

Prince Charles Hospital, Merthyr Tydfil - Multi-disciplinary Training Unit (Unit 2)

Planning, Design and Access Statement

August 2025



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Issue date	07/08/2025
Status	
Revision	0
Author	AV
Checked by	MF
Reference	2473

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Contents

1. Introduction and Background	1
1.1 Background	1
1.2 This Report	1
2. The Development Site	2
2.1. Site Location	2
2.2. Site Description	4
2.3. Planning History	6
3. Legislation and Planning Policy Context	8
3.1 Town and Country Planning Act (1990)	8
3.2. Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015	8
3.3. Planning Policy Wales (2024) Ed. 12	9
3.4. Future Wales: The National Plan 2040	13
3.5. Technical Advice Notes	15
3.6. Local Policy	17
4. Assessment	20
4.1. Introduction	20
4.2 Design Assessment	20
4.3 Planning Assessment	21
5. Summary and Conclusion	22

1. Introduction and Background

1.1 Background

This report is prepared by the Urbanists on behalf of Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board. It is prepared to accompany the planning application for the retention of the Multi-disciplinary Training Unit 2 ('the Site'), at Prince Charles Hospital, Merthyr Tydfil.

The site was granted temporary planning permission on the 1st December 2020 to 'Re-use and extend a single storey temporary building to accommodate a temporary MDTU unit, to include the addition of a first floor (Full)' LPA reference P/20/0240. That permission allowed the lawful use of the unit for 6 years following beneficial use.

This application is for the retention of the existing modular unit (Unit 2). This planning application is not seeking permission to change the approved use parameters of Unit 2 (hours of use, change of use, frequency of use) or its design in any way.

This planning statement should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- Planning Application Form; and
- Plans and Drawings.

1.2 This Report

This document comprises the following;

- **Section two** describes the site in context and surrounding area, including its planning history;
- **Section three** describes the legislative and planning policy context relevant to the site;
- **Section four** sets out the material considerations and provides an assessment of the development in design and planning and policy terms;
- **Section five** provides a summary and some conclusions based on the above.

2. The Development Site

2.1. Site Location

The development site is located south-west of the main hospital buildings at Prince Charles Hospital, Merthyr Tydfil (see Figure 1 below). The Site is accessible via the network of private hospital roads and does not currently include any parking provision. The site is accessible through Gurnos Road, which connects to the A465 to the north and to the A4102 to the south.

Good transport links are present in the surrounding area with a bus stop located on the adjacent highway only a short distance from the hospital. The bus stop is located approximately 350 metres away from the site, within a five minute walking distance. This bus stop is serviced by four different routes which provide access within Merthyr Tydfil. This provides great public transport access to the site.

