

REPORT TO CABINET
20 November 2018

THE BRITISH: MASTERPLAN & PREFERRED REMEDIATION APPROACH

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1. Area Affected

1.1 Abersychan and Talywain.

2. Purpose of Report

- 2.1
- To update Cabinet on the preferred remediation approach and the development of a draft Masterplan for the British
 - To seek Cabinet approval of the draft Masterplan for the British, subject to any changes required by the planning process.

3. Key messages

- 3.1
- Officers have received the concept design for the remediation works at the British.
 - A planning application is required before remediation works can commence. The application must include a “Development Framework”. This concludes with a masterplan showing future land uses.
 - A masterplan has now been produced (see Appendix 3). There has been extensive public and stakeholder engagement in the development of the masterplan. The masterplan is the development framework.
 - Subject to approval, officers will:
 - (a) develop the final design and documentation needed to submit a planning application for the remediation scheme;
 - (b) pursue funding and partnership opportunities to deliver the projects in the masterplan; and
 - (c) identify and commission the information required to incorporate the masterplan into the emerging replacement Local Development Plan

4. Background

4.1 The Council has sought for many years to secure the remediation of “The British” in Talywain, and to explore sustainable land uses for the site. In 2016 a “once-in-a-generation” opportunity presented itself to acquire “The British” at a reasonable purchase price and end the cycle of private sector speculation that had been the largest barrier to remediation and regeneration for over 30 years.

4.2 The reclamation of “the British” is a strategic priority within the Local Development Plan. The site is allocated as a Strategic Action Area (SAA5). The SAA5 summary states:

“Land is allocated at the British Strategic Action Area, Talywain for a major land reclamation scheme. The land reclamation scheme will prepare the land required for future redevelopment as part of a long term regeneration scheme and make safe the surrounding land. The subsequent land form and extent of compaction required to enable redevelopment will be informed by a Development Framework.”

4.3 In October 2016, Council took the decision to (a) proceed with the purchase, (b) to allocate up to £2M from its Capital Programme, and (c) to accept a grant of £1.7M from Welsh Government’s Vibrant and Viable places programme. This would allow the Council to proceed with the purchase, treat the highest risk hazards and put in place a masterplan and management plan to deliver the long-term objectives of the British site.

4.4 The long-term objectives for the British site are:

IO1: Manage worst health & safety hazards

IO2: Strengthen community aspirations for future generations

IO3: Support health & wellbeing : Green infrastructure and access to the environment

IO4: Enhance environmental resilience & biodiversity

IO5: Unlock opportunities for private/third sector investment, jobs & growth

IO6: Unlock potential opportunities for future housing development

IO7: Unlock potential opportunities for green energy

IO8: Protect and promote heritage

4.5 To deliver these objectives, officers have now produced a concept remediation design and draft masterplan. These take into account the findings of the Remediation Options Appraisal, and the outcome of our public engagement activities.

5. Issues and Findings

5.1 Preferred Remediation Approach

5.1.1 To inform the Masterplan, officers commissioned a Remediation Options Appraisal to assess whether the proposed remediation approach (targeting individual hazards) was the most appropriate in light of the changing economic climate, environmental situation, legislative context and available budget. This needs to be established as part of any planning application.

The Options Appraisal has provided:

- A constraints map in relation to shallow mine workings, tip material, mine entries, ecology, hydrology, heritage and contamination to inform the masterplan;
- A risk review and prioritisation of mine entries requiring further assessment;

- Hydrological Analysis to inform flood risk design
- A preferred solution to manage flood risk with consideration of how this could be implemented incrementally as/when funding becomes available;
- An appraisal of the costs of delivering this preferred remediation approach;
- A summary of “data gaps” to be addressed during the technical design.

The Options Appraisal recommends that TCBC proceed with a targeted approach to the remediation of the greatest flood risk and these high priority mine entries. This preferred remediation approach is shown graphically in **Appendix 1**.

- 5.1.2 One of the principal outputs of the Remediation Options Appraisal was to produce a concept watercourse scheme for the masterplan, and to identify which components could be achieved within the available budget. The consultants have broken the full concept down into possible packages of works that could deliver incrementally.

Based on the available budget, the proposed watercourse works will therefore focus on redirecting the Blaengafog watercourse south of Farm Road from the existing culverts into new channels at surface with 2 attenuation / amenity ponds along the route. The watercourse will then re-enter the culvert network to leave the site under Big Arch.

- 5.1.3 A second major component of the Remediation Options Appraisal was to produce a risk ranking of mine entries that would identify the highest priorities for treatment in line with the available budget.

