



Report of the Interim Director of Place

Economy & Infrastructure Corporate Delivery Committee – 22 December 2022

Update on the Tawe Riverside Corridor Strategy

Purpose:	To provide an update on the Tawe Riverside Corridor
Policy Framework:	Swansea Local Development Plan (2019),
Consultation:	Regeneration, Planning, Highways, Culture and Tourism, Access to Services, Finance, Legal.
Recommendation(s):	It is recommended that: 1) The Economy and Infrastructure Corporate Delivery Committee note the update and discuss any relevant next steps
Report Author(s):	Paul Relf/Gail Evans
Finance Officer:	Ben Smith
Legal Officer:	Caritas Adere
Access to Services Officer:	Rhian Millar

1.0 Introduction:

- 1.1 The River Tawe Corridor immediately to the East of Swansea City Centre, is a defining feature in Swansea's landscape and has played 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 The Swansea Local Development Plan (LDP 2019) identifies the Tawe Riverside area as a Strategic Development Area (SDA) under Policy SD L. This sets out the overall statutory policy context for Tawe Riverside as a mixed use, heritage and culture led regeneration area consisting of new housing, employment, leisure and community uses, and contributing also towards the preservation and enhancement of the area's unique historic and cultural heritage. In 2018/19 following a number of Policy

Development Committee workshops, a draft Tawe Riverside Strategy was prepared with the aim of supplementing the LDP policy and establishing a vision and objectives for the area to guide development and regeneration.

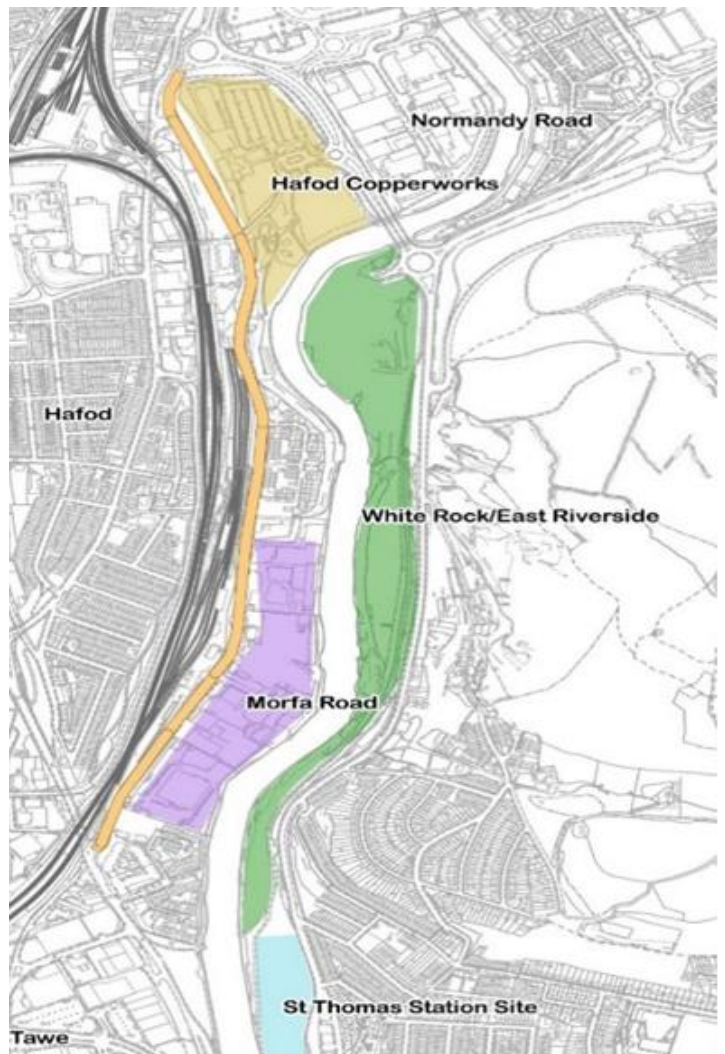
1.3 The draft Strategy was not formally adopted by the Council due largely to resources and the start of a two-year Covid pandemic which prevented proactive community engagement. However, the document has been used as an informally to meet the above outlined objectives in terms of regeneration investment and grant supported schemes. The purpose of report is therefore to provide an update on progress with development and regeneration in the Tawe Riverside corridor area and consider the priorities, next steps with regard to the potential longer-term actions for the area.

