

Wales and Borders Rail Service and South Wales Metro

Application for the Construction of a New Footbridge, Works to Demolish, Alter, and Extend the Existing Down-Platform North of the Railway Line, the Construction of a New Up-Platform South of the Railway Line, and Ancillary Works at Quaker Yard Station.

Quakers Yard

Station - Planning

Statement

April 2023

Document Control Sheet

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Site Location Plan	2511-01-01
Statutory Plan	2511-01-02
Planning Drawing	TRAN01-FJD-R1-MER-DDR-C-CV-000101-P01.1
Planning Sections	TRAN01-FJD-R1-MER-DDR-C-CV-000151-P01.1
Taff Vale Access	TRAN01-FJD-R1-MER-DDR-C-CV-000102-P01.1
Proposed Steelwork Arrangement	TRAN01-FJD-R1-MER-DDR-S-ST-000104-P01
Main Span Steelwork Arrangement	TRAN01-FJD-R1-MER-DDR-S-ST-000105-B01
Ramp Bridge Steelwork Arrangement	TRAN01-FJD-R1-MER-DDR-S-ST-000106-B01
Upside Ramp Steelwork Arrangement	TRAN01-FJD-R1-MER-DDR-S-ST-000116-B01
Upside Ramp Unit Steelwork Details A	TRAN01-FJD-R1-MER-DDR-S-ST-000117-B01
Upside Ramp Unit Steelwork Details B	TRAN01-FJD-R1-MER-DDR-S-ST-000118-B01
Upside Ramp Unit Steelwork Details C	TRAN01-FJD-R1-MER-DDR-S-ST-000119-B01
Upside Ramp Unit Steelwork Details D	TRAN01-FJD-R1-MER-DDR-S-ST-000120-B01
Upside Ramp Unit Steelwork Details E	TRAN01-FJD-R1-MER-DDR-S-ST-000121-B01
Upside Ramp Unit Steelwork Details F, G and H	TRAN01-FJD-R1-MER-DDR-S-ST-000122-B01
Down Platform Cross Sections	TRAN01-FJD-R1-MER-DDR-C-CV-000115-B01
Down Platform Cross Sections	TRAN01-FJD-R1-MER-DDR-C-CV-000116-B01
Down Platform Tie in Detail	TRAN01-FJD-R1-MER-DDR-C-CV-000119-B01
Up Platform Cross Sections	TRAN01-FJD-R1-MER-DDR-C-CV-000141-P01
Up Platform Cross Sections	TRAN01-FJD-R1-MER-DDR-C-CV-000142-B01
Up Platform Waiting Shelter Details	TRAN01-FJD-R1-MER-DDR-C-CV-000147-B01
Drainage General Arrangement	TRAN01-KAW-R1-MER-DDR-D-HW-000001-P02

1. Introduction

1.1 This Application

- 1.1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a planning application submitted under Section 73A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (TCPA) to Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council ('MTCBC') by Amey Infrastructure Wales ('AIW' or 'the Applicant') for the following development (hereafter referred to as the 'Proposed Development'):

"The Construction of a New Footbridge, Works to Demolish, Alter, and Extend the Existing Down-Platform North of the Railway Line, the Construction of a New Up-Platform South of the Railway Line, and Ancillary Works at Quakers Yard Station "

- 1.1.2 The Proposed Development would comprise the removal of the existing pedestrian level crossing (including the associated footpath and fencing between the level crossing and the existing down-platform), the construction of a new footbridge over the railway line with ramps and stairs on either side, works to demolish, alter, and extend the existing platform (the down-platform) on the northern side of the station, a new platform on the southern side of the station (the up-platform), and ancillary works such as new waiting shelters and cycle hoops (the 'Proposed Development').

Consenting Process

- 1.1.3 Prior to confirmation that the Proposed Development would require planning permission, ordinarily the Proposed Development would fall within the parameters of permitted development, as defined by Part 11, Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (GPD0); this would have required the submission of an application for prior approval to allow MTCBC to consider whether the Proposed Development ought to be and could reasonable be carried out elsewhere on the land, or the design of the Proposed Development would injure the amenity of the neighbourhood and is reasonably capable of modification to avoid such injury.
- 1.1.4 A formal request for Part 11, Class A prior approval of the proposed Development was submitted to MTCBC on 25 August 2022. Following consultation with MTCBC in late August and throughout September, it was confirmed that it was not possible for the prior approval to be validated and subsequently determined due to the proposed Development having already commenced; the commenced works at that time related to the below ground foundations for the proposed up-platform and part of the proposed footbridge. Subsequently, it was agreed that the most appropriate process was for the Applicant to submit a full planning application under Section 73A (planning permission for development already carried out) of the TCPA.

1.2 Background

- 1.2.1 AIW has been appointed by the Welsh Government as the Operator and Development Partner (ODP) of the Wales and Borders rail service and South Wales Metro, working in partnership with Transport for Wales (TfW). As the ODP, AIW is undertaking a series of works on the Core Valley Lines (CVL) part of the rail network, these works are known as the Core Valley Lines Transformation (CVLT).
- 1.2.2 The CVLT works are designed to modernise the public transport network so that it can support more services of a higher quality and improve connectivity. The proposed CVLT works will reduce running times from Cardiff to the Heads of the Valleys by an average of 15 minutes and will provide a more reliable service through the purchase and operation of a brand-new fleet of 36 bi-mode Metro Vehicles.
- 1.2.3 As operator of the CVL rail network, AIW will be increasing the number of services running along this section of the CVL network. The trains will also be upgraded to an electric fleet, which will be faster, quieter and provide more sustainable travel than the existing diesel engine stock.



Subsequently, there is an increased potential for conflicts between trains and users of the level crossing.

- 1.2.4 To achieve the aims of the CVLT works, a series of improvements are necessary across the rail network. One of these improvements relates to the closure of the level crossing which is required to mitigate the increased health and safety risks associated with the improvement of rail services on the CVL network. Subsequently, it is necessary for TfW to provide alternative access at this location. The construction of the footbridge provides improved accessibility for the community, including for persons with reduced mobility (PRM) as follows:
- The toe of the new footbridge to the north provides level access from Taff Vale which subsequently provides access (via stairs) to the improved down-platform, and continued access via stairs and a ramp to the new up-platform.
 - Alternative direct access to the improved down-platform from Taff Vale remains as before with the retention of the sloped access off Taff Vale, east of the new footbridge toe.
 - Onward access between the up-platform and Tram Road Side (existing track) to the south of the Proposed Development is possible via a new ramped walkway and connecting access path at the western extent of the new up-platform.

1.3 The Applicant

- 1.3.1 AIW is the Applicant for the planning application. As set out above, AIW has been appointed as the ODP by The Welsh Ministers following a Grant Agreement (GA) between AIW and The Welsh Ministers. The ODP's role in the CVLT is as the Designer and Programme Manager acting as TfW Managing Agent for the contracted construction works. Design and development work on the CVLT started in June 2018 and the ODP took over the operations of trains from Arriva Trains Wales on 14th October 2018.

1.4 Environmental Impact Assessment Requirements

- 1.4.1 As part of the wider CVLT Works, a Screening Request was made to MTCBC, dated 04 December 2019, to determine whether the CVLT Works (incorporating the Proposed Development) required Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). The response provided by MTCBC dated 11 February 2020, confirmed that the CVLT works as a whole did not constitute EIA development. As such the Proposed Development is not EIA development and this application is not required to be supported by an Environmental Statement.
- 1.4.2 Nonetheless, relevant environmental assessments have been undertaken to enable the planning authority to understand the environmental effects of the Proposed Development.

1.5 Scope of the Planning Application

- 1.5.1 The planning application submission comprises the following main elements:
- Covering letter.
 - Application Forms, Certificates and Notices.
 - Planning Application Drawings.
 - Planning Statement (this document).
- 1.5.2 A series of supporting technical reports are also provided which consider the effects of Proposed Development:
- **Appendix 1:** Potential Retrospective Design Modifications
 - **Appendix 2:** Ecological Impact Assessment
 - **Appendix 3:** Bat Constraints Technical Note
 - **Appendix 4:** Bat Tree Report
 - **Appendix 5:** Dormouse Survey Report
 - **Appendix 6:** Badger and Otter Pre-Construction Walkover Technical Note
 - **Appendix 7:** Landscape Mitigation Considerations
 - **Appendix 8:** Landscape Plan
 - **Appendix 9:** Landscape Indicative Section A-A
 - **Appendix 10:** Landscape Indicative Section B-B
 - **Appendix 11:** Landscape Indicative Section C-C
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 - **Appendix 15:** Arboricultural Implications Assessment



1.6 Structure of the Planning Statement

- 1.6.1 This Planning Statement describes the background behind the application, why the application has been made and the administrative procedures that have been followed. It sets the Site in context, provides the relevant planning history and identifies the need for the Proposed Development. Finally, it assesses how the Proposed Development complies with the policies of the Development Plan and other material policy considerations.
- 1.6.2 Following on from this introductory chapter, the Planning Statement is divided into five main sections as follows:
- Section 2.0 - The Site and its Context
 - Section 3.0 - The Proposed Development
 - Section 4.0 - Environmental Effects
 - Section 5.0 - Planning Policy Context and Appraisal
 - Section 6.0 - Conclusion

