



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

WELSH GOVERNMENT

A55 JUNCTIONS 16 AND 16A IMPROVEMENTS

THE CHESTER TO BANGOR TRUNK ROAD (A55) (JUNCTIONS 16 AND 16A IMPROVEMENT REALIGNMENT AND SLIP ROADS) ORDER 202-

THE CHESTER TO BANGOR TRUNK ROAD (A55) (JUNCTIONS 16 AND 16A IMPROVEMENT REALIGNMENT AND SLIP ROADS) (SIDE ROADS) ORDER 202-

THE WELSH MINISTERS (THE CHESTER TO BANGOR TRUNK ROAD (A55) (JUNCTIONS 16 AND 16A IMPROVEMENT REALIGNMENT AND SLIP ROADS)) COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER 202-

OUTLINE STATEMENT OF THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

July 2021

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1. Introduction and the Public Local Inquiry

- 1.1 This document (the “Outline Statement”) relates to the proposed A55 Junctions 16 and 16A Improvement (the “Scheme”). The detail of the Scheme is contained within the draft Orders listed at the front of this document. The Welsh Government (WG) have published the draft Orders under the **Highways Act 1980** and the **Acquisition of Land Act 1981**.
- 1.2 This Outline Statement has been prepared in accordance with The Highways (Inquiries Procedure) Rules 1994 (SI 1994/No 3263) and The Compulsory Purchase (Inquiries Procedure) (Wales) Rules 2010 (SI 2010/No 3015).
- 1.3 The Scheme will remove the existing roundabout at A55 Junction 16 and will replace it with a grade-separated junction with an overbridge and slip roads at Junction 16A. A new link road connection between Junction 16 and Junction 16A is proposed where the Junction 16 westbound slip roads would be retained. To accommodate these improvements, the total length of realigned trunk road (including slip roads and the overbridge) would be approximately 3070 metres, with 1540 metres of two way link road.
- 1.4 Additionally, approximately 480 metres of side roads will be affected. The improvements along Glan-Yr-Afon Road would include a route passing over the replacement cattle grid on to the signalised crossing at the proposed overbridge onto the National Cycle Network Route 5 (NCNR5), where provision would be made for cyclists and pedestrians. A Signal controlled crossing is to be provided for cyclists/pedestrians at Junction 16A, providing new improved connectivity to the NCNR5, the beach and routes further afield.
- 1.5 There are six new structures within the Scheme, comprising both the east and west slip road retaining walls and associated structures, the Junction 16A overbridge over the A55 dual carriageway, structures to facilitate the new Afon Gyrach Crossing and the footbridge at Dwygyfylchi.
- 1.6 The Scheme will provide over 2 kilometres of active travel improvements, consisting of new off-road cycleways/footways and crossings. These works

will extend from Conway Road in Penmaenmawr to the south of the improved A55 Junction 16 to Glan-Yr-Afon Road in Dwygyfylchi and to the proposed new link road. These enhancements will improve the safety of both pedestrians and cyclists, including those using the NCNR5.

- 1.7 The Scheme will also address a number of substandard features of the trunk road in the vicinity of the junctions. The key objective for the Scheme is to improve access to regional, national and international markets and employment opportunities; in addition to improving resilience and safety, and reducing delays both to local traffic as well as for people travelling along the A55.
- 1.8 Dates of publication of the draft Orders are given in Section 2 of this document. Following publication of the draft Orders, an objection period was held until 7 May 2021.
- 1.9 Following receipt of objections to the draft Orders, WG decided to hold a Public Local Inquiry (the "Inquiry") into the draft Orders. WG gave notice of this decision in a letter, dated 25 May 2021, which it sent to all persons who made representations to the draft Orders during the objection period.
- 1.10 The Planning Inspectorate has nominated an independent Inspector appointed by the Welsh Ministers. The purpose of the Inquiry is for the Inspector to consider the proposals and to hear and consider objections, representations and support relating to the published draft. Following the Inquiry, the Inspector will submit his independent report to the Welsh Ministers which will contain his findings, conclusions and recommendations.
- 1.11 This document is an outline of the case that will be presented on behalf of the Welsh Ministers at the forthcoming Inquiry. The Welsh Government will publish its Statement of Case and Proofs of Evidence (the "Statement of Case") in August 2021. The Statement of Case will provide further detail on the topics covered in this Outline Statement.

2. The Published Draft Orders

2.1 The following draft Orders and supporting environmental reports have been published:

Draft Orders / Environmental Documents	Legislation	Publication Date	End of Objection/ Comment Period
The Chester to Bangor Trunk Road (A55) (Junctions 16 and 16A Improvement Realignment and Slip Roads) Order 202- (the “Line Order”)	Section 10 and 12 of the Highways Act 1980	23 March 2021	7 May 2021
The Chester to Bangor Trunk Road (A55) (Junctions 16 and 16A Improvement Realignment and Slip Roads)(Side Roads) Order 202- (the “Side Roads Order”)	Sections 12, 14, 125 and 268 of the Highways Act 1980	23 March 2021	7 May 2021
Environmental Statement (the “ES”)	Part VA of the Highways Act 1980 (as amended) and EC Directive 2014/52/EU (retained EU legislation) Environmental Impact Assessment (Miscellaneous Amendments Relating to Harbours, Highways and Transport) Regulations 2017	23 March 2021	7 May 2021

Draft Orders / Environmental Documents	Legislation	Publication Date	End of Objection/ Comment Period
<p>Statement to Inform an Appropriate Assessment</p> <p>(the “SIAA”)</p>	<p>Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EC</p>	<p>23 March 2021</p>	<p>7 May 2021</p>
<p>The Welsh Ministers (The Chester to Bangor Trunk Road (A55) (Junctions 14 and 15 Improvement Realignment and Slip Roads)) Compulsory Purchase Order 202-”</p> <p>(the “Compulsory Purchase Order” or “CPO”)</p>	<p>Sections 239, 240, and 246, 250 and 260 of the Highways Act 1980 as extended and supplemented by section 250 of that Act and under sections 2 and 19(3) and paragraphs 1(1)(b), (3) and (4) of Part 1 of Schedule 2 to the Acquisition of Land Act 1981</p>	<p>23 March 2021</p>	<p>7 May 2021</p>

2.2 Although the UK, and its constituent nations, left the EU on 31 January 2020, all EU legislation in force which applied directly or indirectly to the UK before 11.00 p.m. on 31 December 2020 has been retained in UK law as a form of domestic legislation known as 'retained EU legislation'. This is set out in sections 2 and 3 of the **European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018**. Section 4 of the 2018 Act ensures that any remaining EU rights and obligations, including directly effective rights within EU treaties, continue to be recognised and available in domestic law after exit.

3. Background

- 3.1 Since 2005, extensive work has been carried out considering road safety along the A55 Trunk Road, near to Penmaenmawr. Much of this work has focused on assessing options to improve the roundabout at Junction 16, which currently impedes the traffic flow. In 2011 a scheme to improve Junction 16 was included in the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) National Transport Plan. In 2015 a further commitment to improve the junction was made in the National Transport Finance Plan.
- 3.2 Options for transport interventions and other associated transport measures were appraised in studies carried out by Capita in 2005, Atkins between 2008 and 2011, and more recently by Ramboll as part of the Welsh Transport Appraisal Guidance (WelTAG) Stage 1 study which proposed a short list of options.
- 3.3 The WelTAG assessment process develops, appraises and evaluates any proposed transport intervention. WelTAG 2017 was developed to reflect the **Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013** and **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**. WelTAG 2017 ensures that for any proposed road scheme, all the proposed options are measured against how they impact on existing local communities and key stakeholders from the point of view of environmental, social, economic and cultural effects. The assessment also considers how each option contributes to the wellbeing goals and project objectives.
- 3.4 Towards the end of WelTAG Stage 1 study, the long list of options developed during the study was appraised and a short-list of options put forward. It was this short-list that was presented at Public Information Exhibitions in December 2017.
- 3.5 Following these exhibitions, the short list of options was examined in further detail, taking into account feedback from received from the public and key stakeholders during these exhibitions. As part of this assessment, the short-list of options was re-assessed against the agreed Project Objectives. Additionally, their short and longer-term impacts in relation to the sustainable development and the social, cultural, environment and economic well-being

of Wales and their ability to maximise contribution to the seven well-being goals of the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015** were appraised. Factors relating to public and stakeholder acceptability, feasibility, risk and affordability were also assessed. These assessments formed the bases of the short list of five options presented at the public consultation held in the summer of 2018.

