

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

13TH DECEMBER 2021

PROPOSALS FOR THE REGENERATION OF PENRHYS

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROSPERITY & DEVELOPMENT IN DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER (CLLR R BEVAN)

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to set out the work being undertaken to explore options for the regeneration of the Penrhys Estate and surrounding area and agree a framework for taking this work forward in partnership with Trivallis and the Prince's Foundation.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Council:

- 2.1 Note the information provided within the report, and the work undertaken so far in considering options for the future of the estate and its community.
- 2.2 Agree the aspirations and objectives for the high quality regeneration of the estate and surrounding area as set out in the report as a focus for ongoing work.
- 2.3 Agree to the engaging of the services of the Prince's Foundation to work with the Council and Trivallis as a key partner in delivering against the aspirations and objectives with Trivallis being the lead procurement body.
- 2.4 Enter into a formal Collaboration Agreement with Trivallis to establish a framework to govern the respective rights and obligations of the Council and Trivallis in the delivery of the regeneration project.

3. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To agree a framework for ensuring the ongoing sustainability of the community at Penrhys and for the regeneration of the estate and the wider area.

4 **BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 The Penrhys Estate was first developed in 1966 as a modern housing development and on opening in 1968, comprised of 951 new homes, which at the time was the largest public sector housing venture in Wales.
- 4.2 During the late 1970s and 1980s, for a range of reasons, the fabric of the estate began to deteriorate and the number of residents leaving the estate was larger than the number of new residents coming in.
- 4.3 Whilst attempts were made to address the issues at the estate with houses refurbished and environmental improvements made throughout the estate, more and more residents continued to move on from the estate and now much of the original development has been demolished and cleared. In 2007 the site transferred ownership from the Council to RCT Homes, now Trivallis, as part of the wider stock transfer programme.
- 4.4 As of today, there are around 268 housing units left at the site with little more than 200 occupied. There are several streets where the stock condition is poor and current estimates show that a repair programme to acceptable standards is likely to be uneconomical. The high level of voids impacts adversely on the overall environment at the estate.
- 4.5 Penrhys Primary School is of a CLASP construction set within a very open site. The opportunities for outdoor play are limited; there are no external green spaces available and all of the hard play areas are extremely exposed due to the topography of the site.
- 4.6 The school currently is in need of renovation and has a current energy rating of E making it an inefficient building due to the type of construction. Unfortunately, little can be done to rectify the position due to the presence of asbestos which is managed on site, and the school which was constructed in 1968 is, in all reality, approaching the end of its useful life.
- 4.7 The current capacity of the school is 130 and the numbers on roll currently are 92. There are two additional learning support classes. The majority of the children walk to school and Home to School Transport taxi children in who attend our Learning Support Classes and over 75% of the children are eligible for free school meals.
- 4.8 Cabinet will be aware that the Welsh Government have awarded an approval in principle to increase the Council's Strategic Outline Programme for 21st Century Schools and Colleges investment to circa £252million, Cabinet will also be aware that this Programme includes

building a new primary school for Penrhys. This new school will complement the regeneration proposals outlined in this report, delivering modern learning environments for learners and staff which will enhance the learning experience for all, as well as providing additional facilities for the community including community rooms and a multi-use games area. The Council is committed to achieving Net Zero Carbon in operation for our new school builds, and this school will be no exception.

- 4.9 Community facilities in Penrhys have declined in recent years and along with the ending of the Communities First programme, there has been a weakening of the voluntary sector presence at the estate and in particular the Penrhys Partnership. Over the past ten years community buildings such as the Arts Centre, Penrhys Partnership Offices and Boiler House Project have all closed. Currently the Community Church is still operating although activity has reduced over several years. All but one of the local shops on the estate have closed.
- 4.10 The Council owns a significant amount of land surrounding the wider estate area including the school site. Much of it is sloping and may not be suitable for residential development but could be considered for some use as part of a wider proposal. The Council owns land to the south of the main roundabout at the entrance to the estate that can also be considered as part of any proposals for the regeneration of the area but clearly subject to the necessary statutory consents. The streets and pavements around the estate were retained by the Council at the time of the stock transfer to RCT Homes.
- 4.10 Do nothing is not an option for the estate and its residents. Even if the quality of accommodation for existing residents is improved it is unlikely that a community of such limited size could support any level of local facilities, with a risk that residents become increasingly isolated. As such, the following sections set out a framework for proposals aimed at ensuring the ongoing sustainability of the community at Penrhys and for the regeneration of the estate and the wider area.

5. REGENERATION PROPOSALS

- 5.1 Officers of the Council have been working closely with colleagues in Trivallis to explore the opportunities to address both the issues around the immediate future of the existing residents who wish to remain on the estate but are in need of improved housing conditions and also to address how a wider investment and regeneration programme can be developed that ensures that the community at Penrhys has a long term, sustainable future.
- 5.2 Trivallis have already engaged the services of an urban design consultancy whose brief was to establish a baseline of evidence to develop a strategic direction for future decision making for Penrhys.