2. The Site and Its Context

2.1 Overview

- 2.1.1 The Site is the existing Quakers Yard Station, Treharris, in Merthyr Tydfil County Borough. The station previously consisted of a single platform (north of the railway line) with a shelter, and a single track running through it. Trains run north towards Cardiff and south towards Cardiff. There is evidence of a historic platform on the southern side of the existing track, and historic mapping shows that there was extensive railway infrastructure to the north and south of the existing station in the past which has subsequently been removed.
- 2.1.2 The station was previously accessed via a surfaced footpath from Taff Vale, a residential street running in an east-west direction to the north. The surfaced footpath is flanked by trees and grassland on one side, with a leylandii hedgerow on the other side. This hedgerow marks the boundary with the adjacent residential property. The land drops in elevation from Taff Vale to the down-platform level. The footpath meets the down-platform which extends partly to the west, but mostly to the east where the shelter and ticket machines are located. At the point where the footpath meets the station there is a further publicly accessible path which runs west and in parallel with the down-platform. This route leads to the existing level crossing which provides a crossing point to land to the south which consists of open areas of grassland, trees and areas of dense shrubs and ferns. The Proposals Map identifies this land as *Green Infrastructure: Open Space* and a *Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)*. The Open Space designation is linear in shape and extends from the settlement boundary to the River Taff. The SINC is more extensive and includes the southern side of the River Taff to where it meets the A470. Immediately to the south of the existing station are trees and grassland.
- 2.1.3 The Site is at a low risk of flooding from the River Taff and small watercourses. There are small areas adjacent to the existing railway line that have a low risk of surface water flooding.
- 2.1.4 The nearest residential properties are immediately to the north of the station on Taff Vale. They are detached houses which back on to the existing railway station and railway line. They are at a higher level to the station, with walls and fences separating the railway land from the rear gardens of these properties. Properties on the northern side of Taff Vale are further away but those properties are immediately opposite the existing entrance to the station and are approximately 10m from the Proposed Development at its nearest point.

2.2 Planning History

- 2.2.1 To the best knowledge of the Applicant, no recent planning applications have been made on the Site of the Proposed Development.

3. The Proposed Development

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 This section of the Planning Statement provides a description of the Proposed Development,

3.1.2 The planning application is supported by a suite of drawings, these drawings are listed in **Table 3.1**.

Table 3.1 Schedule of Planning Application Drawings

Drawing Title	Drawing Reference
Site Location Plan	2511-01-01
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Ramp Bridge Steelwork Arrangement	TRAN01-FJD-R1-MER-DDR-S-ST-000106-B01
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Upside Ramp Unit Steelwork Details A	TRAN01-FJD-R1-MER-DDR-S-ST-000117-B01
Upside Ramp Unit Steelwork Details B	TRAN01-FJD-R1-MER-DDR-S-ST-000118-B01
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Down Platform Cross Sections	TRAN01-FJD-R1-MER-DDR-C-CV-000116-B01
Down Platform Tie in Detail	TRAN01-FJD-R1-MER-DDR-C-CV-000119-B01
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Up Platform Cross Sections	TRAN01-FJD-R1-MER-DDR-C-CV-000142-B01
Up Platform Waiting Shelter Details	TRAN01-FJD-R1-MER-DDR-C-CV-000147-B01
Drainage General Arrangement	TRAN01-KAW-R1-MER-DDR-D-HW-000001-P02

3.2 Design Evolution

3.2.1 The design of the Proposed Development has been through several stages before arriving at the solution presented in this planning application.

3.2.2 The principal objective was to identify a safer, PRM compliant alternative to crossing the railway line than the current level crossing which was recommended to be closed for safety reasons as part of the wider CVLT works (see **Section 1.2** of this Planning Statement for further details) and retain access from street level at Taff Vale.

3.2.3 Three potential options were identified as follows:

- Option 1 - Pedestrian underpass with ramps and steps or with lifts and steps.
- Option 2 - Footbridge with lifts and steps.
- Option 3 - Footbridge with ramps and steps.

3.2.4 In selecting a preferred option, the following criteria were considered.

- Physical constraints of the site.
- Visual sensitivity of the site.
- Meeting the accessibility needs of those using the station, including PRM.
- Cost.



- Anticipated design and construction timescales
- Interaction with existing station and local infrastructure.
- Safety (including consideration of seclusion and anti-social behaviour).
- Ease of design, including accordance with relevant design standards and feasibility to deliver within the context of other design requirements along this section of the railway (between Abercynon to Merthyr Tydfil stations).
- Led by sustainable development principles.
- Construction logistics and access.
- Maintainability.

3.2.5 An appraisal summary of all three options is provided below:

Option 1

- Excavation depth of approximately 4.5m required.
- Approximately 15-20m of track would be required to be removed to facilitate construction.
- Large quantities of spoil would be required to be excavated, which would require on-site storage followed by off-site disposal.
- Space on site is very limited which would provide a significant logistics constraint during construction.
- Due to the excavation depth required, the total length of the ramp would be approximately 90m on either side of the railway line.
- Although deemed to be at very low risk from flooding from rivers, the sea, surface water and small watercourses, in a flooding event, any ramp on the down line of the route would be at the bottom of a steep-sided embankment which has the potential to funnel surface water into the ramp opening and flood the underpass.
- If lifts are installed instead of a ramp, regular servicing and maintenance (and associated costs) would be required, which would add whole life capital costs to the project.
- If lifts are installed instead of a ramp, there is the possibility of an increase in anti-social behaviour, likely to be exacerbated by the relatively secluded location of the station and the relatively secluded location of the lift on the up-platform away (when compared to the down-platform).

Option 2

- A footbridge is the typical solution for rural and semi-rural locations.
- More user friendly (personal safety perspective) than Option 1.
- Would require the smallest land take of all options considered, which given the space constraints at the station, would be a notable advantage.
- A lift would only be required on the proposed up-platform with PRM access provided via a direct footbridge access from Taff Vale to the up-platform via the ramp or steps. Improvement works to the existing sloped access from Taff Vale to the down-platform would be required to provide PRM compliance; this is currently under review.
- The cost of other footbridges on the CVL shows that the costs between ramp and lift solutions are comparable, with footbridge and lift solution proving slightly cheaper when costed over a 15-year franchise period. However, when costed against the 120-year lifecycle of a footbridge, the whole life capital costs of a footbridge and lift solution are significantly more expensive (due to the requirement for regular servicing and maintenance) than for a footbridge and ramp solution.
- As per Option 1, lifts would likely result in an increase in anti-social behaviour, which would



likely be exacerbated by the relatively remote location of the station and the relatively secluded location of the lift on the up-platform away (when compared to the down-platform).

- As per Option 1, the potential for surface water flooding (although at very low risk), has the potential to result in further unplanned maintenance works to the deeper lift pit areas and any associated infrastructure.
- The construction of a footbridge (including foundations) and the ability to deliver prefabricated steelwork by road and/or rail and install quickly is a significant advantage to the complex construction of an underpass (Option 1).
- Minimal intervention (including possession) of the railway.
- The design of the footbridge could be standardised using the Network Rail 400 Series standard design (also used at Treforest Station) which would reduce design and detailing costs.

Option 3

- A footbridge is the typical solution for rural and semi-rural locations.
- More user friendly (personal safety perspective) than Option 1.
- A footbridge and ramp would require a larger footprint than a footbridge with lifts (Option 2); additional land purchase would also be required to accommodate it.
- A ramp would only be required on the proposed up-platform with PRM access provided via a direct footbridge access from Taff Vale to the up-platform via the ramp or steps. Improvement works to the existing sloped access from Taff Vale to the down-platform would be required to provide PRM compliance; this is currently under review.
- The costing of other footbridges on the CVL shows that the costs between ramp and lift solutions are comparable, with footbridge and lift solution proving slightly cheaper when costed over a 15-year franchise period. However, when costed against the 120-year lifecycle of a footbridge, the whole life capital costs of a footbridge and lift solution are significantly more expensive (due to the requirement for regular servicing and maintenance) than for a footbridge and ramp solution.
- Seasonal maintenance costs associated with ramps and steps (e.g. de-icing salt application, cleaning etc.) would add whole life capital costs.
- Ramps are less likely to result in an increase in anti-social behaviour, compared to lifts.
- Unplanned maintenance costs associated with any surface water flooding (although at very low risk) would be significantly lower than for Options 1 and 2.
- The construction of a footbridge and ramp (including foundations) and the ability to deliver prefabricated steelwork by road and/or rail and install quickly is a significant advantage to the complex construction of an underpass (Option 1).
- Minimal intervention (including possession) of the railway.
- The design of the footbridge could be standardised using the Network Rail 400 Series standard design (also used at Treforest Station) which would reduce design and detailing costs.

3.2.6 After careful consideration of each option against the stated criteria, the preferred option was a footbridge with ramps and steps (Option 3), primarily due to the station's remote and low lying location. The whole life capital costs of a footbridge with a lift together with a likely increase in seclusion and anti-social behaviour resulted in Option 2 not being selected, but still being preferred to Option 1 which posed significant cost, programme, constructability and safety issues.

3.2.7 It should be noted that the footbridge would be unable to be positioned in the area of the level crossing due to signalling requirements (including signal sighting) on the up-platform which constrains how close the footbridge can be on either side of the railway line.

