

# BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

## REPORT TO CABINET

8 MARCH 2022

### REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR - COMMUNITIES

#### PORTHCAWL WATERFRONT REGENERATION: PLACEMAKING STRATEGY AND PROGRAMME UPDATE

#### 1. Purpose of report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- Update Cabinet on the progress made on the Porthcawl Waterfront Placemaking Strategy, to report on the outcomes of the public consultation completed and seek approval from Cabinet of the Draft Placemaking Strategy Document (**Appendix 1**).
- Update Cabinet on the Porthcawl Waterfront Regeneration programme.
- Seek acknowledgement and endorsement from Cabinet of the recommended next steps required to bring forward individual projects that form part of the Porthcawl Waterfront Regeneration programme.

#### 2. Connection to corporate well-being objectives / other corporate priorities

2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate well-being objectives under the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**:-

1. **Supporting a successful sustainable economy** – taking steps to make the county borough a great place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focussed on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions for all people in the county borough.
2. **Smarter use of resources** – ensure that all resources (financial, physical, ecological, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the creation of resources throughout the community that can help to deliver the Council's well-being objectives.

#### 3. Background

3.1 On 15 September 2020 a report was presented to Cabinet which included an update on the Local Development Plan (LDP) candidate site submission and proposed Land Use Framework (LUF) for the Porthcawl Waterfront Regeneration Area (PWRA).

Attached to the Cabinet report was a land use plan which indicated a proposed mix of land uses and quantum of development broadly similar to that identified within the Porthcawl Regeneration Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) prepared in 2007. In summary, the land uses proposed was a mixture of residential, leisure, retail, commercial, open space, car parking and active travel routes.

- 3.2 Work on the replacement LDP has since progressed to Deposit Plan stage with the PWRA having been identified as a regeneration growth area, earmarked to deliver mixed use regeneration including in excess of 1,000 homes, a school and commercial development alongside new public open space and active travel routes.
- 3.3 Whilst the LUF was prepared to evidence the deliverability and viability of the site as part of the LDP process, officers recognised that an additional layer of placemaking consideration and guidance would be critical in ensuring the future development of the regeneration area is delivered upon the Councils aspirations to deliver development of the highest quality and responds to the wide ranging needs of both the current community and future generations. In response to the need to provide a strong placemaking framework, a placemaking strategy was commissioned with Austin Smith Lord being the successful bidder following a competitive procurement exercise. Since their appointment in the summer of 2021 Austin Smith Lord (ASL) have worked alongside officers in order to progress the key stages of work, including stakeholder engagement and public consultation, that have culminated in the draft placemaking strategy that is now being presented to Cabinet for approval
- 3.4 In addition to the placemaking strategy providing a framework to shape future development within the regeneration area it serves to highlight various key projects that will need to come forward in a coordinated manner in order to enable delivery of the entire project over a series of integrated phases. As such, in addition to the placemaking strategy, this report includes a series of recommended next steps to be taken for key sites and projects within the PWRA.

#### **4. Current situation/proposal**

##### **Overall Programme Update**

- 4.1 Whilst the Placemaking Strategy provides a framework for future phases of development and will be used to inform the next steps taken in the programme, significant progress has already been made in relation to several key projects that represent the first phases of the regeneration and are intended to act as catalyst for future phases. Summary updates of each of these projects have been provided under separate headings below.
- 4.2 In addition to the projects that fall within the PWRA identified below, it is pertinent to recognise that work is also ongoing in relation to bringing forward other Council led investment and regeneration within Porthcawl. This work follows the success of the Porthcawl Marina, Jennings building and Rest Bay Watersports Centre developments. One such current project is the refurbishment and enhancement of

the Porthcawl Pavilion. At this stage feasibility work has been completed and external grant funding is being actively pursued in order to support delivery of this key project, as without such funding the project will prove difficult to progress.

