



COUNCIL – 17TH NOVEMBER 2020

**SUBJECT: HEADS OF THE VALLEYS REGENERATION AREA
MASTERPLAN**

REPORT BY: INTERIM CORPORATE DIRECTOR - COMMUNITIES

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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise members on the main issues identified by respondents during the public consultation exercise carried out between 17 February and 30 March 2020 on the Draft Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Area Masterplan.
- 1.2 To approve the amended Heads of the Valleys Masterplan Regeneration Area (as Supplementary Planning Guidance to the Adopted Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan) as a tool for guiding regeneration activity in the Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Area.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 On 2 January 2020, Cabinet approved the publication of the Draft Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Area Masterplan (Masterplan) for the purposes of a formal, six-week public consultation process. The consultation period began on 17 February 2020 and ended on 30 March 2020.
- 2.2 In total, ten responses were received during this period. A Report of Consultation has been prepared that addresses the responses to the Masterplan. The Report considers the issues that have been raised, provides officer responses to those issues and makes recommendations on the proposed course of action. The Report of Consultation is included as Appendix 1 to this report.
- 2.3 The main issues raised in the consultation responses are as follows:
 - Greater flexibility in terms of potential redevelopment options for Capital Valley;
 - Greater alignment of housing and employment delivery;
 - Expansion of the Tech Valleys initiative to include the entire Masterplan area;
 - The role of Heolddu Comprehensive School and Leisure Centre;
 - The need for improvements to Gilfach Fargoed Station;
 - Empty shops and lack of on-street parking in Bargoed town centre.

2.4 These issues have been addressed in the Report of Consultation. As a result of the responses received, a small number of changes are proposed to the Masterplan and are indicated as track changes in the amended document.

2.5 Minor typographical changes and updates are also included in the amended document that is appended to the report as Appendix 2, although these are not set out in the Report of Consultation.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 That the Council considers the representations received as part of the public consultation exercise and endorses the officer recommendations set out in the Report of Consultation.

3.2 That the Council formally adopts the Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Area Masterplan as Supplementary Planning Guidance to the Adopted Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan and as a tool for guiding regeneration activity in the Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Area.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 To provide a policy basis for the future development and regeneration of the Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Area.

5. THE REPORT

Background

5.1 The signing of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal signals the intention of the 10 South East Wales local authorities to increasingly work together through joint enterprise, on issues of long term development, infrastructure, land use, economic development and employment. It marks unprecedented investment from the UK and Welsh Governments, as well as local authorities, and offers the possibility of an integrated long term approach to investment within the region. The City Deal agreement sets out a series of priorities and recommendations for the future growth and investment within the Cardiff Capital Region, of which Caerphilly County Borough is part.

5.2 The County Borough's regeneration strategy, 'A Foundation for Success', was approved in July 2018 and provides the strategic framework for regeneration activity over the next five years. In addition to this, masterplans for Caerphilly Basin and Ystrad Mynach, the first two in a suite of five masterplans designed to complement this strategy, were approved by the Council in July 2018 and April 2019 respectively. These documents provide more detailed proposals for the regeneration and revitalisation of their respective areas.

5.3 The Valleys Taskforce Delivery Plan, 'Our Valleys, Our Future', identifies several priorities which are relevant to the Heads of the Valleys. These include:

- Creating 7,000 new jobs;
- Supporting entrepreneurship and helping businesses to grow;
- Ensuring people have the right skills for employment;
- Maximise the potential of the A465 dualling;
- More integrated community services;
- Creation of a Valleys Regional Park, linking green spaces and visitor attractions

and increasing tourism.

- 5.4 In addition, Phase 2 of the Metro will have a positive impact in terms of connectivity, both through increased journey frequency and the provision of enhanced facilities. Regionally significant interventions such as the A465 dualling and the Ebbw Vale Enterprise Zone requires the Masterplan to take a strategic perspective, and to ensure that proposals for economic development in the Heads of the Valleys take advantage of these initiatives.
- 5.5 The Masterplan will form part of the implementation plan for 'A Foundation for Success', with the latter to be reviewed every five years. Whilst the Masterplan identifies investment and development opportunities within the Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Area, the Regeneration Project Board will prioritise projects and proposals for consideration by Cabinet and, therefore, delivery will be dependent on decisions made by Cabinet.
- 5.6 Council resolved to commence a full review of the Local Development Plan on 23 October 2019. Decisions taken with regard to investment and development opportunities set out within the Masterplan will inform the evidence base of the 2nd Replacement Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan.