3.3 Description of the Proposed Development

- 3.3.1 As set out in **Section 1.1** of this document, the Proposed Development would comprise the removal of the existing pedestrian level crossing (including the associated footpath and fencing between the level crossing and the existing down-platform), the construction of a new footbridge over the railway line with ramps and stairs on either side, works to demolish, alter, and extend the existing platform (the down-platform) on the northern side of the station, a new platform on the southern side of the station (the up-platform), and ancillary works such as new waiting shelters and cycle hoops.
- 3.3.2 The entrance to the station from Taff Vale to the north is expected to be the most common route for people intending to use the station, and this would connect the residential streets to the north with the station. The level change between Taff Vale and the station platforms is approximately 5m. The new (footbridge) entrance begins at the back of the pavement on Taff Vale, west of the existing path. The new entrance provides level access from the street to the main span of the footbridge, and is therefore elevated above the ground, which progressively drops away beneath it. The entrance is approximately 10m in length and connects to the proposed footbridge.
- 3.3.3 Where the new elevated (ramped) entrance meets the proposed footbridge, there is a staircase down to the down-platform, where trains depart to Cardiff and destinations beyond. The existing sloped access between the down-platform and Taff Vale will remain.
- 3.3.4 Approximately 50m of the existing down-platform (immediately east of the proposed footbridge) is modified to accommodate the new trains, and approximately 70m of the existing down-platform (at its far eastern extent) has been removed/demolished. A new section of platform, approximately 35m in length, has been constructed to the west of the down-platform. The previous platform shelter has been dismantled and replaced with a new platform waiting shelter with cycle hoops immediately adjacent. At the far eastern extent of the down-platform, some existing copers have been removed and other existing copers and oversail blocks removed and built back up with brickwork, along an approximate 35m length.
- 3.3.5 Those intending to travel north towards Merthyr Tydfil or to cross to the area of open space to the south would continue over the new bridge which would span the existing track and the (future works) second track. The main span of the bridge is approximately 16.5m in length, with the first 6.5m being level, and the remainder gently sloping downwards (southwards). Stairs and an all-access ramp provides access to the new up-platform and onward access to the area of open space to the south.
- 3.3.6 On the southern side of the station, a second platform (the up-platform), approximately 100m in length has been constructed. At the base of the footbridge staircase on the up-platform, a new platform waiting shelter has been constructed.
- 3.3.7 For those who are unable to use stairs (impaired accessibility and cyclists) there is a ramp from the top of the footbridge to the proposed up-platform. The ramp begins at the southern extent of the bridge span, and is in two main sections, that ascend/descend between footbridge and platform. The need for the ramp to accord with Part M of the Building Regulations is reflected in its length. It consists of several 'runs' of approximately 6m in length, typically at a 1:16 gradient, and separated from each other by landings which are approximately 2m in length. The first section of ramp leading from the bridge deck has an approximate length of 60m. The ramp is orientated east to west, with trestle supports steadily decreasing in height from the footbridge to the platform. At the end of this first section of the ramp there is a platform, which will allow users to turn 180 degrees, before the second section of the ramp begins. This section is approximately 30m in length, ending on the proposed up-platform.
- 3.3.8 Once on the newly constructed up-platform, users who want to access the land to the south would be able to walk to the western end of the platform where a ramp approximately 12m in length

extends to the west and provides a connection to the existing footpath.

- 3.3.9 On both the modified/extended down-platform and the new up-platform, stairs provided at either end (four sets of stairs in total) provide secure maintenance access from the platforms to the trackside. Closed circuit television (CCTV) coverage is also provided on both platforms; CCTV coverage zones are provided on **Figure 1**.
- 3.3.10 The height of the footbridge (and consequently the length of the ramp and stairs leading to and from it) is a function of the height and position of the Overhead Line Electrification (OLE) works being erected as part of the CVL Transformation works. The OLE works do not form part of this planning application.
- 3.3.11 The stairs, ramp, footbridge and trestles are constructed of steel; the colour finishes are as follows:

Footbridge & Stairs

Generally:
Painted finish RAL 7035 Light Grey.



Anti-climb coping to footbridge:
painted finish RAL 7024 Graphite Grey.



Handrail:
Polyester powder coating RAL 3020 Traffic Red.



Balustrade and Railings:
Polyester powder coating RAL 9017



- 3.3.12 On both the modified/extended down-platform and the new up-platform, stairs provided at either end (four sets of stairs in total) provide secure maintenance access from the platforms to the trackside.
- 3.3.13 At the entrance to the station from Taff Vale, a diagonal crossing arrangement has been provisionally agreed with MTCBC to connect the existing alleyway (access to Birchgrove Estate) on the other side of Taff Vale and the entrance to the new footbridge. Either side of the crossing, the pavement would have tactical tiles and dropped curves to provide a smooth passage between both the existing alleyway and access onto the new footbridge. The new entrance provides level access from the street to the new footbridge together with additional pedestrian rails to the east and west of the footbridge entrance, drainage points and signage.
- 3.3.14 On the new footbridge itself, additional pedestrian rails have been added on both sides to ensure the pedestrians can pass through safely but also to add a 'pedestrian calming' effect to ensure pedestrians are aware of the highway ahead and encouraged to dismount when travelling on bicycles. Adequate signage will be available to highlight the pedestrian calming effect. The design is fully compliant with existing design standards.
- 3.3.15 The crossing arrangement is shown at **Figure 2**.

3.4 Potential Retrospective Design Modifications

- 3.4.1 The Applicant is aware of potential (and localised) concerns regarding the potential for overlooking from the footbridge ramps towards the residential properties at Taff Vale, and the subsequent potential for impact on local residential amenity.
- 3.4.2 The Applicant has identified several measures (see below) that could be implemented to address



the above; further consideration of the key characteristics and pros and cons of each option is provided at **Appendix 1**:

- Option 1: Extend parapets of ramps with solid screens in areas where overlooking is possible.
- Option 2: Installation of a secondary structure to provide the same privacy levels and heights but supported from a secondary structure independent of the ramps.
- Option 3: Installation of an ancillary structure to the rear down-platform to change the sight lines of those on the ramp.
- Option 4: Erection of taller, close boarded fencing on residential boundary.

3.4.3 On balance (after consideration of effectiveness, impact on overall visual amenity and aesthetics, cost, ease of installation, and maintenance), it is recommended that, in the event that MTCBC consider that such further interventions are necessary in planning terms, Option 3 be taken forward for further consideration. However, the Applicant is open to further discussion with MTCBC regarding other options considered.

3.4.4 In the event such an intervention is deemed necessary by MTCBC and is subsequently agreed, it is anticipated that the details of such measures could be secured by planning condition.

3.5 Community Engagement

Overview

3.5.1 The stakeholder engagement team at Transport for Wales is responsible for ensuring that residents who live near or directly adjacent to the railway lines, known as lineside neighbours, are aware of upcoming work which may be potentially disruptive. The engagement consists of prenotification letters sent to properties within 200m of the work site, drop-in sessions where residents can discuss issues and upcoming work with project managers, and on-site meetings with key stakeholders. These communication methods are supported by TfW's customer relations team, that residents can contact via several methods, including a 24/7 phone line. All complaints or queries received by customer relations relating to the South Wales Metro project are passed onto TfW's stakeholder engagement team to investigate.

Local Community Engagement

3.5.2 Residents of Quakers Yard have been notified throughout the project via prenotification letters detailing the planned works. The following letters have been sent to the local community since September 2021:

- Letter to notify residents of ground investigation works at the station in preparation for the works to the platforms and installation of the footbridge, sent to residents in September 2021.
- Initial letter to residents of Taff Vale regarding the acquisition of land behind the station in January 2022.
- Letter to the wider community regarding the beginning of works on site and plans for the station in April 2022.
- Letter to notify works being carried out during a railway blockade between 10 October 2022 and 04 November 2022, where the level crossing at the station would be closed to pedestrians. This letter was sent in September 2022.
- A newsletter sent to the community to update them on the station works and plans for the footbridge in December 2022.

3.5.3 The stakeholder and engagement team will continue to distribute update letters to local residents



to ensure they are kept up to date with the progress of the work.

- 3.5.4 A community drop-in was held in Troedyrhiw, Merthyr Tydfil, on 19 October 2022. This drop-in aimed to update residents along the Merthyr Line, including residents of Edwardsville, on the upcoming Metro works and how this will affect our lineside neighbours. Residents of Quakers Yard received a letter notifying them of this drop-in event where they could meet with project managers and ask questions about the station works and footbridge scheme. Over 50 people attended this event, including several residents of Taff Vale, Quakers Yard.
- 3.5.5 The community and stakeholder engagement team have been in contact with several residents of the Taff Vale estate throughout the project and have carried out meetings with key residents on site. A site meeting was held on 04 November 2022 with the local councillors and residents living directly next to the station entrance to discuss the ongoing works at the station and to alleviate their concerns over worker parking and behaviour.
- 3.5.6 TfW received complaints from residents associated with workers parking inconsiderately along Taff Vale and causing disruption due to shouting. Following this, staff on site were briefed on their behaviour. A parking marshal was also introduced on the site to monitor parking on Taff Vale, and workers were briefed that they should park at the Vision Factory compound and travel via a minibus to the site, to alleviate the parking concerns along the street.
- 3.5.7 The team is continuing to engage with the residents of 23 Taff Vale and 20 Taff Vale, due to their close proximity to the work site, to discuss what mitigation can be put in place to reduce the noise impact of the works and the visual impact of the footbridge once it is completed. The team met with these residents on the 19 January 2023 to discuss these concerns. Following this, a meeting was also held on 01 February 2023 with five residents of Taff Vale, including those from numbers 23 Taff Vale and 20 Taff Vale. Mitigation measures to reduce the visual impact of the bridge were discussed in this meeting, including mitigation planting behind the bridge and on the banking.
- 3.5.8 The stakeholder engagement team will meet with the residents of 23 Taff Vale and 20 Taff Vale to discuss what mitigations will be put in place to improve the visual impact of the footbridge. This meeting is planned for early May 2023.
- 3.5.9 The stakeholder manager for South-East Wales for Transport for Wales, is the main point of contact for residents at the site and will continue to liaise with residents and elected members throughout the project should they raise any concerns regarding the works at the station. Key residents, including residents in 23 and 20 Taff Vale also have direct contacts in Amey Infrastructure Wales and on-site staff from Alun Griffiths.
- 3.5.10 The TfW stakeholder engagement team regularly meet with the environmental health team at Merthyr Tydfil Council, to discuss any new or ongoing noise complaints raised by lineside neighbours.
- 3.5.11 Local residents may contact TfW through the Customer Relations team should they want to ask questions about the scheme or make a complaint regarding the ongoing work. The contact details for the customer relations team can be found below:
- 33 211 202 this number is available 24/7
 - WhatsApp: 07790 952507 (0700-2000 on Monday to Friday, 0800-2000 on Saturday, and 1100-2000 on Sunday).
 - An online contact form can be completed online at tfw.wales/contact-us.

