



HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**MINUTES OF THE MULTI-LOCATIONAL MEETING HELD IN PENALLTA HOUSE
AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON TUESDAY, 19TH SEPTEMBER 2023 AT 5.30 P.M.**

PRESENT:

Councillor A. Whitcombe – Chair
Councillor S. Williams – Vice Chair

Councillors:

C. Bishop, M. Chacon-Dawson, R. Chapman, D. T. Davies, T. Heron, A. Hussey, M. James,
D. Ingram-Jones, A. McConnell, L. Phipps, H. Pritchard, J. A Pritchard, J. Rao

Cabinet Members:

Councillor S. Cook (Housing)

Together with:

N. Taylor-Williams (Head of Housing), J. Roberts-Waite (Head of Strategy and
Development), C. Forbes-Thompson (Scrutiny Manager), A. Jones (Committee Services
Officer)

RECORDING, FILMING AND VOTING ARRANGEMENTS

The Chair reminded those present that the meeting was being live-streamed and recorded and would be made available following the meeting via the Council's website – [Click Here to View](#) Members were advised that voting on decisions would be taken via Microsoft Forms.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D. Cushing, C. Cuss and B. Owen

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received at the commencement or during the course of the meeting.

3. CALL-IN PROCEDURE

There had been no matters referred to the Scrutiny Committee in accordance with the call-in procedure.

4. HOUSING AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

Cath Forbes-Thompson (Scrutiny Manager) presented the report, which outlined details of the Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme (FWP) for the period September 2023 to March 2024.

A Member requested that a report be added to the forward work programme on the Building Regulations 2025 and the construction methods that will be used for homes for the future for Caerphilly Homes. It was agreed that the Scrutiny Manager would liaise with the Member and Officers and arrange for this item to be added to the forward work programme.

Members were asked to consider the FWP alongside the Cabinet work programme and suggest any changes prior to publication on the Council's website.

It was moved and seconded that the report recommendation be approved. By way of Microsoft Forms (and in noting there were 15 for, 0 against and 0 abstentions) this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that the Forward Work Programme as appended to the meeting papers be published on the Council's website.

5. CABINET REPORTS

It was confirmed that there had been no requests for any of the Cabinet reports listed on the agenda to be brought forward for discussion at the meeting.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

6. REDEVELOPMENT OF THE FORMER OAKDALE COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL SITE BY CAERPHILLY HOMES

The Cabinet Member for Housing presented the report, which sought the Scrutiny Committee's recommendation to Cabinet to approve the signing of the Delivery Agreement with Wilmott Dixon to enable the construction of the first Caerphilly Homes mixed tenure development to start in Autumn 2023.

Members were also asked to recommend the approval of the inclusion of a later living scheme within the Oakdale development which is designed specifically to replace the sheltered housing scheme (scheduled for decommissioning) at Ty Melin and to recommend the signing of a Pre-Construction Delivery Agreement (PSCA) to further progress the design and development of the newly proposed later living element of the scheme.

The report also sought the Scrutiny Committee's recommendation that Cabinet approve the signing of a PCSA to undertake the investigatory site investigation works and design development of the Ty Melin site which will be brought forward for inclusion in the Caerphilly Homes development programme. It is proposed that due to the proximity and relationship of the existing Ty Melin site to the former Oakdale School site, the development of the site to be added to the Oakdale development programme in order to ensure the continuity of the scheme through a 2.5-3-year development programme.

The Head of Strategy and Development confirmed that this was the third time that the report had been brought to the committee and provided a full update on progress made to date. Members were advised that the Oakdale Comprehensive site was vacated in 2016 and cleared following the demolition in 2019. Following the demolition, a dedicated Strategy and Development Team began the process of exploring the potential viability of the site for residential redevelopment. Members were advised that a decision was made by Cabinet on the 9th September 2020 to sign a Pre-Construction Services Agreement (PCSA) with Wilmott Dixon to undertake detailed site investigations.

Wilmott Dixon were procured through the Scape framework as the development partner. They undertook an initial feasibility study at the start of the development as part of the Pre-Construction Services Agreement (PCSA). Detailed site investigations have been carried out and works continue to date. The Officer confirmed that outline planning was approved in March 2022.

Members were informed that the site originally fell within the general fund portfolio and was appropriated to the HRA (Housing Revenue Account) in March 2022. Officers highlighted the challenges associated with the site including the need to retain several trees and provide ecological enhancements that worked with the contours and the topography of the site in terms of the layout.