2.0 Update on Regeneration progress

The location of the Tawe Riverside area, its development sites and regeneration areas are shown in plans 1 and 2. Appendix 1 further highlights the Swansea Local Development Plan (2019), Strategic development plan policy for the area.



Plan 1: Tawe Riverside Location



Plan 2 Tawe Riverside- Key Development sites and Regeneration areas

The draft Strategy included masterplans for two key regeneration sites, the St. Thomas Waterfront and Hafod Morfa Copperworks sites, with various proposals for the enhancement and regeneration along the East and West Riverside areas. A broad description of the current aims for these sites and a summary progress in terms of regeneration activity are highlighted in the sections below.

St Thomas Waterfront site

- 2.1 This 6.9 acre (2.8 hectare) gateway site is located on the East bank of the River Tawe, north of the Tawe bridge, adjacent to the A4217 Pentreguinea Road at St Thomas. The aim is to develop a new residential led mixed-use scheme which has a distinct sense of place and connects the St. Thomas community to the waterfront and City centre.
- 2.2 The St Thomas waterfront is one of a number of sites in Swansea that is being taken forward under the Shaping Swansea Initiative launched in 2020. As part of this initiative, developers Urban Splash have been appointed by the council to work in a development partnership to bring forward a number of key development sites, with St Thomas Waterfront being one of the priority sites. Initial concept plans for this site show a mix of residential types, explore the idea of marker building, defined east-west connections linking the existing St Thomas community with the river and city centre and a scheme which embraces the river frontage with new areas of public realm promoting waterside access. Work is ongoing to develop a high quality scheme for this site with an initial gateway programmed for April 2023.

Hafod Morfa Copper works site (HMCW)

- 2.3 HMCW is a unique site located North East of Swansea City Centre adjacent to the River Tawe and in close proximity to the Liberty Stadium and Morfa retail Park. The site consists of a number of vacant sites on the waterfront, the Landore Park and Ride and vacant land, buildings and other heritage assets associated with HMCW.
- 2.4 The key aim for this site is to develop a mixed-use heritage led leisure destination which capitalises on its waterfront location and delivers a critical mass of leisure to complement the city centre. It is a site with significant regeneration potential and currently a focus of interest from a major international leisure investor Skyline Luge.

i). Skyline Luge Leisure proposal- Skyline Luge are proposing to construct a major new sustainable leisure attraction at Hafod Morfa copper works (HMCW) and Kilvey Hill. The visitor arrival point for the Skyline scheme will be at the HMCW /Landore Park and Ride site and will open up significant potential for sustainable tourism and recreation activities at Kilvey Hill. A cable car / gondola will link HMCW to the summit of Kilvey Hill, where there are panoramic views across Swansea Bay. The upper site will accommodate leisure arrival and departure terminals for a zipline and sky swing and new food and beverage units likely to be in a 'pop up' format. The core of the new attraction will take the form of three luge cart routes, which will descend the Northern flanks of the Hill with a chairlift connecting visitors back to the top. Family biking trails are also being considered as part of the offer. The project is anticipated to attract some 450,000 visitors in its first year of operations and generate up to 100 new jobs.

In September 2022, Cabinet agreed a proposed funding strategy the principle of future funding and legal agreements that will be needed in order for the Council to facilitate

the scheme. Further work is currently progressing in terms of acquiring the necessary land for the scheme, and various technical studies which are being undertaken to inform the design and the enabling works which will be required. A planning application will be submitted for the proposal in the Spring of 2023 and a number of public engagement events are planned leading up to that submission.

(ii)HMCW River Pontoon A new river pontoon is to be installed at the quayside near the restored Musgrave and Vivian Engine Houses. This will provide enhanced access to the copperworks for residents and visitors and will 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. Planning permission has been approved and installation should be complete by late Spring 2023. 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.

3.0 Restoration and activation of Heritage Assets

3.1 The Lower Swansea Valley was formerly the industrial core of the region and many of the remaining buildings at Hafod/Morfa Copper works and White Rock are of historical value, are listed or have scheduled monument status. With grant support, the Council has delivered a number of restoration and regeneration schemes on this site. The overall aim has been to preserve and enhance these buildings and bring them back in into viable commercial or community uses which can contribute positively to the mixed use aspirations for this new waterfront heritage destination. The key heritage restoration and regeneration projects are highlighted in sections (i) to (iv) below.

i). Penderyn Whiskey Distillery and Visitor centre This significant regeneration project has involved the restoration of the Grade 2 listed Powerhouse building and the construction of a new visitor centre and link to a reused part of the adjacent Rolling Mill. The newly restored buildings will be leased to Penderyn Whiskey, who are proposing to develop a distillery for their leading whiskey brand, alongside a visitor centre. The project has been jointly funded and delivered by Swansea Council, WG and the National Heritage Lottery fund, and will be an important new focal point and a regeneration catalyst for the HMCW site. The works on the building will be complete in early 2023 ready for Penderyn to subsequently fit out.