4. Environmental Effects and Mitigation

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 The environmental effects of the Proposed Development are identified and assessed in a series of Technical Reports and are summarised below. Additional environmental considerations not specifically undergoing assessment work are also discussed.

4.2 Ecology and Nature Conservation

- 4.2.1 An EclA (**Appendix 2**) has been prepared for the Site following completion of the following ecology surveys:

- Bat Constraints Technical Note (**Appendix 3**).
- Bat Tree Report (**Appendix 4**).
- Dormouse Survey Report (**Appendix 5**).

- 4.2.2 The EclA makes the following conclusions:

- There are no statutory designated sites within 2km (or 10km for bats) of the proposed development. There are 14 non-statutory designated sites within 1km of the site, all of which are Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs). A small section (0.5%) of the Lower Taf & Edwardsville SINC lies within the land take requirements of the Proposed Development.
- The Proposed Development contained several habitats, such as semi-natural broadleaved woodland, dense/continuous scrub, semi-improved neutral grassland, continuous bracken, ephemeral/short perennial, bare ground and hardstanding.
- The semi-natural broadleaved woodland was a Section 7 Habitat of Principal Importance under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and included within Merthyr Tydfil Nature Recovery Action Plan (NRAP) (2019). It formed a linear corridor along the railway which linked to Ancient Semi Natural Woodland in the surrounding area, to the east and west. Therefore, this habitat was considered to be of local value. All other habitats within the Proposed Development were considered to be of no more than site value.
- A Phase 1 Habitat survey and a broad range of protected species surveys were undertaken between July 2020 and August 2022 including; bats, badger (*Meles meles*), otter (*Lutra lutra*), dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*) and great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*).
- The site was considered to be of local value to foraging and commuting bats, and of site value to breeding birds, otter, badger and reptiles.
- *Cotoneaster* sp., Japanese knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*) and Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) were recorded within habitats adjacent to the proposed development.

- 4.2.3 The EclA makes the following recommendations:

- Appropriate recommendations for mitigation and compensation were provided in the form of pre-works surveys, method statements, safeguard measures, best practice pollution prevention and native replanting to reduce potential effects on habitats and species.
- In line with planning policy, enhancement measures are provided with particular reference to species and habitats recorded on site to benefit biodiversity.
- Full details of the mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures are set out within a Landscape Management and Maintenance Plan (LMMP) which will show the locations and extents of mitigation/compensation habitats and recommended enhancements to provide an

overall increase in biodiversity for the site.

- 4.2.4 Additionally, a badger and otter pre-construction walkover (**Appendix 6**) was undertaken prior to the construction of the Proposed Development. The walkover generated the following interpretation and conclusions, and recommendations:

Interpretation and Conclusions

- Mammal paths were recorded throughout the survey area; it is likely that these can be attributed to rabbit based on their size and evidence of rabbit droppings and burrows in the vicinity.
- No evidence of otter resting places or holts were recorded during the pre-construction presence/likely absence survey. The site is within close proximity to the River Taff, the survey area provides suitable habitat to support otter and several records of otter were returned within a 2km radius of the site, with the nearest 0.1km south-east of the site. Therefore, it is possible that otter may use the site and wider survey area opportunistically to commute and forage.
- No evidence of badger setts or commuting field signs were identified during the pre-construction presence/likely absence survey. However, the survey area provides suitable habitat to support badger. Therefore, it is possible that badger otter may use the site and wider survey area opportunistically to commute and forage.
- Otter and badger are mobile animals and can readily create resting places/holts at any time which will need consideration if there are significant delays to the programme.

Recommendations

- Open excavations should be fenced off and/or covered to avoid animals becoming trapped or injured. A mammal ladder (e.g. wooden plank) should be erected to allow any animals that may become trapped to escape. All excavations should be checked each morning to ensure no animals have become trapped overnight and an ecologist contacted for advice should any animals be encountered;
- Consideration should be given to where spoil is stored, badger/otter proof fencing should be
- considered if spoil is to be stored on site for long periods of time;
- Where lighting is required, hoods should be used and lights directed at works and away from the surrounding environment;
- Chemicals, including fuel for equipment and machinery, should not be used within 20m of any waterbody; and
- No equipment should be stored within suitable otter or badger habitat.

4.3 Landscape

- 4.3.1 Landscape and visual mitigation options for nearby receptors has been carefully considered (see further detail in the Landscape Mitigation Considerations document at **Appendix 7**). This document considers the location of residential receptors, their view before and after construction of the proposed Development, localized constraints to mitigation, potential landscape and visual mitigation options (including location and types of mitigation), and mitigation recommendations.
- 4.3.2 A Landscape Plan (**Appendix 8**) has been prepared for the Proposed Development. The Landscape Plan proposes the following new planting:
- Woodland areas to the north and south of the station platforms, comprising mixed tree species as well as woodland edge species.
 - Individual trees (approx. 3m in height) within the proposed woodland areas to the north of

the station platforms (along Taff Vale road).

- Grass verges (2m wide) along the south side of Taff Vale road.
- Areas of tussock grass and wildflower mix adjacent to the proposed woodland edge areas.
- Hibernacula within the woodland areas and along the woodland edges to the south of the station platforms.

- 4.3.3 Indicative sections across the Proposed Development Site (to show existing, year 1 and year 15 mitigation scenarios) are provided at **Appendices 9 – 11**. An indicative visual representation is also included at **Appendix 12**.
- 4.3.4 A LMMP has been prepared (**Appendix 13**) which sets out the planting and maintenance / management methods to be implemented. This will ensure that the landscape works are sustainable and that biodiversity protection / enhancement is achieved for the Site.
- 4.3.5 The LMMP identifies several enhancement opportunities for biodiversity and includes:
- Strengthening the transport corridors, ensuring tree lines are well connected and sensitively managed;
 - Ensure wildflower meadows and verges are sensitively managed and well-connected with the wider vegetation and other semi-natural habitat features (particularly woodlands); and
 - Ensure current blocks of semi-natural habitat and protected sites are sensitively managed and their extent increase where appropriate.
- 4.3.6 The LMMP also draws on enhancement opportunities identified in the EcIA (**Appendix 2**) including:
- Management of grasslands for reptiles.
 - Management of tree and hedges to enhance diversity whilst offering visual screening.
 - Deployment of bird and bat boxes.
 - Creation of refugia piles for reptiles, hedgehogs and other small mammals.
 - Translocating high quality patches of existing plants and relaying into the landscape scheme to preserve individual plants and species as well as some of the existing seed bank.

4.4 Trees

- 4.4.1 A Tree Survey, Categorisation and Constraints Report (TSCCR) (**Appendix 14**) and Arboricultural Implications Assessment (AIA) (**Appendix 15**) have been prepared to support the application.
- 4.4.2 The AIA is a study to identify, evaluate and possibly mitigate the extent of direct and indirect impacts on trees, in relation to the current development proposal. It follows on to the earlier TSCCR (and accompanying Tree Constraints Plan (TCP)) in which the trees were scored and assessed for their suitability for retention within the Proposed Development. The retained trees are clearly marked on the TCP and Tree Loss Plan (TLP).
- 4.4.3 Prior to the tree survey, several Category C and U trees were removed (immediately adjacent to both sides of the railway line) due to a combination of enabling works for the Proposed Development and damaged/poor condition trees (most of which were semi-mature ash as well as squirrel damaged sycamore and poor form willows).
- 4.4.4 Several tree groupings were surveyed as well as numerous individual trees. Most of the trees and tree groupings were identified as Category C2 and C3. Five individual trees (T3, T4, T9, T19, and T12) are Unclassified and recommended for removal due to their poor (and dangerous) condition (subject to neighboring landowner discussion where applicable). The estimated loss of



trees to the Proposed Development is approximately 1838m² (see TLP for further details).

4.4.5 Details of replacement planting is provided at **Appendix 8** and **Appendix 13**.

4.5 Noise

4.5.1 The Proposed Development would not have any noise impacts during operation and the new trains running on the electrified lines would be significantly quieter than the current diesel engine trains using the line.

4.6 Air Quality

4.6.1 The Proposed Development would not have any negative air quality impacts, and indeed air quality would be improved along the railway line through the wider CVLT works replacing the existing diesel-powered trains with an electric fleet.

5. Planning Policy Context and Appraisal

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 This section of the Planning Statement undertakes an appraisal of the Proposed Development in the context of the current and emerging planning policy framework.
- 5.1.2 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) and Section 70(2) of The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 require that applications for planning permission should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.1.3 The Proposed Development is within the administrative area of MTCBC. The Statutory Development Plan for MTCBC comprises the Merthyr Tydfil Replacement Local Development Plan (LDP) 2016 - 2031 (adopted on 29th January 2020), and Future Wales: The National Plan 2040.
- 5.1.4 The LDP is supported by a series of supplementary planning guidance documents. Those considered to be material considerations in the determination of the planning application are as follows:
- Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 4: Sustainable Design (July 2013)
 - Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 5: Nature and Development (May 2015)
- 5.1.5 Additionally, the further following documents are considered to be relevant material considerations to the determination of the planning application:
- Planning Policy Wales Edition 11 (February 2021) (PPW 11)
 - Planning Policy Wales Technical Advice Note 5: Nature Conservation and Planning (September 2009)
 - Planning Policy Wales Technical Advice Note 12: Design (March 2016)
 - Planning Policy Wales Technical Advice Note 18: Transport (March 2007)
 - One Wales: Connecting the Nation – The Wales Transport Strategy (2008)
 - Economic Renewal: A New Direction (July 2010)

5.2 Planning Policy Context and Appraisal

- 5.2.1 The following appraisal considers the policies and guidance which are considered directly material to the determination of the Proposed Development for which planning permission is being sought.

