



Report of the Director of Place

Economy and Infrastructure Service Transformation Committee – 11 April 2024

Tawe Riverside Corridor Action Plan.

Purpose:	To provide an interim report on the Tawe Riverside Corridor Actions
Policy Framework:	Swansea Local Development Plan (2019),
Consultation:	Regeneration, Planning, Highways, Culture and Tourism, Access to Services, Finance, Legal.
Recommendation:	It is recommended that the Economy and Infrastructure Service Transformation Committee note the interim report and discuss any relevant next steps.
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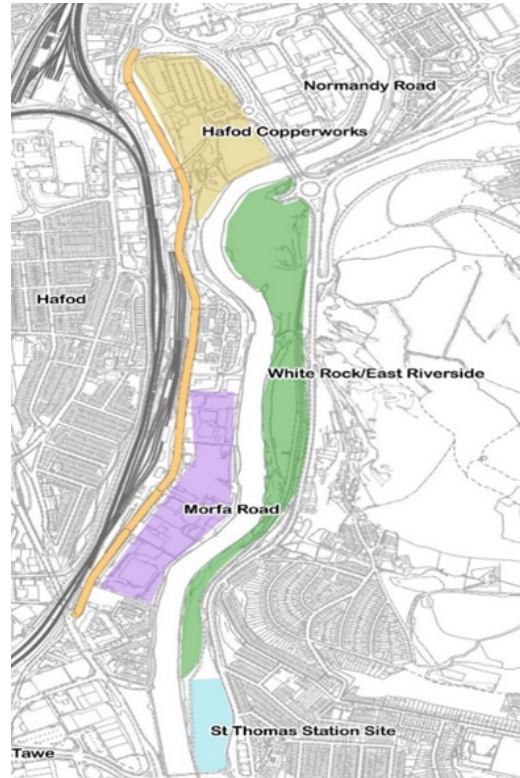
1.0 Introduction:

- 1.1 The Tawe Riverside Corridor is part of the Lower Swansea Valley immediately to the East of Swansea City Centre and is a defining feature in Swansea's landscape with a significant role in the history and development of the City. The riverside is part of the City's waterfront and along with Swansea Bay and the Maritime Quarter, it is what makes Swansea distinctive and gives it a unique quality as a place to live work and to visit.
- 1.2 A report was presented to the Economy and Infrastructure Corporate Delivery Committee (CDC) in February 2023 which set out the planning policy context for the Tawe Riverside and Hafod Morfa strategic development area and reflected on the work undertaken on a draft Tawe Riverside Strategy (2019). Whilst the draft Strategy document has informally guided development and investment in the area, it was agreed that a further report would be brought back to CDC during the Spring of 2024 to provide a further progress update and evolving considerations for the corridor.

- 1.3 The principal delivery mechanism for the current phase of regeneration of the Riverside is implementation of the Lower Swansea Valley project funded by the UK Government Levelling Up Fund, matched with funding from Swansea Council. The purpose of this brief report is to reinforce the current programme of deliverables via this programme, and pointing to the future development potential these works unlock.

2.0 Context of Tawe Riverside Area

- 2.1 The location of the Tawe Riverside area, its development sites and regeneration areas are shown in plan1.
- 2.2 The area includes the 6.9 acre St. Thomas Waterfront site and Hafod Morfa Copperworks sites. These are two of a number of sites in Swansea that are being taken forward for development in partnership with Urban Splash over the coming years.
- 2.3 Various other proposals and initiatives have also been discussed and identified for the enhancement and regeneration along the East Riverside and Morfa Road West Riverside areas.



3.0 Lower Swansea Valley Levelling Up Bid 2023

- 3.1 The Lower Swansea Valley (**LSV**) was formerly the industrial core of the region and many of the remaining buildings at Tawe Riverside's Hafod/Morfa Copper works and White Rock are of historical value, with listed or scheduled monument status. With grant support and private investment, the Council is already delivering a number of restoration and regeneration schemes on this site, including notably the landmark Penderyn Distillery and Visitor centre at the former Powerhouse and Rolling Mill. The overall aim has been to preserve and enhance heritage buildings and bring them back into viable commercial or community uses to contribute positively to the high quality mixed use aspirations for this new waterfront heritage destination.
- 3.2 The Lower Swansea Valley Levelling Up funding approval is for a £28m project which will further enable the city to celebrate its rich industrial and maritime heritage. The initiative consists of three projects which lie within the broadly defined area of the Tawe Riverside Strategy and Maritime Quarter. Parts of these LSV projects have been previously highlighted in the draft Tawe Riverside Strategy, some projects are new initiatives building on the previously defined vision and objectives included in adopted and draft policies for the area. The key aims and focus of these projects included in the bid are summarised below:

