

THE CHESTER TO BANGOR TRUNK ROAD (A55) (JUNCTIONS 14 AND 15 IMPROVEMENT REALIGNMENT AND SLIP ROADS) ORDER 202-

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EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

1. INTRODUCTION

The Welsh Ministers, as the relevant highway authority, are responsible for all trunk roads in Wales. The A55 Trunk Road, also known as the Chester to Bangor Trunk Road, is a strategic route along the North Wales Coast.

The proposed scheme will remove the existing roundabout on the A55 at Junction 15 and replace it with a four-way grade separated junction with an overbridge and slip roads at Llanfairfechan. To accommodate these improvements, the total length of realigned trunk road will be approximately 2819 metres (including slip roads, overbridge and link road). As part of the enabling works, minor improvement works would be made at A55 Junction 14 to lengthen and widen merge and diverge lanes.

Additionally, approximately 400 metres of side roads will be affected. To the south of the bridge over the dual carriageway, the link road would descend towards a signal-controlled junction with Penmaenmawr Road, which will be realigned over approximately 320 metres and improvements will be undertaken along Shore Road East. Improvements along Penmaenmawr Road would include east to west cycleways and footpaths along Penmaenmawr Road from Pendalar in the east with the town centre in the west and connecting with existing and proposed new crossings over the A55 to the shoreline and existing footpaths and roads.

There are ten new structures within the scheme, comprising both the east and westbound slip road retaining walls and associated structures, the overbridge over the A55 dual carriageway, structures to facilitate the extension to Shore Road East underpass and the replacement footbridge at Pendalar.

The scheme will provide over 1 kilometre of active travel improvements, consisting of new off-road cycleways/footways and crossings. These works will extend from Llanfairfechan town centre to the south of the improved A55 Junction 15 onto the replacement footbridge at Pendalar, and then following the alignment of the A55 on towards the existing National Cycle Network Route 5 (NCNR5) Cycleway Bridge over the A55 to the east. These enhancements will improve the safety of both pedestrians and cyclists, including those using the NCNR5.

The proposals comprise:

- a. The draft Line Order, now published, to provide for the construction of a new length of trunk road and the construction of slip roads.
- b. The draft Side Roads Order, now published, to stop up lengths of superseded trunk road and to stop up, improve, create or alter other roads, footpaths, cycle routes and private accesses.
- c. The draft Compulsory Purchase Order, to be published soon, to provide for the acquisition of the land and rights required for the construction and maintenance of the scheme.

(Collectively referred to as “the draft Orders”)

An Environmental Statement (ES) has been prepared in association with the above draft Orders and is available for inspection at the deposit locations listed in Section 10. This scheme is subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in accordance with Section 105A of the Highways Act 1980, Directive 2014/52/EU of 2014 (which amended the 2011 Directive) and the Environmental Impact Assessment (Miscellaneous Amendments relating to Harbours, Highways and Transport) Regulations 2017.

In accordance with Regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), a Statement to Inform an Appropriate Assessment (SIAA) has been prepared on the possible impacts associated with the scheme on the Conway Bay SPA (Special Protected Area), Liverpool Bay SPA, and Menai Strait and Conwy Bay SAC (Special Area of Conservation).

The ES describes the proposals, identifies the main environmental effects on both the manmade and natural environment and describes the proposed measures to avoid, remedy or reduce impacts and provide environmental enhancement where relevant.

The ES is reported in four parts:

- The Non-Technical Summary
- Volume 1 – Technical Assessment Report
- Volume 2 – Figures
- Volume 3 – Technical Appendices

The Non-Technical Summary (NTS) summarises the ES in non-technical language. Volume 1 is the main technical assessment report, which details the methodologies and results of the EIA. It sets out ways in which identified impacts can be effectively mitigated. Volume 2 is a set of supporting figures which should be read alongside Volume 1. Volume 3 is a set of technical appendices which should also be read alongside Volume 1.

2. BACKGROUND TO THE SCHEME

Extensive work has been carried out considering road safety along the A55 Trunk Road, near to Llanfairfechan, dating back to 2005. Much of this work has focused on assessing options to improve the roundabout at Junction 15, which currently impede the traffic flow. In 2011 a scheme was included in the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) National Transport Plan to improve the A55 Junction 15. A further commitment to improve the junction was made in 2015 in the National Transport Finance Plan.

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.

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.

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.

Following these exhibitions, the short list of options was examined in further detail, taking into account feedback 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, environmental 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 basis of the short list of five options presented at the public consultation held in the summer of 2018.