Local Development Plan (2016-2031) (LDP)

- 5.2.2 The LDP includes a series of policies against which development proposals will be considered. Those that are of relevance to the application are set out below, with analysis of how the Proposed Development would perform against each policy.
- 5.2.3 The LDP is accompanied by the Proposals Map and Constraints Map.
- 5.2.4 The Proposals Map shows that the Site is part of the Lower Taf & Edwardsville Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) and subsequently designated under Policy EnW3 'Regionally Important Geological Sites, Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation, Local Nature Reserves and Priority Habitats and Species'. Part of the Site (south of the railway line) is designated under Policy SW10 'Protecting and Improving Open Spaces'. The existing railway line in this location (including the existing Quakers Yard Station) is designated under Policy SW12.3 'Improving the Transport Network' as part of the South East Wales Metro (Merthyr Tydfil Valley Line) improvements.



- 5.2.5 The Constraints Map shows that a 'Strategic Pathway and Cycleway' crosses through the Site; this is the existing informal pathway that connects the residential community of Edwardsville north of the railway to 'Tram Road Side' south of the railway line via the existing level crossing.
- 5.2.6 The policies of the development plan considered to be the most relevant to the determination of the planning application are identified as follows:
- SW10: Protecting and Improving Open Spaces
 - SW11: Sustainable Design and Placemaking
 - SW12: Improving the Transport Network
 - SW13: Protecting and Improving Local Community Facilities
 - EnW1: Nature Conservation and Ecosystem Resilience
 - EnW3: Regionally Important Geological Sites, Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation, Local Nature Reserves and Priority Habitats and Species
 - EnW4: Environmental Protection
 - EnW5: Landscape Protection

- 5.2.7 The following sections appraise the conformity or otherwise of the Proposed Development with the relevant policies and adopted guidance of the development plan.

Policy SW10: Protecting and Improving Open Spaces

- 5.2.8 Policy SW10 seeks to ensure that all new developments improve the quality, quantity or access to open space. The policy states that development proposals that would have an unacceptable adverse impact on or result in a loss of open space will not be permitted unless the specified criteria are met. The criteria are discussed below.

Criterion i: '[the development] would not cause or exacerbate a deficiency of open space in accordance with the Council's open space standards'

Criterion ii: The majority of the open space can best be retained and enhanced through the redevelopment of a small part of the site

- 5.2.9 The design and scale of the Proposed Development is necessary both for its functionality and its accessibility. Only a relatively small area of the open space would be lost to the Proposed Development; the majority of that area was previously occupied by the derelict platform south of the railway line and surrounding scrub vegetations and trees and the presence of the Proposed Development is not considered to result in an open space deficiency in this location. Indeed, the Proposed Development provides improved and safer connectivity to the open space from Taff Vale to the north and from Tram Road Side to the south.

Criterion iii: Satisfactory equivalent community benefit or enhanced compensatory provision can be provided in accordance with the Council's open space standards

- 5.2.10 The Proposed Development is part of the wider CVLT works (see **Section 1.2** of this Planning Statement), providing significant station upgrades (including upgrading the existing rail infrastructure to electric), providing the local community with greater sustainable transport flexibility, and wider community benefits such as faster journey times and reduced air and noise pollution. The Proposed Development also provides improved and safer access over the railway between Taff Vale to the north and the open space provision via Tram Road Side to the south.

Criterion iv: In all cases, the open space has no significant nature or historic conservation importance

- 5.2.11 The EclA identifies that the Site contained a number of habitats, including semi-natural broadleaved woodland, dense / continuous scrub, semi-improved neutral grassland, continuous bracken, ephemeral/short perennial, bare ground and hardstanding. These habitats were mostly considered to be of site value only, with the exception of the semi-natural broadleaved woodland, which was considered to be of local value. As such, the EclA concluded that the Proposed Development site has no significant nature conservation importance.

- 5.2.12 The Site does not sit within or adjacent to any areas of historic conservation and therefore has no significant historic conservation importance.

- 5.2.13 As demonstrated in the sections above, the Proposed Development meets all criterion of this policy.

Policy SW11: Sustainable Design and Placemaking

- 5.2.14 Policy SW11 seeks to ensure that new development contributes to the creation of attractive and sustainable places through high quality, sustainable and inclusive design. The policy sets out a series of policy tests that (where appropriate) new development will be required to meet. These are discussed below.

- *Be appropriate to its local context in terms of scale, height, massing, elevational treatment, materials and detailing, layout, form, mix and density*



- *Integrate effectively with adjacent spaces, the public realm and historic environment to enhance the general street scene and create good quality townscape*
- *Not result in an unacceptable impact on local amenity, loss of light or privacy, or visual impact, and incorporate a good standard of landscape design*

- 5.2.15 The design of the Proposed Development has been through several stages before arriving at the solution presented in this planning application (see **Section 3.2** of this document for further details). The principal objective was to identify a safer, PRM compliant alternative to crossing the railway line than the current level crossing which was recommended to be closed for safety reasons as part of the wider CVLT works. After careful consideration of each option against the stated criteria, the preferred option was a footbridge with ramps and steps (Option 3), primarily due to the station's remote and low lying location. The whole life capital costs of a footbridge with a lift together with a likely increase in seclusion and anti-social behaviour resulted in Option 2 not being selected, but still being preferred to Option 1 which posed significant cost, programme, constructability and safety issues.
- 5.2.16 The scale, height, and massing of the Proposed Development is controlled by necessary compliances to design code. Nevertheless, the finished treatments and surfaces for the Proposed Development have been chosen to be sympathetic to the existing station and the character of the local area. Landscape mitigation (see **Section 4.3** of this document for further details) proposed new woodland and tree planting to soften the visual impact of the Proposed Development and provide integration into the surrounding landscape. Opportunities for biodiversity enhancement have been identified and included in the landscape proposals including strengthening of transport corridors, sensitive management and connectivity of wildflower meadows, management of grassland for reptiles, deployment of bird and bat boxes, creation of refugia piles, and translocation of high-quality patches of existing plants.
- 5.2.17 The Proposed Development with the implementation of the proposed landscape mitigation is deemed to be appropriate and proportional development on an existing and operational train station and would provide, on balance, the most appropriate solution to the replacement of the level crossing (see **Section 1.2** of this document). Whilst the Proposed Development would be visible, this would be in the context of the existing station and in accordance with the wider improvement works being undertaken as part of the CVLT. **Section 3.4** of this document provides an overview of the measures that have been identified to minimise the potential for overlooking, including a recommendation that Option 1 is implemented in the event MTCBC deems such an intervention to be required and appropriate.
- *Contribute to the provision of green infrastructure, including open space in accordance with the Council's standards, sustainable drainage systems where appropriate, and ensure that the County Borough's network of green infrastructure is accessible and connected*
- 5.2.18 Opportunities for biodiversity enhancement have been identified and included in the landscape proposals including strengthening of transport corridors, sensitive management and connectivity of wildflower meadows, management of grassland for reptiles, deployment of bird and bat boxes, creation of refugia piles, and translocation of high-quality patches of existing plants. The drainage arrangement is shown at drawing TRAN01-KAW-R1-MER-DDR-D-HW-00001-P02 and shows a drainage connection to existing sewer.
- *Allow access for the widest range of people possible, and demonstrate that any traffic movements will not have an unacceptable impact on local amenity or highway safety and satisfy the Council's parking standards*
- 5.2.19 The new footbridge will allow safe pedestrian access between both sides of the railway track. The use of a ramp on the up-platform enables those with mobility issues to cross also. There is no parking proposed at this station. Details of the proposed crossing arrangement (to connect the existing alleyway (access to Birchgrove Estate) on the other side of Taff Vale and the entrance to the new footbridge) are provided at the end of **Section 3.3** of this document.



- *Incorporate a range of inclusive/adaptable design specifications [...] and sizes to meet identified local needs.*

5.2.20 The design of the Proposed Development has been informed by an options exercise (see **Section 3.2** of this document). The incorporation of a ramp on the up-platform and retention of the existing ramp off Taff Vale (see **Section 3.3** of this document) allows for inclusivity of all station users.

- *Minimise the demand for energy and utilise renewable energy resources*

5.2.21 The Proposed Development supports the wider CVLT improvement works, which ultimately will improve the energy efficiency of the local rail network through conversion of the existing diesel engine trains to a modern electric fleet.

- *Promote the creation of healthy and active environments and reduce the opportunity for crime and anti-social behaviour*

5.2.22 The Proposed Development (and the wider CVLT works) would encourage the use of rail transport, thereby reducing the number of car journeys and consequently improving local air quality. In selecting a preferred option (see **Section 3.2** of this document), regard has been had to safety (including consideration of seclusion and anti-social behaviour) which has led to the selection of the Proposed Development. CCTV coverage is also provided on both platforms; CCTV coverage zones are provided on **Figure 1**.