(i) Project 1 Hafod Morfa Copperworks – The overall aim is to consolidate the industrial legacy of the copper industry on the banks of the River Tawe at the Hafod-Morfa Copperworks, preserving the rich heritage features including several listed buildings, releasing them for business use, preparing for new private sector investment and increasing connectivity of local communities and visitors. The project specifically includes proposals for the restoration, extension and positive re use of key buildings including the following:

- **Laboratory building**- restored and refurbished to create a landmark restaurant/ food and beverage space.
- **Vivian and Musgrave Engine Houses**- sensitively extended and fitted out as heritage visitor attraction and cafes.
- **Rolling Mill**- refurbished and fitted out as a market-place and food hall.
- **V & S Shed locomotive shed**- restored and refurbished for displaying and storing locomotives and tracks along with landscaped public spaces.

(ii) Project 2 Community and Water space Accessibility - This project includes two new pontoons on the banks of the river Tawe for improved use of the river space for travel, recreation and leisure. The bid also identifies the potential for the regeneration and enhancement of the Victorian railway arches at the Strand and High Street Station. The Strand Arches Project identifies the scope for enabling improved connectivity with safer pedestrian links around the train station and wider Morfa Road area, increasing footfall, providing a catalyst for regeneration and opportunities for local businesses, attracting greater footfall around the area and responding to current and proposed developments around the station, linking to other modes of transport, and the wider masterplan for the city.

(iii) Project 3 Swansea Museum - creates a mutual destination within the heritage corridor in upgrading and enhancing Swansea Museum. This will enable a richer display of Swansea's maritime and industrial history, with the collections in a larger enhanced space and facilitating the release the Copperworks Rolling mill for mixed use regeneration and economic benefit.

3.2 Economic Case and Impact of the Levelling Up bid

The projects identified in the Levelling Up bid are anticipated to deliver the following economic, social and community benefits for the City:

- **Job and GVA creation** – expected to support 106 gross direct jobs, 69 net additional jobs and will generate £5.7m gross direct GVA per annum and £3.7m net additional per annum.
- **Increased footfall** – programme will enhance over 6,000 sqm of public realm settings in Swansea, thus increasing footfall and supporting surrounding businesses and amenities.
- **Visitor numbers** – through the above investments there will be a forecasted increase of 11,500 additional visitors to the V&S Shed and engine houses. The overall programme of investment will bring about an additional 8,350 additional overnight visitors and 31,200 daytime visitors each year.

3.3 Hafod Morfa Copperworks (HMCW) wider programme

(i) HMCW River Pontoon - A new river pontoon has been installed at the quayside near the restored Musgrave and Vivian Engine Houses. This can now provide enhanced access to the copperworks for residents and visitors and provides the opportunity to pioneer sustainable transport options and further recreation-based regeneration in the waterway. The project has been jointly funded by the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, Small scale Coastal Infrastructure Fund with WG. A small number of stakeholder groups will initially pilot the use of the pontoon, but in the longer term it could be offered to other community groups and users for accessing the river space.

(ii) Morfa Road Regeneration Area and riverside walkway -Further private sector regeneration is likely to come forward incrementally in this area and will include sites such as the former Pipehouse Wharf. The key challenge will be to ensure that a more sustainable community and commercial area is developed by enhancing its connectivity, supporting its mixed-use role, reorientating development to face the river and streets, and enhancing the quality of its environment. Feasibility work is ongoing to consider the options available to deliver the missing incomplete sections of the walkway/cycleway on the west side of the river, the delivery of which have been precluded by private landownerships and river bank topography. This is an important action which will create a direct walking /cycling route between the city centre and HMCW /Liberty stadium.

(iii) Lower Swansea Valley and Hafod Morfa Heritage Trails- A series of local trail leaflets have been published for the LSV, Hafod Copper works, White Rock and Morryston Park and now Parc Llewellyn. The aim of these trail publications is to raise awareness of the areas' significant local heritage, to encourage local community use and support for the routes and the key points of interest and to encourage more visitors to the area. Greater walking and cycling activity on these local routes also complements the wider Tawe Riverside destination as a place to visit, supporting the local economy and contributing to enhancing community health and well-being encouraging outdoor activity recreation and leisure. To launch the leaflets a series of organised walks were held in August 2022, and during 2023 significantly increased numbers are reported attending the Hafod Morfa walks. The trails are actively used by the local Friends groups as part of their regular tours and activities at the sites in the Lower Swansea Valley.

