

Design Review Report

Morrison Hospital, Swansea

DCFW Ref: N328

Meeting of 18th September 2024



Review Status

Meeting date
Issue date
Scheme description
Scheme location

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Planning status
Planning status of DCFW comment

Public

18th September 2024
2nd October 2024
Access road and masterplan
Heol Maes Eglwys, Morriston,
Cwmrhydyceirw, Swansea, SA6 6NL
N328
Pre-application
Material consideration

Key Points

- The masterplan needs to be given sufficient time for engagement and design development.
- The masterplan needs to take account of the transitional stage between the access road being built and the changes to the hospital.
- Interventions beyond the new access road are needed to support active and sustainable transport.
- The design of the access road should be future proofed for any further development in the future.
- The overarching concept for the masterplan needs further development. There is potential to focus more on the landscape, courtyards and connection with nature.
- Further analysis and early engagement should be undertaken to fully understand how people experience the existing hospital and how the masterplan can help address any problems as well as accommodate the new development.
- The masterplan should seek to improve the integration of the hospital with the surrounding neighbourhood.
- The energy strategy should be developed early and tested, including considering whether a large new energy centre is required.

Consultations to Date

This is the first review of the scheme by DCFW.

Swansea Bay University Health Board has been engaging in pre-application discussions with Swansea Council and have a Planning Performance Agreement in place. An EIA Scoping Opinion request has been submitted and Swansea Council have issued a Scoping Opinion.

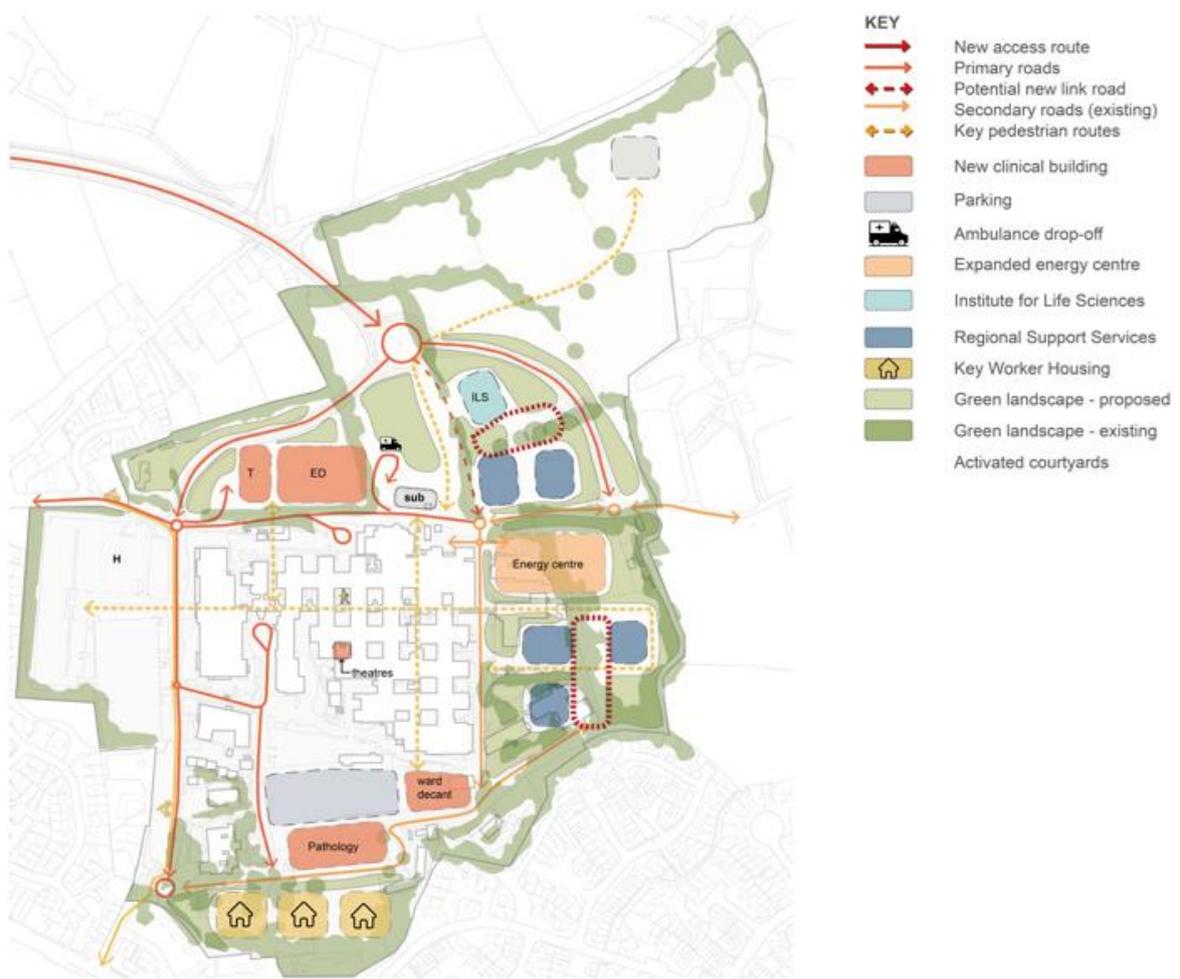
Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) is planned to be undertaken in December.

