

An aerial photograph of the Trevor Basin and surrounding area. The image shows a residential neighborhood with red-brick houses on the left, a canal winding through the center, and a large stone bridge crossing the canal in the foreground. The background is filled with lush green trees and rolling hills under a blue sky with scattered clouds.

TREVOR BASIN AND SURROUNDING AREA MASTERPLAN

November 2020

Executive Summary

Arcadis (UK) Ltd was commissioned by the Canal & River Trust, Solutia UK Ltd and Wrexham County Borough Council in 2017 to identify a viable and deliverable masterplan for a site of circa 74ha encompassing land at and around Trevor Basin and the area known locally as the former 'Flexsys site' at Cefn Mawr.

The masterplan work has comprised three stages:

- Stage 1 Baseline Analysis
- Stage 2 Option Development
- Stage 3 Preferred Masterplan

Stakeholder and Community Engagement

Extensive stakeholder and community engagement was undertaken as part of workshops during Stage 1, followed by further workshops and drop-in sessions for members of the public during Stage 2. The drop-in sessions were well attended by over 100 people and provided an opportunity to give detailed feedback and input to the developing options for the masterplan.

Stage 1 Baseline Analysis

This initial stage comprised a thorough review of the masterplan area from a variety of perspectives and technical disciplines. The analysis enabled the identification of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that would inform the subsequent development of masterplan options.

Stage 2 Option Development

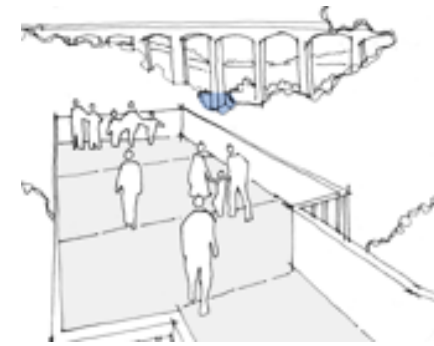
During Stage 2, a range of potential ideas were identified for various parcels of land within the site boundary.

An independent assessment was undertaken in 2019 in order to quantify the economic and social impacts likely to arise from the masterplan proposals. The report concluded that the masterplan presented a significant opportunity to develop the visitor destination at Trevor Basin, promote local health and wellbeing, and improve quality of life through changing perceptions of Trevor and Cefn Mawr as places to live and invest.

The Preferred Masterplan

The Preferred Masterplan comprises:

- a primary arrival space / car parking / Welcome Centre or 'Hub' building
- 'rewilding' the former manufacturing site
- creation of a Treetops Walk – 'Telford's Treetops'
- High-quality built environment at Trevor Basin incl. enriched public realm and repurposed buildings and spaces
- woodland activity & education centre
- glamping / camping Site
- Dee Valley walks & new river bridge
- Potential mixed-use development area and development plot



Executive Summary

Benefits

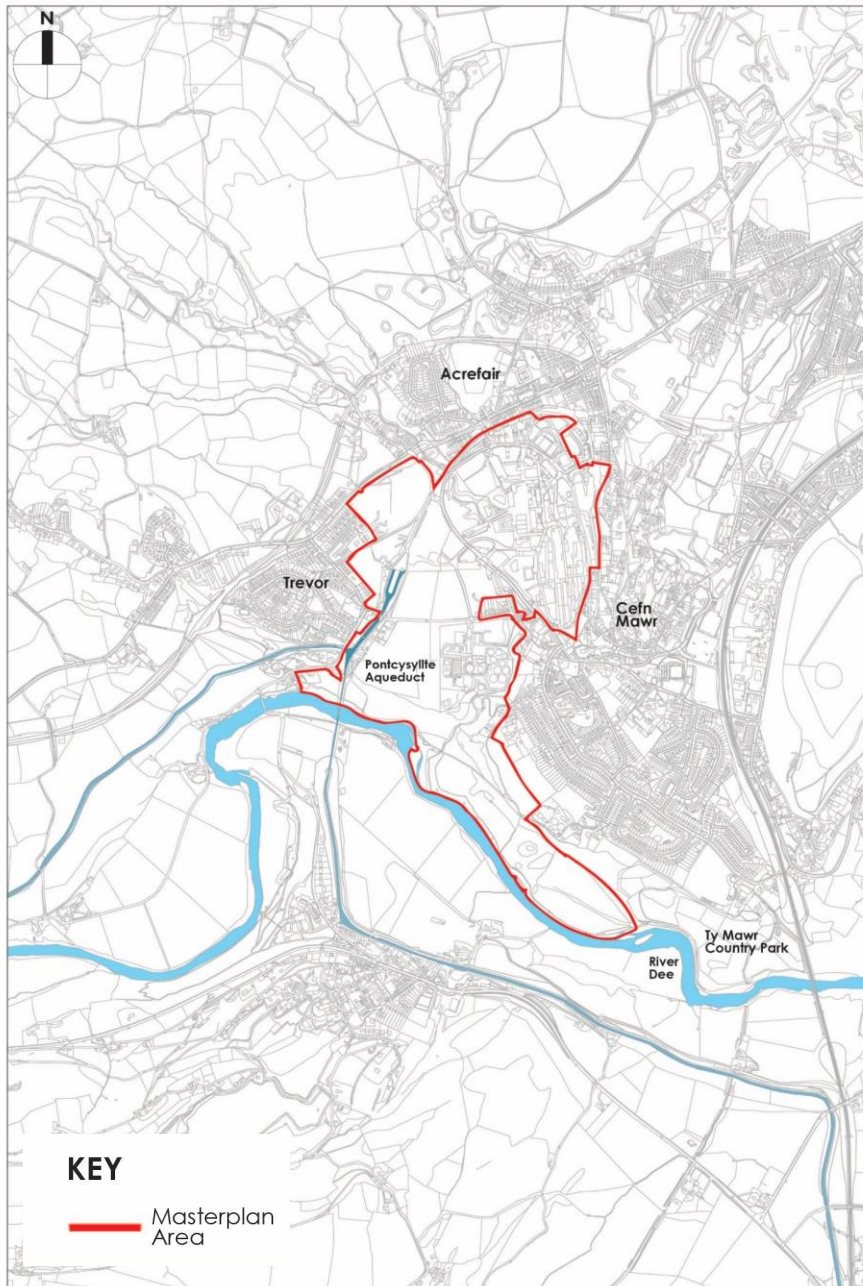
Benefits associated with the Preferred Masterplan include:

- Safeguards the WHS via improvements in access, quality of land use, improved views and economic investment.
- Improvements for local residents and communities in terms of access to the WHS, health and wellbeing benefits from the creation of new walking links, and community uses incorporated into the hub building.
- Forecast to generate circa £24.6 million in social value impacts from recreational users.
- Forecast to generate approximately £75.7mn (present value) of additional Gross Value Added (GVA) benefits for the local and regional economies over the next 30 years.
- Disperses visitors across a wider area, enhances visitor experience and increases dwell time. Increased visitor spend estimated to rise from circa £1.5mn per annum to circa £13.8mn by 2036.

Delivery and Implementation

A phasing plan has been developed for the Preferred Masterplan. Further discussions are now taking place with landowners and stakeholders regarding the delivery and implementation phase.





Trevor Basin and Surrounding Area Masterplan



Introduction

Arcadis (UK) Ltd was commissioned by the Canal & River Trust, Solutia UK Ltd and Wrexham County Borough Council in 2017 to identify a viable and deliverable masterplan for a site of circa 74ha encompassing land at and around Trevor Basin and the area known locally as the former 'Flexsys site' at Cefn Mawr.

The principal focus of the masterplanning work has been to look at land use and place-making improvements, improvements to World Heritage Site (WHS) facilities and improving linkages both within the masterplan area itself and to settlements in the wider area (such as Cefn Mawr, Trevor and Froncysyllte).

