

# Design Review Report

The Kingsway Infrastructure Project,  
Swansea

**DCFW Ref: 140**

Meeting of 16<sup>th</sup> March 2017



## Declarations of Interest

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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

Meeting date  
Issue date  
Scheme location  
Scheme description  
Scheme reference number  
Planning status

### Public

16<sup>th</sup> March 2017  
21<sup>st</sup> March 2017  
Swansea  
Highway/Urban Park  
N140  
Pre-application

## Declarations of Interest

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Panel member Elfed Roberts declared that he has responded to consultation on this scheme on behalf of Pobl as their office is located adjacent to the site. Steve Smith representing the Local Planning Authority is also a panel member. All present were content to proceed following these declarations.

## Consultations to Date

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Public and stakeholder consultation has been undertaken. The consultation period has now closed and comments received will be considered in amendments to the proposals.

## The Proposals

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The proposals seek to improve the quality of the environment of this part of the city centre as a place to live and work by creating a green artery with the relevant infrastructure to support this. Improvements to the road and environment are considered critical to attracting new occupiers. Proposals form a critical element of the City Deal application and the forerunner to the creation of the Digital Village.

## Main Points

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We welcomed the opportunity to review proposals for the Kingsway at the concept design stage. The following comments respond to the material presented and the dialogue entered into at this meeting.

The proposals, at this stage, demonstrate a positive approach and clear ambition to improve the area. It is positive that a place-led approach is being taken rather than a wholly engineering response to the issues presented by the area.

It is evident that the proposed scheme is informed by a good understanding of the highway network behind it and that the proposals have been tested and the implications on other parts of the network understood.

The following key points were raised in the review and should be considered as the design develops.

### **Design Vision**

The objectives presented in the review are appropriate to achieving the vision of supporting the development of a mixed-use district that is home to new businesses. Further detail is now needed on the vision for each part of the proposed public realm. Part of this vision will be built upon understanding who will use the space and how the space will be used at different times of the day. It may be worth considering a 'day in the life' of the street to help the team work through this. Some of the movement patterns and surrounding uses will be known but others are yet to be defined as the nature of the street is set to change significantly in the future. Therefore, we would encourage some flexibility in the design to allow some of the spaces to adapt over time. Key features, such as the avenue of trees, could be identified as elements that must be delivered at the earliest stages to effect the necessary transformational impact, whereas other elements could be delivered later or be of a temporary nature so that they can adapt to changes in the street and provide that flexibility.

The vision should also address local distinctiveness and identify the elements that will make this a unique place. This may include reflecting the history of the street or its future as a digital hub.

### **Movement and Spaces**

The proposed arrangement of two lanes of traffic, one in each direction, with the majority of the public realm focused on the northern, sunnier side of the street appears rational and appropriate. Further exploration of some of the objectives at the diagrammatic design stage could assist further as the proposals progress into detailed design. Some of the key spaces that should be given more consideration are:

- Kingsway Circle – a stronger design approach is required for this space. A compromise between it acting as an attractive place that people use on a day-to-day basis and a space for events may not be possible as they have competing space requirements. A bolder design approach is required if this is to be transformed into a park or destination gateway for the city.
- North-south links – one of the aims is to place more emphasis on north-south movement but the concept still reads in a very linear east-west way. Further consideration of connections across the western end of the street to link to the arcades and the Grand Theatre to the south is encouraged. Whilst this route may not currently be open throughout the day, future changes should be anticipated.
- Variety – whilst uniformity along the street is bold, it is a long stretch. There may be opportunity to add further spatial definition of some areas which may be based on some of the practical requirements of movement or surrounding uses.

More detailed studies on these areas and developing a narrative for them will help to inform the overall plan.

### **Street Function**

Key functional matters such as utilities, servicing and emergency vehicle access need to be worked through in detail to ensure that they work and will not require retrospective adjustments to the street. The introduction of residential uses on the street will have an impact with refuse collections, deliveries and removal vehicles.

These elements will also have an impact on the budget. A significant amount of highway work to the whole system needs to be carried out within the overall project budget. It is not yet clear how that budget will be distributed and what will be available for the hard and soft landscape proposals. This will clearly have an impact on the quality that can be achieved.

### **Coordination**

At a strategic level it is evident how this area could work alongside the central areas that are proposed for redevelopment under the Swansea Central Area Regeneration Framework (SCARF). A more detailed level of coordination is also required, however, in relation to materials, management and maintenance and how Kingsway will relate to the other proposed changes within the city centre.

### **Next Steps**

The project timetable is ambitious with an aim to start on site in October. It is critical that sufficient time and resources are given to the proper development of the design to move from the concept stage to what will actually be implemented on the ground. The quality audit role is also important to ensure that design integrity is upheld during the delivery process. It is vital that every effort is made to ensure opportunities are seized to fully resolve the issues with this area of the city and ensure a wholly successful place.

The Design Commission would like to see the proposals again when there is more detail and so that further discussion can address matters such as materiality and planting proposals. We urge the team to liaise with the Commission swiftly in order to reserve a date and time to return in the Design Review Service calendar.

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

## Attendees

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Architect/Design Team:	James Brown, The Urbanists
Highway Engineer:	Simon Jones, CCS
Client Team:	Gareth Hughes, CCS
Local Planning Authority:	Steve Smith
Design Review Panel:	
Chair	Simon Richards
Lead Panellist	Jen Heal, Design Advisor, DCFW
Panel	Elfed Roberts Simon Carne Alister Kratt
Observers	Gayna Jones, Chair DCFW Hayley Kemp, Richard Matthams – Bridgend CBC