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# Final evaluation of ERDF-funded A55 Road Operation

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# Final evaluation of ERDF-funded Road Operation: A55 between Abergwyngregyn and Tai'r Meibion (North Wales)

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## **Glossary**

### **ERDF**

European Regional Development Funding

### **CCT**

Cross-Cutting Themes

### **WEFO**

Welsh European Funding Office

### **TEN-T**

Trans-European Transport Network

### **NDF**

National Development Framework

### **TRFP**

Trunk Road Forward Programme

### **WeITAG**

Welsh Transport Appraisal Guidance

### **ECI**

Early Contractor Involvement

### **PLO**

Public Liaison Officer

### **NTFP**

National Transport Finance Plan

### **OP**

Operational Programme

### **COVID-19**

Coronavirus

**PRoWs**

Public Rights of Way

**PMA**s

Private Means of Access

# 1. Introduction

This report provides a final evaluation of improvements to the A55 between Abergwyngregyn and Tai'r Meibion in North Wales (referred to in this report as the 'operation'), which were funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Welsh Government as part of the 2014-20 European Structural Funds Programme.

## 1.1. About the ERDF funded road operations

ERDF funding was secured by the Welsh Government as part of the 2014-20 ERDF West Wales and the Valleys Operational Programme (OP) <sup>[footnote 1]</sup> to deliver improvements to two arterial roads in Wales: the A55 and the A40.

The strategic rationale for ERDF investment is set out in the OP. This contains an objective to invest in the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) <sup>[footnote 2]</sup>, a planned network of roads (and other infrastructure) which aims to “develop an integrated multimodal transport network allowing people and goods to move quickly and easily across the EU. This is intended to support the development of the internal market and reinforce economic and social cohesion” <sup>[footnote 3]</sup>.

The OP specifically highlighted investment on the A55, noting a preference for a small number of significant schemes in order to maximise impact. The core investment rationale set out in the OP is economic: Specific Objective 4.1 states that investments should aim to mitigate peripherality and “will need to demonstrate that they are addressing genuine bottlenecks in terms of access to employment or that they are unlocking opportunities for economic growth at a regional level rather than just affecting sub regional or local choices for business locations... There should be an expectation that investment will leverage additional private sector investments (e.g., through inward investment)” <sup>[footnote 4]</sup>. Operations are also expected to make a positive contribution to sustainable travel options, including through the provision of cycleways, footpaths, etc. in addition to the improved highway. The impacts of the scheme are considered in Chapter 7.

In addition to the economic benefits, the operations were expected to contribute to a broader range of environmental, transport and social benefits locally.

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### Footnotes

[1] [West Wales and the Valleys: European Social Fund \(ESF\) operational programme 2014 to 2020 summary](#)

[2] The A55 forms part of the E22 TEN-T route, extending from Ireland to Russia

[3] [Trans-European Transport Network \(TEN-T\) – a quick guide \(senedd.wales\)](#)

[4] [West Wales and the Valleys: European Social Fund \(ESF\) operational programme 2014 to 2020 summary](#)

## 1.2. Introducing the A55 Abergwyngregyn to Tai'r Meibion operation

Contributing to the OP priority for investment in the A55, the Abergwyngregyn to Tai'r Meibion operation is located between Conwy and Bangor, as shown in Figure 1.1. Specifically, the operation involved:

- the widening of a 2.2km length of dual carriageway trunk road to meet modern dual standards
- closing gaps in the central reservation and the numerous field and private accesses joining the A55
- the reconstruction or creation of 2km of footpath or cycleway
- delivery of a footway to improve pedestrian access to local bus services
- extension of existing cattle underpasses
- creation of an agricultural access track
- implementation of an improved drainage system on the A55

**Figure 1.1: Map of A55 improvements between Abergwyngregyn and Tai'r Meibion**



Source: Produced by SQW 2019. Licence 100030994. Contains OS data © Crown copyright [and database right] 2020.

The business case for the operation was prepared in 2016, and design and construction were subsequently commissioned by the Welsh Government. Enabling works began in late 2018, and the new section of trunk road was completed in spring 2023.

The total cost of the operation (including risk and contingency), as set out at the time of the final re-evaluation in December 2022, was £21.70 million. Of this, £20.01 million was funded by ERDF, with the remaining £1.69 million from the Welsh Government. In addition, there were further costs incurred in the delivery of the operation that were ineligible for ERDF expenditure: these are considered further in Chapter 4.

### 1.3. Operation objectives and key indicators

The OP defined a series of result and output indicators which operations funded by ERDF were expected to achieve. In the case of the Abergwyngregyn to Tai'r Meibion operation:

- the ERDF Result Indicator is a 5-10% increase in average speed along the A55 (from a baseline average of 86 kph, defined in the OP <sup>[footnote 5]</sup>)
- the ERDF Output Indicators are:
  - total length of reconstructed or upgraded roads (including TEN-T): 2.2 km
  - footpath or cycleway created or reconstructed: 2 km

Beyond the OP, the objectives of the operation more broadly related to strategic connectivity, resilience and sustainability, and were defined as aiming to <sup>[footnote 6]</sup>:

- improve the standards of a strategically important highway to ensure that it provides efficient future connectivity between communities and economic hubs
- alleviate flooding issues to ensure ongoing transport connectivity and resilience to climate change
- improve pedestrian and cycling connections to provide alternative, healthier forms of travel
- enhance biodiversity and future connectivity for wildlife at the locality
- consider the aims of sustainable development within the design, construction and delivery of the operation

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#### Footnotes

[5] The original baseline was calculated using Trafficmaster data. A new baseline has been calculated using Inrix data as Trafficmaster data is no longer available. Further information on this can be found in chapter 7.

[6] Welsh Government (2017), [A55 Abergwyngregyn to Tai'r Meibion improvements: environmental statement](#)

## **1.4. Cross-cutting themes**

All operations funded through ERDF must also integrate a series of Cross-Cutting Themes (CCT) into their design and delivery, consistent with the 2015 Wellbeing of Future Generations Act. These relate to sustainable development, tackling poverty and social inclusion, equal opportunities and gender mainstreaming, and the Welsh language. The business case set out a series of actions that would be taken to integrate the CCT within the delivery of the operation.

## **1.5. Report structure**

The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

- Chapter 2 provides an overview of the evaluation methodology
- Chapter 3 sets out the context for the operation. It describes in greater detail the rationale for the scheme, discusses the wider economic, environmental and transport policy context in which it has been delivered and assesses the extent to which has been aligned to relevant strategic objectives
- Chapter 4 outlines the progress that has been made in delivery, considering timescales, expenditure and output delivery
- Chapter 5 considers the process of delivering the operation. This includes the effectiveness of project management arrangements, the process of monitoring outputs and the arrangements for communications and stakeholder consultation and engagement
- Chapter 6 looks at the delivery of the cross-cutting themes, which were an important aspect of the operation
- Chapter 7 considers the impacts that have been realised, or are expected to be realised, and how these compare with those anticipated in the original business case
- finally, Chapter 8 sets out conclusions and recommendations for future schemes

## 2. Evaluation methodology

### 2.1. Evaluation aims and objectives

In May 2020, SQW was commissioned to carry out an evaluation of the operation. This has taken place alongside an evaluation of a second ERDF-funded road operation (a new stretch of highway on the A40 between Llanddewi Velfrey, Penblewin and Redstone Cross, in Pembrokeshire), which will report separately <sup>[footnote 7]</sup>.

The evaluation aims to assess the delivery of each operation against the indicators set out in the respective business plan and provide recommendations for future, similar activity.