Masterplan Stages

The masterplan work has comprised three stages:

- Stage 1 Baseline Analysis
- Stage 2 Options Development
- Stage 3 Preparation of a Preferred Masterplan

Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives for the Masterplan have been to:

- Safeguard the World Heritage Site
- Maximise economic & community benefits
- Identify realistic options for brownfield regeneration
- Minimise brownfield maintenance
- Enhance visitor attractions and dwell time
- Balance the needs of community, residents and visitor numbers
- Improve accessibility
- Promote the health and wellbeing of communities and visitors
- Explore viability for extending canal / waterspace
- Inform the ongoing Local Development Plan process
- Inform asset management strategies



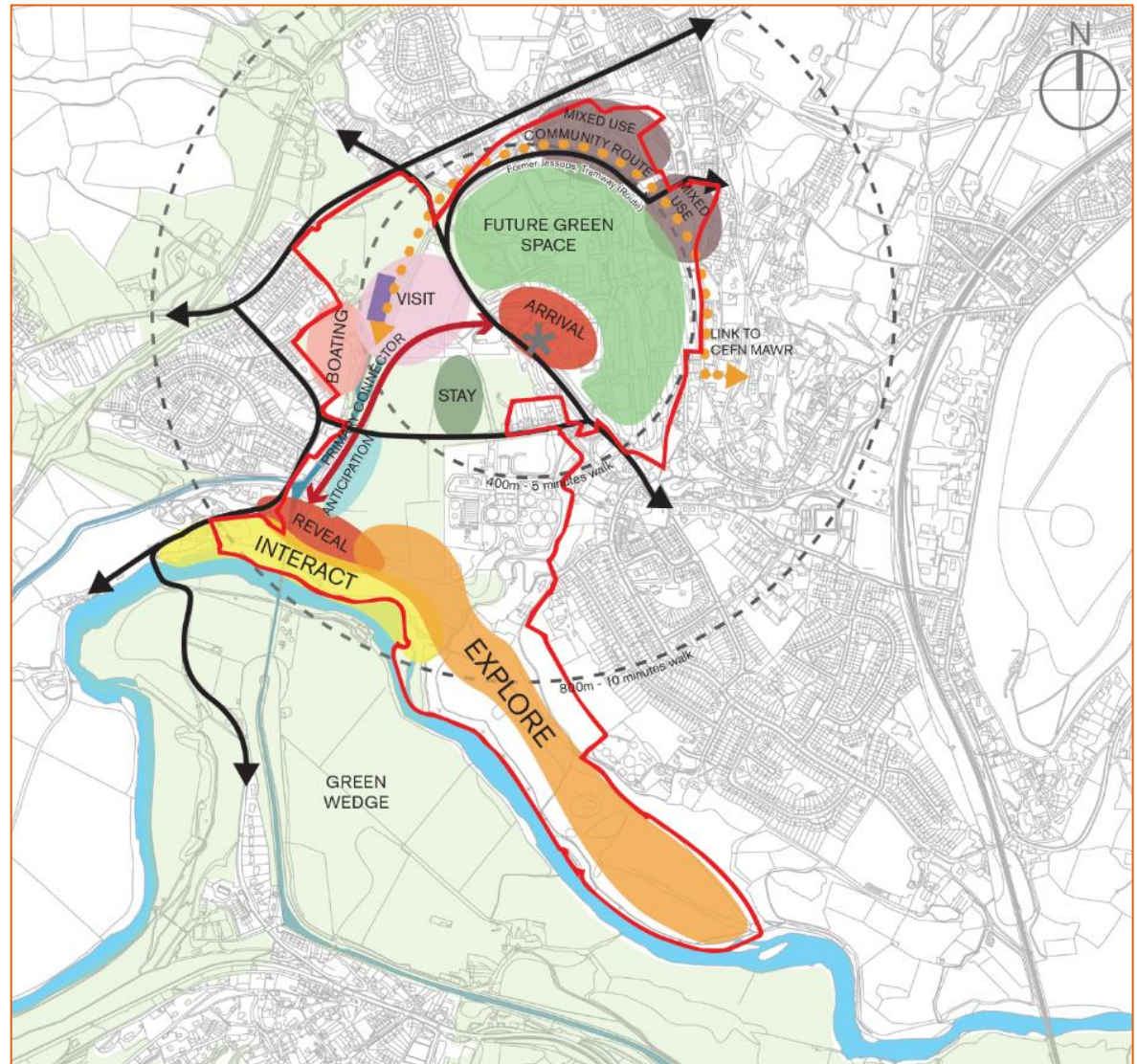
Stage 1 – Baseline Analysis

Stakeholder and Community Engagement

Extensive stakeholder and community engagement was undertaken as part of workshops during Stage 1, followed by further workshops and two drop-in sessions for members of the public during Stage 2. The drop-in sessions were attended by over 100 people.

Priorities highlighted as part of this engagement included:

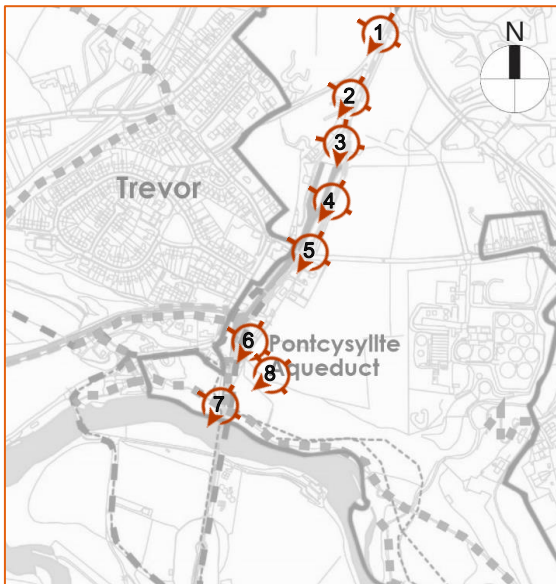
- the need to improve the sense of arrival at the WHS
- issues relating to parking, access and movement both to and within the masterplan area
- the importance of creating links with the wider area
- consideration of income generating uses to benefit the local economy (for example waterside or camping uses, activity tourism, supporting infrastructure)
- the importance of encouraging visitor spend and increasing dwell time
- emphasis on education opportunities within the WHS

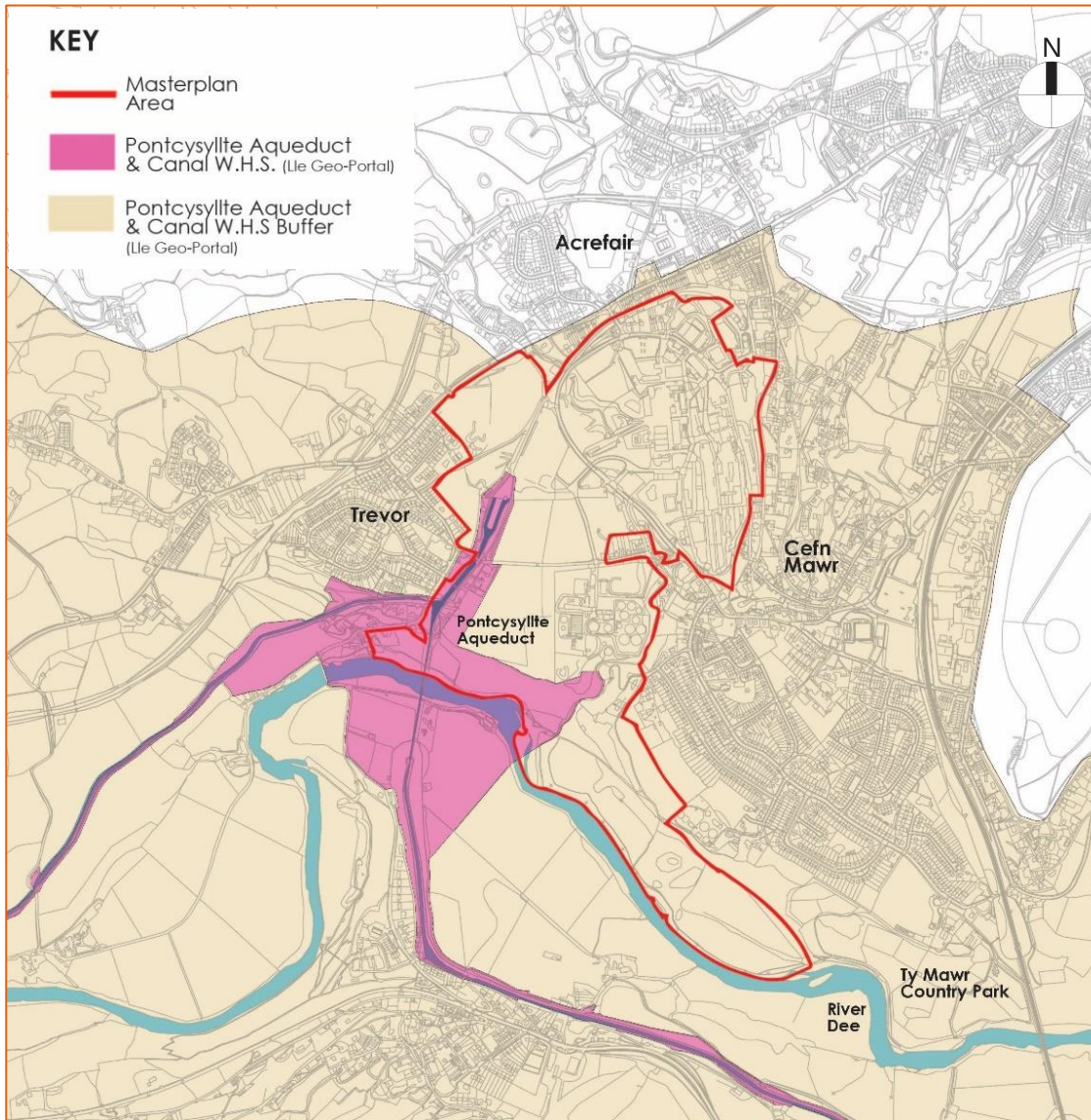


Current Visitor Experience

The average annual number of visits to the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct over the past three years has been 313,609. Visitor numbers in 2018 were over 340,000. Interestingly, Canal & River Trust data shows that only 13% of people visit the Trevor Basin Visitor Centre.

