



PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

18 OCTOBER 2018

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, PLANNING

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

APPLICATION NO: 18/0856/08
(DJB)

APPLICANT: Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council

DEVELOPMENT: Installation of a new pedestrian footbridge across the River Taff, linking Ynysangharad Park with the Taff Vale Redevelopment (Permission Ref: 17/0793/08). The proposals include the demolition of the former changing rooms (adjacent to site of former day-centre) and the removal of existing vehicular ramp to the lower informal parking area

LOCATION: FORMER TAFF VALE SHOPPING CENTRE, TAFF STREET, PONTYPRIDD

DATE REGISTERED: 27/07/2018

ELECTORAL DIVISION: Town (Pontypridd)

RECOMMENDATION: Approve

REASONS:

The strategic aim of the footbridge is to connect the new Taff Vale development to the town's major leisure asset, providing an additional attraction for potential tenants, creating an additional connection to the park from the town centre via the new public realm and, through its design quality, increasing the profile of both the park and the new development.

The redevelopment forms part of a regeneration programme for Pontypridd town centre which is intended to deliver significant economic benefits to the town.

The proposed scheme represents an exciting and modern development in terms of both function and form and is considered to comply with the relevant policies of the Council's LDP and national planning policy and guidance.

REASON APPLICATION REPORTED TO COMMITTEE

The application is submitted on behalf of the Council and involves land owned by the Council, where the nature of the Council's interest is more than a minor nature

APPLICATION DETAILS

The application seeks full planning permission to construct a pedestrian footbridge across the River Taff, linking Ynysangharad Park with the approved Taff Vale development, construction on which is now well advanced.

When the Taff Vale scheme (17/0793) was considered at the 7 September 2017 meeting of this Committee it was indicated within the officer's report that there were very initial proposals that in the future a new bridge connecting the town to the Park on the opposite side of the River Taff could be provided and landed within the Taff Vale site (potentially between buildings A and B). It was made clear however, that at that time such plans were at a very initial stage, with no firm commitment or funding and did not form any part of the Taff Vale redevelopment application.

As part of the works required to be undertaken in connection with the provision of the bridge it is also proposed to demolish a small detached, vacant and dilapidated former changing rooms building, which currently stands adjacent to the former day-centre site within the Park and remove an existing vehicular ramp which leads down to a lower plateau area.

Several options were considered for the bridge form, including a torsion box structure and a cable-stayed structure. However, a cable-stayed structure has been chosen and proposed within this application, as studies have shown the resultant deck and its structural slenderness will have a minimal visual impact on the heritage context. In addition, the bridge mast, located near the bank on the Ynysangharad Park side of the river, will provide some prominence and landmark characteristic whilst nestling amongst the mature trees. The proposed deck will also have a gentle camber along its length providing an attractive profiling and proportion of the main structure.

The proposed bridge mast will be a tapered steel section approximately 25m high at its uppermost point. From the mast, steel suspension cables (approximately 35mm in diameter) will extend in pairs to support the deck at approximately 10m intervals. The deck is a simple structure consisting of a pair of 600mm deep steel box girders with intervening steel outriggers and deck support members. The mast and cable will be painted white and the deck will be painted a dark grey.

Where the bridge mast intersects with the deck, a widening is proposed to ensure minimum access widths are maintained. The widening also allows an opportunity for benching to be incorporated, encouraging visitors to dwell on the bridge and view the river and town context whilst amongst the tree canopies. Balustrading has been designed to ensure a horizontal emphasis whilst preventing opportunities for climbing. The balustrades therefore rake towards the centre of the deck allowing horizontal stainless steel baluster wires to provide guarding. Both the balustrading and handrails are proposed to be of a stainless steel construction/finish.

In order to make provision for the possible future use of the bridge by cyclists (cycling in the park is not currently permitted), the handrail system consists of two levels. The upper level is positioned at 1400mm above the deck level to prevent any risks of falling from a cyclist crossing the bridge.

The following documents, in addition to the suite of plans, have also been received in support of the application:

Summary Planning Statement (DarntonB3 – July 2018)
Heritage Impact Assessment (DarntonB3 – July 2018)
Flood Consequence Assessment (Hydrock – 13 July 2018)
Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report (Soltys Brewster – 21 March 2017)
Addendum Ecology Report (Soltys Brewster – July 2018)

SITE APPRAISAL

It is proposed that the new bridge will cross over the river at a point approximately 100m down river from the point where the William Edwards Old Bridge crosses the river.