- 3.6 Following the public consultation, analysis of the questionnaires and responses showed that there was support for improvements along the A55 Junctions between Junctions 14 and 16A in particular improvements to Junctions 16. To address issues raised during the consultation, further work was undertaken, including consultation with members of the community. This resulted in the Preferred Route which was announced on 5 April 2019.
- 3.7 As part of the development of the Preferred Route, a number of design enhancements were considered, including:
- The arrangement of the informal sports pitch and public open spaces adjacent to the Puffin Services.
 - A number of non-motorised user mini-schemes to improve active travel routes, including links to the existing Sustrans NCNR5 and Public Rights of Ways.
 - The provision for the safety of pedestrians and cyclists crossing the link road and the A55, especially in the vicinity of the Puffin Services and at Junction 16A.
 - Widening of Glan-Yr-Afon Road.
 - Provision for incident management.
- 3.8 A Sustainable Development Report is available.

4. Trunk Roads and Government Policies

4.1 A review of the legislative and policy context for the Scheme from an environmental perspective is reported in Chapter 5 of the Environmental Statement (ES). Policies that are specific to the assessment topics are further set out and taken into account in the ES assessment topic chapters (Volume 1, Chapter 7 to 16).

4.2 In summary, whilst a wide range of legislation and policy documents have been taken into account as part of scheme development work, the main legislation and policy documents taken into account in the ES include:

1. **Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017**
2. **Environment (Wales) Act 2016**
3. **Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2016**
4. **Planning (Wales) Act 2015**
5. **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**
6. **Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013**
7. **Climate Change Act 2008**
8. **Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006**
9. **Human Rights Act 1998**
10. **Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981** (as amended)
11. **Highways Act 1980**
12. Prosperity for All: A Low Carbon Wales 2019
13. National Transport Plan for Wales 2010 and its Finance Plan 2015, 2017 2018
14. Green Corridors on the Welsh Government Trunk Road and Motorway Network 2018 and Trunk Road Estate Biodiversity Action Plan 2004
15. Prosperity for All – The National Strategy 2017
16. Prosperity for All: Economic Action Plan 2017
17. Taking Wales Forward 2016

18. Wales Infrastructure Investment Plan 2012
 19. Economic Renewal, A New Direction 2010
 20. One Wales: One Planet 2009
 21. One Wales: Connecting the Nation – The Wales Transport Strategy 2008
 22. Trunk Road Forward Programme 2002, 2004 and 2008
 23. Environment Strategy for Wales 2006
 24. Wales – A Vibrant Economy November 2005
 25. The Wales Spatial Plan 2008 Update
 26. Planning Policy Wales Edition 10 2018
 27. Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment 2017
 28. Technical Advice Note 23: Economic Development 2014
 29. Technical Advice Note 5: Nature Conservation and Planning 2009
 30. Technical Advice Note 18: Transport 2007
 31. Technical Advice Note 15: Development and Flood Risk 2004
 32. Technical Advice Note 11: Noise 1997
 33. Conwy County Council Local Development Plan
 34. Conwy Integrated Network Map
- 4.3 A review of any new and relevant legislation and policy documents that have been published since the assessments were carried out for the ES will be included in the evidence presented at the Public Local Inquiry (PLI). This will include Planning Policy Wales Edition 11 and Future Wales: The National Plan 2040.
- 4.4 Below is a description of the main policies from a transport perspective, relevant to the Scheme, at both UK and Welsh levels. This includes any such policies published since the documentation for the draft Orders was produced. In addition the Scheme will take into account the latest Welsh Government guidance on Coronavirus (COVID-19).

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

- 4.5 This 2015 Act is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales with an overarching aim of creating a Wales we all want to live in, now and in the future. The Act puts in place seven well-being goals and places a duty on public bodies in Wales and those listed in the Act to work and improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. To help do this they must set and publish well-being objectives and think more about the long term, work better with people and communities and each other, look to prevent problems and take a more joined-up approach.
- 4.6 The WeITAG appraisal considers how improvement to the A55 Junctions 16 and 16A would contribute towards the well-being goals, objectives and ways of working.

Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013

- 4.7 The **Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013** places a legal requirement on local authorities in Wales to map and plan for suitable routes for active travel and to build and improve their infrastructure for walking and cycling every year. It creates new duties for highways authorities to consider the needs of walkers and cyclists and make better provision for them. It also requires both the Welsh Government and local authorities to promote walking and cycling as a mode of transport so that local communities rely less on cars when making short journeys.
- 4.8 In the context of road schemes, there is significant opportunity to reconfigure existing infrastructure so that it better meets the needs of existing and new settlements and facilitates active travel. For example, the Scheme seeks to provide healthy and active travel options alongside the A55 through the provision of improved, sustainable accessibility between local areas and the coastline.

Climate Change Act 2008

- 4.9 The Act imposes a duty on the Secretary of State to reduce UK wide greenhouse gas emissions in 2050 to a level which is at least 80% below the

level of emissions in 1990. It also obliges the Secretary of State to set carbon budgets for successive five-year periods and to prepare proposals and policies for meeting those carbon budgets. Part 2 of the Act establishes the Committee on Climate Change.

Highway Act 1980

4.10 The scheme is being promoted and would be constructed using the powers of the Welsh Ministers as Highway Authority in accordance with the **Highways Act 1980**. These powers were transferred to the Welsh Ministers by virtue of the **National Assembly for Wales (Transfer of Functions) Order 1999** and the **Government of Wales Act 2006**.

4.11 The Welsh Ministers derive statutory authority to construct a new highway or improve an existing highway under sections 24 and 62 of the **Highways Act 1980** respectively. All other ancillary powers required to construct the new section of trunk road, stopping up parts of the existing trunk road and stop up, alter, improve and construct highways, public rights of way and private means of access etc would be exercised through the making of statutory orders. The powers relied on by the Welsh Ministers are cited in these statutory orders and are to be published in draft alongside a draft compulsory purchase order which, if made, would enable Welsh Ministers to acquire all land and rights over land necessary for the construction and operation of the proposals.

Prosperity for All – The National Strategy 2017

4.12 The Welsh Government's National Strategy outlines its long-term aim to build a Wales that is prosperous and secure, healthy and active, ambitious and learning, and united and connected.

Prosperity for All: A Low Carbon Wales 2019

4.13 Prosperity for All: A Low Carbon Wales sets the foundations for Wales to transition to a low carbon nation and works within the context of the **Environment (Wales) Act 2016** which requires Welsh Government to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases in Wales by at least 80% for the year 2050. It also sets a target that the Welsh Government should seek to

achieve a carbon neutral public sector by 2030. This plan identifies measures for how Welsh Government plans to meet the first carbon budget (2016-20).

- 4.14 On 29 April 2019, the Welsh Government declared a climate emergency in Wales to draw attention to the magnitude and significance of the latest evidence from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and highlighting the recent climate protests across the UK.
- 4.15 The announcement referred to Prosperity for All: A Low Carbon Wales (published the previous month) and stated that this Plan sets the policies and proposals intended to meet the 2020 carbon emission targets. The statement referred to the Welsh Government's previously set targets in 2017, reaffirming the commitment to achieving a carbon neutral public sector by 2030. The Welsh Government stated that the next plan, which will set measures to meet emissions reduction targets by 2021-26, was being prepared and must go further and faster.
- 4.16 On the 9 February 2021 the Welsh Government set out its legal commitment to achieve net zero emissions by 2050 following a recommendation report from the independent Climate Change Committee (CCC).
- 4.17 In March 2021 the Senedd agreed to revise Wales's statutory climate targets in line with all of the CCC's recommendations in the December 2020 advice.
- 4.18 The revised budgets are:
- Carbon Budget 2 (2021-25): 37% average reduction.
 - Carbon Budget 3 (2026-30): 58% average reduction.
 - 2030: 63% reduction.
 - 2040: 89% reduction.
 - 2050: At least 100% reduction ('net zero').

Taking Wales Forward 2016

- 4.19 Taking Wales Forward sets out the government's programme to drive improvement in the Welsh economy and public services, delivering a Wales

which is prosperous and secure, healthy and active, ambitious and learning, united and connected.

Future Generations Report 2020. Future Generations Commissioner for Wales. Chapter 5 Areas of focus; Land use and Placemaking.

