

Pont Briwet

Revisions to scheme seen at Design Review on 19th January 2011

DCfW Response:

Thankyou for the opportunity to comment on the revised scheme for Pont Briwet. We note there are positive developments in the revised scheme. Our detailed comments are provided below:

Bridge design

In general the bridge design has developed well and looks a far more attractive proposition than previously.

- The stepped and textured face of the concrete parapet to the outer face of the railway section is a positive feature but it would be beneficial to follow this profile and patterning on the parapet that faces the adjacent road where it will be clearly seen by road users.
- The integrated and curved crossheads are an improvement. Recessing the main beams into the crossheads and providing a flat face to the two outward facing beams is very positive. However, the crossheads appear to enclose pre-stressed beams and it is not clear how this will be constructed. Also, the weathering of the crosshead beams will require drips or other devices to throw water off.
- The stepped concrete parapet to the outer edge of the road way is less successful as the wall is lower. We suggested this could be done without a step but arranged so that the height of it and the step in the railway profile are the same, so that the upper part of the railway parapet above the step appears as a special extension of a standard height unit used throughout the scheme.
- While we understand that the guardrails and railway fencing are meant to be utilitarian, we questioned the different appearance, spacing and materials for each. In particular the spacing of uprights are varied 4200mm over piers and 3200mm elsewhere (drawing 124).

Services

- We note there is no indication of service runs on the bridge. We wondered whether the bridge and/or cycle path would be lit at night and if so, we think there should be a strategy to increase the dramatic effect without causing undue

light pollution. It would be interesting to explore the possibility of any lighting being powered by solar PVs or a wind turbine.

Southern approach

- We understand that the space available for two lanes and a cycle and pedestrian footway is very limited on the south side. Retaining the existing stone wall would be a challenge without cutting into the rock face.

Programme

- The previously submitted programme envisaged two stages with the rail line going in first, followed by the road. We wondered whether there were advantages in a one phase construction process. The changes to the main crossbeam supports cast in situ will require very careful setting out and presumably re-use of complex shaped shuttering, and a two stage process would add to the complexity.

Heritage shelter

- Using the bridge structure as a shelter but then not allowing access to the shelter below seems perverse. We wondered whether there was a better option of a viewing platform – eg. partially over the water at ground level looking up the estuary. Then the structure could be retained closer to its original function. The rationale for choosing the preferred option seems to be based on making the structure less easy to climb, but it would be regrettable if the structure became fenced off. If a shelter is required then perhaps it could take a more appropriate local form using local stone and slate.
- Keeping part of the old structure as a monument is intriguing, but it may look better in its setting if the handrails are not reinstalled and just the chunky timber structure is kept.

Railway halt

- This is a modest proposal dominated by the DDA compliant ramp. We wondered whether a 1:15 ramp with landings would be an acceptable solution. The steps could be more gradual with landings and provide a more direct route for those less agile. Again we think that local materials should be used rather than sheet metal, and that dry stone walls should be authentic rather than cladding.

End