The objectives of the final evaluation are to:

- provide an assessment on the success of each operation in meeting the specific aims and indicator targets set out in the relevant business plans
- provide an assessment on the success of the operations in meeting the specific aims and targets set in relation to the Cross Cutting Themes (CCT)
  - a. how did the operation perform against the delivery of CCT aims, objectives and commitments, as well as CCT project related indicators, including what worked well/what didn't work, problems identified and how were these addressed?
  - b. how, and to what extent, did the operation provide opportunities for participants to use and develop their Welsh language skills in the workplace?
  - c. how did the operation contribute to the goals of the Well Being and Future Generations Act?
- provide an assessment to what extent the operations met or are likely to achieve the outcomes they sought to achieve
- examine the overall contribution of the operations with Welsh Government, WEFO and regional strategies and policies
- provide a final assessment of the efficiency of the programme management and monitoring processes and identify how these may be improved for future, similar programmes
- assess whether the wider social, environmental, and economic outcomes and impacts of the operations have or are likely to be realised in the future (where feasible)
- identify any key lessons relevant to this and future operations to achieve the Welsh Government's strategic aims

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#### Footnotes

[7] The evaluation commission also included evaluation of a third road operation – improvements to A55 Junctions 15 and 16 at Llanfairfechan and Penmaenmawr. However, this operation was withdrawn from the ERDF programme in September 2021, pending the outcomes of the Welsh Government's Roads Review (discussed further in Chapter 3).

## 2.2. Evaluation methodology

The evaluation has progressed through three phases of research. These involved an initial scoping phase in summer 2020, which led to the development of a logic model and evaluation plan; an interim evaluation which reported in January 2022 <sup>[footnote 8]</sup>; and the final evaluation. There were four recommendations for the operations that were suggested in the interim evaluation and, where there is evidence that these have been addressed, this is mentioned later in the report.

Three research activities were undertaken at interim and final evaluation stage. These were:

- a desk-based review of policy/strategy documents, including national strategies, local and regional strategies and documents relating to key policy issues (e.g., climate change/ net zero and the changing approach to transport strategy) and post-COVID-19 recovery
- stakeholder consultations (44 in total; 31 at interim evaluation stage and, building on this, 13 at final stage <sup>[footnote 9]</sup>). These took the form of bilateral semi-structured interviews and covered the progress and impact of the scheme. Consultees included representatives from the project delivery teams (20), regional representatives from the Welsh Government (6), local authority representatives (9), and community and business organisations (9)
- analysis of programme monitoring data relating to expenditure, outputs and emerging outcomes

It should be noted that construction work was nearing completion as this final evaluation report was being prepared. This means that it is not possible at this stage to fully assess the impacts of the operation: for example, we cannot know the effects of the scheme on accident rates or average journey speeds until sometime after completion. We have therefore considered the extent to which the operation is likely to achieve its anticipated impacts, based on evidence to date. The Welsh Government is planning a further review of impacts one-year post-completion.

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### Footnotes

[8] [The interim evaluation can be found here](#). It covers the A40 Llanddewi Velfrey to Penblewin and Redstone Cross operation, as well as the A55 Abergwyngregyn to Tai'r Meibion.

[9] Note that fewer consultations were conducted at the final stage due to a low response rate and previous involvement at interim evaluation stage.

### 3. Context and assessment of strategic fit

This chapter sets out a summary of the strategic context within which the A55 Abergwyngregyn to Tai'r Meibion road operation has been delivered. It provides an overview of the existing transport network and explains the transport policy context, its evolution and the continued relevance of the operation.

#### 3.1. Transport infrastructure in North Wales

Strategic transport infrastructure in North Wales comprises a major port at Holyhead, the A55 North Wales Expressway, the North Wales Coast Line and a small airport on Anglesey:

**Figure 3.1: Transport infrastructure in North Wales**



Source: Welsh Government: [Summary statistics for economic regions: 2019](#)

Holyhead, the third largest port in Wales by sea freight volume <sup>[footnote 10]</sup>, is one of the UK's main ports for freight and passenger transport with Ireland. In 2021, 402,000 lorries and unaccompanied trailers passed through Welsh ports to and from Ireland; 93% of this traffic went through Holyhead.

The A55 trunk road runs approximately 87 miles from Chester to Holyhead and is the main coastal route and principal economic artery of North Wales. It is part of TEN-T Route E22, providing the main road access between Ireland and the UK (and onwards to continental Europe). It also links North Wales with Northwest England and the wider motorway network;

#### Footnotes

[10] [Welsh Government, Sea transport: 2021](#)

and connects at Conwy with the A470 to South and Mid Wales. It is an important link for local towns and communities across North Wales, linking with local roads to service the rest of the region. It provides a link to key Enterprise Zone employment sites in Anglesey, Deeside and Snowdonia and the Port of Holyhead, and to important visitor economy locations such as Snowdonia National Park and UNESCO World Heritage Sites <sup>[footnote 11]</sup>.

The road is important in enabling access to employment in North Wales. Census data from 2021<sup>[footnote 12]</sup> shows that 66% of workers (aged 16+) living in North Wales travelled to work by car, van, taxi, motorcycle, scooter or moped (this corresponded to approximately 202,000 people). A small proportion of workers travelled by foot or by bike (8.6%) or by train, bus, minibus, or coach (2.9%), reflecting the largely rural and dispersed settlement pattern of the region. In line with changing working patterns since the COVID-19 pandemic, 21.7% worked mainly at or from home.

## **3.2. Transport strategy alignment**

### **3.2.1. Original strategic context and rationale**

The case for improvements to the A55 between Abergwyngregyn and Tai'r Meibion is long-standing. 'Driving Wales Forward' <sup>[footnote 13]</sup>, published by the Welsh Office in 1998, identified that a full upgrade was required to bring the section of the A55 up to the modern standards of the rest of the road, noting that the stretch between Abergwyngregyn and Tai'r Meibion had been unmodified since 1969 and did not comply with current highway standards. This was reflected in the business case, which highlighted the safety issues presented by multiple access points, poor drainage and the lack of safe pedestrian routes.

From a broader perspective, the national strategic context for the 2014-20 OP was informed by 'One Wales: Connecting the Nation', the national transport strategy published in 2008. This emphasised sustainability as a central principle and included an aim of "getting the most out of the existing transport system" <sup>[footnote 14]</sup>. However, it also sets out commitments to:

- improvements to the road infrastructure, especially on the main east-west routes (including the TEN-T network)
- better road connections to the main freight ports
- investments to support improved safety and reliability

These commitments align with the aims and objectives of the scheme to improve the A55 between Abergwyngregyn and Tai'r Meibion.

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#### Footnotes

[11] For example: Pontcysyllte Aqueduct, Conwy Castle, and Caernarfon Castle.

[12] [Nomis/ONS, 2021 Census Data – Method used to travel to work](#)

[13] [Deposited paper DEP 98/853 – Driving Wales Forward \(parliament.uk\)](#)

[14] Welsh Government (2008), [One Wales - connecting the nation - the Wales transport strategy \(trid.trb.org\)](#)

### 3.2.2. Subsequent developments in relation to decarbonisation and net zero

Since then, the policy context has evolved, with a progressive strengthening of measures to reduce Wales' carbon footprint and increase the sustainability of the transport system. For example, the goals of the Well-being of Future Generations Act include a low carbon society and well-connected communities, whilst the transport chapter in 'The Future Generations Report 2020' report <sup>[footnote 15]</sup> sets out how a sustainable transport system could be implemented. These serve to increase the relative prominence of active travel and public transport within the Welsh transport mix and reduce the emphasis on roads investment.