It is estimated that the majority (around 85%) of visitors only visit the Aqueduct itself; evidence suggests that the typical dwell time at the site is around 40 minutes (which translates into low local expenditure).

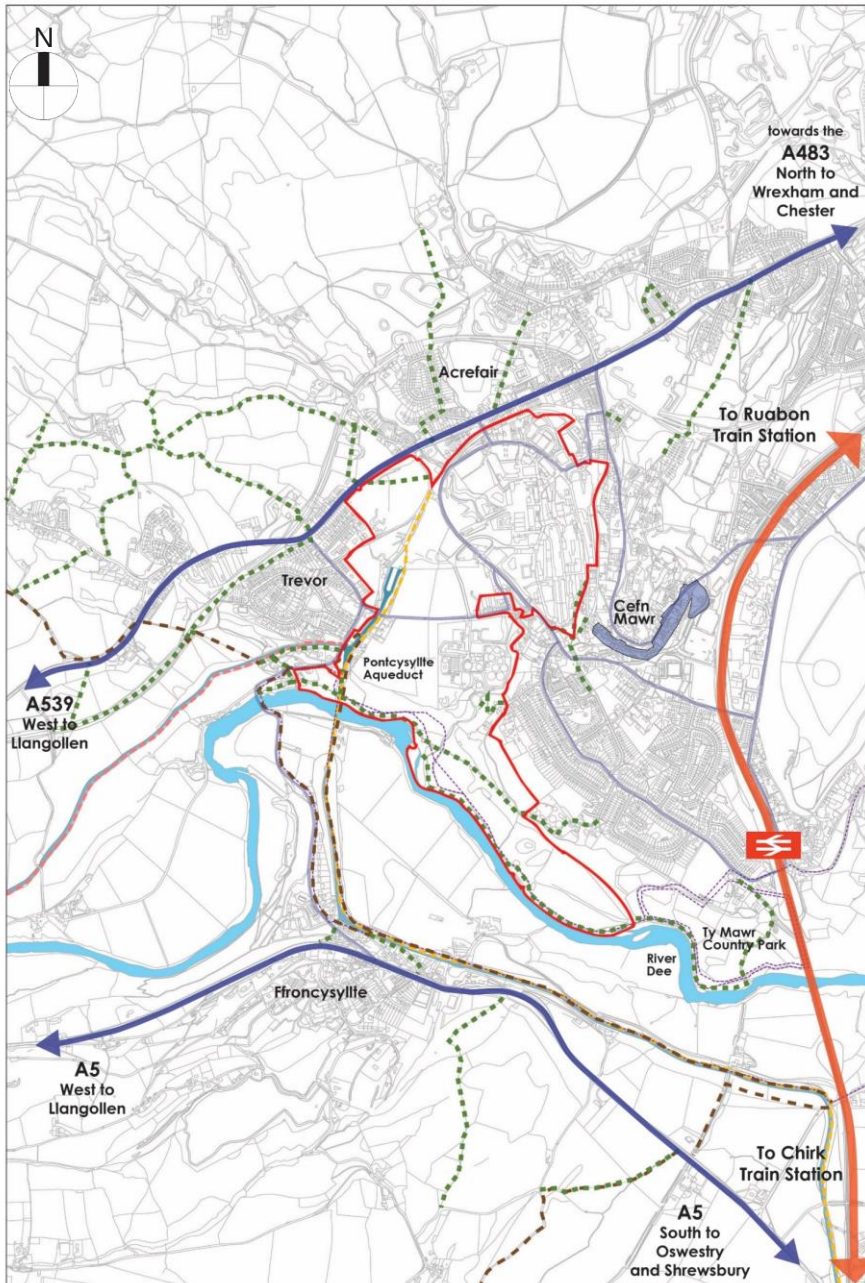




World Heritage Site – Issues and Pressures

The new WHS Management Plan identifies the following in relation to Trevor Basin and the surrounding area:

- the importance of protecting the Outstanding Universal Value of the WHS, its Buffer Zone and wider setting (including views and sense of arrival)
- the need for enhanced visitor facilities, including parking
- the need to improve physical and non-physical accessibility and connectivity to the WHS
- the need to ensure long-term sustainable access without erosion, damage or over-crowding
- the importance of realising economic, social and cultural benefits



Wider Accessibility

The diagram opposite identifies the existing accessibility to the wider area, including the communities of Cefn Mawr, Trevor and Froncysyllte.

KEY

- Masterplan Area
- National Cycle Route 85 (Sustrans)
- National Cycle Route 84 (Sustrans)
- National Trail Offa's Dyke Path (O.S.)
- Local Walks - Ty Mawr Country Park (Wrexham County Borough Council)
- Public Right of Way (PROW) - (O.S.)
- Primary Road Network / Bus Connections
- Local Road Network / Bus Connections
- Rail Connections

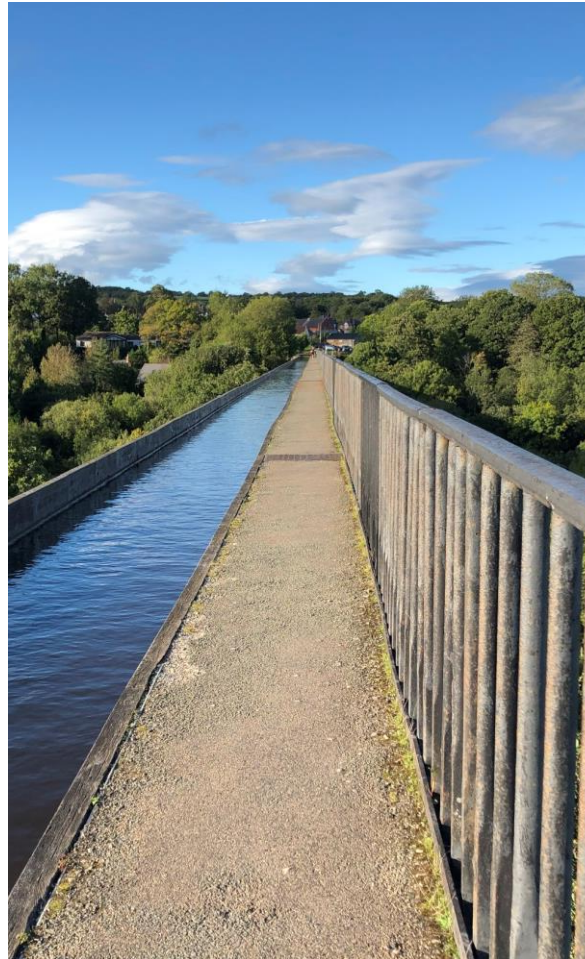
Stage 2 – Option Development

During Stage 2, a range of potential ideas were identified, including:

- Potential Mixed-Use Development area
- Woodland Activity & Education Centre
- Former manufacturing site utilised as green space
- Primary Arrival / Car Parking / Welcome Centre or 'Hub' building
- Glamping / Camping Site
- Treetops Walk – 'Telford's Treetops'
- Clinker Trail
- Basin Area Improvements
- Dee Valley Walks & River Bridge
- Development Plot

A range of proposals were developed for individual sites within the masterplan boundary, including potential ideas for the Hub building and linkages between here, Trevor Basin and the primary arrival / car parking area in particular. Options considered included the creation of a canal extension from Trevor Basin to the Welcome Centre site, the creation

of a 16-berth marina, and options for the Hub building itself in terms of size and therefore function.



Following the end of Stage 2, it was agreed that the masterplan proposals had the potential to significantly improve the quality and variety of the area's visitor offer, drive new visitor spend and create jobs; however it was also agreed that further research was necessary to explore the options that had been developed in order to provide a more detailed evidence base to support delivery mechanisms and potential funding applications.

An independent assessment was therefore undertaken in 2019 in order to quantify the economic and social impacts likely to arise from the masterplan proposals, as well as to take into account heritage and deliverability considerations and phasing. The report concluded that the masterplan proposals presented a significant opportunity to develop the visitor destination at Trevor Basin and promote local health and wellbeing, as well as improving quality of life through changing perceptions of Trevor and Cefn Mawr as places to live and invest.



