



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol
MERTHYR TUDFUL
MERTHYR TYDFIL
County Borough Council

The Cyfarthfa Plan

Launch Press Briefing

Embargoed until
00.01 12 January 2021

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PRESS RELEASE

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Cyfarthfa Plan will reveal world importance of crucible of industrial revolution and work in harmony with nature

Plans to transform Merthyr Tydfil's Cyfarthfa Castle into an international quality museum set in an expanded 100-hectare public park, could draw more than half a million visitors each year and "energise the Valleys Regional Park concept", according to a report published today.

The report says the plan would 'open new chapters in Welsh tourism, community and cultural development and sustainability' and 'create an exemplar project to demonstrate the force and effectiveness of the agenda of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act'.

The 20-year Cyfarthfa Plan is the result of 12-month's work by a multi-disciplinary team led by the internationally renowned Ian Ritchie Architects. The plan was commissioned by Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council and has already been approved unanimously.

A new company has been formed – The Cyfarthfa Foundation - to take the scheme forward. This is currently seeking charitable status. The plans have also been submitted to the Welsh Government.

Lee Waters MS, Deputy Minister for Economy and Transport and Chair of the Valleys Taskforce, said: "The plans put forward could see Cyfarthfa Castle and Park become a flagship attraction and an important green space for residents and visitors to enjoy for many years to come. We have provided funding to the park as a Valleys Regional Parks Discovery Gateway.

"I thank all those involved for their work on this so far, and I am particularly encouraged that the ethos of this project is that of a 'bottom up, community led, long term approach to regeneration'. This echoes perfectly the aims of the Valleys Taskforce and Cadw. We will now consider the detail of these proposals."

The report sets out a three-pronged plan for the castle and a 'Greater Cyfarthfa Park' that will

- "celebrate Merthyr Tydfil's unique history and heritage, as a spur to social renewal
- "celebrate and heal the natural environment to provide a beautiful setting for recreation, education and scientific advance
- "create an engine of creativity that can embrace the whole community".

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It states: “Realising these proposals would change the rest of the world’s view of Merthyr Tydfil and other Valleys communities. It would energise the Valleys Regional Park concept by giving it a core of real scale and impact.

“It would also bring something new and compelling to the economy of the Capital Region, in an area of great need, with a clear agenda of social purpose”.

The report sets out a menu of more than 70 possible projects split into ‘must do’, ‘should do’ and ‘could do’ categories. Among the key proposals are:

- Almost doubling the size of the current Cyfarthfa Park, extending it westwards to take in both sides of the river Taff, ‘healing a wounded landscape’.
- Renovating Cyfarthfa Castle – home to the Crawshays, the famous 19th century ironmasters - and creating new exhibition galleries that will celebrate the industrial and social history of Merthyr Tydfil and Wales.
- Rescuing the 200-year-old Cyfarthfa furnaces west of the Taff, a scheduled ancient monument of world importance, but currently endangered.
- A new ‘Iron Way’ - a dramatic high-level walkway connecting the castle and the furnaces, to echo the 19th century aqueduct that spanned the valley.
- A new ‘Glass Way’ entrance through the park to the east the castle - incorporating two giant greenhouses – the largest is 50 metres in diameter - to echo the castle’s vanished 19th century greenhouses.
- Developing the Pandy Farm buildings opposite the entrance to the castle as a real community asset, offering genuine employment and workspaces.
- An eight-acre community vegetable garden – that could also supply produce to new outlets at the castle – together with the creation of bio-diversity meadows.

The plan also places a strong emphasis on education. It proposes a ‘co-creation centre’ at the castle to extend the castle’s education and outreach programme, while also reserving a site at the confluence of the Taff and Taf Fechan rivers for a possible new environmental institute that could be linked to a higher education institution.

Jonathan Shaw, project leader for Ian Ritchie Architects, said: “This is a 20-year strategic plan that will reveal the global importance of Merthyr Tydfil’s industrial past and work in harmony with nature to transform the Cyfarthfa area.

“The project should grow in parallel with the lives of the youngest generations as they grow into adults. We have developed these plans on the back of extensive consultation with schools, young people and community organisations in Merthyr.

“It draws on the unrivalled social, political and industrial history of Merthyr Tydfil and Wales, its position as a southern gateway to the Brecon Beacons, and its pivotal position in the wider Valleys Regional Park,” he added.

