



FULL COUNCIL REPORT

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Service Area	Community Regeneration
Exempt/Non Exempt	Non Exempt
Committee Date	6 th June 2018

To: Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen

Crucible – Design Charrette Report: Cyfarthfa Heritage Area

1.0 SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 On 21st October 2017 at Cyfarthfa Castle, Merthyr Tydfil, the Design Commission for Wales and the Welsh School of Architecture at Cardiff University held a Design Charrette.
- 1.2 The event brought together over 60 creative minds – architects, landscape architects, planners, heritage specialists and artists – to examine and appraise the potential around Cyfarthfa, in the wider town and landscape so as to shape a vision for the future.
- 1.3 Merthyr is the crucible wherein the industrial revolution was forged, where the creation of the world's largest centre of iron production transformed a small hamlet into Wales' largest town.
- 1.4 Much of Merthyr's physical heritage has been lost or hidden, but over the last 30 years there has been a greater consciousness of the importance of conserving what remains and of finding ways to use that heritage to tell Merthyr's story.
- 1.5 The charrette – an intense day of ideas generation – considered how Cyfarthfa Castle, its extended landscape and built heritage might become an international quality visitor destination and experience, better promoting its already palpable sense of place.

- 1.6 The central proposition to emerge from the charrette was the need to create at Cyfarthfa a visitor experience of a scale and quality that would mark it out as a major national landmark.
- 1.7 In order to do this, a review of the Cyfarthfa Castle and Park applications was advised, which has led to the recommendation of the internal design charrette with the Design Commission and Purcell, the multi-disciplinary team appointed for the Castle Project.
- 1.8 It has been identified that the delivery of the vision outlined within the charrette report will require human and financial resources beyond those of the local authority itself. The full implementation of all elements envisaged will need to be fully costed but may be in the order of £50m, possibly spread over a decade.
- 1.9 A Special Purpose Vehicle is to be created to steer this project, to bring all governmental and community stakeholders together with the best specialist expertise and to ensure continuity of vision over the long term and beyond political cycles

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS that

- 2.1 To establish a small working group to progress the 'Crucible' concept and projects.
- 2.2 To establish a task and finish group to undertake discussions as part of an internal design charrette.
- 2.3 To establish an interim working group to explore the establishment of an appropriate development vehicle to take the programme forward.
- 2.4 To identify a potential location for a new development vehicle to be based
- 2.5 To undertake community consultation and identify engagement with key stakeholders.
- 2.6 To review existing Heritage Lottery Fund applications for Cyfarthfa.
- 2.7 To explore the establishment of links with major London based Charities, Trusts, Welsh Government Departments, and all relevant UK based funding organisations.

3.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 3.1 On 21st October 2017 at Cyfarthfa Castle, Merthyr Tydfil, the Design Commission for Wales and the Welsh School of Architecture at Cardiff University convened a multi-disciplinary team to scope the possibilities within the town and surrounding landscape in a bold visioning exercise that sought ways of making of Merthyr's heritage assets something greater than the sum of its parts, underlining its true international significance.

- 3.2 This one-day charrette was supported by Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, Merthyr Leisure Trust and Merthyr Heritage Trust and made possible thanks to funding from MTCBC and support from Design Circle RSAW South. The event brought together over 60 creative minds – architects, landscape architects, planners, heritage specialists and artists – to examine and appraise the potential around Cyfarthfa, in the wider town and landscape so as to shape a vision for the future.
- 3.3 Merthyr is the crucible wherein the industrial revolution was forged, where the creation of the world’s largest centre of iron production transformed a small hamlet into Wales’ largest town. The ironworks of Cyfarthfa, Dowlais, Penydarren and Plymouth employed thousands and propelled Wales into a global industrial economy, characterised by investment in new ideas, technologies and techniques, making Merthyr’s name in the late 18th and 19th centuries synonymous with innovation. It is true that much of Merthyr’s physical heritage has been lost or hidden, but over the last 30 years there has been a greater consciousness of the importance of conserving what remains and of finding ways to use that heritage to tell Merthyr’s story.
- 3.4 The charrette – an intense day of ideas generation – considered how Cyfarthfa Castle, its extended landscape and built heritage might become an international quality visitor destination and experience, better promoting its already palpable sense of place. It considered new ways in which these central assets could be connected to other assets throughout the town and beyond to catalyse regeneration and tourism, maximise impact and return real public benefit.
- 3.5 The findings highlighted four strategically integrated strands:
- a) A cathedral for our industrial heritage
 - b) Weaving a connected landscape
 - c) Beyond Cyfarthfa – Beyond Merthyr
 - d) A year-round framework for events

The charrette report recommends the pursuit of these strands and outlines the necessary resources, timescales and mechanisms required for them to realise their full potential.