A series of strategic developments are relevant to this. The Welsh Government and Gwynedd Council both declared a climate emergency in 2019. Following this:

- 'Prosperity for All: A Low Carbon Wales' was published by the Welsh Government in 2019 <sup>[footnote 16]</sup>. This outlines several significant measures to support carbon reduction, including: the definition of a Sustainable Transport Hierarchy to guide transport investment, prioritising walking and cycling, followed by public transport, Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEV), and finally other private motor vehicles
- the Welsh Government published its 'Net Zero Wales' plan in October 2021 <sup>[footnote 17]</sup>. This sets out 123 policies and proposals to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050. In relation to transport, these include a commitment to reduce passenger transport<sup>18</sup> emissions by 22% by 2025 (over a 2019 baseline) and by 98% by 2050. Demand reduction and modal shift are seen as key contributors to this, with the 'Net Zero Wales' plan setting an ambition to reduce the number of car miles per passenger by 10% by 2030 <sup>[footnote 19]</sup>
- a year later this was followed by the Welsh Government publishing its 'Net Zero Strategic Plan' in September 2022 which set out 54 initiatives that provide the foundation for the Welsh Government to progress towards net zero. Under transport infrastructure, the key objective is "to maintain a safe, efficient transport network across the region to accelerate economic development and facilitate access to services and employment" <sup>[footnote 20]</sup>. Examples of initiatives include installing on-site renewable energy generation, where viable, installing high-efficiency technology by default across transport infrastructure, informing national standards and participating in discussions around reducing energy consumption from transport infrastructure

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#### Footnotes

[15] Future Generations Commissioner for Wales (2020), [The Future Generations Report](#)

[16] Welsh Government (2019), [Prosperity for All: Low Carbon Wales](#)

[17] Welsh Government (2021), [Second All Wales Low Carbon Delivery Plan \(2021-2025\)](#)

[18] Passenger transport refers to the total movement of passengers using inland transport.

[19] Welsh Government (2021), [Second All Wales Low Carbon Delivery Plan \(2021-2025\)](#), p.82

[20] Welsh Government (2022), [Welsh Government's Net Zero Strategic Plan](#)

### 3.2.3. Llwybr Newydd

In March 2021 the Welsh Government published its new Wales transport strategy (Llwybr Newydd) <sup>[footnote 21]</sup>. The strategy outlines a vision for an accessible, sustainable and efficient transport system that is “good for people and communities, good for the environment, good for the economy and places and supports a thriving Welsh language and culture”. The Welsh Government has developed three priorities to help achieve its vision. The priority which is of most relevance to this operation is Priority 2: allow people and goods to move easily from door to door by accessible, sustainable transport. As part of this priority, the Welsh Government have committed to “provide safe, accessible and well-maintained and managed transport infrastructure” and to “future-proof it to adapt to climate change and facilitate more sustainable transport choices”.

### 3.2.4. The Roads Review

In June 2021, the Deputy Minister for Climate Change announced a freeze on new road building projects, pending the outcome of an independent review, which subsequently reported in August 2022 <sup>[footnote 22]</sup>. In the Deputy Minister’s announcement, transport was acknowledged as a key contributor to Wales’ total emissions (circa 17%), and the review aims to reduce transport emissions to achieve Wales’ target of net zero emissions by 2050:

“We need a shift away from spending money on projects that encourage more people to drive and spend more money on maintaining our roads and investing in real alternatives that give people a meaningful choice.” : Lee Waters, Deputy Minister for Climate Change

While the A55 Abergwygregyn to Tai’r Meibion operation was not included in the scope of the review (since it was already committed and construction was already underway), the outcomes of the review are relevant in considering the continued relevance of the operation.

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#### Footnotes

[21] Welsh Government (2021) [LLwybr Newydd: the Wales transport strategy 2021](#)

[22] [Plenary 22/06/2021 - Deputy Minister’s Statement to the Senedd - Welsh Parliament \(assembly.wales\)](#)

The review recommended that to be consistent with Welsh Government policy, road schemes should only be considered for four purposes and, where they are implemented should meet four conditions, illustrated below:

**Table 3.1: Recommended purposes and conditions for future road investment, based on the Roads Review**

Purposes	Conditions
We recommend that to be consistent with Welsh Government policy, road schemes should only be for these four purposes:	We recommend that road schemes for these purposes should additionally meet four conditions:
1. Shifting trips to sustainable transport to reduce carbon emissions	1. The scheme should minimise carbon emissions in construction
2. Reducing casualties where they are high, through small-scale changes	2. The scheme should not lead to higher vehicle speeds that increase emissions
3. Adapting roads to the impacts of climate change	3. The scheme should not increase road capacity for cars
4. Supporting prosperity by providing access to development sites that will achieve high sustainable transport mode share	4. The scheme should not adversely affect ecological valuable sites

Source: [The Future of Road Investment in Wales: Advice from the independent panel appointed by the Welsh Government \(2022\)](#)

It is likely that the A55 Abergwygregyn operation continues to meet some of these ‘purposes and conditions’ even though it was not subject to review by the independent panel. Specifically, the scheme:

- supports adaption to the impact of climate change by addressing flooding issues
- seeks to improve road safety
- minimises carbon emissions in the construction process
- mitigates ecological impacts
- provides additional Active Travel routes
- improves access to public transport

Minimising carbon emissions during construction and mitigating ecological impacts are core elements of the cross-cutting themes. However, the business case (and the ERDF Result Indicator) explicitly seeks to increase vehicle speeds, which in some circumstances may increase average car emissions as a result of lower fuel efficiency although research has also shown that roads with faster moving traffic disperse pollutants more effectively than roads with slower moving traffic <sup>[footnote 23]</sup>.

### **3.2.5. Infrastructure planning**

Finally, the Welsh Government published the 'Wales Infrastructure Investment Strategy' in December 2021 <sup>[footnote 24]</sup>. The strategy sets out the Welsh Government's 10-year vision of the outcomes that investment in infrastructure should enable. Its vision is for "a well-being economy which drives prosperity, is environmentally sound, and helps everyone realise their potential". Whilst there is a recognition throughout the strategy of the need to prioritise new investment in active, sustainable and public transport over the use of private road vehicles, there is also a commitment "to ensure that our strategic infrastructure investments enable effective maintenance of our Strategic Road Network, meeting our statutory obligations, and protecting the safety and lives of the people of Wales".

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#### Footnotes

[23] Transport for London (2018) [Speed, emissions and health \(tfl.gov.uk\)](https://www.tfl.gov.uk)

[24] Welsh Government (2021) [Wales Infrastructure Investment Strategy](#)

### 3.3. Spatial strategy alignment

At the time of the operation's approval, the 'Wales Spatial Plan' (adopted in 2004 and updated in 2008) set out a goal to "increase Wales' competitiveness whilst assisting less well-off areas to catch up on general prosperity levels and reducing negative environmental impacts". The Plan identified North West Wales (Eryri a Môn) as a defined strategic planning area and noted the importance of the A55 in general and the link between Bangor (defined as a 'settlement of national significance') and Conwy/ Colwyn Bay/ Llandudno in particular.

In 2021, 'Future Wales: The National Plan 2040' <sup>[footnote 25]</sup> was adopted as the new national development framework set in the context of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act. In common with the wider strategic developments described above, it emphasises decarbonisation and sustainability, and includes a series of wider policies that are relevant to the operation:

- Policy 4 - Supporting Rural Communities. The Welsh Government will support investment in the road network to maintain or improve rural accessibility, sustainability and community well-being
- Policy 10 - International Connectivity. Holyhead Port (which is served by the A55) is identified as a Strategic Gateway that facilitates international connectivity. The Welsh Government sets out its commitment to working with stakeholders (including operators, investors, and local authorities) to support this Gateway and maintain its international connectivity role. One method of support will be via infrastructure investments.
- Policy 11 - National connectivity. The Welsh Government will support and invest in improving national connectivity; key to this will be investing in a strategic road, rail, bus and cycle network

'Future Wales' <sup>[footnote 26]</sup> defines the whole of North Wales as a 'region'. It highlights the inter-regional links to Ireland, Cheshire and the North West of England, referencing the national significance of connectivity along the coast. Policy 21 of 'Future Wales' further defines the North Wales Coastal Settlements as a Regional Growth Area. This stretches from Caernarfon to Flintshire (as well as including Holyhead) and is defined as the primary focus for sustainable growth.