4.20 Identifies future trends and predictions and highlights that planning will support decarbonisation of all sectors, including transport, and provide the relevant infrastructure to 'operate that shift.'. It acknowledges that the most significant aspect of Planning Policy Wales (at the time, PPW Edition 10) was 'placemaking' as a planning 'tool' towards achieving each of the Well-being of Future Generations goals and that this is also relevant to other sectors, including transport, and relevant to the Housing and Transport sections of the Chapter document.' The report highlights hierarchies for transport, energy and waste', which were introduced in PPW10 and emphasises the need to 'understand the connections between housing, the environment, technology, transport, access to services, culture and language now and for generations to come in order to help them achieve multiple objectives and steps.'

Building Better Places. The Planning System Delivering Resilient and Brighter Futures. Placemaking and the COV 19 recovery. July 2020. Welsh Government.

4.21 This guide identifies the most relevant planning policy priorities and actions as part of the Cov 19 recovery and continues with the emphasis (at that time PPW10) continuing on placemaking as a key priority, including the publication of the (then proposed) new National Development Framework in early 2021. The priorities and actions for the planning system highlights continuing to reduce the need to travel and creating places which support sustainable and active travel, with the basis of 'active and social streets' and the preference to the provision of nature-based solutions, including green infrastructure assets and networks.

National Transport Plan for Wales 2010 and its Finance Plan 2010, 2015, 2017, 2018

- 4.22 Published in 2015 by the Welsh Government, the National Transport Finance Plan followed the National Transport Plan 2010 to list the schemes the Welsh Government sought to deliver across the different areas of transport policy for which it is responsible. The 2018 Plan is not a policy document in itself but provides a framework of schemes pursuant to policy aims set out in the Wales Transport Strategy 2008.
- 4.23 A scheme to improve the A55 at Junction 15 and 16 is detailed in the plan under reference R18. The scheme is described as the Design and Construction of grade separated junctions at Junctions 15 and 16 on the A55. The scheme includes new slip roads and an under bridge at Llanfairfechan and a new over bridge and slip roads at Dwygyfylchi. The improvements to Junctions 14 and 16A were not included in the considerations at the time. These have since been included to enable the improvements to Junction 15 and 16.

Green Corridors on the Welsh Government Trunk Road and Motorway Network 2018 and Trunk Road Estate Biodiversity Action Plan 2004

- 4.24 The Welsh Government, as the Highway Authority for trunk roads in Wales, has direct responsibility for the maintenance, improvement and development of the trunk road and motorway network for Wales. Under the **Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000** and the **Environment (Wales) Act 2016**, the Welsh Government has a duty to have regard for the conservation of biodiversity in its work.
- 4.25 The Welsh Government Transport Directorate is already incorporating biodiversity into its work, and the Trunk Road Estate Biodiversity Action Plan 1 (TREBAP1) contributed to this ongoing process.
- 4.26 TREBAP set out eleven Habitat Action Plans and seventeen Species Action Plans some of which are directly relevant to the Scheme: boundary features, coastal and estuarine habitats, lowland dry grassland, lowland meadow, water bodies, woodland and planted native trees and shrubs, bats, otter and reptiles. The Green Corridors on the Welsh Government Trunk Road and Motorway Network initiative will deliver against the Economic Action Plan, creating a sustainable economy and promoting the economic, cultural, social

and environmental well-being, and enhancing people's quality of life in Wales.

4.27 Over a five-year period, the initiative will deliver a programme of work and activities. The junction improvements will contribute tree and shrub planting to improve structure and age range of the planted area, introduce wildflower areas for visual quality and for pollinators, create wildlife corridors and contribute to carbon sequestration.

Wales Infrastructure Investment Plan 2012

4.28 The Wales Infrastructure Investment Plan for Growth and Jobs (WIIP) is designed to prioritise, scope and coordinate delivery of the Welsh Government's major infrastructure investments, whilst improving the long term economic, social and environmental well-being of people and communities in Wales.

4.29 The Plan, through Chapter 1, sets a number of high level investment priorities including: 'Improving transport links, particularly East-West transport links in both North and South Wales'. This priority is further explored through Chapter 2 of the Plan which outlines an aim to secure the most out of the existing road network through well planned maintenance and upgrades to ensure the road network operates more efficiently by:

- 1) Prioritising investments which contribute to economic growth – addressing urban congestion and improving access to key areas, and by improving the capacity and reliability of our key east-west corridors.
- 2) Being more agile in our approach to developing solutions to underlying problems to address problems that people face every day. The Wales Infrastructure Investment Plan: project pipeline March 2021 is a periodic update with the previous version dated 2019.

4.30 The Wales Infrastructure Investment Plan: project pipeline March 2021 is a periodic update with the previous version dated 2019.

Economic Renewal, A New Direction 2010

4.31 Economic Renewal, A New Direction was published in July 2010. It sets out the role that the Welsh Government can play in providing the best conditions

and framework to enable the private sector to grow and flourish. Part 3 of the document encourages investment in high quality and sustainable infrastructure to underpin economic growth. People, business and communities need to be well connected within and beyond Wales to have access to the right facilities and services where they live and work. Investors and indigenous businesses must be able to count on communications, transport, energy and other infrastructure necessary for 21st century enterprise.

One Wales: One Planet 2009

4.32 One Wales: One Planet was first launched by the Welsh Government in May 2009. This document sets out the objectives to achieve the goal of sustainable development. One Wales: One Planet defines sustainable development as ‘enabling all people throughout the world to satisfy their basic needs and enjoy a better quality of life without compromising the quality of life of future generations.’

Llwybr Newydd: the Wales Transport Strategy 2021

(Replacing One Wales: Connecting the Nation – The Wales Transport Strategy 2008)

The transport strategy – Wales

4.33 The Transport (Wales) Act 2006 places a duty on Welsh Ministers to prepare, publish and review a strategy setting out its policies and how they will be discharged’ It covers all mode and sets out strategic priorities and desired outcomes including for plans at the local authority level.

Llwybr Newydd: the Wales Transport Strategy 2021

4.34 This is the new Wales Transport Strategy, Llwybr Newydd, which sets out a 20 year long-term vision for transport in Wales and aligns with Future Wales. People and climate change are at the forefront and specific capital transport expenditure is aligned with the Wales Infrastructure Investment Plan. This Investment Plan includes the Scheme (as A55 Junctions 15 and 16) for work to start on 2022.

4.35 Llwybr Newydd focuses on three main, strategic priorities; bring services to people in order to reduce the need to travel; allow people and goods to move easily from door to door by accessible, sustainable transport and, encourage people to make the change to more sustainable transport. Delivering these priorities will include a ‘detailed five – year National Transport Delivery Plan and Regional Transport Plan’. **Trunk Road Forward Programme 2002, 2004 and 2008**

4.36 The aim of the Welsh Government’s 2002 Trunk Road Forward Programme was to improve the economic and social conditions in Wales, through increasing efficiency and accessibility in all areas. The A55 was identified in the Forward Programme within the ‘East – West (north) strategic corridor’.

Wales – A Vibrant Economy 2005

4.37 Wales – A Vibrant Economy was published in November 2005 and is the strategic framework for economic development in Wales. The main vision of the document is to create; ‘a vibrant Welsh economy delivering strong and sustainable economic growth by providing opportunities for all.’

Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 (replacing the Wales Spatial Plan 2008 Update)

4.38 The Wales Spatial Plan 2008 update has now been replaced by the National Development Framework (NDF): “Future Wales – The National Plan 2040”, which was published in March 2021.

4.39 The NDF will be used to guide both public and private investment. Welsh Government’s aim is to ensure investments and developments – whether large or small in scale - contribute to the broader ambitions of the Welsh Government and to the well-being of communities. Therefore, the NDF will influence how communities develop over the next 20 years. The NDF should be read alongside Planning Policy Wales 11 (PPW 11) which provides planning policy on an all-Wales basis.

4.40 The NDF ‘addresses key national priorities through the planning system, including sustaining and developing a vibrant economy, supporting our town and city centres, achieving decarbonisation and climate-resilience, developing strong ecosystems and improving the health and well-being of

our communities. Future Wales reflects the lessons being learnt from the Covid-19 pandemic.’ Several Welsh Government strategies and policies, including the Transport Strategy, and the Low Carbon Wales plan forms the basis for Future Wales, as do the main themes highlighted by the first annual report (2019) of the National Infrastructure Commission for Wales.

