yes.



Regeneration Proposal

Idea one

The first idea for this regeneration proposal is to reopen RJs nightclub. RJs was a very popular club that closed in 2003, it was in the Masonic centre (previously shown) within the town. Currently Haverfordwest town has 3 nightclubs, all located next to each other, with Masonic centre/RJ's just down the street. During the reopening and occasionally there will be themed events, or performers would hold events in order to draw in more people.

This idea would work as it would improve and expand nightlife for younger people and the older generation who would have used to go there can reminisce. From the primary research survey, nearly 50% of respondents selected night when they were asked what Haverfordwest needs more of, through this result we can see there is demand for this idea. Demand to bring back RJ's and popularity of the venue has also been seen on a local radio stations Facebook post with comments saying; "Loved this place and it holds some very fab memories", "Bring back Rj's", "Easily the best night out ever! If I could go back" (Radio, 2022).

This idea does not need to demolish or rebuild since the building is still there, this supports sustainable aspects as it is repurposing a building that is currently not being used. This idea also supports social sustainable practices since it is bringing people together and creating an environment where individuals demand is met and promotes inclusion.

Resources such as assessing the buildings quality and safety, music equipment, lighting, bar equipment, security equipment, staff, licensing, and design will all need to be considered. These resources come at a cost so financial resources will also need to



be considered. As stated before, Pembrokeshire County Council offer business funding which this idea could use, as long as they are eligible.

An example of a similar regeneration project is Club 051 in Liverpool who successfully reopened their club in 2023 after it had been shut since 2005. Their relaunch resulted in 60,000 people trying to buy tickets online, which ended up crashing their website, people had even taken the day off work to be online when tickets launched (Townsend, 2023).

Idea 2

The second idea is an indoor playing facility that will contain rock climbing, an obstacle course, and an arcade area. It will be located in the Riverside Shopping Centre in aims to increase footfall in the area and use up empty space.

This would be a good idea as Haverfordwest town does not have many activities or things to do apart from retail and dining. From the primary research survey, “things to do/activities” was the most popular answer when asked “what does Haverfordwest need more of,” with 71% of respondents selecting this option. Sports facilities, children’s play also came high up on the list, and this idea incorporates both.

One of the UN sustainability goals is good health and wellbeing, which this idea promotes through encouraging sports, play and interaction (Nations, 2024). This idea also supports social sustainability as it is bringing people together to enjoy and connect. This idea is using current buildings and space in order to utilise space and protect untouched land.

There are multiple resources for this idea such as premises, equipment, health and safety checks, staff, insurance, and training, this can become costly. Providing a service that the public want and believe they will benefit from, may interest them into donating to help with funds. Crowdfunding could be a source of finance for this idea, as well as government or bank loans to cover costs.

A similar business to this idea is Ninja Warrior Adventure Park. Ninja Warrior provides activity and fitness courses and obstacles. Their first adventure park opened in Stoke on Trent and due to popularity, they currently have 18 more locations (Warrior, n.d).

Idea three

The third idea is to create better green space. This will be done next to Haverfordwest skate park where there is a large open grass space. Picnic benches, recycling bins, and sheltering as well as planting trees, flowers and creating bug houses.



(Surfwear, 2017)

This would be a good idea since the skate park is already a busy place and Haverfordwest does not have a lot of green spaces, which 33% of respondents in my survey want to see in Haverfordwest. There is a walking path that ends at the skate park, having picnic benches would give people the opportunity to sit and eat or enjoy their surrounding after their walk.

Planting trees and flowers will encourage wildlife and provide food, shelter and habitats for them. Another sustainable aspect of this idea is providing recycling bins to minus waste and improve the areas recycling processes.

This project will work with primary schools, where pupils will create bug houses whilst learning about the importance of wildlife, habitats and the impact it has on the environment. These bug houses will then be used in this new green space.

The costs for this idea are relatively low compared to the other 2. Benches, bins and shelter will need purchasing, this will be done through fundraising money in the area with the help of local communities such as Haverhub.

Conclusion

All of these sustainable ideas can improve the economic, social, and environmental well-being of Haverfordwest through bringing people together, using sustainable practices, responding to demand, supporting health and wellbeing and utilising resources. This regeneration project will aim to contribute to the restoration and enhancement of Haverfordwest and seek to improve the quality of life of people in the area, collaborate and partnership, regenerate natural resources, strengthen communities, and create jobs.

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