



## REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 21ST MAY 2013

**SUBJECT: BUTE TOWN, RHYMNEY – HERITAGE LOTTERY FUND –  
'TOWNSCAPE HERITAGE' FUND BID OPPORTUNITY**

**REPORT BY: ACTING DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of the report is to:-

- Update Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee on the background to issues in respect of the Bute Town roofs;
- Provide an overview of the main conclusions that have emerged from the recent Bute Town Roof Condition Survey;
- Recent developments including correspondence received from Huw Lewis AM and the Butetown Residents' Association; and
- Inform members of the potential funding opportunities from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

### 2. SUMMARY

2.1 Following meetings with Huw Lewis AM and the HLF, a roof condition survey of Butetown roofs was recently commissioned by Caerphilly County Borough Council, which was funded through the Welsh Government's 'Heads of the Valleys Programme' assisted by up to £20,000 funding. Davies Sutton Chartered Architects and Conservation Consultants, who are specialists in dealing with historic buildings, prepared the Report. The Report has now been finalised and a summary of its recommendations is set out in this report

### 3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

3.1 The Key Objectives relevant in the Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan up to 2021 (Adopted November 2010) are to: -

- 22 Maintain the vitality, viability and character of the County Borough's town and village centres and re-establish them as a focus for economic activity and community pride.
- 23 Maintain, enhance and develop a hierarchy of town and village centres which are easily accessible, and which meet the needs of all sections of the population.
- 24 Protect and enhance the overall quality of the historic natural and built environment of the County Borough.

3.2 Butetown was also identified as an important 'Gateway' to the County Borough in the landscaping proposals funded through the Heads of the Valleys Programme. The settlement has a high profile both in terms of its conservation importance and its strategic location, just south of the Heads of the Valleys area.

3.3 The Welsh Government has several objectives which include:

- Enhancing the historic environment;
- Safeguarding historic buildings; and
- Ensuring that conservation areas are protected and enhanced.

3.4 Local planning authorities have an important role in securing the conservation of the historic environment while ensuring that it accommodates and remains responsive to present day needs. There is a range of planning controls relevant to the terraced housing in question.

3.5 Both a Butetown Conservation Area Design Guide and Butetown Conservation Area Enhancement Plan were adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance in August 2005. The guidance promotes a greater understanding of Butetown's significance, clarification of current planning controls and design guidance for future repairs and maintenance, as well as setting out a number of enhancement proposals for the area, the majority of which have since been implemented.

## **4. THE REPORT**

### **4.1 Background**

Butetown, also known as Drenewydd, was built by the Bute Ironworks Company between 1827-28 on an exposed and isolated site at the Head of the Rhymney Valley. It was built during the expansion of the Rhymney Ironworks and the construction of the 'Egyptian' furnaces and provided much needed housing for workers.

What made Butetown most unusual amongst early industrial workers' housing was that it was such an elaborate formal architectural composition, built to such a high quality and exemplary in its complex mix of planned social housing.

Following the demolition of much early industrial workers' housing in South Wales in the early 1970's, Butetown today has exceptional significance as a rare surviving example of one of the earliest planned, and best preserved industrial workers' housing developments in South Wales.

The historic architectural significance and vulnerability of Butetown was first formally recognised 20th October 1972, and so protecting it from demolition during the 'slum' clearance drive occurring at that time.

In January 1973 John Eynon, architect and Glamorgan County Council's historic buildings consultant recommended to Cadw that Butetown's houses should be statutorily listed and declared a General Improvement Area (GIA). In response to this, Cadw listed the group grade II on 24<sup>th</sup> July 1973, as amongst the earliest planned industrial housing in the Welsh valleys. Following local government re-organization in 1974, the then Rhymney Valley District Council declared the area a GIA (August 1974) with the aim of improving living conditions and amenities in the area.

Increased understanding of Butetown's heritage merit led to the implementation of renovation proposals by Mid Glamorgan County Council with limited support from Rhymney Valley District Council. Renovation work to conserve the existing character of the village was undertaken, largely funded by Cadw. This work sought to restore some of the town's architectural details, including: new re-constituted 'stone' tiled roofs; new rainwater goods; removal of external wall finishes; replacing all windows with timber horned sliding sashes that had superseded the cast-iron windows; and replacing all front doors and frames to match an original existing example.

