



**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 PROOF OF EVIDENCE

**Note: See Document References WG 1.01.01 (Part A) and WG 1.01.02 (Part B) for full
evidence and referencing**

JAMES HEALEY BEng, CEng, MHKIE, MICE

WELSH GOVERNMENT, STATEMENT OF CASE - PART C SUMMARY

DOCUMENT REFERENCE: WG 1.01.03

Contents

1. Personal Statement	1
2. Scope of Evidence	2
3. Published Draft Orders.....	3
4. Background.....	4
5. The Need for the Published Scheme	6
6. Objectives of the Published Scheme	8
7. Description of the Published Scheme.....	9
8. Environmental Appraisal and Mitigation.....	10
9. Sustainable Development	11
10. Construction	12
11. Land Acquisition and Compensation.....	13
12. Summary of Support, Objections and Representations	14
13. Conclusions	15

1. Personal Statement

- 1.1 My name is James Healey. I am a Project Engineer within the Infrastructure Delivery Division of Welsh Government where I am responsible, on behalf of the Welsh Ministers, for the delivery of the transport improvement schemes identified in the Wales Transport Strategy. I have been a Project Engineer for the delivery of the A55 Junctions 16 and 16A Improvement Schemes since September 2017.
- 1.2 The evidence in this Proof of Evidence is true and the opinions expressed are my true and professional opinions.

2. Scope of Evidence

2.1 This summary Statement covers the background and justification for constructing the Published Scheme which is outlined in more detail in the Statement of Case (Part A - Document Reference WG 1.01.01) and the Statement of Need (Part B – Document Reference WG 1.01.02). In order to assist me in presenting evidence at this Public Local Inquiry, I will rely on the following Expert Witnesses to cover their respective specialist fields:

Simon Price (Climate Change and Carbon) (WG 1.02)

Nigel Roberts (Traffic and Economics) (WG 1.03)

Shân Wyn Jones (Planning Policy) (WG 1.04)

Jonathan Bayliss (Engineering) (WG 1.05)

Andrew Sumner CMLI (Environment) (WG 1.06)

Jon Stoddard (Landscape and Visual Impact) (WG 1.07)

Donna Hall (Nature Conservation) (WG 1.08)

Craig Barson (Noise) (WG 1.09)

Graham Harker (Air Quality) (WG 1.10)

Steve Cox (Water Quality/Flooding) (WG 1.11)

Phil Studds (Geology, Soils and Contamination) (WG 1.12)

3. Published Draft Orders

- 3.1 Draft Orders set out the necessary rights and land needed for the Welsh Government to implement the Scheme.
- 3.2 The Environmental Statement identifies the main environmental effects of the Scheme and describes the proposed measures to avoid, remedy or reduce effects and provide environmental enhancement where practicable.
- 3.3 The draft Line and Slip Road Order and draft Side Roads Order (SRO) (Document Reference (abbreviated to Doc.) WG 2.01.01 and WG 2.01.08 respectively) were published on 23 March 2021 and the draft Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) (Document Reference WG 2.01.16) was published on 23 March 2021. The objection period for all of these ended on 7 May 2021. In addition, an Environmental Statement (Document Reference WG 3.01.01 to 3.01.05 inclusive) together with a Statement to Inform an Appropriate Assessment (SIAA) (Document Reference WG 4.06.01) was published on 23 March 2021.
- 3.4 I confirm that the Welsh Government gave notice of its intention to hold this Public Local Inquiry (PLI) to all objectors individually on 25 May 2021 in accordance with The Highways (Inquiries Procedure) Rules 1994 (Doc. 4.01.23) and The Compulsory Purchase (Inquiries Procedure) (Wales) Rules 2010 (Doc. 4.01.25).

