

Technical Note



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Planning Application 2018/0718

Proposed Residential Development,
Pen-y-Bont, Pentre, Chirk

Response to Highways Objections

Our reference: 661712-TN03-Rev02

This Technical Note has been prepared in response to the Highway Authority's objections in regard to planning application 2018/0718 for construction of a residential development of 60 dwellings on land at Pen-y-Bont landfill, Pentre, Chirk.

An earlier Technical Note (ref: 661712-TN02) responded to initial comments from the highway authority around the site access junction, trip generation, pedestrian environment and sustainability. While the site access arrangements and trip generation aspects have been agreed, the highway authority has continued to raise concerns over the pedestrian environment and sustainability, both of which are inter-linked, and the positioning of the proposed southbound bus stop infrastructure outside the site. These two aspects are discussed below and, where relevant, supported by enclosed figures and drawings.

Pedestrian Environment on B5605

The current pedestrian environment was described in the previous technical response, although the latest highway response does not respond to any of the information contained therein.

The technical response discussed the volume of traffic along the B5605, dismissing the suggestion that it was a 'busy road' with only around 170-230 vehicles an hour in each direction at peak periods. With reference to the Guidelines for the Environmental Assessment of Road Traffic, discussions around pedestrian fear and intimidation indicate that traffic flows of less than 600 per hour or 1,000 HGVs per day are low or negligible in environmental terms. The B5605 is comfortably below both of these thresholds and therefore it is considered conclusive that the pedestrian environment is acceptable in relation to the volume of traffic.

The technical response also discussed the width of the footway, highlighting that is commensurate with footways in a semi-rural area and indeed in many parts of Cefn Mawr. It is considered unnecessary and would be unreasonable to expect the footway to be widened to 2.0 m for a length of around 1 km. However, a financial contribution could be secured to improve specific pinchpoints, crossing locations and the surfacing. In addition, as highlighted in Planning for Walking (CIHT, 2015), places to rest can be an important part of a walking route and therefore a financial contribution could be sought to secure benches or other means of rest along the footway between the site and Cefn Mawr.

On the above basis, it would be possible to improve the pedestrian environment to encourage residents to walk between the site and Cefn Mawr, in line with the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013.



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Sustainability

The principle of sustainable development is not defined by ensuring that all transport modes are equally accessible by all users as characteristics of a specific location will differ from that of another, sometimes considerably. For example, access to rail services is not a given unless a site is within easy reach of a rail station, yet this would not preclude a development from being considered to be sustainable. Furthermore, sustainable development is not defined purely by its accessibility.

The application site is in a semi-rural location, commensurate with much of the county outside of the major towns. Figure 2, enclosed with this report, clearly indicates that Cefn Mawr and a number of facilities are within a 25 minute walk (equivalent to 2 km), including employment opportunities. The edge of the village is within a 15 minute walk (equivalent to 1.2 km), which is contrary to the highway authority's position that only the edge is within 2 km.

However, the site benefits from a good level of bus access directly outside the entrance, which likely exceeds many similar locations. This provides easy access to multiple employment locations within centres larger than Cefn Mawr, such as Wrexham and Oswestry. Equally, the development offers the opportunity for home-working and car sharing, both of which are factors in creating a sustainable development and can be encouraged through a good travel plan, secured through a planning condition or obligation.

Furthermore, the highway authority's reliance on Providing for Journeys on Foot (CIHT, 2000) is not embedded in local policy and is only a guidance document. Its use to define a site's accessibility has been challenged by a planning inspector at appeal (APP/U3935/W/17/3192234) and it is not considered to be robust given that such distances are contrary to statistics from the National Travel Survey. Furthermore, the upper distances quoted in such guidance documents does not represent a maximum that any person will travel, which is supported by a planning inspector (APP/L2820/W/16/3149835). The attractiveness of the end destination will influence how far someone will walk or cycle. In this instance, the Tesco supermarket in Cefn Mawr is only slightly beyond a 2 km walk distance, yet the employment opportunities on offer and the range of goods available will be sufficiently attractive that the extra distance will not deter a proportion of residents from walking to it.

Paragraph 3.45 of Planning Policy Wales (Edition 10, 2018) promotes sustainable transport modes giving people a real choice about how to travel. In this location, there are opportunities to travel using a choice of modes, comprising walking, cycling and public transport. While the quality and condition of the route and facilities provided for different modes may affect the ability to use one or more modes by some people, such as the elderly, this not preclude the use of such modes by all people and therefore a choice still exists.

