



Cardiff Bay Redevelopment

The Cardiff Bay Development Corporation (CBDC) was set up in 1987 to regenerate some 1,100 hectares of South Cardiff (20% of the city). The area contained a population of 5,800, largely concentrated in Bute Town (popularly known as Tiger Bay) and substantial existing industrial development. CBDC remained operational until April 2000. CBDC is an example of an Urban Development Corporation. These were property-led projects that were devised to be catalysts for the redevelopment of areas which had suffered serious economic decline and had a high proportion of derelict land. UDCs were autonomous organisations (similar in function to New Town Corporations) which had the power to acquire land, and to use their extensive funding to create the conditions necessary to attract private investment, for example by rebuilding infrastructure. There were 13 UDCs established in England and Wales. Cardiff was the second largest UDC after London's Docklands.

The main aim of CBDC was to regenerate South Cardiff and its waterfront to create a showcase maritime city of the world class quality of Boston, Sydney, Barcelona or Baltimore. By the 1980s the Docklands had deteriorated into a run-down area as a result of the collapse of the coal-exporting trade, and deindustrialisation of steel making and dependent industries. The foreshore, rivers and bay area was a major site for waste disposal and its unattractive image made it suitable only for low grade industrial use.

The CBDC mission was therefore:

'To put Cardiff on the international map as a superlative maritime city, which will stand comparison with any such city in the World, enhancing the image and economic well-being of Cardiff and of Wales as a whole.'

The CBDC Strategy

The project had two major foci

1. The development of the land around the bay
 - Development of 372,000 sqm of office space, 372,000 sqm of industrial floor space, major tourist, leisure and shopping facilities and 6000 new homes.

2. The creation of the new waterfront

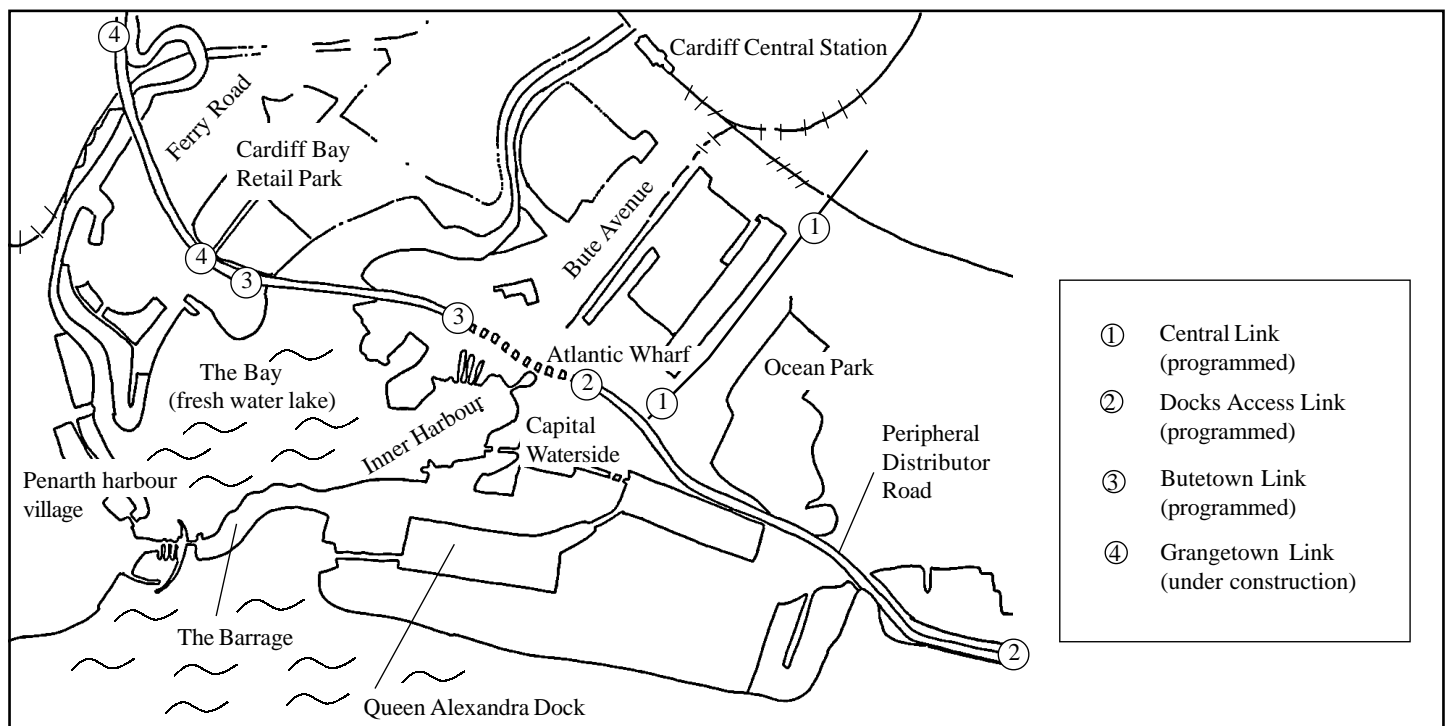
- The building of the Barrage from Penarth Head to the entrance of Queen Alexandra Dock. The aim was to create a clean freshwater bay and permanent waterfront as a focus for the new residential, commercial and leisure development.