Figure 1: Existing Site Location

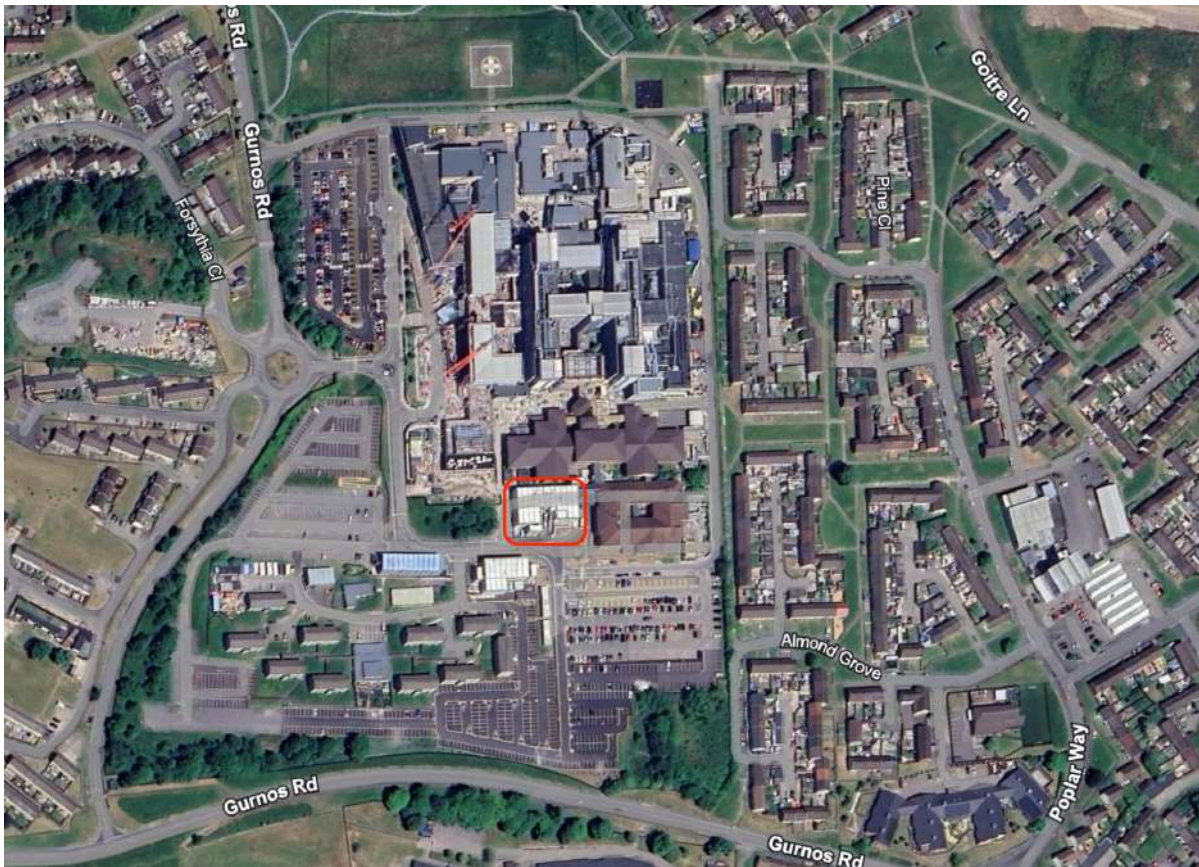
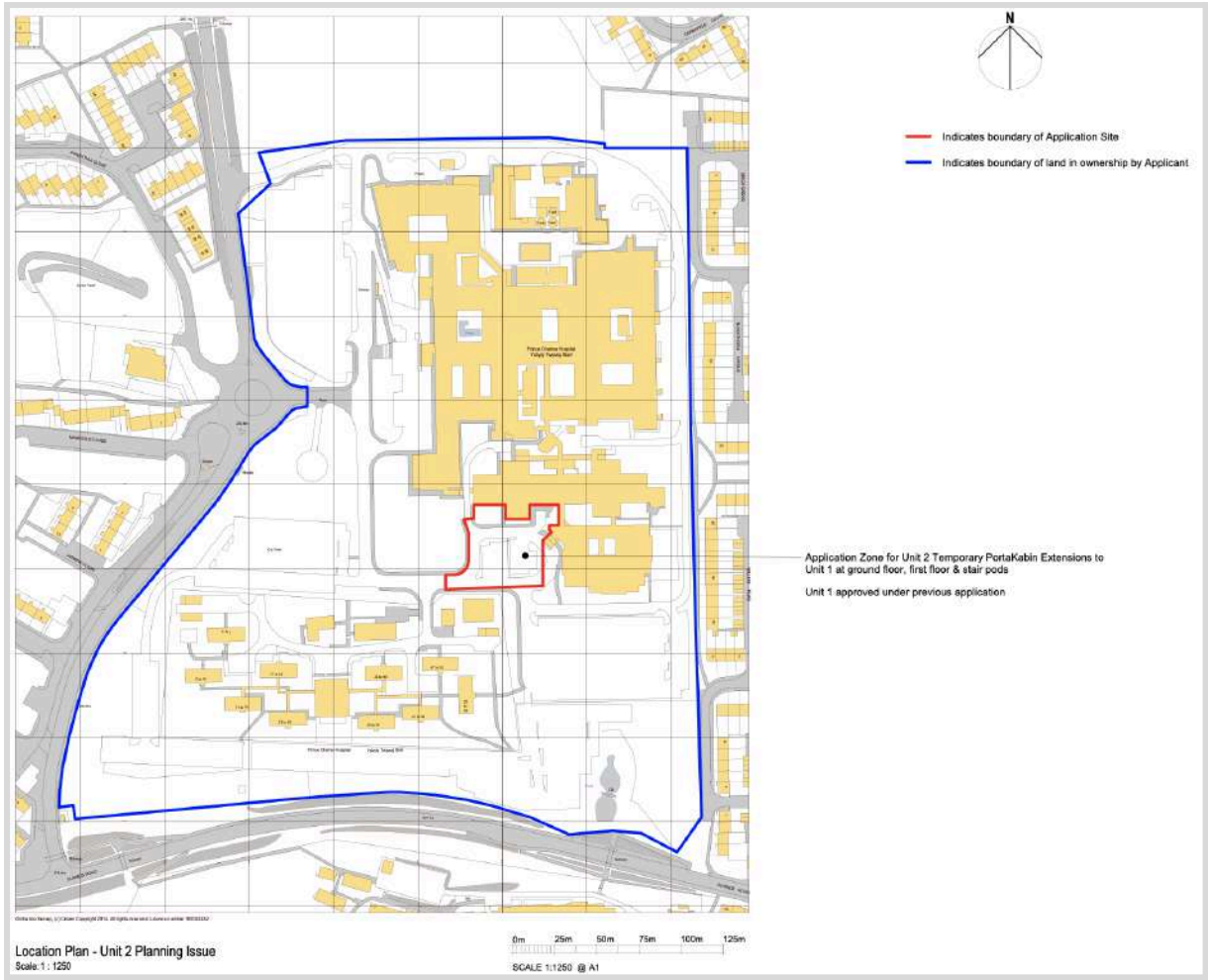