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#### Footnotes

[25] Welsh Government (2021) [Future Wales: National Plan 2040](#)

[26] Welsh Government (2021) [Future Wales: National Plan 2040](#)

### 3.4. Economic strategy alignment

The original business case was strongly predicated on the potential of the operation to drive economic benefits through more reliable connectivity. The OP noted that “investment to improve connectivity is an essential pre-requisite of the long-term success of all [European funding]. A well-functioning transport system helps people to access work, increases the forces of competition, promotes greater efficiency and increases the likelihood of co-location and clustering” [footnote 27].

Improved connectivity through investment in existing transport infrastructure continues to be recognised as a priority in regional economic strategy. For example, one of three key principles in ‘A Growth Deal for North Wales’ (Connected North Wales), published by the North Wales Economic Ambition Board in October 2018 [footnote 28], concerns improving transport infrastructure to improve connectivity to and within the region. This was also listed as a priority in the ‘North Wales Regional Economic Framework’, which was published by Ambition North Wales and the Welsh Government in December 2021 [footnote 29]. A commitment was made to “protecting and enhancing services to Ireland and cross-border to England and into mid Wales, ensuring access to public and active transport modes”.

Ambition North Wales set out its three key aims for North Wales in its Annual Report 2021-22 [footnote 30]. One of these was to make North Wales “connected, through improving and developing digital connectivity and infrastructure, but also recognising the importance of moving towards an integrated and effective transport system”.

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#### Footnotes

[27] Operational Programme, p.103

[28] North Wales Economic Ambition Board (2018) [Ambition North Wales | Growth Deal \(ambitionnorth.wales\)](#)

[29] Ambition North Wales & Welsh Government (2021) [North Wales Regional Economic Framework](#)

[30] Ambition North Wales (2022) [Annual Report 2021-22 \(ambitionnorth.wales\)](#)

### **3.4.1. Strategic economic investments**

As well as the economic benefits to be gained through more resilient connectivity between settlements, the business case cited strategic economic opportunities that would be supported by an improved A55, in particular the potential of the Wylfa Newydd nuclear power station on Anglesey and the Anglesey Enterprise Zone.

‘Future Wales’ is supportive of North West Wales’s role as a centre for new energy investments. While there is currently no investor in Wylfa Newydd, a number of other strategic economic opportunities have come forward which reinforce the role of the A55. These include:

- Anglesey Freeport, which was announced as successful by the UK and Welsh Governments in March 2023. Linked with the Anglesey Energy Island vision for economic development through the exploitation of green and renewable energy and investments attracted by the package of Freeport tax and customs incentives
- the twelve key industrial sites which form the Anglesey Enterprise Zone (which include the Port of Holyhead and link with the new Freeport designation)
- strategic sites west of Abergwyngregyn, such as Parc Bryn Cegin near Bangor – a 3,000 sq m business park being taken forward by Ambition North Wales and the Welsh Government and which benefits from its proximity to the A55

### 3.5. Responding to COVID-19

Various papers have been published at a national and local level regarding the impact of COVID-19 on the regional and local economy and on behaviours in terms of travel and working patterns. For example, a report by Public Health Wales outlines COVID-19 impacts on employment changes in Wales and the risk of job losses in North Wales <sup>[footnote 31]</sup>, a report by the North Wales Regional Skills Partnership sets out the impact of COVID-19 on the labour market <sup>[footnote 32]</sup>, and reports by Ipsos Mori for the Department for Transport present analysis on the impacts of COVID-19 on travel patterns in the UK, including Wales, in the first few months of the pandemic <sup>[footnote 33]</sup>.

In February 2021, the Welsh Government published 'Our Economic Reconstruction and Resilience Mission', setting out a plan for economic recovery from the pandemic. This reinforced the themes set out above and also highlighted the potentially permanent impacts of COVID-19 on work and travel patterns; outlining the Welsh Government's ambition to capitalise on the opportunities offered by this. For example, to continue the environmental benefits associated with increased home working (specifically reduced pollution and congestion). The 'Economic Resilience and Reconstruction Mission' sets a 'long-term ambition' for 30% of the workforce to work flexibly and remotely <sup>[footnote 34]</sup>. It is likely that this will result in reduced road usage with fewer people travelling to work. In assessing the outcomes of the road operations (such as road usage and journey times), the evaluation will need to recognise these shifts in working patterns.

Linked with this, the Welsh Government <sup>[footnote 35]</sup> has committed to work with trade unions, local authorities and passengers to build on trials of demand-responsive public transport; to invest a further £15 million to support active travel as an investment in public health and to achieve sustained changes in travel behaviour; and put clear emphasis on minimising the need to travel in the finalised Transport Strategy.

Further information regarding the impact of COVID-19 on the delivery of the operations is set out in the next section.

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#### Footnotes

[31] Public Health Wales (2021), [COVID-19 and employment changes in Wales \(phw.nhs.wales\)](https://phw.nhs.wales)

[32] North Wales Regional Skills Partnership (2022), [North Wales COVID-19 Labour Market Insights Summary Report \(rspnorth.wales\)](https://rspnorth.wales)

[33] Department for Transport (2020), [Travel behaviour, attitudes and social impact of COVID-19 \(gov.uk\)](https://gov.uk)

[34] Welsh Government (2021), [Our Economic Resilience and Reconstruction Mission](#), p.11

[35] Welsh Government (2020), [COVID-19 Reconstruction: Challenges and Priorities \(assembly.wales\)](https://assembly.wales)

### **3.6. Conclusions**

Overall, the strategic context for transport has changed substantially since the operation was approved, with a much greater focus on active travel and public transport as an alternative to investment in road schemes, and a stronger commitment, linked with Wales' climate change priorities, to reducing demand for road use. It should be noted however that the stated objectives of the A55 Abergwyngregyn operation included road safety improvements, additional active travel routes and improved access to public transport. Alongside improvements to the highway itself: these have, in policy alignment terms, become more important over time, and are augmented by the cross-cutting themes discussed further in Chapter 4.

The strategic connectivity afforded by the A55 also remains important to regional economic and transport strategy. This has, to a large extent, been reinforced by the continued emphasis on strategic economic opportunities west of Abergwyngregyn (especially on Anglesey and recently augmented by Freeport designation), for which the resilience of the A55 expressway will be significant.

## 4. Delivery progress

This chapter sets out the progress that has been made in delivering the Abergwyngregyn to Tai'r Meibion operation, focusing on delivery timescales and changes in scheme costs.

### 4.1. Delivery progress to date

The A55 Abergwyngregyn operation was approved for £13.81m ERDF funding in December 2016 and work commenced on the scheme in January 2017; the operation was originally due to complete in December 2021. Ymgynghoriaeth Gwynedd Consultancy (YGC) was appointed as the Employer's Agent for the scheme, and the construction contract was awarded to Alun Griffiths Contractors with Atkins appointed as the designers<sup>[footnote 36]</sup>.

Following the initial work on the scheme, including design and preliminary investigation, the draft Orders were published in August 2017 and subsequently made permanent, as there were no objections. The project decided to use an enabling works contract (in advance of the main construction contract) due to the time constraints on environmental work. The enabling works were completed between late 2018 and spring 2019 and involved environmental works as well as constructing some new accesses to farms.

In late February 2020, the Welsh Government was due to appoint Alun Griffiths as the design and build contractor, with construction work due to start in late March/ early April 2020. However, due to disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a delay in awarding the contract; in part, because the contractor was unable to commence construction activities as a result of COVID-19 restrictions (including lockdown). Following discussions with the contractor, the project team arranged for the contractor to progress other elements of the programme which were not site-based, such as the detailed design and the environmental, topographical and ground surveys. The construction start was delayed until September. It was considered that this would balance reducing risks as well as keeping momentum and progress with the scheme design.