Overall, dismissing the site's ability to meet sustainability criteria based purely on walk distance to local facilities, which has actually been proven to be within easy reach, is not a justifiable objection when sustainability encompasses a choice of travel modes and measures as well as non-transport-related aspects.

Proposed bus stop arrangements

The development proposals included formalisation of an existing bus stop in the southbound direction that is located directly outside the site. Although no infrastructure currently exists for the southbound stop, there is clearly a northbound stop close to the site access and therefore a corresponding southbound stop appears to be absent.

The proposed reinstatement of infrastructure, illustrated on the previously submitted site access drawing (ref: 661712-10-01-A), was therefore based upon a single option that would be subject to agreement with the highway authority. Although this option has not been accepted by the authority, there are a number of options available and therefore such proposals could be secured through a planning condition.

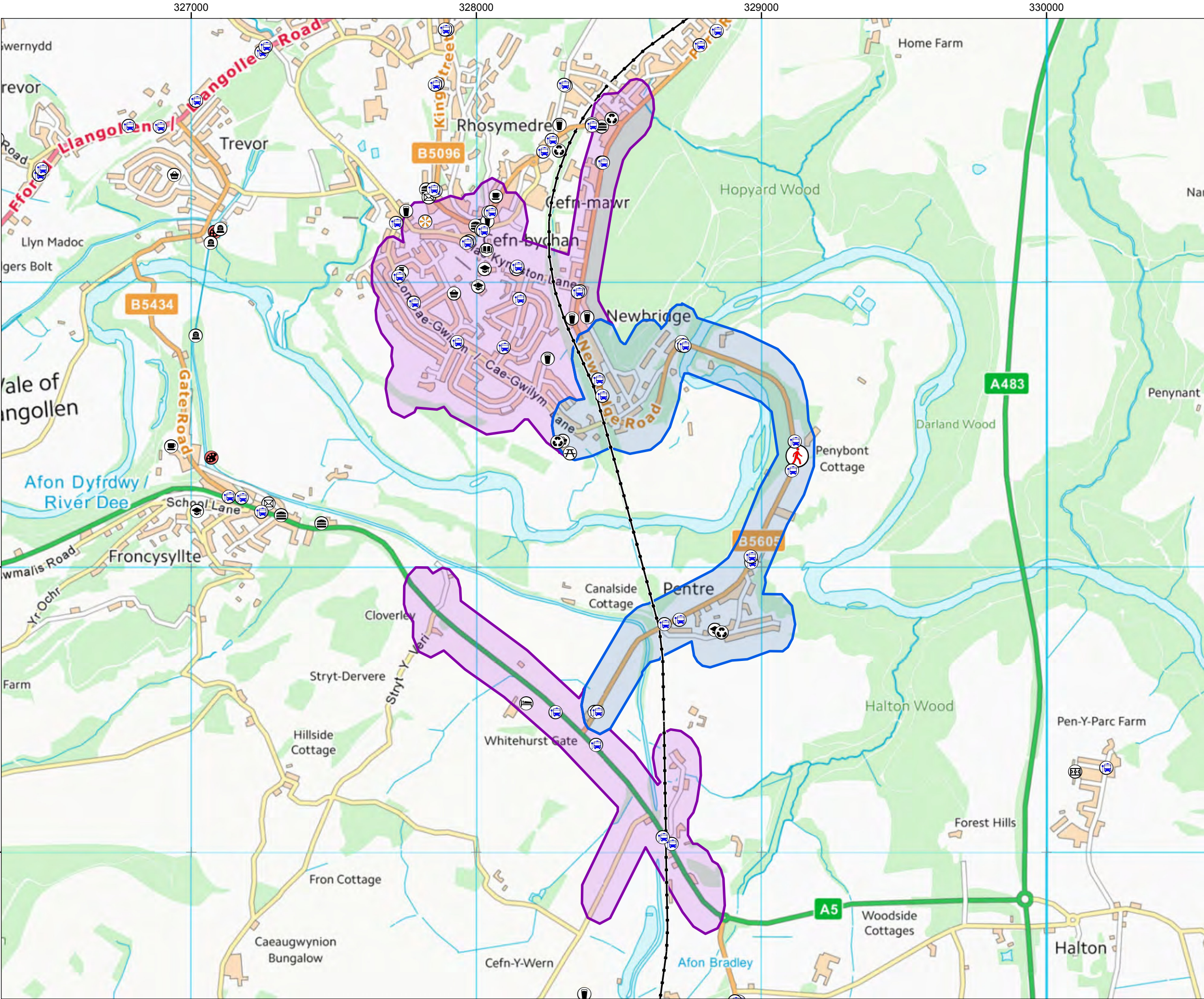
A revised bus stop arrangement has therefore been proposed, as illustrated on the enclosed drawing (ref: 661712-10-01-B). This option avoids the need for a bus to wait in the carriageway, providing a bus layby close to the site access, and thereby reducing the walk distance for residents and increasing its attractiveness. This layout can be achieved within the adopted highway and land within the applicant's ownership.