- Whether the feature is recorded as a shaft (higher risk) or adit (lower risk);
- The origin of the record: whether or not it is included in the Coal Authority records;
- For Coal Authority recorded entries, whether treatment detail is known and what is known about that treatment;
- Current ground/vegetation cover: this is considered to be an indicator of the risk of members of the public accessing the area around the mine entry.
- Whether the entries are in official or commonly used walking routes;
- Whether the entries are along the route of the proposed watercourse;

The Options Appraisal consultants have then undertaken a further prioritization to identify which of these entries should be prioritized for treatment.

A total of 11 adits and up to 16 shafts have been identified as the highest priority to consider for treatment due to potential risks to members of the public. These are shown in **Appendix 2**.

- 5.1.4 The budget will now be re-profiled to reflect this stage of design. The re-profiled

budget is as follows:

Year	Total	Change from 2016 Report
Mine entries (Design & Works)	£448,000	- £952,000
Surface Watercourses (Design & Works)	£1,778,485	+ £878,485
Regrading / Planting (Design & Works)	£185,000	- £65,000
Planning & Consultancy	£427,006	+ £141,253
Project & Contract Management	£454,247	
Urgent Risk Control	£77,262	- £32,738
Acquisition & Tenancies	£330,000	+ £30,000
TOTALS	£3,700,000	0

- 5.1.5 A final version of the Remediation Options Appraisal is currently being peer reviewed by the Coal Authority.

Subject to approval of this report, officers will commence preparation of the designs and documentation for a planning submission.

5.2 Site Hazards

- 5.2.1 As set out in sections 4.8 and 5.3 of the report to Council in October 2016, there will be a number of site hazards which the project will not remediate and which will therefore remain with the Council following the Phase 1 works. The site hazards have been updated and can be found in Appendix 5.

5.3 Development of the Masterplan

- 5.3.1 This is a huge site which has generated much community passion and interest over the years. It is therefore only right and proper that a masterplan is created in full consultation with the community and stakeholders to ensure there is full understanding and buy in to the outcomes this long term project will deliver. In addition a planning application is required before remediation works can commence. In accordance with the LDP, the application must include a “Development Framework”.

The Development Framework should justify how the proposed remediation works will address the constraints of the British site, and how it will enable future land use opportunities taking into account technical and economic constraints. The opportunities in the LDP for consideration are:

- Residential development of a quantity to be determined
- Employment development of a size to be determined
- Provision of education
- Local neighbourhood centre including shops
- Consideration of internal circulation governed by the principles of a sustainable movement hierarchy

- Primary access routes to the north and south
- Green infrastructure through the development and enhancement of biodiversity
- Provision of formal and informal recreation space
- How the wider area to the west of the British can be incorporated into the scheme

The Development Framework will therefore conclude with a “Masterplan” showing proposed land uses once the remediation works have been completed.

5.3.2 The preferred remediation approach does not allow for compaction of the surrounding mine workings. As such, the extent of potential development land within the draft masterplan is more limited than in previous undelivered proposals for the British site and this has consequences for the opportunities envisaged in the LDP, including:

- **Green Infrastructure:** the remediation approach will create new features that can enhance the green infrastructure beyond that envisaged in the LDP
- **Residential:** There will be significantly less land which is suitable for housing under the proposed remediation approach than would have been the case had compaction been viable.
- **Employment:** In the absence of significant strategic road infrastructure improvements, it is unlikely that this site will be able to attract demand for industrial space.
- **Education provision:** With less housing land than previously envisaged it is unlikely that there will be sufficient additional pupil numbers from the site to require the construction of a new primary school.
- **Local Neighbourhood Centre:** With less housing land than previously envisaged it is unlikely that there will be sufficient additional footfall and disposable income without creating a negative impact on the existing shops on Commercial Road (Talywain) and Stanley Road (Garndiffaith).

5.3.3 The “constraints and opportunities” mapping has fed into an extensive programme of public and stakeholder engagement with the aim of identifying a long-term vision for The British. The engagement activities are set out in **section 6**.

The following vision has subsequently been agreed for the Masterplan:

“A Sustainable Community; a Dramatic Natural Landscape with a Wealth of Historic Character”

5.3.4 The resulting masterplan is shown in **Appendix 3**. It comprises a series of individual projects.

It should be noted that the masterplan has not yet progressed through the formal planning process which will commence after this report. The planning process may require amendments to this masterplan.