Councillor Geraint Thomas, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, said: “This is a visionary report that describes a transformation that will be of huge value to Merthyr Tydfil, to the heads of the valleys area and to Wales as a whole. It celebrates important

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chapters in our national past, but with its emphasis firmly on the needs of future generations.”

Geraint Talfan Davies, who will chair the new Cyfarthfa Foundation, said: “The Ian Ritchie team have produced an immensely rich and exciting report that opens up a multitude of opportunities to use our past, and Merthyr’s story in particular, as a springboard to address the challenges of the 21st century. This a project of national as well as local importance.”

Carole-Anne Davies, Chief Executive of the Design Commission for Wales, said: “The commission has been closely engaged in the evolution of this plan, and we are delighted that the end result of almost four year of collaboration is not only a set of proposals of quality and ambition, but also a plan based on sound social and environmental values. It will be important to hold fast to those values and standards as the plans are realised.”

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VISUAL MATERIALS

1. Still Images

Still images can be downloaded via this Dropbox link. It contains 14 images of various aspects of the project:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/ss8yklhgvzieoz/AACFRPC0Ao8bkm9JUXnSfWpba?dl=0>

2. Film

A 12-minute film is also available, including footage of the site and interviews, with or without a music bed.

3. Executive Summary

A low res copy of the 42-page Executive Summary is being sent separately.

Comments on The Cyfarthfa Plan

Ian Ritchie

Principal, Ian Ritchie Architects

“The potential of this plan is huge. It represents a new approach that combines not only history, heritage, buildings and tourism but also social and structural renewal. The well-being of people is central to the project. We all need space and we all need hope, and we all need things that will inspire us. Within this plan, and within this community, lies an energy that will carry people through to a happier place”.

Jonathan Shaw

Project Leader, Ian Ritchie Architects

“The Cyfarthfa Plan is a people-led plan which puts the community of Merthyr Tydfil at the heart of its implementation over the next 20 years. Whether it is large scale transformative projects, small scale events, community projects, school-led design competitions, the making of creative employment space, or co-creation spaces offering engagement in the creative arts, climate impact and the town’s history, this is a plan to secure the town’s unrivalled heritage and natural assets and to inspire the next generation”.

Mary Bowman

Gustafson, Porter + Bowman, Landscape Architects

“Cyfarthfa Park is an incredible natural resource for Merthyr Tydfil. The existing mature woodland, meadows and parkland, the Taff Fawr and Taff Fechan valleys, the leats, ponds and lakes will be made more accessible to residents and visitors. The history of the site will also be revealed through a revitalised landscape that weaves together the narrative strands of the interrelationship between man and nature. Cyfarthfa Park is a beautiful natural landscape transformed by its industrial past. It can now be reinvented as a contemporary landscape destination for generations to enjoy”.

Dan Anderson

Fourth Street Consultants, Destination Business Analysts

“This plan represents a unique opportunity to redefine the economic identity of Merthyr Tydfil and the Valleys at a time when we are all trying to find a ‘new normal’ after a global pandemic and in the midst of a climate emergency. It will regularly provide new reasons to visit, but it also describes a great place to live, to work, to study and to start a business. Its success will be measured by the happiness, health, education, and success of the children who grow up here”.

Cllr. Lisa Mytton

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Learning

“The heritage assets of Merthyr Tydfil need to play as big a part in the future of the town and region as they did in its past. I’m proud that we have been able to commission a visionary plan that will enhance the profile of the town, engage its people and put in place an important building block for the city region as a whole. We have here a story of world importance that must be told dynamically to benefit future generations”.

“I’m particularly glad that the plan has such a clear focus on our young people. Its rich potential lies not only in educating those young people about their community’s

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past and the importance of the natural environment, but also opening their eyes to future opportunities. This can truly be the start of a new era for Merthyr”.

Cllr. Geraint Thomas

Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Public Protection

“For many years Merthyr has been a sleeping giant in the south Wales valleys, and this is a plan like no other I have seen. It will be an immense industrial heritage park of 100 hectares that is going to create up to 200 full-time jobs when completed. Merthyr has always been famous for re-inventing itself, and tourism must be a vital part of our future. Learning from our past, learning from our heritage and turning that into a modern tourist attraction will be another vital string to our bow”.

