

WELSH GOVERNMENT

THE NEATH TO ABERGAVENNY TRUNK ROAD (A465) (ABERGAVENNY TO HIRWAUN DUALLING AND SLIP ROADS) AND EAST OF ABERCYNON TO EAST OF DOWLAIS TRUNK ROAD (A4060) AND CARDIFF TO GLAN CONWY TRUNK ROAD (A470) (CONNECTING ROADS) (DOWLAIS TOP TO HIRWAUN) (SIDE ROADS) ORDER 2019 (VARIATION) (No.4) ORDER 2024

REALIGNMENT OF TAFF TRAIL SOUTHERN APPROACH

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

INTRODUCTION

The Welsh Ministers, as the relevant highway authority, are responsible for all trunk roads in Wales. The A465 is an important part of the Welsh Government strategic road network and it serves as the major east/west route linking the industrial centres of the Midlands and South Wales as well as providing an alternative route to the M4.

Following the Public Local Inquiry held in March / April 2018, the A465 Dualling Section 5&6 Dowlais Top to Hirwaun Orders were made by the Welsh Ministers in April 2019. Options for adding value have continued to be investigated. The Orders comprise:

(i) Line Order 1999 and Amendment Line Orders are—

“The Neath to Abergavenny Trunk Road (A465) (Abergavenny to Hirwaun Dualling and Slip Roads) and East of Abercynon to East of Dowlais Trunk Road (A4060), Cardiff to Glan Conwy Trunk Road (A470) (Connecting Roads) Order 1999” as amended by a 2012 Amendment Order, a 2014 Amendment Order, a 2019 Amendment Order and a 2021 Amendment Order.

(ii) Side Roads Order 2019 and the Variation to the Side Roads Order 2020, the Variation (No.2) to the Side Roads Order and the Variation (No.3) to the Side Roads Order are—

a) The “Side Roads Order” means “The Neath to Abergavenny Trunk Road (A465) (Abergavenny to Hirwaun Dualling and Slip Roads) and East of Abercynon to East of Dowlais Trunk Road (A4060) and Cardiff to Glan Conwy Trunk Road (A470) (Connecting Roads) (Dowlais Top to Hirwaun) (Side Roads) Order 2019”;

b) “the Variation to the Side Roads Order” means “The Neath to Abergavenny Trunk Road (A465) (Abergavenny to Hirwaun Dualling and Slip Roads) and East of Abercynon to East of Dowlais Trunk Road (A4060) and Cardiff to Glan Conwy Trunk Road (A470) (Connecting Roads) (Dowlais Top to Hirwaun) Side Roads Order 2019 (Variation) Order 2020”;

c) “The Neath to Abergavenny Trunk Road (A465) (Abergavenny to Hirwaun Dualling and Slip Roads) and East of Abercynon to East of Dowlais Trunk Road (A4060) and Cardiff to Glan Conwy Trunk Road (A470) (Connecting Roads) (Dowlais Top to Hirwaun) Side Roads Order 2019 (Variation) (No.2) Order 2021”.

d) “The Neath to Abergavenny Trunk Road (A465) (Abergavenny to Hirwaun Dualling and Slip Roads) and East of Abercynon to East of Dowlais Trunk Road (A4060) and Cardiff to Glan Conwy Trunk Road (A470) (Connecting Roads) (Dowlais Top to Hirwaun) Side Roads Order 2019 (Variation) (No.3) Order 2022”.

(iii) Compulsory Purchase Order 2019 and the Supplementary (No.1) Compulsory Purchase Order 2020 and the Supplementary (No.2) Compulsory Purchase Order 2021 are—

a) “the Compulsory Purchase Order made on 17 April 2019” means “The Welsh Ministers (The Neath to Abergavenny Trunk Road (A465) (Abergavenny to Hirwaun Dualling and Slip Roads) and East of Abercynon to East of Dowlais Trunk Road (A4060) and Cardiff to Glan Conwy Trunk Road (A470) (Connecting Roads) (Dowlais Top to Hirwaun)) Compulsory Purchase Order 2019”;

b) “the Supplementary (No.1) Compulsory Purchase Order” means “The Welsh Ministers (The Neath to Abergavenny Trunk Road (A465) (Abergavenny to Hirwaun Dualling and Slip Roads) and East of Abercynon to East of Dowlais Trunk Road (A4060) and Cardiff to Glan Conwy Trunk Road (A470) (Connecting Roads) (Dowlais Top to Hirwaun)) (Supplementary) (No.1) Compulsory Purchase Order 2020”.

c) “the Supplementary (No.2) Compulsory Purchase Order” means “The Welsh Ministers (The Neath to Abergavenny Trunk Road (A465) (Abergavenny to Hirwaun Dualling and Slip Roads) and East of Abercynon to East of Dowlais Trunk Road (A4060) and Cardiff to Glan Conwy Trunk Road (A470) (Connecting Roads) (Dowlais Top to Hirwaun)) (Supplementary) (No.2) Compulsory Purchase Order 2021”.

(iv) The Draft Orders now published comprise—

a) the “draft Variation (No.4) to the Side Roads Order” means “The Neath to Abergavenny Trunk Road (A465) (Abergavenny to Hirwaun Dualling and Slip Roads) and East Of Abercynon to East of Dowlais Trunk Road (A4060) and Cardiff to Glan Conwy Trunk Road (A470) (Connecting Roads) (Dowlais Top to Hirwaun) (Side Roads) Order 2019 (Variation) (No.4) Order 20--”.