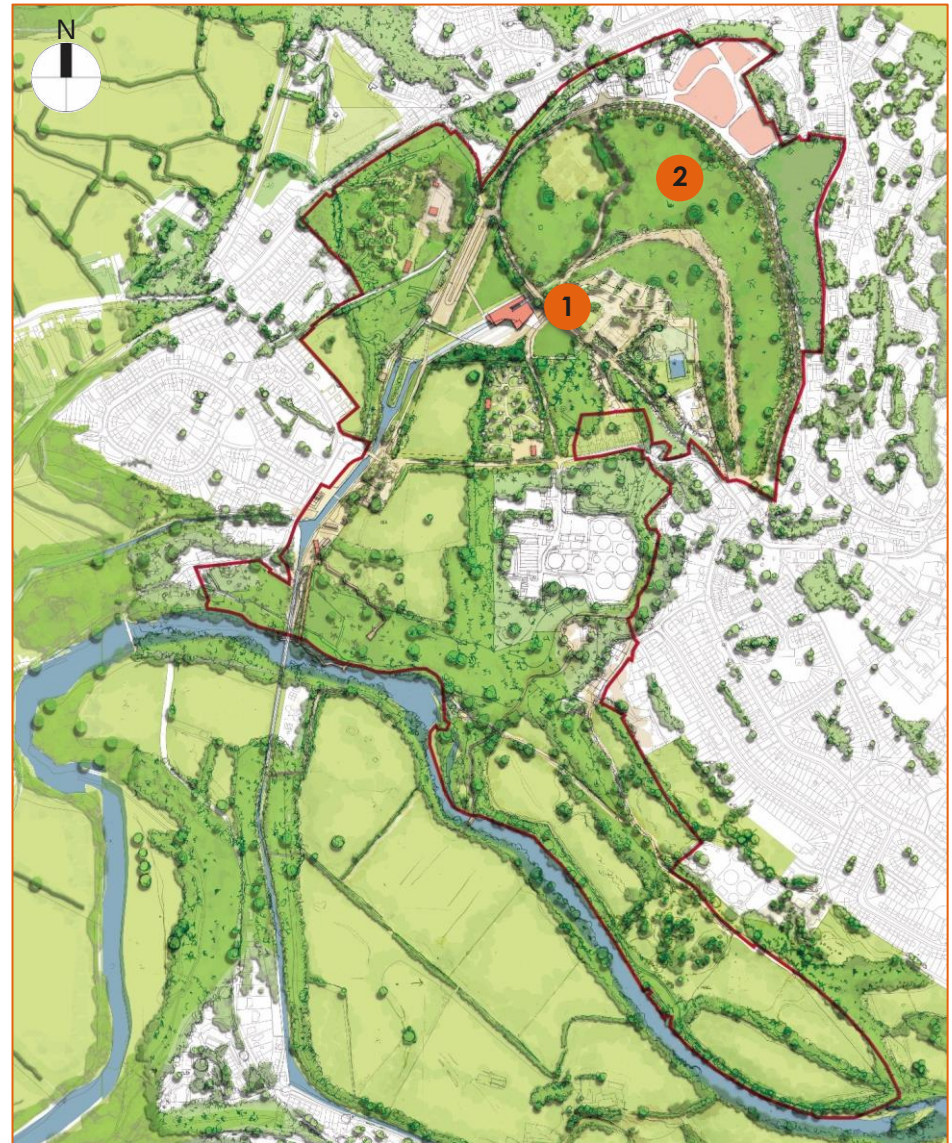
Stage 3 Preferred Masterplan

Stage 3 – Preferred Masterplan

The development of a Preferred Masterplan for Trevor Basin and the surrounding area commenced in 2020. The Preferred Masterplan has taken on board findings from the preceding stages of work, including the outputs of the Stantec work.

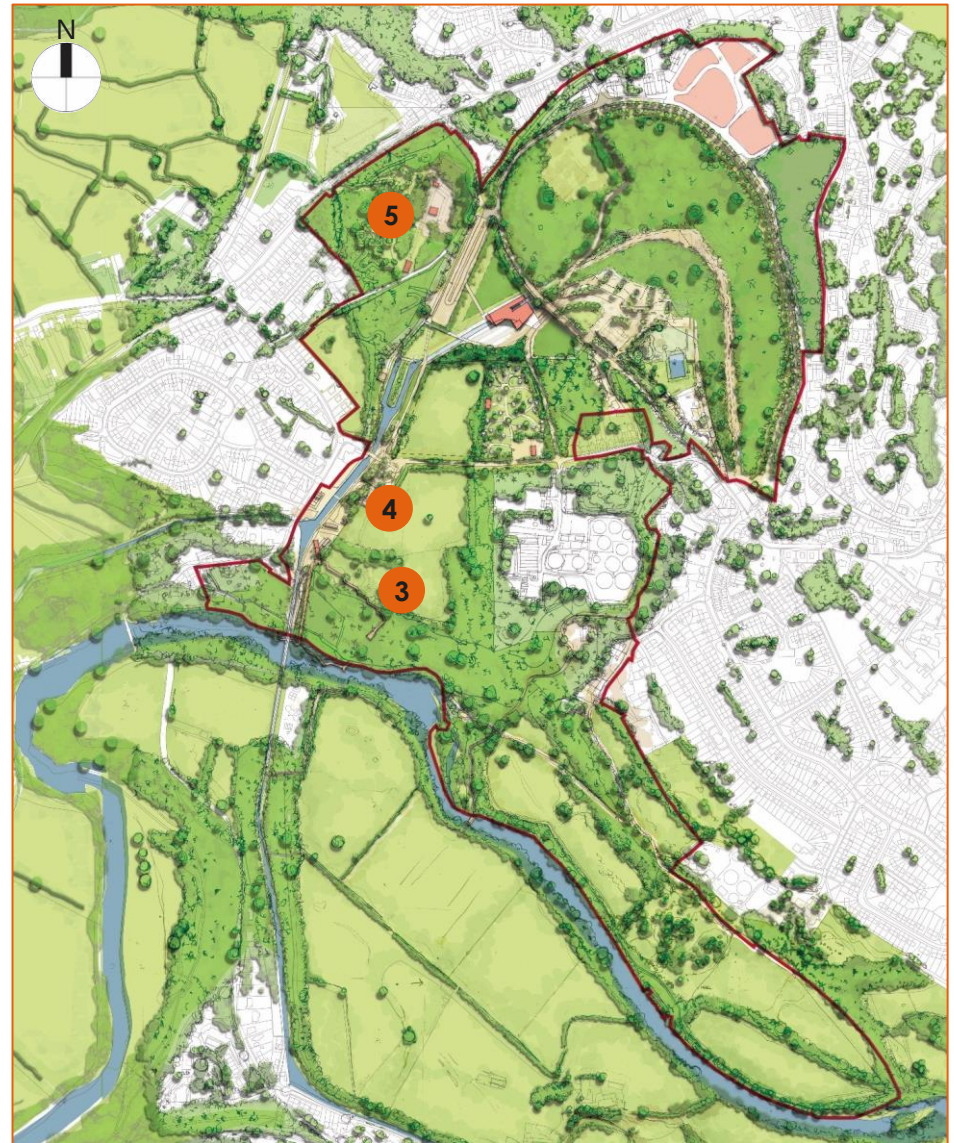
The components of the Preferred Masterplan are as follows:

- 1** Creation of a primary arrival area, car park and new 'Hub' building (a combined visitor centre, community resource and event space). This forms part of proposals to better manage the visitor experience at the WHS, and thereby overcome issues with poor parking, low dwell time and poor visitor management as at present. A new, landscaped car park would be provided at Wimborne Gate, from which point visitors would be directed around the WHS through improved signage and wayfinding. The Hub would form the 'welcome centre' for the WHS.
- 2** 'Rewilding' the former manufacturing site – management of the site in accordance with the environmental permit; progressively develop as a restricted access brownfield nature reserve; include tree planting for screening; include opportunities to link Cefn Mawr to the WHS with a heritage trail.