Geraint Talfan Davies

Chair, The Cyfarthfa Foundation

“This plan can be part of a post-Covid route to recovery for Merthyr and a means of energising the wider Valleys Regional Park concept in the years ahead. In its realisation we must strive for both the highest international quality and the deepest community roots. It is precisely that combination that will make it transformative”.

Carole-Anne Davies

Chief Executive, Design Commission for Wales

“Ian Ritchie Architects and their whole team have woven together so many important strands to create an ambitious and holistic vision. The resulting plan takes account not only of the need to attract visitors, but also of the potential for continued, long term, deep engagement with the community. The original brief put imaginative placemaking and the importance of future generations at its heart, and the team has responded with creativity and a true understanding of the richness, complexity and importance of this place.”

Jane Sellwood

Chief Executive, Wellbeing@Merthyr (Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Trust)

“The whole team at Wellbeing@Merthyr welcomes the plan’s emphasis on the town’s unusually rich and distinctive cultural assets, including its wonderful archival and artistic collections. This is a once in a generation opportunity to weave these together into strong, clear narratives. Together, we can tell the world the extraordinary stories of social and technological change, radicalism, innovation and creativity that were ‘Made in Merthyr Tydfil’, and which went on to shape much of Wales and beyond in the modern era”.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How urgent is this?

Very. Doing nothing is not an option. The 200-year-old Cyfarthfa Furnaces require urgent stabilisation. The Castle is also in a severe state of disrepair. Merthyr and Wales cannot afford to see further deterioration of cherished historical structures that were central to our nation's history. To do nothing could risk the loss of significant and cherished parts of our national heritage. Instead, this plan will give them new life in a way that will deliver real social and economic benefits.

2. How does Covid affect this plan?

This plan can be part of the route map to recovery for a place that has been hit hard by the pandemic. Over the decades Merthyr and the Valleys have had more than their share of hard blows, but despair has never been the right answer. This plan starts to shape an exciting future. It builds not only on Merthyr Tydfil's history but also on the communal values that have sustained this area through thick and thin. The Covid crisis is another crisis that this community will overcome. We mustn't wait before looking beyond it. Planning for the post-war welfare state began in the middle of the war not at its end.

3. How many jobs will it create?

Directly it would create between 150 and 200 new and lasting full-time jobs, plus a further 95 jobs during construction of the projects. This estimate *excludes* the further economic impact of the increased spending power of local residents and other new employment created by inward investment and start-ups that would result from changed perceptions of Merthyr Tydfil as a place in which to live, work and invest.

4. How much will it cost?

This will depend on which of its many elements are prioritised and over what timescale they are realised. The development of Cyfarthfa Castle into a modern museum of international quality, will be within the original estimate of £50m. contained in the 2018 Crucible report.

This is a 20-year plan that will change over time. The masterplan contains many different elements, some of which will be delivered by the new Cyfarthfa Foundation alone, some by the Foundation in partnership, and some by other parties taking advantage of the platform that will have been created.

5. How will it be funded?

This 20-year development programme provides a framework for investment from multiple sources in the public, private and third sectors. The early support of the Welsh Government and the National Lottery Heritage Fund will be of critical importance, but we will also be looking to other sponsors, philanthropists, trusts and foundations.

The Welsh Government has already assisted in the preparatory work, with a grant of £80k towards the development of a foundation of knowledge through an intensive Archives Study project. This work has already begun under the joint chairmanship of Aled Jones, former head of the National Library of Wales and Geraint Talfan Davies, collaborating with MTCBC and staff from Merthyr Tydfil's Libraries and Archives.

6. Why can't all this be done by the Council?

The Council's resources, human and financial, are limited, especially after the financial constraints of the last 10 years. The Council has no option but to concentrate on its statutory functions. This means that it cannot devote the required resources to the work that is urgently needed if Cyfarthfa is not to deteriorate further, let alone develop to its full potential.

The creation of an independent charity is the only practical way to assemble the necessary funding – from governmental, national lottery, business, and charitable sources. The Foundation will establish an organisation whose sole focus will be the development of Cyfarthfa and other heritage assets in Merthyr to maximise the benefits for the community and the region – economic, educational, social, environmental and cultural.

