

Addroddiad Adolygu Dylunio Design Review Report

Review Status: **Public**

Meeting date:	16th September 2010
Issue Date:	27th September 2010
Scheme Location:	Glan Llyn, Llanwern
Scheme Description:	Residential / Mixed Use. Sub area masterplan
Planning Status:	Application submitted

Part1: Presentation

The Local Authority representative stated that their consultation process was complete. Highways officers had raised concerns as to whether the proposals complied with the principles in Manual for Streets, and thought the street design was perhaps too formal. Questions were also raised about visibility splays and kerb widths.

This application is not required to go to Planning Committee and will be decided by delegated powers. The Local Authority intends to set up a dedicated multi-disciplinary project team to deal with each phase of this project, and would like DCFW to be involved in that process. It was confirmed that the East Newport Development Framework Plan SPG from 2007 still provides relevant guidance for the design of this project. The location of the local centre was not seen as problematic.

The planning officer had concerns about the low level of commitment shown in the document to low carbon building standards, particularly Code Level 1 for phase 1, which would not meet the new Building Regulations requirement of 25% carbon reduction. This was taken to be a low benchmark, setting a poor precedent for future phases.

Summary of key points arising from discussion, to be read in conjunction with Part 2 of this report.

The Panel thanked the team for returning to Design Review so promptly and providing additional information. We remain concerned that there is still insufficient information to meet the relevant planning condition. While we are reassured by the commitment of the developer to deliver and maintain the site infrastructure, we cannot have complete confidence in this project until we see clear design guidelines for each sub-area land

disposal, more detailed information on the design requirements, and an unambiguous commitment to quality and sustainability. The proposal therefore remains unsatisfactory. In summary:

- There is a lack of congruence between the stated design ambitions and sustainability targets for this area, as contained in the SPG of 2007, and the actual proposals that we had sight of.
- There is a worrying lack of real commitment and precise guidance as to the delivery of design quality through the sub-area masterplans and the guidance that will accompany individual land disposals, in virtually every aspect of the proposal.
- In particular the proposed sustainability standards are well below what is expected to be delivered in the next few years. This is a marked deviation from the intentions behind Welsh Assembly Government policy and recent changes to the planning system, as well as a possible failure to comply with Building Regulations.
- Given the sustainability strategy proposed, there should be more evidence that considerations of orientation have had an influence on the site layout.
- Given the requirements of the SPG, we would have expected to see a fuller consideration of a site-wide CHP system for local generation of heat and power.
- As identified in the SPG, we think a detailed urban design code should be developed to guide developers and protect overall design quality.
- Further development work is needed particularly with regard to the public realm, parking and highways. This should demonstrate stronger adherence to the principles contained in Manual for Streets.
- We are encouraged by the references to contemporary design, and urge the team to pursue this approach more forcibly in their sub-area guidance.
- The Panel was encouraged by the commitment of St Modwen to design, develop and manage the green infrastructure and arterial road proposals in the masterplan, and by their intention to develop a community management structure that will give residents a role in future maintenance and management.
- This project requires more direction from the Local Planning Authority, and we think a special project team should be established immediately to oversee this first phase of the scheme.
- We do not think it is appropriate to determine the discharge of this very important condition as an application under delegated powers, especially if there is considerable departure from the SPG, as appears to be the case.
- We would be happy to review further developments of this proposal, and we look forward to ongoing engagement with the team and the Local Authority, in the development of the whole of the western area.

Part 2: Discussion and Panel Response in Full

Having studied the pre-review material, the Panel was not convinced that the desired design quality would be delivered or that the material gave enough information to the Local Authority to be able to enforce the requirements set out in the SPG. There appeared to be a fundamental mismatch between the words of the vision and the strong aspirations set out by Newport CC on the one hand, and the actual images and proposals on the other. While we appreciated the 3D representations of the green infrastructure, we questioned

the accuracy of some of the images. We were informed that the width of the blueways would be 40m and the width of the greenways 30m.

We were, however, reassured to learn that St Modwens would be responsible for the delivery and maintenance of the whole infrastructure phase, including the green grid, LEAPs, LAPs and the blueways. Details such as highway widths, setbacks and junction details, greenway dimensions and design, and water management have already been considered and are set out in separate documents. The infrastructure phasing plan will be submitted to discharge a separate condition of the outline consent [condition 5]. Similarly, the landscape strategy has been developed and will be the subject of a separate reserved matters application. The site layout shown on p20 determines the location of LAPs and LEAPs and will form part of each sub-area development brief, and this was welcomed. The Panel also welcomed the development of a Community Management Strategy to support and shape the maintenance and management of open space, landscape and other communal facilities.