4. Background

- 4.1 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 National Transport Plan. In 2015 a further commitment to improve the junction was made in the National Transport Finance Plan.
- 4.2 A long list of options for transport interventions and other associated transport measures were appraised in studies carried between 2005 and 2011, and more recently by Ramboll since 2017. These studies are documented in the Welsh Transport Appraisal Guidance (WelTAG) Stage 1 Strategic Outline Case Report, which proposed a short list of options to be taken forward to Stage 2. The appraisal of the short list of options is detailed in the WelTAG Stage 2 Outline Business Case and Impact Assessment Reports.
- 4.3 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 considered the ability of each option to maximise contribution to the seven well-being goals of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 how each option contributed to the wellbeing goals and project objectives. Factors relating to public and stakeholder acceptability, feasibility, risk and affordability were also assessed.
- 4.4 There has been ongoing stakeholder engagement since December 2017, with a Public Liaison officer acting as the primary point of contact for the project team. Additionally, Public information exhibitions were held in December 2017, June 2018 as part of the 12 week Public Consultation and in June 2019 following the announcement of the preferred option on 5 April 2019. At each of the exhibitions, attendees were invited to share their thoughts on the potential delivery of the proposed A55 Junction 16 and 16A Scheme.
- 4.5 As part of the development of the Preferred Route, a number of design enhancements were considered, including:
- a) The arrangement of the informal sports pitch and public open spaces adjacent to the Puffin Services.

- b) 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.
- c) 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.
- d) Widening of Glan-Yr-Afon Road.
- e) Provision for incident management.

5. The Need for the Published Scheme

- 5.1 The existing Junction 16 roundabout was constructed in the late 1980's/early 1990's and built to alleviate traffic congestion. In conjunction with this proposed scheme to remove the roundabout at Junction 16 there will also be a separate project delivered at the same time to remove the roundabout at Junction 15.
- 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. The current road configuration 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 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 stop in Penmaenmawr 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.
- 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:
- a) Environmental issues – Including noise and the visual impact associated with the A55. The Welsh Government has identified the section along the A55 near Penmaenmawr as being a priority area for intervention in North Wales based on the 2007 noise maps.

- b) 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.
- c) Safety – The Junctions and A55 mainline between Junctions 16 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.
- d) 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.
- e) 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.
- f) 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.

6. Objectives of the Published Scheme

- 6.1 In accordance with Welsh Transport Appraisal Guidance (WelTAG 2017), an objectives-led approach has been adopted. This means that a Scheme's inception starts by identifying problems and opportunities and defining what is to be achieved.
- 6.2 In developing the objectives, a review was undertaken against the well-being goals as presented within the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (WFGA 2015) (Document Reference WG. 4.01.1004), helping to ensure that the Scheme objectives align to the wider sustainable development principle of the Welsh Government, and take into account the needs of Wales' future generations.
- 6.3 The Overall Scheme objectives / technical objectives are:
- | | |
|------------|---|
| OBJ1 | Improve access to regional, national and international markets and improve access to employment opportunities. |
| OBJ2 | Improve road safety on the A55 from Junction 14 to Junction 16A (although this Statement of Case and the associated draft Orders relate solely to Junctions 14 and 15). |
| OBJ3 | Improve journey times and journey time reliability on the A55 from Junction 14 to Junction 16A (although this Statement of Case and the associated draft Orders relate solely to Junctions 16 and 16A). |
| OBJ4 | Improve resilience on the A55 for strategic and local traffic. |
| OBJ5 | Improve journey times, journey time reliability and safety for access onto the A55 from Llanfairfechan and Penmaenmawr (note that this is a combined objective for the Junction 15 and 16 schemes). |
| OBJ6 | Reduce severance with coastal areas for the non-motorised users and enhance provision made for walkers and cyclists. |
| OBJ7 | To take reasonable steps to build healthier communities and better environments. |
| OBJ8 | Increase opportunities to provide integrated transport. |
| TECH OBJ9 | Minimising technical departures from standards |
| TECH OBJ10 | Minimising need to reduce speed limits |
| TECH OBJ11 | Minimising disruption during construction |

7. Description of the Published Scheme

- 7.1 The total length of new trunk road (including slip roads and the overbridge) would be approximately 3070m, with 1540 m of two-way link road, and would affect 480 m of side roads.
- 7.2 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.
- 7.3 A more detailed Scheme description can be found in Section 6 of Part B Statement of Need (Document Reference WG 1.01.02).