Figure 2: Red Site Boundary



2.2. Site Description

The site comprises a two-storey modular 'C' shape building of total area 2,249sqm. It provides essential facilities for existing hospital staff. The total internal floor area is 1,486.2sqm. It provides a medical library, lecture theatre, seminar rooms, multimedia and IT rooms, and study and office spaces.

The area is characterised by a mixture of buildings varying in scale and material appearance, which has grown and changed incrementally in accord with the requirements for health service provision.

Figures 3, 4 and 5: Photos of The Site.





2.3. Planning History

This section sets out the planning history of relevance to the site and the proposed development. There is an extensive planning history associated with the wider Prince Charles Hospital Campus, including a wide range of planning applications which have resulted in changes to the wider campus. Many of these were brought forward as part of the Prince Charles Hospital Ground and First Floor Refurbishment Scheme (P/17/0286), which also led to the proposal of Unit 2.

The site was granted full planning permission on the 1st December 2020 to 'Re-use and extend a single storey temporary building to accommodate a temporary MDTU unit, to include the addition of a first floor (Full)'. The Planning Application reference is **P/20/0240**.

Previously, an application for this development in a different location on the hospital campus was approved on 24th March 2020 under reference **P/20/0013**. At the time, this presented the only feasible location (albeit temporary loss of car parking). Due to delays with the Covid pandemic, the new location presented by the approved **P/20/0240** application was found feasible. The previous proposal was no longer constructed, and the MDTU facility was built in the new location.

A planning application in 2014 (**P/14/0162**) was granted consent for a permanent MDTU as well as other proposals across the hospital site. This demonstrates that the principle of development has previously been established on the hospital campus.

Reference	Proposal	Date	Decision
P/20/0240	Re-use and extend a single storey temporary building to accommodate a temporary MDTU unit, to include the addition of a first floor (Full)'	1st December 2020	Approved
P/20/0013	Construct temporary two storey MDTU building on the car park to the south of the hospital.	24th March 2020	Approved
P/20/0007	Erect two storey side extension to Emergency Care Centre to provide Medical Day Unit	25th February 2020	Approved
P/19/0330	Convert Block 9 from nurses' accommodation to office space.	27th January 2020	Approved
P/19/0317	Erect two portacabins (temporary consent)	21st January 2020	Approved
P/19/0250	Change of use of open space to provide extended helipad safety area, to include the erection of a fence and relocation of existing windsock	10th December 2019	Approved

Reference	Proposal	Date	Decision
P/17/0086	Temporary Kitchen Unit (with plant above). Road works to include reconfiguration to parking, road alignment, landscaping and footways.	31st May 2017	Approved
P/15/0114	New entrance lobby to the existing hospital's main entrance with associated hard landscaping	28th May 2015	Approved
P/14/0162	New multi disciplinary training unit, relocated helicopter pad, relocated playground with new play equipment, extensions to medical records and bulk store, new secondary ambulance drop off and canopy, reconfigured site car parking (requiring some demolition works of temporary buildings) and installation of new lighting and CCTV	18th Sep 2014	Approved

3. Legislation and Planning Policy Context

This section sets out the planning legislation and policy context against which the development should be considered.

