



## Report of the Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration & Tourism

Cabinet – 20 May 2021

### Copr Bay St. David's Temporary Public Realm

<b>Purpose:</b>	This report is to agree the temporality and associated conditions of the interim public realm, including the parklet, which will be installed in the St. David's area as part of the Copr Bay programme.
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	Swansea Local Development Plan (LDP) 2010-2025, Swansea Central Area Regeneration Framework (SCARF) 2016, Regenerating our City for Well Being and Wildlife (2020), Corporate Priority Creating a Vibrant and Viable City and Economy
<b>Consultation:</b>	Access to Services, Finance, Legal
<b>Recommendation(s):</b>	It is recommended that Cabinet: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) Agree the installation of the interim public realm solution in the St. David's area in preparation for future development phases, subject to the conditions outlined in this report.</li><li>2) Agree the installation of a temporary parklet on the site of the former St David's units 1-7, and associated conditions:<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) To be located at the abovementioned temporary brownfield regeneration site for a maximum term of two years, with the option to extend subject to a further report to cabinet if the development timetable is not achieved.</li><li>b) To be able to close and remove the Parklet from the site before the end of the term in preparation for development and grant delegated authority to the Director of Place in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance and Strategy to determine the timing of such.</li><li>c) Grant delegated authority to the Director of Place, Chief Finance Officer and Chief Legal Officer to agree letting of units within the parklet on flexible terms and to enter into any documentation necessary to protect the Council's interests.</li></ol></li></ol>

<b>Report Author:</b>	Emma Dakin
<b>Finance Officer:</b>	Jeffrey Dong
<b>Legal Officer:</b>	Debbie Smith
<b>Access to Services Officer:</b>	Rhian Millar

## 1. Introduction and background

1.1. This report sets out the context, recommendations, and associated conditions for the interim public realm solutions for the St. David's area during the period between demolitions and site preparatory work completed as part of the Copr Bay (formerly known as Swansea Central Phase 1) and the commencement of the forthcoming regeneration programme.

1.2. For previous decision making and background information on Copr Bay and forthcoming development plans for the St David's area please refer to the related reports listed below:

- Swansea Central, the digital waterfront project (18th August 2016, 16th March 2017, 15th June 2017, 17th March 2017, July 2018, 29th November 2018, and 21st November 2019).
- The 'City Centre Marketing of Strategic Site Joint Venture Opportunity and FPR7' report was agreed by Cabinet on 21st November 2019, which gained approval for the delivery method for the forthcoming development of the St. David's area under the regeneration programme known as Swansea Central North.

1.3. Swansea Council is leading a major regeneration programme to facilitate the creation of a vibrant, sustainable central area. Copr Bay, the first phase of this programme is currently onsite, with estimated completion in December 2021.

1.4. Part of the Copr Bay programme includes the preparatory works to the St David's area to facilitate forthcoming development and provide interim pedestrian and service access, pending redevelopment of the site for mixed use purposed. This series of works comprises of:

- demolition of St David's units 1 –7 (Completed in April 2020)
- demolition of the St. David's multi story car park (Estimated completion in September – December 2021)
- demolition of Llys Dewi Sant (Estimated completion in September – December 2021)
- installation of temporary landscaping and public realm (Dates to be confirmed – dependant on the St. David's MSCP and Llys Dewi Sant demolition programmes)

1.5. Swansea Central North, the next phase of development in St. David's locale is expected to commence on site in 2023. Swansea Council are currently in the process of appointing a long-term private sector

development partner via the 'Shaping Swansea' initiative, with expected appointment in Q3 2021. The St. David's area is a priority site, and work to progress its regeneration is expected to commence immediately after the partner's appointment.

## **2. Treatment of the St David's site post-demolition and pre-development**

2.1. The provision of the temporary public realm has been included in the Copr Bay project from inception. The original 'Swansea Central' scheme, and subsequent outline planning permission, covers both the 'Copr Bay' and 'Swansea Central North' programme area, divided into development zones to acknowledge the multi-phased nature of the development programme. The scale and complexity of the development in this area means it is not feasible to construct the entire scheme at once.

2.2. The installation of temporary public realm is required to make the St Davids area safe and accessible during the interim period between site clearance and redevelopment. Planning application 2018/2130/FUL states the obligation to make the site accessible and grants permissions and works described in section 1.4. The covering letter to the application describes the proposal and provides the reasoning for the temporary public realm and associated uses:

*"...Swansea Central [Copr Bay] is a complex regeneration scheme and whilst development begins on the initial phases, this proposal will provide temporary landscaping and public uses which will contribute towards the regeneration of the city centre. Public realm and landscaping (hard and soft) has been a key consideration in developing the temporary proposal for the site and will ensure that the temporary use the site aligns with the Council's aspiration for the City, as detailed in local planning policy and regeneration frameworks. The temporary uses seeks flexibility to ensure a range of different uses could take place, and that the opportunities are attractive to potential operators and other organisations. The uses are envisaged to include retail, leisure (active and passive), community, and sport uses".*

(Nick Green, Savills, (02.10.2018), Covering Letter accompanying planning application for 'Land to the east of Phase 2 of the Swansea Central Development application for demolition of existing building and structures and provision of temporary uses and landscaping for on behalf of Swansea Council).