The works were promoted in 1975 as part of the South Wales Valleys' contribution to the Architectural Heritage Year and visited the same year by HRH the Prince of Wales.

The renovation works were completed in 1978.

The renovation works have now outlived their useful life, which has led to the current correspondence from residents and the AM.

An Article 4 Direction was formalized on 23rd April 1979 to remove a number of permitted development rights in order to further protect Butetown's character.

## **4.2 Supplementary Planning Guidance**

Draft supplementary planning guidance in the form of a Butetown Conservation Area Design Guide and a Butetown Conservation Area Enhancement Plan was prepared during 2001/2002. Two rounds of formal consultation were undertaken. The first round of public consultation was undertaken in July 2001. The second round of consultation took place in January 2002 and went to all relevant Directorates, to the local member, Cllr. Peter Bailie and to the Cabinet Member for Planning. Written representations and a Butetown Residents Petition were received from Cllr. Peter Bailie at a meeting of Council on 7th March 2002. This petition (signed by 84 residents) demanded: -

- 1) *That the Caerphilly County Borough Council takes action to withdraw the newly imposed restrictions on development of the backs and insides of our houses.*
- 2) *That the Caerphilly County Borough Council provides adequate granting for conservation improvements to the houses in our historic village.*

*We as residents also would like to make it clear that if the Caerphilly County Borough Council does not take the above actions then, we as residents will take the first actions to have the village withdrawn from listed status.*

Amended Drafts for Public Consultation were circulated in August 2002 and a Public Meeting held at the former Drenewydd Community Centre, on 12th September 2002. After further revision of both these documents they were finally adopted by Council on 15th March 2005.

As a consequence of concerns raised by local residents and following an internal inspection of a sample number of the existing roof coverings in Butetown, a Preliminary Internal Roof Condition Survey was prepared by Caerphilly County Borough Council in July 2003. The report concluded that the most appropriate and cost effective course of action would be to replace the roof covering using an alternative slate material in accordance with manufacturers' instructions.

In January 2006 a Conservation Plan and accompanying documents were commissioned by Caerphilly County Borough Council to provide a greater understanding of Butetown and to establish policies to conserve its significance. This was assisted with 80% grant aid from Cadw, which led to the production of a Conservation Plan, Delivery Strategy, and Design Guidance for Extensions and Garages. These documents were used to support the Council's application to Cadw for funding under their 'Town Scheme Partnership' (TSP) initiative to address the replacement of defective roofing and associated works.

## **4.3 Town Scheme Partnership**

The Butetown TSP was first launched by the Council and Cadw in April 2010 and ran for 3 consecutive years. Cadw and the Council had each both agreed to allocate £20,000 to the scheme, offering a 50% grant rate of total cost of eligible works to a maximum of £10,000 (inclusive of appropriate professional fees and VAT) to re-roof the properties. The funds for the TSP were withdrawn at the end of 2012 due to the lack of take-up.

From an historic environment context, the Officer's preferred option for roof repair is for a block repair or 'enveloping' scheme to be undertaken. This would allow for a holistic approach to the renovation of the roofs in the area and would ensure that the works would not be carried out in a piecemeal fashion. This approach would ensure that a change in roofing material and associated works to chimneystacks; eaves and rainwater goods were undertaken in a systematic, comprehensive and cost effective manner. It is considered that linking roofs of different materials would inevitably prove problematical and be visually obtrusive, resulting in a 'patchwork' quilt effect. It is recognised however, that a comprehensive approach to roof repair would require the full agreement and backing of the homeowners and that only the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) would have sufficient resources to implement such an approach.

In essence, in order to restore the roofs to a suitable condition within the conservation area and achieve good value in terms of procurement, all the works would need to be let under one contract with all funding including residents' contributions available at the same time.