- 4.41 For ‘Transport Infrastructure’. Future Wales highlights that we ‘visit and trade with Ireland, Europe and beyond and our ports, roads and rail lines are key connections into wider European network’. Holyhead Port in North Wales ‘is the main port for freight and sea passenger transport with Ireland’.
- 4.42 People and Places reflect the focus of the majority of the 11 NDF outcomes. ‘All methods of travel will have low environmental impact and low emissions, with increased use of public transport and ultra-low emission vehicles replacing today’s petrol and diesel vehicles. Sustainable transport infrastructure will be embedded within development to enable easy and convenient access from one place to another for commuting, business, tourism and leisure purposes. Development will focus on active travel and public transport, allied with a reduced reliance on private vehicles.’
- 4.43 The NDF’s integrated sustainability appraisal sets out the relevance of several factors and includes transport: The development of transportation links within Wales are both important for Wales and have strong links with supporting the economy. The NDF has a key role to play in helping to guide decisions through the planning process relating to transportation.’ The integrated sustainability appraisal sets out the assessment process and outcomes and notes that the NDF 2018 Preferred Option, with ‘the proposed requirement for improvements to, and the expansion of, the national road networks was predicted to have the potential to lead to an increase in traffic volumes in the long- term, leading to negative effects associated with this, such as exacerbated noise pollution in South East Wales. This could be further exacerbated by the development of city regions and growth areas. Significant infrastructure projects, such as for transport or energy purposes, would also have posed a risk to natural landscapes, although these could likely be mitigated to some extent on a project-level basis.

- 4.44 The NDF includes key outcomes and, with effect from February 2022, mandates Strategic Development Plans (SDPs) for each region (here, the North Region) which shall address issues such as ‘regional housing markets, travel to work patterns and economic opportunity areas’ and which shall ‘focus on the movement of people across the region and support an integrated approach to strategic land-use and transport planning’. D shall focus ‘on the most sustainable and accessible locations, address congestion, reduce car-based commuting and improve air quality.
- 4.45 NDF policies 11 and 12 highlight support and investment in improving national and regional connectivity, for example, for Strategic Road Network – Invest in road improvements to reduce journey times, deliver a safer and more resilient road network, and improve air and noise quality. Create a network of rapid-charging points to enable longer distance travel by electric vehicles throughout Wales; Develop the regional metros, including plans for the North Wales Metro. We will create new integrated transport systems that provide faster, more frequent and joined-up services using trains, buses and light rail.
- 4.46 The North Region should work ‘together to consider the connections with Mid Wales, Ireland, Cheshire West and Chester and the North West of England. Promoting accessibility and inter-linkages between these areas, based on an understanding of their roles and functions, will ensure these areas operate as a cohesive whole, and do not compete against each other or take strategic decisions in isolation’.
- 4.47 The North Region includes the following Regional Growth Areas: Holyhead; Caernarfon and Bangor; Llandudno and Colwyn Bay and, Rhyl and Prestatyn. Holyhead Port is recognised as important to Anglesey and the region and as a ‘major national asset and an important international gateway’. In the North Region, Wrexham and Deeside are identified as ‘nationally significant areas for growth’.
- 4.48 The NDF highlights the strategic significance of the A55 Trunk Road as a major transport route through several North Wales Local Planning Authorities. It also highlights the need for the North Wales SDP to ‘be informed by and, facilitate the delivery of the North Wales Growth Deal and

ensure support for a smart, resilient and connected region. The SDP is intended to provide a framework to take the strategic locational decisions that will support the long-term ambitions of the Growth Deal in relation to housing, economic growth, key services and essential infrastructure.’ Several of the Growth Deal priorities relate to the benefits and impacts of transport infrastructure upgrades and improvements and significantly, relies on commitments by the Welsh Government to deliver the forward work programme for Trunk Roads (£600m).

Planning Policy Wales Edition 11 2021 (Replacing Planning Policy Wales 10 2018)

4.49 In the context of transport schemes, Planning Policy Wales 11 (PPW 11), published in March 2021, has now replaced PPW10. It sits alongside the National Development Framework and sets out how the planning system at national, regional and local levels can assist in delivering these requirements through Strategic Development Plans (SDPs) and Local Development Plans (LDPs).

4.50 The primary objective of PPW 11 is ‘to ensure that the planning system contributes towards the delivery of sustainable development and improves the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, as required by the **Planning (Wales) 2015**, the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015** and other key legislation and resultant duties such as the Socio-economic Duty. A well functioning planning system is fundamental for sustainable development and achieving sustainable places.’ Where appropriate, PPW 11 translates wider Welsh Government objectives, strategies and policy into land use planning policy

4.51 Moving forward with ‘placemaking’ principles established by its predecessor, a key theme of PPW 11 is the delivery of the right development in the right locations, for the right reasons for the planning system.

Technical Advice Note 18: Transport 2007

4.52 TAN 18 (Welsh Assembly Government, 2007) encourages an efficient and sustainable transport system as a requirement for modern society. It states that to achieve a more sustainable pattern of development it is necessary to

understand the interactions and linkages between land use and transport and devise integrated strategies, objectives and policies at the national, regional and local levels.

Conwy County Council Local Development Plan

- 4.53 County level planning policy provides a clear vision on how new development can address the challenges to be faced and identifies where, when, and how much new development will take place in Conwy up to 2022. The Plan Area is rich in historic assets, has a buoyant tourism industry, excellent transport links, good water and air quality and a high quality natural environment (including coast and countryside). However, population and household projections have demonstrated that the population of the Plan Area could increase by as much as 7,850 people by 2022.
- 4.54 One of the Spatial objectives of the LDP is to encourage efficient patterns of movement and to recognise the strategic role that the A55 and rail corridors will play in meeting the development needs of the Plan Area, and to give particular attention to development locations that are convenient for pedestrians, walking and cycling in Conwy to aid the reduction of transport CO2 emissions.

Conwy Integrated Network Map

- 4.55 The Integrated Network Map (INM) proposals are a requirement of the **Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013**. The INM sets out Conwy Council's 15-year vision to improve cycling and walking routes and improvements for active travel. There are a number of active travel routes identified around the A55 at Penmaenmawr and Llanfairfechan.

5. Existing Conditions and the Need for the Scheme

- 5.1 The existing Junction 16 roundabout was constructed in the late 1980's/early 1990's and built to alleviate traffic congestion.
- 5.2 A55 Junctions 15 and 16 are the only two roundabouts west of the Pennines on the mainline of the 228-mile UK section (Immingham Docks - Port of Holyhead) of a strategic trans-european transport route (which runs from Ishim, near the Russia-Kazakhstan border, via Latvia, Sweden, and Netherlands, to the Port of Holyhead). This causes problems to the traffic using the A55 travelling along the route, in particular in relation to resilience, delays and safety.
- 5.3 A key factor behind both transport and non-transport related issues relates to the fact that the A55 was constructed parallel to the London-Chester-Holyhead railway mainline (in existence since the 1850s) and in close proximity to the established centres of Llanfairfechan, Penmaenmawr and Dwygyfylchi. Consequently, the population was severed by the A55 from the coastline about 30 years ago (and, to a lesser degree, by the railway even earlier) and since then has, for the same reason, been especially reliant on the A55 rather than other local roads to access services or employment located out of the immediate area. The only other routes out of the towns are either on foot or bike, using the railway service (which, at the relevant stops, Penmaenmawr and Llanfairfechan, presently has infrequent, low capacity services that do not provide much improvement over road travel times) or (in the case of Penmaenmawr and Dwygyfylchi) via the Sychnant Pass to Conwy; something which is particularly an issue if an incident occurs on the A55 so as to block it. These communities have an older population and higher rates of unemployment (compared with the Welsh average), in addition to the associated health issues. This means that vulnerable groups such as children are disproportionately adversely impacted.
- 5.4 Previous studies, undertaken between 2005 and 2015, identified the need for improvements to take account of increasing traffic and to improve road safety. The problems associated with the existing roundabouts were acknowledged in Section 2.9.12 of the Draft National Transport Plan (NTP), which was issued for consultation in 2014. This document stated that “There

are a number of capacity issues on the North Wales network on the A55, linked with ferry traffic and summer traffic, in particular around Junctions 15 and 16...".A commitment to improve the junction was made in the Welsh Government's National Transport Finance Plan (2015).