- 5.3 Their work so far includes reviews of:
- The role of Penrhys within the wider Valleys Taskforce Area
 - The village's micro-climate characteristics and the opportunities for renewable energy generation
 - The impact of climate change and shifts in the choices of mobility, working patterns and energy consumption
 - Site based environmental opportunities and constraints
 - Landscape impact and opportunities around the views out from the site
 - The state of existing site utilities and services
 - Landownership implications
 - Potential around connectivity and movement and links to Metro nodes
- 5.4 Officers have also been discussing the wider planning context of the emerging work and how and where that fits within the review of the Council's Local Development Plan review.
- 5.5 Ultimately, all parties involved in the work undertaken so far consider that there is real potential to deliver a high quality programme of regeneration that at its heart improves the lives of the current residents of Penrhys. The vision for the estate needs to reframe its future and develop a whole new perspective on Penrhys as a place.
- 5.6 Given the starting point for this programme of regeneration, the initial interventions will need to be led by the public sector but with the aim of shifting the perception of the place so that private investment follows to ensure a sustainable future.
- 5.7 It is considered that this high quality, sustainable community could take the form of:
- New, quality homes for existing residents who wish to remain in their community
 - The redevelopment of the wider site delivering up to 900 high quality new homes across a range of house types and tenure supported by a unique lifestyle offer based around outdoor activity and nature
 - Pursue low carbon and zero carbon developments utilising a range of renewable energy options for the surrounding area
 - A new school and local services at the heart of the community
 - Innovative approaches to reduce the need to travel by car, using 'flexihomes' to promote home working and independence, communal electric cars and utilising the expanded community to promote more sustainable public transport services
 - Explore opportunities for the creation of new workspace building on the site's location at the heart of the Rhondda

valleys

- 5.8 In resetting the vision for the future of Penrhys it is important that we learn lessons from the past. Critical to the success of any regeneration proposals will be to change unfounded external perceptions of the place and focus on the unique natural environment, and the opportunities to create a popular and sustainable community living in high quality homes. The new Penrhys should be developed to such a high standard that it will be a place where people will actively seek to live, raising the bar for the quality of development in the area.
- 5.9 A key tool for achieving this step change in quality and perception is the proposal to engage the services of the Prince's Foundation as a key partner in developing and delivering the plans for the site

The Prince's Foundation

- 5.10 The Prince's Foundation offers support to the public and private sector to create communities through, amongst other things, championing a sustainable approach to how we live our lives and build our homes. This approach aims to realise HRH The Prince of Wales' vision of creating harmonious communities, respecting the past and building the future. Developments led by the Foundation have an international reputation for their quality in terms of planning, design, delivery and the sustainable communities they create.
- 5.11 Photographs of projects relevant to the Foundation's involvement in Penrhys are attached at Appendix A and these projects include:
- Nansledan in Cornwall a 4,000 home urban extension to Newquay
 - Coed Darcy, 4,000 new homes at the former BP Llandarcy oil refinery site
 - Poundbury, an experimental new village of 1,700 new homes on the edge of Dorchester
- 5.12 Discussions have taken place with representatives of the Foundation and the vision for the regeneration of Penrhys is something that is of genuine interest to them. The Foundation has submitted a proposal setting out the terms and conditions for their engagement in working in partnership with the Council and Trivallis on the regeneration of Penrhys.
- 5.13 The Prince's Foundation would work in partnership with the Council and Trivallis to review and agree all development issues as they relate to design and delivery of the vision for Penrhys. The Foundation would maintain a key role through all stages of the process from development of the vision and testing of proposals, through to the procurement of developers and to implementation on site. The Foundation would need to see that there is delivery of their principles and design quality

throughout the process. The Foundation would take the role of the 'partners' lead representative providing advice, and guidance through the regeneration planning, implementation and delivery phases.

- 5.14 The Foundation would become an integral part of the governance arrangements of the project including sitting alongside the Council and Trivallis to consider appropriate implementation and delivery vehicles including possible joint venture development models and associated procurement issues, as well as agreeing the identification and appointment of developer partners and the development heads of terms. It is proposed that the precise governance arrangements will be refined over time but will be based around these basic principles.
- 5.15 The Foundation would expect to work with the Council and Trivallis in identifying and selecting appropriate consultants aligned to the agreed values and principles of the both the Foundation and the Council/Trivallis.
- 5.16 As the project progresses and to ensure delivery of the vision through all stages, the Foundation would be involved in review and sign off any draft designs by others to ensure that they meet the agreed design aspirations before being submitted for planning. Any agreement between the Foundation and the Council and Trivallis will require the inclusion of a suitably agreed process and mechanism for dispute resolution.
- 5.17 In practical terms, the Foundation's approach is to lead partners, the community and other relevant stakeholders through a process to deliver a vision and masterplan for the regeneration of Penrhys, with community engagement at the heart of the process. The Foundation places engagement at the centre of the process and uses innovative methods that bring together key stakeholders and the local community to collaborate on the vision for the new and revived community.
- 5.18 One of the key products of the partnership will be the development of an Implementation Action Plan with an emphasis on implementation and deliverability within an appropriate timescale. The Implementation Strategy will cover issues such as phasing and the release of land, development procurement potential, means of delivery and funding. It would also include financial and economic appraisals demonstrating the viability of development and socioeconomic benefits over time.
- 5.19 Key elements of the Implementation Action Plan should include:
 - Land assembly
 - Delivery mechanisms and programmes
 - Phasing of infrastructure and development costs
 - Measures to secure long term community involvement in management and future
 - planning of area (eg: community trust initiatives)