On the western bank of the river the bridge will land within the Taff Vale development, at a point between the two office buildings (noted as buildings A and B on the approved plans for 17/0793). Whilst on the eastern side of the river the bridge will land within Ynysangharad Park at a point towards the northern part of the area on which the now cleared day-centre used to stand, approximately 30 m south of the Bridge Street, Pontypridd Health Centre building. The river channel at this point is approximately 32m wide.

Currently the Taff Vale site western bank landing point is an active building site. On the eastern, Park side of the river some limited tree loss will necessary in order to accommodate the bridge.

The River Taff channel itself and the Taff Vale site do not lie within a conservation area designation. However, Ynysangharad War Memorial Park is a Registered Historic Park and lies within the designated Pontypridd (Town Centre) Conservation Area and accordingly the works on the eastern side of the river do take place within a conservation area setting.

Approximately 100m to the north lies the grade I listed building (which is also a scheduled ancient monument (SAM - GM015)) William Edwards Old Bridge; the grade II listed Pontypridd Museum/Cultural Centre and a grade II listed red telephone box.

Somewhat further afield, to the west of the site in Gelliwastad Road are the Municipal Buildings (Grade II* Listed) and a little further to the south west in Gelliwastad Road the Muni Arts Centre (Grade II Listed).

The River Taff is included within a SINC designation (site of interest for nature conservation).

The site is within close proximity to the town's bus station and within a short walking distance of the town's railway station.

PLANNING HISTORY

The previous planning applications noted below relate to the Taff Vale site (ie the western bank bridge landing point)

17/0793	New build, mixed-use development providing predominantly B1 space but with ancillary A3, D1 and D2 uses in the form of three new buildings above a common basement providing car parking and servicing areas.	Approved 11/09/17
16/0848	Class B1 (office) led mixed use redevelopment, also including floorspace for class A3 (food and drink), D1 (non-residential uses) and D2 (leisure/assembly) uses up to 12,675sq.m. to be accommodated within 3 new buildings, above a basement car park and servicing area.	Approved 04/11/16
09/0651	Redevelopment of the existing Taff Vale Shopping Centre to include retail (Classes A1, A2 and A3 uses) and a Hotel (as a phase 2) together with associated car parking, access and servicing.	Approved 12/10/09
06/1539	Mixed use development including retail, commercial, hotel, office and residential classes with associated car parking & access.	Resolution to grant, subject to a S.106 Agreement 08/11/07 Withdrawn 31/01/11
02/0919	Retail Led Mixed Use Scheme	Approve, subject to a Section 106 Agreement 09/12/04
T/01/3100	Renewal of Consent 56/97/2705	Refused 14/06/02
97/2705	Demolition of existing buildings and construction of retail development car park, office block and improvement of existing road junctions (Outline).	Approve 05/02/99
93/0965	Additional car park	Approve 08/02/94
90/0538	Temporary Car Park	Approve 04/09/90
89/2705	Fountains Walk	(incomplete)

89/1137	Retail development, offices and parking.	record) Resolution to grant, subject to a Section 106 Agreement 08/07/93
89/0917	Retail development, refurbishing existing office block and construct leisure pool	Approve 08/02/90

In addition, a number of minor planning applications for shop fronts, signs and changes of use within the former Taff Vale Shopping Centre were received by the Council and the former TEBC since 1974.

The applications below relate to the Ynysangharad Park side of the river (ie the eastern bank bridge landing point).

18/0882	Demolition of vacant and dilapidated changing rooms (application for Conservation Area Consent)	Awaiting determination (this application will be determined by Welsh Ministers, not the Council)
15/1632	Demolition of day-centre building (application for Conservation Area Consent)	Approved by Welsh Ministers in letter from Welsh Government 23/02/16

PUBLICITY

The application has been advertised by means of a notice in the local press and the posting of site notices in the vicinity of the site.

No responses had been received:

CONSULTATION

RCT Transportation Section – raise **no objections** subject to the imposition of conditions.

RCT Countryside Section – **no objections** are raised.

It is confirmed that the submitted ecology surveys have assessed the key ecological issues. It is noted that the bat survey work found no bat roost in the changing room

to be demolished or in the trees to be lost. Conditions will be required in respect of bat, bird, otter, invasive plants and lighting mitigation will be required.

Natural Resources Wales – confirm that they **no objection** to the application and provide comments/advice in respect of flood risk and protected species.

Public Health & Protection – raise **no objection**.

Cadw – have carefully considered the information provided and have **no objections** to the impact of the proposed development on the scheduled monuments and registered historic parks and garden.

Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust (GGAT) – The application area is c100m from the scheduled monument of Pontypridd Bridge Cadw reference GM015. As noted in our previous correspondence related to 17/0793, no recorded archaeological features are noted within the HER, or on historic mapping of the 19th and 20th centuries, that would be impacted by the proposal. It is our opinion that there will not be any adverse effect on the scheduled monument, listed structures or registered park, or their settings. Given our current information, we do not request any mitigation and as the archaeological advisors to your Members, we have **no archaeological objection** to the application.

The 7 Historical Societies (inc. Ancient Monuments Society, The Victorian Society, The Georgian Group, The Twentieth Century Society, Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings, The Council for British Archaeology Wales and the Royal Commission for Ancient & Historic Monuments) - **no objections** have been received at the time of preparing this report.

POLICY CONTEXT

Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan (LDP)

The LDP identifies Pontypridd as the Principal Town within the Southern Strategy Area.

Core policies

Policy CS2 – confirms that in respect of development in the Southern Strategy Area the emphasis will be on sustainable growth that benefits the County Borough as a whole. 8 key criteria that will be considered in seeking to achieve this aim are identified.

Criteria specifically relevant to this proposal are noted below:

Criteria 2 – states that “Protecting the culture and identity of communities by focusing development within defined settlement boundaries and promoting the reuse of under used and previously developed land and buildings”

Criteria 3 – states that “Promoting large scale regeneration schemes in the Principal Town of Pontypridd and Key Settlement of Tonyrefail”

Area Wide policies

Policy AW2 – promotes development in sustainable locations. Sustainable locations are defined by a number of criteria.

Policy AW5 - identifies design criteria (under the headings of Amenity and Accessibility) for new development.

Policy AW6 - supports development that promotes high quality design which makes a positive contribution to place making.

Policy AW7 - seeks to protect and enhance the built environment.

Policy AW8 - seeks to protect and enhance the natural environment.

(The bridge will cross and land either side of SINC AW8.142 – Taff and Rhondda Rivers).

Policy AW10 – confirms that development will not be permitted where it would cause or result in an unacceptable risk of harm to health and/or local amenity (identified issues include air pollution, light pollution, noise pollution, water pollution, contamination, landfill gas, land instability and flooding or any other identified risk to the environment, local amenity and public health or safety).

Southern Strategy Area policies

Policy SSA1 – confirms that proposals for development within the defined town centre of Pontypridd will be permitted, where the development:

Criteria 1 – reinforces the role of Pontypridd as a Principal Town

Criteria 2 – respects the culture and heritage of Pontypridd

Criteria 3 – is of a high standard of design and makes a positive contribution to the townscape in the defined town centre

Criteria 4 – contributes to the enhancement of Ynysangharad Park

Criteria 5 – integrates positively with the existing built form

Criteria 6 – promotes opportunities for new retail, leisure and tourism development

Criteria 7 – promotes walking and cycling

Criteria 8 - promotes accessibility to services by a range of sustainable transport modes

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Rhondda Cynon Taf LDP SPG – Design and Placemaking (March 2011)

Rhondda Cynon Taf LDP SPG – Delivering Design and Placemaking: Access, Circulation & Parking Requirements (March 2011)

Rhondda Cynon Taf LDP SPG – Design in Town Centres (March 2011)

Rhondda Cynon Taf LDP SPG – The Historic Built Environment (March 2011)

Rhondda Cynon Taf LDP SPG – Nature Conservation (March 2011)

National Guidance

Planning Policy Wales (9th Edition, November 2016)

Chapter 4 of PPW sets out Welsh Government policy in respect of Planning for Sustainability.

Section 4.11 sets out the policies relating to planning for sustainability through good design. Meeting the objectives of good design should be the aim of all those involved in the development process and applied to all development proposals, at all scales, from the construction or alteration of individual buildings to larger development proposals.

Section 6.1 (at para. 6.1.2) confirms that local planning authorities have an important role in securing the conservation of the historic environment while ensuring that it accommodates and remains responsive to present day needs.

Section 6.5 sets out policy in respect of development management and the historic environment.

Para 6.5.9 confirms that local planning authorities are required to consult the Welsh Government on any development proposal that is likely to affect the site of a scheduled ancient monument.

Para 6.5.11 confirms that where a development proposal affects a listed building or its setting, the primary material consideration is the statutory requirement to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building, or its setting, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Para 6.5.21 indicates that should any proposed development conflict with the objective of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area, or its setting, there will be a strong presumption against the grant of planning permission. In exceptional cases the presumption may be overridden in favour of development deemed desirable on the grounds of some other public interest. The Courts have held that the objective of preservation can be achieved either by development which makes a positive contribution to an area's character or appearance, or by development which leaves character and appearance unharmed.