3.1 Town and Country Planning Act (1990)

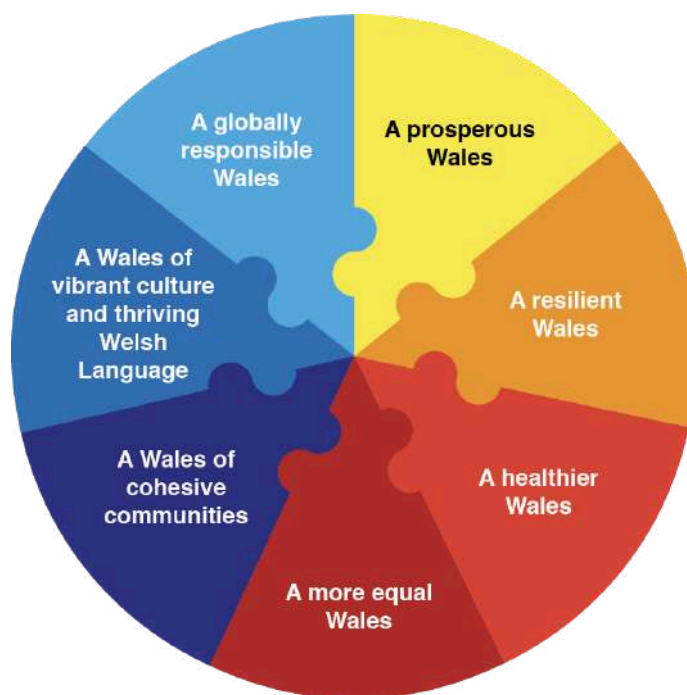
Under Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, planning decisions must be made in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. For Wales, the Development Plan includes the National Development Framework for Wales, any strategic development plan for an area that includes all or part of that area, and the local development plan for that area.

The Planning Act (Wales) (PWA) 2015 states that Local Planning Authorities must exercise their function in relation to the determination of planning applications “...as part of carrying out sustainable development in accordance with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (annex 2), for the purpose of ensuring that the development and use of land contribute to improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales.” (PA(W), Sec.2(2)).

3.2. Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The Well-being of Future Generations Act requires public bodies in Wales to consider the long-term impact of their decisions. The Future Generations Act defines Sustainable Development in Wales as: “The process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the well-being goals.” The Act identifies seven well being goals; that are illustrated below. The Act makes it clear that the public bodies must work to achieve all of the goals, not just one or two. The Act also sets out five ways of working needed for public bodies to achieve the seven well-being goals. These include the fundamental requirement to balance short-term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs.

Figure 6: Well being Goals



3.3. Planning Policy Wales (2024) Ed. 12

The national planning policy context for the development is provided by Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12) and Future Wales: The National Plan 2040. Collectively, these documents provide a guide to ensure the delivery of sustainable development proposals. This is achieved through improving the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of current, and as required by the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act, future generations.

Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12) (PPW) is the Welsh Government's land use planning policy for Wales. The primary objective of PPW is to ensure the planning system contributes towards the delivery of sustainable development, and improves the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of Wales, as required by the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act. PPW names placemaking as the process of creating sustainable places and maximising wellbeing. PPW identifies key planning principles to include: growing our economy in a sustainable manner; delivering educational facilities; creating healthy and accessible environments; sustaining communities; and, maximising environmental protection and limiting impact. These principles are then underpinned by National Sustainable Placemaking Outcomes which interrelate.

PPW also sets out the four key themes which contribute to placemaking thus:

- **Strategic and spatial choices**, including how to achieve a good design that enables access and inclusivity, environmental sustainability, and respect for local character; and healthier places, including enabling opportunities for outdoor activity and recreation.
- **Active and social places**, including encouraging the multiple use of open space and facilities, where appropriate, to increase their effective use.
- **Productive and enterprising places**, including the promotion of healthy lifestyles, physical and mental health and wellbeing, provision of integrated green infrastructure, and resilience to climate change.
- **Distinctive and natural places**, including the need to conserve and enhance the historic environment and its assets; protecting and enhancing green infrastructure assets and the protection and enhancement of biodiversity; protection of trees and woodland where they contribute towards the ecological, character or green infrastructure functionality of an area; and to integrate Sustainable Drainage Systems to minimise flood risk and maximise other benefits.