CBDC saw the waterfront as vital to the new image for the world class city.

Whilst there are always controversies in such large scale developments such as the destruction of historic communities, (in this case Bute Town,) or disputes about how many new jobs UDCs actually create, the main controversy in CBDC was the environmental impact of the building of the Barrage which was only finally completed in 1999.

Fig 1. shows the zones within the CBDC area and summarises the main proposals. The original plan was to ensure that the CBDC waterfront developments were well linked to the existing city centre.

Fig 1. CBDC areas and Proposals



Over 13 years a number of factors have either slowed down, or increased the pace of achievement of the strategy. Some of these factors - e.g. economic recession in 1992 - were worldwide, but others such as reorganisation of local government, and the creation of the Welsh Assembly were more locally relevant.

The evaluation of success at this stage (as the CBDC is wound up) is much more complex with many different views.

Evaluation of Success

A number of arguments can be put forward in support of the success of CBDC, not least that it has completely transformed the appearance of an area which was partially derelict, with a very negative environmental image. The biggest success is undoubtedly the Inner Harbour Zone which is now host to 2.1 million tourists annually and has many flagship projects.

Ferry Road is a notable example of a mixed development area which was formerly 25 hectares of derelict land.

However UDCs are property-led developments and like all the other UDCs (Docklands, Salford Quays etc.) CBDC was derailed from achieving its targets by the 1989-1992 Property Crash.

In terms of targets, by December 1999, the situation was as follows (Table 1).

Table 1. Targets for CBDC

| | % of target achieved | Target set |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| Private sector investment | 68% | |
| Industrial floor space | 60% | 465,000 sq metres |
| Office floor space | 46% | 372,000 sq metres |
| Retail floor space | 66% | |
| Residential units (housing) | 55% | 6000 homes |
| Land reclamation | 65% | |
| Public open space | 65% | |
| Permanent employment | 52% | 30,000 jobs |

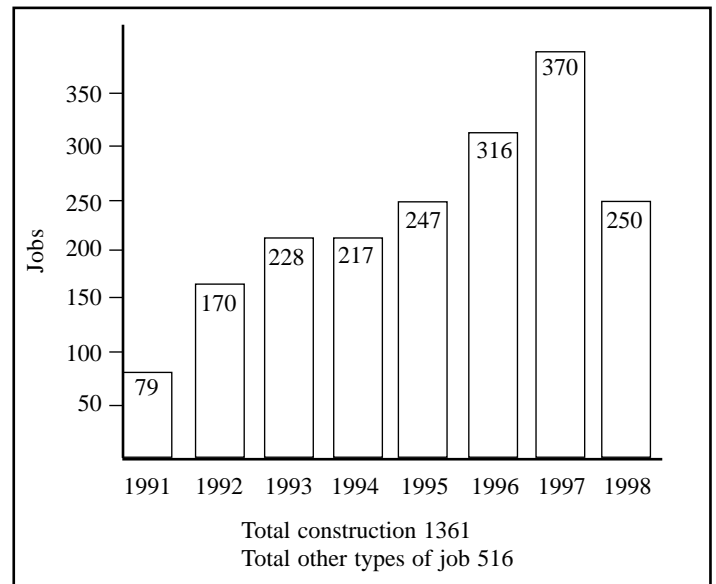
One feature of CBDC that has been praised is the enormous range of high quality leisure developments it has been able to attract. However, incentives of up to £7 million, plus very low cost land have had to be offered as **pump priming**. Overall, although 68% of the private sector investment target has been met, £400 million of public money has been used to build infrastructure and reclaim land.

When assessing the success of the ability to attract new businesses – both office and industrial - it is very easy to be influenced by the success of Ocean Park where the £200 million specialised glass factory has been built – with 750 new manufacturing jobs. Many of the so-called new small businesses are relocated from elsewhere – in particular CBDC has had a **dislocation affect** on businesses in the city centre which has moved to Cardiff Bay.