5.5 The problems identified on the trunk road which the Scheme seeks to address include:

1. Environmental issues including noise and the visual impact associated with the A55. The Welsh Government has identified the section along the A55 near Llanfairfechan and Penmaenmawr as being a priority area for intervention in North Wales based on the 2007 noise maps.
2. Social issues including those associated with the communities' reliance on the A55 plus the impact of the A55 severing the communities from themselves and the coast.
3. Safety – the Junctions and A55 mainline between Junctions 14 and 16A do not comply with current design standards. Based on feedback from public consultation, there is a perception that the roundabouts are dangerous, with members of the public raising concerns about near misses and their fears of using the junctions.
4. Delays – the A55 corridor experiences seasonal increases in traffic volume and delays, especially during summer weekends and where peak flows correspond with the Holyhead ferry traffic.
5. Poor Network Resilience – the primary issues identified relate to lack of local and strategic diversion routes during incidents or planned works and the operational requirements for tunnel maintenance.
6. Sustainable Travel – Public consultation has identified that there is a perception that there is a lack of competitive sustainable travel options, poor coastal access for non-motorised users and concerns with respect to the safety of cyclists.

5.6 Taking into account the need to address the problems identified and in accordance with national and local policy, the following eleven objectives have been identified:

OBJ 1) Improve access to regional, national and international markets and

improve access to employment opportunities

- OBJ 2) Improve road safety on the A55 from Junction 14 to Junction 16A (although this Statement of Reasons and the associated draft Orders relate solely to Junctions 14 and 15)
- OBJ 3) Improve journey times and journey time reliability on the A55 from Junction 14 to Junction 16A (although this Statement of Reasons and the associated draft Orders relate solely to Junctions 14 and 15)
- OBJ 4) Improve resilience on the A55 for strategic and local traffic
- OBJ 5) Improve journey times, journey time reliability and safety for access onto the A55 from Llanfairfechan and Penmaenmawr
- OBJ 6) Reduce severance with coastal areas for the non-motorised users and enhance provision made for walkers and cyclists
- OBJ 7) Contribute towards building healthier communities and better environments
- OBJ 8) Increase opportunities to provide integrated transport
- TECH OBJ 9) Minimising technical departures from standards
- TECH OBJ 10) Minimising need to reduce speed limits
- TECH OBJ 11) Minimising disruption during construction

6. Description of the Scheme

- 6.1 The total length of new trunk road (including slip roads and the overbridge) would be approximately 3070 metres, with 1540 metres of two way link road, and would affect 480 metres of side roads.
- 6.2 The scheme would encourage free-flowing traffic in both directions on the A55, improve road safety and improve access to the communities of Penmaenmawr and Dwygyfylchi by replacing the roundabout at Junction 16 with westbound on and off slip roads only and upgrading Junction 16A to a grade-separated junction. Slip roads would allow safer access and egress from the A55 with local roads modified to meet current highway design standards. The Scheme involves changes to both Junction 16 and 16A.
- 6.3 At Junction 16 the existing roundabout at the eastern approach to Penmaenmawr would be replaced by westbound on and off-slip roads. The new arrangement at Junction 16 would only be used by westbound vehicles for access to Penmaenmawr and by vehicles leaving Penmaenmawr and Dwygyfylchi to travel west towards Bangor. The works would start on the A55 mainline approximately 510 metres south west of the existing Junction 16 roundabout and extend north eastwards for a distance of 570 metres to approximately 270 metres north east from the roundabout. The new at-grade junction would require additional land take to the south of A55 and to the south of Conwy Road to facilitate the west bound on and off slips and a new roundabout connecting to Conway Road and the Link Road. The total length of new road at Junction 16, including slip roads, would be in the order of 950 metres.
- 6.4 A new signal-controlled grade-separated junction would be constructed further east at Junction 16A, at Dwygyfylchi, with a new overbridge and with on and off east and west bound slip roads that would provide four-way movement. The westbound slip-roads would rise on embankments to a height of approximately 9 metres above existing ground level, to meet an overbridge across the A55. There would also be access off the eastbound off slip road to the Dwr Cymru /Welsh Water (DCWW) water treatment works, on the northern side of the A55.

- 6.5 The realigned A55 mainline and lengthened slip roads would commence at a point 508 metres south west of the centre point of the existing roundabout for a distance of 572 metres along the dual carriageway to a point 270 metres north east of the centre point of the existing roundabout, where the road would taper back to meet the existing dual carriageway. The total length of new road at Junction 16A, including slip roads and overbridge, would be in the order of 2120 metres.
- 6.6 A new link road running roughly parallel to the A55 on the south side would form a new junction with Ysguborwen Road in the west. Extending east it would pass close to the north side of houses in Maes-y-Llan and then loop round the south side of Puffin Café and Service Station to meet the new grade separated Junction 16A. Glan-Yr-Afon Road, to Dwygyfylchi and Capelulo, would meet with the link road at a 'T' junction close to Junction 16A. The total length of new road between the extent of the changes to the side roads, would be approximately 1,530 metres.
- 6.7 The existing highway network would be modified at a number of locations, where the proposed improvements would join or cross existing routes.
- 6.8 Details of the side road improvements include:
- Glan-Yr-Afon Road – Consisting of realignment works and localised road widening, over a length in the order of 251m, to enable Glan-Yr-Afon Road to tie in with the new link road. Much of the approximately 207m of stopped up existing road, would be located under new embankments for Junction 16A westbound off-slip and the link road. A cattle grid would be provided on Glan-Yr-Afon Road.
 - Ysguborwen Road – New realigned length of approximately 60 metres to tie in with new link road. Approximately 170m of the old road would either be incorporated into the new link road alignment or would no longer be required. Dependant on detailed design, there is an opportunity for a part of the existing road to provide a section of footpath next to The Oasis.
 - Conway Road – Realigned over a length of approximately 170m to accommodate the upgraded westbound slip road arrangement at Junction 16. Part of the original alignment would be located under the

new slip roads, with the remainder being located in an area of proposed landscaping.

6.9 The Design Speed of the proposed Trunk Road is 120kph and would be subject to the national speed limit. Side Roads speed limits would be in keeping with the existing local road network.

6.10 The scheme incorporates a range of active travel measures to enhance the provision made for walkers and cyclists. It is anticipated that these would improve the quality and connectivity of the existing walking and cycling routes, including:

- Active travel route alongside the link road – A shared cycleway and footpath route alongside the link road, intercepting existing footpaths
- New Puffin services footbridge and ramps – Replacement multi-span truss footbridge with ramps that are compliant with the requirements of the **Equality Act 2010** and enhanced access between Dwygyfylchi, NCNR5 cycleway and the coast
- Improvements to Glan-Yr-Afon Road – A new 160m cycle/footway along Glan-Yr-Afon Road to provide improved connectivity to Dwygyfylchi from the east and to the proposed new segregated route along the new link road
- Improvements to Conway Road – A 400m segregated cycle/footway along the north side of Conway Road, providing a link between the residential area of Penmaenmawr, the existing Footpath 29/06 and local amenities such as the Penmaenmawr Phoenix Football Club ground.

6.11 The scheme would use conventional piped drainage to remove water from the carriageway. This drainage, along with attenuation storage, would be designed to store surface water and then discharge it to the existing network, under the North Wales coastal railway line and then into the sea via existing outfalls.

6.12 Fencing of the road boundary would be provided, where required, in the form of post and wire stock-proof mesh fences, to discourage farm stock and pets from adjacent areas and to delineate the Welsh Government landownership. Special forms of this fence, with mesh buried below the

ground would be required to reduce the risk of collisions with legally protected species such as badger and otter. Further fences would be required to discourage access to hazardous locations, such as the tops of retaining walls and steep slopes. In other locations, where noise or visual assessments indicate they are required, the boundary would be formed by walls, or, for example, by acoustic barriers.

6.13 The improvements would incorporate signage, for example, in relation to junctions and destinations. Although there would be no proposed Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) provided as part of the Scheme, it includes for the provision of ducting which would enable ITS to be installed after completion of the Scheme.

6.14 Highway lighting is already provided along this length of the A55 and on adjacent county roads. New lighting would be installed along the A55 and at Junction 16 to meet current standards. Luminaires would be designed to emit no light above the horizontal level. LED Luminaires are proposed because these can be more directional and so reduce light spill beyond the road. Lighting of the link road would be subject to agreement with the highway authority.

6.15 The requirement to provide a safe road with good visibility for drivers, pedestrians and cyclists means that sometimes features in the setting are adversely affected by the proximity of the new road and associated structures and earthworks. The route has been aligned to minimise the impact of the Scheme on adjacent properties and other features.