2.3. The multi-phased nature of the regeneration programme means there will be a short interim period before construction begins on the next buildings. The sites left empty by the demolitions and site clearance performed as part of the Copr Bay programme must be made safe and key access routes to the arena and city made accessible. These temporary spaces in the central area also provides an opportunity to support the post Covid -19 recovery of the city centre through encouraging vibrancy through short-term uses.

- 2.4. It is planned that the temporary public realm will be replaced by a permanent solution within 2-5 years. To reduce expenditure on this short-term installation the materials, surfaces and finishes selected are low-cost options. The overall quality of finish and design, whilst compliant to all relevant standards and accessibility requirements, are lower than Swansea Council's standard public realm specifications. The finish of the public realm will also communicate to the public that further redevelopment of the area is forthcoming.
- 2.5. It is not recommended to install the long-term public realm at this stage because the demises of forthcoming buildings are not yet confirmed, thus the public realm cannot be designed to accommodate the building footprints. The permanent public realm solution will include sustainable urban drainage (SUDs) infrastructure and significant greening to meet the Council's statutory and policy obligations. There is significant likelihood that the surfaces, greening and below ground infrastructure would be damaged during the construction of St. David's developments due to heavy vehicle traffic and areas being used as compounds.
- 2.6. Consideration has been given to hoarding off areas of the St. David's site to prevent public access, therefore removing the need for the public realm to be installed. Lower costs are associated with hoarding areas compared to the installation of the interim solution. The installation of large areas of hoarding however would be visually intrusive, and the appearance of hoarding panels often deteriorate due to damage and weathering, which could negatively impact on the public's perception of Copr Bay. Restricting access and blocking sight lines with hoardings present crime and safety risks and could provide areas for anti-social behaviour. The maintenance of the large sections of hoarding should be considered as an ongoing cost. In addition, it limits opportunities to use the area for activities and uses to attract visitors to the city centre.
- 2.7. The Design Commission for Wales' review of the outline scheme for Swansea Central also recommended that site should be made accessible for meanwhile uses, as they would be of benefit of the overall city centre vision in terms maintaining momentum and perceptions, given that the Swansea Central development be phased over a number of years.
- 2.8. A comprehensive communications programme will inform the public of the temporary nature of the public realm and the parklet (as described in section 3). On site signage and information panels will notify the public of the forthcoming development and associated timescales, supported by clear messaging on the temporality of the installation, and their subsequent removal. Digital and traditional channels will communicate that the scheme is an interim solution before further construction commences and will link to announcements on the 'Shaping Swansea' initiative and the appointment of a partner to progress the Swansea Central North development.

### **3. Proposed Temporary Public Realm**

- 3.1. The objectives for the proposed temporary public realm scheme are:
- Provide safe and accessible routes through the site and to Copr Bay.
  - Promote vibrancy and activity in the central area with multi-generational offers.
  - Delivery a cost-effective solution appropriate to its interim nature.
  - Maximise reuse of existing surfaces and infrastructure to minimise cost.
  - Enable reuse and relocation of installations once development on the site commences and the interim solution is removed.
- 3.2. The draft proposal for the temporary public realm and soft landscaping can be found in appendix A. The proposed design largely adheres to the scheme presented as part of the 2018 planning application. The key components of the design are:
- Wayfinding and desire line paths accompanied by appropriate lighting.
  - Multi age free standing play equipment.
  - Power and water connections in strategic locations for mobile units and pop-up use.
  - Amenity and meadow grassland with soft landscaping grading to mitigate level changes.
  - Vehicle deterrents adjacent to highway.
- 3.3. Design to provide flexible spaces and accessible routes through the development site, the proposal is an uncomplicated, cost effective solution to address the transition between development programmes. The design allows for pop-up events, and the container units will provide opportunities for small businesses and will attract people into the central area.
- 3.4. The works will be completed by Buckingham, the main contractor for the Copr Bay development, and are included the main contract. Current estimated date for completion of the public realm works is December 2021.