6. Consultation

6.1 Alongside regular working group meetings which are attended by the British Liaison Group and Gwent Wildlife Trust, the following public/stakeholder engagement activities have been undertaken in developing the masterplan:

- **May 2017:** Awareness raising activities and community litter pick with Garnteg School in collaboration with Keep Wales Tidy.
- **May 2017:** Cardiff University planning students' masterplanning session.
- **August 2017:** Community workshop to raise awareness of the project, to identify ideas for land uses, and to set a vision. 146 members of the public attended the sessions across Talywain and Garndiffaith.
- **November 2017:** Community litter pick with Keep Wales Tidy
- **December 2017:** Gwent Wildlife Trust MoU signed which sets out a framework for working together to encourage residents to take an active role in monitoring and managing the landscape on the British and to raise the profile of ecology on the site.
- **June 2017:** Community litter pick with Keep Wales Tidy
- **January 2018:** Masterplan working group (including British Liaison Group and Gwent Wildlife Trust representatives) met to review pros and cons of community proposals
- **May 2018:** Cardiff University planning students' masterplanning session.
- **July & August 2018:** Community Workshops to review the draft masterplan and proposed projects and to raise awareness of the preferred remediation approach and works. 74 community members attended the sessions
- **July & August 2018:** Online Publication via the PSB's "Get Involved" website. 66 responses received.
- **July & August 2018:** Youth engagement session via the Play Service at 4 sessions. 27 responses received.
- **November 2018:** Community litter pick with Keep Wales Tidy

6.2 In addition, regular stakeholder engagement has been done with:

- Keep Wales Tidy:
- Cardiff University:
- South Wales Fire and Rescue Service:
- Local Partnerships:
- Coal Authority:
- Coalfield Regeneration Trust:
- Welsh Government:

In addition, officers have updated Cadw and Natural Resources Wales on the proposals and will continue to do so throughout the development and planning process.

6.3 The draft masterplan was subject to public consultation in July / August 2018. Key findings were as follows:

Taking ideas from workshops with the local community, we've put together this masterplan. What do you think of it? Have we missed anything?

Over 70% of responses raised no concerns at all about the draft masterplan. Of the remainder, 24% were largely positive but with some specific reservations. The remaining 3% of comments were not supportive of the draft masterplan.

Which of the future projects interests you the most? Have we missed anything from our discussions?

Consultees were presented with the specific projects that make up the draft masterplan and asked to identify which ones interested them the most. This provides us with an indication of priorities. 60% of consultees named specific priorities which were as follows:

Entrance to the British	6
Ironworks Heritage Trail & Café	30
Accessing the British	14
Road Improvements	1
Landscape Corridor	22
Potential Development Areas	4
Community Food Growing Zone	8
Discovery Trail Hub	7
Sustainable Energy Generation	12
Cwmbyrgwm Heritage Trail	8
Trekking Centre	7

6.4 Council Officers:

Finance: No comments raised.

Legal Services: No comments raised.

Equalities: No comments raised.

Highways Network: No comments raised.

6.5 Cleaner Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee Feedback

The committee noted that they *“felt that the consultation process had been carried out effectively, taking appropriate consideration into the views of the consultees”*.

The committee made the following recommendations which are being reviewed and/or implemented:

1. *Communication with the local community enabling joint working is key to this*

project continuing successfully. Consultation should continue to be an ongoing process for all stages of this process including when the new LDP is developed.

2. *Project risk and opportunity logs should be in place to ensure business continuity is considered, especially in relation to workforce planning, to prevent loss of knowledge as a result of losing staff.*
3. *When working with voluntary groups it should be carried out in as transparent a way as possible at all times.*
4. *Priority should be given to adding more resource into attracting commercial opportunities to the site when the time is right.*

7 Policy Impact and Wellbeing Assessments

7.1 An updated version of the project Wellbeing Assessment is provided in **Appendix 4**

8 Risks

8.1 The British features on the Council’s corporate risk register “there is a risk that failure to properly reclaim and regenerate The British could lead to reputational and operational risks”. This risk is managed through the engagement approaches identified above and through monitoring of the programme and capital expenditure at the Capital Working Group. There are operational and site risks and these are outlined below.

The principal site hazards remaining after the remediation works are discussed in section 5.2. and Appendix 5.