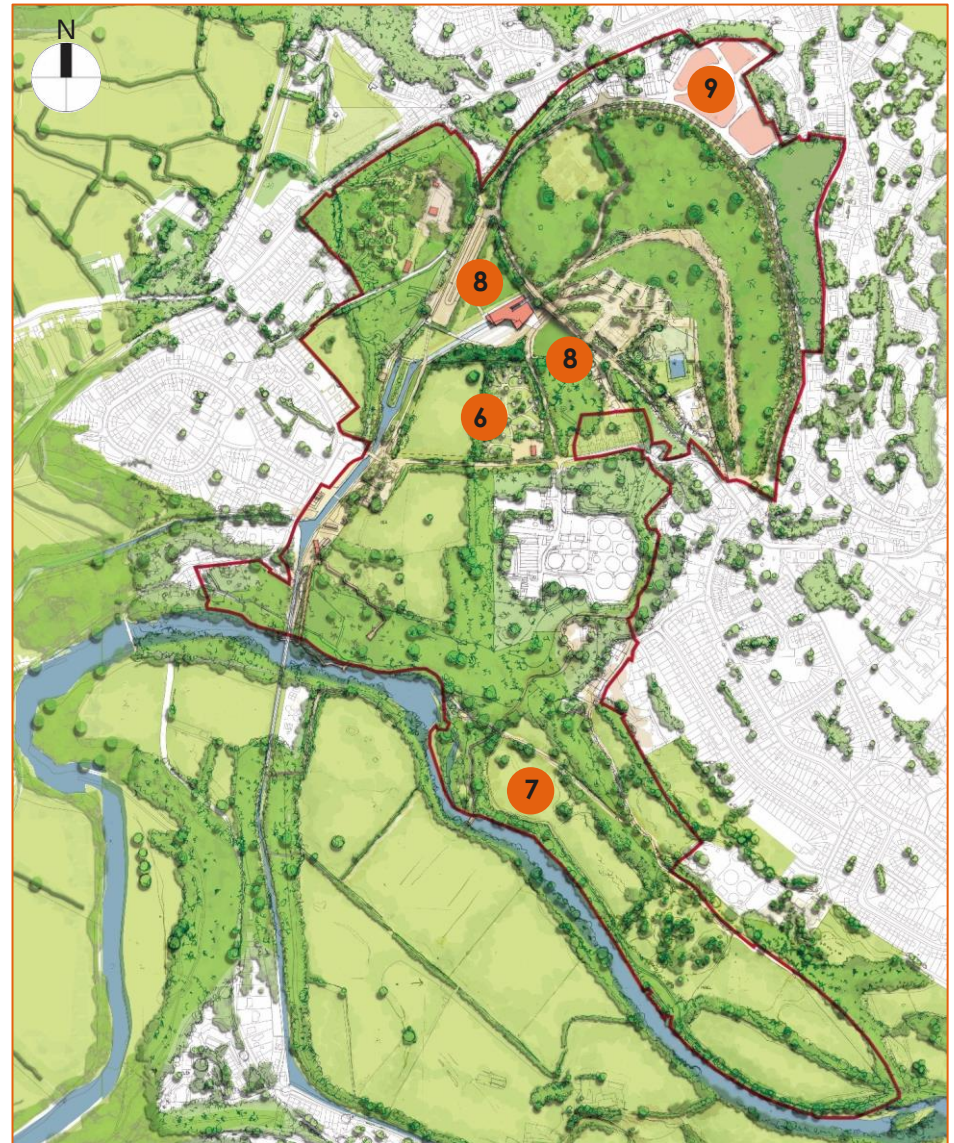
Stage 3 – Preferred Masterplan

- 3** Creation of a Treetop Walk. This is 'Telford's Treetops', a new visitor attraction comprising walkway and viewing platform, which would be developed sensitively through the trees adjacent to the aqueduct. The platform helps to spread out the visitor experience and importantly, give people a view of the aqueduct itself.
- 4** Opportunities within Trevor Basin to sympathetically enhance and repurpose the existing buildings and adjoining land to provide flexible space for complementary commercial and leisure related uses on and off the water. Including Public realm improvements to create a higher-quality environment and experience fitting for the WHS and incorporating accessibility and inclusive design associated with a replacement lifting bridge.
- 5** Woodland activity area and education centre on the former brickworks site – this may include a high ropes activity area or similar as well as incorporating education / interpretation opportunities presented by the wider site (for example heritage associated with the former brickworks)