The way these different principles, themes, and targets integrate when considering planning proposals is summarised in Figure 7 below. The first consideration is how the proposals contribute towards strategic and spatial choices; then how they contribute towards active and social places, productive and enterprising places, and distinctive and natural places. The conclusion of this process should result in a proposal that contributes towards a sustainable place and achieving the well-being goals and sustainable placemaking outcomes.

Figure 7: Applying PPW principles in decision-making



Each theme contributes in different ways to the placemaking outcomes. Education development generally falls under the active and social places theme, which includes the key placemaking outcomes of integrated green infrastructure; resilient to climate change; promoting physical and mental health and wellbeing; unlocking potential and regeneration; convenient access to goods and services; minimising the need to travel; makes best use of natural resources; feels safe and inclusive; provides equality of access; and embraces smart and innovative technology.

The promotion of Active Travel is prominent in PPW; it highlights the important role of the planning system in promoting and supporting the delivery of Active Travel and creating the right environment and infrastructure to make it easier for people to walk and cycle. Active Travel is integral to placemaking, creating life and activity in public places, and providing the opportunity to meet people; it is a key component for sustainable places delivering social, economic, and environmental benefits, therefore, new development must be fully accessible by walking and cycling.

Figure 8: Active and Social Outcomes of PPW.

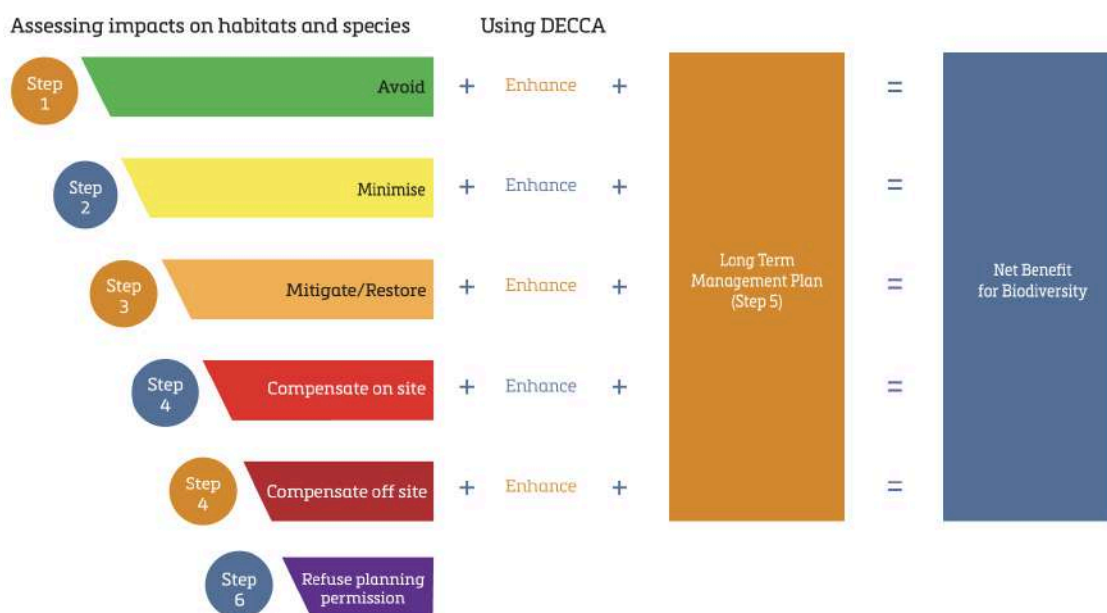


A key update in Edition 12 of PPW responds to the Welsh Government's commitment to 'Addressing the Nature emergency through the planning system'. The main changes to policy requirements are:

