

Design Review Report

Coed Darcy, New Masterplan

DCFW Ref: 253

Meeting of 13th May 2021



Review Status

Meeting date
Issue date
Scheme location
Scheme description
Scheme reference number
Planning status

CONFIDENTIAL

13th May 2021
21st May 2021
Neath Port Talbot
Residential led mixed use
N253
Pre-application (extant permission in place for previous masterplan)

Declarations of Interest

Panel members, observers and other relevant parties are required to declare ***in advance*** any interests they may have in relation to the Design Review and meeting Agenda items. Any such declarations are recorded here and in DCFW's central records.

Consultations to Date

Proposals for Area 1 within the original masterplan were reviewed in 2005. This design review concerns a new masterplan for the wider site.

The Proposals

The scheme proposes a new masterplan for Coed Darcy comprising residential development with a new primary school and local centre / commercial hub. Coed Darcy is a brownfield site located west of Junction 43 of the M4, south of Skewen and to the north of Jersey Marine. Following the removal of the BP refinery infrastructure, St Modwen has invested in the remediation and preparation of the site for development. A new masterplan identifies a developable area of circa 45ha which will be the focus of the masterplanning exercise.

Coed Darcy is a longstanding, significant regeneration project, owned and being promoted by St Modwen Developments. Planning permission was originally granted in 2008 with the first phase of 300 new homes delivered by Persimmon. The materials state that the extant scheme is not considered viable and that it is therefore not possible to continue to deliver the 2008 consent. A revised masterplan is evolving for a new, more viable scheme that will enable to continued delivery of development at this strategically important site. Up to 2,000 new homes, a primary school, commercial uses within a local centre and care home / sheltered accommodation are currently proposed.

Main Points

DCFW welcomed the opportunity to review proposals for this site at this stage in the development of the masterplan. The information provided within the presentation material was helpful in outlining the current situation and site context. It is an appropriate time to revisiting the masterplan for the site to update it in the context of placemaking policy and the desire to develop a sustainable community in this location.

Delivering a Future Community

The scale of the site, although smaller than the original masterplan, provides the opportunity to explore the delivery of a 15-minute neighbourhood alongside consideration of how people might live in the future. All residents should have good accessibility to the centre of the development by walking and cycling, therefore it is important to ensure that the facilities within the centre meet as many of the day-to-day needs of local people as possible.

The 'centre' of the neighbourhood is appropriately shown located close to the school and potential train station. Flexible ground floor spaces in this area will allow for a future mix of uses that may include retail, office, health and community facilities. A mix of higher density houses and flats in this location, along with a mix of tenures, would help to reinforce it as a focal point and provide greater population density to support the mix of uses.

Considerations for how the residents of this neighbourhood might live in the future include the sustainability and flexibility of homes, adaptation of space allocated for parking to other uses and energy generation and provision.

Viability considerations for the revised masterplan must include what is to be delivered in each phase to ensure the neighbourhood develops in a sustainable and cohesive way. This includes Neath Port Talbot Council coordinating the delivery of the school. There is also an important role for NPT Council in ensuring design quality and placemaking is locked into the planning permission.

Movement Strategy

There is a significant danger of this becoming a car focused place unless a movement strategy is developed and delivered early in the phasing to ensure sustainable travel behaviour can be embedded from the start. Unless dependency on the car is challenged it will impact on the quality of streets and spaces across the development.

The inclusion of a station would positively change the nature of the place and provide much better public transport connections, but this is at an early stage and should not be relied on. We encourage continued collaboration with Transport for Wales to ensure any development allows for a future station.

The focus of investment in movement infrastructure should be on active travel and public transport rather than highways and may include innovations in demand responsive transport.

Keeping as many trips within the new neighbourhood as possible will help to limit the need to travel. This may include the provision of space for remote working both within homes and in a communal building.

Vision and Identity

Now that the constraints and some of the opportunities for the site have been explored, it is important that a vision and sense of identity for the place is developed that can act as a guiding focus for future design decisions. The history of the place should be explored and there may be relevance in the 'green, to black, to green' process that the site is going

through. Working through the principles of the Placemaking Wales Charter could also help to structure thinking on this.

Green Infrastructure

The strategic network of green features is developing in a way that will help it to be integrated within the masterplan but is largely focused on the edges. It is also important to ensure that green infrastructure is delivered on all scales including streets and spaces which will also provide an opportunity to integrate SuDS and increase biodiversity.

Next Steps

Using the principles of the Placemaking Wales Charter to frame future thinking in the development of the masterplan could be helpful to ensure all aspects are given consideration.

DCFW welcome further engagement on this important strategic site. Some of the aspects raised in this initial review such as movement, identity, 15-minute neighbourhood and green infrastructure could be explored in more detail in a workshop setting involving the local authority, Transport for Wales, Future Generations Office and other key stakeholders as well as the client and design team. DCFW can coordinate a workshop session if St Modwen would like to take up this opportunity.

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

Attendees

Agent/Client/Developer:	Elise Coalter, St Modwen Mark Thorne, St Modwen
Architect/Design Team:	Bernadette Kinsella, Powell Dobson Alistair Fraser, Powell Dobson
Landscape Architect:	Simon Brewster, Soltys Brewster
Planning Consultant:	Laura Williams, Savills Nick Matthews, Savills (observing)

Local Authority:

DCFW Design Review Panel

Chair:	Cora Kwiatkowski
Lead Panellist:	Maria Asenjo, DCFW Lead Panellist
Panel:	Jen Heal, DCFW, Design Advisor Matt Thomas Stephen Smith Stephen Smith (UN, DCFW) Efa Lois, DCFW, Place Advisor Carole-Anne Davies, DCFW, Chief Executive
Observers:	Gemma Christian, Welsh Government Jonni Thomos, Welsh Government Rachel Willis, Swansea Council