6.16 The following public rights of way would require modification:

- Footpath No. 29/08 – Localised footpath diversion works where the existing footpath crosses the proposed link road.

7. Construction

- 7.1 If the Welsh Ministers make the Orders, it is anticipated that construction would start in Spring 2022 to be completed in late 2023.
- 7.2 Construction would typically commence with temporary fencing of the works corridor and setting up of temporary compounds, followed by site clearance, removal of roadside vegetation and diversion of utilities.
- 7.3 Temporary traffic management would provide steady flows of traffic through the works.
- 7.4 With these preparations complete, cuttings and surface water attenuation measures would be excavated and embankments formed. Construction of structures such as the new overbridge, river bridge, footbridge, embankments, retaining walls and culverts would commence. The new section of the dual carriageway would be completed, followed by the installation of lighting columns, road signs, safety barriers and further fencing. Finally, the landscape planting and accommodation works would be completed.
- 7.5 Following construction, there would be 3 years of landscape maintenance and aftercare to make sure that areas of tree and shrub planting and grass seeding grow and become established.
- 7.6 Construction work would be completed in accordance with best practice to minimise the effects of noise, dust and construction traffic and the inconvenience of road closures.
- 7.7 A full time Public Liaison Officer (PLO) would keep the public and affected landowners informed of progress and advise on the phases of construction work. The PLO would be based at the contractors site office and be the first point of contact, with a dedicated telephone number for members of the public to use.

8. Environmental Effects of the Proposed Improvement

- 8.1 The environmental assessment of impacts and effects on the Scheme, including consideration of the construction phase, together with mitigation and enhancement measures are reported in detail in the Environmental Statement (ES). A Non-Technical Summary (NTS) is available as a freestanding document, which summarises the proposals in non-technical terms.
- 8.2 An overview of the approach to environmental assessment and the likely effect of the Scheme on the environment will be detailed in the Environmental Proof of Evidence.

Consultation

- 8.3 Organisations including CADW, Gwynedd Archaeological Trust (GAT), Natural Resources Wales/Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru (NRW/CNC), Conwy County Borough Council (CCBC), Snowdonia National Park Authority (SNPA) and Welsh Government departments, were consulted or have provided information. Their views have been considered as the design of the Scheme has developed. The Organisations have been invited to and / or attended Environmental Liaison Group (ELG) meetings and have been consulted throughout the development of the Scheme.
- 8.4 Town Councils, Community Councils, local residents, business owners, and stakeholder groups attended public exhibitions held in Llanfairfechan, Penmaenmawr and Dwygyfylchi and met with the project team. Commercial, industrial, business operators, landowners and stakeholder groups have also been consulted.

Screening and Scoping

- 8.5 A screening exercise was undertaken in 2018 and 2019 to establish if the Scheme would require an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in accordance with the relevant legislation. This process concluded that a statutory EIA would be required as the Scheme is classified as a “Relevant Project” due to its size and the likelihood that it would have potential to cause significant environmental effects.

8.6 Scoping is the process for deciding what environmental topics should be considered for assessment within the EIA. The Scoping Report was prepared in June 2019 and sets out the details and scope of the environmental assessments.

Mitigation and Enhancement

8.7 The designers have considered the impact of their design on the environment and, where practicable, the design has been adjusted to avoid or reduce any adverse effects. If adverse effects cannot be avoided or adequately reduced, mitigation measures have been considered. Examples of mitigation include planting of trees and shrubs to screen views of traffic from properties, providing physical barriers to reduce traffic noise, and creating new habitat for displaced wildlife. Enhancement is a measure that is over and above what is required to mitigate the adverse effects of a project and would deliver added benefits to the Scheme. The EIA has been completed by measuring the effects of the Scheme with the proposed mitigation in place by the time the Scheme becomes operational.

Specialist Environmental Assessments

8.8 Specialist Environmental Assessments have been undertaken as part of the EIA process and are reported fully in the ES. These have identified and assessed the potential effects of the Scheme on a comprehensive range of environmental aspects. A summary of these assessments is set out in the following pages.

Geology and Soils

8.9 The underlying geology and soils have a strong influence on the appearance of the local landform and how the use of land has evolved.

8.10 Historical mapping and results of a detailed ground investigation identified areas of made ground. Potentially there are buried materials associated with historic land uses including refuse disposal, a gasworks and a tar storage tank. There are also areas previously used to tip household waste and fill material associated with the construction of the A55 in the early 1990's. An existing sewage treatment works lies nearby Junction 16A, between the railway line and the coast.

- 8.11 The assessment has considered the likely effects of the Scheme on the underlying geology, ground conditions, groundwater and any areas of contamination.
- 8.12 There are no significant effects during the construction or operational phases of the Scheme and there is a low risk to the general public of being exposed to contamination if it is encountered during construction.

Road Drainage and Water Environment

- 8.13 The waters of Menai Strait, Conwy and Liverpool Bay that lie north off the North Wales coast between Llanfairfechan and Penmaenmawr, are designated sites of national and international importance due to the aquatic ecosystems and inter-tidal areas that support the aquatic, marine and birdlife. This area of sea is also of excellent water quality for bathing.
- 8.14 The Afon Gyrach is the main watercourse in the vicinity of the Scheme and runs in a northerly direction east of Penmaenmawr and north - east of the village of Dwygyfylchi. The river descends from the uplands and through the village of Capelulo and flows north passing underneath the A55 and railway before discharging onto the beach and into Conwy Bay. The water quality of the river has been recorded as generally good and the banks of the river are known to flood at times of heavy rain.
- 8.15 The Water Framework Directive (WFD) and Bathing Water Directive are important pieces of retained EU legislation that aim to provide a holistic approach to protection of the water environment and to address the chemical content of the water and marine ecology. As required by the above Directives, the assessment has looked at the potential effects of the Scheme on the water quality of the rivers and watercourses that run into the sea, together with any potential risks associated with flooding that would be caused by the construction or operation of the Scheme.
- 8.16 The Scheme includes measures to protect the water environment including pollution control and containment measures in case there are pollution incidents and spillages on the A55. It also includes areas to store surface water following heavy rain where there are risks of surface water flooding. These would act to control flows and prevent localised flooding prior to

discharging the water to existing drains and the Afon Gyrach which collectively outfall to the sea.

8.17 During the construction period there would be measures in place to protect watercourses and the sea from silt and spilled pollutants. These would be monitored following completion of the Scheme to ensure that they continue to be effective pollution control measures during the operational period.

8.18 The assessment has concluded that the Scheme would not affect the water quality of the Afon Gyrach or surface water drainage that enters the sea. There would be no significant effect on the chemical quality of the water, the aquatic ecosystems or bathing quality of the sea at Penmaenmawr. The Scheme would thus be in compliance with the WFD.

Nature Conservation (Biodiversity)

8.19 The coastal waters north of Penmaenmawr and Dwygyfylchi are designated sites of national and international importance:

- Menai Strait and Conwy Bay Special Area of Conservation (SAC).
- Liverpool Bay Special Protection Area (SPA).

8.20 A range of birds, including species normally associated with coastal habitats, were identified, including overwintering birds. Large numbers of oyster catchers forage in the intertidal zone and take refuge during high tide on local grasslands.

8.21 A Statement to Inform an Appropriate Assessment (SIAA) has considered the likely effects of the Scheme on these sites of national and international importance. The SIAA concluded that there would be no significant effects on these protected areas or overwintering birds as a result of the Scheme.

8.22 Surveys for bats have found a number of species, including lesser horseshoe bats using the landscape near the Scheme, but no roosts were identified. Otter, trout and eel are associated with the Afon Gyrach and reptiles were found in grassland near the A55.

8.23 During the construction period, vegetation clearance would be carried out in the appropriate season to avoid harm and disturbance to species, such as birds and reptiles.

- 8.24 Mitigation to reduce potentially adverse effects includes tree and shrub planting to form a corridor of coastal scrub woodland along the A55 that links with the Afon Gyrach and woodland on Penmaen Bach. The woodland would provide cover, flight lines and foraging for fauna. Large areas of grassland would be seeded with wildflowers to encourage pollinators. Road lighting would be designed to avoid disturbance of bats and otter using the river valley of the Afon Gyrach.
- 8.25 Many of the impacts would be short term, but overall the Scheme would be beneficial with an increase in vegetated habitats, including species rich grassland and native trees and shrubs.

