The Carmarthenshire Well-being & Therapeutic Social Hub (CWTSH)
Big Ideas in a Micro Village: Evaluating a young person's supported housing project in Llanelli

Sara O'Shea, The Morgan Academy, Swansea University

The Micro Village Concept

The Micro Village concept is rooted in the tiny-house movement which has seen people opt to live in small houses, often for environmental, financial or lifestyle reasons.

In recent years, the concept has swept throughout the USA and into the UK as a way to solve homelessness and provide homes and community to those in need. Coleman (2018) estimates that there are over a dozen homelessness micro village projects in America, whilst the Social Bite Village in Scotland has recently opened its doors to twenty homeless adults.

However, it is in Llanelli, South Wales, that The Wallich homelessness charity plan to take this concept one step further by developing the CWTSH. This innovative supported housing model will provide the first micro village type service to young adults with complex needs who are at risk of homelessness and aims to holistically support service users to prepare for independent community living.

CWTSH Accommodation Units

Policy & Legislation

The CWTSH has the potential to innovatively translate a large cross section of Wales's new legislation and its branches of policy into practice.

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

A Prosperous Wales
- The CWTSH aims to provide an innovative, productive and zero carbon community.
- The CWTSH plans to use resources in an efficient and proportionate way.
- The CWTSH will offer educational, skill development and employment opportunities.

A Resilient Wales
- The CWTSH will be developed sustainably and will implement a number of environmentally friendly practices e.g. renewable energy, rainwater harvesting, recycling, growing food etc.
- The CWTSH service providers will explore ways that biodiversity can be enhanced.

A Healthier Wales
- The CWTSH will use therapeutic and psychological approaches to help improve the health and well-being of its service users.
- The CWTSH will ensure the availability of professionals such as psychotherapists and counsellors.
- The CWTSH will promote healthy and active lifestyles.

A More Equal Wales
- The CWTSH will support young adults from disadvantaged backgrounds to reach their full potential.
- The CWTSH will support young people to improve their education and employment outcomes.

A Wales of Cohesive Communities
- The CWTSH aims to provide an attractive, viable, safe and well-connected community.
- The CWTSH plans to support young people to become valuable community members.
- The CWTSH aims to establish positive connections with local people, organisations and businesses so that service users are able to integrate into the wider community.

A Wales of Vibrant Culture & Welsh Language
- The CWTSH will provide a wide range of activities and opportunities that could stimulate artistic, sporting or recreational interests.
- The CWTSH aims to be a bilingual service that will offer opportunities to learn the Welsh language.

A Globally Responsible Wales
The CWTSH aims to be a service model for young people that is socially and environmentally responsible and which can be replicated at the global level.

Other Relevant Legislation

Environment (Wales) Act 2016
The CWTSH's zero carbon footprint and its focus on environmentally sustainable practice align with some of this acts objectives

Housing (Wales) Act 2014
The CWTSH will provide support to young people at risk of homelessness and could help achieve this acts homelessness prevention objectives.