#### Eastern Promenade and Western Breakwater Sea Defences

- 4.3 Works to complete the improvements to the existing Eastern Promenade and Western Breakwater sea defences continue to progress on site with the Eastern Promenade element of the works projected to be completed by the summer of this year and the final stage of works to Western Breakwater to be completed by November of this year.
- 4.4 The completion of this infrastructure project will represent a significant programme milestone, as once complete existing properties in the surrounding area will benefit from an enhanced level of coastal defence protection. In addition to existing properties benefiting from the enhanced level of protection the completion of the works will ensure protection for any new developments that are delivered as part of the regeneration of Porthcawl.

#### Cosy Corner

- 4.5 In December 2020 the following were proposed to, and agreed by, Cabinet as a set of guiding principles for the way forward for Cosy Corner, based on information available at the time:
- Desire to ensure funding allocated for Cosy Corner is retained for Cosy Corner. There is potentially funding still available through the Tourism Attractor Destination (TAD) programme for Cosy Corner
  - Adopting a partnership approach with key stakeholders
  - Taking action in a suitable timeframe
  - Minimising the period of time that Cosy Corner remains in its current condition
  - Minimising the on-going maintenance requirements and costs for Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC)
  - Enhancing the tourism offer of Porthcawl
- 4.6 In May 2021 BCBC concluded a procurement exercise and appointed architects with the required consultancy support to progress the project. The architects began producing the remaining information required by Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO) and Welsh Government taking the project up to RIBA stage 3. In October 2021 a report was presented to cabinet outlining that a proposal was submitted to WEFO and Welsh Government in August 2021 based on a capital programme budget of £2,114,615. It was proposed that this value included £1,000,000 grant and £1,114,615 match funding from BCBC. The match fund is made up of £384,615 via the Communities Directorate public realm budget, £500,000 from earmarked reserves and £230,000 from the SRF. An offer of funding on this basis has now

been received by BCBC with this funding and capital programme budget of £2,114,615 now forming part of the approved capital programme.

- 4.7 A planning application for a multi purpose development consisting of a play area, public amenity space, commercial units, Harbour Master office, and toilet / changing facilities was submitted on the 2 November 2021 with planning permission subsequently granted on the 11 February 2022. Now planning permission has been secured work will be progressed to tender the construction of the project.

#### Food Retail Store

- 4.8 As detailed within a report to Cabinet in January 2021 Aldi Stores Limited were appointed as the successful bidder to bring forward a new food retail store on the north western portion of Salt Lake Car park. Following extensive dialogue with officers, and a public consultation exercise, planning permission was granted for the new foodstore on the 22 December 2021. Aldi currently plan to commence construction onsite by the summer of this year with a view to being a position to open the store by the summer of 2023.

#### Metrolink Bus Terminus

- 4.9 Detailed design work has now been completed on the proposed Metrolink Bus Terminus to be located on the eastern side of the Portway. This design work culminated in the submission of a planning application on the 12 December 2021 and is currently pending consideration by the Local Planning Authority. The proposed Metrolink, which is to be delivered utilising Cardiff Capital Region grant funding, consists of a new four bay bus terminus and a single storey enclosed structure together with associated highways alterations, landscaping and public realm works. Once delivered the Metrolink will enhance public transport links to Pyle train station and in turn the wider South Wales Metro network. In addition to the enhanced linkages to Pyle, it will act to facilitate improved public transport frequency and accessibility in and out of Porthcawl and across the local network.

#### Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO)

- 4.10 Following Cabinet resolution in July 2021 the Porthcawl CPO was published on the 8 October 2021 and formally submitted to Planning and Environment Decisions Wales (PEDW). The publication of the CPO was followed by a period of consultation between 21 October 2021 and 26 November 2021 with a wide range of representations submitted to PEDW. Officers are now awaiting confirmation from PEDW as to what procedure the consideration of the CPO will follow. Once further updates are provided by PEDW, officers will report back to Cabinet as appropriate.