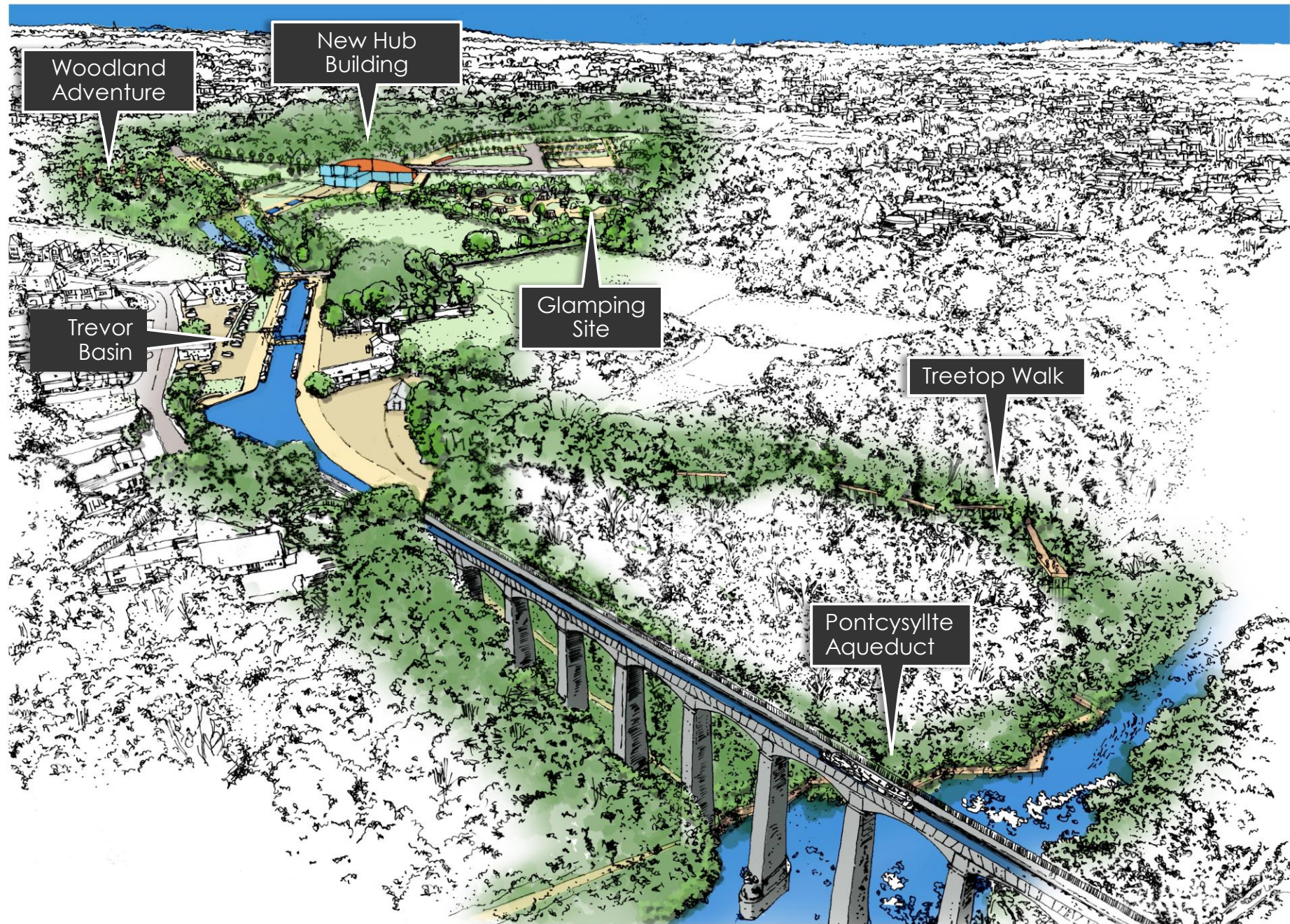


Stage 3 – Preferred Masterplan

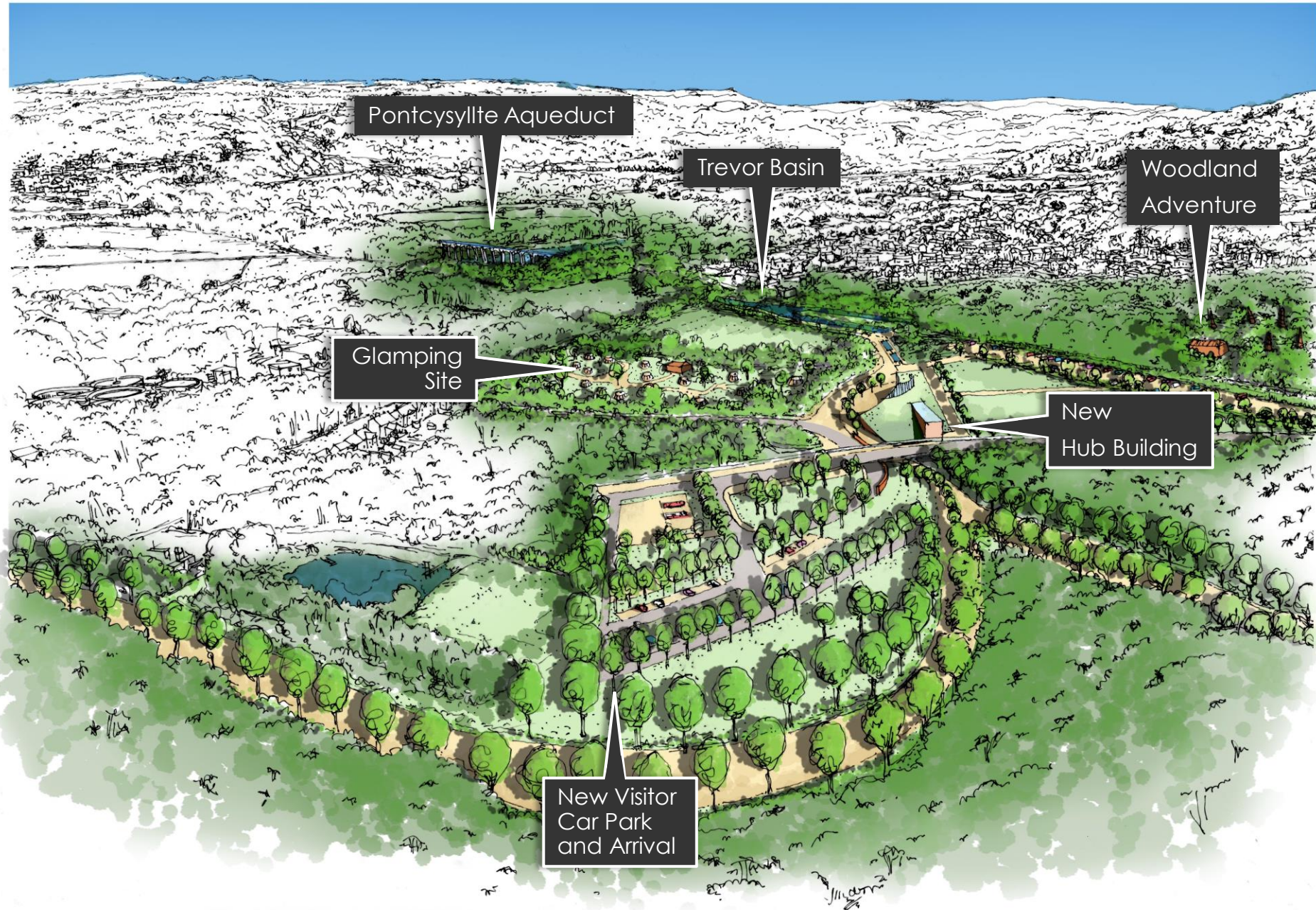
- 6** Developing a glamping/camping site (1.4ha) on fields to the east of Trevor Basin, including associated infrastructure (shower block / reception area). The portion of the site closest to the WHS to be kept as open space / green buffer, with potential for events space here as necessary.
- 7** Creation of a Dee River walk, including a new river bridge crossing located outside of the WHS boundary, to protect the setting of the WHS. The creation of a new river crossing further along the River Dee again enables visitors to be dispersed throughout the site and helps to increase dwell time within the wider area.
- 8** Bringing forward two small development plots in the vicinity of the Hub building which could come forward for commercial, leisure or community uses to support wider needs as appropriate.
- 9** Bringing forward a small development plot as potential residential infill / self-build or mixed use, adaptable to support wider needs as appropriate.



Preferred Masterplan - View NE across Trevor Basin towards Hub Building and Cefn Mawr



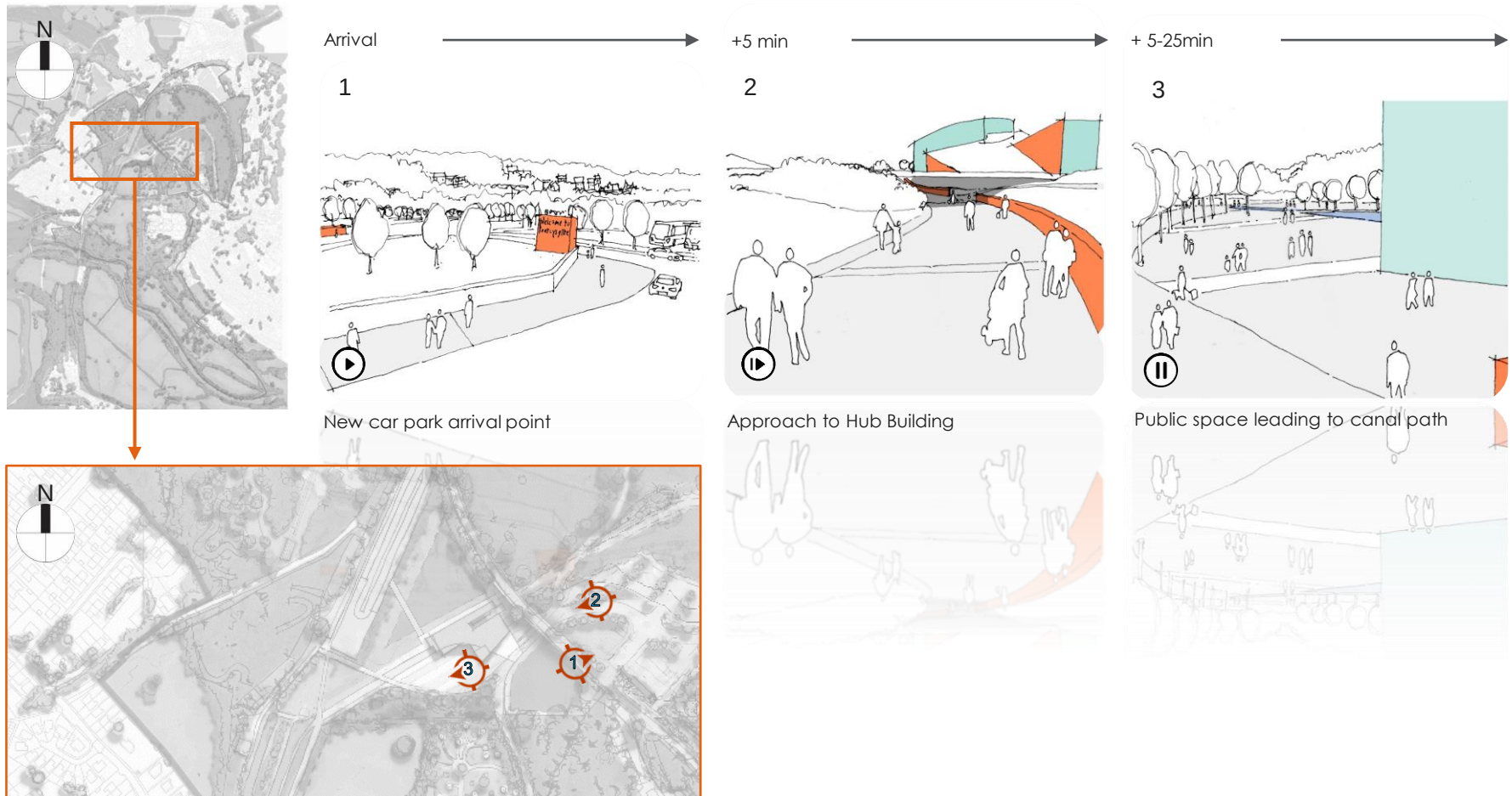
Preferred Masterplan - View SW from Cefn Mawr across a 'rewilded' former industrial site toward Trevor Basin



The Potential Visitor Experience

Once realised the masterplan will improve visitor management – parking, wayfinding, and the breadth