As in London Docklands, many of the new jobs are in the leisure industry or the commercial sector – the “wrong” sort of job for those males who are long-term unemployed from the Docks or Steel works. To date, only 12,500 permanent jobs have been created although 8,500 temporary construction workers have also been employed. There is great concern that many of these jobs have not gone to local people, and that some of the new jobs are again the results of firms moving from other areas i.e. displacement jobs.

Fig 2. shows the significant contribution to local employment of CBDC.

Fig 2. Employment of local people by CBDC



CBDC has already built 3000 new houses. However, the vast majority of these houses - as at Penarth Harbour Village - are expensive and exclusive residences, whose prices (as in Docklands) are way beyond the prices local people can afford. In their defence CBDC point out that they did commit themselves to providing around 25% affordable housing.

Many UDCs made the mistake of not ensuring an efficient infrastructure was built – without which development cannot proceed. CBDC had an aim of uniting Cardiff Bay with its historic waterfront via Bute Avenue, a specially built continental-style boulevard. Whilst Bute Avenue is now being built as a show piece street the planned light rapid transit system has been shelved. The peripheral distributor road, a fast road across Cardiff Bay area, has not yet been completed.

CBDC had an excellent relationship with South Glamorgan Council, as both the local authority and CBDC shared the same vision for Wales. With local government reorganisation and the formation in 1996 of Cardiff County Council new relationships had to be forged. This took time. The failure to achieve **initial** funding for the Welsh National Opera House, was a result of direct competition with Cardiff Council’s own scheme to regenerate the National Stadium. Compared to other UDCs however there is far more evidence of shared vision, and less friction.

Two big issues emerge when considering the ultimate success of CBDC. The first one is the highly controversial £190 million Barrage project which created the new waterfront in 1999 which was such an integral part of the CBDC. The arguments for and against are finely poised as shown in Fig 3.

Exam Hint: Candidates that want to obtain up-to-the-minute info on CBDC can search editions of the local newspaper - The Western Mail online at www.totalwales.com or www.cardiff-bay.co.uk.

Fig 3. The Barrage Project

The Barrage Issue

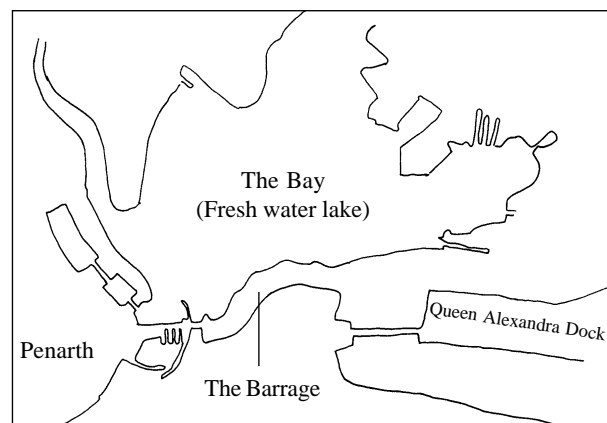
CBDC regarded the Barrage across the mouth of the Bay from Penarth Haven in the west to Alexandra Dock in the east as 'a pivotal development in the long term regeneration of Cardiff Bay'. The barrage created a fresh water lake of some 500 acres with 8 miles of waterfront, accelerated regeneration of the Bay as a whole, and encouraged many visitors to the Bay. It was hoped that it would make a significant contribution to the target of attracting up to 2 million visitors a year to the Inner Harbour.

The CBDC envisaged the natural creation of a freshwater ecological system that would lead to vegetation, fish and bird life that are not found in the present estuarine environment. The Corporation plan to encourage the use of pleasure boats and for a regular water bus scheme. However, before construction the Barrage scheme was subject to fierce criticism by a number of environmental and social groups.

Conflicting Views of the Barrage Scheme

For

- The barrage would prevent the sea from entering the Bay, allowing the Rivers Taff and Ely to form a freshwater area of 500 acres through which the rivers will continue to flow out of the barrage sluices into the sea (CBDC)
- There would be spare capacity in the Bay for surplus water from high river flows, which can be discharged through the Barrage (OBOC)
- The Barrage would protect Cardiff from flooding by exceptionally high tides (CBDC)
- The CBDC recognised from the outset that, because of the pollution found in the mud of the Bay and the waters of the Taff and Ely rivers, that the quality of the impounded water would preclude swimming and all water sports where submersion is the norm, but it would still be possible to enjoy many water sports (CBDC)
- The CBDC would provide equipment to enable an adequate circulation of water to allow oxygen to be absorbed from the atmosphere, and in extreme conditions to enable oxygen to be pumped directly into the water, if on warm days oxygen levels fall below levels necessary for migratory fish (CBDC)
- Floating equipment to collect surface algal growth, which is likely to occur in warm weather (CBDC)
- Monitoring of the lake will occur to ensure quality standards are maintained (CBDC)
- while the CBDC acknowledge that the Barrage would cause an increase of up to 3 m in groundwater levels in areas immediately adjacent to the Bay, it decided to install 75 wells positioned along the Taff and Ely which will pump groundwater out into the rivers
- The Barrage may affect the Taff, Ely and Severn Estuary SSSIs, but it was thought that the impact will be marginal. Migratory bird population which winter on the exposed mudflats may be displaced to other parts of the Severn Estuary. To mitigate for the loss of the SSSI £6m is being invested by the CBDC to provide alternative habitats for a number of bird species of current levels