- Requirements for partnership working and identification of partners
 - Potential sources of funding (including planning obligations under Section 106 agreements)
- 5.20 An important role of the Implementation Plan will be the translation of development opportunities into wider socio-economic regeneration benefits that can then be shared with stakeholders as part of any funding process and agreements.
- 5.21 The Prince's Foundation have submitted a fee proposal for this work and it is reflective of the detailed level of support they will bring to the partnership and the sustained duration of their involvement. The total indicative fee for this full scope of service proposal is £110,000.
- 5.22 The Foundation would look to charge the fee based on its charitable rates on a phased basis and aligned to the following stages:
- An initial fee for the Inception stage, establishment of the project and governance structure and initial Community Stakeholder Workshop Process.
 - A fee to lead on the development of masterplan options associated viability and testing leading into and including the masterplan workshop.
 - The development of the final masterplan, and associated Pattern Book / Design Code in order to support procurement of development partners and funding negotiations alongside the development of the implementation and delivery strategy. Also, in support of any outline planning applications.
 - An ongoing retention fee for involvement in supporting the Council and Trivallis as Client Critical friend to review and sign off designs and ensure quality delivery in accordance with the design code and aligned aspirations including the Foundation's principles and values; To include involvement in any Strategic Board/Development Trust;
- 5.23 Members may be aware of recent news reports around the resignation of the former CEO of the Foundation in light of an investigation by the Charity Commission in Scotland. It is not considered that the actions of this individual in any way compromises the reputation of the exemplar work the Foundation itself does in the field of developing and delivering sustainable, high quality communities.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment screening form is not necessary at this stage but EIA will need to form an integral part of the proposals for the regeneration of Penrhys going forward.

7. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 A Welsh Language impact assessment is not necessary at this time.

8. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

- 8.1 This report has been prepared in consultation with senior officials at Trivallis. Should this report be agreed then community, stakeholder and statutory consultation will be an integral part of the process going forward.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 To move to the next stages as set out above and the engagement of the Prince's Foundation will cost £110,000. It is proposed that this cost is split equally between the Council and Trivallis. The Council element of the cost will be met from the existing Regeneration Investment Fund.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 10.1 There are no statutory legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report. However, the services of the Council's Legal team will be engaged in the establishment of any collaboration agreement with the Prince's Foundation and/or Trivallis

11. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

- 11.1 The proposals set out above would directly contribute to developing community resilience and wellbeing along with significant benefits for the environment and local economy. This will contribute to the delivery of all three of the Council's Corporate Plan priorities of economy, people and place

- 11.2 It will also make a significant positive contribution to the seven goals set out in the Well-Being of Future Generations Act.

12. CONCLUSION

- 12.1 There is a real opportunity emerging to deliver a high-quality programme of regeneration at Penrhys that at its heart improves the lives of the current residents. The proposals highlighted above would improve the quality of accommodation for the existing people of Penrhys whilst

creating an expanded settlement that would ensure the sustainability and vibrancy of the community for the long term.

- 12.2 It is important to recognise that these proposals will have a significant impact on the lives of the existing residents and engagement with them will be crucial. A well thought out engagement strategy is essential to ensure that the community is involved in the right way at the right times and also to avoid consultation overload.
- 12.3 In addition to the local benefits to the community, the development opportunities at Penrhys have the potential to meet the wider demand for housing land in the Rhondda where such opportunities are limited due to topography and constraints left by past coal mining and flood risk.
- 12.4 The proposed partnership with the Prince's Foundation will bring significant gravitas to the project and ensure a high quality of design which in turn should lead to positive exposure across a wide area which can only serve to enhance the reputation of the new community as a great place to live.

APPENDIX A – EXAMPLES OF PRINCE'S FOUNDATION PROJECTS

Nansledan in Cornwall a 4,000 home urban extension to Newquay (under construction)



Coed Darcy, 4,000 new homes at the former BP Llandarcy oil refinery site



Poundbury, an experimental new village of 1,700 new homes on the edge of Dorchester