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 Junction 15. To address issues raised during the consultation, further work was undertaken, including actions to assess the feasibility of minimising the demolishing of residential properties and consultation with members of the community. This resulted in the Preferred Route which was announced on 5th April 2019.

As part of the development of the Preferred Route, a number of design enhancements were considered, including:

- Improvements to A55 Junction 14.
- The arrangement of the junction to minimise impact on adjacent housing.
- The design of the earth retaining and overbridge structures.
- Alternatives with respect to the footbridge over the A55 at Pendalar.
- A number of non-motorised user mini-schemes to improve active travel routes, to reduce severance across the A55 corridor and to improve safety along the existing NCNR5.
- Improvements for the safety of pedestrians crossing Penmaenmawr Road.
- The feasibility of options to address issues raised by the closure of the existing bus gate from the A55 onto Penmaenmawr Road.
- Measures for the management of flood risk.

A Sustainable Development Report is available.

3. EXISTING CONDITIONS

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

- 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-West Wales based on the 2007 noise maps.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

4. POLICY CONTEXT

A review of the legislative and policy context for the scheme from an environmental perspective is reported in Chapter 5 of the 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).

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) Environment (Wales) Act 2016;
- 2) Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2016;
- 3) Planning (Wales) Act 2015;
- 4) Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015;
- 5) Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013;

- 6) Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017;
- 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 – The National Strategy 2017;
- 13) Prosperity for All: A Low Carbon Wales 2019;
- 14) Taking Wales Forward 2016;
- 15) National Transport Plan for Wales 2010 and its Finance Plan 2015, 2017, 2018;
- 16) Green Corridors on the Welsh Government Trunk Road and Motorway Network 2018 and Trunk Road Estate Biodiversity Action Plan 2004;
- 17) Wales Infrastructure Investment Plan 2012;
- 18) Economic Renewal, A New Direction 2010;
- 19) Prosperity for All: Economic Action Plan 2017;
- 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 18: Transport 2007;
- 28) Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment 2017;
- 29) Technical Advice Note 23: Economic Development 2014;
- 30) Technical Advice Note 5: Nature Conservation and Planning 2009;
- 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.

Below is a description of the main policies from a transport perspective, relevant to the scheme, at both UK and Welsh levels. In addition the scheme will take into account the latest Welsh Government guidance on Coronavirus (COVID-19).

Well-being of Future Generation (Wales) Act 2015

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.

The WelTAG appraisal considers how improvement to the A55 Junctions 14 and 15 would contribute towards the well-being goals, objectives and ways of working.

Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013

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.

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 foot-cycle links to the coastline via Shore Road East and an extended replacement footbridge at Pendalar.

Climate Change Act 2008

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

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.

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

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

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).

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.

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.

Taking Wales Forward 2016

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.

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

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.

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, although this Statement of Reasons and associated draft Orders relate solely to Junctions 14 and 15.

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

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.

The Welsh Government Transport Directorate is already incorporating biodiversity into its work, and the TREBAP¹ contributed to this ongoing process.

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 Plan², creating a sustainable economy and promoting the economic, cultural, social and environmental well-being, and enhancing people's quality of life in Wales.

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

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.

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:

- a) 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.
- b) Being more agile in our approach to developing solutions to underlying problems to address problems that people face every day.

The A55 forms part of the Trans-European Network (TENs) route and the Plan recognises the importance of the route.

Economic Renewal, A New Direction 2010

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.

¹ Trunk Road Estate Biodiversity Action Plan (TREBAP) (Welsh Assembly Government, 2004b) (TREBAP)

² Prosperity for All: Economic Action Plan 2017

One Wales: One Planet 2009

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.'

One Wales: Connecting the Nation – The Wales Transport Strategy 2008

Published in 2008, by the then Welsh Assembly Government, the overarching aim of the Wales Transport Strategy is to promote sustainable transport networks that safeguard the environment while strengthening the country's economic and social performance. The strategy has been prepared in the context of the One Wales programme, a progressive agenda for Wales. The strategy sets out a number of policy outcomes, delivered through strategic priorities. These include:

- Reducing environment impacts from transport;
- Integrating local transport;
- Improving access between key settlements and sites;
- Enhancing international connectivity; and
- Increasing safety and security.

Trunk Road Forward Programme 2002, 2004 and 2008

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

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.'

The Wales Spatial Plan 2008 Update

Ultimately, through provisions in the Planning (Wales) Act 2015 the Wales Spatial Plan (WSP) will be replaced by the National Development Framework (NDF) when published. The programme had suggested publication in 2020. However, no update has been published as yet. Therefore the WSP remains relevant to this assessment.