The contract (and off-site work) subsequently commenced in June 2020 and construction work started on site in September 2020. Construction work has progressed since then and the contractor completed the planned works by the end of March 2023, a year and a half later than scheduled. The eastbound speed restriction was removed on 31st March 2023 and the westbound restriction was removed on 21st April 2023.

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#### Footnotes

[36] Welsh European Funding Office and Welsh Government (2020) A55 Abergwyngregyn to Tai'r Meibion Business Plan

The COVID-19 pandemic led to delays on the scheme due to key individuals isolating or unable to work due to illness which affected the work programme. There were also supply chain issues in terms of procurement and delivery of materials (e.g., the culverts). Alongside the COVID-19 pandemic, other reasons for the delay to the scheme included issues with the design work and scope growth (e.g., additional design and construction work on the underpasses, building a concrete barrier between the multi-user path and main carriageway). It was noted in the consultations that challenges with supply chains have been common across other similar schemes <sup>[footnote 37]</sup>.

Figures 4.1 and 4.2 below provide photos of the scheme before and after the road improvement works. Some of the key issues the scheme was trying to address, such as the gaps in the central reservation, grass verges and previous Wig cattle underpass <sup>[footnote 38]</sup> can be seen in Figure 4.1. Below this, a photo of the scheme post-completion shows the improvements to the main carriageway, including the new safety barrier, the new county road and Active Travel route running alongside the main carriageway, the new fencing and drainage system and the improved agricultural underpass.

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#### Footnotes

[37] [BBC Northern Ireland \(September 2022\), A6 market volatility and supply issues delaying upgrade](#)

[House of Commons Library \(2021\) UK supply chain problems](#)

[38] The Wig cattle underpass provides a passage underneath the A55 for livestock and small agricultural vehicles, as well as wildlife including bats.

**Figure 4.1 Photo of scheme before improvement works (Wig underpass and A55 looking westbound)**



**Figure 4.2: Photo of completed works as part of the A55 improvements between Abergwyngregyn and Tai'r Meibion**



Source: Welsh Government

## 4.2. Timescales

Summarising the narrative above, the original timescale for the operation is set out in Table 4.1, against the actual timetable for the operation. This indicates that the delivery of the operation progressed as planned, until spring 2020, with delays at the start of the pandemic and subsequently exacerbated during the construction phase.

**Table 4.1: Original and actual timetable for the A55 Abergwyngregyn operation**

	<b>Original timetable</b>	<b>Actual timetable</b>
<b>Publication of draft Orders</b>	Autumn 2016	Autumn 2016
<b>Enabling works contract commencement</b>	Late 2018	Late 2018
<b>Completion of enabling works contract</b>	Spring 2019	Spring 2019
<b>Start of main works construction</b>	Spring 2020	Autumn 2020
<b>Completion of new section of trunk road</b>	Autumn 2021	Spring 2023

Source: [A55: Abergwyngregyn to Tai'r Meibion improvements | GOV.WALES](#) and consultations with the project team

## 4.3. Expenditure

Total approved costs at the outset were £22.41 million, including contingency and optimism bias. ERDF funding approved was £14.90m, representing an intervention rate of 66.49%. Match funding amounting to £7.51m was to be provided towards the project costs by the Welsh Government.

Total project expenditure on construction costs was £21.70m by the end of the scheme, with the ERDF funding accounting for £20.009m. The operation has been through a couple of reprofiles, with final ERDF eligible expenditure coming within the original approved budget. The increase in the intervention rate from 66% to 92% was due to reallocation of funding within the broader programme of ERDF operations to maximise the portfolio spending.

Accounting for non-construction costs (including land costs and compensation), the overall final cost of the scheme was £30 million, with the balance incurred by the Welsh Government.

#### **4.4. Conclusions**

The operation experienced significant delay following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, which exactly coincided with the planned start of construction works. COVID-19 restrictions caused a five month delay in starting construction; subsequently, labour and materials shortages exacerbated the delay. The contractor completed the planned works by the end of March 2023 and all speed restrictions on the road were removed by mid-April 2023. Despite delays in starting and completing construction, and some higher costs linked with the COVID-19 pandemic, the operation was delivered within the total project costs anticipated at the time of ERDF approval.

## 5. Process evaluation findings

This chapter sets out the process evaluation findings in relation to the effectiveness of project management, communication and engagement and project monitoring systems.

### 5.1. Project management

The overall management and delivery model have remained as reported in the Interim Evaluation <sup>[footnote 39]</sup>. The Welsh Government's Transport Infrastructure Delivery Division was responsible for the delivery of the operation through the procurement of a private sector contractor which was responsible for construction.

There was clarity across the Project Delivery Team regarding roles and responsibilities for the A55 Abergwyngregyn operation. The specific arrangements were as follows:

- a Project Director and Project Engineer at the Welsh Government were responsible for overseeing the scheme
- Welsh Government was represented by an appointed Employer's Agent, Ymgynghoriaeth Gwynedd Consultancy (YGC) which ensured the works were done in accordance with the specification and contract
- the detailed design and construction work was undertaken by Alun Griffiths Contractors and Atkins
- on the construction site, the contractor's project manager was responsible for managing the contractor's operations and a supervisor from the Employer's Agent represented the Welsh Government

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#### Footnotes

[39] SQW (2021) [Interim Evaluation of ERDF Road Operations Also included in Annex B.](#)

The project management arrangements were described by the project delivery team as effective and working well. This was for three main reasons:

- a strong project delivery team, across the Welsh Government, the contractor and Employer's Agent, who were seen as experienced and knowledgeable. Good working relationships were developed which meant that the construction works progressed smoothly with no major issues raised
- effective information flows were introduced which were useful when any delays to the scheme or particular issues needed to be resolved. These were raised early and discussed openly so that there was a collaborative problem solving process and mitigations could be put in place. For example, re-ordering the work programme whilst waiting for certain materials (e.g., culverts) to be delivered
- the Employer's Agent and contractor were local and had good relationships with the main stakeholders (e.g., local councils and North and Mid Wales Trunk Road agency) as well as the statutory organisations (BT OpenReach, British Gas, Dŵr Cymru). Knowledge of key contacts and how these organisations operate was particularly beneficial when issues arose on site which required a joint approach or resolution. For example, getting a BT diversion in place sooner so that it did not coincide with and affect the works on the main carriageway

The strong project management arrangements meant that whilst delays were experienced to the construction works due to COVID-19, the team worked together with the Welsh Government to advance other aspects of delivery, such as the detailed design work, which were not site-based. This helped to mitigate some of the delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and demonstrated the flexibility and adaptability within the project delivery team.

The COVID-19 pandemic also led to resource challenges during the construction, due to staff absences, and longer lead in times for the delivery of materials. This required building more contingency time into the workplan and being flexible to adapt to changing circumstances. Consultees on the delivery team thought that, whilst the project did experience delays, taking this proactive approach had helped to minimise these and this was seen as a key lesson to take into future project delivery.

## 5.2. Communication and engagement

Overall, feedback from local consultees was positive on the level of communication and engagement on the operation. This was primarily due to the appointment of a Public Liaison Officer (PLO) by the contractor. The PLO proactively engaged with community councils, local residents and other local stakeholders to inform them about the progress of the scheme and facilitate community benefits, such as site clearance work for a local rugby club, careers events with local schools and providing advice and support to local community councils.

The contractor was proactive in maintaining regular communications with local stakeholders, which included sending out a monthly newsletter, updating a webpage with information on the scheme <sup>[footnote 40]</sup> and having a notice board on site with information. It was reported that the contractor had been proactive in maintaining contact with stakeholders and flexible when specific needs were raised. For example, they worked with a local bus company to avoid any significant disruption to their operation and liaised with the local hospital to prevent any problems for staff when changing shift, and to ensure that any consultants on call could get through the road when required (by providing a contact number to call). There was a recommendation in the Interim Evaluation linked to increased communication with local communities on progress with the scheme and the work undertaken by the contractor suggests this has been addressed.

