

Adran yr Economi a'r Seilwaith  
Department for Economy and Infrastructure



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

**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-**

**SUMMARY OF PROOF OF EVIDENCE**

**Note: See Document Reference WG 1.08.02 for full evidence and referencing**

**DONNA HALL MSc, M.CIEEM**

**WELSH GOVERNMENT, NATURE CONSERVATION**

**DOCUMENT REFERENCE: WG 1.08.01**

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## **1. Author**

- 1.1 I am Donna Hall. I am the Principal Ecologist at Richards Moorehead & Laing Ltd (RML). I am a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM).
- 1.2 I am the project ecologist for the Scheme, and I am familiar with the contents of Chapter 8 of the Environmental Statement (ES) (Nature Conservation) and with the Statement to Inform an Appropriate Assessment (SIAA).

## **2. Scope and Purpose of this Proof of Evidence**

- 2.1 My Proof of Evidence addresses the ecology and nature conservation considerations of the Scheme including details of the surveys undertaken, a summary of the findings, assessment of effects and mitigation measures.

### **3. Legislation, Policy and Guidance**

- 3.1 My evidence has presented the legislation, policies and guidance relevant to the design, assessment and construction of the Scheme and also highlighted any changes to these during the production of the ES.

## **4. Methodology and Consultation**

- 4.1 Within my evidence I have outlined the suite of ecological surveys undertaken during 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020 to determine the initial baseline and also updates to these owing to delays. All of the surveys were undertaken in accordance with published guidance as set out within Section 8.4 of the ES. Breeding bird survey methodology is provided in the Breeding Bird Survey Report provided and the aquatic macroinvertebrates survey methodology is provided in the report of the same name, both of which are provided in Appendix A of my submitted Proof of Evidence.
- 4.2 The assessment of effects on ecological receptors and the nature conservation interest was undertaken in line with the CIEEM guidance as well as the frameworks set out in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB). Whilst writing the ES and undertaking surveys, DMRB guidance was withdrawn and replaced with updated revisions, as such the CIEEM Guidance provided consistency, in addition LA115, LA108, and LD118 refer to the use of the guidelines produced by CIEEM.
- 4.3 Consultation during the development of the Scheme was undertaken with environmental stakeholders through regular Environment Liaison Group Meetings. In addition, Natural Resources Wales (NRW) provided comments in response to the SIAA.

## **5. Baseline Conditions**

- 5.1 My evidence has presented a summary of the baseline information set out within Section 8.5 of the ES. Valuable Ecological Receptors (VERs) identified within vicinity of the Scheme include Designated Sites within the National Site Network, Priority habitats, protected and notable species including bats (foraging and commuting), otters, reptiles, hedgehogs, badgers, breeding and overwintering birds.

## **6. Effects of the Construction of the Published Scheme on Valuable Ecological Receptors**

- 6.1 The potential effects of the construction of the Scheme have been assessed in the ES and the SIAA in the absence of mitigation measures. The assessment identified the potential for significant effects on hedgerows and watercourses (Priority Habitats) from loss of or disturbance to habitat, bats from loss and also disturbance to habitat used for foraging and as flight lines, disturbance to otters using the Afon Gyrach, loss of and disturbance of habitat which supports reptiles, loss of habitat and disturbance to overwintering and breeding birds. Disturbance and the risk of spreading Non-Native Invasive Species (INNS).



## **7. Effects of the Operation of the Published Scheme on Ecological Receptors**

- 7.1 The potential effects of the operation of the Scheme have been assessed in the ES and the SIAA in the absence of mitigation measures. These were considered to be the potential for water quality changes, habitat establishment and change of land use for bats, otters and reptiles and the effects of lighting upon nocturnal animals including otters and bats, in particular along the Afon Gyrach.

## **8. Effects of the Published Scheme on Sites within the National Site Network**

- 8.1 The effects of the Scheme on designated sites within the National Site Network (which includes Special Areas of Conservation/SACs and Special Protection Areas/SPAs) are set out within the SIAA and Chapter 8 of the ES. Following the screening, three sites were identified within the 30 km search area which could potentially be affected by the proposals. Whether the Scheme would have an adverse effect on the integrity of the sites has been determined by considering the effect on the conservation objectives, taking account of the implementation of proposed mitigation measures to avoid or reduce any adverse impacts. In reviewing the conservation objectives, the potential effects identified was a slight adverse effect to roost sites, which include high tide roost sites (currently used by Curlew and Oystercatcher).

## **9. Mitigation Design in the Published Scheme**

- 9.1 My evidence has presented the mitigation and compensation measures which were proposed as part of the published Scheme. Mitigation measures are also discussed in Section 8.8 of the ES and Section 7 of the SIAA. Monitoring proposals are also provided.

## **10. Residual Effects of the Published Scheme**

- 10.1 The 'Integrity of Site Checklist' was used to ascertain whether the proposed Scheme would not adversely affect the integrity of any of the sites considered in the Appropriate Assessment, as detailed within Chapter 10 of The SIAA. The conclusions were that no adverse effect on the integrity of the designated sites or their features of interest is predicted as a result of the Scheme, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.
- 10.2 The significance of residual effects is described in Section 8.8 of the ES and summarised in Table 8.17 of the ES. These were considered to be either neutral or minor beneficial with the advised mitigation and once the landscaping has become established.

## **11. Consultees Responses to Objections to the Scheme**

- 11.1 My evidence has addressed objections in relation to the loss of and disturbance to overwintering birds which utilise fields as a high tide refuge and for foraging.

## **12. Conclusions and Declaration**

- 12.1 It is my opinion that the development of measures to mitigate the effects of the Scheme are effective, justifiable and achievable and would not give rise to significant effects on the nature conservation interest at the site.