7. What will be the role of the Leisure Trust that manages Cyfarthfa now?

The Leisure Trust will continue to manage Cyfarthfa while The Cyfarthfa Foundation establishes the new organisation and until it is ready to take full ownership of Cyfarthfa Castle and Park. In the meantime a liaison committee has been established, and a Memorandum of Understanding agreed, that will ensure close collaboration between the new Foundation, the Leisure Trust and the Council. The Leisure Trust has a wide range of responsibilities for several services, but the Cyfarthfa Plan requires a sole focus and the retention of specific high-level expertise, at board and staff level, drawn from Wales, the UK and beyond.

8. How will the interests of Merthyr Tydfil be safeguarded?

The proposal seeks to balance the charitable trust's requirement for autonomous governance with the need to safeguard the interests of the Council and the people of Merthyr Tydfil.

- a) The Cyfarthfa Foundation will be a charity established to further a range of public purposes, including a powerful education remit. It will be a not-for-profit organisation. Its objects and its performance will be overseen by the Charity Commission.
- b) Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council will be a founding Member of the company, and will have two representatives on its board.
- c) A liaison committee between the Foundation and the Council and the Leisure Trust has already been established, working under an agreed Memorandum of Understanding.

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The Cyfarthfa Plan Team

Ian Ritchie Architects

Architects and Urban Designers

Ian Ritchie Architects have won more than 60 competitions in Europe and the UK, and received over 100 national and international awards, including two international innovation awards. His practice has been nominated four times for the Stirling Prize, the UK's biggest architecture prize, and twice for Europe's prestigious Mies Prize.

Ian Ritchie collaborated with the Chinese-American architect, IM Pei, through his Paris based design engineering practice, RFR, on the design of the famous glass pyramid at The Louvre. His practice also designed the 120-metre high Spire in Dublin and the celebrated glass lift towers at the Reina Sofia Museum of Modern Art in Madrid. The practice has also produced masterplans for the development of the British Museum and the Humber Bridge. Recently iRAL completed the transformation of the Royal Academy of Music's opera theatre and new recital hall, winning over 20 national and international awards.

Gustafson Porter + Bowman

Landscape Architects

Gustafson Porter + Bowman is an award winning landscape architecture practice with a global portfolio. It recently won a competition to redesign the area around the Eiffel Tower. Spanning climate zones, geographical characters, historical and cultural backgrounds its varied projects include the Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fountain (London 2004) Cultuurpark Westergasfabriek (Amsterdam, 2006) Old Market Square (Nottingham, 2007), Parque Central (Valencia, 2019).

Fourth Street

Destination Business Analysts

Fourth Street specialises in placemaking and destination development. It has been involved in projects that range across heritage, arts and culture, sport, leisure and tourism. Those projects include Shakespeare's Globe, the Old Royal Naval College and Alexandra Palace in London, Aberystwyth University's Old College, Ty Pawb in Wrexham, the Transporter Bridge at Newport, the Biggin Hill Memorial Museum and Liverpool's Cavern Quarter.

Arup

Multi-disciplinary Engineers

Arup is a world-leading international group providing consulting services for all aspects of the built environment. It has advised on projects such as the Snowdon Summit Building, the London Eye, the Angel of the North, and the Scottish Parliament building.

Equals

Cost Consultants

Equals provides project and cost consultancy services, and has advised on projects such as the British Museum, the Imperial War Museum, the Natural History Museum, the Victoria & Albert Museum and the Royal Opera House.

Julia Holberry Associates

Public Community Engagement

JHA works with museums, libraries and archives to develop strategic, interpretive and activity plans. Among its clients have been the Newport Transporter Bridge, the RAF Museum, Royal Hospital Chelsea, and the V&A at Dundee.

The Whole Story

Public Engagement / Narrative Gathering

The Whole Story uses story-telling techniques to focus and involve people and teams in change and new strategies. It has worked with the Science Museum, the National Trust, London Transport Museum, the Wallace Collection, and Chester Zoo.

The Cyfarthfa Foundation

The Cyfarthfa Foundation has now been established as the vehicle through which the project will be delivered. It is an independent company limited by guarantee and has already applied for full charitable status.

It was envisaged from the outset that this would be necessary for the realisation of the plan. Without a special purpose vehicle with charitable status, it would not be possible to draw in the major charitable foundations as potential contributors to capital costs as well as to a variety of community projects.

This is the most common structure adopted by sizeable organisations in the cultural sector – museums, galleries, and other arts organisations such as the Wales Millennium Centre and the National Botanic Garden of Wales.

The Memorandum and Articles of Association of the The Cyfarthfa Foundation have been agreed unanimously by the Council, and the company has been registered.

