

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL.

CABINET

28 FEBRUARY 2017

**REPORT AUTHOR: CLLR ROSEMARIE HARRIS (PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR
PROPERTY, BUILDINGS AND HOUSING) & CLLR TONY
THOMAS (PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR REGENERATION)
& CLLR JOHN POWELL (PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR
ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY)**

**SUBJECT: Use of site for development of Business Units and
Recyclables Bulking Centre**

REPORT FOR: Decision

1. Summary

- 1.0 A site in Abermule was approved for purchase on 22 February 2017 (shown edged red on the attached plan).
- 1.1 It is proposed that the site will be shared between the Commercial Property portfolio, which will develop around 53% of the site for new Business units, whilst approximately 47% of the site will be utilised by Highways Transport and Recycling (HTR) as a new Material Recycling Facility (MRF) for the northern part of the County. Within those figures, approximately 15% of the site will be utilised as highway infrastructure, electricity substation and sewerage pumping station.
- 1.2 HTR has resources for the acquisition and development of a bulk recycling site. At the present time Corporate Property does not have the resources to develop the whole site and so HTR's contribution would help to achieve development of the whole site within a shorter timescale.
- 1.3 It should be noted that planning permission to construct any of the units on the site has yet to be obtained. However, we have obtained pre-application advice from our planning department who have raised no concerns over the proposed use of the site. The main concern raised about construction was in relation to flooding as the site was designated within a high risk flooding area. We have mitigated this risk by carrying out a detailed flood risk assessment which has shown that it is not actually a high risk flood area.

2 Proposal

- 2.1 That Cabinet confirm the proposed use of the site for both the development of business units and an MRF.

3 One Powys Plan

- 3.1 The proposal directly supports at least one of the priorities of the Corporate Improvement Plan:-

Developing the Economy: by developing and growing the existing Commercial Property portfolio, the County Council is contributing towards enabling growing businesses to expand and to create employment opportunities which contribute to success of their local communities and wider Powys economy.

This expansion should also provide a useful income stream to the Council enabling it to better meet its priorities.

It is also expected that this proposal will also contribute towards improved wellbeing, reduced poverty and – especially – the provision of new jobs for local people.

- 3.2 The proposal will also assist the Council to meet its obligations to Welsh Government to increase recycling rates to 70% by 2025, and 100% by 2050.

4 Options Considered/Available

- 4.1 Option 1- Approve the proposed use of the site and enable the development of a range of business units to aid economic growth and contribute towards stronger communities, whilst also ensuring the provision of a new bulk recycling facility for the north of the county.
- 4.2 Option 2- Reject the proposal, meaning that only part of the site can be developed for business units in the immediate term. No other viable site for an MFR can be found in the north of the County and so the Council would risk being able to meet its recycling objectives in the future.

5 Preferred Choice and Reasons

- 5.1 **Option 1** is the preferred option as it provides a viable scheme capable of delivery in the short to medium term which meets multiple Council objectives.

6 Sustainability and Environmental Issues/Equalities/Crime and Disorder,/Welsh Language/Other Policies etc

- 6.1 The proposal will make the Council more sustainable as it will have newer more energy efficient units within its portfolio. The income produced will also help the Council become more self-sufficient.
- 6.2 The proposal contributes towards sustainability and environmental issues by providing the required infrastructure to ensure the Council is able to meet and hopefully exceed the recycling targets of Welsh Government and, in doing so, by reducing the amount of waste currently sent to landfill at significant cost to the taxpayer.
- 6.3 The proposal will also contribute towards Equalities and Crime and Disorder policies by helping to ensure that opportunities exist for people living in the county to create employment opportunities for (hopefully) not only themselves but also other residents, as their business flourish and grow.

7 Children and Young People's Impact Statement - Safeguarding and Wellbeing

Not applicable

8 Other Front Line Services

- 8.1 This proposal would need a unified approach to be taken with regard to design by both the Council's Strategic Corporate Property Team and HTR, to ensure that a consistent theme and design is incorporated across the whole site.