4.0 CYFARTHA HERITAGE AREA REVIEW

- 4.1 The central proposition to emerge from the charrette was the need to create at Cyfarthfa a visitor experience of a scale and quality that would mark it out as a major national landmark, with international appeal, truly befitting the town’s central contribution to the industrial revolution and our social and political history and invoking the awe and wonder of the ironworks.
- 4.2 In order to do this, a review of the Cyfarthfa Castle and Park applications was advised, which has led to the recommendation of the internal design charrette with the Design Commission and Purcell, the multi-disciplinary team appointed for the Castle Project.

- 4.3 On 16th June 2016, a Stage 1 application was submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to secure funds for the re-development of the former school side of the Castle. The application was a joint submission from the local authority and Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Trust. The proposal to HLF was to secure funding for the 'development phase' to prepare the Stage 2 application, which if approved will secure funds for the 'delivery phase'.
- 4.4 The overall proposal was to re-develop and restore the North-West section of the Castle, creating a Museum Learning Zone, Collections Store and Research Centre, the development of an Enterprise Centre and the re-location and enhancement of the Museum. The proposed re-development aimed to support employment and business growth, create excellent educational facilities result in revenue generation for the future sustainability of the Castle.
- 4.5 The charrette report outlines that a distinctive building is needed that, while respecting the character of the main castle and the surrounding landscape, will not only make provision for the display of artefacts but also provide more dramatic exhibition spaces that would allow for technologically leading-edge immersive displays that can provide elements of spectacle and an ability to transport visitors into the Merthyr of the past. This would complement the historical domesticity of the castle's rooms, as well as allowing for the attraction of much higher visitor numbers.
- 4.6 A vital part of the process in any project of this scale is the creation of a properly developed concept and brief. But once that is done any development would also provide an opportunity for a major architectural intervention – perhaps through an architectural competition – that could transform Merthyr's image as a tourist centre. If properly connected to other key sites, through imaginative physical and online signposting, the effects of such a development would be felt over time across the rest of the town and the region. These wider effects are unlikely to be achieved by more modest incremental changes, therefore the review will look at transformational change.
- 4.7 HLF allocate up to two years to develop the Stage 2 application, but due to the work undertaken by the Design Commission for Wales, HLF has granted an extension until March 2019 for the submission of the application.
- 4.8 On the 1st September 2016, a Stage 1 application was submitted to HLF to secure funds for further capital works and an activity programme for Cyfarthfa Park. Similarly to the Castle, the proposal to HLF was to secure funding for the 'development phase' to prepare the Stage 2 application, which if approved will secure funds for the 'delivery phase'.
- 4.9 The overall proposal is to deliver a capital programme which will enhance the key heritage features within the park including better interpretation, improved access and navigation and create links to the industrial heritage hinterland. The programme of activities will enable MTCBC and the Leisure Trust to engage with more, and a wider range of people, to take an active part in making decisions about our heritage as well as further develop their understanding of the area. The project will also focus on recent Roman and Medieval finds, telling a history of ironworking and its impact on

the landscape and people of Merthyr Tydfil. The application will be submitted in September 2018 but the Park will form a key part of the review.

- 4.10 The charrette report identified that the park is a major asset. It has a scale of its own and has significant water features that are connected to the history of iron-making. However, in landscape terms, the park has not yet realised its full potential for further enhancement in ways that could make it a major visitor attraction in its own right.

5.0 FUTURE DELIVERY

- 5.1 It has been identified that the delivery of the vision outlined within the charrette report will require human and financial resources beyond those of the local authority itself. The full implementation of all elements envisaged will need to be fully costed but may be in the order of £50m, possibly spread over a decade. The realisation of the full vision will require an innovative approach to procurement and delivery and the enthusiastic commitment of Merthyr Council, the Merthyr Leisure Trust and the Welsh Government, as well as other community organisations, stakeholders and funders.
- 5.2 The charrette day demonstrated beyond doubt that Merthyr has resources of powerful loyalty to the place and pride in its history. The presiding impulse from all participants was to raise the town's projection to the world today to a position truly commensurate with its international importance in our industrial, social and political history.
- 5.3 A Special Purpose Vehicle is to be created to steer this project, to bring all governmental and community stakeholders together with the best specialist expertise and to ensure continuity of vision over the long term and beyond political cycles.

6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 6.1 A comprehensive fundraising strategy will be developed to support any developments including a review of the existing Heritage Lottery Fund applications.
- 6.2 £1,320,000 has been secured through the Council's Capital Programme between 18/19 and 21/22 to utilise as match funding against any funding applications.

7.0 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) form has been prepared for the purpose of this report. It has been found that a full assessment is not required at this time. The form can be accessed on the Council's website/intranet via the 'Equality Impact Assessment' link.

**ALYN OWEN
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**COUNCILLOR GERAINT THOMAS
CABINET MEMBER FOR
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BACKGROUND PAPERS		
Title of Document(s)	Document(s) Date	Document Location
Does the report contain any issue that may impact the Council's Constitution?		

Consultation has been undertaken with the Corporate Management Team in respect of each proposal(s) and recommendation(s) set out in this report.