Landscape and Views

- 8.26 The existing A55 has extensive roadside planting screening the road from many nearby properties and to integrate it with the landscape. The proposed improvements, including the new link road and grade separated junction at 16A, would widen the existing road corridor into agricultural land to the south. As a result of the Scheme much of the existing roadside vegetation would be lost, leading to more open views of the A55 road corridor and associated traffic.
- 8.27 The Scheme includes landscape mitigation measures to reduce the landscape and visual impact in the form of an extensive earth bank, known as a false cutting. This would be planted with trees and shrubs to screen views of the link road and dual carriageway from the south. Where the false cutting stops, to the east of the Orme View Services, plantations would continue east along the south side of the A55 to meet the established trees near the tunnel portal. Junction 16A would be partly hidden in a cutting and by elevated slip roads. The landscape mitigation would also provide benefits for nature conservation and biodiversity with planting of native trees and shrubs appropriate to the locality.
- 8.28 During construction earthmoving would cause short-term disruption, but once complete, the false cutting would provide effective screening. Plantations would grow over several years to provide the same benefit. The A55 and the link road would be screened from the views of nearby

residential areas such as those along Ysguborwen Road, Gwel y Mor and Cae Gwynan while keeping open views of the sea beyond.

- 8.29 The scheme would be close to the residential properties at Maes y Llan, but existing views north across the open sea from the properties would be retained.
- 8.30 The landscape and visual impact of the Scheme on the highly scenic qualities of the surrounding upland areas, would remain intact, with no significant change to the wider landscape character or the tranquillity of Snowdonia National Park.

Cultural Heritage

- 8.31 The Creuddyn and Arllechwedd Historic Landscape, which lies in the uplands to the south, is noted for its archaeology and open character. The uplands contain numerous prehistoric Scheduled Ancient Monuments, but these are over 1km from the Scheme. There are four Conservation Areas within Penmaenmawr that protect mainly 19th century buildings. The Scheme would have no significant effects on these heritage assets.
- 8.32 There are a number of archaeological features identified in the assessment that have the potential to be affected by the Scheme. These include areas of former landfill sites and buildings that lie close to the existing A55. These features will be fully investigated, evaluated and recorded prior to construction of the Scheme.

Community Assets

- 8.33 The assessment has examined the effects on community facilities such as surgeries, post offices, shops, parks, community halls, and on development land and farms.
- 8.34 An area of garden at the Oasis Centre and part of the playing field at Maes y Llan, would be taken for the Scheme. Approximately 10 hectares of grazing land would be permanently lost, but there would be no severance or loss of farm access. There would be some temporary loss of grazing land during the construction period for site compounds and storage of materials.
- 8.35 There would be new public open space and the Maes y Llan playing field would be improved. Safe Active Travel routes would be created to improve

accessibility for the local community. The Scheme would have a beneficial effect on the community.

Air Quality

- 8.36 The assessment has examined how the Scheme would affect air quality. Surveys of existing air quality were undertaken in 2018. These results have then been compared with calculations of air quality in 2022/2023, when the Scheme would be open for traffic. The assessment of the operational effects of the proposed Scheme show that there would be no changes in vehicle emissions.
- 8.37 The assessment has also considered construction dust and airborne pollutants such as Nitrogen Oxides, and tiny particulate matter that could be from dust, sea salt, soot or small particles of metal. Concentrations of airborne pollutants would be well below the levels that would require reduction measures.
- 8.38 Good construction site management and dust control techniques would reduce emissions during the construction phase. With these measures in place the effects of construction dust have been assessed as not significant.

Noise and Vibration

- 8.39 This assessment examines how the Scheme would change noise and vibration associated with construction and operation of the Scheme. The A55 is the primary source of noise in the area and consequently there are designated Noise Action Plan Priority Areas (NAPPA), at several locations.
- 8.40 Surveys of existing noise levels were undertaken in 2018. These results have then been compared with calculations of air quality in 2022/2023, when the Scheme would be open for traffic.
- 8.41 The assessment showed that during the construction period there would be an increase in noise affecting people living close to the Scheme as a consequence of some construction activities.
- 8.42 Proposed mitigation for traffic noise would include a low-noise surfacing system for the proposed new link road, and false cuttings and noise barriers installed for the benefit of local residents.

8.43 The assessment has concluded that with mitigation there would be a decrease in noise levels for the majority of receptors, although a few would experience a slight increase. Residential properties at Maes y Llan, which are within a NAPPA would experience a noise reduction with noise barriers of adequate height installed beside or close to the road.

All Travellers

8.44 This environmental topic addresses the requirement of the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015** and the **Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013**. It also addresses the effects that the Scheme would have on pedestrians, cyclists, equestrians and vehicular travellers.

8.45 The **Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013** refers to walking or cycling as an alternative to motorised transport for the purpose of making regular and daily journeys. An active travel is a journey made to or from a workplace or educational establishment or to access other services or community facilities. This covers short distance commuting, such as travel to school, shops or leisure facilities and has to be suitable for every day use. It does not cover routes or sections of routes that are just used for leisure or recreational purposes.

8.46 Following consultations with Conwy County Borough Council, Sustrans and Cycling UK, a number of Active Travel routes have been proposed within the Scheme including improvements to National Cycle Network Route 5 (NCNR5). This would include:

- A new **Equality Act 2010** compliant footbridge, including ramps, at Orme View Services.
- Improved accessibility between Dwygyfylchi and Penmaenmawr to the NCNR5.
- Improved accessibility along Glan Yr Afon Road between Dwygyfylchi, NCNR5 and Penmaenmawr.
- New pedestrian/cycleway along the new Link Road providing connectivity between Penamenmawr, Dwygyfylchi and the new Junction 16A with access to NCNR5 along the coastline.

- Closure of informal footpaths which currently have direct access onto A55.

8.47 During construction, a Construction Traffic Management Plan would be put in place by the contractor to manage any diversions or road closures. There would be some temporary diversions required during the construction phase to footways and access to NCNR5 may be temporarily affected by the works. There may also be some disruption to users of the A55 caused by reduced speed limits and lane closures during the construction period.

8.48 The Scheme has considered the requirements of the **Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013** and would deliver a number of additional benefits by improving accessibility to the NCNR5, coastline and neighbouring local areas and community facilities.

Material Assets and Waste

8.49 The assessment has considered the effects of the Scheme on the use of materials and waste generated during both the construction and operational stages of the project.

8.50 During construction the Scheme would require a large amount of uncontaminated fill material to be imported from a suitable source such as an active, permitted quarry. The cost of transport will encourage the contractor to use a relatively local source. The material will be used to construct large-scale earthworks such as the false cutting and the slip road embankments.

8.51 Opportunities would be sought wherever possible to make use of local projects to source suitable fill materials for construction. Waste would be minimised by recycling and suitable recycled materials would be used in construction wherever possible and feasible.

8.52 It is predicted that there would be no significant change in the use of materials or generation of waste when the road is completed and in use.

Population and Human Health

8.53 The assessment of population and health has drawn upon the work carried out in a number of other specialist assessments undertaken as part of the EIA. The assessment has considered the potential effects relating to private

property and housing, community land assets, development land and businesses, agricultural land holdings and walkers, cyclists and horse riders. The Health Impact Assessment has considered potential effects relating to geology and soils, road drainage and environment, landscape, community assets, air quality, noise and vibration, all travellers, climate change and the risks of accidents and disasters.

8.54 The most adverse effects would be loss of open space, loss of development land and agricultural land during both construction and when the Scheme is in operation. The football pitch at Maes Y Llan residential area would be temporarily affected during construction but would be returned to the community on completion of the works. The effects on agricultural land include loss of land used as a seasonal camp site.

8.55 There would be beneficial effects from improvements to public open space, provision of additional cycleways and access to areas of amenity once the Scheme is completed. No adverse effects are anticipated in terms of private properties and housing or local businesses.

8.56 The Health Impact Assessment has concluded that there would be some potential adverse effects on driver stress during construction but beneficial effects as a result of the Scheme. With regard to the **Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015** and the **Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013**, there would be some beneficial effects resulting from improved provision for non-motorised users such as cyclists and pedestrians.

Climate Change

8.57 A climate change assessment has been undertaken. This comprises three individual assessments:

- A greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions assessment, which quantifies the potential impact.
- A climate change resilience (CCR) assessment, which evaluates the effectiveness and feasibility of adaptation measures integrated into the Scheme to avoid or reduce hazards and/or increase resilience of the Scheme to climate change impacts during construction and operation

- An in-combination climate change impact (ICCI) assessment, which evaluates if climate change may have an additive effect on impacts already identified within other assessments, where residual impacts identified may now become significant because of the effects of climate change.