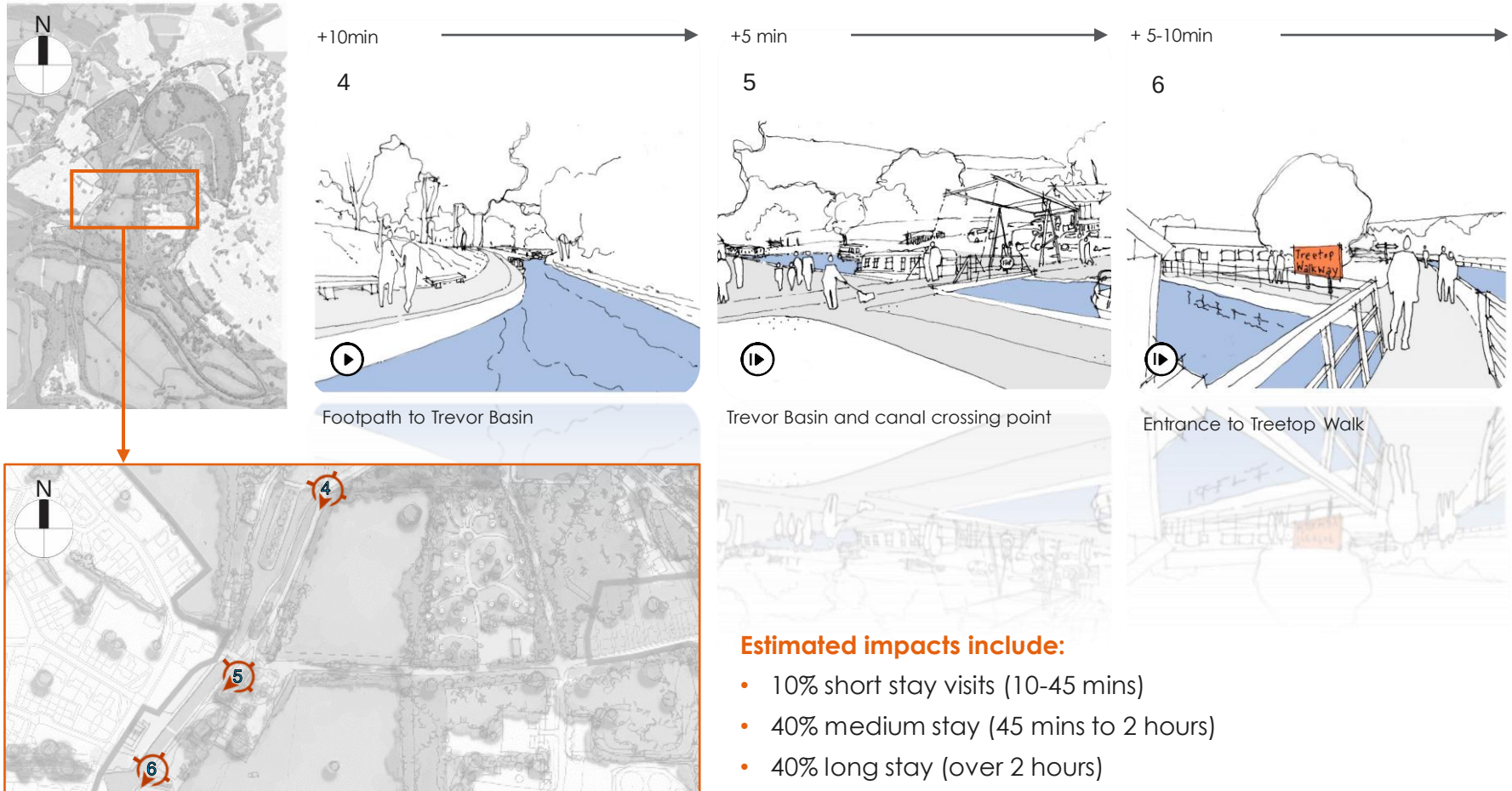
of activities and destinations available. The following sequential sketches set out the anticipated visitor experience.



The Potential Visitor Experience

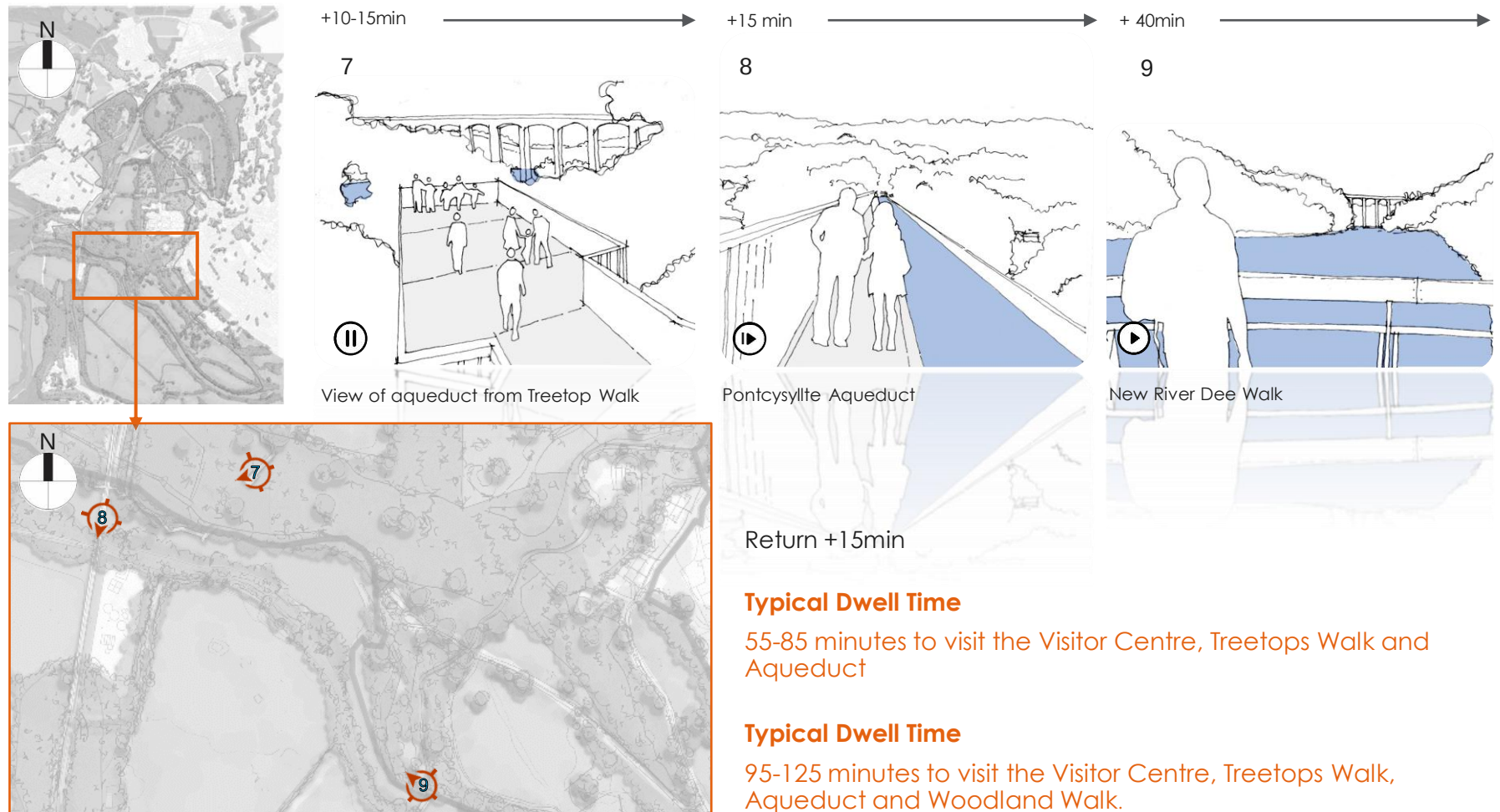
It is anticipated that the masterplan will increase dwell time within the area.

Visitors will be able to disperse through the site, with more opportunities to link with nearby communities, services and facilities.