To try and achieve this holistic approach, the Council has therefore been in recent discussions (in December 2012) with the HLF to consider the remit of works that might be included within a 'package' for a potential bid for a HLF Townscape Heritage Initiative (TH) that could include the following: -

- Replacement roofs and associated works (possibly including rebuilding existing chimneys and inserting drip trays, replacing rainwater goods, fascias and soffits),
- Providing conservation skills training with apprentices working alongside Contractors,
- Re-building missing boundary walls,
- Enhancing public realm works,
- Investigating the potential of linking up the TH works within the settlement with a marked footpath route from Butetown along the Rhymney Bridge to the remains of the Union Ironworks site, Rhymney which is a scheduled ancient monument formerly known as Rhymney Upper Furnace, Llechryd, Rhymney that was built in June 1801.
- Developing a community led heritage project to include some archaeological survey/dig of the site to see what remains there, with subsequent environmental enhancement works and interpretative material of the site and linking it up with Bryn Bach Country Park, Tredegar. Some outline options for the site have been prepared for discussion with the residents group.
- The Heritage and Outreach Manager, Dr Edith Evans, at Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust (GGAT) has also already expressed an interest in having an input into such a project with the local community group and she has recently met the Council to make progress on this. A further meeting has been arranged with GGAT as well as with Cadw officers to progress this.

The meeting with the HLF in December 2012, with Welsh Government Regeneration and Caerphilly County Borough Council representatives and Cadw concluded that there was a need to carry out a new structural roof condition survey in Butetown to later inform any decision regarding the future repair and restoration of the roofs at Butetown and the potential of a future bid for THI funding in 2013. Following a successful bid to WG for funding this financial year, a study was therefore commissioned by CCBC and funded through the Welsh Government's Heads of the Valleys Programme.

#### **4.4 Recommendations of the Butetown Roof Condition Survey - March 2013**

The survey has looked at what repair works are required in order to address the roof defects,

together with developing options for further desirable improvements that could be undertaken concurrently.

Importantly the survey indicates that whilst the existing roof coverings are not fit for purpose, the roof structure is structurally sound. Therefore in order that the roof structure does not deteriorate the study indicates consideration should be given to the wholesale replacement of the roof coverings and that the following work should be prioritised:

- Re-clad all roofs in Welsh slate to include a ventilated eaves detail;
- Rebuild the chimney stacks to include lead trays, renewed lead flashings, chimney pots and cowls;
- Overhaul the rainwater goods including the renewal of missing sections and the addition of downpipes to 3-storey terraces.

In undertaking these works the study also indicates that it would also be prudent to:-

- Insulate the roofs;
- Install a rooflight to each property;
- Renew the defective soffits.

In addition to the above, the study has established that further works are required to the boundary walls and the gable end wall of the Windsor Arms Public House.

#### **4.5 Potential Cost of Scheme and Grant Options**

Since the earliest that the TH funding is likely to be 'on-stream' is mid 2015, the total estimated projected Second Quarter cost for 2015 to undertake this work is estimated to be £959,073, including Preliminaries and Contingency costs, but excluding Professional Fees and VAT. This breaks down to a cost of £20,849 per property (based on 46 properties). These figures, notwithstanding any further deterioration are considerable, and therefore such a substantial investment will need considerable justification for any bid to external funders. In light of this, any 'additionality' to the project, in terms of links to wider heritage assets, involvement of other agencies and in particular the opportunity for conservation skills training will need to be strongly emphasised in any bids.

Previous grant assistance proposals in the form of a joint Town Scheme Partnership (TSP) initiative with CCBC and Cadw offered between April 2010 until Dec 2012 to assist with the replacement of the properties' roofs was not taken up by the residents. This is due to the owners being unable to provide their 50% funding contribution themselves. Alternative sources of funding are therefore required to realise the proposed works and to meet the necessary balance of repair, conservation and sustainability. Caerphilly County Borough Council could work with residents to identify funding opportunities to implement the proposed works.