8.58 The GHG assessment shows that construction of the Scheme will produce a total estimated emission of approximately 11,600 tonnes of carbon dioxide. The Welsh carbon budget baseline is 56 million tonnes, the annual carbon emissions for Wales averaged 41.2 million tonnes (2016 to 2020) and the Carbon Budget 2 for 2021-2025 is a 37% reduction against the baseline (35.5 million tonnes per year). The total construction carbon emissions for the proposed project therefore represents approximately 0.03% of the carbon budget and is not expected to materially affect the Welsh Government's ability to achieve that budget. As a result the estimated construction emissions are not considered significant. Throughout the further design of the Scheme and construction, efforts will also be made to minimise carbon emissions wherever possible and such measures will be outlined within the pre-construction environmental management plan.

8.59 Greenhouse gas emissions from traffic, using a 60-year appraisal period, were assessed to be approximately 2700 tonnes higher than if the A55 Junction 16 Improvement Scheme was not in place. However when combined with the Junction 15 scheme there is an overall reduction of approximately 4000 tonnes. The decrease in user greenhouse gas emissions with the A55 Junction 15 and 16 Scheme in place is due to the overall smoother traffic flows. To account for uncertainties in future vehicle fleet composition, this emissions assessment used the anticipated road traffic fleet on the A55 in 2022. The further decarbonisation of all road traffic, through the adoption of electric vehicles and other technologies, beyond that assumed in the assessment means that annual carbon emissions both with and without the scheme are expected to fall to close to zero by 2050.

8.60 The CCR assessment used climate change projections to consider likely future climate conditions in the region of the scheme during construction and over its lifetime. An assessment was made of how these future conditions

might impact on the scheme. The design of the scheme already takes into account many of these potential climate change impacts and the assessment found that no further mitigation measures would be required.

8.61 The ICCI assessment reviewed the scheme's impacts on the environment to consider if climate change may have an additive effect on impacts already identified within other assessments, where impacts identified may now become significant. No impacts were considered to become significant as a consequence of projected climate change.

Risk of Accident and Disaster

8.62 The Scheme is designed to resist the normal adverse effects of natural and man-made events that might be expected to affect the area in which it is sited, for example, flooding, high winds or vehicle collisions. Some extreme and very unlikely natural and man-made events, for which the Scheme cannot be designed, could occur such as extreme weather events and severe flooding events following tidal surges from the sea.

8.63 The assessment demonstrates that the Scheme would not worsen the consequences for the environment but could result in closure of the A55 for a short period while damage is repaired. Mitigation for these events would include advanced warning signs and advanced planning for the consequences of collisions and repair of damage to the road.

Cumulative Effects

8.64 An assessment of cumulative effects is required due to the potential for separate effects of one or more projects to incur a significant effect on receptors. This includes the potential effect associated with the construction and operation of the proposed A55 Junctions 14 and 15 Improvements scheme to be constructed over a similar period.

8.65 Two types of cumulative effects have been considered in the assessment:

- a) interrelationships between effects arising from the Scheme. The assessment identifies a 'modest' cumulative effect.
- b) the addition or interaction of effects arising from other developments in combination with the Scheme. In particular, the separate A55 Junctions 14 and 15 Scheme has the most potential to generate

effects which, cumulatively with the potential effects of the Scheme, could affect several environmental receptors. Any potential cumulative effects can be either minimised and/or avoided through communication and planning of both schemes.

Summary of likely environmental impacts

8.66 The Scheme would provide an improved carriageway designed and built to current standards with good overtaking opportunities.

8.67 The environmental assessments have determined that there would be some beneficial and adverse impacts on the local environment as a result of the Scheme. Where adverse impacts are identified, these would be mitigated where feasible as part of the design. The most significant effects can be summarised as:

- Temporary disturbance to local residents and travellers during construction of which traffic and construction noise and closure of the junction 15 for 24 months would represent the most significant effect.
- The permanent loss of views to the sea for some properties and public spaces on Penmaenmawr Road. These same properties would suffer a large adverse impact as a result of the raised slip roads, overbridge and viaduct. For those properties on the north side of Penmaenmawr Road, to the east of the junction, the impacts would include the slip roads passing much closer than the existing situations.
- The loss of roadside plantations would open up views of the road from a larger number of residential properties.
- A small increase in traffic noise for a large number of properties, with only a small number benefitting from a slight reduction.
- Biodiversity would be adversely affected by the Scheme but would recover with the growth of replacement trees and shrub planting.
- The improvements to public open space and active travel routes would have a beneficial effect on travellers, including local residents, and would improve the existing community severance caused by the existing junction.

- Vehicle travellers on the A55 and local roads would benefit from the junction improvements.
- 8.68 The proposed mitigation has been developed in collaboration with the statutory environmental bodies, landowners and other key stakeholders and is recorded in the Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC).
- 8.69 The Scheme is designed following the principles of sustainability and would reuse excavated materials within the Scheme and minimise waste. Measures to protect water quality, include drainage attenuation, included in the Scheme proposals to minimise pollution risks during construction and operation, and a flood compensation area to address flood risks have been included in the Scheme.
- 8.70 Measures to manage dust and limit noise during construction would form part of the Construction Environmental Management Plan.
- 8.71 Mitigation measures in the form of tree and shrub planting have been designed to restore any plantations or hedges that have to be cleared, although existing trees and shrubs would be retained where feasible. Planting would also provide replacement habitat for and as part of the proposed ecological mitigation. The ES also considers the effects of the Scheme in combination with other proposed developments in the area and concludes that there would be no significant cumulative effects.

9. Sustainable Development

- 9.1 A Sustainable Development Report has been published with the Draft Orders. The report considers how the Scheme is aligned to the Welsh Governments' principles of sustainable development, particularly in the context of the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**.
- 9.2 The report is based around the framework of the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**, by:
- Providing evidence of how ways of working have influenced, or would influence the Scheme's progress and delivery.
 - Demonstrating how the Scheme aligns with the Well-Being goals.
- 9.3 The report has summarised the consideration during the Scheme's design process given to the principles of sustainable development, the ways of working and the Well-being Goals of the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**.
- 9.4 The report shows how sustainability was considered throughout the decision-making process, development of the Scheme objectives, and how the objectives and environmental, social, cultural and economic aspects shaped the option selection and design development process.
- 9.5 The report explores how the Scheme meets each of the seven Well-being Goals, as well as aligning to the factors within each goal.
- 9.6 Mitigation for environmental impacts has been developed and where practicable enhancement provided to ensure ecosystem resilience in the longer term. Cultural issues, both historic and current, have influenced the Scheme design and the way that the Scheme is taken forward.
- 9.7 In conclusion, while acknowledging there are potential impacts of the Scheme, these need to be considered against the opportunities which align with the Well-being Goals. On this basis, the Scheme is considered to align with the Welsh Government's principles of sustainable development.

10. Objections, Representations and Support

10.1 32 objections and 2 letters of support have been received in relation to the draft Orders for this Scheme to date.

11. Land Acquisition and Compensation

11.1 The Welsh Ministers will acquire the land, where agreements with landowners cannot be reached, by exercising their powers of compulsory purchase pursuant to the **Highways Act 1980** and the **Acquisition of Land Act 1981**.

11.2 The acquisition of land and rights as shown in the draft CPO are considered the minimum necessary to construct, mitigate, operate and maintain the proposed Scheme. Land required only during the construction period, for temporary works such as traffic diversions, has been identified separately as part of the publication of the draft CPO.

11.3 The Scheme would require approximately 25 hectares of land in total. Approximately 4.37 hectares of land would be required temporarily to undertake construction works and temporary traffic management operations.

11.4 The Engineering Proof of Evidence will identify the reasons for both permanent land take and temporary land take, the latter necessary during the construction period.

11.5 The Environmental Proof of Evidence will explain why land is required for essential environmental mitigation.

11.6 The consideration of compensation is not a matter for the Inspector at Public Local Inquiries. In the event that the draft Orders are made and subsequently implemented, the entitlement to and amount of compensation would be a matter of negotiation between the respective parties. If an agreement cannot be reached, affected parties have the right to refer their case to the Upper Tribunal (Lands Chamber) for determination.

11.7 Liaison with those affected by the draft CPO is ongoing and will continue. Matters of accommodation works would be discussed with affected parties during the detailed design stage.