Policy SW12: Improving the Transport Network

5.2.24 The existing railway line in this location (including the existing Quakers Yard Station) is designated under Policy SW12.3 'Improving the Transport Network' as part of the South East Wales Metro (Merthyr Tydfil Valley Line) improvements.

5.2.25 Policy SW12 states that support will be given to developments that encourage a modal shift towards sustainable transport including the enhancement of pedestrian, cycle, rail and bus facilities. The policy goes on to state that development proposals will be expected to demonstrate how they reduce the need to travel and encourage the use of sustainable transport.

5.2.26 The Proposed Development supports the delivery of the wider CVLT improvement works. As discussed elsewhere within this Planning Statement, the CVLT works will upgrade the existing diesel-powered trains to an electric fleet. By the very nature of energy usage, this represents a modal shift to a more sustainable form of transport.

5.2.27 The proposed footbridge and platform improvements would enhance the facilities of the station for pedestrian use, as well as providing safe passage over the railway. Additionally, facilities would be enhanced for cyclists to use the trains through the provision of new cycle hoops. The Proposed Development would ultimately make the station more accessible and safer for people, and consequently encourage the use of trains over cars for travelers.

5.2.28 Accordingly, the Proposed Development is strongly supportive of this policy.

Policy SW13: Protecting and Improving Local Community Facilities

5.2.29 Policy SW13 states that the provision of new and enhanced community facilities will be supported subject to satisfying other relevant LDP policies and that the Council will protect and support the enhancement of the County Borough's existing community facilities.

5.2.30 The Proposed Development is part of the wider CVLT works (see **Section 1.2** of this Planning Statement), providing significant station upgrades (including upgrading the existing rail infrastructure to electric), providing the local community with greater sustainable transport flexibility, and wider community benefits such as faster journey times and reduced air and noise pollution. The Proposed Development also provides improved and safer access over the railway between Taff Vale to the north and the open space provision via Tram Road Side to the south.

Policy EnW1: Nature Conservation and Ecosystem Resilience

- 5.2.31 Policy EnW1 requires that development will be required to promote the resilience of ecosystems; in particular, proposals will be required to maintain and enhance biodiversity interests unless it can be demonstrated that the need for the development clearly outweighs the biodiversity value of the site, and the impacts of the development can be mitigated and acceptably managed through future management regimes.
- 5.2.32 Landscape mitigation (see **Section 4.3** of this document for further details) proposed new woodland and tree planting to soften the visual impact of the Proposed Development and provide integration into the surrounding landscape. Opportunities for biodiversity enhancement have been identified and included in the landscape proposals including strengthening of transport corridors, sensitive management and connectivity of wildflower meadows, management of grassland for reptiles, deployment of bird and bat boxes, creation of refugia piles, and translocation of high-quality patches of existing plants.
- 5.2.33 Accordingly, the Proposed Development is considered to support the aims of Policy EnW1.
- Policy EnW3: Regionally Important Geological Sites, Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation, Local Nature Reserves and Priority Habitats and Species**
- 5.2.34 This policy states that development proposals likely to have an adverse impact on regionally and locally important geological and biodiversity sites will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:
- the need for the development clearly outweighs the conservation value of the site;
 - adverse impacts on nature conservation features or geological features can be avoided;
 - appropriate and proportionate mitigation and compensation measures can be provided; and
 - the development maintains and where possible enhances biodiversity and geodiversity interests.
- 5.2.35 The Site is part of the Lower Taf & Edwardsville Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) which is a non-statutory designated site. The Proposed Development is appraised against the four criteria of the policy in the subsequent paragraphs.
- 5.2.36 As discussed elsewhere within this Planning Statement, the Proposed Development represents part of the wider CVLT improvement works, which ultimately will improve the efficiency and sustainability of the railway network, both locally and nationally. The conservation value of the Lower Taf & Edwardsville SINC is considered to be of local importance. The permanent Proposed Development land take within the SINC would be approximately 1,067m². This was required to construct the station platforms and footbridge/ramps and therefore cannot be avoided. This permanent loss equates to just 0.5% of the total area of the SINC.
- 5.2.37 Accordingly, the need for the Proposed Development in terms of providing safe access across the railway track (supporting the wider benefits provided by the CVLT works), is considered to outweigh the permanent land loss within the SINC and the overall conservation value of the Site. Furthermore, the scheme includes new landscape planting within the Site, which would ultimately enhance the environmental value of Site and complement the surrounding landscape.
- 5.2.38 Mitigation measures were implemented during the construction works to minimise / avoid harm to the SINC. These include the presence of an Ecological Clerk of Works (ECOW) to ensure that appropriate avoidance measures etc. were taken, and the erection of temporary boundary fencing to prevent site operatives entering or storing materials within the SINC land surrounding the Site.
- 5.2.39 Opportunities for biodiversity enhancement have been identified and included in the landscape proposals including strengthening of transport corridors, sensitive management and connectivity of wildflower meadows, management of grassland for reptiles, deployment of bird and bat boxes, creation of refugia piles, and translocation of high-quality patches of existing plants.
- 5.2.40 In light of the above, it has been demonstrated that the Proposed Development meets the four tests of this policy.

Policy EnW4: Environmental Protection

5.2.45 Policy EnW4 states that development proposals will be required to demonstrate they will not result in an unacceptable impact on people, residential amenity, property and/or the natural environment from either:

- pollution of land, surface water, ground water and the air;
- land contamination;
- hazardous substances;
- land stability;
- noise, vibration, dust, odour nuisance and light pollution; or
- any other identified risk to public health and safety.

5.2.46 The policy goes on to state that where impacts are identified, the Council will require applicants to demonstrate that appropriate measures have been incorporated to reduce or minimise the impact identified to the lowest possible acceptable level.

5.2.47 The nature of the Proposed Development is such that it would not result in unacceptable impacts on receptors in terms of pollution of land, surface water, ground water or the air, land contamination, or hazardous substances.

5.2.48 The Proposed Development has been constructed using best practical means to ensure suitable foundations for the proposed structures, and that they do not impact land stability.

5.2.49 No noise, vibration, dust, or odour emissions would be generated by the Proposed Development during its operation. Lighting would be low-level, kept to a minimum and be installed for the safety of station users.

5.2.50 Through the incorporation of these measures, impacts on amenities and the environment from the Proposed Development would be minimised and kept within acceptable limits. The Proposed Development therefore accords with this policy.

Policy EnW5: Landscape Protection

5.2.51 Policy EnW5 relates to development in Special Landscape Areas and states that development proposals will be permitted where it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that:

- it would not cause unacceptable harm to the character and quality of the landscape setting of the County Borough;
- development within SLA are sensitive to their special characteristics;
- development respects the local distinctiveness and historic character of the landscape;
- development will safeguard local landscape character and landscape features, including views, which make a significant contribution to the character, history and setting of the locality;
- development secures the enhancement of the character, appearance and quality of the landscape, through restoration, management or enhancement where possible;
- there is no satisfactory alternative and the benefits associated with the development can be demonstrated to outweigh the harm; and
- where damage to local landscape character cannot be avoided appropriate mitigation has been secured.

5.2.52 A small portion of the south of the Site sits partially within the Pontygwaith Special Landscape Area 4 (SLA4). However, the built elements of the Proposed Development (i.e., the footbridge and



platform) sit outside of this.

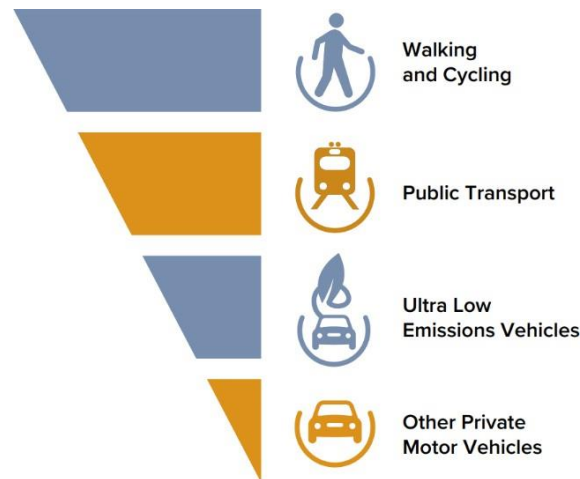
- 5.2.53 Furthermore, the area of the Site encroaching into SLA4 is subject to the proposed landscape mitigation planting (as discussed in the appraisal of policy EnW1 and in **Section 4.3** of this document). This landscaping would consist of planting a mix of woodland species, details of which are provided within the LMMP. As such, the planting here would enhance the character, appearance and quality of the landscape within SLA4.
- 5.2.54 The proposed landscaping would soften the interface between the proposed new southern platform and SLA4. Therefore, the setting of the SLA would be enhanced over time.
- 5.2.55 In light of the above points, the Proposed Development is considered to comply with policy EnW5.

Future Wales: The National Plan 2040

- 5.2.56 Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 (referred to as simply 'the National Plan') is the national development framework for Wales and has development plan status (adopted February 2021). The National Plan applies to the whole of Wales and covers the period up to 2040. It sits complementary to Planning Policy Wales (PPW), which is discussed later in this section.
- 5.2.57 The National Plan seeks to provide a strategy for addressing key national priorities through the planning system. The plan covers many big issues including the economy, housing and environment. It shows where nationally significant developments like energy, transport, water and waste projects should take place, as well as where growth should happen, what infrastructure and services are needed and how Wales can help fight climate change.
- 5.2.58 The National Plan identifies that across Wales there were 52.5 million rail station entries / exits in 2017-18, accounting for 1.8% of the UK total. The number of train journeys made in Wales increased by 30% between 2007-08 and 2017-18. The vast majority of this increase was in journeys starting and / or finishing in the southeast.
- 5.2.59 Page 51 of the plan sets out the challenges that face travel in Wales and recognises that *"Significant investment in public transport... provide an opportunity to re-think how our places work. Growth should be shaped around sustainable forms of transport and places that make us and the environment healthier."*
- 5.2.60 The National Plan sets out 36 policies as part of the spatial strategy. Those relevant to the Proposed Development are set out and discussed below.