It was noted that the proposed mixed tenure development comprises of 99 homes and is the first site the Council development of this kind. The Caerphilly Homes Occupational Therapist has been engaged in the scheme and two accessible bungalows will be provided within the development, to meet the specific needs of two families who are currently on the Common Housing Register.

Members were advised that in 2018 approval was given to consider remodelling the Ty Melin Sheltered housing scheme in Croespenmaen. However, it had become apparent that the costs to remodel the scheme to ensure compliance with the WHQS23 would be unachievable. As a result, the Project Team (including Caerphilly Homes, Architects - Holder Mathias, Engineers - Cambria and Wilmott Dixon) were asked in April 2023 whether it could be possible to incorporate a new, low carbon, contemporary sheltered housing scheme within parameters of the former Oakdale Comprehensive School site. This was a challenge, but partners confirmed that it would be possible to develop a 33 apartments (maximum) Later Living Scheme where the current MUGA site is located.

The Scrutiny Committee were pleased to note that conversations have taken pace with Ward Members and the Occupants of Ty Melin to discuss the proposals and to seek their views, which had been quite positive, and all were excited about the development. The Officer confirmed that further engagement with prospective occupants would take place as part of the design and development stages of the project.

The Officer explained the Social Value Plan and how the Council would work with Willmott Dixon and the supply chain to maximise the amount of reinvestment or social return on investment within Caerphilly would be produced. The Plan would cover aspects such as employment, education, community, and environmental targets., The Officer referenced a specific workstream for veterans, to engage ex-armed forces personnel directly in the project to provide them with training and skills to obtain secure employment and a home.

Members noted that the contract value for the redevelopment of the former Oakdale Comprehensive School site is estimated to be circa £38m. The exact figure will be confirmed by the time the final report is presented to Cabinet on the 18th October 2023.

The Officer confirmed that Caerphilly Homes would be working closely with Wilmott Dixon on a sales and marketing strategy, A show home will be erected on site, there will be marketing and branding literature to showcase this development to anyone interested in both the affordable offer and the market sales homes. The Scrutiny Committee noted that subject to approval it was hoped that works would commence before Christmas 2023 with the site's completion by October 2025.

Occupants of Ty Melin will be moved into the new building as soon as the Later Living scheme is available, and assistance would be provided throughout the moving process.

A presentation showing the design of the site was shown to the Scrutiny Committee touching on Ty Darran and Oakdale Comprehensive School. The Head of Strategy and Development went through each slide of the presentation and confirmed that a copy of the presentation can be circulated to Members of the Committee.

The Chair thanked the Officer for the presentation and Member questions were welcomed.

Clarification was sought on the MUGA equipment on site and Members were advised that Officers are discussing this with Islwyn High School. The intention is to keep the existing MUGA at Oakdale site until the new MUGA is available, which is estimated at 5-6 months. The Scrutiny Committee asked about the increased distance from Oakdale to Islwyn High and were advised that there is another MUGA on the Persimmon site nearby.

The Scrutiny Committee asked for the reasons why the Ty Melin and other sites were not re-developed as part of the WHQS programme. Members were advised that there were several factors including the configuration and building materials used at these sites. This would have meant extensive costs to bring them up to WHQS standards and were therefore deemed prohibitive. In addition, the apartments at these sites are very small and not fit for purpose, making them very difficult to let.

Members queried the plans for the new build which shows one-bedroom apartments and suggested that two bedroomed apartments would be required for couples or people who have carers. It was confirmed that although most apartments are one bedroomed there are also two bedroomed apartments planned.

The Scrutiny Committee sought further detail on the plans to include training within the Employment Programme and asked if training on new technology will be included. Members were assured that the intention was to provide as many learning opportunities as possible including new technologies around heat pumps, for example, and other modern methods of construction.

Members asked if the land being used (which is owned by CCBC) is reflected in the sale prices for the new homes, as compared with homes sold by private developers who must pay for the land. In addition, it was asked if there is a way to limit sales to local people. The Scrutiny Committee was advised that the land had to be paid for by Caerphilly Homes based on a valuation by the District Valuer. The land must be appropriated to the HRA from the General Fund at market value, even though it isn't necessarily a 'cash' transaction. Members were advised that it is not possible to limit sales to local people.

