

**Statws/Status:**  
**Cyfrinachol (Confidential)**



**Adroddiad Adolygu Dylunio:**  
**Design Review Report:** 10 March 2005

**Dyddiad Cyfarfod / Cyflwyno'r Deunydd:**  
**Meeting Date / Material Submitted:** 2 March 2005

**Lleoliad/Location:** Porth

**Disgrifiad o'r Cynllun**  
**Scheme Description:** Relief road and bridges

**Designer:** Glamorgan Engineering  
Consultancy: [Dave Osborn,  
Ian Walsh, Ian Germain,  
Neil Clarke]

**Consultants:** Camlin Lonsdale [Huw Morland  
Costain [Darren James]

**Cleient/Asiant:** Rhondda Cynon Taff CBC  
**Client/Agent:** [Donna Bowhay]  
**Awdurdod Cynllunio:** as above  
**Planning Authority:**

**Statws Cynllunio:**  
**Planning Status:** Full application pending

**Y Panel Adolygu Dylunio/Design Review Panel:**

Alan Francis (cadeirydd/chair) Howard Wainwright  
Cindy Harris (swyddog/officer) Wendy Hall  
Nigel Hanson Douglas Hogg

**Sylwedyddion/Observers:** Gillian Wulff  
Peter Roberts

## Cyflwyniad/Presentation

This scheme was first presented to DCFW in August 2003. Since then, Costain have been appointed as the Contractor and together with the project team have carried out a value engineering exercise to arrive at a target cost. This was seen as an important part of the design development and concentrated particularly on achieving best value, minimising environmental impact, and identifying Health and Safety implications. A new application is pending and works are due to commence in April/May 2005.

The design team have responded to each of the specific points raised in the previous review and it was agreed to take this as the basis for the presentation:

- Roadworks – the layout of junctions has been revised to reduce earthworks, and the associated environmental impact. The number and height of retaining walls has been reduced, with positive implications for Health & Safety. These changes will also reduce any disruption to the general public. The two roundabouts at Pontygwaith have been changed to one, and the Wattstown roundabout has been moved into the hillside to avoid diverting the river. It has not been possible to reduce the scope of this junction, and the roundabout solution was deemed preferable to a simple junction from a road user and safety point of view.
- The Wyndham roundabout has been lowered by 2 metres, and the Dinas Road link will be treated with an overlay which is simpler and less disruptive. There will be a pedestrian crossing at the Cymmer Link junction, and the road by the Pioneer store raised slightly.
- The Llanwonno Road footbridge will now have shallower ramps to allow for disabled access, and a simpler supporting truss.
- The Rheola bridge remains essentially unchanged in its concept and general appearance. However, the tie girders are now in line with the bridge, and not on outriggers. The parapet design has been changed and these are now open metal balustrades. The public spaces in this area have been reviewed and the walkway between Cymmer bridge and Rheola bridge is now a riverside feature.
- The new Cymmer bridge will incorporate a footway and the old Cymmer bridge, which was subject to flooding, will be removed. The aesthetic appearance of the new bridge is influenced by flood level design parameters and sight line requirements.

Although value engineering is often associated with a loss of quality, in fact the current design is much simpler and leaner, still retaining its own design language.

The landscape design has progressed alongside, and biodiversity aspects have been addressed. Seeds have been collected from indigenous vegetation and a bold stripe planting plan will facilitate future seed collection. Soil structure and quality will be maintained and improved.

The local authority welcomes these changes as an improvement to the scheme. They wish to be reassured that the treatment and finishes of the newly created public spaces will be acceptable, and these may be conditioned.

## **Ymateb y Panel/Panel's Response**

The increased depth of the girders on Rheola Bridge is a trade-off between different design constraints and will not be apparent from a distance. The finish to the parapet, now in metal, is considered to be a more elegant solution. The original cycle underpass has been changed to an overpass, in response to public pressure.

The Panel remarked that the colour and materials used on the Llanwonno Road footbridge would have a significant visual impact. The colour is yet to be determined; the materials for the parapet will be a metal mesh, and the exact composition of this will have maintenance implications. There are no plans to light the footbridge, in spite of its being in use for 24 hours. The community route will be lit at a height of 5-6 metres above ground, with flat glass lanterns to minimise light pollution.

The Panel acknowledged that the re-siting of the war memorial in the most urban part of the scheme was appropriate, but the street furniture, signage and landscaping should be simplified and well integrated.

There are limited visual barriers between the road and nearby buildings, but there will be a broader, soft, planted corridor, which in places will be raised higher. Four options for noise barriers (fencing) are currently being offered to the adjoining residents; co-ordinated selection and implementation will be important. The steep embankments created will be stabilised by soil nailing and the use of biodegradable geotextiles, under two types of grassland planting.

The biodiversity masterplan looked at movement routes for humans, flora and fauna and concluded that for the latter two, there are major improvements. Otters in particular have been well catered for, and extensive bat and bird boxes will be provided along the route.

The cost savings as a result of value engineering have not been quantified, but the designers are confident that they have eliminated unnecessary, redundant costs while still retaining design quality and meeting the requirements of the design statement.

## **Crynodeb/Summary**

The Panel acknowledge that major improvements have been made to the original scheme and we welcome the simpler, leaner approach. In addition we would make the following points:

- The success of the new bridges and the extent of noise barriers will depend largely on the quality of the detailing. We note that the local authority may impose conditions on these aspects if consent is granted.
- The revised parapet detail on the Rheola bridge is viewed as an improvement
- The footbridge parapet will need to be treated with care to avoid the appearance of chain link fencing
- We welcome the landscape strategy and the minimising of environmental impact relating to soil extraction and movement
- The public space at the town square needs further thought to ensure that the war memorial setting is not compromised by inappropriate safety barriers and street furniture.

**Diwedd/End**

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