Risk	Risk Control
Undersized channels leading to failure of the water transport system (culvert / channel) leading to flooding in Abersychan	A structural survey of the culverts was commissioned to determine the condition of the culverts. The worst damaged culverts along the Blaengafog watercourse will be bypassed as part of the remediation works, with the water being kept at surface on that route.
Insufficiently protected channels leading to a build up of eroded material and blockages within the in water transport system (channels / culverts)	The detailed design of the watercourse channels will consider appropriate channel protection for the Blaengafog Route. The Cwmsychan and Cwmybyrgwm watercourses will remain. Culvert entrances will be monitored for build up of blockages / silt
Collapse of shallow mine workings during works	Abandonment plans show the location of workings for known pits in the area at the time of their closure. These will be used to inform the detailed design of the works and access routes for heavy machinery.

Injury from fall through untreated/ sub-standard treated shaft in TCBC ownership	AECOM (a multidisciplinary consultancy) were appointed to undertake a prioritization exercise as part of the remediation options appraisal. This has been undertaken and has informed the proposals for the remediation works. The remaining risks are identified in Section 5.2.1
Collapse of listed building following deterioration	The funding does not allow for the repair of the listed structures. A structural survey has been commissioned and robust fencing has been erected to prevent vandalism. Further funding will be sought from Cadw and other sources in line with the objectives of the masterplan.
Injury or damage resulting from uncatalogued or unknown hazards	Permissive route marking has been erected to identify the safest walking routes. Contractors and consultants are required to provide risk assessments to indicate which areas of the site they will be accessing.
Tendered rates increase as a result of on-site abnormalities	A contingency has been allocated which will be reviewed as designs progress. The consultation has clearly indicated that some features may need to be removed from the watercourse route should other issues emerge.
Changes required to the scheme as a result of the planning process	Planning consultees are aware of the proposed works and masterplan. The Coal Authority are undertaking a peer review and NRW have early sight of the proposed concept and masterplan for comment.
Inlets continue to discharge into culvert network leading to build-up of hydraulic pressure and breach	This will be considered as part of the detailed design process.
Failure of water transport network (Channels / Culverts) due to insufficient maintenance leading to flooding downstream	A structural survey of the culverts was commissioned to determine the condition of the culverts. The worst damaged culverts along the Blaengafog watercourse will be bypassed as part of the remediation works, with the water being kept at surface on that route.

9. Action to be taken following decision

- 9.1 Officers will develop the final design and documentation needed to submit a planning application for the remediation scheme.
- 9.2 Officers from Forward Planning and Economy & Strategic Regeneration will identify and commission viability testing required in relation to the masterplan to inform the emerging Local Development Plan
- 9.3 Officers will explore funding and partnership opportunities to deliver the projects in the masterplan

10. Measure of success

- 10.1
- The vision within the masterplan is delivered
 - The remediation works will secure planning consent
 - The identified health and safety risks set out above will be satisfactorily mitigated
 - The community will be kept up to date on the remediation plans
 - Masterplan projects will be developed into funding applications
 - Successful partnership arrangements will continue.

11. Conclusion/summary

- 11.1 Officers have also now received the concept design for the remediation works and the draft masterplan for the British based on the findings of the Remediation Options Appraisal and extensive public engagement activities.
- 11.2 The remediation proposals to address the greatest flood risk and the highest priority mine entries is shown in Appendix 1 & 2.
- 11.3 A planning application is required before remediation works can commence. It is important that both for planning but also for strategic programme management this site has a vision, a masterplan to identify how constraints will be managed and opportunities maximized.
- 11.4 A masterplan has now been produced (see Appendix 3). There has been extensive public and stakeholder engagement in the development and consultation of the masterplan.
- 11.5 If the masterplan is approved, officers will develop the final design and documentation needed to submit a planning application for the remediation scheme; identify and commission viability testing required in relation to the masterplan to inform the emerging Local Development Plan; and explore funding and partnership opportunities to deliver the projects in the masterplan.

12. Recommendation(s)

- 12.1 That Cabinet approves the draft Masterplan for the British, subject to any changes

required by the planning process.

12.2 That Cabinet notes the preferred remediation approach and proposed works

12.3 That Cabinet notes the re-profiled budget.

Appendices	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Appendix 1 – Preferred Remediation Approach2. Appendix 2 – Mine entries proposed for investigation/treatment3. Appendix 3 – Masterplan Summary & Projects4. Appendix 4 – Wellbeing Assessment5. Appendix 5 – Site Hazards
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Background Papers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Council Report October 2016- British Business Plan- Summary of Consultation Feedback
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For a copy of the background papers or for further information about this report, please telephone: David Leech, Economy & Strategic Regeneration Manager, david.leech@torfaen.gov.uk, 01495 766084