Overall, this bus stop option meets the requirements of the highway authority and further details for approval can be secured through a planning condition.

Summary and conclusion

Overall, there are opportunities to improve the site's accessibility in line with the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013, which can be appropriately secured through financial contributions and/or planning conditions for physical works. The sustainability of the site in transport terms could be comparable to most of the borough outside of the major towns with reasonable access on foot and by bus to local facilities and beyond to major destinations. This would be facilitated by the proposed bus layby immediately to the south of the site access.

Based on the above, the proposed development is considered to be sustainable and appropriate measures have been proposed to enhance the accessibility of the site in proportion to the scale of development. Therefore, the development should be recommended for approval in transport and highway terms.



Legend:

- Site Location
- Bus Stop Location
- Railway Track
- 15 Minute Walking Isochrone
- 25 Minute Walking Isochrone

Local Amenities:

- Artwork
- Cafe
- Convenience Store
- Educational Facility
- Fast Food
- Hotel
- Library
- Memorial
- Picnic Site
- Playground / Pitch
- Police
- Post Office
- Pub
- Recycling
- Viewpoint



00	14/12/2018	First Draft	DR	IW	IW
Rev	Date	Description	Drm	Chk	App

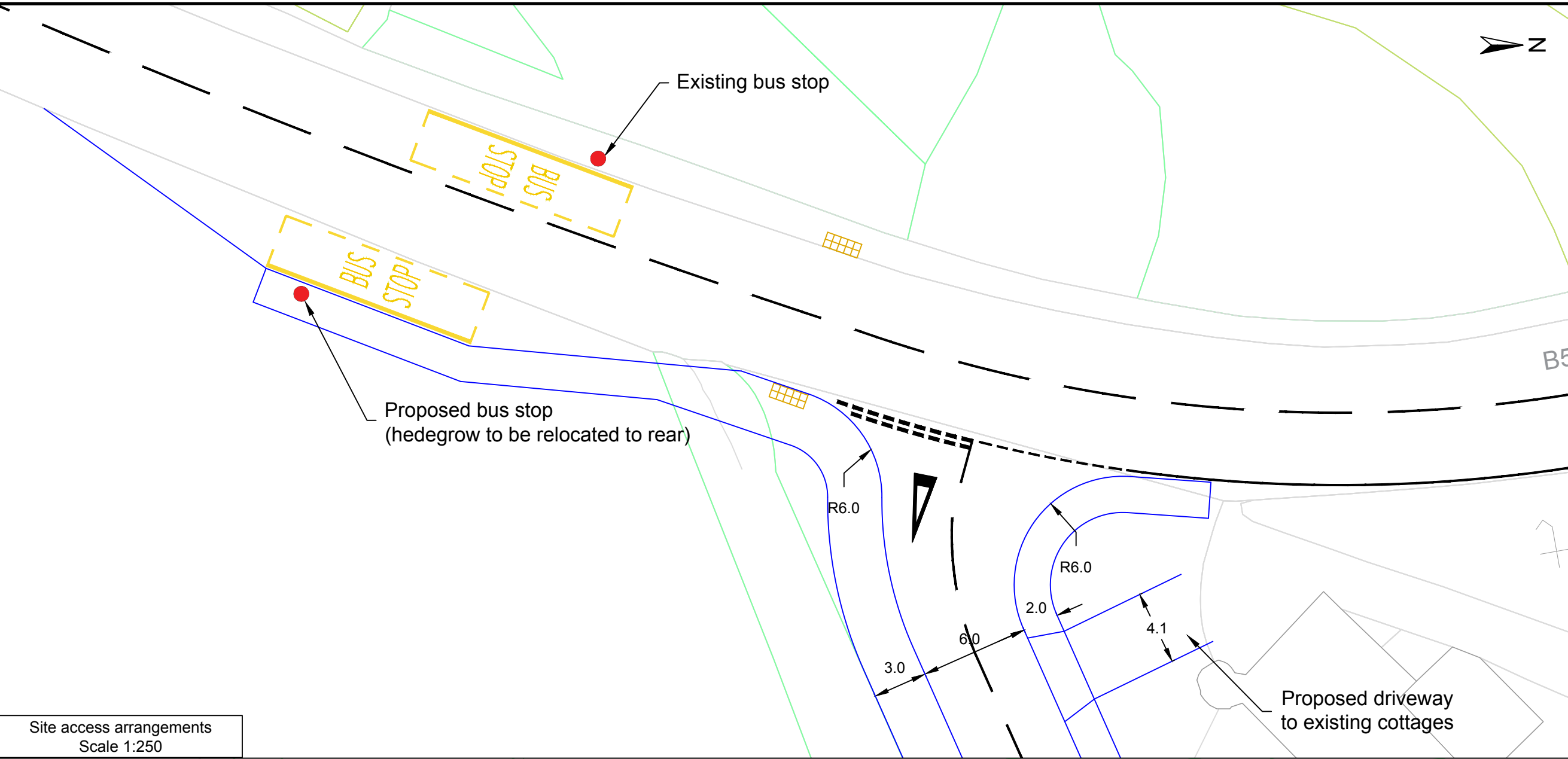
Pen y Bont



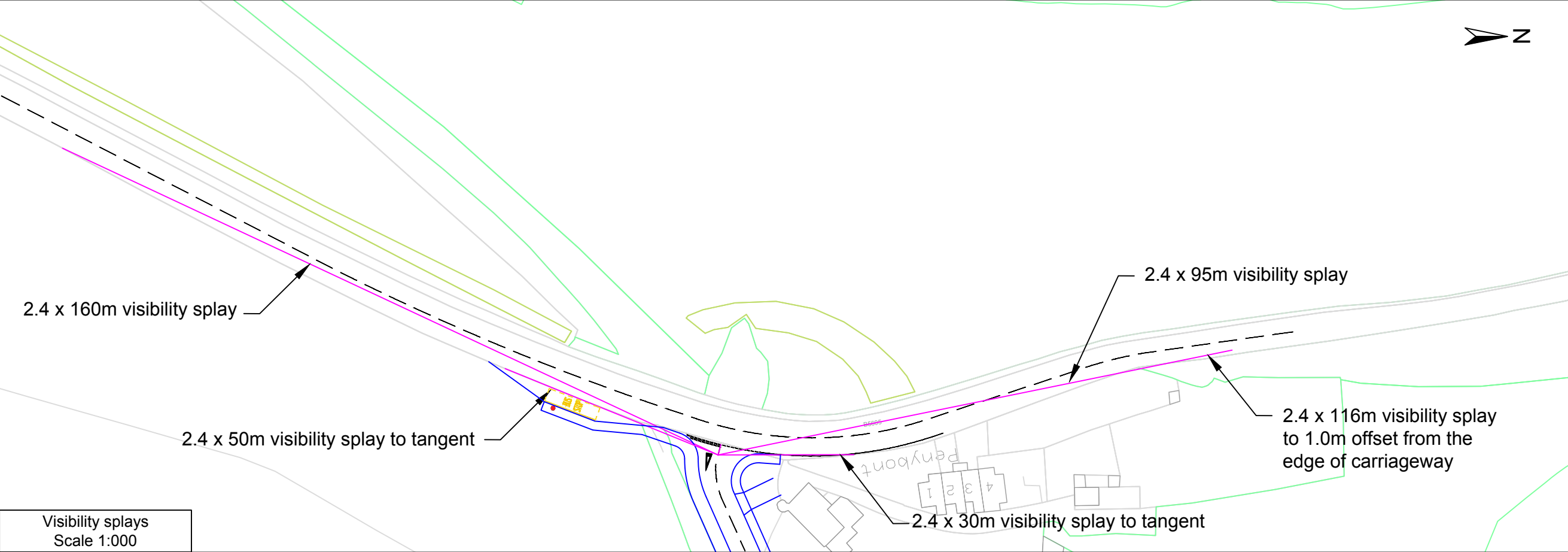
TITLE: Figure 2:
Walking Isochrone Plan

SCALE: 1:12,500 @ A3

REV 00



Site access arrangements
Scale 1:250



Visibility splays
Scale 1:000

Legend

B	04.04.19	Bus layby added Revised layout	MQ	IW	—
A	18.12.18		MQ	IW	—
Rev.	Date	Amendment	Drawn	Chkd.	Appd.

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Client

DBA Estates

Project Title

Pen y Bont
Residential Development

Drawing Title

Proposed site access arrangements
and
visibility splays

Drawn MQ	Date JAN18	Checked IW	Date JAN18	Approved IW	Date JAN18
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Scale As shown	Orig Size A3	Dimensions METRES
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Project No. 661712	Drawing File
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Drawing No. 661712-10-01	Rev. B
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Scale