Funding has also been identified for redevelopment of the adjacent Grade 2 Porters Lodge and Weighbridge office to a shell and core standard. New tenants will be identified for these also in due course.

ii) Laboratory building – This prominent listed building is at serious risk of collapse. However emergency works have been undertaken to safeguard the building and stabilise the structure whilst efforts continue to seek support to fund its redevelopment and re use. The building is included within the second round of the Levelling up fund, with a decision expected in December 2022. Subject to restoration, this is a prominent building on the site that could accommodate a viable commercial or community use.

iii)Musgrave and Vivian Engine Houses: The Engine Houses are two landmark historic structures on the HMCW site. Stabilisation and roofing works were completed

in 2020 funded by Swansea Council and Cadw. These buildings could also support commercially viable new uses and subject to appropriate design could be extended/linked to accommodate a leisure/restaurant with river views or interpretation or craft/traditional small-scale maker uses. The Friends group of Hafod Morfa maintain an active role in seeking to contribute to the restoration of the Musgrave engine having already restored the gantry crane within the building.

iv)Bascule Bridge Restoration- The historic Bascule bridge is a listed structure and scheduled ancient monument and marks the eastern extent of the former Morfa Copperworks. Its restoration is a key project for the ongoing regeneration of the area and could have a significant role in terms of connecting new and established communities on the East bank to the Hafod and the Tawe Riverside Park. As well as bringing the landmark structure back in to positive use, the restoration scheme will preserve and enhance this important heritage asset for future generations. It will also provide an extended walking and cycling link as part of a heritage trail linking the former Copperworks sites. Restoration works to date have involved the removal of the lifting span section of bridge where this has been repaired, repainted and temporarily returned to the Landore park and ride car park for safe storage prior to future reinstatement. The next steps will involve timber repairs to the West abutment structure and repair work to the remaining trestles in the river however the challenge remains of identifying additional budget for full completion of the restoration.

- 4.0 **Morfa Road Regeneration Area.** Over the last decade the regeneration of private and publicly owned land adjacent to Morfa Road has resulted in the alteration of its mix of land uses and its character, from one dominated by industry and dereliction, to an emerging high quality mixed use area of residential, commercial and light industrial uses. The relatively new Morfa Road highway link constructed in 2016 runs centrally through this area and has provided a further catalyst for regeneration, opening the area up, exposing new views and perspectives on this key corridor into the City Centre.
- 4.1 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, re orientating development to face the river and streets, and enhancing the quality of its environment.
- 5.0. **White Rock and East Riverside Green Corridor-** This key corridor frames the main highway and active travel routes from communities to the North and the North East of the city centre. It includes part of the White Rock Copper works which is a scheduled ancient monument and other significant heritage features. The riverside corridor is also a significant biodiversity asset and strategic green artery which connects the Swansea Valley and its communities to its seafront.
- 5.1 Proposals for this area should aim make more positive use of the potential of the river and its immediate banks and surrounds as an informal leisure and green infrastructure resource for the city. This includes scope for more water-based recreation opportunities, informal leisure, enhancing biodiversity and to improve active travel linkages to the city centre.

6.0 Next steps and Way Forward

- 6.1 **Ongoing Masterplan short term/long term** Further work is required to develop and refine the Masterplan for Hafod Morfa Copperworks, to respond to the outputs from technical studies and incorporate a number of development requirements which are emerging for the site. The Penderyn scheme has highlighted that there is extensive buried archaeology at HMCW which will be likely to have implications for all new development proposals on the HMCW site. Also, the new Planning Policy Wales technical advice note (TAN15) shows that climate change related flood risks will have implications for the overspill car parking area and restored engine houses at the waterfront area of the site. Careful consideration will be required in terms of future land use options and any necessary flood mitigation options for these parts of the site.

Skyline Luge have indicated a need for a significant element of on-site car parking which will require a phased delivery approach, combining the parking requirements of other leisure uses and in tandem with a robust travel plan. HMCW is also one of the priority sites that will be taken forward for regeneration by Urban Splash, so initial discussions will be undertaken between them and Skyline to consider strategic master planning and placemaking needs to support the future wider development of the site.