Public Consultation Exercise

- 5.7 A public consultation exercise was held in respect of the Masterplan between 17 February 2020 and 30 March 2020.
- 5.8 Consultation emails were sent to all elected members, community councils within the Masterplan area, AMs and MPs.
- 5.9 Posters advertising the dates of the consultation, dates and times of consultation events and the locations of the associated documentation were displayed in libraries across the County Borough. The consultation was also advertised on the Council's website and social media channels.
- 5.10 Consultation material was also placed in all libraries across the County Borough, and staffed consultation events were held in Bargoed Library (Saturday 29 February 2020 and Tuesday 3 March 2020) and Rhymney Library (Wednesday 4 and Thursday 5 March 2020) to allow members of the public to discuss the Masterplan with officers.

Key Issues Raised

- 5.11 In total, ten responses were received during the consultation period. A Report of Consultation has been prepared that addresses the responses to the Masterplan. The Report considers the issues that have been raised, provides officer responses to those issues and makes recommendations on the proposed course of action. The Report of Consultation is included as Appendix 1 to this report.
- 5.12 Respondents were asked to comment on the Vision, Strategic Objectives, Development Strategy and site-specific proposals, and the responses have been grouped in the Report of Consultation to reflect this.
- 5.13 The main issues raised in the responses are as follows:
- Greater flexibility in terms of potential redevelopment options for Capital Valley;
 - Greater alignment of housing and employment delivery;

- Expansion of the Tech Valleys initiative to include the entire Masterplan area;
 - The role of Heolddu Comprehensive School and Leisure Centre;
 - The need for improvements to Gilfach Fargoed Station;
 - Empty shops and lack of on-street parking in Bargoed town centre.
- 5.14 Additional representations concerned the present condition of the A4048 between Blackwood and Tredegar, and the potential for provision of a lake in New Tredegar to increase leisure activity, employment in associated areas and electricity generation.
- 5.15 Representations for support were forthcoming for the Vision, the Strategic Objectives and the Development Strategy, as well as the proposals generally. The redevelopment of Capital Valley is also supported.

Conclusion

- 5.16 The Report of Consultation sets out each of the issues with an officer response and a recommendation for any amendments or action. The Report of Consultation sets out some proposed amendments to the Masterplan. There are also a small number of changes arising from typographical errors and factual updating proposed. All of the proposed amendments have been included as track changes in the amended Masterplan which is appended to this report as Appendix 2.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

- 6.1 Delivery of individual proposals contained within the Masterplan will be dependent on financial constraints and the implementation of related initiatives e.g. South Wales Metro, Active Travel Fund. Funding sources identified to date are set out in Section 7 of the Masterplan document.
- 6.2 It is assumed that additional funding sources, including private sector investment, will be required for the implementation of some proposals, and for facilitating the delivery of schemes involving key sites.
- 6.3 All representations have been considered through the appended Report of Consultation.

7. LINKS TO RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES

- 7.1 The following Council policies are relevant to the Masterplan:

A Foundation for Success 2018-2023

- 7.2 'A Foundation for Success' is the over-arching regeneration strategy which seeks to provide the strategic framework for the future regeneration of the County Borough. This strategy will be supported by a suite of action plans and strategies aimed at bringing forward regeneration opportunities and developing key sites and premises.
- 7.3 The Heads of the Valleys Masterplan is the third of the suite of masterplans.

Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan up to 2021

- 7.4 The Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan up to 2021 (LDP) was adopted on 23 November 2010. It sets out the Council's land use policies and proposals

to control development in the County Borough up to 2021 and provides the basis by which planning applications will be determined, consistently and appropriately.