The Proposal

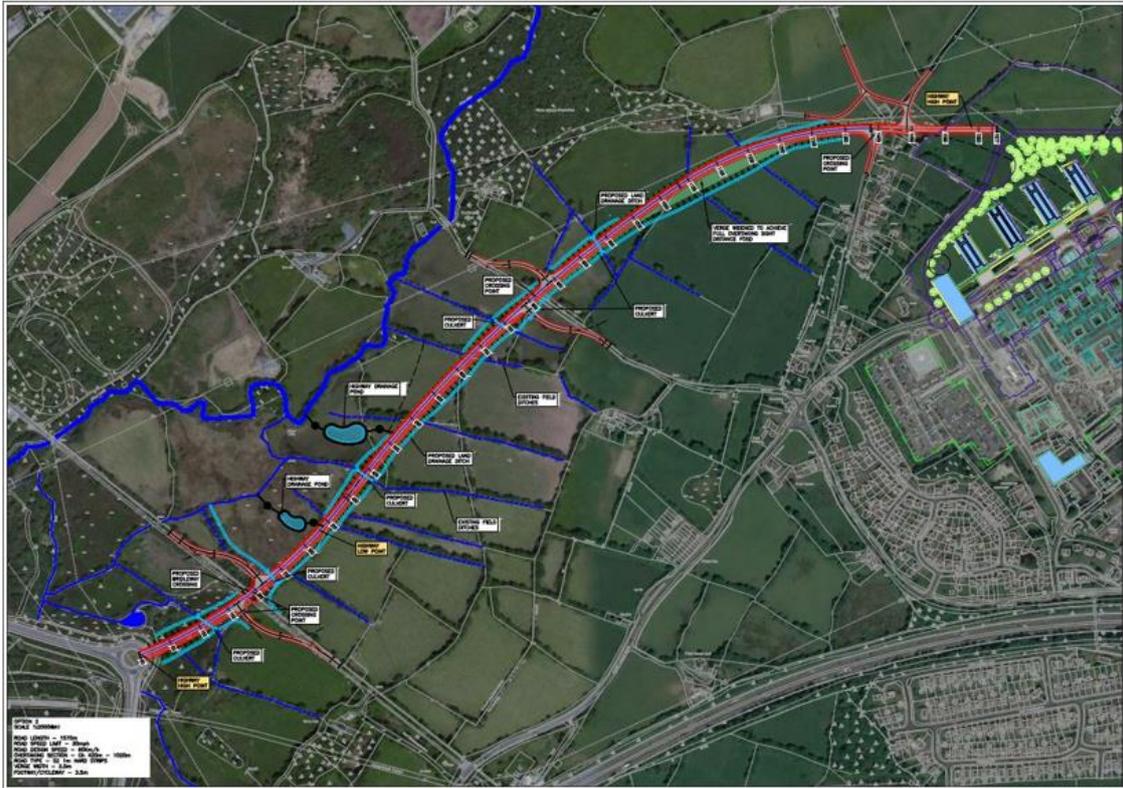
Swansea Bay University Health Board is proposing to refurbish, upgrade and expand Morriston Hospital. The proposal seeks to refurbish approximately 21,500m² of existing hospital facilities and create approximately 68,500m² of new facilities.

A new access road is proposed to support the expansion of the hospital. The road is proposed to have a single-carriageway and connect the hospital with the B4489 roundabout at junction 46 of the M4 motorway.

The principle of the development is supported in Swansea Council's Local Development Plan, with land around the site allocated for development.



Concept Masterplan



Proposed Access Road

Context

Morrison Hospital is located on the northern edge of Swansea. The hospital is north of the M4, between junctions 45 and 46, along with Morrison Comprehensive School and a small residential neighbourhood, with the countryside beyond.



Site Location Plan

Main Points

Strategic

The plans for the access road are currently ahead of the masterplan for the hospital. The Local Planning Authority want the masterplan framework in place before giving consent for the access road. It is important that the development of the masterplan is given sufficient time for design development and it must be recognised that these are different projects that need different approaches. There is a risk at present that the road proposal becomes the sole focus, out of step with masterplan findings.

A new access road will impact on how the hospital works, in terms of how people travel to and around the site, and there will be a meanwhile situation before changes to the hospital happen. The masterplan and phasing of the development will need to account for this transitional stage.