The scheme is located in North West Wales Eryri and Môn by Chapter 17 of the WSP. The vision for this area is 'A high quality natural and physical environment supporting a cultural and knowledge-based economy that will help the area to maintain and enhance its distinctive character, retain and attract back young people and sustain the Welsh Language'.

'Internal connectivity within the region, across its dispersed settlements, to the Central Wales region and between Eryri a Môn's primary and secondary hubs and the rural areas is more complex but crucial to ensuring the distribution of growth and access to services and leisure especially with NHS services being delivered out of hospitals and closer to home. A suitable road network must be maintained along with the further development of public transport. Opportunities to develop the region's other mainline (Conwy Valley and Cambrian Coast) and leisure railways for the transportation of people and goods, where appropriate, must also be considered... Work to address the capacity issues on the Britannia Bridge and the A487 around Caernarfon to help improve this link further is also required as is the enhancement of the road network within the region especially in relation to the main north-south and east-west corridors.'

Planning Policy Wales Edition 10 2018

In the context of transport schemes, PPW10 recognises that a prosperous Wales can be promoted through the development of modern and connected infrastructure and that in order for cohesive communities to be created, they need to be well-connected.

PPW10 notes the key role transport infrastructure such as trunk roads and motorways play for national and international connectivity. Access to jobs and services through shorter, more

efficient and sustainable journeys should be enabled through the planning system; with new infrastructure as a means of achieving this.

Technical Advice Note 18: Transport 2007

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

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.

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

The Integrated Network Map (IMP) 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. CONSULTATIONS

The wider public has been informed about the proposed scheme via a full public consultation exercise held between June and August 2018 and two public information exhibitions held in December 2017 and June 2019 at local venues. During both the public consultation and the public information exhibitions, people were encouraged to complete feedback forms and/or questionnaires. Issues raised during these consultations and exhibitions have been considered during the design process and as the draft Orders have been developed. There has also been continued stakeholder engagement via the Public Liaison Officer and the project team, as described below.

Environmental Bodies and other stakeholders have been consulted individually and as part of an Environmental Liaison Group (ELG) during the evolution of the design. The ELG brings together representatives from Conwy County Borough Council, Cadw, Natural Resources Wales (NRW), Gwynedd Archaeology Planning Services and the North and Mid-Wales Trunk Road Agent. It is intended that the ELG will continue to meet regularly throughout the pre-construction and construction period.

Scheme details have also been presented to the Design Commission for Wales, Sustrans, Cycling UK and Conwy County Borough Council, as well as Town Councils and local councillors. Their comments have also been considered in the development of the scheme, including the active travel proposals.

Statutory Undertakers have been consulted regarding diversions and protection of infrastructure. Detailed discussions have also taken place with Network Rail. Landowners and people whose properties or private accesses would be directly affected by the scheme have been contacted and informed about the details of the proposed scheme. Where landowners have had specific concerns or queries, the project team have provided information via the Public Liaison officer.

6. SCHEME OBJECTIVES

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

7. THE PROPOSED SCHEME

The scheme involves a number of measures intended to improve the corridor associated with the A55 around Junction 15. As part of the enabling works, minor improvement works would also be made at A55 Junction 14 to lengthen and widen merge and diverge lanes.

The scheme would result in a dual carriageway with free-flowing traffic in both directions, as a consequence of removing the roundabout. A new grade-separated junction would provide improve movement on and off the A55 to both east and westbound carriageways, utilising an overbridge. The eastbound slip roads would rise on a viaduct to meet with a signal-controlled T-junction to the north of the overbridge. The westbound traffic off the A55 would meet with a priority junction with the link road, at the south side of the overbridge.

Proposed eastbound slip roads, on the north side of the junction, would rise on a viaduct up to a maximum of 7.5 metres above existing ground level, to cross the dual carriageway on the proposed bridge. To accommodate the junction and the necessary highway alignments and slip roads, the A55 dual-carriageway centreline would be moved, up to 6 metres south, towards residential properties along Penmaenmawr Road. As a consequence, the arrangement would affect Penmaenmawr Road and the link road to the existing Junction 15. The change in alignment means that for the closest property St Brendas, the new westbound slip road would be approximately the same distance away from the property as the existing carriageway but significantly higher (circa 4 metres) with a retaining wall approximately 3 metres from the property and steep embankment rising above the wall.

