

Design Review Report

DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

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

PUBLIC

Meeting date	Monday 12 August 2013
Issue date	3 September 2013
Scheme location	Swansea Bay Tidal Lagoon Scheme
description	Tidal Power Generation
Scheme reference number	PINS02/13 - 17
Planning status	Pre-application PINS NSIP Process

Declaration of interests

The Commission was informed of the involvement of Knights Architects, working for the client/scheme promoter on bridge design. Martin Knight is a member of DCfW's Design Review Panel and has had no involvement in the assessment of this scheme. Andrew Linfoot has previously recorded his interest in an earlier review of this project.

Consultations to date

The project has been subject to wide public consultation of both formal and informal nature. Project consultation documentation has been mailed to almost 200,000 addresses and this has been supplemented with public meetings and events.

Consultation has included informal consultation on issues and options during the period Autumn 2011 to June 2013; statutory consultees and the wider public were included in the process.

Formal consultation on the preferred option and Preliminary Environmental Information Report took place during the period 4 July to 5 August 2013 in accordance with advice in para 52 of Guidance on the PINS NSIP pre-application Process, DCLG, January 2013. Consideration is now being given to follow-up consultation on Environmental Impact Assessment findings planned for early October 2013.

Formal submission is planned by 6 December 2013 allowing for two further consultation events. A meeting with PINS/NRW to discuss this is scheduled for 14 August (TBC). The formal submission in December will be accompanied by an Environmental Impact Assessment.

Correspondence of 23 May 2013 and 21 July 2013 provides further background to the NSIP/PINS process through which this project is proceeding, and to two prior consultations with the Design Commission for Wales, focussing on the energy generation and coastal aspects.

This Design Review of 12 August 2013 looked more closely at the landside ambitions, land ownership and associated design issues. The Commission welcomed this third meeting at formal Design Review and expects to receive further presentations at Review later in the Autumn, prior to submission.

Representatives of the local authorities of the City & County of Swansea and of Neath Port Talbot CBC were welcomed to the Review meeting.

The Proposals

The Severn Estuary holds the second highest tidal range in the world, with Swansea Bay benefitting from spring tides of up to 10m. The stated aim of the project is to harness this tidal resource for energy/power generation and capture regeneration and tourism benefits. The proposal offers a nominal rated capacity of 240MW with 120 year life, capable of 14 hours generation, daily. <http://www.tidallagoonswanseabay.com/>

Summary of the presentation and discussion:

This is the third meeting with DCFW and the first formal Design Review meeting. The Commission is broadly supportive of what is an ambitious scheme in terms of energy generation, regeneration and tourism with the potential for large scale water sport events, as well as the provision of traditional Oyster and Lobster beds within the lagoon.

The Panel received a further presentation covering the principles of the project and its wider aims for water/coastal activity beyond the primary power generation purposes. These include watersports, boating, visitor facilities for interpretation and turbine viewing and public access, and links with the University Science Campus.

The City & County of Swansea Officer Stephen Smith informed the Panel that a number of specialists were considering the project and would report to Council at the end of August contributing to the decision making process.

A key issue is the western link, the success of which is critical to the success of the wider regeneration objectives of the project. While other routes require further detailed consideration in order to ensure 24hr vehicle access, navigation rights into the Prince of Wales dock needed to be protected.

Neath Port Talbot CBC stated their broad support for the principles of the project and its regeneration ambitions, subject to further detail on what exactly is to be delivered. The Panel noted that the Preferred Strategy stage of the Local Development Plan will be published in August of 2013, and that the Local Impact Report, required by the NSIP process requires the early engagement of the project team with the affected Planning Authorities.

The following items were highlighted in detail:

- Matters of land ownership and interests require swift resolution given their critical impact on access and movement.
- Agreement with all parties on access points is critical along with the need to fix key elements in order to clarify items for the EIA and to assess mitigation.

- The Panel recognised the stage the project has reached and that this is a critical point in its progress, but with several important unknowns and uncertainties yet to be addressed in a short timescale.
- The Panel highlighted the need to make tangible progress on the land side design issues which are critical to the success of the wider ambitions of the project.
- The Panel would expect greater detail on the following aspects, at the next meeting:
 - Quality of public spaces arising from further design work and understanding of constraints;
 - Relationship of public realm to planned buildings and movement strategy;
 - Details of the western link, assuming agreement is achieved;
 - The nature of landscape treatment, walkways/boardwalks and the nature and quality of the experience at high and low tide;
 - Detailed information on access to the eastern landfall building;
 - Connections with the University Campus public realm and balance of student use ;
 - Details of design procurement;
 - Sections of lagoon enclosure and landward beach and park;
 - A clear understanding of what will be contained within the DCO and what will be excluded for later consideration.