The Panel remained very concerned about the lack of real commitment to clearly stated design principles, for the development of each sub-area/land disposal in the masterplan. The expanded contextual analysis of the built environment of Newport yielded no firm guide as to aspirations or exemplars and implied that any almost any architectural style and layout could be 'contextual' and therefore acceptable. The Panel welcomed the developer's stated preference for a contemporary design approach but we urged the team to consult the Portishead sub-area guidance, which provides a much clearer steer on urban design matters. Overall the Panel felt strongly that an Urban Design Code should be developed to guide this and future phases, with detailed prescription on building heights and massing, as required by the original SPG [2007].

More work is needed on the urban design aspects to ensure that the street scenes reflect the intentions set out in Manual for Streets. It was agreed by all present that the parking arrangements were not properly articulated and that the 'squareabouts' were particularly crude. The reliance on large courtyards within the blocks should also be discouraged. DCFW supports the principle of on-street formal and informal car parking with integral landscaping and traffic calming, but these need to be presented in a more refined and considered way. The provision of home zones should be increased.

The Panel shared the concerns of the Local Authority about the poor standard of environmental building performance being proposed. Code Level 1 is not an acceptable standard at a time when all new proposals have to achieve Code Level 3 or above. We thought that the sustainability standards offered may not be compliant with present or future Building Regulations, and we noted that the SPG requires EcoHomes Excellent, which is roughly equivalent to Code Level 4.

There is little evidence that the site layout has been driven by consideration of orientation or passive solar design. While we accept that this cannot be the only consideration, it is nevertheless an important one given the reliance on solar PV to achieve higher Code standards in future phases. We remain disappointed that the infrastructure phase will not include provision for a district heating system, especially given the clear steer within the SPG that this should be a central consideration.

Overall, the proposal fails to match the Local Authority's stated objectives for sustainable design – that the standards should be 'equivalent to the best achieved on major projects elsewhere in the UK' and 'become a flagship recognisable throughout Europe... with a reputation for leading-edge sustainable development'.

More clarity is needed on the responsibilities and commitment of the various parties, in terms of setting standards and monitoring quality through the detailed design and construction process. There is no mention of this in the documents and too much latitude is allowed, for instance with regard to materials specifications. We think it is important that the Local Authority takes a strong lead in ensuring that the development is delivered to the required quality, especially with regard to the first phase which will be used as a precedent for the whole development. Phase 1 should be exemplary in order to extract the best value from future phases.

With regard to the crossing of the railway line to the north of the site, the Panel was informed the s106 contribution was to be used for the improvement of public transport, but had not yet been specifically allocated. We thought that the railway crossing was essential given the lack of other links to the countryside to the north.

It was confirmed that the development parcels had been defined by the green grid, and these were not necessarily the same as the land sale parcels.

For future presentations, we would like to see more information about the development of the school design and how it relates to other community facilities. We understood that this has been progressed in discussions with the education department but details were not included in our documents.

The quality of the landscape will be critical for the success of the scheme as a whole and will require appropriate investment. The treatment of the public/private boundaries throughout the site needs more work.

The Design Commission for Wales Design Review Panel and staff welcome further consultation and will be happy to provide further feedback on this report and/or where appropriate, to receive further presentations. Thank you for consulting the Commission and please keep in touch with us about the progress of your project.

A Welsh language copy of this report is available upon request.

Appendix 1: Attendees

Asiant/Client/Datblygwr:
Agent/Client/Developer

St Modwen [Rob Skelston]

Pensaer/Architect:

SGP [Masterplanner] [Ian Yallop]

Consultants:

Munro Whitten [Don Munro]

Awdurdod Cynllunio/ Planning Authority	Halcrow [Chris James, Jon Atkinson] GVA Grimley [Tim Gent]
Y Panel Adlygu Dylunio: Design review panel: Wendy Richards [Chair] Cindy Harris [Officer] John Punter	Newport CC [Andrew Dawe] Mark Hallett Kieren Morgan
Lead Panellist:	Mark Hallett
Sylwedyddion/Observers:	None

Declaration of interest: Mark Hallett stated that Igloo currently employ GVA Grimley on other projects.