4.0 Next steps and Way Forward

- 4.1 The sections above have highlighted current progress with a range of initiatives and projects being delivered across the Tawe Riverside area. The Levelling Up funding (LUF) is a significant boost to support the next stages of regeneration for a number of projects along the river corridor. These projects will act as a catalyst for development and further regeneration in due course as we work towards the objective of delivering a new destination for Swansea's riverside waterfront.
- 4.2 In terms of next stages for the projects identified in the Levelling Up bid, a project team within the Council along with a Multi-Disciplinary design team comprised of consultants Wardell Armstrong, Project Managers and QS architects GWPA and engineers Mann

Williams and SDS were appointed in Spring 2023. Surveys and scheme designs were subsequently undertaken and developed to RIBA design stage 3 for each of the Lower Swansea Valley Projects and sub-projects. One sub-project at the Hafod-Morfa Copperworks site, the former Laboratory Building, is at a more advanced stage and will see the appointment of a main contractor to undertake the works necessary to redevelop the building into a food & beverage venue. The main contractor is expected to commence works on site during 2024.

- 4.3 An exercise is currently underway to review the next steps for the remaining Lower Swansea Valley (LUF) projects and sub-projects that have reached RIBA 3. This may include reducing the scale or scope of delivery of projects in order to meet programme timescales and budget.
- 4.4 A draft of the revised Masterplan for the Hafod-Morfa Copperworks as prepared by Urban Splash and Studio Egret West (SEW) was taken to the Design Commission For Wales (DCfW) in December 2023. This has also been presented to City Regeneration Programme Board (CRPB) and Members Steering Group (MSG), and has been positively received by all. It is accepted that the Masterplan, whilst responding to and also setting the framework for the current and proposed developments, will allow for a phased and flexible approach to longer term plan and developments that will inevitably follow. The Council will continue to work with Urban Splash to ensure the scheme aligns with strategic planning and placemaking objectives and responds to planned consultation and feedback from stakeholders and communities.
- 4.5 A number of further projects were identified in the draft Tawe Riverside Strategy (2019) which can be explored further, and there may be other new initiatives which can be added to these proposals and actions. However, there will be resourcing and funding issues, which will require detailed consideration of prevailing priorities for the Regeneration and External Funding Team who would lead on the delivery on a number of these alongside the commitments that will emerge from the recent Levelling Up funding bid approval. A further report will be brought to the STC later this Spring to evaluate the scope for further projects and report back on progress with the LSV Levelling up projects and regeneration of key sites.

5.0 Integrated Assessment Implications

- 5.1 The Council is subject to the Equality Act (Public Sector Equality Duty and the socio-economic duty), the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure, and must in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Acts.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Deliver better outcomes for those people who experience socio-economic disadvantage.
 - Consider opportunities for people to use the Welsh language.

- Treat the Welsh language no less favourably than English.
- Ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

5.2 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 mandates that public bodies in Wales must carry out sustainable development. Sustainable development means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the 'well-being goals'.

5.3 Our Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process ensures we have paid due regard to the above. It also takes into account other key issues and priorities, such as poverty and social exclusion, community cohesion, carers, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Welsh language.

5.4 An Integrated Impact Assessment Screening form has been completed which identified positive impacts for all protected characteristic groups in: increased wellbeing, benefiting future generations, community and poverty benefits, socio economic benefit, benefiting tourism. In terms of engagement and consultation, a member and officer workshop was held in 2019 which enabled the preparation of a draft Strategy document. The draft now needs updating and there will be an opportunity for the community to get involved in shaping the future of the area. As the process continues further site-specific consultation will take place and preceding this, site specific full IIA reports will be developed where required.

5.5 The draft Tawe Riverside Strategy and actions arising from it have been prepared with full consideration of the Council's duties to work towards Wales' shared well-being goals and to contribute to sustainable development and management of natural resources under the Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act (2015).

5.6 The recommendation of the IIA Screening Form was that further site-specific consultation will take place and that site specific full IIA reports will be developed where required.

6.0 Financial Implications

6.1 There are no financial implications currently associated with this interim update report. As capital schemes are developed FPR7 reports shall be prepared for consideration at Cabinet, and if approved shall be added to the capital programme.

7.0 Legal Implications

7.1 There are no legal implications currently associated with this interim update report.

Background Papers: IIA

Appendices: None