Para 6.5.26 indicates that local planning authorities should protect parks and gardens and their settings included in the first part of the 'Register of Landscapes, Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in Wales'.....The effect of proposed development on a park or garden contained in the Register of Landscapes, Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in Wales, or on the setting of such a park or garden, may be a material consideration in the determination of a planning application.

Chapter 7 of PPW sets out Welsh Government objectives in respect of economic development.

Para. 7.6.1 confirms that local planning authorities should adopt a positive and constructive approach to applications for economic development. (for planning purposes the Welsh Government defines economic development as development of land and buildings for activities that generate wealth, jobs and incomes. Economic land uses include the traditional employment land uses (offices, research and

development, industry and warehousing), as well as uses such as retail, tourism, and public services).

Chapter 8 of PPW sets out Welsh Government objectives in respect to transport.

Section 8.7 sets out the approach to be taken in respect of development management and transport.

Para. 8.7.1 indicates that when determining a planning application for development that has transport implications, local planning authorities should take into account a number of criteria which include:

- the impacts of the proposed development on travel demand;
- accessibility by a range of different transport modes;
- the opportunities to promote active travel journeys, and secure new and improved active travel routes and related facilities, in accordance with the provisions of the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013; and
- the effects on the safety and convenience of other users of the transport network.

Chapter 11 sets out Welsh Government policy in respect of tourism, sport and recreation.

Chapter 12 sets out Welsh Government policy in respect of infrastructure and services.

Section 13.15 (Development Management and Noise and Lighting) Local authorities can attach conditions to planning permissions for new developments that include the design and operation of lighting systems and prevent light pollution.

Planning Policy Wales Technical Advice Notes (TANs)

TAN 5: Nature Conservation and Planning (2009)

TAN 12: Design (2016)

TAN 15: Development & Flood Risk (2004)

TAN24: The Historic Environment (2017)

Government Circulars

Welsh Government Circular 016/2014: The use of Planning Conditions for Development Management

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

REASONS FOR REACHING THE RECOMMENDATION

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that, if regard is to be had to the development plan for the purposes of any determination to be made under the Planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Furthermore, applications that are not in accordance with relevant policies in the plan should not be allowed, unless material considerations justify the grant of planning permission.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Main Issues

This application proposes a new pedestrian bridge over the River Taff within the town of Pontypridd, linking the new Taff Vale redevelopment with Ynysangharad War Memorial Park. It is considered that the main issues in this case are consideration of the design of the proposed bridge; together with the impacts on the wider townscape of Pontypridd; the proximity of historic designations and heritage assets; interests of ecology/biodiversity; trees and flood risk implications.

Design

The opportunity and desirability to provide a new pedestrian bridge across the River Taff as part of the Taff Vale redevelopment scheme was identified when the Taff Vale scheme was evolving through the design process.

When the Taff Vale scheme was subject to a Design Review with the Design Commission for Wales (DCfW) they indicated their clear support for the provision of a new pedestrian footbridge linking the scheme across the river with the park.

In their Design Review Report, issued following that session, DCfW comment that:

“ The potential for a footbridge over the river to link to Ynysangharad Park and the Lido to the south would enhance the public realm and the contribution of the project to the town. A bridge would help to enliven the riverside through increased footfall, giving people somewhere to go as they move through the space. Ideally both the proposed development and the bridge should be designed, applied for and delivered at the same time.

The implications of the potential footbridge should be followed through into the design of the spaces and location of uses as it will alter the flow of people around the site and the views into the site. Consideration should be given to the interaction between the site and the park including people who will work within the development and use the park, people using the park who may come across to use the A3 uses within the development, and general movement through the site to get from the town centre to the park”.

The proposed bridge has been designed not only as a solution to a number of technical and topographical challenges but also as a careful response to the setting and potential impact upon listed heritage assets in the context. It is understood that

pre-application several initial options were been considered for the bridge form. A cable-stayed structure was chosen as the preferred option as studies showed the resultant deck and its structural slenderness will have a far lesser visual impact on the heritage context of the surrounding townscape.

The bridge will be aligned geometrically with the new buildings proposed in the Taff Vale redevelopment. The bridge abutment on the redevelopment side will be central to the new public realm space between the two new office buildings (A and B). This alignment provides coherence and ensures a strong connection is made between the existing park and the new redevelopment.

The bridge design incorporates a single tapered mast, which will be 25m high from the bridge deck. This height is comparable to the height of the office buildings (A and B at 24m) within the Taff Vale scheme. The deck level of the bridge falls by 1m from the point by the support mast to the western landing point within the Taff Vale site. The deck level itself is approximately 5m above the eastern river bank and base of the concrete base mass that anchors the support mast.

