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Newgale Coastal Adaptation Plan - Response to WelTAG Report March 2017

The Friends of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park (FPCNP) is an independent voluntary charity with the stated aim to help to protect, conserve and enhance Pembrokeshire Coast National Park. The comments here are made in this context

This WelTAG assessment has been very thorough and impressive in its execution. The exhibitions and roadshows have been frequent, open and informative. The presentation of the material, visual and written, along with the personal interaction with the professionals involved has made for a very open and transparent process.

The comparison of the competing schemes on a like for like basis has resulted in four options being considered. In line with the report we have looked at Option 3b and Option J as the two most likely routes to be considered.

Two of the main objectives set out in the planning stage were as follows - *'to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park and to avoid or minimise adverse effects on the natural environment caused by traffic and associated infrastructure.'*

Also - *'to make the transport network suitable to facilitate tourism and regeneration in the St David's Peninsular including access to the coast at Newgale.'*

It is with these objectives in mind that we make the following observations.

Observations on Option 3b

The most visually intrusive in relation to the coastline. The construction of a 3m high viaduct would have a major visual impact and become the dominant feature of the valley.

Although this option has the lowest environmental impact it could be argued that it would not create as many long term environmental benefits.

At an estimated cost of £21.55m Option3b costs about 30% more than Option J.

Its construction could restrict or shorten the viability of the pub,shop and campsite which could otherwise remain in their current form up until 2036 (estimated).

All traffic would still have to climb up the steep hill through the village at the northern end.

Road traffic would remain the dominant characteristic of this part of the coastline. The stated objective of enhancing the qualities of the National Park will not have been met.

Observations on Option J

This route would take through traffic away from the coast and provide the opportunity to develop and adapt the whole Newgale area in a more strategic and visionary way.

A longer route which would affect more landowners and have a greater environmental impact in the short term.

As highlighted in the non-technical summary the design of the roundabout at the southern end would be critical. Signage, lighting and landscaping of this would require great attention. Likewise the landscaping of the route would have to be exemplary.

The lower cost estimated at £15.9m is significant.

Option J allows the main Newgale seafront to carry on as normal whilst the new road is built rather than creating a step change which could accelerate disruption or closure of the commercial businesses behind the shingle bank.

Summary

On balance FPCNP would favour Option J as the preferred route based on the observations outlined above.

Both schemes would benefit from high quality 3d visualisation including from critical viewpoints around the Newgale area. The quality of the work done to date is very high and would benefit from some form of virtual illustration at this stage.

We trust you are able to consider the above comments in these closing stages of the consultation.

Gus Stott

Policy Committee

Friends of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park