

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2018/ 2019

**PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY,
COMMUNITIES & PROSPERITY
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:**

14th MARCH 2019

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF
REGENERATION, PLANNING &
HOUSING**

Agenda Item No. 4

**PROGRESS OF THE TAFF VALE
REDEVELOPMENT**

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the progress of the Taff Vale Redevelopment concentrating on achievements since progress was last reported to this Committee in September 2017.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that Members of the Public Service Delivery, Communities and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee scrutinise the content of this report; and
- 2.2 Consider whether they require further information on any aspects of the report.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 There is renewed confidence in Pontypridd which is in part driven by the successful delivery of major regeneration schemes such as Pontypridd Lido and by its central position in the South East Wales region.
- 3.2 Since acquiring the site of the former Taff Vale precinct in March 2015, significant progress has been made in developing and delivering a scheme that is right for Pontypridd and its strategic location within the region.
- 3.3 As previously reported, there will be three buildings on the site. Two large office accommodation buildings incorporating street level food/drink units, and a third building that will provide a new gateway to the town centre, a 21st Century library, a Council customer contact point, a cafe, and a new leisure and fitness centre.

- 3.4 The new development also presented the opportunity to provide a direct pedestrian route from the development site across the river to Ynysangharad War Memorial Park and subject to detailed design and funding availability, Members of the Ynysangharad War Memorial Park Committee agreed to the submission of a planning application.
- 3.5 When the scheme was last considered by this Committee in September 2017 a number of key milestones had already been achieved. To briefly recap:-
- 2015 - Site Acquisition / Appointment of Commercial Advisors / Development of outline plans.
 - 2016 – Public Consultation / Outline Planning Approval / Site Investigation Works / Appointment of Project Management, Cost Consultant and Design Specialists.
 - 2017 – Site Demolition / Public Exhibition / Full Planning Approval / Stage 1 Appointment of Main Contractor.

4. UPDATE / CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 Positive progress continued with the enabling works package commencing in January 2018 which comprised of processing previously demolished material and the laying of the piling mat complete with reinforcement layers in order to allow the main works to commence.
- 4.2 The main construction works started in March and the significant and visible progress made between March 2018 and March 2019 includes completion of the piling works, construction of the building cores, substructures and podium slab and the steel frames to the three buildings nearing completion. Timber cassettes are currently being installed on the new gateway building, giving the building its defined curved shape.
- 4.3 Considerable work is also ongoing below the podium with the removal of propping, tanking to retaining walls, concrete bases installed and the formation of basement plant rooms.
- 4.4 The Contractor has reported significant progress against their Community Benefits Plan target of 2280 weeks of targeted recruitment and training, aimed at recruiting local people who were previously long term unemployed, new entrants into the construction industry, trainees, apprentices and work experience placements. To date, 1248 weeks have been achieved and it is anticipated that the contractor will exceed their overall target by the end of the contract.
- 4.5 A contractor specialising in bridge design and construction was appointed to provide Early Contractor Involvement, working with the Council and the multi-disciplinary design team to advise on design and build issues. Planning

Permission was subsequently granted in October 2018 and the main contract for the delivery of the footbridge awarded in January 2019.

- 4.6 Site preparation works for the footbridge have commenced within the park with the demolition of the former changing room block and the removal of localised trees which is necessary not only to enable construction of the bridge but to enhance visibility between the Taff Vale Redevelopment and the Park. New tree planting within the wider park will be undertaken to mitigate the tree loss.
- 4.7 The project continues to make positive progress and remains on programme and on budget.

5. NEXT STEPS

- 5.1 The main steel structures on all three buildings will be completed during March 2019 and this major achievement will be celebrated with a topping out ceremony scheduled for the end of March.
- 5.2 The zinc cladding to the Council's gateway building will commence in April 2019 and the brickwork will commence on the office accommodation buildings in June.
- 5.3 The leasing arrangements with Transport for Wales for the largest office building will shortly be finalised and a Marketing Campaign for the remaining available office space and food/drink units will be launched in March following a scheduled site visit by the First Minister. The new name for the redevelopment will also be announced at this time.
- 5.4 As part of the Contractors commitment to Pontypridd, they would like to give something back to the local community and have selected the bowls pavilion within the Park as its Community Legacy Project. During Summer 2019, the Contractor will donate materials and labour to give the external envelope and adjoining green areas a much-needed face lift. The contractor will be supported by other members of the project team including Rhomco, Darnton B3 and RCT Officers.
- 5.5 Site set up works for the footbridge will commence in June with anticipated completion in December 2019.
- 5.6 There will then be sequential completion of the three buildings between February and April 2020 which will also include the completion of the public realm and basement car park. On completion, the tenants can commence the necessary building fit-out works. This includes the Council's building which will need to be fitted out prior to opening to the public.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 This does not relate to this update report, however, an Equality Impact Assessment screening was undertaken as part of the initial Cabinet process.

7. CONSULTATION

- 7.1 This does not relate to this update report, however consultation took place as part of the initial Cabinet process and in accordance with the Statutory Planning process.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The funding package for the main development was finalised in November 2017 when Council agreed to part finance from Council borrowing using its powers under the prudential code. A significant contribution to the development has also been received from Welsh Government and European Structural Funds. The funding package for the footbridge was subsequently finalised in January 2019 with support from Welsh Governments Targeted Regeneration Investment Programme.
- 8.2 The budget for the scheme is £49million and the project is on programme and within budget.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 9.1 The site is wholly controlled by the Council in terms of freehold and leasehold.
- 9.2 The detailed legal issues which arise in the delivery of capital projects will be considered and progressed in accordance with relevant legislation, within the usual project governance arrangements.

10. LINKS TO THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES / WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

- 10.1 Enabling vibrant and enticing town centres, with a strong offer, which recognises that they are at the heart of our communities is a clear commitment within Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council's 2016-20 Corporate Plan "The Way Ahead".
- 10.2 The development will make a positive contribution to the Council's corporate priorities of "Economy – Building a strong economy"; "People – Promoting independence" and "Place – Creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live and work".
- 10.3 A positive contribution towards the Well-Being of Future Generations Act will also be made by improving prosperity, connecting communities through sustainable and resilient infrastructure and facilitating high quality, responsive and better integrated public services.

11. CONCLUSION

- 11.1 This report has summarised the significant progress made in the delivery of the Taff Vale Redevelopment project and highlights the importance of the project to the County Borough and the wider region.
- 11.2 The development will result in transformational change for Pontypridd and its pivotal position in the Cardiff City Region. Its proximity to Cardiff will be further enhanced by the South Wales Metro and the commitment of Transport for Wales to locate its Headquarters in Pontypridd in the new Grade A office accommodation at Taff Vale. The development will bring hundreds of jobs to the town centre, increasing footfall and improving the town's commercial offer.