- Green Infrastructure:** A stronger emphasis is being placed on a proactive approach, covering cross-boundary consideration, identifying key outputs of green infrastructure assessments, the submission of proportionate green infrastructure statements with planning applications, and signposting Building with Nature standards.
- Net Benefit for Biodiversity and the Step-wise Approach:** Off-site compensation is acknowledged as a last resort, and the need to consider enhancement and long-term management at each step is recognised. Green Infrastructure statements are set out as a requirement to demonstrate the 'step-wise approach' i.e. avoid, minimise, mitigate/restore, compensate on-site, compensate off-site. This links to the DECCA framework of ecosystem resilience to evidence adequate enhancements (Diversity, Extent, Condition, Connectivity, and resultant Adaptation/resistance/recovery aspects).
- Trees and Woodlands:** a close alignment is taken with the step-wise approach, as well as promotion of new planting as part of development based on securing the right tree in the right place. For any trees that may be removed as part of a proposed development, consideration of their GI value including carbon, landscape amenity, and ecological

resilience sets a baseline from which a proportionate ratio of planting compensation shall be considered. Furthermore, the prescribed minimum ratio or areas of tree cover to compensate for any tree/woodland loss should be regarded.

Figure 9: Summary of the Step-Wise Approach



3.4. Future Wales: The National Plan 2040

Future Wales - The National Plan 2040 was adopted in February 2021 as the national development framework setting the direction of development in Wales to 2040. The National Plan provides a strategy to address key national priorities through the planning system, including developing a vibrant economy, developing strong ecosystems, achieving decarbonisation and climate resilience, and improving the health and wellbeing of communities.

It sets out 11 outcomes of Future Wales comprising the vision for Wales in 2040. The aim is for a Wales where people live:

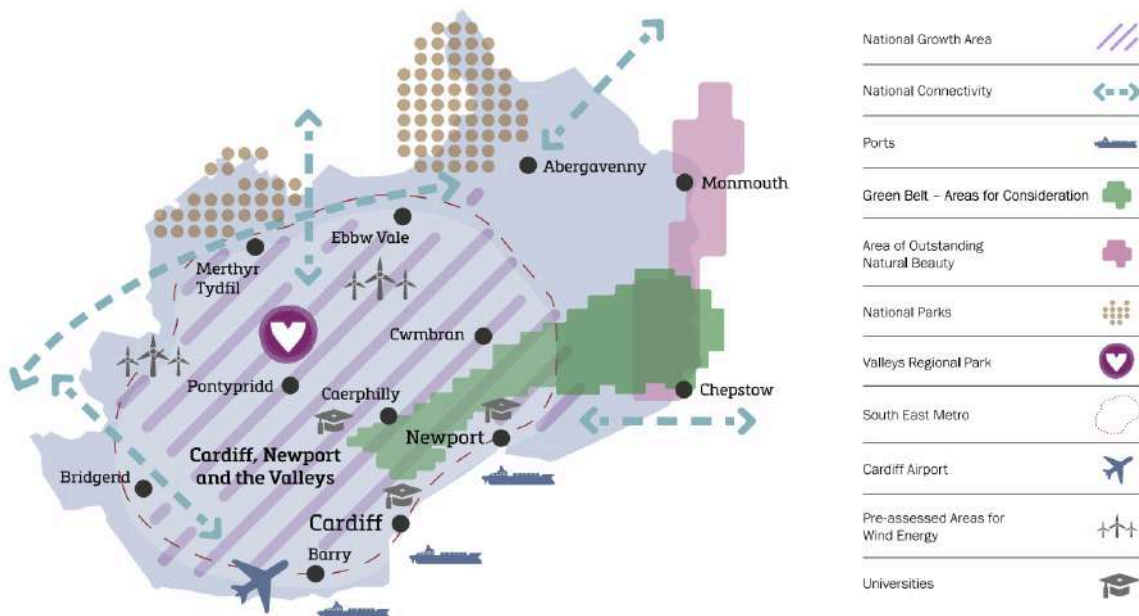
- In connected, inclusive, and healthy places;
- In vibrant rural places with access to homes, jobs and services;
- In distinctive regions that tackle health and socio-economic inequality through sustainable growth;

- In places with a thriving Welsh Language;
- In towns and cities which are a focus and springboard for sustainable growth;
- In places where prosperity, innovation, and culture are promoted;
- In places where travel is sustainable;
- In places with world-class digital infrastructure;
- In places that sustainably manage their natural resources and reduce pollution;
- In places with biodiverse, resilient, and connected ecosystems; and
- In places that are decarbonised and climate-resilient.