### **4. Proposed Temporary Recreational Uses – Parklet**

- 4.1. The original scheme for the St David's site, as set out in planning application 2018/2130/FUL, saw the site of the former St David's Shopping Centre (Units 1-7; demolished as part of Copr Bay programme), shown edged red on the attached plan (Appendix B) remain vacant and boundary hoarded to prevent access, until redevelopment occurs.
- 4.2. The site sits on the edge of the main pedestrian linkage between the central area and the Arena. Due to the site strategic location and to assist with the post-Covid 19 city centre recovery its proposed that instead of hoarding the site until it is redeveloped, an interim solution of a pop-up parklet, should be installed to bring activation, footfall, and greening to the site.

- 4.3. The proposal is based upon the principles and objectives defined in the recently adopted 'Swansea Central Area: Regenerating our City for Wellbeing and Wildlife' and developed in collaboration with Natural Resources Wales, Urban Foundry and cross departmentally within the Council.
- 4.4. The key objectives of the parklet are:
- Deliver a focal point along the key pedestrian route between the city centre and Copr Bay to improve the visitor experience to increase dwell time and activity in St David's in the interim period before redevelopment.
  - Contribute to the Council's post Covid-19 recovery plans for the city centre by attracting visitors to the central area, thereby further strengthening the City Centre's offer.
  - Provide a social meeting space to support residents and visitors' wellbeing and community cohesion.
  - Increase biodiversity and space as prescribed in 'Swansea Central Area: Regenerating Our City for Wellbeing and Wildlife;' through the application of the 5 principles of Green Infrastructure (multi-functionality, adapted for climate change, biodiverse, healthy, smart, and sustainable)
  - Act as a 'learning lab' by piloting new green and biodiverse design solutions, enabling the development of maintenance skills and trial new greening solutions in an urban context.
- 4.5. A draft concept design has been produced, see Appendix C. Key features of the parklet include:
- **Urban greening and green infrastructure:** The greening of the Parklet will be achieved by multiple planters and green roofs, planted with native pollinator species, minimal maintenance, and drought tolerant species to suit the urban environment. It is hoped the planting and habitat structures will provide food and shelter for wildlife, and promote engagement with nature in the city centre.
  - **Green infrastructure education:** The Parklet will include interpretation explaining the benefits of the green shelters and green roofs and other typologies as part of creating resilient ecosystems and a city centre fit for the future with the ability to adapt to and mitigate to climate change impacts.
  - **Green infrastructure skill development:** The Parklet will act as a test bed for green infrastructure features, allowing for maintenance techniques and green infrastructure installations to be tested before being rolled out in other parts of Swansea. The site also offers the potential for onsite training on green roof fitting and maintenance, as the containers units will have the green roofs retrofitted.
  - **Containers for Food and Beverage Start-up businesses:** To maximise the parklet's use and dwell time it is proposed the parklet contains two container units for food and beverage uses. The units will be fully converted, to include wood cladding and all apertures glazed and furnished externally, and partially fitted out internally. This level of fit out will allow a tenant to start trading immediately with

minimal outlay and cost once the units are connected to utilities, thus providing an ideal opportunity for local business start-ups. A green roof will be fitted to contribute to sustainable surface water management and biodiversity. The lettings strategy will focus upon local start-ups and small businesses, ideally with an offer that compliments the sustainability messages of the parklet. It is hoped this platform will allow for the evolution of these businesses, with them later relocating into larger units on Cupid's Way or the redeveloped St. David's.

- **Community Container:** A third container will be fitted out as a flexible space available for use by the Council for engagement and consultation purposes and by community, school, and third sector groups to facilitate education and training on GI technologies and approaches.
- **Outside Social Space:** The central social space around the food & beverage units, will contain integrated tables and seating to allow for people to consume their purchases from the containers in a manner that adheres to the latest Covid-19 restrictions. This area will be highly visible to draw people into the parklet and provide clear lines of sight for accessibility and safety.
- **Cycle storage with green roofs and habitat structures:** multi-functional structures which promote active travel, support sustainable drainage of surface water, and contribute towards urban greening. These are prototype structures that could potentially be installed elsewhere if successful.

- 4.6. It must be noted that this brownfield urban site is a key regeneration site, and the parklet is only occupying the space on a temporary basis. The former St David's units is identified for redevelopment under the Swansea Central North regeneration programme.
- 4.7. An additional planning application is required for the containers. The temporary permission for the units will allow them to remain in situ for a maximum of two years, with the option to extend subject to a further report to cabinet if the development timetable is not achieved. The time limited permission aligns with the development plans for the site, and ensure the temporality of the installation.
- 4.8. The temporality of the parklet installation has required all components of the proposal to be designed to be relocatable. When the site is redeveloped the moveable nature of the components means the scheme can either be relocated in its entirety to a new location, or the elements relocated individually. For example, the planters could be relocated into schools for educational purposes, and the containers could be relocated to licenced pitches on strategic points along the Swansea Bay promenade to provide refreshments along this popular route. A comprehensive relocation for all the elements will be developed ahead of the redevelopment of the site and the removal of the parklet, thus maximising the longevity and the benefits realisation of the initial capital spend. A full relocation plan for all the components will be produced ahead of the parklet

closure and communicated via standard regeneration governance channels.