Access Road

The decision for there to be a new access road and its route has already been taken and, as such, the review did not explore the principle of the road. However, we would like to highlight that any decision to build a new road such as this needs to first fully explore options to enable a modal-shift and reduce the need to travel by car.

The decision about which of the two route options would be taken forward had already been taken and very limited material was provided about the design of the road. Therefore, there was very limited scope for us to comment on the road itself. Earlier engagement on options, or more detailed material on the design, would have provided a more fruitful review session.

It was positive that the material presented references the sustainable transport hierarchy and the proposed new road includes provision for walking and cycling, as is required by the Active Travel Act. However, the reality is that most people walking and cycling to the hospital are more likely to be travelling from the south and using the existing street network rather than the new road. To ensure the development meaningfully applies the sustainable transport hierarchy, the project should broaden out the scope of the active travel improvements to include the surrounding streets and introduce improvements that will encourage and enable more people to walk and cycle to the hospital. Improvements to the public transport system also need to be further developed to support the expansion of the hospital and ensure sufficient measures are being taken to encourage sustainable transport. In response to prioritising sustainable travel, the opportunities to rationalise

and reduce the dominance of parking on the site should form part of the phasing of the masterplan.

We encourage further analysis and engagement to better understand how people travel to and from the site, including walking, cycling and public transport. A drawing to visualise the planned metro station, new developments and active travel improvements will help people understand the context. Plans and images also need to be prepared to visualise what the proposed road would look like.

It was identified in the meeting that it is possible there may be further development off the new link road in the future. The design of the road should future proof such development and ensure it will create a suitable environment for people living there, including the ability for new homes to have direct frontages onto the road.

The construction of the road should be factored into the energy calculations and inform the sustainability strategy.

Masterplan

The analysis presented identified a local grid pattern and this has been developed into a warp and weft concept. A concept, or guiding principle, can be beneficial in the development of a masterplan, but it was unclear how the warp and weft concept was informing the emerging masterplan and this needs further consideration.

Other strong features that came through in the material presented, which could form the basis for a clearer concept, were the retention of the hedgerows and the importance and potential of the hospital courtyards. The hedgerows could inform a more organic grid and the courtyards have the potential to be opened-up and greened, as well as being a potential feature for the new buildings. Both these features could contribute towards the proven health benefits of looking onto nature.

The masterplan should be informed by an understanding of what the hospital is like for the people using it. The experience of patients and visitors visiting a hospital can often be confusing and further analysis would help better understand the arrival experience. This analysis should be undertaken at ground level and include engagement with the people using the hospital. This analysis and engagement can inform how the masterplan can address the existing hospital's problems.

Further analysis should be undertaken of the surrounding neighbourhood and the relationship with the hospital. What facilities and services are there? How does the hospital

connect to the surrounding street network? The masterplan should help integrate the hospital with the surrounding neighbourhood.

The proposal includes the provision for a large energy centre. Consideration should be given to whether such a large energy centre is needed. Would the new buildings be better powered individually, rather than with a central energy centre. The new buildings should be all electric and opportunities to utilise the power generated by the surrounding solar farms should be fully explored.

The masterplan needs to broaden out to consider how people currently walk, cycle and use public transport to get to and from the hospital. As mentioned above, this should inform improvements within the hospital site and beyond to promote active and sustainable transport, to complement the improvements for travelling by car with the new access road.

Engagement

Involving people in the understanding of the hospital and surrounding area is important and we encourage early engagement ahead of the formal PAC process. Plans, sketches and visual material will also need to be developed to help people easily understand the proposals and enable meaningful engagement.

Next Steps

There is an ongoing need and opportunity to promote good design for the benefit of patients, staff and the public throughout this project. We encourage the Health Board to engage further with DCFW, and at the earliest possible stages, so as to identify and agree what support would be most useful.

There are opportunities to test the early approach to the masterplan, with both client and design team, develop a clear brief and design requirements, further strategic design review and possibly input into the procurement process. The Design Commission will be happy to engage with the health board on this potential and draw on its experience with similar projects.

The masterplan concept, more developed plans and energy strategy would all benefit from being explored further in a second review. The design of the individual buildings would subsequently benefit from their own reviews in the future.

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

Attendees

Client: Clive Ball, NHS Wales

Design Team: Rob Stevens, BDP
Gavin Lewis, WSP
Andrew Wilkinson, WSP

Local Planning Authority: Steve Smith, Swansea Council
Simon Hughes, Swansea Council

DCFW Design Review Panel

Chair: Wendy Maden

Panel: Toby Adam
Barny Evans
Richard Woods
Carole-Anne Davies, DCFW Chief Executive
Jen Heal, DCFW Deputy Chief Executive
Max Hampton, DCFW Design Advisor

Observer: Dave McCullough, Transport for Wales

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.

Steve Smith attended the meeting as a representative of Swansea Council's Planning Department. Steve is a DCFW Design Review panel member, but there was not considered to be a conflict of interest.