Planning (Wales) Act 2015
The CWTSH will be sustainably developed and will meet objectives outlined in Planning Policy Wales and the One Planet Development policy
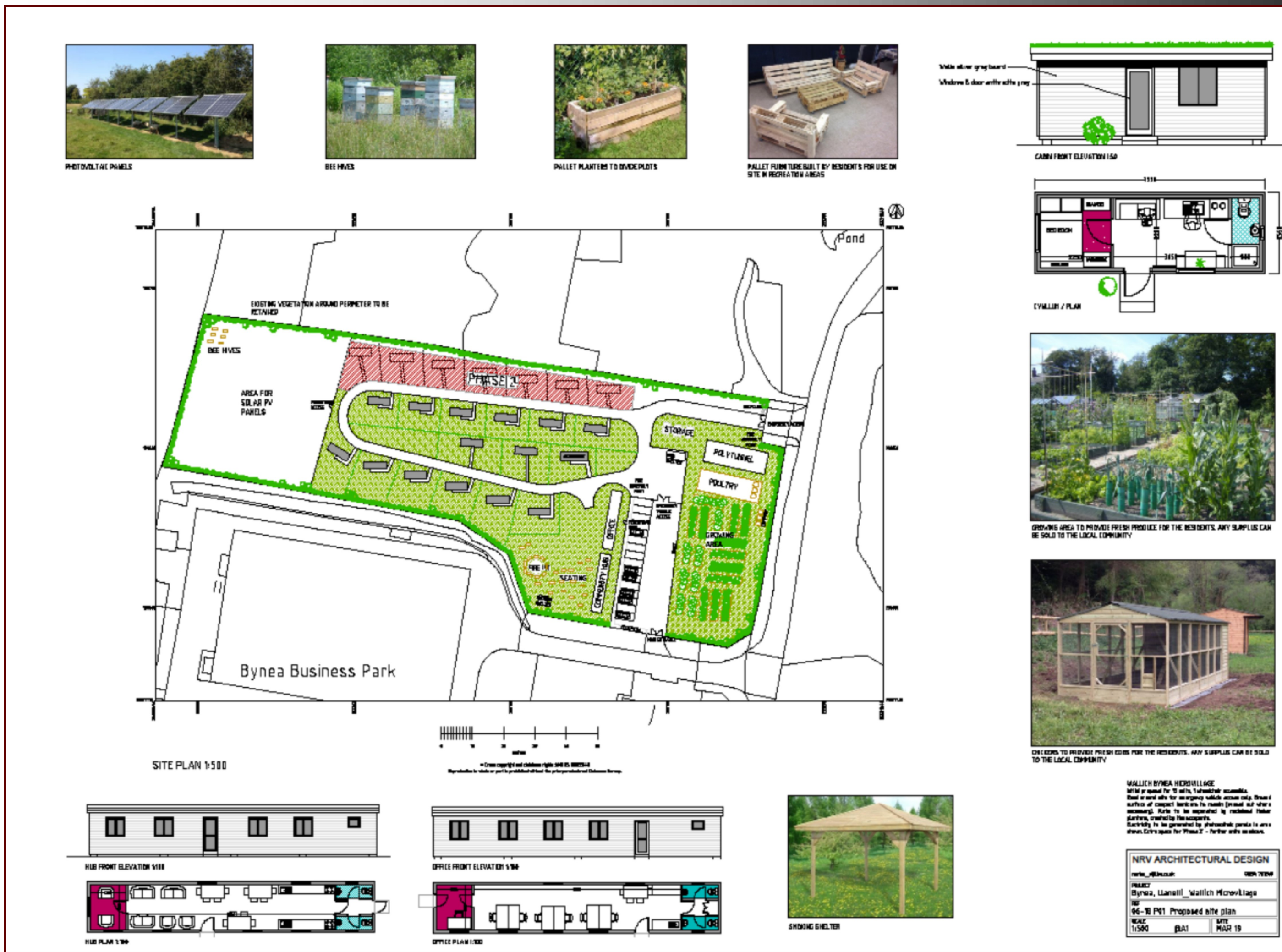
Social Services & Well-being (Wales) Act 2014
As the CWTSH will be co-produced, with a strong focus on prevention and early intervention, improving well-being, multi-agency working, talking and listening, and giving a voice and control to service users, it could align with this acts key principles.

Coleman, R. (2018) *Are Tiny Houses Useful and Feasible to Help Address Homelessness in Alameda County? How Could Tiny Houses Be Used and Under What Conditions?*: http://ternercenter.berkeley.edu/uploads/
Tiny_Houses_Study_FINAL_Terner.pdf

CWTSH: Main Aims & Characteristics

- Coproduced by The Wallich and young people at planning, development and operational stages.
- Consists of 15 zero carbon homes and several indoor and outdoor communal areas.
- Provision of a wide range of skill development, education and employment opportunities.
- Opportunities to grow food, keep bees and rear animals.
- Significant focus on environmentally sustainable practices such as renewable energy production, rainwater harvesting and recycling.
- Developed using a Psychologically Informed Environment (PIE) framework.

The CWTSH Plan

Research

This is a three year ethnographic PhD research project.

Research Focus

This research project has been split into two interrelated parts:

A comparative evaluation of the CWTSH's efficacy for The Wallich.	PhD thesis focused research into how a third sector organisation employs coproduction in the development of a new service (the CWTSH).

Methodology

Potential Participants	Research Methods
Young people using The Wallich services	Discussions/informal conversations
Young people using different services	Observations
Young people preparing for services	Interviews
The Wallich staff & management	Focus groups/meetings
Statutory services and funding bodies such as Children's Services, Carmarthenshire County Council, Youth Justice, Social Services, Supporting People etc.	Questionnaires/Surveys

Potential Findings

- How service users and staff experience adjusting to the CWTSH.
- How the CWTSH compares to other models of service provision.
- The CWTSH's effectiveness in delivering services to young people.
- The CWTSH's effectiveness in translating Welsh policy and legislation into practice.
- How the relationship between the third sector and statutory services impacts funding.
- How a psychologically informed approach relates to co-production.
- How conflicting temporalities such as life course, fixed term projects and policy agendas impact young peoples experiences of coproducing a new project.