#### Appropriation

- 4.11 On the 20 July 2021 Cabinet authorised the Corporate Director – Communities to advertise the Council's intention to appropriate the open space land. As detailed

within the 20 July 2021 Cabinet report the process of appropriation allows for the Council to transfer the land from its current use to a use for planning purposes. Before appropriating the land to planning purposes the Council must advertise its intention to appropriate the open space land for two consecutive weeks in a newspaper circulating in the local area and consider any objections received to the appropriation.

- 4.12 In order to avoid any confusion that could arise from multiple consultations taking place at the same time, officers have not yet progressed the advertisement of the intention to appropriate land at Sandy Bay whilst the CPO and subsequent placemaking strategy consultation were ongoing. Now that these two consultations have closed and the draft placemaking strategy has been produced, officers intend to progress with the advisement of the appropriation following the 8 March Cabinet meeting. As outlined in the July 2021 Cabinet report, any objections to the appropriation that are forthcoming will need to be considered at a further Cabinet meeting in due course.

## **Placemaking Strategy**

### Emerging Themes and Opportunities Presented at Consultation Stage

- 4.13 Following a thorough review of the constraints, opportunities and planning policy considerations that apply to the PWRA and a series of engagement sessions with key stakeholder groups, a series of consultation boards were produced by ASL to reflect the emerging themes and opportunities for consideration as part of the placemaking strategy.
- 4.14 The consultation boards focused on what may be an appropriate response to the key themes which included active travel and connectivity, green space, public realm, sustainability and mix of uses. Diagrams were included to show how the development could possibly be laid out in order to positively respond to these key themes, with areas of potential development and connecting routes identified on the consultation boards. These diagrams were supported by further illustrative design material and precedent images in order to stimulate thought, conversation and responses from the public.
- 4.15 The public consultation was undertaken over a 3 week period from 24 November 2021 until 17 December 2021. The consultation included a two day public exhibition in the Porthcawl Pavilion which was attended by in excess of 1,000 members of the public. This exhibition was followed by the consultation material being displayed on the cosy corner site hoarding for 3 weeks and being made available online on the BCBC website.

### Outcome of Public Consultation and Draft Strategy Proposed

- 4.16 The outcome of the public consultation process is fully outlined within the consultation report prepared by officers and included as **Appendix 2** to this report. In summary, the consultation reflected the continued levels of public interest in the future

development of the PWRA. This interest ranges from full support of the emerging strategies and opportunities to full opposition of any new development. Based on the consultation responses the majority of the public fall between these two contrasting positions with a clear trend that although there is acceptance of, and indeed support for regeneration, there remains significant concern in relation to the following key areas:

- Amount of residential development.
- Compensatory car parking provision.
- Provision of leisure facilities.
- Provision of community facilities.
- Extent of public open space.

Whilst the above matters represent some of the core areas of concern it is equally evident that the following matters were either fully or broadly supported:

- Pedestrianisation of Eastern Promenade.
- Extension of Dock Street with associated piazza.
- Delivery of housing to meet local needs.
- Extension of Griffin Park.
- Construction of a multi storey car park.

4.17 In response to the consultation officers have worked to investigate what potential amendments to the indicative approach identified at consultation stage could be explored in order to ensure the nature and scale of development identified within the draft placemaking strategy responds to the concerns and aspirations of the public. When considering any such potential amendments it is incumbent on the Council to ensure the framework for development identified within the placemaking strategy remains in accord with matters such as planning policy and the need for any strategy to be credible, deliverable and financially viable. Within this context the following core amendments were made to the indicative mix and distribution of uses identified within the PWRA.

- Creation of a circa 200m long and 70m wide linear park along the Salt Lake seafront.
- Enlarged area of open space adjoining the pedestrianised extension to Dock Street and adjoining piazza.
- Reduction in the area of land on Salt Lake earmarked for housing by approximately a third.