Corporate Plan 2018-2023

- 7.5 Appendix 3 of the Masterplan sets out how each priority within the document relates to the Corporate Plan objectives.
- 7.6 The following Masterplan objectives assist in delivering the six Corporate Plan objectives:

Objective 1 - Improve education opportunities for all

Objective B - Improve social and economic resilience through education, training and careers advice, and foster the development of the foundational economy within this area to ensure that economic growth accrues more equitably;

Objective E - Maximise the impact of the Valleys Regional Park, protecting and enhancing important green spaces and built heritage and promoting tourism;

Objective F - Supporting proposals for renewable energy generation and community benefit through utility infrastructure;

Objective G - Supporting the development and diversification of housing in sustainable locations to complement economic growth and resilience;

Objective H - Providing a suitable level of community, leisure and education facilities, aligning with national and local initiatives including 21st Century Schools and the CCBC Sport and Active Recreation Strategy where applicable, and establishing Integrated Well-Being Networks in order to connect communities' strengths and assets

Objective 2 - Enabling employment

Objective A - Complement, and integrate with, nearby initiatives such as the Ebbw Vale Enterprise Zone (EZ) in order to develop a strategic employment function for Rhymney, establishing it as a gateway to the Valleys;

Objective B - Improve social and economic resilience through education, training and careers advice, and foster the development of the foundational economy within this area to ensure that economic growth accrues more equitably;

Objective C - Expand the area's sphere of influence and improve connectivity;

Objective D - Reinforcing the role of Bargoed as a service centre for the north of the County Borough

Objective E - Maximise the impact of the Valleys Regional Park, protecting and enhancing important green spaces and built heritage and promoting tourism;

Objective F - Supporting proposals for renewable energy generation and community benefit through utility infrastructure

Objective 3 - Address the availability, condition and sustainability of homes throughout the County Borough and provide advice, assistance or support to help improve people's well-being

Objective F - Supporting proposals for renewable energy generation and community benefit through utility infrastructure;

Objective G - Support the development and diversification of housing in sustainable locations to complement economic growth and resilience;

Objective J - Ensuring all communities within the Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Area are able to engage and benefit from the Masterplan

Objective 4 - Promote a modern, integrated and sustainable transport system that increases opportunity, promotes prosperity and minimises the adverse impacts on the environment

Objective C - Expand the area's sphere of influence and improve connectivity;

Objective D - Reinforcing the role of Bargoed as a service centre for the north of the County Borough;

Objective I - Ensuring that accessibility for all is embedded in all improvement schemes;

Objective J - Ensure all communities within the Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Area are able to engage and benefit from the Masterplan

Objective 5 - Creating a County Borough that supports a healthy lifestyle in accordance with the sustainable development principle within the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

Objective E - Maximise the impact of the Valleys Regional Park, protecting and enhancing important green spaces and built heritage and promoting tourism;

Objective H - Providing a suitable level of community, leisure and education facilities, aligning with national and local initiatives including 21st Century Schools and the CCBC Sport and Active Recreation Strategy where applicable, and establishing Integrated Well-Being Networks in order to connect communities' strengths and assets

Objective 6 - Support citizens to remain independent and improve their well-being

Objectives A-J

8. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

8.1 Led by 'A Foundation for Success', the Masterplan takes a systematic approach to dealing with distinct, yet interrelated, aspects of social and economic inequality, with

the result that each of the seven Well-Being Goals are addressed by the objectives and priorities for intervention identified within it:

- A prosperous Wales;
- A resilient Wales;
- A healthier Wales;
- A more equal Wales;
- A Wales of cohesive communities;
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language;
- A globally responsible Wales.

8.2 Appendix 3 of the Masterplan sets out how each priority within the document relates to the Well-Being Goals.

8.3 The development of the Masterplan has been informed by the five ways of working:

Involvement – The proposals contained within the Masterplan were subject to consultation with the local community, and have been developed through engagement with stakeholders such as landowners, partner organisations including the Local Health Board and Idris Davies School, and local authority ward members and community councillors representing the various communities within the Masterplan area;

Collaboration – The development of the Masterplan has drawn upon the expertise from key representatives across local authority departments, including Planning, Regeneration, Housing, Engineering and Countryside. The delivery of the projects identified within the Masterplan will involve collaboration between the public, private and third sectors, and the Council will work closely with these partners to deliver schemes in a collaborative manner;

