



16th August 2021

By Email from
Respondent ID: J15-R016 J16-R005

Mr James Healey
Project Engineer
Welsh Government
Transport & Economic Infrastructure

Dear Mr Healey,

A55 IMPROVEMENTS AT JUNCTIONS 16 & 16A

Thank you for your letter of 23rd July, in response to our earlier representation of 4th May 2021.

Our purpose in writing, as Local Representatives of Cycling UK, is to offer our support to the Welsh Government's (WG's) proposed improvements to the A55 at J16-16A, in so far as the works relate to cycling.

The UK National Cycle Network Route 5 (NCNR5) traverses the whole length of the intended scheme following an alignment more or less parallel to the A55. This section of NCNR5 is now rather dated, falling well below modern Welsh standards (as set out in the WG's Active Travel Guidance 2nd Edition July 2021 [ATG]), particularly in relation to width, surface and general maintenance.

NCNR5 is a cycle route of national and even international importance, terminating at Holyhead Port. As a 'shared use path' (SUP) it carries significant cycle and pedestrian traffic both local and long distance; it is not only a popular leisure facility but is an active travel route and along this section it also carries the Wales Coast Path. In extremis there is an alternative non-motorised user (NMU) route available from Conwy to Penmaenmawr via the Sychnant Pass but it is not suitable for most users due to gradient, and it is on-carriageway for its entire length. In summary NCNR5 here is an important national asset, but at the moment an embarrassingly substandard one.

In respect of the J16-16A scheme our concerns centre around several narrow sections of the existing alignment (the worst one being on the railway overbridge at the current J16 roundabout), but this entire section is narrow and poorly maintained.

We are also concerned about the current very poor access to this important active travel and leisure facility for local residents, particularly for those living in Dwygyfylchi. The current A55 is a very significant barrier, cutting the hinterland off from the coast and the strategic cycle network.

We have discussed all of these issues with you and your team over the course of several months. We are now satisfied that your modified proposals for non-motorised users in relation to the J16-16A scheme offer significant improvements to both safety and convenience of all users of NCNR5, and to local residents and visitors. The currently proposed arrangements for the Penmaenbach to Penmaenmawr promenade section, with an upgraded off-carriageway SUP throughout, a new NMU crossing facility at the new J16A and a new NMU bridge adjacent to the Puffin café offer substantially improved safe access to local residents and visitors alike

Also of great benefit, particularly to local residents, are the proposed new SUPs running from J16A into Dwygyfylchi, and along the new link road and towards Penmaenmawr town centre.

Given the physical constraints imposed by the challenging geography we understand that it might not be possible for the proposed improvements to NCNR5 to fully comply with all aspects of the ATG, particularly as respects width. We accept that it is simply not possible at this stage, in advance of detailed designs, to be sure exactly what can be achieved. We therefore welcome your commitment in your letter of 23rd July to comply with the ATG where possible and to use the departure from standard process set out in the WG's PAG 115/20 where it is not.

Given all of the above it is our belief that the current modified proposals for NMUs, if constructed as agreed, will discharge the duty placed on Welsh Ministers in relation to the A55 J16-16A scheme by s9 and s10 ATWA - respectively to enhance facilities for walkers and cyclists, and to promote active travel.

Accordingly we repeat that we can now support the proposed works at J16-16A as far as they concern facilities for cyclists. You had recorded our previous representation as an objection. We would be grateful if you would inform the Inquiry Inspector Mr Hywel W Jones that in light of your letter to us of 23rd July our objection is withdrawn and that Cycling UK may now be regarded as a supporter of this scheme in so far as it relates to cycling.

We have copied this letter to the Inquiry Office.

Regards

Local Representatives, Cycling UK