9. Local Service Board/Partnerships/Stakeholders etc.

- 9.1 N/A.

10 Local Member(s)

- 10.1 The local member, Councillor Wynne Jones comments as follows:

Although the original intention for this important site at Abermule, was for the development of business units, the subsequent lack of ambition to take forward development by Welsh Government has resulted in many missed opportunities and I therefore fully support the County Council initiative to purchase the site from Welsh Government, with a firm intent to take forward development as soon as possible.

Although the proposed co-location proposals contained within this report, with the development of a recycling unit alongside business units is not in accordance with the original vision/plans for the site, there are I think several positives that arise from this proposal as follows:-

1. The site will benefit from additional flood protection that can now be afforded to be built into the scheme.
2. The funding in the capital plan for the Regeneration Service to purchase the site, will now not all be used as part of the purchase price will come from capital allocation to the HTR service. That will leave some of the unused capital allocation intended for the site purchase to be added to the funding allocated for planned Phase 1 development, which will enable the development of the business units to proceed faster than was anticipated. I seek assurance that this now unused portion of the allocated purchase funding will be retained and now used for the development of the site.
3. The co-location will enable the whole site to be potentially developed over a much shorter period, with building of the recycling unit and the other business units going ahead simultaneously, thus reducing building costs. I seek assurance on this issue and an indication of anticipated timeframe for beginning development on this site.

I have visited our new recycling facility at Rhayader and was very impressed with the design and operation, and I therefore have no concerns about the co-location of such a facility on this site, which will in fact also create some additional jobs. Access out onto the trunk road without traffic having to go through any residential community also makes this site most suitable for the development both the commercial and recycling co-located facilities.

Subject to confirmation of the questions raised in 2 & 3 above, the proposals receive my full support.

11 Support Services (Legal, Finance, Corporate Property, HR, ICT, Business Services)

- 11.1 Legal Services: The recommendation can be supported from a legal point of view
- 11.3 Corporate Property: the Professional Lead supports the proposal as the development of new business premises will endorse the Council's stated priority of "... developing the economy..." by offering opportunities to newly created and established businesses. The acquisition of the site also provides the Highways Service with a much needed MRF for the north of the County.

11.4 The Capital and Financial Planning Accountant: The Capital and Financial Planning Accountant confirms that contribution to the purchase price is part of the capital programme.

12 Local Service Board/Partnerships/Stakeholders etc

N/A

13 Corporate Communications

13.1 The Communications Officer states: The report is of public interest and requires use of news release and appropriate social media to publicise the decision.

14 Statutory Officers

14.1 The Strategic Director Resources (S151 Officer) notes the comments made by finance

14.2 The Solicitor to the Council (Monitoring Officer) has commented as follows: "I note the legal comment and have nothing to add to the report."

15 Members' Interests

15.1 The Monitoring Officer is not aware of any specific interests that may arise in relation to this report. If the Leader or Portfolio Holders have an interest he/she should declare, complete the relevant notification form and refer the matter to Cabinet for decision.

Recommendation:		Reason for Recommendation:	
That approval is given to use and develop the site for both business units and an MRF.		To enable a site to be developed as a prestige business park, and a new bulk recycling facility for the north of the County.	
Relevant Policy (ies):		Not applicable	
Within Policy:	Y	Within Budget:	Y

Relevant Local Member(s):	Councillor Wynne Jones
----------------------------------	------------------------

Person(s) To Implement	Natasha Morgan
-------------------------------	----------------

Decision:	
Date By When Decision To Be Implemented:	As soon as possible

Contact Officer Name:	Tel:	Fax:	Email:
Natasha Morgan	01597 827560	N/A	natasha.morgan@powys.gov.uk

Background Papers used to prepare Report:

PLAN