- 4.9. The impermanence of the Parklet translates through to the letting strategy, whereby the commercial units are for business start-ups and incubation. A tenant should have the ability to start trading within a week of signing the tenancy, the units will include many fixtures and fittings and will be decorated to a basic level internally. This will encourage tenant turnover and transient uses, assisting in keeping the food and beverage offer fresh, and supporting new business start-ups.
- 4.10. The tenancy agreements will be drafted to ensure the ability to appropriately terminate lettings or relocate the tenant, allowing for timely redevelopment of the site according to programme. Lettings will be for either six or twelve months, flexible lease terms, no security of tenure (any tenancies for more than six months will be contracted out of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954 Part II meaning that there is no obligation on the Council to renew the tenancy upon expiry).
- 4.11. The Parklet is informed by local and national guidance and policy, it contributes to the Local Development Plan (LDP) Policy ER 2 Strategic Green Infrastructure Network and emerging Supplementary Planning Guidance on Green Infrastructure and will contribute to the Council's duties under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, Environment (Wales) Act 2016. It also delivers one of the steps in the Council's well-being objective: maintaining and enhancing Swansea's natural resources and biodiversity and, the Swansea Public Service Board's Working with Nature Objective. It is also hoped it will raise awareness at ground level of climate change and environmental issues.
- 4.12. The works will be completed by Buckingham, the main contractor for the Copr Bay development, and are incorporated via a variation to the main contract. Current estimated dates for completion of the parklet is September 2021.
- 4.13. The Parklet will be an innovative addition to the city centre in the short-term and deliver longer term benefits through education on environmental matters, and the development of the Council's green infrastructure maintenance skills and knowledge. The Council will also own a collection of containers, planters and GI installations that can be relocated to schools, other development sites or elsewhere in the county, thus continuing to create new habitat for wildlife and supply ongoing opportunities for business start-up.

## **5. Integrated Assessment Implications**

- 5.1. The Council is subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty (Wales) 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 Act.



- 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
- 5.2. The Integrated Impact Assessment process ensures that due regard has been paid to the above.
- 5.3. In order to comply with the relevant equality regulations, an Integrated Impact Assessment Screening Form has been completed. The Screening Form is attached as Appendix D.
- 5.4. As this scheme is part of the overall Swansea Central Phase 1 development and is an interim solution before future development of the St. David's area, it is recommended that a full Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) is not undertaken; however, the screening form will become part of the Swansea Central Phase 1 full EIA Report.
- 5.5. Generally, this temporary scheme will advantage all, as it will add a greener area to the city centre, which will be available to all residents and visitors to Swansea and will enhance the social well-being of all thus positively impacting all protected characteristic groups.
- 5.6. The temporary surfacing and lighting will make the area safe and accessible for all groups during the interim period before further development of the site occurs in the next 2-5 years as part of the city centre regeneration programme.
- 5.7. The play equipment and parklet will provide free play and social opportunities for children and promote social cohesion.
- 5.8. The appended Swansea Central Phase 1 Sustainability Statement (Appendix E) shows that the Corporate Plan Objectives and the Well Being and Future Generations Act has been fully adhered to, how we are considering maximising contribution to each of the seven national well-being goals, how we apply each of the five ways of working and how we are doing this without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- 5.9. It is recognised even at this early state there may be some potential equality implications, for example disabled users and older people may be impacted. These potential implications will be fully explored, and consideration will be given to minimising the potential impact within the design process.
- 5.10. Consultation on this scheme is currently scheduled as part of an upcoming Design Update meeting, focusing up accessibility on the bridge and surrounding public realm.

## **6. Financial Implications**

- 6.1. There are no additional financial implications associated with this report.
- 6.2. All costs are included within the project budget presented in 'Swansea Central Phase 1 Contractor Appointment and FPR7' report agreed by Cabinet on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2019.
- 6.3. There will be none or minimal additional revenue financial implications related to the temporary public realm. All maintenance costs will be covered by the budgetary arrangements set out in of 'Swansea Central Phase 1 Contractor Appointment and FPR7' report (November 2019).
- 6.4. Any financial implications for the removal of the temporary works during the future development of the site would be subject to a further cabinet report.

## **7. Legal Implications**

- 7.1. Tenancy agreements as per the conditions set out in section 4.9-4.10

### **Background Papers:**

None

### **Appendices:**

Appendix A	Draft Temporary Public Realm General Arrangement Plan
Appendix B	Parklet Red Line Plan
Appendix C	Draft Temporary Parklet General Arrangement Plan
Appendix D	Integrated Impact Assessment Screening Form
Appendix E	Swansea Central Sustainability Statement