It is proposed that access to the footbridge will be controlled via a pair of gates located on the western Taff Vale redevelopment side. The operation of the gates will coincide with the opening/closing times of the park. The gates are designed to prevent climbing but also to integrate with the bridge balustrade structures given they will be held in an open position for the majority of time. Access to the park side landing point will be controlled through the use of the main park access gates. Available access to the eastern bridge access point will therefore be controlled via the main park gates.

Deck lighting for general pedestrian safety and access during twilight/early evening hours will be provided via lighting integrated into the handrail system. This system will deliver a consistent pool of light across the deck whilst ensuring there is only minimal overspill, thus minimising any disturbance to the river itself. The mast will be up-lit via a surface mounted luminaire on each mast face. The luminaires will be mounted 4m above deck level to prevent any tampering. The proposed mast lighting will be a single colour and will be controlled via a feeder pillar located adjacent to the park-side bridge landing.

It is considered that the bridge design succeeds in its aim of seeking to integrate within the scope of the wider townscape of Pontypridd, including the direct river setting and also the surrounding heritage context (which is considered further below). In this respect it is considered that the proposal accords with policies AW5 and AW6 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf LDP as well as national planning policy and guidance.

Associated works

As part of the works required to facilitate the building of the bridge it is proposed to demolish a vacant and dilapidated former changing rooms block, which stands approximately 53m to the south of the bridge landing point on the park side of the river. A separate application (18/0882) seeking conservation area consent for its

demolition will be referred to Welsh Government for determination by the Welsh Ministers.

Detailed records of the building's origins have not been discovered although an analysis of historic maps and photographs suggest it was not constructed until approximately 1959. The building is not listed and is not specifically mentioned in the Register of Parks and Gardens and the description of Ynysangharad Park. The building is a simple linear single storey form with a low pitched roof. It consists of two changing rooms each containing shower and wc facilities. The fabric consists of a rough-cast rendered external wall finish and corrugated cement sheeting roof with ridge caps (analysis has shown the roof material to contain asbestos (chrysotile)). The windows have mostly been removed/boarded-up – those that remain indicate timber frame construction. Window cills are formed in quarry tiles. To the south of the building is a line of large, mature cypress trees. These are not visible on the available historic photographs and maps and are believed to have been planted at a similar time to the construction of the building.

The building has been vacant and in a dilapidated state for several years and detracts from both the setting of the park and the proposed footbridge. It is considered that the removal of the building and the row of cypress trees adjacent to it will allow better views of the new bridge from the park and views of the park from the bridge and will generally improve the public realm in the vicinity. The site of the building will be regarded to tie in with existing ground levels and finished with hardstanding to match the existing.

Having aligned the bridge with the new Taff Vale redevelopment, the eastern/park side landing point of the bridge naturally terminates at the top of an existing vehicular ramp leading to a lower plateau area. The lower plateau is not intended to be used as an area for parking so the ramp is now considered to be redundant as a vehicular access. In order to ensure the most effective transition from the new bridge to the existing footway network, the vehicular ramp is proposed to be removed and re-landscaped with grasses to match the adjoining areas. This approach will also ensure any potential conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians using the bridge are removed.

Heritage Assets and Historic Designations

The red line boundary of the application site as well as including the extent of the bridge deck across the river and the landing point within the Taff Vale site also includes an extent of land within Ynysangharad War Memorial Park. This park element of the site lies within the Pontypridd (Town Centre) Conservation Area and is in itself a Grade II listed Registered Historic Park.

The bridge would also stand in close proximity to a number of other historic designations and heritage assets.

Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that a local planning authority in considering whether to grant permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, has special regard to the

desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

National planning policy, as set out in Planning Policy Wales (PPW) confirms that it is important that the historic environment – encompassing archaeology and ancient monuments, listed buildings, conservation areas and historic parks, gardens and landscapes – is protected. PPW also confirms that the desirability of preserving an ancient monument and its setting is a material consideration in determining a planning application.

In relation to conservation areas, PPW states that, should any proposed development conflict with the objective of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area, or its setting, there will be a strong presumption against the grant of planning permission. In exceptional cases however, the presumption may be overridden in favour of development deemed desirable on the grounds of some other public interest.

PPW also sets out that LPAs should protect parks and gardens and their settings included in the first part of the Register of Landscapes, Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in Wales. The effect of proposed development on such a park or garden or on its setting may be a material consideration in the determination of a planning application.

To the north lies the grade I listed building (which is also a scheduled ancient monument (SAM)) William Edwards Old Bridge; the grade II listed Pontypridd Museum/Cultural Centre and a grade II listed red telephone box.