8. Environmental Appraisal and Mitigation

- 8.1 The assessment of environmental impacts and effects of the Scheme, including consideration of the construction phase, are reported in detail in the Environmental Statement (ES) together with the proposed mitigation measures. A Record of Determination, which outlined the process undertaken for determining whether an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is required and is included within Appendix 4.1 of the ES.

9. Sustainable Development

- 9.1 The development of the Scheme has considered the requirements of the WFGA 2015, and a Sustainable Development Report has been published.
- 9.2 The report has summarised the consideration during the Scheme's design process given to the principles of sustainable development, the ways of working and explores how the Scheme meets and aligns with each of the seven Well-being Goals of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.
- 9.3 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.
- 9.4 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. Construction

- 10.1 Subject to the satisfactory completion of the statutory procedures, a Design and Build (D&B) contractor would be procured for the detailed design and construction of the Scheme. Details of the construction, including the timings of the works and how they would be managed, can be found in Section 9 Part B Statement of Need (Document Reference WG 1.01.02).

11. Land Acquisition and Compensation

- 11.1 The land-take and rights to be acquired shown in the CPO is the minimum necessary to construct, mitigate, operate and maintain the Published Scheme. Land required only during the construction phase for temporary works has been separately identified in the Welsh Government letters, which accompanied the publication of the CPO.
- 11.2 The provisions of the Acquisition of Land Act 1981 (Document Reference WG 4.01.79) would apply.

12. Summary of Support, Objections and Representations

12.1 The publication of draft Orders provided the opportunity for any person or organisation to object, support, or suggest alternatives to the Scheme. In summary, at the time of writing evidence:

- a) Four unique correspondence letters or emails have been received that clearly express support for the Scheme;
- b) Seven unique correspondence letters or emails have been received that clearly express that the respondents do not object to the Scheme;
- c) 28 unique objections to the Scheme have been received, of which 10 have been classed as being from statutory objectors; and;
- d) One objection has since been withdrawn by the respective consultees.

13. Conclusions

- 13.1 The Scheme is in accordance with the Welsh Government's priorities for transport, as outlined in my Statement of Case Part A - Policy Statement (Document Reference WG Ref 1.01.01).
- 13.2 The proposals would meet the Scheme objectives and provide a highway designed to modern standards, with improved safety, greater overtaking opportunities and more reliable journey times.
- 13.3 The Scheme has been developed as a result of comprehensive assessment and stakeholder involvement, undertaken over the course of many years.
- 13.4 The Scheme addresses the problems identified as part of a WeITAG Study, and bestmeets the objectives set out as a result of that study: it improves the performance of the A55 and improves the resilience of the trunk road network in north Wales.
- 13.5 The ES highlights adverse and beneficial impacts and residual effects associated with the Scheme under a number of environmental topic headings. It also describes how any adverse effects would be mitigated through works integrated into the Scheme. These include new areas of woodland planting, the provision of landscaping bunds and measures to mitigate the ecological impact.
- 13.6 All objections have been considered and responses presented on each point raised. Welsh Government have, where practicable, taken steps to mitigate impacts.
- 13.7 Whilst the Welsh Government recognises that the Scheme would have an impact on people's right to land, this needs to be considered against the local and regional benefits that the Scheme would deliver which are in the wider public interest.
- 13.8 At the PLI, the Welsh Government will invite the Inspector to consider this Statement of Case and those of the Expert Witnesses and to recommend to the Minister for Economy and Transport that the published Line, Side Roads and Compulsory Purchase Orders are made, taking into account the corrections and modifications presented at the Inquiry.
- 13.9 As set out in my Proof of Evidence, and as set out in the Proof of Evidence of my expert witnesses, the Welsh Government considers that there is no impediment to the Scheme being implemented.