



DESIGN
COMMISSION
FOR WALES
COMISIWN
DYLUNIO
CYMRU

Design Review Report

Sunnyside Wellness Village

DCFW Ref: 167

Meeting of 13th September 2018

Review Status

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

PUBLIC

13th September 2018
26th September 2018
Bridgend
Mixed use
167
Pre-application

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

Formal pre-application consultation is due to take place at the end of September.

The Proposals

The aspiration is to create an innovative, vibrant and multi-generational community with a focus on designing for wellbeing of residents. The scheme aims to provide social housing, a primary healthcare facility and community spaces, including a village hall. The 70 homes will be delivered in a variety of housing types. Relocation of the Registry Office within the site to a different part of the site is included in the proposals, however is subject to land negotiations.

Main Points

DCFW supports the aspiration to create a vibrant, multi-generational community, with a focus on health and wellbeing. The focus on wellbeing and improving lifestyles is encouraged however further work must be done to achieve this bold vision.

The following points summarise key issues from the review and should be considered to inform any further design work:

Programme

The current uncertainty around the Registry Office relocation has led the design team to have to retain the access road to the existing Registry Office site, which has become a substantial driver of the layout. The specific requirements of this road mean that it not only runs along the edge of the site, but also is over-engineered and inappropriate for this residential development. The timing of the design process and land ownership discussions have led to a compromise in the layout, which DCFW believe to be to the detriment of the scheme. A firmer understanding of whether the Registry Office will or will not move would allow the design team greater flexibility in designing a more holistic scheme which best achieves the wellbeing aspiration.

Relating to the context

The challenging nature of the site, with level changes along the boundary, leads to the development being inward facing. However, more can be done to knit the development into its context, particularly at the various access points. The access points around the boundary, for both pedestrians and vehicles, could become more welcoming entrances to the site if the buildings had a greater corner presence. This would also help with natural surveillance and overlooking of these routes and green spaces. In addition, the relationship between the residential component and community buildings could be better developed, recognizing the different uses and addressing the somewhat disjointed car parking, public realm and landscape.

Parking

DCFW supports the design teams intention to provide a quantum of parking spaces below the Local Authority parking standards, which require an unnecessarily high number of spaces for a site of this nature. The site is highly accessible and within walking distance of Bridgend town centre and train station. The design team is encouraged to provide further evidence to the Local Authority to demonstrate that the current parking provision is appropriate. DCFW understands there are parking issues in the wider area, but these should not influence the development of an appropriate level on this site.

Despite the reduction of parking to numbers below the parking standards, car parking still appears to dominate the scheme. Parking is visually prominent in the street scene and conflicts with the aspiration to deliver a development focused on wellbeing and improving the lifestyles of residents, which should include the promotion of more sustainable transport modes. Although the aspiration to create streets for activity and play is encouraging, this dominance of parking is likely to have a negative impact on the success of these streets for these other purposes. The design team should explore options to reduce this visual dominance through varied parking types, in addition to exploring options for parking relocation.

The ample parking provided for the health centre will require careful management to ensure it is used by the intended users at the intended times. This is of particular concern given the parking pressures in the area. DCFW understands and supports the aspiration that this space has a community use, and therefore the appearance and use of the car park when not in use should also be considered and designed as a space first and car park second.

Access and movement

The access point required for the Registry Office also provides another point of conflict and is unnecessary for the requirements of the scheme if the Registry Office is relocated. This access could, instead, be solely for active travel modes.

Although the active travel access point at the north east corner of the site is encouraged, the layout could be strengthened to create a bolder north-south active travel movement route through the site. This route could be reinforced by planting, feature paving and being physically and visually separated from areas of car parking. This route would be valuable to the residents of the site, whilst also opening up the site to wider connections beyond its boundaries, therefore adding value for the wider community and encouraging active travel to the civic uses to the south of the site.

Landscape

It is encouraging that a Landscape Architect has now been appointed to the design team. This has led to an improvement in the types and quality of green spaces and planting designed into the scheme. The allotments will provide residents with the opportunity to come together as a community and grow food, however they will require substantial management by the housing provider to ensure their success and sustainability.

Access to the green space behind the apartment block, which will be under the management of the cooperative, should be clearly defined so that residents across the site understand whether it is for their use or solely by the homes immediately around it.

Green spaces at the corners of the site should be better overlooked. The homes at the ends of the terrace should have a strong corner orientation to provide increased natural surveillance and safety within these spaces. They could be a valuable green space resource for residents if they were well overlooked and used.

Next steps

The Commission would welcome further opportunity to review the scheme with the aim of improving design quality through constructive dialogue.

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

Attendees

Agent/Client/Developer:	Louise Attwood, Linc Shan Morgan, ABMU Health Board
Architect/Planning Consultant:	Tim Young & Victoria Slater, Austin Smith Lord Steffan Harries, LRM Planning
Local Authority:	Rhodri Davies & Jonathan Parsons, Bridgend CBC
Design Review Panel:	
Chair	Andrew Linfoot
Lead Panellist	Mark Lawton Matt Thomas

Angela Williams
Chris Jefford
Wendy Maden, Design Advisor, DCFW

Observers

Gayna Jones, Chair, DCFW
Sarah Laing Gibbons, Welsh Government
Darren Hatton, Welsh Government