The Foundation will have up to 12 directors. The initial directors are:

Geraint Talfan Davies (Chair)

Author of the initial Crucible Report, former Controller of BBC Wales and former Chair of Welsh National Opera and the Arts Council of Wales

Rowland Davies

A lawyer and property specialist, and former partner with Geldards, who has experience of projects of this scale, having advised the founders of the National Botanic Garden of Wales.

Helen Protheroe

Director of Development and Alumni Relations at The Royal College of Art, overseeing the college's global charitable and alumni external relations activity. Helen, originally from Merthyr Tydfil, has also undertaken executive roles for the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, the Wales Millennium Centre, The Homeless World Cup (Wales), Royal Opera House and the Design Museum.

Cllr. Geraint Thomas

Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Public Protection.

Cllr. Lisa Mytton

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Learning.

It is the intention to recruit a further seven members of the board by an open public process. In addition to community representation, we intend to recruit people with high-level expertise in the following fields: urban planning and architecture, landscape planning, heritage, museums, tourism and sustainability.

The Foundation will continue to benefit from the critical friendship and expert input of the Design Commission.

The story so far

- Oct 2017** Design charrette at Cyfarthfa Castle. 60 people from a range of disciplines and the community come together with the help of the Design Commission for Wales and the Welsh School of Architecture to brainstorm ideas for developing Cyfarthfa.
- May 2018** A report on the charrette is published by the Design Commission for Wales, co-authored with Geraint Talfan Davies – the *Crucible Report*. It recommends development of the castle and estate as a national centre for industrial heritage and as an anchor project in developing the tourist potential of the south Wales valleys.
- Jun 2018** The Council accepts the recommendations of the Crucible Report unanimously.
- Mar 2019** A brief for a masterplanning exercise is developed by DCFW and published for competitive tender.
- Jun 2019** Ian Ritchie Architects, leading a multi-disciplinary team appointed after a competitive exercise that attracts leading firms from the UK and the rest of Europe.
- Sep 2019** The consultants start work on a 12-month schedule.
- Sep-Mar** Extensive consultation with schools, community groups, heritage organisations
- Mar 2020** Covid lockdown begins
- Apr 2020** Welsh Government agrees £80k for concurrent Archives Study to provide foundation of knowledge for exhibitions at Cyfarthfa.
- Aug 2020** Archive consultants appointed and begin work – six month schedule.
- Nov 2020** The Council approves the Masterplan unanimously.
- The Cyfarthfa Foundation established as a special purpose vehicle to carry the project forward.
- The Foundation makes initial submission to the Welsh Government.
- Jan 2021** Public launch of **The Cyfarthfa Plan**

Crucible of the Industrial Revolution - Key dates

1759	Dowlais ironworks opens
1763	John Guest founds Plymouth ironworks
1765	Anthony Bacon opens Cyfarthfa ironworks
1767	John Guest becomes manager of Dowlais works
1777	Bacon and Richard Crawshay form a partnership to supply armaments for the American Revolutionary War
1784	Francis Homfray founds Penydarren ironworks
1786	Crawshay takes control at Cyfarthfa
1794	Glamorganshire Canal opens, from Merthyr to Cardiff
1796	Merthyr Tydfil overtakes Shropshire iron output
1802	Admiral Nelson visits Cyfarthfa to purchase cannons and cannonballs
1804	Richard Trevithick trials the world's first steam locomotive at Penydarren
1824-5	Cyfarthfa Castle built for William Crawshay II, designed by Richard Lugar. It cost £30,000 and had 15 towers and 72 rooms
1831	The Merthyr Rising – Dic Penderyn hanged
1840	Brunel builds Taff Vale railway from Merthyr to Cardiff
1841	Report exposes poor housing conditions in Merthyr
1845	Merthyr becomes the largest centre of iron-making in the world
1860	Merthyr Tydfil largest town in Wales
1900	Keir Hardie elected MP for Merthyr – the first Labour MP
1908	Cyfarthfa Castle sold to the Council
1908	Merthyr Tydfil given county borough status
1913	Castle opens as separate boys' and girls' grammar schools.
1919	Cyfarthfa ceases production
1936	Dowlais ceases production
1947	Hoover and Thorn Lighting factories open
1966	Aberfan disaster
2009	Production ceases at Hoover (Candy) factory
2013	Cyfarthfa school vacates the castle

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