- 6.2 **Landore Park and Ride:** To facilitate the comprehensive regeneration of the HMCW site and enable the development of a critical mass of leisure uses, the existing Landore Park and Ride will need to relocate. The future of the Park and Ride was already under review due to issues with the viability of the facility, though as a result of the Skyline scheme there is a more immediate need to progress and fund the proposed relocation. The preferred site lies at Swansea Vale and costs estimates for this are being confirmed, potentially part supported by grant funding.

6.3 Future Action Plan and way forward

The sections above have highlighted current progress with a range of initiatives and projects being delivered across the Tawe Riverside area. Further proposals were identified in the draft Tawe Riverside Strategy (2019) which are identified within a schedule in Appendix 2. This list is not exhaustive and there may be other new initiatives which can be added to these proposals and actions. A public engagement and consultation exercise could be undertaken to explore additional initiatives and ideas. 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.

7.0 Integrated Assessment Implications

- 7.1 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.

7.2 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'.

7.3 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.

7.4 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 proceeding this site specific full IIA reports will be developed where required.

7.5 The draft Tawe Riverside Strategy has 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 Generation (Wales) Act (2015).

7.6 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.

8.0 **Financial Implications**

8.1 There are no financial implications currently associated with this initial update report.

9.0 **Legal Implications**

9.1 There are no legal implications currently associated with this initial update report.

Background Papers: None

Appendices:

- Appendix 1 An extract from the Swansea Local development Plan (2019) for the Tawe Riverside Strategic Development Area.
- Appendix 2 Future work
- Appendix 3 IIA

APPENDIX 1 : An extract from the Swansea Local Development Plan (2019)

- Spine Street with active frontages
- Cycle path / footpath
- Outward facing edge onto protected open space
- ◆ Listed buildings and unlisted buildings of local interest
- Potential for residential or employment use subject to further masterplanning
- Low-Medium Density Residential
- Mixed uses on copperworks site
- Key Areas of Public Access Greenspace
- River Pontoon

Site specific elements:

- 1 - Morfa Road becomes a spine street
- 2 - River path / cycle route along west bank
- 3 - Cross pedestrian / cycle routes between river and Morfa Road
- 4 - Potential higher density riverside developments
- 5 - Hafod / Morfa copperworks as a heritage-led mixed use destination
- 6 - Enhancement of White Rock as heritage park
- 7 - Improved public access to east bank
- 8 - Potential river bus service
- 9 - Potential bridge linking Hafod / Morfa