Against

- it would be an environmental disaster creating a lake so polluted that it will die in hot summers causing masses of poisonous algae to bloom. Fourteen huge oxygen pumps will try to keep it alive (CRAB)
- The Barrage was being built purely to create a cosmetic freshwater lake without providing any practical benefit like hydroelectricity (WWF)
- The Barrage would mean the loss of internationally important mudflats, vital feeding and roosting grounds for birds (Dr. S Tyler, RSPB for Wales)
- The CBDC revealed the plan about sinking de-watering wells to maintain groundwater levels after the Barrage Act was passed. This was despite warnings over many years by their own hydrologists that the groundwater rise would be serious. The CBDC have spent many years trying to convince residents that groundwater rises would be negligible (CRAB)
- By containing the flow of sewage and silt the 'lake' is far more likely to have a brief life as a cess pit of green slime and mosquito habitat. Even the Governments own advisers have said no human contact with the polluted lake will be allowed (Chris Barnes, Wolverhampton)
- Some 4000 Redshank and Dunlin wading birds which depended on the mudflats as a winter feeding ground would perish as a result of the Barrage (WWF)
- The loss of any SSSI is a major environmental disaster and in this case it is an international one because the Dunlin breed in two areas of the Russian Arctic only (WWF)
- The Barrage scheme would move the sea one mile south of its present position, cuffing off the maritime city of Cardiff from its natural waterfront (Living Waterfront Group)
- The Cardiff Bay SSSI formed an integral part of the Lower Severn Estuary SPA (in accordance with the EU Wild Birds Directive 79/409/EEC). The Welsh Office's decision to exclude the Bay from the boundary of the SPA is a direct contravention of that Directive. The 3 alternative sites proposed as compensation for the SSSI loss fail to provide suitable alternative feeding grounds for over 4000 Dunlin, 600 Redshank and 300 Shelduck

Many environmentalists are still very concerned and did put forward an alternative scheme.

The second issue is that of CBDC and the local 2000-strong community in Bute Town located in the heart of CBDC. This community has the classic profile of deprivation with very high adult and youth unemployment, and poor quality housing and amenities. Bute Town residents comment on the very limited improvements made to their houses, and the tokenism of CBDCs social projects (a youth barn and a new school) which form only 2% of CBDCs overall budget. They also claim that CBDC has provided

only limited jobs for Bute Town residents and that the building of Bute Avenue which runs parallel to Bute Street a main artery through Bute Town is insulting. They see the new avenue as a means of preventing potential entrepreneurs from viewing the unattractive image of Bute Town. An added dimension of the social exclusion of Bute Town is the fact that it is the most ethnically diverse area within Cardiff with a rich multi-cultural tradition.

Table 2 summarises the polarised views local people have about CBDC.

Table 2. Has redevelopment divided the community?

| No | Yes |
|--|---|
| Travers Merrill: Community Development Manager | Butetown Locals |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Barrage, Butetown link Road and Bute Avenue represents economic regeneration for all local residents The Development Corporation Community Programme helps local voluntary groups, for e.g. to gain funding for summer-holiday play schemes, community radio schemes and cultural activities In conjunction with S. Glamorgan County Council, the CBDC built Mount Stuart Primary School | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The expensive houses and flats in the former dockland, have created a 'them and us' situation and has attracted yuppies The yuppies have greater spending power than local people and are pushing prices up More money should have been spent on improving the condition of the old housing stock |

Using the case study

A typical exam question in which you can use this case study is

With reference to a large urban area

- Describe the nature of one major regeneration scheme
- Assess how successful it has been in improving the environment and the quality of life of its people.

Hints

- Learn a simple sketch map showing the main features of CBDC. An annotated version of Figure 1 would be ideal.
- Learn a fact file of the major features of CBDC.
- Read through the evaluation and identify a range of criteria to evaluate success such as value for money, or ability to meet targets.

Acknowledgements;

This Geo Factsheet was researched and written by Sue Warn, who would like to acknowledge the help and advice of - Frances Hirres (Project Manager) - Hun Thomas (lecturer Cardiff University) - Rob Jones (Alkynes School)

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