Alongside this, the Welsh Government also maintained and updated a clear and informative webpage with information on the scheme <sup>[footnote 41]</sup>. This provided an overview of the scheme, including its rationale, progress to date, a timetable and next steps and some relevant publications.

However, wider stakeholders at some of the local councils (e.g., those in economic development and tourism) said at the time of the Interim Evaluation that they had limited detailed knowledge of the scheme and would have benefited from more information. In particular, they thought it would have been helpful to share an overview of the key activities and updated timescales publicly so stakeholders could better understand progress and when construction activities were taking place.

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### Footnotes

[40] [A55 Abergwyngregyn to Tai'r Meibion Improvements – Griffiths Community](#)

[41] [A55: Abergwyngregyn to Tai'r Meibion improvements | GOV.WALES](#)

### **5.3. Monitoring systems**

Project monitoring systems were in place at various levels, including the Project Delivery Team, and within the Welsh Government, the Infrastructure Delivery Division and WEFO.

#### **5.3.1. Project Delivery Team**

The programme monitoring systems were considered to be efficient and working well by consultees at the Welsh Government and the contractor. The systems in place enabled the team to monitor progress of delivery, manage and respond to risks, and ensure alignment across the various teams. The monitoring systems in place included:

- during construction, monitoring of delivery against key milestones was undertaken on site through the Employer's Agent
- the contractor provided a monthly programme, which set out their activities for the month ahead and the works to be undertaken to complete construction. The Employer's Agent would review this and it would be revised as necessary
- a monthly progress report was produced by the contractor for the Welsh Government regarding the operation activities and achievements, which was informed by data collected on site during construction. For example, this data included key progress activities, timesheets and the number of hours worked each month
- monthly progress meetings were held between the Welsh Government, the contractor and the Employer's Agent, during which project progress was discussed and key issues were raised
- a risk register was regularly reviewed and reported on at these meetings
- quarterly finance meetings were in place and commercial updates were discussed alongside any issues or risks that could lead to cost escalation

During the COVID-19 pandemic, adaptations were introduced to ensure consistent monitoring arrangements. This involved switching to virtual meetings when key team members started working remotely. More frequent catch-ups were introduced at the start of the pandemic when its implications were unclear. During construction, as restrictions eased, some meetings were held face-to-face.

#### **5.3.2. Welsh Government Infrastructure Delivery Team**

Welsh Government had various systems in place to monitor delivery. They were kept informed of progress through monthly progress reports and meetings. The monthly progress report included sections on progress updates, profile against spend, the forward plan, CCT, monitoring and evaluation, publicity, procurement and risks. On site, monitoring of progress was undertaken by the Employer's Agent and reported back to the Welsh Government.

Overall, representatives from the Welsh Government thought that the systems in place to monitor delivery were effective and allowed an opportunity for critical reflection and review of the contractor's programme by the Employer's Agent. It was thought that an appropriate amount of information was shared with the Welsh Government, with an understanding that more detailed information was available on site as required.

### **5.3.3. Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO)**

Stakeholders from WEFO were satisfied with the monitoring systems that had been in place for this scheme. They received comprehensive updates through a quarterly meeting with all the relevant stakeholders and progress reports. This covered activity on site against the delivery profile, upcoming delivery schedules, financials and any issues. There was a recommendation in the Interim Evaluation linked to more regular reporting to WEFO and the evidence suggests this has been addressed. There was also a regular dialogue between Welsh Government's Infrastructure Delivery Division and WEFO and the wider delivery team which meant issues could be picked up outside of the quarterly forum.

Alongside this, stakeholders from WEFO had also been involved in reprofiles of the scheme. These reprofiles were undertaken to grant a time extension to the project, and to enable additional funding to be reallocated to this scheme from the ERDF funds, due to changes to the overarching portfolio of projects. In order to undertake the reprofiling, various meetings were held with key stakeholders to understand scheme progress and expected activity. Following this, the beneficiary submitted a revised business plan to outline the changes and this then went through WEFO's approval process.

## **5.4. Conclusions**

Overall, project management and monitoring arrangements were efficient, and stakeholders regarded liaison between the contractor, the Welsh Government's Infrastructure Delivery Team and WEFO as effective. The Public Liaison Officer role appears to have been especially effective in supporting communications with wider stakeholders.

## 6. Cross-Cutting Themes

The cross-cutting themes were an important part of the 2014-20 ERDF programme. The Operational Programme noted 'integration' as a key design principle, ensuring that EU investments work together and with other programmes to deliver better outcomes. The ERDF programme also coincided with the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015, which places a duty on all public bodies to work to achieve the seven defined 'wellbeing goals' (regardless of whether these goals reflect the primary objectives of the organisation or project). Within the spirit of the Act, public organisations ought to consider how "the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales" can be 'mainstreamed' within the delivery of multiple interventions <sup>[footnote 42]</sup>.

Consequently, there was a strong focus on the cross-cutting themes within the Abergwyngregyn to Tai'r Meibion operation. This chapter introduces the CCT, explains how they were integrated into the delivery process and identifies key outputs and benefits.

### 6.1. Introducing the cross-cutting themes

The Operational Programme set out three CCT:

- sustainable development, including opportunities to promote low-carbon transport solutions, increase resource efficiency, support innovation in energy production and supply and "contribute towards sustainable development objectives for environmental protection, resource efficiency, climate change mitigation and adaptation, disaster resilience and risk prevention and management"
- equal opportunities and non-discrimination, focused on the integration of equal opportunities, gender mainstreaming and the enabling the use of the Welsh language
- tackling poverty and social exclusion, including through measures to enable people at risk of social exclusion to access opportunities in the labour market

A summary of the CCT contributions set out in the Abergwyngregyn to Tai'r Meibion business case is set out below:

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#### Footnotes

[42] [Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015](#)

**Table 6.1: A55 Abergwyngregyn contribution to CCT actions (taken from operation Business Plan)**

<b>Cross Cutting Theme</b>	<b>Agreed actions</b>
<b>Sustainable development</b>	<p>Along with publishing the Draft Orders, the Environmental Impact Assessment and Environmental Statement were also published assessing the likely significant adverse and beneficial environmental effects of the scheme.</p> <p>Alun Griffiths Contractors (AGC) will review and update the environmental data throughout the contract period and shall undertake surveys as required, including protected species and habitat surveys, within the scheme location, to establish their presence or absence during the accepted survey season and survey period duration. They are required to provide evidence that the scope of the surveys has been agreed with Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and Cadw as necessary.</p> <p>AGC will be required to actively manage, and reduce the carbon footprint, wherever possible.</p>
<b>Waste management and material resources</b>	<p>AGC will be required to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify methods to reduce waste and waste to landfill and increase reused and recycled content, and report to the Welsh Government at the end of each key stage the financial and practical implications of implementing the recommended actions</li> <li>• work with the project team to ensure that design actions to reduce construction waste and increase reused / recycled content are implemented</li> <li>• agree with the Welsh Government the level of waste reduction to pursue</li> <li>• develop the Site Waste Management Plan from an early design stage and include the waste forecasts and data on reduction targets and actions</li> <li>• increase supply capacity of future renewable energy projects</li> </ul>
<b>Tackling poverty and social inclusion</b>	<p>Consult with local access groups, 3rd Sector organisations and local community groups.</p>

<b>Equal Opportunities and Gender Mainstreaming</b>	<p>Language / Accessibility: The operation also needs to build-in Welsh language considerations. For example, ensure all materials, websites and publicity aimed at the public are made available in accessible and bilingual formats.</p> <p>Social Clauses / Community Benefit Schemes: Wherever possible, work with contractors to incorporate a social clause / community benefit scheme, which offer some form of re-investment into the community via work experience / trainee placements and employment opportunities, invests back into the local community for example: sponsoring local football teams or paying to have community centre redecorated etc.</p> <p>Support / incorporate options that encourage healthier lifestyles such as walking and cycling.</p>
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Source: A55 Abergwyngregyn to Tai'r Meibion Business Plan, WEFO (July 2020)

Some elements of the CCT have a statutory element. For example, a Welsh Government-led capital project of this nature will have a statutory obligation to prepare an Environmental Impact Assessment and an Environmental Site Management Plan, and to ensure that communications are bilingual. Nevertheless, the CCT team within WEFO seeks to capture both statutory delivery (which should be captured through audit processes anyway), as well as actions that go beyond specific statutory commitments.