4.18 The aforementioned amendments to the approach to the nature and extent of various uses within the placemaking strategy is considered to represent a significant shift in response to the key aspirations of the public as conveyed through the consultation process. With particular reference to the linear park proposed along the Salt Lake

seafront, this area is capable of accommodating a variety of recreational, leisure and community uses for both current and future generations.

### **Recommended Next Steps**

4.19 Subject to Cabinet approval of the Draft Placemaking Strategy, it is proposed to progress work on various projects that either represent requisite steps to delivering the regeneration or individual opportunities that form part of the wider planned regeneration as outlined in the Draft Placemaking Strategy. The next steps for which Cabinet acknowledgment and endorsement is sought are as follows:

- Prepare a business case delivery of development on Salt Lake central residential site, Hillsboro Car Park and Salt Lake South Leisure Site.
- Complete an options appraisal to determine the optimum route to deliver a commercially deliverable leisure development on Salt Lake South Leisure Site.
- Commission a feasibility study to explore potential capacity, design options and associated costings for a Multi Storey Car Park on the existing Hillsboro Car Park site.
- Engage in further public consultation on the potential design and use of new and extended areas of public realm and community space identified within the placemaking strategy.
- Prepare a development brief for the delivery of residential led development on the area of Salt Lake North that lies immediately to the east of the food retail site. Subject to a development brief being adopted proceed to market and dispose of the site.
- Prepare a development brief for the delivery of residential led mixed-use development across Sandy West and Sandy Bay East in line with the principles outlined within the draft placemaking strategy.
- Progress the advertisement of the appropriation of land at Sandy Bay in line with the previous authorisation provided by Cabinet on 20 July 2021.

4.20 As work is progressed on the items listed above the Corporate Director - Communities will keep Cabinet informed of any developments and report back on individual work streams as appropriate, in order to ensure the regeneration programme continues to progress and that any further authorisation that may be required is sought.

## **5 Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules**

- 5.1 The endorsement of the Draft Placemaking Strategy and progression of the regeneration programme based on the recommended next steps will positively support the Council's policies and procedures.
- 5.2 The site is currently allocated for mixed development within the existing Local Development Plan. Policy PLA3 of the Adopted Local Plan sets out the Council's objectives for mixed use regeneration of brownfield under utilised sites and identifies the Porthcawl Regeneration Area as being a significant part of this strategy through its allocation as site PLA3(8). This allocation is supported by adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG), often referred to as the "Seven Bays Project – Porthcawl Waterfront SPG".
- 5.3 In addition to the allocation in the Adopted Local Plan the site is identified as a Mixed-Use Strategic Development Site within the Replacement Local Development Plan Deposit Plan Public Consultation Document.
- 5.4 Specifically, Policy PLA1 of the Replacement Local Development Plan Deposit Plan Public Consultation Document sets out that the Land at Porthcawl Waterfront is allocated for a comprehensive, regeneration-led, mixed-use development that will deliver circa 1,115 homes (including 30% / 335 units of affordable housing), incorporating a new one form entry Welsh medium primary school, a four classroom block extension at the existing English medium primary school, a new food store, leisure facilities, a bus terminus, recreation facilities, public open space, plus appropriate community facilities and commercial uses. Policy PLA1 goes on to set out a series of placemaking and master planning principles that apply to the site.
- 5.5 The draft Placemaking Strategy builds upon the land use framework that had previously been prepared for the site and reported to Cabinet. Collectively these documents evidence the deliverability, subject to funding being secured, and viability of the site the major landowners have contributed to a draft land use framework and masterplan for consideration as part of the LDP process. This work is supported and informed by a suite of technical evidence that has been commissioned by the landowners. The proposed mix of land uses and quantum of development are similar to those within the existing SPG and include mixed use of residential, leisure, retail, commercial, open space, car parking and active travel routes.
- 5.6 In addition to the planning status of the site at a local level, there is significant support for the proposed regeneration at a national policy level. Planning Policy Wales (PPW) supports the prioritisation of suitably located brownfield sites for regeneration purposes subject to other policy considerations.
- 5.7 When considered in the policy and procedural context outlined above, the endorsement of the draft placemaking strategy represents an important additional step in progressing the delivery of development across the PWRA, realising the

regeneration objectives of the Council and wider national placemaking objectives of Welsh Government.

