

Yr Arglwydd Elis-Thomas AS/MS
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Diwylliant, Chwaraeon a Thwristiaeth
Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-1094
Ein cyf/Our ref DET/03349/20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Chair
Petitions Committee

14 December 2020

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter of 30 November seeking my views on petition P-05-1094 by Councillor Mike Powell who is campaigning to stop the demolition of the grade II* listed White Bridge, Pontypridd.

It is inappropriate for me to comment on the proposal as Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council will require listed building consent (LBC) from the Welsh Ministers before it can demolish the bridge and I must not prejudice that decision. While there are exceptions to the requirement to obtain LBC in cases of utmost urgency, I understand that the Council is not proposing this option. Therefore, everyone will have an opportunity to make representations as part of the 21 day public advertisement that must take place when, or if, such an application is made. Any such representations relating to the application must be taken into account in deciding whether to approve, or refuse, LBC.

My officials in Cadw have been in touch with the Council from the outset when it was first being suggested that both White Bridge, Pontypridd and Castle Inn Bridge, Treforest needed to be demolished as a matter of urgency. They have emphasised to the Council that the demolition of any listed building should be an option of last resort when all practical alternatives have been comprehensively assessed. Planning Policy Wales explains that the demolition of any listed building should be considered as exceptional and any such proposal requires the strongest justification. My officials have also advised on the high level justification that would be required if an application for LBC for demolition was to be successful. Similarly, they have explained that any proposals should be informed by a conservation accredited structural engineer's report that balances the possibility of conservation repairs against demolition. This is the web link to the relevant guidance for your information: <https://cadw.gov.wales/advice-support/historic-assets/listed-buildings/listed-building-consent>.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

I understand that the Council is currently considering the content of the conservation accredited structural reports that it commissioned for both White Bridge and Castle Inn Bridge. The reports will inform the Council's next steps and the feasibility of the structures being repaired rather than demolished. My officials continue to keep in touch with the Council but may I suggest that you write to the Council's Leader for any further information that he may feel is helpful to your consideration of the petition.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E. Elis-Thomas'.

Yr Arglwydd Elis-Thomas AS/MS

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