## **6.2. Overall progress**

Good progress has been made against the CCT, as outlined in the progress reports, particularly since construction work started on site. Welsh Government consultees thought that the contractor had been proactive in delivering the CCT and had gone over and above what was expected, particularly on community benefits. This is notable as the restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic did put some constraints on certain activities, e.g., going into schools. The following paragraphs considers each of the CCT in turn.

### 6.3. Sustainable development

Sustainability was a key objective for the contractor to ensure environmental considerations were taken into account. Some examples of activity undertaken include:

- monitoring stations onsite to monitor noise, vibration, and dust levels. These helped to manage activity levels on site and mitigations were put in place as needed to minimise the impact on residents. For example, in relation to noise and vibration, noise attenuation fencing was used, working hours for specific activities were restricted and work methods were adapted to minimise disturbance
- procuring labour and materials locally helped to reduce costs and carbon emissions. The contractor spoke to Careers Wales and the local supply chain before and after they were awarded the contract to discuss the skills and supplies needed. They also helped local suppliers who were not on their supply chain achieve Constructionline silver accreditation so that they could supply materials to the scheme. Examples of local procurement include building products procured locally from Huw Gray Builders Merchant in Gaerwen and Mochdre; fuel used on site purchased from Oil4Wales at Blaenau Ffestiniog, and concrete sourced from the Hanson quarry at Penmaenmawr
- the contractor has sought to retain as much of the habitat as possible in undertaking the work, especially in terms of hedgerows. Landscaping has also been undertaken wherever possible, including planting new hedges
- in terms of biodiversity, the clearance work was done within the appropriate window and any planting has been kept separate to the main works contract so that it can be handled by a suitably experienced contractor
- sustainable design principles have been used for certain aspects of the site, e.g., new stream crossings underneath the A55. The designers and contractors have been working with Natural Resources Wales to make sure this work is done in a sustainable way

A Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) was produced prior to the commencement of construction in order to set out the environmental management system requirements, minimise any potential adverse effects during construction and translate committed mitigation into site procedures. It was kept as a 'live' document during construction and updated as necessary.

The team arrangements in relation to environmental management were seen as working well. There were clear roles and responsibilities set out in the CEMP, including an Environmental Manager, an Environmental Co-ordinator, an Environmental Clerk of Works and an Ecology Lead. The contractor was keen to make sure they understood and complied with the environmental commitments in their contract and involved stakeholders throughout to tap into their knowledge and expertise.

The operation also contributed to sustainable development through the integration of green and blue infrastructure into the scheme (for example through hedgerows to mitigate the impact of the road, and the creation of wildlife tunnels). The integration of active travel and access to public transport into the operation also contributed to the CCT through the scheme's core activities.

### **6.3.1. Waste management**

The contractor was committed to minimising waste and reusing materials as much as possible on site. All material that was excavated was screened and any suitable material was stored on site, e.g., topsoil. Any other material that was excavated was graded and reviewed for its suitability for reuse, with material planed from the old A55 offered for re-use to farmers for agricultural tracks. Within the site, any waste was dealt with by a waste disposal contractor who separated out the waste.

## 6.4. Tackling Poverty and Social Inclusion

Since the contract award, Alun Griffiths had a Public Liaison Officer (PLO) in post who was responsible for contact between the project team and stakeholders. This included businesses, residents, road users and local landowners. The PLO ensured that all stakeholders were aware of the operation, its progress and timescales. In particular, the contractor maintained a good relationship and open dialogue with residents living next to the site compound.

Due to COVID-19, the contractor was unable to run a public exhibition event after they were awarded the contract. However, they decided instead to put together a newsletter to introduce themselves and set out the key dates for the scheme. During construction, the PLO worked with community councils to distribute a regular newsletter to local residents. Alongside this, Alun Griffiths set up a community website which had key dates, project bulletins, progress videos and traffic updates to keep the local community informed of activities and progress. People could register their interest in receiving updates on the scheme.

A Considerate Constructors Scheme visit took place in October 2022 which gave the site a score of 44 out of 50, which was equivalent to the performance level 'Excellent' <sup>[footnote 43]</sup>.

## 6.5. Equal Opportunities and Gender Mainstreaming

In terms of promoting the Welsh language, the Welsh Government is obliged to publish everything bilingually and this has been the case in all material produced and at public engagement events. The contractor and Employer's Agent both had Welsh speakers in their teams. Alun Griffiths is a Welsh contractor and employs locally. Almost 75% of the workforce on site spoke Welsh and they all lived locally. The contractor also contributed to 'Welsh in the Workplace' careers events with Careers Wales which provided an opportunity to promote the ways in which Welsh was being used on site.

In terms of Active Travel, improvements to existing Active Travel infrastructure were always part of the scheme, but these have been improved and the scheme has delivered more than originally expected. The Welsh Government delivery team consulted Cycling UK, Sustrans and the local councils during the scheme's development to understand how they could improve Active Travel and get people to use more sustainable transport options. This informed the Active Travel interventions delivered by the scheme.

During construction, an Active Travel forum was set up to facilitate dialogue between the contractor, Employer's Agent and key stakeholders. This group met on several occasions to discuss project delivery activities and upcoming works and provided an opportunity for key

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### Footnotes

[43] The [Considerate Constructors Scheme](#) is an independently managed, not-for-profit organisation that works with the construction industry and the public to raise standards and build trust.

stakeholders to provide feedback and voice their concerns. These meetings were seen as helpful in terms of information sharing and collaborative problem solving.

A representative from Cycling UK reported that they had a good working relationship with the project delivery team who had been responsive to their comments and feedback. Cycling UK made representations to ensure a reasonable alternative route was available whilst the national cycle route five was affected by the works. One key improvement was the newly separate multi-user path which runs alongside the carriageway with a safety barrier in between. It was thought that this would encourage more Active Travel.

In terms of community benefits, the contractor created a Good Causes Committee made up of members of the on-site team who met regularly to decide which initiatives proposed by the community the scheme should support. It included a mix of ages and on-site roles. One consultee from the contractor thought that it worked really well and made sure the scheme supported a range of initiatives supported by a cross-section of the on-site team. There was also a project budget which was available to spend within the community. Some examples of initiatives supported included:

- site clearance works at Bangor Rugby Club to enable them to create a new recreational area which they can use for events and to generate additional income
- working with the Wellbeing team at Bryn y Neuadd Hospital in Llanfairfechan to provide labour to work on their allotments
- virtual lessons were delivered to local Welsh-medium and English-medium schools and extensive engagement with Careers Wales, including supporting mock video interviews, provision of worksheets, attending careers events, and delivering presentations
- sponsorship of a local under 8s girls' football team to purchase a new sports kit and training aids
- working in partnership with a local community council to set up a new car parking area to relieve parking problems near the Aber Falls tourist destination
- surplus laptops were donated to local secondary schools
- advice given to a local community council on the cost of works to improve an amenity area
- work experience placements, apprentices and training on site

## **6.6. Contribution to the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act**

The road scheme operation has contributed to achieving the goals of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act, particularly those linked to a prosperous Wales and cohesive communities. This has been achieved through connecting communities, improving access to services, helping people to access work and improving access to markets for businesses in North Wales. Linked to the achievements of the CCT, consultees thought that the scheme had contributed to the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act through the extensive community engagement, local employment, use of local supply chains and environmental benefits. From a climate change perspective, the scheme has improved the resilience of the road infrastructure for future generations, particularly flood prevention.

