



## Report of the Director of Place

Economy and Infrastructure Service Transformation Committee – 10 April 2025

### Tawe Riverside Strategy Update

<b>Purpose:</b>	To provide an interim report on the Tawe Riverside Corridor Actions
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	Swansea Local Development Plan (2019),
<b>Consultation:</b>	Regeneration, Planning, Highways, Culture and Tourism, Access to Services, Finance, Legal.
<b>Recommendation:</b>	It is recommended that the Economy and Infrastructure Corporate Delivery Committee note the interim report and discuss any relevant next steps.
<b>Report Author:</b>	Paul Relf
<b>Finance Officer:</b>	Ben Smith
<b>Legal Officer:</b>	Lisa Jones
<b>Access to Services Officer:</b>	Rhian Millar

#### 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 Previous reports have 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 2025 to provide a further progress update and evolving considerations for the corridor.

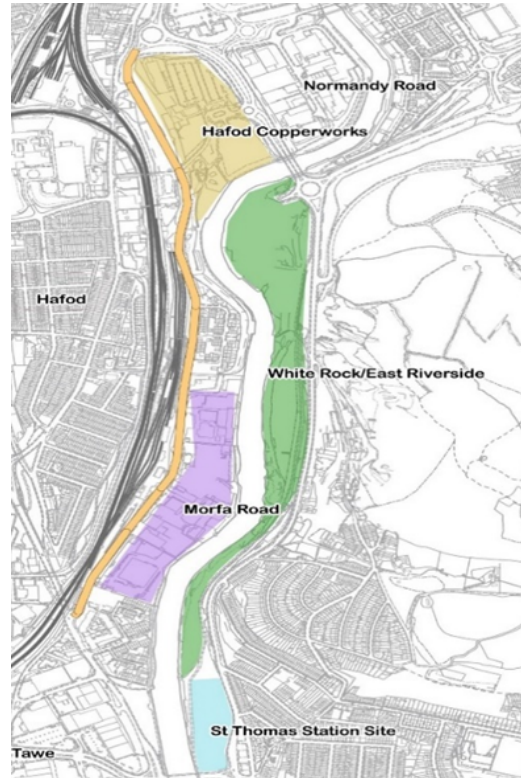
- 1.3 The principal delivery mechanism for the current phase of regeneration of the Riverside is implementation of the Lower Swansea Valley project funded by the UK Government Levelling Up Fund, matched with funding from Swansea Council and additional funds from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. The purpose of this brief report is to update on delivery of this programme, associated developments and the enabling environment being created at the site.

## 2.0 Context of Tawe Riverside Area

The location of the Tawe Riverside area, its development sites and regeneration areas are shown in plan1.

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.

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 Programme 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, 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 in 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:

**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 Locomotive Shed-** restored and refurbished for displaying and storing locomotives and tracks along with landscaped public spaces.

**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.

**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. This project is now the subject of a Heritage Fund application.

3.3 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.

### 3.4 Hafod Morfa Copperworks (HMCW) wider programme

**Skyline Luge Leisure proposal** - This major new sustainable leisure attraction will have its main visitor arrival point at the HMCW /Landore Park and Ride site and will open up significant potential for sustainable tourism and recreation activities at Kilvey Hill. Urban Splash and Skyline are co ordinating master planning objectives to ensure the scheme meets strategic planning and placemaking requirements. A planning application has been approved enabling the scheme to proceed.

**HMCW River Pontoon** - A new river pontoon has been e 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. 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.

**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 will be undertaken in March 2023 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. Ground Investigation works in the river and on land have now been completed for the new shared use path along the west bank of the River Tawe. The design of the first phase, behind Pipehouse Wharf, from Coles Close to the trueStudent development is complete. With a pre planning application submitted, awaiting response from planning. The design of the second phase north of the trueStudent development to the Hafford Copperworks is ongoing with the involvement of specialist consultants and contractors to design the section at Swansea Industrial Components (SIC). Discussions with SIC regarding the purchase of the riverbank land remain positive and are ongoing with the recent involvement of land agents, Rees Richards. A meeting is programmed for the 1<sup>st</sup> April with SIC, Swansea Council, Rees Richards, and the Valuation Office Agency to discuss the purchase.

**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 Morrision Park and now Parc Llewellyn and Swansea Canal at Clydach. 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 compliments 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. A 'Tawe Trails' app has also been produced over the past 12 months and is now also ready for launch, also incorporating other heritage-related trails in the area, but using the Lower Swansea Valley branding. This wider 'soft' work with the Friends groups links into the Heritage-led Regeneration work being done in linked towns of Morriston and Clydach, as well as the Copperworks site in the context of the 'Lower Swansea Valley' to encourage more visitors to the area to support the local economy.

#### **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 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, resources will be allocated to work up designs and feasibility where required, and programmes developed to secure delivery. The next major phases of work include:

- Continuation on site of Laboratory building restoration works
- Start on site of next phase of works to Musgrave and Vivian Engine Houses and V&S Locomotive shed
- Morfa Lifting Bascule Bridge
- High Street and Bascule Bridge pontoon installations

4.3 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 Council will continue to work with Skyline Luge and Urban Splash to ensure the scheme aligns with strategic planning and placemaking objectives and responds to planned consultation and feedback from stakeholders and communities. Works programmed to date do not compromise room for manoeuvre with future complimentary uses for the remaining development plots at the 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 proceeding 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 Generation (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 will be prepared which will add the schemes onto the capital programme.

## **7.0 Legal Implications**

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

**Background Papers:** None

**Appendices:** None.