Panel Discussion in full:

Discussion concerned the key role of adjacent land interests, particularly where access is required for operational and visitor use. The proposed University Energy and Innovation Centre abuts the proposed new dune landscape and the University may take responsibility for the planned Burrows Interpretation Centre. But it was not clear what the relationship might be between the public realm, to be delivered by the University, and the planned access to the centre, the sea wall and fishing beds, to be provided by the Tidal Lagoon project. It was suggested detailed discussion would be helpful to both parties, particularly as the University occupation date and the construction programme for the Tidal Lagoon were likely to overlap.

Future plans for the Swansea Dock estate, lying north of the lagoon, need to be co-ordinated with the operational requirements for the lagoon. Connections and access are particularly important. The preferred link at the west side of the docks to the city centre involves land belonging to ABP. ABP believe that vehicle and pedestrian access across a new bridge to the west would limit use of the quayside and constrain access to the docks. The planned provision of a visitor reception centre, boat centre and associated parking and service areas, are also partly shown, on the current masterplan, within the retained ABP estate. Alternative access along the south side of the dock estate via the seawall also lies within ABP ownership.

The Panel noted that vehicle access is required for transporting visitors by 'eco' bus to the visitor centre located by the turbine building, for operational requirements along the lagoon wall and for the fishing beds located at the eastern side of the lagoon. All of these movements will need to be considered as part of the public realm strategy.

A construction compound will be required for works and transport on site during the build period of 30 months starting in Spring 2015. Discussion is ongoing with ABP, on a number of possible sites, together with the consideration of visitor and event parking requirements which may be accommodated in the same area, on completion. Location of this is uncertain. The Panel considered that relationships with ABP are crucial and that agreement on permanent and temporary land take within, or outside, ABP dock estate need to be resolved.

Highway junction capacity, vehicle and pedestrian movement through the site, and event management, require more detailed consideration. The Panel notes that early agreement with all parties, including the relevant Highway Authorities, needs to be reached with some urgency. The travel impact needs to consider large number of potential visitors. A proposed extreme sailing series could attract 10ks of visitors, requiring remote off site park and ride facilities. Smaller events may be accommodated on site or using existing Fabian Way park and ride which has land available for possible expansion.

The proposed boating centre is now associated with the western landfall building while the main visitor centre is now located at the turbine hall. The boating centre, to be designed as a gateway building, may become a wider recreational centre for visitors as well as for formal boating use.

The landward urban park:

Connections are not yet finalised however this area is intended to include a visitor reception building, new beaches, promenade and seafront along with slipways from the boating centre. A flood defence/seawall is currently required to protect from extreme waves on the west side. The team preferred to see its removal arguing that the lagoon structure effectively diminished wave action. This may be subject of further consideration.

Boardwalks and seaward park:

Electric buses are envisaged to take visitors to the visitor centre in addition to walkways and cycle access along the broader seawall. Areas of interest will be achieved through landscape design to break up the wall and include the provision of boardwalks.

Questions were raised around the internal lagoon tidal range and how the parks respond to this range. It will be important to understand how the experience differs at different times. The Panel requested further information on the lagoon enclosure and landward park in the form of sections to illustrate both the relationship of access and levels and the effect of tidal levels in these areas.

Narrow seaward park:

This is the least hospitable area and most exposed with the furthest point off shore providing opportunity for fishing in deep waters from the walkway.

Landward ecological park.

The location of the 'landing' of the sea wall avoids the boundary of the SSSI at the east side. Habitat creation opportunities include new area of dunes in front of the campus, area of new saltmarsh and grassland (foreshore of former dockland). The area could be designed as a recreational area for students. Mariculture elements are proposed within the lagoon.

Design Approach:

The scope of LDA's work is currently masterplanning and dealing with public realm design, as well as coordinating the design procurement of the scheme.

The Panel were informed that architects were in place, with detailed briefs having been issued, for each lagoon building, up to Stage D RIBA. These teams are procured via LDA on behalf of the client.

The proposed designs aim to link maritime heritage and high tech materials, aiming for lightweight striking character that creates a landmark at the western landfall with the offshore buildings (ie turbine building and visitor centre) designed to be more robust.

The Panel acknowledged that operational priorities were a principle concern to the team but wanted to understand more about detailed procurement and the protection of design quality beyond the DCO application and its scope.

The Panel also advised that a public art strategy should be developed now to ensure integrated teams and to inform a structured programme with schools in due course.

Ecological design is not part of LDA's scope but they are working closely with all other design parties and with Atkins' marine engineers who are also part of this collaborative process.

The Panel welcomed this presentation and urged that dates be agreed with the Commission for future consultation before PINS submission and in relation to post-DCO work around detailed design and delivery.

End

DCFW is a non-statutory consultee, a private limited company and a wholly controlled subsidiary of the Welsh Government.

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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.

Appendix 1

Attendees

Client/Developer	Alex Herbert, Swansea Bay Tidal Lagoon power Charles Coombs , LDA Design
Design Review Panel Chair Lead Panellist	Alan Francis Roger Ayton Andrew Linfoot Angela Williams
Observing Recording	Carole-Anne Davies, DCFW Sue Jones, DCFW
Local Authority Observers	Stephen Smith, City & County of Swansea Nicola Lake, Neath Port Talbot CBC