## **6. Equality Act 2010 implications**

- 6.1 An initial Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) screening has identified that there would be no negative impact on those with one or more of the protected characteristics, on socio-economic disadvantage or the use of the Welsh Language. It is therefore not necessary to carry out a full Equality Impact assessment on this proposal.

## **7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 implications**

- 7.1 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 Assessment based on the 5 ways of working has been considered and there are no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the achievement of well-being goals/objectives as a result of this report.

- Long term - The Porthcawl Waterfront Regeneration is a strategic development scheme which has the potential to add vibrancy to the locality through the provision of new housing, leisure and tourism opportunities, as well as retail and commercial developments; set within appropriate open space, parking and public realm.
- Prevention – the current Waterfront sites are largely unoccupied and under-utilised and detract from the attractiveness of the area.
- Integration – the Waterfront development will integrate with and access the existing town centre, sea front and leisure developments.
- Collaboration – the Council will continue to collaborate with residents, visitors and end users of this project to ensure successful and sustainable development and outcomes.
- Involvement – ongoing engagement with the community will be an important facet of this project.

## **8. Financial implications**

- 8.1 Whilst the placemaking strategy includes a significant number of large scale individual and interlinked development projects, its endorsement by Cabinet does not constitute approval of any additional capital or revenue expenditure and therefore there are no direct financial implications arising for BCBC from this report. All financial considerations will need to be considered on a project by project basis and further reports will be brought back to Cabinet and/or Council as appropriate.

- 8.2 Although there are no direct financial implications arising from the endorsement of the placemaking strategy it is pertinent to acknowledge that the receipt from the sale of the food retail site remains ring fenced to invest in infrastructure improvements within the PWRA and is currently included within the Council's capital programme. As outlined within the report to Council on 9 February 2022 the capital budget has increased from £2.553 million to £3.488 million to reflect the enhanced receipt the Council now expects to secure for this land.

## 9. Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended:

- 9.1 To note the progress that has been made with respect to various projects that form part of the wider Porthcawl Waterfront Regeneration Area (PWRA) programme.
- 9.2 To approve the draft placemaking strategy and authorise the Corporate Director - Communities to (subject to such amendments as the Council's Corporate Director-Communities may authorise) publish a final copy of the placemaking strategy, for the purposes of establishing a coherent framework to guide the delivery of future development within the PWRA.
- 9.3 To acknowledge that the following steps will now be undertaken to further progress the delivery of key projects within the PWRA:
  - Prepare business cases for delivery of development on Salt Lake central residential site, Hillsboro Car Park and Salt Lake South Leisure Site.
  - Complete an options appraisal to determine the optimum route to deliver a commercially deliverable leisure development on the Salt Lake South Leisure Site.
  - Commission a feasibility study to explore potential capacity and design options for a Multi Storey Car Park on the existing Hillsboro Car Park site.
  - Engage in further public consultation on the potential design and use of new and extended areas of public realm and community space identified within the placemaking strategy.
  - Prepare a development brief for the delivery of residential led development on the area of salt Lake north that lies immediately to the east of the food retail site.
  - Prepare a development brief for the delivery of residential led mixed use development across Sandy West and Sandy Bay East in line with the principles outlined within the draft placemaking strategy.
  - Progress the advertisement of the appropriation of land at Sandy Bay in line with the previous authorisation provided by cabinet on 20 July 2021.

The Corporate Director-Communities will report back to Cabinet to provide updates and seek any further authorisations required in order to progress development within the PWRA.

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**March 2022**

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**Background Documents:**

November 2021 Porthcawl Placemaking Strategy Consultation Boards