Long term – The objectives identified, and the projects that will deliver these objectives, are part of a longer-term vision of enhancing the role of the wider Heads of the Valleys corridor as a sub-regional economic hub capable of supporting local communities. The Masterplan recognises the need for development in order to support economic growth, but recognises that this development should be of a sustainable nature, both in terms of its purpose and its location;

Integration – The projects identified in the Masterplan will help deliver the objectives set out in the Council's regeneration strategy *A Foundation for Success* (as set out within Section 7 of this document), as well as proposals contained within the adopted LDP. They will also deliver against the Council's own well-being objectives by identifying projects that will lead to job creation and training opportunities, promote more healthy and active lifestyles and reduce the carbon footprint through improved Active Travel routes and facilities locally;

Prevention – The Masterplan recognises that there are a number of challenges within the Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Area that need to be addressed, in order to realise the vision. The proposals identified will respond to these key concerns and will raise the profile of the area, developing the economy within the context of the A465 corridor, increasing and improving the tourism offer and enhancing town centres – all from the basis of improved connectivity, infrastructural investment and an advantageous strategic location in regional terms – thereby improving quality of life for those visiting, living and working in the Masterplan area.

9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 An equality impact assessment was undertaken as part of the process of formulating the Masterplan, which has been updated following the public consultation. It is not considered that there are any potential equalities implications for those groups identified under Section 6 of the Council's Strategic Equality Plan.
- 9.2 The EqIA is included as Appendix 3 to this report. No representations were received in relation to equalities impacts during the consultation.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Funding sources (where known) for specific projects are identified in Section 7 of the Masterplan. Decisions on the funding and delivery of specific projects will be made by Cabinet, on the basis of the Council's Corporate Priorities and recommendations of the Regeneration Project Board.

11. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are no personnel implications.

12. CONSULTATIONS

- 12.1 The consultees listed below have been consulted on the report and their views have been incorporated accordingly.

13. STATUTORY POWER

- 13.1 Local Government Act 2000

Author: Ian Mullis, Planning Officer

Consultees: Cllr. Sean Morgan, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Transport and Sustainability
Cllr. Eluned Stenner, Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance and Planning
Cllr. John Ridgewell, Chair, Housing & Regeneration Scrutiny Committee
Cllr. Christine Forehead, Vice Chair, Housing & Regeneration Scrutiny Committee
Cllr. Alan Higgs, Aberbargoed
Cllr. Alan Collis, Aberbargoed
Cllr. Walter Williams, Argoed
Cllr. Carol Andrews, Bargoed
Cllr. Tudor Davies, Bargoed
Cllr. Diane Price, Bargoed
Cllr. David Hardacre, Darren Valley
Cllr. Lindsey Harding, Gilfach
Cllr. David Harse, Moriah
Cllr. John Bevan, Moriah
Cllr. Mark Evans, New Tredegar
Cllr. Gaynor Oliver, Pontlottyn
Cllr. Carl Cuss, Twyn Carno

Christina Harrhy, Chief Executive
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Steve Harris, Interim Head of Business Improvement Services & Acting
S.151 Officer
Robert Tranter, Head of Legal Services & Monitoring Officer
Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services
Rhian Kyte, Head of Regeneration & Planning
Marcus Lloyd, Head of Infrastructure
Mark Williams, Interim Head of Property Services
Robert Hartshorn, Head of Public Protection, Community & Leisure
Services
Keri Cole, Chief Education Officer
Mike Headington, Green Spaces and Transport Services Manager
Jeff Reynolds, Sport & Leisure Facilities Manager
Shaun Couzens, Chief Housing Officer
Sue Richards, Head of Education Planning & Strategy
Ryan Thomas, Planning Services Manager
Allan Dallimore, Regeneration Services Manager
Phil Griffiths, Green Space Strategy and Cemeteries Manager
Clive Campbell, Transportation Engineering Manager
Claire Davies, Private Sector Housing Manager
Jared Lougher, Sport and Leisure Development Manager

Appendices

Appendix 1 Report of Consultation
Appendix 2 Amended Heads of the Valleys Masterplan
Appendix 3 Equality Impact Assessment