To the west of the site in Gelliwastad Road, but somewhat further from the site are the Municipal Buildings (Grade II* Listed) and a little further to the south west in Gelliwastad Road the Muni Arts Centre (Grade II Listed).

Cadw have a statutory role as consultee in respect of the Old Bridge, given its SAM status and the Park, as a registered historic park and garden..

Cadw confirm that they have carefully considered the information submitted with the planning application, which allows them to provide advice regarding the impact of the proposed development on the setting of scheduled monument Pontypridd Bridge (GM015) and Ynysangharad War Memorial Park.

Pontypridd Bridge (GM015) comprises a single arch bridge with its spandrels pierced by 3 circular holes. This was a unique design by William Edwards that produced the widest span bridge in Britain in 1756. When built the bridge was in a rural setting, with the construction of Pontypridd taking place around it following the construction of the Glamorgan Canal in the late 18th century. The monument is of national importance for its potential to enhance our knowledge of post-medieval construction techniques and transportation systems. It retains significant archaeological potential, with a strong probability of the presence of associated archaeological features and deposits. The structure itself may be expected to contain archaeological information concerning chronology and building techniques. Therefore the ability to view the bridge, the width of the river it crosses and the general topography of the area, assist

the observer in understanding the engineering challenges that were overcome when it was constructed.

In order to assess the visual impacts of the proposed new pedestrian bridge on Pontypridd Bridge the submitted Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) includes predicted views from 8 pre-agreed viewpoints, both to the north and south of Pontypridd Bridge and the proposed new bridge. Cadw concurs with the HIA's conclusions that the proposed development will not have any significant negative impact on Pontypridd Bridge (the SAM).

In respect of the impact of Ynysangharad Park, whilst it is recognised that the bridge, including the 25m high mast, will require the removal of a number of trees the loss of these will be off-set by additional planting elsewhere within the park. In conclusion it is not considered that the bridge will not have significant impacts on the character, appearance or historical context of the park.

Further, it is not considered that the proposal will have an adverse impact, either directly or on the setting of, any nearby listed buildings.

It is considered that the proposal accords with policy AW7 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf LDP and the policy guidance set out in PPW and TAN24: The Historic Environment.

Flood Risk

The site location for the bridge mast lies entirely within a Zone C2, as identified on the Development Advice Map (DAM) as referred to in TAN15. The development of a new pedestrian footbridge would constitute a development of 'less vulnerable development'.

A Flood Consequence Assessment (FCA) has been submitted with this application. This confirms that the bridge will have a soffit level of between 58.9mAOD and 58.93mAOD. NRW have advised that this level is sufficiently above the predicted flood level for the 1% (1 in 100 year) plus 25% climate change allowance and the 0.1% (1 in 1000 year) events. Therefore the proposed bridge is in line with appropriate guidance set out in TAN15.

NRW have noted that there will be a localised increase in in-channel flood depth of 6mm around the stanchion of the bridge and increase in velocity of 25m/s. However, it is considered that as the increase is shallow and limited in its extent to around the base of the stanchion it is considered that the risk is acceptable.

Ecology/Biodiversity

The River Taff is designated as a SINC (Site of Interest for Nature Conservation) under policy AW8 of the LDP (site no. AW8.142).

An Ecological Appraisal Report was prepared and submitted with the Taff Vale redevelopment application (17/0793). That document, together with an Addendum Ecology Report (dated July 2018) has been submitted with this current application.

The Addendum Report further considers the presence of and potential impacts on bats and otter, together with impacts on bird species and the presence of invasive non-native species (Japanese Knotweed etc).

Evidence of the continued use of the river corridor adjacent to the site by Otter was noted during the Addendum report survey. No holts were identified although the dense bankside scrub up and downstream of the outfall in the north western part of the site could be used as lying up spots on an irregular basis by Otter. No habitat features suitable for use by Otter were identified away from the river bank/corridor – i.e. within the parkland. In respect of bats no bats have been observed entering or leaving the former changing rooms building, which it is proposed to demolish and the trees to be lost are considered to be of low bat roost potential.

It is considered that nesting birds are likely to be present within dense scrub along the river bank and/or within the canopies of coniferous trees in particular (i.e. those affording dense canopy cover). In order to avoid any conflict with the nesting season, vegetation clearance should be undertaken between September and February. Where this timing is not possible – for example if tree works are required in March/April, a prior check for any nesting birds should be undertaken by an ecologist. In the event that an active nest (i.e. a nest under construction or containing eggs/chicks) was found, it would be left *in situ* until any young had fledged and the nest was no longer in use.

