



## **COUNCIL – 4TH OCTOBER 2022**

**SUBJECT: LOWER EBBW AND SIRHOWY VALLEYS MASTERPLAN**

**REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR, ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT**

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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 19 January 2022 and 2 March 2022 on the Draft Lower Ebbw and Sirhowy Valleys Masterplan.
- 1.2 To approve the amended Lower Ebbw and Sirhowy Valleys Masterplan as Supplementary Planning Guidance to the Adopted Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan up to 2021 as a tool for guiding regeneration activity in the Lower Ebbw and Sirhowy Valleys.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 On 12 January 2022, Cabinet approved the publication of the Draft Lower Ebbw and Sirhowy Valleys Masterplan (Masterplan) for the purposes of a formal, six-week public consultation process. The consultation period began on 19 January 2022 and ended on 2 March 2022.
- 2.2 Twenty-seven representations were received during this period. The Report of Public Consultation (ROC) considers the issues raised, provides officer responses and makes recommendations. The ROC is included as Appendix 1 to this report.
- 2.3 The main issues raised in the consultation responses were:
  - Potential for tourism beyond Cwmcarn Forest Drive (at Sirhowy Valley Country Park and, more generally, in the Lower Sirhowy Valley, for example);
  - Making town centres safer for people walking, wheeling or cycling;
  - Promotion of the area's industrial heritage;
  - Reusing empty buildings;
  - Protection of natural and semi-natural environments.
- 2.4 These issues have been addressed in the ROC. As a result of the responses received, several changes are proposed to the Masterplan (see the ROC for details).
- 2.5 Minor typographical changes and updates are included in the amended document (see Appendix 2) but are not set out in the ROC.

### **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 That the Council consider the representations received as part of the public consultation exercise and endorse the officer recommendations set out in the ROC.
- 3.2 That the Council formally approves the Lower Ebbw and Sirhowy Valleys Masterplan as Supplementary Planning Guidance to the Adopted Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan and as a tool for guiding regeneration activity in the Lower Ebbw and Sirhowy Valleys.

### **4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 To provide a policy basis for the future development and regeneration of the Lower Ebbw and Sirhowy Valleys.

### **5. THE REPORT**

#### **Background**

- 5.1 Caerphilly County Borough and the wider Cardiff Capital Region is in a period of transformative change. The need for a strategy to coordinate regeneration initiatives and capitalise on funding streams is urgent to maximise the potential benefits to the County Borough.
- 5.2 The signing of City Deal and the Cardiff Capital Region Investment Fund signalled an unprecedented investment of £1.2 billion, to support the region's economic growth. The investment fund will continue to be used to take forward a wide range of projects and schemes that contribute toward economic growth.
- 5.3 The County Borough's regeneration strategy, 'A Foundation for Success', was approved in July 2018 and this was intended to provide the strategic framework for regeneration activity up to 2023. However, the Strategic Vision for the Regeneration of the County Borough was clouded throughout 2020 by 2 significant events Covid-19 and Brexit and the significant economic impact of both continues to persist. In response the Strategy was formally supplemented in December 2021 by A Foundation for Success - Delivering Prosperity after Covid.
- 5.4 The Lower Ebbw and Sirhowy Valleys Masterplan is one of five masterplans that cover the county borough to provide a more detailed outline of the regeneration opportunities in their respective areas.
- 5.5 The Lower Ebbw and Sirhowy Valleys' employment base and tourist economy present real opportunities for economic renewal and growth. The Masterplan seeks to integrate the strong employment, retail, tourism and recreational base to realise added benefit for economic recovery and growth.
- 5.6 The Masterplan sets out a development strategy and framework for delivering these outcomes and will form the basis for bids from funding streams for projects in the area.
- 5.7 Council resolved to commence a full review of the Local Development Plan on 23 October 2019. Decisions about investment and development opportunities in the Masterplan will inform the evidence base of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Replacement Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan.

#### **Public Consultation Exercise**

- 5.8 A public consultation exercise was carried out between 19 January 2022 and 2 March 2022.
- 5.9 Consultation emails were sent to all elected members, community councils within the Masterplan area, MSs and MPs.
- 5.10 Posters and consultation documents were displayed in libraries across the county borough, and the consultation was advertised on the Council's website and social-media channels.

### **Key Issues Raised**

- 5.11 Twenty-seven representations were received during the consultation period. The ROC considers the issues raised, provides officer responses and makes recommendations. The ROC 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 ROC to reflect this.
- 5.13 The main issues raised in the responses are:
- Potential for tourism beyond Cwmcarn Forest Drive (at Sirhowy Valley Country Park and, more generally, in the Lower Sirhowy Valley, for example);
  - Making town centres safer for people walking, wheeling or cycling;
  - Promotion of area's industrial heritage;
  - Reusing empty buildings;
  - Protection of natural and semi-natural environments.
- 5.14 Representations were also made about littering, antisocial behaviour, active travel, development in Abercarn and Cwmcarn, and the need for housing, among other things.
- 5.15 Most respondents supported the Vision, the Strategic Objectives and the Development Strategy. Many of the proposals were supported; however, respondents also suggested some changes and additional projects.