Policy 11 National Connectivity & Policy 12 Regional Connectivity

- 5.2.61 Policy 11 of the National Plan sets out that *"The Welsh Government will support and invest in improving national connectivity. Our priorities are to encourage longer-distance trips to be made by public transport while also making longer journeys possible by electric vehicles. The Welsh Government will work with Transport for Wales, local authorities, operators and partners to support the delivery of the following measures [inter alia] to improve national connectivity:*
- *Rail Network – Transform the rail network and improve the quality of rail services for passengers."*
- 5.2.62 The same sentiment is echoed by Policy 12, which states *"The Welsh Government will support and invest in improving regional connectivity."*
- 5.2.63 Page 84 of the plan sets out a 'Sustainable Transport Hierarchy for Planning' which identifies the priority for transportation modes across Wales that will help deliver a sustainable future. The extracted diagram below provides an illustration of the hierarchy, which shows walking / cycling and public transport coming out first and second respectively on the hierarchy.



5.2.64 Further on page 85, it is stated that *“The Welsh Government will be investing significantly to improve active travel and public transport. This needs to be combined with the implementation of policies in Planning Policy Wales which require development to be directed towards sustainable locations and designed to make it possible for everyone to make sustainable and healthy travel choices for their daily journeys.”*

5.2.65 Page 86 of the plan sets out the Welsh Government’s ambition for improving public transport, stating that *“Our rail infrastructure and services are fundamental to an effective and efficient transport network and central to national connectivity across Wales and its regions. Their continued development and expansion will contribute to the ambition to develop a stronger, inclusive and more equitable economy and to deliver prosperity for all by connecting people, communities and businesses across Wales to jobs, services and markets.”*

Policy 33 National Growth Area – Cardiff, Newport and the Valleys

5.2.66 Policy 33 sets out that Cardiff, Newport and the Valleys will be the main focus for growth in the Southeast region. The policy states that *“Strategic and Local Development Plans should recognise the National Growth Area as the focus for [inter alia] strategic economic growth; essential services and facilities; and transport infrastructure.”* The policy goes further to identify that *“the Welsh Government supports co-ordinated regeneration and investment in the Valleys area to improve well-being, increase prosperity and address social inequalities.”*

Policy 35 Valleys Regional Park

5.2.67 This policy identifies the support which the Welsh Government gives to the establishment of the Valleys Regional Park, which seeks to maximise the social, economic and environmental potential of the Valleys’ natural and cultural heritage assets. The policy states that *“the Welsh Government will work with local authorities, the third sector and key partners to support the Valleys Regional Park and maximise opportunities for new development.”*

Conclusion

5.2.68 The Proposed Development has been considered in the context of relevant policies of the adopted Development Plan. The Proposed Development is essential to the delivery of the wider CVLT works, which would improve connectivity across the rail network, delivering an important sustainable travel solution for South Wales.

5.2.69 The policy appraisal has shown that the Proposed Development would be in accordance with the relevant policies of the Development Plan and would not give rise to any unacceptable environmental effects.

5.3 Material Considerations

MTCBC Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)

Guidance Note No. 4 - Sustainable Design (July 2013)

- 5.3.24 The Sustainable Design SPG provides advice on how proposals can better incorporate sustainability, defined as *‘[enhancing] the natural and cultural environment and [respecting] its limits.’*
- 5.3.25 The introduction to the document notes in paragraph 1.7 *“It is recognised that there will be occasions where a development is unable to successfully deliver all aspects of sustainable design covered within this guidance. There will inevitably be situations where site constraints, the local context and urban design considerations result in the need for “trade-offs” in the overall design solution proposed. Nevertheless, there is an expectation that all aspects of sustainable design are explored and that the proposed design solution is fully explained and justified.”*
- 5.3.26 Chapter 6 ‘Transport and Movement’ notes the benefits of developments that ensure the effective use of more sustainable modes of transport, providing benefits such as the reduction in the emission of greenhouse gases, improving the health of the local population, increasing social inclusion and cutting the costs of congestion.
- 5.3.27 Further on in Chapter 6, the importance of accessibility and inclusiveness is stated *“new developments should provide equal and convenient access for all potential users, including disabled people, older people, children and families. Routes should be kept as near to level as possible along their length and width as this will benefit wheelchair and pram users.”*
- 5.3.28 The sustainable benefits of the Proposed Development are discussed under the appraisal of LDP Policy SW11. In terms of accessibility and inclusiveness, the proposed footbridge and ramp would provide access across the railway track for people of all ages and mobility.

Guidance Note No. 5 – Nature and Development (May 2015)

- 5.3.29 The Nature and Development SPG provides guidance on how ecology and biodiversity should be assessed within the planning process and how it can be enhanced through the development process.
- 5.3.30 Chapter 6 ‘Protected Species, Designated Sites & Habitats’ states that that proposals for development must be carefully assessed for their effect on protected species and that locally designated sites, although non-statutory, have an important role to play in meeting biodiversity targets and contributing to the quality of life and well-being of the community.
- 5.3.31 The impact of the Proposed Development on biodiversity and locally designated sites is discussed under the appraisal of LDP Policies EnW1 and EnW3 respectively. In terms of effects on protected species, the EclA identifies that the Site had suitable habitats to support a number of species. The following species were confirmed on or within close proximity to the proposed development, breeding birds, foraging and commuting bats, otter, badger and reptiles.
- 5.3.32 Appropriate recommendations for mitigation have been made in the form of pre-works surveys, method statements, safeguard measures, best practice pollution prevention and replanting schemes in order to reduce potential effects on habitats and species. The LMMP provides details of how the replanting will be carried out and aims to improve the biodiversity offering of the Site.
- 5.3.33 The proposed mitigation measures, along with the areas of replanting around the Site would contribute both towards meeting biodiversity targets and the quality of life and well-being of the community. As such, the Proposed Development supports the aims of this SPG.



Planning Policy Wales (PPW) Edition 11 (February 2021)

- 5.3.34 PPW sets out the land use planning policies of the Welsh Government, which underpins the policies and decision-making of local planning authorities. PPW is supported by Technical Advice Notes (TANs), Minerals Technical Advice Notes (MTANs), and policy clarification letters.
- 5.3.35 The primary objective of PPW (as set out in paragraph 12 of the document) is *“to ensure that the planning system contributes towards the delivery of sustainable development and improves the social, economic, and environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, as required by the Planning (Wales) Act 2015, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act and other key legislation.”*
- 5.3.36 The most relevant sections of PPW to this planning application are considered to be those chapters and paragraphs that support sustainable transport measures and economic development, with further sections on accessibility.
- 5.3.37 Chapter 3 (Strategic and Spatial Choices) and Chapter 4 (Active and Social Places) of PPW both highlight the need to minimise the need for travel and reliance upon the car, and to increase walking, cycling and use of public transport.
- 5.3.38 The CVLT works will aid the improvement of rail links between Cardiff and the Heads of the Valleys to the north of the city. The proposed footbridge would deliver a safe connectivity between the communities north and south of the railway line here, thus promoting movement by walking and cycling. The proposed ramp will ensure that the enhanced rail services are highly accessible to and for wheelchair users from the southern platform.
- 5.3.39 Paragraph 3.61 states that *“Adequate and efficient infrastructure, including services such as [...] transport [...] is crucial for economic, social and environmental sustainability. It underpins economic competitiveness and opportunities for households and businesses to achieve socially and environmentally desirable ways of living and working. Infrastructure which is poorly designed or badly located can exacerbate problems rather than solving them.”*
- 5.3.40 Paragraph 4.1.1 sets out that *“The planning system should enable people to access jobs and services through shorter, more efficient and sustainable journeys, by walking, cycling and public transport.”*
- 5.3.41 Relating to transportation infrastructure specifically, paragraph 5.3.1 notes that *“The provision of sustainable transport infrastructure is essential in order to build prosperity, tackle the climate emergency, reduce airborne pollution and to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. **The planning system should facilitate the delivery, decarbonisation and improvement of transport infrastructure in a way which reduces the need to travel, particularly by private vehicles, and facilitates and increases the use of active and sustainable transport**”* (emphases added).
- 5.3.42 Paragraph 5.3.2 goes on to state that *“Planning authorities should support necessary transport infrastructure improvements, where it can be demonstrated that such measures are consistent with Welsh Government policy to encourage and increase use of sustainable transport and reduce reliance on the private car for daily journeys.”*
- 5.3.43 Paragraph 6.4.20 speaks on the protection of non-statutory designations, such as the SINC which the Site is situated within, saying that *“Although non-statutory designations carry less weight than statutory designations, they can make a vital contribution to delivering an ecological network for biodiversity and resilient ecosystems, and they should be given adequate protection in development plans and the development management process”*.
- 5.3.44 In summary, the message from PPW is unambiguous in setting out the Welsh Government’s support for improvements to the public transportation system and investment in facilities that would encourage sustainable travel, with the impact upon the SINC being arguably acceptable on balance. The Proposed Development would enhance the availability of public transport via the construction of a new platform for more services, a footbridge safe means of travel byfoot / cycling between both sides of the railway line, a ramp on the new platform for equal access and ancillary works associated with the development. All works are part of CVLT and its enhancement works.