The presence of Japanese Knotweed, Himalayan Balsam and Cotoneaster is identified within the Addendum Report. Accordingly, it is recommended that prior to site preparation/construction work, an appropriate management strategy to limit the risk of further spread of these species (downstream or off-site) and to manage/control the existing stands would be required. An appropriate condition is recommended in this respect.

The use of lighting will lighting will be incorporated within the bridge design. However, in view of the known presence of bats and otter along the river corridor it is important to ensure that the opportunity for any light spill over the river corridor is minimised. In this respect the imposition of an appropriate planning condition is recommended.

Both the Council's ecologist and NRW have carefully considered the submitted Ecological Appraisal Report and Addendum Report submitted with the application and have raised no objections, subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions, to the application.

Trees

As previously noted in this report the provision of the bridge will result in the loss of a number of trees. Within the defined application site two 'groups' (identified as G22, Leyland Cypress; and, G24, Sycamore/Lawsons Cypress/Sawara Cypress) will be removed together with 3 individual trees (identified as T15, London Plane; T23, Lawsons Cypress; and, T82 Turkey Oak). Standing just outside the defined application site are 3 further trees that need to be removed in order to facilitate the

building of the bridge. These are identified as T7, Oak; T13, London Plane; and, T14 London Plane.

It is appreciated that the loss of trees is almost always a regrettable consequence of any development proposal. However, in this case it is noted the trees to be lost are not considered to be any of the best quality specimens within the park. Further, in mitigation it is proposed to plant new, more appropriate species trees (Norway Maple, Horse Chestnut, London Plane, Oak and Common Lime) in replacement in a location and number to be agreed with the Council's Parks Section. A suitable condition is recommended in this regard.

Having regard to the lesser quality of the trees to be removed and the proposed planting of new trees the Council's Landscape Officer has not raised any objection to the application.

Other Issues

It is not considered given the distance to the nearest residential properties (the nearest property in Sion Street is approximately 120m to the north and the mixed use of commercial and residential properties in Ceridwen Terrace approximately 65m away to the north east) and the presence of intervening buildings and significant tree cover that the current level of amenity enjoyed by occupiers of any of these properties will be adversely impacted to any discernible extent.

The presence of a Council culverted watercourse through the park, together with its concrete encased outfall and the horizontal easements associated with it together with vertical and horizontal easements associated with existing Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water pipes on both the west and east sides of the river have been considered in the design of the bridge and its support structure. No objections are raised in these respects.

With regard to the issues raised by the Public Health and Protection it is considered dust and waste matters can be more efficiently controlled by other legislation and the addition of an Informative Note to the permission notice is recommended in this regard.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Liability

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) was introduced in Rhondda Cynon Taf from 31 December 2014.

The application is for development of a kind that is not liable for a charge under the CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended).

Conclusions

It is considered that a new pedestrian bridge linking Ynysangharad War Memorial Park with the new Taff Vale redevelopment offers the opportunity to significantly improve the Pontypridd town centre urban realm. The Taff Vale redevelopment, now under construction, already has the potential to be a real catalyst for improvement

and regeneration of the town and the bridge, providing connections to the park and engagement with the river Taff, can only enhance this, as was recognised by DCfW when they reviewed the proposals for the Taff Vale site last year.

It is considered that careful thought has been given to the slender bridge design in order to ensure that whilst providing a contemporary new feature within the townscape of Pontypridd it recognises and responds to the significant surrounding heritage asset context of the site.

RECOMMENDATION: GRANT SUBJECT TO THE BELOW CONDITIONS:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of five years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Sections 91 and 93 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance within the following approved plans/drawings/documents:

- Planning Statement – DarntonB3, July 2018 (12498-DB3-S01-ZZ-RP-A-SK-003)
- Heritage Impact Assessment – DarntonB3, July 2018 (12498-DB3-S01-ZZ-RP-A-SK-002 B)
- Flood Consequences Assessment – Hydrock, 13/07/18 (TVR-HYD-PH1-XX-RP-D-5002)
- Addendum Ecology Report – Soltys Brewster, 25/07/18 (E1774702/Doc1-25/07/18)
- Site Location Plan – (Ref: 12498-DB3-S01-ZZ-DR-A-90001)
- Proposed Footbridge Plan – (12498-DB3-B01-ZZ-DR-A-20000)
- Proposed North and South Elevations – (Ref: 12498-DB3-B01-ZZ-DR-A-20001)
- Proposed East Elevation - (Ref: 12498-DB3-B01-ZZ-DR-A-20002)
- Proposed West Elevation – (Ref: 12498-DB3-B01-ZZ-DR-A-20003)
- Typical Footbridge Sections – (Ref: 12498-DB3-B01-ZZ-DR-A-20004)
- 3D Visualisations – ((Ref: 12498-DB3-B01-ZZ-DR-A-SK001)
- Combined Electrical Services Ground Floor – (9279-HYD-BR-00-DR-E-70-0010 rev P01)
- Tree Retention/Tree Removal – (1670103-SBC-00-XX-GA-L-001 Rev P02)
- Landscape GA Plan – (1670103-SBC-00-XX-GA-L-002 Rev P01)

unless otherwise to be approved and superseded by details required by any other condition attached to this consent.

