



DESIGN
COMMISSION
FOR WALES
COMISIWN
DYLUNIO
CYMRU

Design Review Report

A483/A489 Newtown Bypass,
Newtown

30th January 2014



Declarations of Interest

Panel members, observers and other relevant parties are required to declare **in advance** any interests they may have in relation to the Design Review Agenda items. Any such declarations are recorded here and in DCFW's central records.

Review Status

CONFIDENTIAL

Meeting date	30 th January 2014
Issue date	17 th February 2014
Scheme location	Newtown
Scheme description	New bypass road
Scheme reference number	27
Planning status	NA

Declarations of Interest

Consultations to Date

A public exhibition for the proposed scheme was held in July 2013. Further public exhibitions are planned for February 2014 and Q3 2014.

The Proposals

The scheme is for a 5.6km long bypass road around Newtown through predominantly agricultural land, with a build budget of approximately £50m. The new road will include eleven structures, including bridges, and culverts. It is hoped that the bypass will relieve traffic congestion in the town, making it a safer place to walk and cycle. It is planned that Draft Orders will be published June 2014, a public inquiry will take place winter 2015, and construction will begin summer 2016. Improvement works in Newtown will follow.

Summary

- The Design Commission welcomes the opportunity to review this project at an early stage, and would encourage further engagement as the designs progress.
- The integration of highway design and environmental mitigation and enhancement is positive.
- The Design Commission would like to know more detail about the proposed improvements in Newtown and how these will benefit the wider community.

Main Points in Detail

Environmental Factors

A new road of this scale will have an impact on the landscape and environment. Given the rural, agricultural setting for this bypass, it is good that the highway design has been strongly guided by and integrated with environmental mitigation and enhancement.

On initial inspection the changes to the original route that are proposed appear positive; adding value and reducing environmental impact.

A holistic approach to environmental mitigation and enhancement, such as proposed, is to be encouraged. The design of these measures is at an early stage, but we look forward to seeing how they progress alongside the highways design.

It is good to hear that the team has found undertaking the CEEQUAL Assessment a helpful process; and that it has encouraged proactive thinking rather than retrofitting, and has helped integrate the team.

Structures

The road requires 11 structures which are designed to minimise impact on the environment. Natural stone cladding will be used where bridges are visible, along with weathered (Corten) steel. The designers recognise that careful detailing of the structures is needed to avoid staining from the steel, but they have experience of using this material.

It would be beneficial if the stone for the bridges could be sourced locally. Resources should be investigated, and samples tested.

Newtown Improvements

The benefits to Newtown which will result from this project are important. The bypass is intended to relieve traffic levels in Newtown, enabling improved and safer walking and cycling conditions. Following construction of the new road, improvements will be carried out in the town. Whilst it is acknowledged that the town centre improvements are being designed and delivered separately from the bypass it is important that Welsh Government ensure both aspects of the Newtown scheme are presented to the Design Commission.

It is encouraging to see the team working with the Local Authority and community on a project for Newtown 'Gateway'.

The Design Commission would like to know more about what will be done in the town and how the works will improve the quality of the urban realm in Newtown, and address the broader objectives of public transport and non-car transport. It will be important to define the measures which will be used to achieve this soon, as this project has potential to make major positive change.

Future Engagement

It is best if design review is first carried out at an early stage when there is more potential to influence the scheme and add value. The Design Commission welcomes this

early engagement on this project and would welcome further review as designs progress to a more detailed stage.

At the next review we would expect to see the following:

- Environmental masterplan drawings
- Key details of the environmental strategy (water treatment, lighting, wildlife mitigation, noise and visual impact, cut-fill balance etc.). Treatment of the cutting and embankment slopes and measures to reduce visual and acoustic impacts from properties located to the north of the scheme.
- More detailed proposals for structures, including appraisal of options for sourcing local stone
- Proposals for mitigating effects on non-motorised users of the area during construction and operation
- Proposals for town centre improvements and Newtown 'Gateway'
- How lessons learned from previous road schemes are influencing this project
- Demonstration of BIM model

DCFW is a non-statutory consultee, a private limited company and wholly owned subsidiary of the Welsh Government. The comment recorded in this report, arising from formal Design Review through our Design Review Service, is provided in the public interest for the consideration of local planning authorities as a material consideration, and other users of the Design Review Service. It is not and should not be considered 'advice' and no third party is bound or required to act upon it. The Design Review Service is delivered in line with DCFW's published protocols, code of conduct and complaints procedure, which should be read and considered by users of the service.

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

Attendees

Agent/Client/Developer:	Peris Jones, Welsh Government
Designers/Contractors:	Alex Thomas, Atkins Peter McComiskey, TACP Jo Wall, TACP David Rowlands, Alun Griffiths Contractors Richard Britten, Alun Griffiths Contractors
Planning Authority:	
Design Review Panel:	
Chair	Wendy Richards
Lead Panellist	Simon Power Elfed Roberts Ashley Bateson Toby Adam

Amanda Spence, Design Advisor, DCFW

Observing:

Carole-Anne Davies