Following a meeting with the Senior Grants Officer of the Heritage Lottery Fund in Cardiff, the Council has been advised that the Townscape Heritage grants programme would be the most appropriate grant scheme to apply for, in respect of Butetown. A simpler, new TH programme was launched as part of a new 5 year Strategic Framework in April 2013. Decisions will be made in a competitive environment and not all applications will be successful. Applications will be assessed as part of a two round process. The deadline for first round applications will be 31st August 2013 with decisions made in January 2014. There are no cost implications at the Round 1 stage. Those moving forward to a Round 2 application will have up to a year to develop a detailed bid. There may be an opportunity to also bid in Round 1 for a development grant to develop a Round 2 application. Commonly the length of time between a Round 1 application and a Round 2 decision will be approximately 2 years. So, the earliest that a TH grant could be confirmed is likely to be mid to end of 2015. Grants offered by the HLF will be between £100,000 and £2 million. It is by no means certain that this bid would be successful. In the meantime, the condition of the roofs will continue to deteriorate.

According to the HLF there is potential for a successful TH at Bute Town subject to a rounded package of conservation-led works that must include more than just a re-roofing scheme. An appropriate conservation based approach to the work is necessary and early groundwork will be essential to secure buy in from the residents if conservation based repairs run counter to their expectations/wants. An inclusion of projects involving the Windsor Arms public house and St. Aidan's church and of potential wider regenerative benefits might be worth exploring. The benefits of a single block scheme, with economies of scale and a uniformity of approach are suggested. Also, connecting with skills training where TH's are operating in neighbouring authorities is advised. Active involvement with the residents is vital for the success of the scheme and a range of small community projects and initiatives should be considered.

## **4.6 Conclusions**

The recommendations in the Report are extremely useful, in particular, the need for residents to undertake basic maintenance of their properties. This information should be communicated to all residents as soon as the report is finalised and distributed. The report recognises that potential funding for the necessary works will not be immediate. Therefore, it is of paramount importance that during this intervening time, basic maintenance is carried out by residents to ensure that existing problems are not exacerbated, specifically:

- All rainwater goods should be cleaned out twice a year. In particular, rainwater gullies should be cleaned out and any drainage runs rodded to ensure sufficient flow.
- All ivy, vegetation and lichen should be removed from all external walls and roofs in general, with the ground level around the buildings kept a min of 150mm below the interior floor level.
- All grass and vegetation should be cut away at least 300mm from the external face of the walls.
- There should be a strong aim to retain characteristic architectural details and materials as well as re-establishing them where possible.
- There is a notable creep of unregulated alterations and future proposed works to Butetown should be based on clear conservation principles and the presentation of Butetown not allowed to deteriorate in the fragile intervening period between now and when repair works are carried out.

Failure to carry out the necessary maintenance could eventually lead to currently sound elements of the building fabric being detrimentally affected.

### Strategic Action Plan in Short Term

The Roof Condition Survey Report recommends that the following actions should be implemented as an on-going process to guide the conservation led approach to the repair of Butetown roofs:-

- The application for funding to undertake works be pursued;
- The commissioning of specialist investigations and surveys to include, asbestos surveys of the properties;
- The development of detailed repairs and remedial works to the roofs;
- A comprehensive consultation process with residents, organisations, visitors and others to illustrate a summary of the proposals for the repairs, highlighting the key issues, including potential benefits, threats, opportunities and restrictions.
- It would need to be clear that even if CCBC provides capital funding and if grant applications are successful, the residents themselves would be expected to make a contribution and undertake the basic maintenance as explained in 4.6 above.

## **4.7 Correspondence from Huw Lewis AM**

Since attending a public meeting held in Bute Town on 28th September 2012, the Council has been engaged in on-going correspondence with Huw Lewis in his capacity as Assembly

Member for Merthyr Tydfil & Rhymney. Since that time there have been a number of meetings and actions that the Council has undertaken, to investigate the available options to address the roofs issue and the AM has been kept informed. It is worth noting that up until recently Huw Lewis was the Minister for Housing, Regeneration & Heritage and so had a particular interest in this matter. However, the Welsh Government's recent Cabinet reshuffle has meant that Huw Lewis's responsibilities have changed, and that John Griffiths now has responsibility for heritage matters within his portfolio under the heading of Culture and Sport.