Appendix 2 Future Action Plan Summary and scope

1.	Hafod Morfa Copperworks : Heritage Regeneration	
	Musgrave and Vivian Engine Houses -Both buildings are located in a low part of the site and are subject to flood risk from the River Tawe. However, subject to appropriate design and flood risk mitigation, the buildings could be re-used and/or extended/linked to accommodate a leisure/restaurant with river views or interpretation or craft use	
	Morfa Works Laboratory Block - This is one of the most significant remaining listed heritage buildings on the site, stabilised but in extremely poor condition. This could be restored to provide a Heritage Visitor Experience at ground floor level with meeting rooms and shared facilities for the business incubator units above	
	V & S locomotive sheds -. The building is in an extremely poor state of repair, and is subject to the effects of long term flood risks. There are significant design and mitigation challenges with bringing this building back into positive use. A possible future use could be for the storage of leisure crafts/ long boats	
	Hafod Morfa Gatehouse Subject to these buildings being restored there is potential for these buildings to accommodate a commercial use as a café or small retail shop, that could also serve as a meeting space for the Friends group and orientation space to complement the new Penderyn visitor centre adjacent and the Gatehouse	
	White Rock Canal office The remains of the canal office are located beneath the vegetation currently overwhelming the heritage remains This could offer potential for an orientation point to mirror the Hafod Gatehouse.	
	White Rock and Smiths Canal Heritage Infrastructure and Restoration - Further work is required to understand whether there is scope to introduce complementary leisure uses on this side of the river and additional car parking provision, which need to be sensitive to the setting and heritage designations and biodiversity interest. Further work is also required to clear vegetation, expose interesting infilled/tunnel sections of the Smiths canal and enable safe access and viewing points.	
	Alamein Road/ Normandy Road -Wider Site Context - Employment and Industrial land at Normandy and Alamein Road to the North of the HMCW site is considered to have the potential for future phases of mixed residential /leisure use redevelopment. The area is strategically located between the Hafod Morfa Copperworks site, Stadium and Morfa retail park, and has an attractive waterfront aspect with further distinctive heritage and informal leisure opportunities.	
2.0	Morfa Road Corridor	
	West Tawe Riverside Walk and Public Realm - The "West Tawe Riverside Walk", is completed in part, mainly in front of the new residential developments. There are however significant lengths of the riverfront path which require completion, or improved maintenance and enhancement	
	Green Infrastructure -Environmental Enhancement - New developments and public open space, paths and cycleways should recognise the multi-functional capacity of green infrastructure, and incorporate innovative solutions for surface water drainage and biodiversity. SUDS features could include rain gardens, filter strips, swales, permeable paving and green roofs rainwater harvesting.	
3.0	East side River Park Corridor and White Rock	
	Bascule Bridge restoration -. Its restoration is a key project for the ongoing regeneration of the area and confirms its significant role in terms of connecting new and established communities on the East bank to the Hafod and the Tawe Riverside Park. The landmark structure needs to be brought back in to positive use, to preserve and enhance this important heritage asset for future generations.	
	New pedestrian cycleway bridge linkages to facilitate Active Travel: A new pedestrian/cycle bridge is could be considered for Hafod/Morfa Copper works, connecting the heritage/leisure destination on the west bank to the White Rock copperworks area and the Eastern Tawe Riverside Park. This is will facilitate a much improved walking and cycling, active potential travel along the river Tawe, enabling direct traffic free connection across the river from Eastside communities, the stadium and other proposed visitor attractions on the west	
	River viewpoints and Heritage Interpretation sites - Interesting views points and interpretation points could be provided along the river's edge, accessed from the main pedestrian/cyclepath.	
	White Rock and Smiths Canal Heritage Infrastructure and Restoration: The conical mound at White Rock and a flatter plateau area to its south, have exceptional views across the HMCW site, long views down river, level access for water recreation, interpretation, bike hire, play and picnic areas.	
	Copperworks Heritage Trail – A 'Heritage Trail' could be identified and promoted for the HMCW site, which could link key attractions and trip generators on site, and connect the various elements to the broader context of industrial history.	

	River Tawe Basin circular route/Waterfront Fitness trail- The West and East banks paths, if connected by 2 dedicated pedestrian cycle bridges at St Thomas and HMCW could create a 2 mile waterfront circuit for cycling, walking	
	White Rock footway/cycleway enhancement- There is scope to develop a safer access into the corridor and more attractive level cycle route to run directly adjacent to the remains of the canal and sensitively through the heritage area, directly opening up views into the site.	
	Eastside Community Access- Further access points are available from two other locations off Foxhole Road/Pentreguinea Road (A4217). An arched entrance in the railings on the western side of Foxhole Road, marks the position of a ramped entrance to the main footway/cycleway (NCN route 43). A further former highway Kilvey Road, forms a bridge connection into the corridor and directly connects Foxhole Road and Kilvey Hill, into the corridor. New signage, refreshed painting of the railings along this frontage could contribute towards highlighting these locations as points of connection into the Tawe River corridor.	
	Supplementary Planting and Landscaping- There are several opportunities for tree planting and establishing structurally diverse and species rich grassland.	
	Habitat Management Plan- A Management plan is required for the corridor which should be informed by a appropriate studies on protected species and habitats, and the presence of heritage assets in the corridor.	
	Ecological Interpretation and Nature trail – With its riparian, woodland, and species rich grassland habitat, the corridor has a diverse and valuable biodiversity which should be positively promoted and recognised as an important resource for raising awareness and supporting education on the natural environment.	
	River water transport The River Tawe is in principle navigable from the Liberty stadium and Hafod Copper works to the Marina. The river is informally used for rowing, guided tours and pleasure craft, but has no current means for passengers to disembark safely at any location along the river corridor. River pontoons would allow direct access between the Hafod/Morfa Copper works site and the Sailbridge site near the City Centre and Marina, and Swansea Bay/ Mumbles beyond. The provision of pontoons and river boat transport would contribute towards the cluster of attractions and facilitate an alternative form of sustainable transport along the river corridor. Any proposals for pontoons should have regard to the fixing points and structure of any quayside walls. Appropriate consent easements will also be required from the Duke of Beaufort estates.	