(v) The Orders that have been made for the A465 Dowlais Top to Hirwaun Dualling project (referred to as the “Published Scheme”) comprise—

a) The 1999 Line Order, the Amendment Line Order 2019 and the Amendment Line Order 2021 authorise the route of the main new trunk road, slip roads, connecting roads and de-trunking.

b) The Side Roads Order (SRO) 2019 together with the Variation (No.1) to the Side Roads Order 2020, the Variation (No.2) to the Side Roads Order 2021 and the Variation (No.3) to the Side Roads Order 2022 authorises the stopping up of existing highways (that include footpaths, bridleways and cycle tracks), the construction and improvement of new highways, the stopping up of private means of accesses (PMAs) and provision of new private means of access (PMA).

c) The Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) 2019, together with the Supplementary (No.1) CPO 2020 and the Supplementary (No.2) CPO 2021 would provide for the

acquisition of the land and rights required for the construction and maintenance of the Published Scheme.

An Environmental Statement and a Statement to Inform an Appropriate Assessment of the potential likely effects of the Published Scheme were prepared in association with the above Orders. The draft Orders now published do not have an adverse environmental effect and therefore do not require any supplements to the environmental documents.

Following further development of the Scheme design, a new Variation (No.4) to the Side Roads Order are required to address the following:

The Variation (No.4) to the Side Roads Order is needed for:

1. Realignment of the Taff Trail southern approach

This proposed change to the Published Scheme does not require additional land and/or additional rights over land.

The details of the proposed changes, including how they compare with the Published Scheme are set out below and illustrated on the Site Plans.

The proposals in this draft Variation (No.4) to the Side Roads Order would make amendments to Schedule 9 and replace Site Plans 9B with the Site Plan 9C. Schedules and Site Plans numbered 1A, 2B, 3B, 4B, 5A, 6B, 7A, 8, 10C, 11, 12A, 13, 14 and 15 would remain unaffected.

Landowners, other interested parties and persons whose properties or private accesses would be directly affected by the changes to the Published Scheme have been visited or contacted and made aware of the proposals in advance of the publication of the draft Variation (No.4) to the Side Roads Order. Objections and comments are being invited for these proposed changes to the Published Scheme, as set out in the public notices.

None of the proposals in the draft Orders, described below, result in a change to the published objectives of the Published Scheme.

DRAFT VARIATION (NO.4) TO THE SIDE ROADS ORDER PROPOSALS

1. REALIGNMENT OF TAFF TRAIL SOUTHERN APPROACH (Site Plans 9C)

The proposal is to change the approach of the Taff Trail to reinstate its pre-Scheme alignment between St John's Church and the property known as Valbonne, and to simplify the ramped approach from Lower Vaynor Road to the Taff Trail Footbridge crossing the A465.

This replaces the layout of the preceding Order which established a western deviation between Valbonne and the property known as Aloha. This created, amongst other challenges, conflicting use between vehicles and NMUs between New Church Street and Aloha. It also replaces the hairpin ramp structure to the east which would have been a prominent, unpopular and unappealing feature to the north of Lower Vaynor Road.

CHANGES REQUIRED TO THE SIDE ROADS ORDER 2019, THE VARIATION TO THE SIDE ROADS ORDER 2020, THE VARIATION (NO.2) TO THE SIDE ROADS ORDER 2021 AND THE VARIATION (NO.3) TO THE SIDE ROADS ORDER 2022

An amendment would be required to the SRO to curtail the stopping up of the Taff Trail, replacing Highway reference 9/S1 with a new curtailed version, 9/S3. Consequential alignment changes to New Highways 9/D and 9/E have seen those removed and replaced with amended versions in 9/G and 9/F respectively.

COMPARISON OF THE PROPOSED VARIATION WITH THE PUBLISHED SCHEME

Following consultation with Merthyr Tydfil CBC, Sustrans and Transport for Wales' Active Travel Team, the proposal is deemed to be both safer and more desirable in that it removes an unattractive, prominent and intrusive structure from the end of Lower Vaynor Road and also avoids a potential vehicle-NMU conflict point between Aloha, Valbonne and New Church Street, and a potential anti-social behaviour area in the enclosed route between the top of Cefn Coed cutting and the northern boundary of the Valbonne property. large underpass and provides opportunity to acquire less, adjacent land than currently defined for the Published Scheme.

The changes have been discussed with the Local Authority and, where appropriate, landowners, other interested parties and/or beneficiaries, and in all instances received positive support and feedback, being considered by all consulted parties to be not only a reasonable alternative to the Published Scheme design but a necessary one.

Benefits of the proposed change relative to the Published Scheme include:

- Removal of unsightly, intrusive hairpin ramp on Lower Vaynor Road
- Better security and removal of anti-social behaviour risk by removing dark, steep and enclosed section between Aloha and Valbonne
- Creates better desire line for NMUs approach Taff Trail Footbridge from both Taf Fechan to the east, and Lower Vaynor Road to the south
- Safer by eliminating vehicle-NMU conflict point from adopting shared drive with Aloha
- Reduced long term maintenance by minimising scheme footprint and reduced structural inspection and maintenance requirements.