### **Conclusion**

- 5.16 The ROC sets out each of the issues with an officer response and a recommendation for any amendments or action. All the proposed amendments have been included in the amended Masterplan (see Appendix 2).

## **6. ASSUMPTIONS**

- 6.1 Delivery of individual proposals contained within the Masterplan will depend on financial constraints and the implementation of related initiatives e.g. UK Levelling Up Fund, South Wales Metro, Active Travel Fund. Funding sources identified to date are set out in Section 7 of the Masterplan.
- 6.2 It is assumed that 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 received have been considered through the appended ROC.

## **7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 The Masterplan sets out a series of broad projects and proposals that will deliver a vision for the Masterplan area. A key underlying theme of the Masterplan is to reduce inequality, particularly through the generation of new job opportunities through enhancements in the existing employment base, the tourist economy and the town centre and foundational economies. The Masterplan also seeks to increase accessibility throughout the Masterplan area making it easier for everyone to access their required services and facilities.
- 7.2 The Masterplan identifies broad level projects and proposals and the IIA has not identified any adverse impacts in respect of these. As the proposals come forward to implementation the detailed projects will also be the subject of IIA which will identify any impacts and propose mitigation as appropriate where more details are known.
- 7.3 Overall, the Lower Ebbw and Sirhowy Valleys Masterplan does not give rise to any issues in respect of the integrated impact assessment.

### **[Link to full Integrated Impact Assessment](#)**

## **8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 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.

## **9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 There are no personnel implications.

## **10. CONSULTATIONS**

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

## **11. STATUTORY POWER**

- 11.1 Local Government Act 2000

Author: Mark Stringer, Planning Officer (Strategic Planning)

Consultees:

Councillor Carol Andrews, Cabinet Member for Education & Communities  
Councillor Patricia Cook, Vice Chair of Housing and Regeneration  
Scrutiny Committee  
Councillor Shayne Cook, Cabinet Member for Housing  
Councillor Elaine Forehead, Cabinet Member for Social Care  
Councillor Nigel George, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and  
Property (also Risca East ward member)  
Councillor Adrian Hussey (Newbridge)  
Councillor Leeroy Jeremiah (Newbridge)  
Councillor Gary Johnston (Newbridge)  
Councillor Jan Jones (Ynysddu)

Councillor Arianna Leonard (Risca East)  
Councillor Phillipa Leonard, Cabinet Member for Planning & Public Protection (also Risca East ward member)  
Councillor Chris Morgan, Cabinet Member for Waste, Leisure & Green Spaces  
Councillor Sean Morgan, Leader  
Councillor Bob Owen (Risca West)  
Councillor Denver Preece (Abercarn)  
Councillor James Pritchard, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Prosperity, Regeneration and Climate Change  
Councillor Janine Reed (Ynysddu)  
Councillor Julian Simmonds, Cabinet Member for Highways & Transportation (also Crosskeys ward)  
Councillor Eluned Stenner, Cabinet Member for Finance & Performance  
Councillor Andrew Whitcombe, Chair of Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee (also Abercarn ward member)  
Councillor Ceri Wright (Risca West)  
Christina Harrhy, Chief Executive  
Richard Edmunds, Corporate Director Education & Corporate Services  
David Street, Corporate Director Social Services & Housing  
Mark S Williams, Corporate Director Economy and Environment  
Keri Cole, Chief Education Officer  
Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services  
Steve Harris, Head of Finance and S.151 Officer  
Robert Hartshorn, Head of Public Protection, Community & Leisure Services  
Rhian Kyte, Head of Regeneration & Planning  
Marcus Lloyd, Head of Infrastructure  
Robert Tranter, Head of Legal Services & Monitoring Officer  
Clive Campbell, Transportation Engineering Manager  
Anwen Cullinane, Senior Policy Officer – Equalities, Welsh Language and Consultation  
Allan Dallimore, Regeneration Services Manager  
Claire Davies, Private Sector Housing Manager  
Phil Griffiths, Green Space Strategy and Cemeteries Manager  
Mike Headington, Green Spaces and Transport Services Manager  
Jared Lougher, Sport and Leisure Development Manager  
Liz Lucas, Head of Customer and Digital Services  
Jeff Reynolds, Sport & Leisure Facilities Manager  
Sue Richards, Head of Education Planning & Strategy  
Ryan Thomas, Planning Services Manager

Background Papers:  
None.

Appendices:  
Appendix 1 Report of Public Consultation  
Appendix 2 Amended Lower Ebbw and Sirhowy Valleys Masterplan