The realigned A55 mainline and lengthened slip roads would commence at a point 556 metres south west of the centre point of the existing roundabout, for a distance of 1075 metres along the dual carriageway to a point 508 metres north east of the centre point of the existing roundabout, where the road tapers back to meet the existing dual carriageway.

To the south of the bridge over the dual carriageway slip road, the link road would descend towards Penmaenmawr Road and a signal-controlled junction. The west bound slip roads on the south side of the dual carriageway would rise on embankments to meet the link road. To accommodate the junction, which must meet current highway design standards, Penmaenmawr Road would be moved further south, cutting into the hillside.

The total length of the new trunk road would be approximately 2819 metres (including slip roads, overbridge and link road) with approximately 400 metres of side roads affected.

The existing highway network would be modified at a number of locations, where the proposed improvements would join or cross existing routes. This will include stopping up the existing Penmaenmawr Road adjacent to the junction over a maximum length of 100 metres, stopping up a 4m width of bus gate and a further 33 metres length of Penmaenmawr towards the eastern boundary of the scheme.

Details of the side road improvements include:

- Penmaenmawr Road (east of Junction 15) - Realigned south at the approach to the junction for a length in the order of 118 metres. Although some of the existing paving would be located under the new alignment, much of it would be within the landscaped area adjacent to the east of the new link road to the overbridge; where it is proposed that a surface water attenuation basin would be located.
- Penmaenmawr Road (west of Junction 15) - Realigned south at the approach to the junction for a length in the order of 205 metres. Much of the existing paving would be under the new road alignment.
- Shore Road East (south of A55) - Alignment modified to accommodate the realigned Penmaenmawr Road, over a length in the order of 77 metres.
- Shore Road East (north of A55) - The improvements to Shore Road East to the north of the A55 consist primarily of kerb realignment works.

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

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:

- Mona Terrace – 240 metres segregated cycle/footway adjacent to Mona Terrace
- Penmaenmawr Road – East of Junction 15 Improvements – 240 metres segregated cycleway on the verge adjacent to the existing footway
- Penmaenmawr Road – West of Junction 15 Improvements – 550 metres segregated cycle/footway to south side of Penmaenmawr Road
- Replacement footbridge at Pendalar – replacement footbridge with ramps designed to take account of the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.
- Llanfairfechan Promenade Access – reconfiguration of the existing walls to improve cycle access, while maintaining level of protection for tidal flooding

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.

Fencing of the road boundary would be provided to delineate the road corridor, areas of soft estate and the Welsh Government landownership. Special fencing, designed to exclude wild mammals from the road, otters or badgers for example, would be provided where necessary. Barriers would be required to discourage access to hazardous locations, such the tops of retaining walls and steep slopes. In other locations, where noise or visual and landscape assessments indicate they are required, the boundary would be formed by walls, or, for example, by acoustic barriers.

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.

Highway lighting is already provided along this length of the A55 and on adjacent county roads and within the town of Llanfairfechan. New lighting would be installed along the A55 and at Junction 15 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.

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, but demolition of two properties to the east of Shore Road East would be required. These consist of semi-detached residential properties. The realignment of the A55 dual carriageway and Penmaenmawr Road to the south of the existing routes and the introduction of longer slip roads would result in the loss of some well-established roadside planting.

8. POWERS TO CONSTRUCT THE SCHEME

The Scheme would be authorised and constructed using the powers of the Welsh Ministers as Highway Authority in accordance with the Highways Act 1980 in conjunction with the Acquisition of Land Act 1981.

The powers to construct the new sections of trunk road would be exercised through the making of 'The Chester to Bangor Trunk Road (A55) (Junctions 14 and 15 Improvement Realignment and Slip Roads) Order 202-', already published in draft.

The power to stop up; alter; improve highways, public rights of way, and private means of access would be exercised through the making of 'The Chester to Bangor Trunk Road (A55) (Junctions 14 and 15 Improvement Realignment and Slip Roads) (Side Roads) Order 202-', already published in draft.

As the Highway Authority for trunk roads in Wales, the Welsh Ministers are empowered to undertake improvements to the existing trunk road (under section 62 of the Highways Act 1980) and to construct new highways (under section 24 of the Highways Act 1980).

A draft Compulsory Purchase Order will be published shortly, and this will enable the Welsh Ministers to acquire all the land and rights over the land, necessary for the proposed scheme. In drawing up the proposed scheme, regard has been given to the interference with the rights of all those with interests in the relevant lands and/or who would otherwise be affected by the scheme.