

Statws/Status:
Cyfrinachol / Confidential



Adroddiad Adolygu Dylunio: 14 February 2006
Design Review Report:

Dyddiad Cyfarfod / Cyflwyno'r Deunydd: 1 February 2006
Meeting Date / Material Submitted:

Lleoliad/Location: A40, Canaston Bridge

Disgrifiad o'r Cynllun Road improvement and
Scheme Description: new bridge

Cleient/Asiant: Welsh Assembly Government
Client/Agent: [Andy Falley, Martyn Leech,
Tim Dorken]

Cynllunio: Atkins
Consultants: [Simon Andrews, Terry Davies]
Costain [Dafydd Lloyd]

Awdurdod Cynllunio: Pembrokeshire CC
Planning Authority: [Alf Williams]
Statws Cynllunio: Pre-planning
Planning Status:

Y Panel Adolygu Dylunio/Design Review Panel:
Alan Francis (cadeirydd/chair) Paul Vanner
Cindy Harris (swyddog/officer) Ed Colgan
Ben Sibert Douglas Hogg

Lead Panellist: Ben Sibert

Sylwedyddion/Observers: Charlie Deng
Design Review assistant

Cyflwyniad/Presentation

A feasibility study was carried out as early as 1997-98 into road improvements on the A40 west of St Clears. It was decided in December 2004 that a dual carriageway was not justified in economic terms at present traffic volumes, and that a single carriageway solution would be progressed [although the current brief provides for possible future upgrade to dual carriageway standard]. The existing section of trunk road has a higher than average accident rate, limited safe overtaking opportunity, and poor journey time reliability. It passes through the village of Robeston Wathen, where there is a 30mph speed restriction.

The six kilometer section of road improvements, which is the subject of this proposal, includes: a new roundabout at the junction with the A4075; a bypass of the village of Robeston Wathen; closure of the junction with the side road to Llawhadarn, and provision of a new link road over the existing bridge to the new roundabout; a new roundabout junction with the B4314 to Narberth; and a new bridge across the Eastern Cleddau alongside and south of the existing bridge to carry the trunk road. A key objective is to minimise environmental impact, and to conserve and enhance existing landscape and biodiversity. Key stakeholders have been consulted.

The team identified specific issues which they would like discussed in relation to the river crossing:

- The balance between i) retaining the existing bridge, which is mainly in good condition, avoiding the impacts of demolition but involving a small incursion into the National Park, and ii) demolition of the existing bridge and construction of two new bridges but avoiding incursion into the National Park.
- The form of the proposed bridge
- Landscape mitigation for the proposed new crossing

A full stage 3 environmental assessment will be carried out. Views from approaches to the site show the bridges to be relatively unobtrusive and easily mitigated by embankments and tree planting.

The project team anticipates publishing draft orders [the equivalent of a planning application] in the autumn of 2006, with a public enquiry if necessary in the spring of 2007. Detailed design work would be carried out through the rest of 2007.

The Local Authority reported that Pembrokeshire Coast National Park have not ruled out a small incursion into the Park, [as in option i) above] but a case would need to be made for this. This part of the A40 is a key gateway into Pembrokeshire, with Oakwood a few kilometres to the south and the Bluestone development close by. New bridge[s] should demonstrate the highest standards of design, especially as they are a permanent and unyielding feature in the landscape. The LA representative thought that concrete would appear more elegant in beams and abutments, and they would probably prefer option 2 [three span].

Ymateb y Panel/Panel's Response

The Panel discussed the two options outlined for the river crossing. We agreed that in terms of sustainability and the risk to the Special Area of Conservation [SAC], the retention of the existing bridge as in option i) was preferable. However, we suggested a third option of a single crossing, either carrying the trunk road only and retaining a separate junction with

the side road to Llawhaden, or carrying both the trunk road and side road in parallel. The project team said that the latter was not preferred because of the apparent width of the road in that solution, with its necessary strong dividing safety barrier. They felt that that was probably a visually poorer solution than two separate bridges. The Panel then questioned whether the side road to Llawhaden might not join the new road in a new roundabout to the west of the roundabout proposed, but the project team thought that this was not feasible, partly because it is WAG policy to minimise access points and junctions along trunk roads, and this is essential for improving overtaking facilities. The existing bridge has had a structural assessment. Its parapets are weak and the beams are capable of carrying loading which is adequate for side roads but not for trunk roads. A new bridge carrying both highways would present difficulties in construction, and its width and the angle at which it crossed the river would be problematic. The Panel deferred to this judgment. We supported the reuse of the existing bridge and the consequent incursion into the National Park boundary, which follows the line of the old highway.

With regard to the form of the bridge, the Panel found the options presented for a three span bridge were unattractive and intrusive. The abutments should be less apparent and become part of the natural habitat, possibly by using stone cladding. If the three span option is chosen, the Panel considered that a steel structure would be more appropriate than concrete. Intermediate piers should be lighter, offering a more open aspect to the river bank. A three span bridge would mean longer routes for underpasses, but a less disturbed river bank. Nevertheless, the Panel did not favour the three span option next to an existing single span bridge. A new single span bridge would leave three metres of accessway either side of the river and, with 45 degree wing walls or concave walls, would allow for an equally sensitive treatment of the riverbank area. The project team stated that either option would improve on the present provision for wildlife and amenity.

The Panel found that the landscape issues had been well addressed. The proposed alignment of the road and the retention of existing vegetation, providing natural visual shielding, was welcomed. We thought that the engineered cutting could be made less obtrusive from remote views by more planting on the lower side.

The project team confirmed that any upgrade to dual carriageway standard would not occur before 2020 and in that event, a further new bridge would be required.

Crynodeb/Summary

The Panel welcomes this presentation and considers it to be an acceptable response to the site and the brief, with minor revisions only. In particular:

- We support the retention of the existing bridge and the realignment of the road and new bridge which encroaches slightly into the National Park.
- We support the single span option for the new bridge, with sensitive treatment of the wing walls, using natural materials and screening.
- We welcome the way in which landscape and biodiversity issues have been incorporated into the design
- Pedestrian and cycle access across and along the river should be maintained and enhanced

Diwedd/End

NB A Welsh language copy of this report is available upon request.