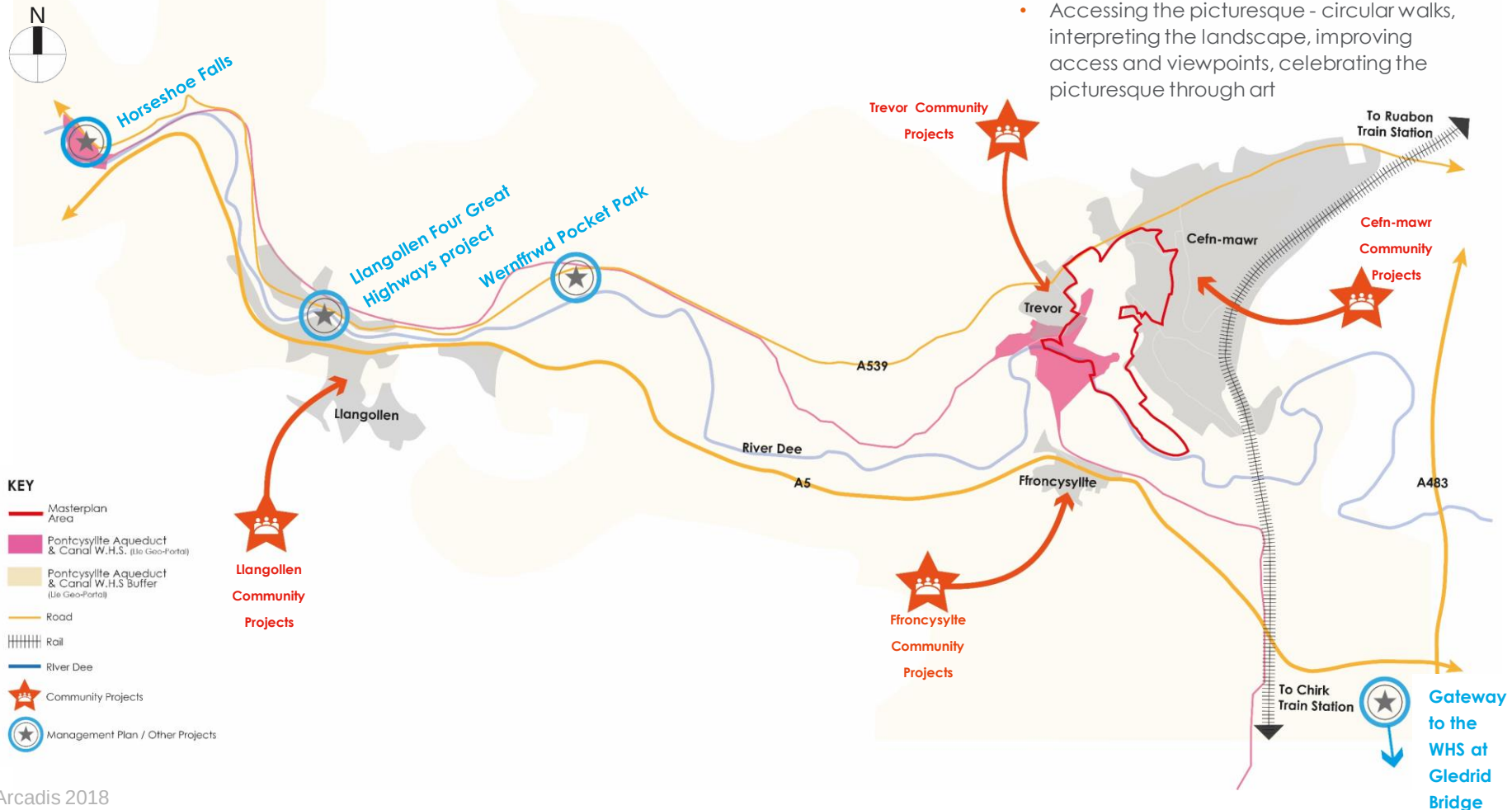
The Potential Visitor Experience

It is anticipated that the masterplan will increase dwell time within the area.



Catalyst for Development and Opportunity

Building on the ambition of improving connectivity, the realisation of the Masterplan will support and align with wider initiatives. These are illustrated here.



Benefits of the Preferred Masterplan

Aim: Safeguard the World Heritage Site



Achieved via economic investment adjacent to and within the WHS to ensure long-term sustainable access, generate income to

reinvest in maintenance and management, and improve physical and non-physical accessibility. Improved quality of land use within the Buffer Zone and views in and out.

Aim: Maximise economic & community benefits



Generate circa £75.7m (present value) of additional Gross Value Added benefits for the Welsh economy over the next 30 years

Aim: Improve accessibility



Improved access to the WHS site through new footways and access to the river, a new elevated viewing platform and enhanced public realm and car parking

Aim: Enhance the health & wellbeing of community & visitors



Spread of new and existing visitors along the Llangollen Canal towpath, across the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct,

and within the network of paths in and around the masterplan area, supporting the physical and mental health of those who use them

The woodland activity and education centre will offer opportunities to educate visitors (both adults and children) about biodiversity and sustainability issues

Aim: Enhance visitor attractions & dwell time



Improving visitor management through parking, wayfinding and the breadth of activities and

destinations, to enhance the visitor experience and increasing dwell time.

Increase visitor spend - predicted to rise from its current figure of circa £1.5 million per annum to circa £13.8 million in 2036

Aim: Balance needs of community, residents and visitor numbers



Estimated to generate circa £24.6 million in social value impacts from recreational users

The hub building will be designed around the needs of the local community with potential to host community events

The development will provide additional amenities that can improve quality of life for residents of Trevor and Cefn Mawr. Potential solution for current parking issues in Trevor.

Aim: Realistic options for brownfield regeneration / minimise brownfield maintenance



Providing sympathetic development, improving access and minimising visual impact, with limited remedial works .

Delivery and Implementation

Indicative Phasing Overview

The core components of the Masterplan will take place over the short term (1 to 3 years) with subsequent associated development reaching into the medium and longer term (up to 7 years) as follows:

Phase A (Year 1)

- 2 Greening the Former Manufacturing Area
- 6 Glamping / Camping Site & Open Space

Phase B (Year 2)

- 1 Primary Arrival / Car Parking / 'Hub Building'

Phase C (Year 3)

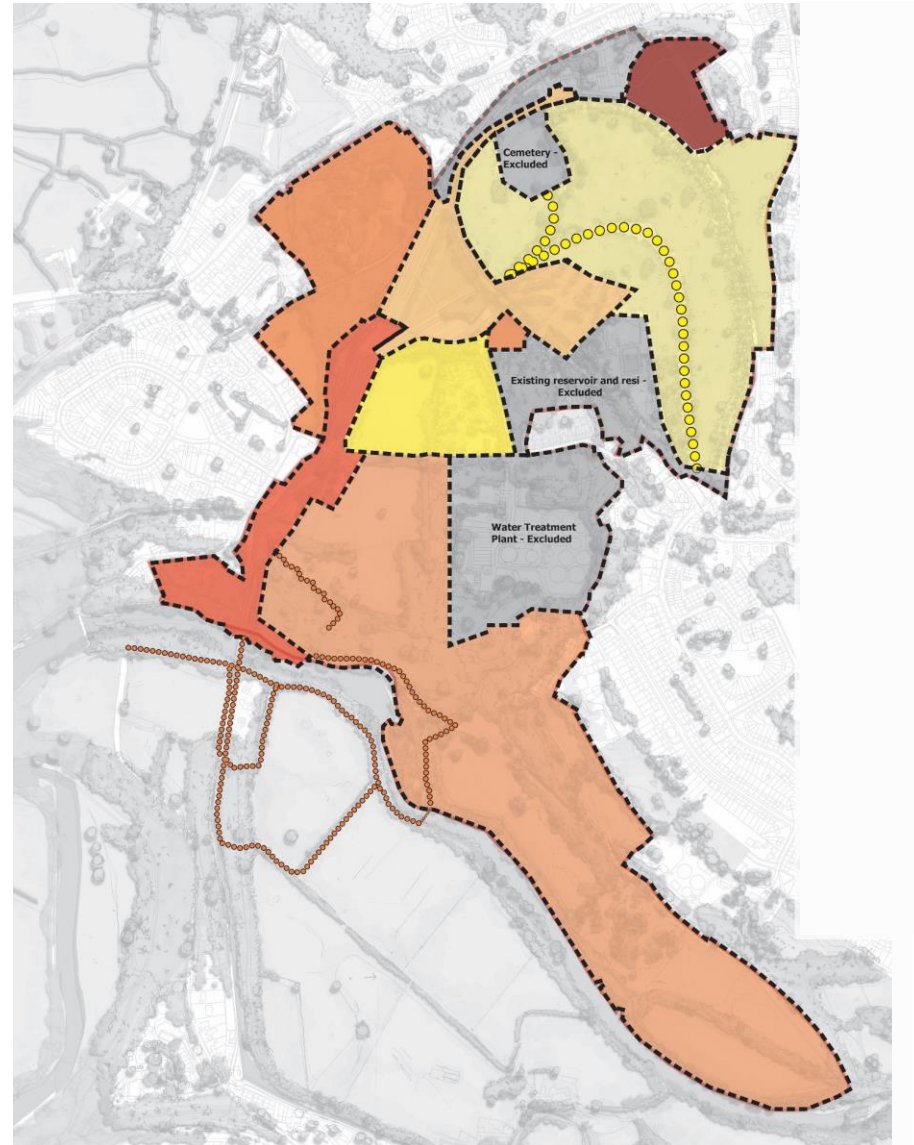
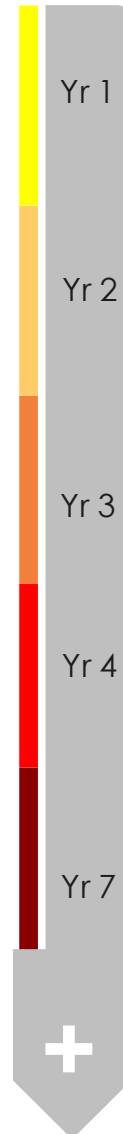
- 5 Woodland Activity & Education Centre
- 8 Development Plots
- 3 Treetops Walk – 'Telford's Treetops'
- 7 Dee Valley Walks & River Bridge

Phase D (Year 4)

- 4 Built Environment Improvements to the Basin Area

Phase E (Year 7)

- 9 Potential Mixed Use Development



10 Note: Clinker Trail – completed 2019

Ownership

The Masterplan will see the project partners working collaboratively but also independently to self develop the components of the masterplan. The diagram opposite identifies responsibility by area.

Next Steps

Further discussions are now taking place with landowners and stakeholders regarding the delivery and implementation phase.