Reason: In order to define the extent by the permission hereby granted and in order to ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans.

3. No development shall take place, including any works of site clearance/preparation until a Construction Method Statement/Management Plan has been submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority to provide for:
- the means of access into and egress from the site for all construction traffic;
 - the parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors;
 - the management of vehicular and pedestrian traffic;
 - loading and unloading of plant and materials;
 - storage of plant and materials to be used in the construction of the development;
 - wheel washing facilities;
 - the sheeting of lorries leaving the site;
 - details of plant and equipment;
 - mitigation measures for the control of noise;
 - mitigation measures to limit disturbance to any animal species on or adjacent to the site;
 - location of any site compounds;
 - use of artificial lighting.

The approved Construction Method Statement/Management Plan shall be adhered to throughout the development process unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of the safe and free flow of traffic and in order to ensure that the amenities of residents in proximity to the site are not unduly impacted upon in accordance with policies AW5 and AW10 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

4. All HGV deliveries to and from the site during the construction of the development hereby approved shall only take place between the hours of 09.00am and 04.30pm on weekdays (not at all on Saturdays and Sundays).

Reason: In the interests of the safe and free flow of traffic and in order to ensure that the amenities of residents in proximity to the site are not unduly impacted upon in accordance with policies AW5 and AW10 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

5. No development shall commence on site until full engineering design and detail of the bridge and associated tie-ins with existing footways have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The bridge shall be constructed in accordance with the approved details prior to its first beneficial use.

Reason: In the interests of the safe and free flow of traffic and in order to ensure that the amenities of residents in proximity to the site are not unduly impacted upon in accordance with policies AW5 and AW10 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

6. Prior to the removal of any trees required to be felled in connection with the development hereby approved full details of a scheme and programme for replacement tree planting shall be submitted for the written approval of the Local Planning Authority. The submitted details shall include species, size and number of trees together with a plan clearly showing the exact locations at which the new trees will be planted.

Reason: To ensure that the development will be visually attractive in the interests of wider amenity, in accordance with policies AW5, AW6 and AW7 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

7. Planting of the new trees (*as agreed within the scheme required under condition 6*) shall be carried out in the first planting season following the completion of the bridge. Any trees that die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased, within a period of 5 years from the completion of the bridge, shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.

Reason: To ensure that the development will be visually attractive in the interests of wider amenity, in accordance with policies AW5, AW6 and AW7 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

8. Notwithstanding the details submitted as part of the application, the bridge shall not be brought into beneficial use until such time as details of all lighting and measures that will be put in place to reduce impacts of light fall from the bridge onto the River Taff SINC and the wider area have been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. Any lighting installed shall be operated in accordance with the approved scheme unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that residents and wildlife living in close proximity to the site are not unduly affected by the levels of light emanating from the proposed development. In accordance with policies AW5 and AW6 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

9. No works (including any works of site clearance and/or preparation) shall take place until such time as details of a Japanese Knotweed and/or Himalayan Balsam, removal and control plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme

Reason: To ensure compliance with the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

10. Prior to commencement of development a scheme for any in river and river bank works is shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Authority. The development shall proceed in strict accordance of the approved scheme to ensure that any polluted surface water does not enter the adjacent watercourse.

Reason: To protect the watercourse from pollution in accordance with policy AW10 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

11. Prior to the commencement of development the mitigation measures for interests of ecology and biodiversity set out in Section 4 (paras 4.2 – 4.6) of the Addendum Ecology Report (prepared by Soltys Brewster – dated July 2018) shall be implemented in full accordance with the recommendations made, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of ecology and biodiversity and having regard to policy AW8 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

12. No development shall take place, nor any demolition works or site clearance, until there has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority details of a scheme for the protection of trees shown to be retained on the plan titled 'Tree Retention/Tree Removal' (Ref: 1670103-SBC-00-XX-GA-L-001 Rev P02). The approved scheme shall be carried out throughout the entire construction period (including works of demolition and site clearance/preparation) of the development.

Reason: To ensure that the development will be visually attractive in the interests of wider amenity, in accordance with policies AW5, AW6 and AW7 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan

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