Future Wales divides Wales into 4 regions, with Merthyr Tydfil falling within the South East Region, as covered by the Regional Strategic Diagram below. It also shows that Merthyr Tydfil is included in the National Growth Area.

Figure 10: Regional Strategic Diagram

Regional strategic diagram



Future Wales also provides a series of national policies (Ch. 4: Strategic and Spatial Choices) including:

- **Policy 1** - Where Wales will grow;
- **Policy 2** - Shaping Urban Growth and Regeneration - Strategic Placemaking;
- **Policy 3** - Supporting Urban Growth and Regeneration - Public Sector Leadership;
- **Policy 8** - Flooding;
- **Policy 12** - Regional Connectivity.

Policy 1 identifies that South Wales is a key location for future growth and **Policy 2** sets out the importance of incorporating the Strategic Placemaking Principles in development proposals: mixtures of uses; walkable scales; increased densities in towns and cities; integration with street networks; plot-based development; and green infrastructure. **Policy 3** sets out how the Welsh Government would play an active, enabling role in supporting the delivery of urban growth and regeneration. **Policy 8** explains how flood risk management enables and supports sustainable strategic growth and regeneration. It must be ensured that projects do not have adverse impacts on international and national statutory designated sites for nature conservation. **Policy 12** emphasises the importance of Active Travel and explains how planning authorities must plan the growth and regeneration of the National and Regional Growth Areas to maximise opportunities arising from the investment in public transport.

3.5. Technical Advice Notes

In addition to the above overarching development policies, a series of Technical Advice Notes (TANs) provide design guidance to development proposals. Technical Advice Notes should be read in conjunction with Planning Policy Wales (PPW) and are to be taken into account during the preparation of Development Plans. Those relevant to the development are identified below. These documents provide practical guidance that the development scheme will need to consider and apply as the design progresses.

TAN 12: Design (2016)

This Technical Advice Note aims to equip all those that are involved in the design of the development with advice on how sustainability, through good design, may be facilitated through

the planning system. It sets out the core design principles that any development proposal must follow to help create a sustainable environment and exhibit a high level of design quality. These are structured via the five key objectives of good design illustrated below.

Figure 11: design objectives



Technical Advice Note 15: Development, flooding and coastal erosion (2025)

This TAN provides a framework within which the flood risks arising from rivers, the sea and surface water, and the risk of coastal erosion can be assessed. It also provides advice on the consequences of the risks and adapting to and living with flood risk in relation to development and flooding. It replaces the previous 2004 advice.

The updated TAN refers to the Flood Map for Planning which identifies flood zones as below. It takes a risk-based approach, so that a locally appropriate approach can be taken during the development management process.

3.6. Local Policy

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council First Replacement Local Development Plan 2016-2031

The Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council (MTCBC) First Replacement Local Development Plan (LDP) 2016-2031 was adopted by the Council on 29th January 2020. The LDP forms the basis for decisions on land use planning in the area.

The Site is subject to two designations within the Proposals Map, albeit they are not shown directly on the Figure below. The Site is within the Settlement Limits of Merthyr Tydfil (policy SW4) and also within a Heat Priority Area as part of the District Heating policy (Policy EcW9). Additionally, along the hospital's boundary is a proposed active travel integrated network line (Policy SW12).

Figure 12: Proposal Map.



Figure 13: Constraints Map.



As is evident in the Figure above, the Site is not subject to any constraints on the LDP constraints map, only an existing Active Travel Route highlighted in black dots.

There is one scheduled monument located within 1.0km of the Proposed Development. The Gurnos Quarry Tramroad and Leat is located approximately 960m west of the site. There are nine listed buildings within 2.0km of the site, all of which are located within the Cyfarthfa Conservation Area. Two of the listed buildings are Grade I listed; Cyfarthfa Castle, and the former school and museum at Cyfarthfa Castle. The closest point of the Cyfarthfa Conservation Area is located approximately 240m south of the Site. Cyfarthfa Castle Park is also a Grade II* Registered Park and Garden.

These were the policies considered relevant to the proposed development, which has demonstrated compliance and granted planning approval:

- SW4 – Settlement Limits;
- EcW9 – District Heating;
- SW11 – Sustainable Design and Placemaking;
- SW13 – Protecting and Improving Local Community Facilities; and
- EnW4 – Environmental Protection.

