

Statws/Status:
Cyfrinachol / Confidential



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| Adroddiad Adolygu Dylunio: Design Review Report: | 2 March 2007 |
| Dyddiad Cyfarfod/Cyflwyno'r Deunydd: Meeting Date / Material Submitted: | 14 February 2007 |
| Lleoliad/Location: | Newport Station |
| Disgrifiad o'r Cynllun Scheme Description: | Transport facilities and Masterplan |
| Cleient/Asiant: Client/Agent: | Newport Unlimited [David Ward] |
| Developer/Datblygwr: | Network Rail [Stephen Eggleton, Malcolm Wood] |
| Pensaer/Architect: | Grimshaw [Ewan Jones, Mark Middleton, Chris Crombie] Atkins Rail [Joanne Griffiths] |
| Awdurdod Cynllunio: Planning Authority: | Newport CC |
| Statws Cynllunio: Planning Status: | Pre-application |
| Y Panel Adolygu Dylunio/ Design Review Panel: Alan Francis (cadeirydd/chair) Cindy Harris (swyddog/officer) Charlie Deng (swyddog/officer) | Jonathan Hines Richard Parnaby Ann-Marie Smale Ashley Bateson |
| Lead Panellist: | Richard Parnaby |

Sylwedyddion/Observers:

Carole-Anne Davies, DCFW

Cyflwyniad/Presentation

While this proposal is still at an early stage, the designers are working to a rapid programme, structured around planned station closures over the next two Christmas periods. Some of the works to the station buildings will be carried out under permitted development rights (although the exact extent of those works was not made clear). The new platform 4 is under construction.

A new bus interchange will be built to the south of the existing rail station and the ticket office will be located in the new south side building. A (maximum) 400 space multi-storey car park is proposed to the north on the site of the existing station car park and alongside a proposed commercial development shown as six indicative blocks of unspecified mixed uses. Two new pedestrian bridges are proposed: a new footbridge to the east (replacing the existing bridge that links the residential areas to the north to the city centre) and a paying passenger bridge to the west. It was suggested that the latter provides a new link between the civic and commercial centres of Newport .

The buildings will be well insulated with high thermal mass to minimise the heating demand. On site renewable energy generation will be maximised and, as lighting is likely to be the largest end use, a vertical axis wind turbine is under consideration. Efforts will be made to use bio-remediation techniques on this brownfield site. Existing buildings will be reused, stripping away excess services and signage and refurbishing the basic structures.

Ymateb y Panel/Panel's Response

The Panel welcomed the commitment to tackle the problem of underinvestment in this area of Newport, the brief requirement to provide an improved experience for passengers, and the ambition to address the separation of the station from the city centre. The intention is to retain a strong pedestrian route along Cambrian Road, integrated with the boulevarding of Kingsway and the increased use of Queensway for bus prioritisation.

The Panel was concerned that the new bridge to the west would be for passengers only and thus not part of the public realm. This undermines the stated (and very welcome) intention to provide a new link between the city centre and civic centre. It was acknowledged that this decision was driven by the rail franchisees' "revenue protection" policies, which were said to be 'sacrosanct'. However, the Panel insisted that the provision of fully public routes, connecting the civic centre and northern residential areas with the city centre, should be a fundamental requirement of the development brief and we reiterated our strong opposition to any further privatisation of the public realm.

There was some discussion about ways in which the problem might be resolved, by using a single wider bridge split horizontally, or by providing two new bridges meeting at a single vertical circulation point on the south of the railway closer to, but still west of, the existing station buildings.

The Panel considered that the current proposal did not improve connectivity, but rather reinforced the separation of the station from the city. The south terminal should be treated as a destination in its own right, and ideally moved further east, reinforcing a clear pedestrian route and visual link along Cambrian Road and Railway Street.

The Panel noted that the proposals were presented only in diagrammatic form and gave no information on the spatial quality of the urban design proposals and only the most preliminary indication of architectural intentions. The status of the commercial blocks was unclear on the drawings and it became apparent in discussion that the proposal was indicative only of a general aspiration for the site, although we were told that ideally this would be a mixed use development. The Panel noted from the massing diagrams that some of the new blocks appeared overbearing in relation to the residential buildings to the north, and we suggested that there could be problems with rights to light. We were strongly of the view that the development brief should require that the rail passenger car parking should be completely integrated into the proposed mixed use development (noting that the site levels were helpful in this respect). We accepted that there were difficulties with this approach, but we were convinced that it could be done and should be required at the masterplanning stage.

The Panel was disappointed that no information was provided on the submitted drawings to indicate the use of existing station and ancillary buildings, but we were reassured by the design team's response that all will be reused. We were informed that the catering facility will be relocated more centrally in the north terminal building. The south terminal will include the main ticket office and a newsagent, and this facade will be the 'front' of the station. The vertical circulation details were unclear. We noted that the diagrammatic representation on the submitted drawings gave no indication of the realistic extent of ramps and stairs that would be required and that would have a significant impact on the ground. This particularly applies to the south end of the eastern bridge where there appears to be insufficient space available to accommodate the necessary structures.

The Panel emphasised that sustainability measures including renewable generation should be part of a site-wide energy strategy, and not added on to an existing design as tokens of green credibility. The opportunity presented by this masterplan could be used to trigger an appraisal for centralised energy systems serving all the buildings shown. It was agreed that storm water management issues would need to be dealt with by identifying opportunities at this stage. The car parking provision will increase from 170 to about 200, although the original request was for 400. Cycle parking is included with greater provision than the existing 70 spaces. We would like to see more

daylight introduced into existing buildings as the design develops, and the energy use of the new blocks minimised through the use of shallow floorplans.

Crynodeb/Summary

The Panel welcomed the opportunity to consider this important regeneration proposal at an early stage. However, we have fundamental concerns with some key aspects of the proposal and consider it unacceptable in its present form. In particular:

- We believe it essential that the principles of connectivity and public accessibility should prevail over other considerations, while recognising the difficulties associated with security and revenue protection that arise from current franchising arrangements of the privatised railway system
- We suggest that a single vertical circulation point on the south side of the railway would allow better connectivity with the route to the city along Cambrian Road, and offer the possibility of better resolution of the vertical circulation. There could be two bridges springing from this single point - one connecting to the residential areas directly to the north and the other linking with the north terminal and the civic centre.
- The new car parking to the north should be integrated with the proposed commercial blocks and the proposed number of spaces should be reviewed with a view to minimising private transport.
- The urban design concepts need further development, to provide a distinctive and well composed sequence of urban experiences
- We recommend a site-wide energy strategy be adopted to drive the design development, and the achievement of high environmental standards be made a condition of any future development.

Diwedd/End

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