A letter was recently received from Huw Lewis AM asking for an update on the Butetown Roof Condition Survey. An acknowledgement as well as a full response has now been sent. As part of this correspondence a copy letter of correspondence that was sent by Butetown Residents' Association to the Chief Executive Officer was included. This letter raised a series of legal queries and the Council's Principal Solicitor, John Rogers has recently commented on the legal aspects of the letter. In summary, Mr Rogers has confirmed that the author of the letter is correct in saying that Caerphilly CBC inherited the responsibilities of Mid Glamorgan for the County Borough area. However, it is clear that the problems concerning Butetown roofs have been known about for many years and even if there was any legal claim against Mid Glamorgan or Caerphilly, that has long since become statute barred. The report that went to Regeneration Scrutiny Committee on 17th February 2009, 'Butetown Roofs' makes the point in paragraph 4.13 that the Council is under no legal obligation to pay for re-roofing these properties. Nevertheless, these are important buildings in our county borough of historic significance and we would like to work with the residents and other partners to find a positive solution to the problem faced.

## **5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no specific equalities implications arising as a result of this report.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 If the authority was successful in securing just under £1million funding from a HLF-Townscape Heritage grants programme for Bute Town, the expectation is that the "partnership" (made up of both the local authority and residents) contribute **at least** 5% of total costs. This is described as 'partnership funding' and it can be made up of cash, volunteer time, non-cash contributions or a combination of all of these. If the grant applied for is £1million or more, the partnership must contribute at least 10% of total costs. Total project costs taken from the latest roof condition study are identified in paragraph 4.5 above estimated at £959,073 including preliminaries and contingency costs, but excluding professional fees and VAT. This gives a total cost per property of £20,849 based on 46 properties. These figures are only indicative figures and could be subject to change. This would require a 5% contribution towards the scheme from the partnership of £47,953.65, with the local authority contributing half (£23,976.83) and the residents/home owners also contributing £23,976.83 equating to £521.23 per property (based on 46 properties).
- 6.2 If the Council did obtain the maximum of a 95% grant, it is not a condition that residents pay half of the remaining 5% but in the spirit of working in partnership with the residents of Butetown there is an expectation that they will. There is a risk that some or all of the residents will not agree to provide their proportion of the funding (£521.23 per property, total cost £23,976.83). If any of the residents do not 'sign up to the scheme' and fail to agree to pay a contribution towards the works, then there may not be a scheme. It has to be done as an 'enveloping scheme' or not at all as all the roofs are defective. If this is the case, the Council may wish to consider providing the full 5% funding of £47,953.65 in order to secure the £959,073 HLF funding.
- 6.3 Further, as noted in the report if the project costs were to exceed £1million and the grant application needed to be over £1million, the partnership match funding would need to be 10%. The potential Council match funding could then be between £50,000 (where residents pay half

the 10%) to £100,000 (if the Council pays the full 10% contribution).

- 6.4 At present, no budget is identified for any match funding required from the authority, for the new HLF bid. This will need to be identified in the Medium Term Financial Plan and Capital Programme, to be in place for 2015/16, should the bid proceed and succeed in attracting funding.
- 6.5 The HLF launched this new, simplified Townscape Heritage grants programme online, just as this report was being finalised. Council officers have now registered an interest in the scheme.
- 6.6 Previously, funding had been offered through the Butetown Town Scheme Partnership fund that had an annual pot of funding of £40,000, with both the local authority and Cadw each contributing £20,000pa. The grant on offer was 50% of total cost of eligible works per property, up to a maximum of £10,000. The scheme was in place for 3 financial years, making a total grant allocation of £120,000 that was not taken up.

## **7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 None

## **8. CONSULTATIONS**

- 8.1 Comments received are covered in the body of the report.

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 9.1 That members note the background and detail of the Butetown project.

## **10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 10.1 To make members aware of plans for progressing this initiative.

## **11. STATUTORY POWERS**

- 11.1 As part of key objectives set out in the CCBC LDP up to 2021, Adopted November 2010.
- 11.2 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- 11.3 Welsh Government's Planning Policy Wales, Ch 6, Edition 5, November 2012.
- 11.4 Local Government Act, 1972.
- 11.5 Local Government Act, 2000.

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