The Scrutiny Committee asked how many apartments are utilised at Ty Melin at present compared to the 33 that will be available at the new site. Members were advised that

there are 16 occupiers at Ty Melin, some are couples. This development will increase the number of apartments available and there is an identified need for Later Living accommodation in the area.

Members asked if the Later Living accommodation will be prioritised for development ahead of the other builds and were advised that the Later Living accommodation cannot proceed until the new MUGA is completed, but this was part of continuing discussions with Willmott Dixon.

The Armed Forces Champion stated that she was pleased to hear of the intention to provide opportunities to ex-service personnel. Members were advised that discussions have been held with the Armed Forces Covenant Officer and the charity Alabare.

Members were pleased to see the plans to use sustainable materials and modern methods of construction on the site and were informed that this was an important factor of the development.

Members congratulated Officers on an excellent presentation and gave their support for the proposals.

Following consideration of the report, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations contained in the Officer's report be approved, and by way of Microsoft Forms (and in noting there were 15 for, 0 against and 0 abstentions) this was unanimously agreed.

RECOMMENDED that: -

1. Cabinet approve the inclusion of the Later Living element of the scheme which will result in the residents of Ty Melin, Croespenmaen relocating into the new accommodation on the former Oakdale Comprehensive School site and the existing Ty Melin site being redeveloped post 2025.
2. Cabinet approve the signing of the Delivery Agreement with Willmott Dixon which will allow the development to start on site in October 2023.
3. Cabinet approve the signing of a PCSA with Willmott Dixon to undertake the design work necessary to include the Later Living Scheme into the wider site and also approve the signing of a separate PCSA to undertake the site investigatory and design work necessary to bring forward the Ty Melin site into the Caerphilly Homes development programme
4. The proposal to develop a Social Value Plan which will relate to all developments undertaken by Willmott Dixon in the county borough. Under the SCAPE Framework arrangement 20% of the contract value will be attributed to the delivery of social value including an extensive construction related employment programme be endorsed.

7. CAERPHILLY HOMES – TY DARRAN REDEVELOPMENT

The Cabinet Member for Housing presented the report, which sought the Scrutiny Committees' recommendation to Cabinet to approve the signing of the Delivery Agreement with Willmott Dixon to progress the scheme through to construction and completion by Autumn 2025.

Members are asked to recommend Cabinet endorse the creation of a Social Value Plan which will encompass the Ty Darran, former Oakdale Comprehensive School, and Ty Melin development schemes.

The Head of Strategy and Development confirmed that her earlier presentation had encompassed both developments and would now highlight key areas of interest.

Members were advised that a feasibility study was commissioned in 2015 and Cabinet determined that the St Mary's Castle Court and Waunfawr House Sheltered Housing Schemes would be removed from the WHQS programme and remodelled post 2020. Further investigations determined that the cost of upgrading the schemes would be prohibitive, subsequently the development of a new 45 unit Later Living scheme at the site of the former care home at Ty Darren, Risca.

The Officer confirmed that the objective was to provide something unique within the borough, providing flexible housing solutions that would for example enable people working to work from home, provide enough space for those who require carers or the opportunity to have grandchildren stay over. Each apartment will be wheelchair accessible and have access to their own outdoor space with internal and external communal areas allowing interaction and socialisation with other residents.

Members asked if the land at Ty Melin and the other Sheltered Housing Schemes at St Marys, Castle Court etc, will be re-used for other Caerphilly Homes schemes. The Scrutiny Committee were assured that Castle Court is already being explored and the other areas will be considered.

Members stated that most of their questions related to both Oakdale and Ty Darren and were pleased to see the plans and gave their support for the proposals.

Following consideration of the report and having noted its comments, it was moved and seconded that the following recommendations be forwarded to Cabinet for approval, and by way of Microsoft Forms and verbal confirmation (and in noting there were 14 for, 0 against and 0 abstentions) this was unanimously agreed.

RECOMMENDED that: -

1. Cabinet notes the content of the report and approve the signing of the Delivery Agreement (DA) with Willmott Dixon to deliver a new, low energy, flagship Later Living Scheme by Spring 2025.
2. Cabinet endorses the formulation of a Social Value Plan which will encompass the Ty Darran former Oakdale Comprehensive School and Ty Melin development schemes with Wilmott Dixon.

The meeting closed at 18:36 p.m.

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 31st October 2023, they were signed by the Chair.

CHAIR