Supplementary Planning Guidance

In light of the recently updated policy framework provided by the Replacement LDP, the Council will review and consult on draft Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG). In the meantime, the adopted SPGs will remain as material considerations in the planning application process until they are replaced or otherwise withdrawn. Of the six SPGs currently adopted by the LPA, guidance Note No. 4 – Sustainable Design is assessed to be relevant to the Proposed Development.

4. Assessment

4.1. Introduction

To demonstrate how the development proposal satisfies the adopted Development Plan, this section of the statement assesses the proposal against the relevant Development Plan policies. It also demonstrates how the proposal satisfies wider local policy and also wider national policy and legislation. These documents and plans should be relied upon to decide the planning application.

4.2 Design Assessment

Character and Community Safety

The scheme comprises a two-storey modular unit which provides essential facilities for existing hospital staff. The total internal floor area is 1,486.2sqm. Internally, there is provision for a medical library, lecture theatre, seminar rooms, multimedia and IT rooms, and study and office spaces.

Prince Charles Hospital is characterised by a range of buildings of varying scale and material appearance, from single storey to 6/7 storeys. The Unit 2 building is visually subservient to the main/central complex and provides a human scale elevation and massing, enhancing legibility of access. The materials and design are fully in accord with its built context, of which it appears to be an integrated part of.

The building will maintain a high level of passive surveillance of the surrounding area, and will help to maintain the perception of the safe environment. The building is not adjacent to the site boundary and is surrounded by existing hospital uses.

Access and Movement

The building is accessible via the network of private hospital roads. Parking provision is provided in the wider area by a range of alternative locations. The facility is set within the public transport accessibility of the wider complex, and will not increase the number of vehicle movements to/from the site being a facility for existing staff. It is fully accessible by the arrangement of walking routes (footways) around and through the site which meet the CTMHB requirements for safe and lit routes.

The scheme provides the required access ramps to ensure equality of access regardless of physical, mental or sensory impairment.

4.3 Planning Assessment

Green Infrastructure / Environmental Sustainability

Unit 2 was previously a car parking area. The building included the provision of a green area in the south-east part of the site, but is constrained due to its location. It also retains the existing green space to the west of the building including mature trees. The retention of the existing building of Unit 2 will not impact on any existing green infrastructure or habitats, and has provided enhancement with the additional small green area. Further ecology enhancement could be provided, if required, by the provision of bird nesting boxes, bat boxes (subject to building suitability for fixing) or insect refugia.

Principle of Development

This planning application seeks to retain the existing building and does not propose any alterations to the existing development. The building, whilst granted under a temporary permission, has been shown not to cause unacceptable impacts (movement, amenity drainage, etc) and is appropriate in scale, form, and appearance to its location. It provides an important beneficial use for the operation of the hospital and it is critical to retain this to ensure the on-going delivery of services.

Its retention will remain in compliance with local plan policy particularly having regard to policy SW11 Sustainable Design and Placemaking: the modular building is fully appropriate to its context and visual appearance. The design is typical of contemporary health buildings which are required in physically constrained locations; it reinforces the legibility of movement and access to the building via the southern entrance; it retains its sustainable drainage approach (granted under the temporary permission); it is fully accessible to staff via level or ramped access; the modular building approach is a recognised sustainable construction method; and it provides an increased level of passive surveillance of the surrounding area helping to minimise any anti-social behaviour or opportunity for crime.

The retention of the existing development would continue to support the existing community with services and facilities, being a sustainable re-use of previously developed land, in accordance with PPW and the LDP. Considering the above, the principle of the existing development and its retention would remain compliant with the relevant planning policy and represents an acceptable development.

5. Summary and Conclusion

The retention of Unit 2 will allow the hospital to continue to provide the essential facilities for hospital staff which have been utilised for the past five years. Whilst the extant planning permission was temporary, it has been shown that the facility does not have unacceptable planning impacts for the immediate or wider area, and is fully appropriate to this location. It provides an important facility for staff to help continue to deliver and improve health care services.

This report has considered the scheme in the planning and design context. It appears as an integrated part of the main building and its quality modular design is fully in accord with the surrounding contemporary visual design context.