5.3.45 The CVLT scheme overall would provide significant improvements to the strategic rail network, encouraging transport by rail for commuters and businesses and ultimately promoting more sustainable travel means within the CVL regions. It is therefore considered that the Proposed Development is in accordance with national policy.

PPW Technical Advice Notes

5.3.46 Technical advice notes (TANs) are national policy documents set out by the Welsh Assembly Government that provide detailed planning advice. These documents hold weight for local planning authorities when they are preparing development plans and are thus of material consequence in decision making.

5.3.47 There are over a dozen TANs available, each regarding their own facet of planning for developments to consider; those most relevant to this proposal are:

- TAN 5: Nature Conservation and Planning
- TAN 6: Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities
- TAN 12: Design
- TAN 18: Transport

TAN 5: Nature Conservation and Planning (September 2009)

5.3.48 This TAN provides advice about how the land use planning system, and thus proposed developments, should contribute to protecting and enhancing biodiversity and geological conservation. The note makes specific mention to proposals situated within SINC.

5.3.49 The conservation status of SINC sites is a material consideration within planning decisions and as such, developers should seek to avoid harm from development wherever possible. Where harm is unavoidable, mitigation measures should be put in place to minimise and offset harm as far as possible via compensation measures designed to ensure there is no reduction in the overall nature conservation value of the area or feature.

5.3.50 As mentioned previously, the Proposed Development sits within the Lower Taf & Edwardsville SINC. The impacts of the Proposed Development on this SINC are discussed in detail within the appraisal of LDP Policy EnW3.

5.3.51 The permanent loss to the SINC from the Proposed Development is just 0.5% of the total area. Mitigation measures have been taken during the construction works to minimise / avoid harm to the SINC. These include the presence of an ECoW to ensure that appropriate avoidance measures etc. were taken, and the erection of temporary boundary fencing to prevent site operatives entering or storing materials within the SINC land surrounding the Site.

TAN 6: Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities (July 2010)

5.3.52 This TAN provides practical guidance on the role of the land use planning system, and thus proposed developments, in supporting the delivery of sustainable rural communities.

5.3.53 Relevant to the proposal is paragraph 5 'Sustainable Rural Services', which highlights the need to *"improve the viability, accessibility or community value of existing services and facilities"*. It is noted how *"development plans should facilitate the provision of services as an essential part of new developments"*.

5.3.54 The Proposed Development is part of the wider CVLT works, which ultimately will provide better rail services for commuters. The proposed footbridge will provide accessibility between both sides of the railway track for all users. Accordingly, such development proposals should be supported through the local development plan.

TAN 12: Design (March 2016)

5.3.55 This TAN provides practical guidance on how 'Promoting sustainability through good design' and 'Planning for sustainable building' may be facilitated through the land use planning



system.

5.3.56 Particular guidance is provided regarding movement and the promotion of sustainable means of travel and how this can be achieved through maximizing design opportunities within a development. These relevant details are noted below with an adjoining appraisal:

- Safe and clear connections;
- Potential to cycle, walk and use public transport safely, and reducing the reliance on the car;
- Connection to the existing transport infrastructure by integrating development with existing footpaths, cycle ways and public and private transport infrastructure.

5.3.57 The Proposed Development would provide safe access connecting both sides of the railway track. The footbridge would replace the existing crossing, which is required to be removed for safety reasons (due to the quieter and faster electric train fleet which would use the upgraded railway tracks). The footbridge and stairs / ramps would include side railings for additional safety. Overall, safety would be improved for users of the station.

5.3.58 The Proposed Development would support the wider CVLT works, which will improve the rail network and ultimately encourage travelers to use rail for transport over car. Therefore, the reliance on cars is anticipated to be reduced through these works. Furthermore, the new / upgraded station platforms would incorporate infrastructure including waiting shelters and cycle hoops to improve the safety of those cycling and walking to the station.

5.3.59 The proposed footbridge would be connected to the existing footpath along Taff Vale on the northside of the railway track. The existing ramp leading from Taff Vale to the down-platform would be retained and is currently under review with respect to PRM compliance. Accordingly, both up and down platforms would connect to the existing footpath network. The wider CVLT works (which the Proposed Development would support) provide integrated connections to the existing transport infrastructure.

TAN 18: Transport (March 2007)

5.3.60 This TAN provides practical guidance on how the land use planning system can realise an efficient and sustainable transport system, in turn realising a modern, prosperous and inclusive society.

5.3.61 The document notes that the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended) requires that people with disabilities should be treated no less favourably than others, and as such public transport should be accessible to people with disabilities.

5.3.62 The Proposed Development incorporates a new ramp to access the up-platform and retains the existing ramp serving the down-platform. As such, people with disabilities / mobility issues will be able to access both platforms and thus the Proposed Development supports an inclusive society envisaged through TAN 18.

One Wales: Connecting the Nation – The Wales Transport Strategy

5.3.63 The Wales Transport Strategy is underpinned by three sustainable transport themes, as follows:

- Achieving a more effective and efficient transport system;
- Achieving greater use of the more sustainable and healthy forms of travel; and
- Minimising demands on the transport system.

5.3.64 A range of long-term outcomes are identified that transport in Wales can make a contribution to. These cover a range of topics and issues, and those of relevance to the Proposed Development are listed below:

- Encourage healthy lifestyles;



- Improve the actual and perceived safety of travel;
- Improve access to employment opportunities;
- Improve connectivity within Wales and internationally;
- Reliable transport systems;
- Reduce the impact of transport on greenhouse gas emissions;
- Adapt to the impacts of climate change;
- Reduce the contribution of transport to air pollution and other harmful emissions;
- Improve the positive impact of transport on the local environment; and
- Improve the impact of transport on biodiversity.

5.3.65 Key actions to achieve these outcomes include:

- Provide more infrastructure to support the shift to public transport, walking and cycling;
- Making sure that new transport infrastructure is resilient to climate change;
- Taking action to reduce the effects of transport on noise, severance, air and water pollution and biodiversity; and
- Encouraging more frequent and better-quality public transport services between key settlements and employment sites and their surrounding areas. For example services focussing on market towns in rural areas or travel to work areas for cities.

5.3.66 The Proposed Development would form part of the wider CVLT works, which as a whole would help achieve the outcomes of the Wales Transport Strategy. Specifically the Proposed Development would, as discussed in greater detail above contribute to improved public transport services, improve safety and achieve healthy lifestyles by improving the existing walking and cycle link in this locality.

Economic Renewal: A New Direction

5.3.67 Economic Renewal: A New Direction identifies several priorities for the renewal of the Welsh economy. One of these is 'Investing in high quality and sustainable infrastructure'.

5.3.68 As part of the wider CVLT works, the Proposed Development would contribute to significant improvements to the rail network that connects Cardiff with the Valleys. This in turn is likely to have economic benefits to locations along the CVL routes.

6. Summary and Conclusions

- 6.1.1 This application seeks planning permission for the Proposed Development at Quakers Yard Station, which would comprise the removal of the existing pedestrian level crossing (including the associated footpath and fencing between the level crossing and the existing down-platform), the construction of a new footbridge over the railway line with ramps and stairs on either side, works to demolish, alter, and extend the existing platform (the down-platform) on the northern side of the station, a new platform on the southern side of the station (the up-platform), and ancillary works such as new waiting shelters and cycle hoops.
- 6.1.2 As operator of the CVL rail network, AIW will be increasing the number of services running along this section of the CVL network. The trains will also be upgraded to an electric fleet, which will be faster, quieter and provide more sustainable travel than the existing diesel engine stock. Subsequently, there is an increased potential for conflicts between trains and users of the level crossing.
- 6.1.3 The Proposed Development is required to mitigate the increased health and safety risks associated with the improvement of rail services on the CVL network. Subsequently, it is necessary for TfW to provide alternative access at this location. The construction of the footbridge, ramps and platform improvement works provides improved accessibility for the community, including for PRM.
- 6.1.4 The design of the Proposed Development has been through several stages before arriving at the solution presented in this planning application (see **Section 3.2** of this document for further details). The principal objective was to identify a safer, PRM compliant alternative to crossing the railway line than the current level crossing which was recommended to be closed for safety reasons as part of the wider CVLT works. After careful consideration of each option against the stated criteria, the preferred option was a footbridge with ramps and steps (Option 3), primarily due to the station's remote and low lying location. The whole life capital costs of a footbridge with a lift together with a likely increase in seclusion and anti-social behaviour resulted in Option 2 not being selected, but still being preferred to Option 1 which posed significant cost, programme, constructability and safety issues.
- 6.1.5 The application is supported by a range of Technical Assessments which confirm that the Proposed Development would not give rise to unacceptable environmental effects. A range of mitigation measures have been incorporated into the design of the Proposed Development including a Landscape Plan (**Appendix 8**) and the associated LMMP (**Appendix 13**) which identifies areas for new planting and biodiversity enhancements.
- 6.1.6 The Proposed Development would form part of the wider Core Valley Lines Transformation (CVLT) works, which would collectively improve rail links between Cardiff and the Valleys to the north of the city. As such, it would contribute to achieve a range of policy outcomes identified in the LDP and in other Wales-wide policy document.
- 6.1.7 The Proposed Development has been considered in the context of relevant policies of the adopted Development Plan. The policy appraisal has shown that the Proposed Development would be in accordance with the relevant policies of the Development Plan and national policy. It would not give rise to any unacceptable environmental effects and could be managed to prevent harm to local amenity.
- 6.1.8 In conclusion, it is the Applicant's view that the Proposed Development would help contribute towards the delivery of sustainable development and improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, as required by the Planning (Wales) Act 2015, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and other key legislation, and that the Proposed Development is in accordance with the Statutory Development Plan. On this basis, it is requested that MTCBC approves this application.