## **6.7. Monitoring systems**

Progress against the CCT was reported at the monthly progress meetings between Welsh Government, the Employer's Agent and the contractor and in progress reports. This included reporting on activity undertaken to date, planned activity and raising any risks or issues. Alongside this, the contractor had a cost plan to monitor spend related to the CCT against budget and used the community benefit measurement tool to demonstrate their performance against targets.

At the interim evaluation stage, it was noted that communications between the project delivery team and the CCT managers at WEFO was not as good as it could have been. However, this appears to have improved greatly over the course of delivery: a member of the CCT team reported that over time, "the whole relationship has changed". This was largely ascribed to changes in personnel and, over time, delivery colleagues developing a better understanding of what is required.

In the latter part of the operation delivery process, the CCT were discussed with WEFO during quarterly meetings, which allowed WEFO to understand progress to date and achievement against the outputs. The contractor also provided case studies and examples of this activity. When they submitted a claim to say they had achieved a target, the contractor had to upload case study evidence. All claims had been submitted by the end of March 2023.

## **6.8. Looking to the future**

In terms of embedding the CCT in future projects, the main suggestion from consultees was to ensure they are included in the tender and contract documentation, as they had been for the A55 operation, to ensure contractors are aware of the requirements early on. This also provides adequate time for contractors to consider how they can be achieved, and if any additional activity can be delivered. The CCT can then be monitored during project delivery to ensure they are achieved. Consultees thought it would be useful to continue this approach.

It should be noted however that the concept of CCT is strongly integrated into European funding, and central management resourcing via WEFO has been important in raising awareness of the CCT. The CCT team described their role as a supportive one, rather than one based on 'compliance', and this appears to have been successful in this case, given the extent of delivery against the CCT. As European funding comes to an end, it will be important to consider how CCT (or an equivalent based on the Well-being of Future Generations Act) can be embedded in future projects.

## **6.9. Conclusions**

The operation had a positive record in the delivery of the CCT. A wide range of actions were taken, which exceeded the original targets. This reflects both the importance attached to the CCT in the Operational Programme and business case and the commitment of the contractor and project team. While there were some communication challenges between the project team and the CCT team at WEFO in the early stages of the programme, which were reflected in the interim evaluation report, these were subsequently resolved.

## 7. Impact evaluation findings and assessment of wider outcomes

This section contains the impact evaluation findings. It assesses progress against the operation's outputs and outcomes, the extent to which wider outcomes have been, or will be, delivered, and considers the operation's value for money.

### 7.1. Outputs

The scheme was expected to achieve a number of outputs. There were two ERDF outputs and five project outputs, as outlined in the business case and environmental statement. Construction years of employment <sup>[footnote 44]</sup> was not set out in the operation business case but was identified and calculated by the evaluator as a construction activity output. While the jobs were not central to the fundamental rationale for investment, they were an ancillary effect and were considered a relevant output from the construction activities.

By the time of the final evaluation, the majority of the outputs had been achieved, including the two ERDF outputs. The works on the main carriageway were completed and the road was open to road users. The scheme overdelivered on the amount of footway or cycleway created, with 4km of new or reconstructed paths for Active Travel users, against a target of 2km. Half of this was complete by 30th November 2022, using ERDF funding, with an additional 2km alongside the A55 completed within the post-November 2022 works, funded by the Welsh Government. The Active Travel provision evolved over time, partly in response to the increasing importance of this as a policy area for the Welsh Government.

Alongside this; the agricultural access track was completed and in use, a footway to improve pedestrian access to the local bus service was completed, the existing cattle passes had been extended and the drainage system improved. Training was provided in excess of the required hours and one apprentice was trained onsite.

In terms of construction years of employment, 420,272 construction hours were completed onsite which equated to approximately 222 construction years of employment. This was slightly below the estimated 241 construction years of employment.

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#### Footnotes

[44] Construction years of employment calculates an estimation of the number of construction jobs generation by the scheme based on the total project construction capital cost using the direct jobs co-efficients by category of activity. The coefficients express the number of workers required over one year to deliver £1m of construction investment.

**Table 7.1: Achievement against outputs**

	<b>Achieved?</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>ERDF outputs</b>		
<b>2.2km of reconstructed or upgraded roads (including TEN-T)</b>	Yes	Completed and open to road users.
<b>2km of footpath or cycleway created or reconstructed</b>	Yes	County road completed. Final work undertaken on multi-user path. In total, there will be 4km of new or reconstructed paths, funded by both ERDF and Welsh Government.
<b>Broader outputs</b>		
<b>An agricultural access track created</b>	Yes	Completed and in use.
<b>A footway (2m wide) between Tan yr Allt cottages and Llain y Ffwlbart to improve pedestrian access to the local bus service</b>	Yes	Completed including bus stop and appropriate signage.
<b>Extension of the existing cattle underpasses at Tai'r Meibion and Wig farms</b>	Yes	Completed and in use.
<b>An improved drainage system on the A55</b>	Yes	Completed.
<b>Deliver 135-person days of training &amp; 4 places on Apprenticeship+ programme</b>	Partly	Training provided in excess of the required hours. One apprentice onsite.
<b>241 construction years of employment</b> <sup>[footnote 45]</sup>	Partly	420,272 construction hours completed which equates to approx. 222 years

Source: Consultations with the project delivery team and photographic evidence

Footnotes

[45] Estimated 241 construction years of employment. Construction years of employment calculated using a labour coefficient benchmark from a [Homes & Communities Agency best practice note \(pdf\)](#). This is based on 2011 values which inflation rates have been applied to. Note that while the jobs are not central to the fundamental rationale for investment, they are an ancillary effect and are considered a relevant output from the construction activities. The output estimate will be updated at the final evaluation stage when scheme specific information is available from project delivery. From 31 May to 2 July 2021, 115 employees worked on site, including direct employees, labour only, subcontractors and other.

## 7.2. Outcomes

The scheme was expected to deliver against four outcomes. There was one ERDF Result Indicator and three additional outcomes. These were:

- 5-10% increase in average speed along the A55 road (baseline average in the business plan of 86kph <sup>[footnote 46]</sup>) (ERDF Result Indicator)
- improvements in travel time reliability (e.g. through addressing congestion bottlenecks)
- improved network resilience
- improved safety by removing the need for farm vehicles to join the fast-flowing traffic

In the original business plan, the baseline data used for average speed outcome was calculated using TrafficMaster data which was supplied by the Department for Transport (DfT). The ERDF operation was set up using this as a specific baseline, and was used in the approval of the scheme for European funds. The ERDF Result Indicator was a 5-10% increase in average speed along the A55, from a baseline average of 86 kph, defined in the business plan. The DfT has discontinued using the TrafficMaster dataset and Welsh Government has also stopped using this data source. Welsh Government has adopted INRIX to replace TrafficMaster in the evaluation of road speed data.

These two are different data sources for the same variable (speed). INRIX will now be used to measure the average speed data for the A55. TrafficMaster used data on commercial vehicle tracking only, whereas INRIX data is based on GPS data from cars with built-in sat nav technology. This includes commercial fleets, delivery and taxi vehicles, as well as consumer vehicles, smartphones, cameras, incidents and other sensors to collect data. Therefore INRIX is more robust. This data is also more current and up to date than TrafficMaster.

Evidencing the outcomes from the A55 operation was dependent on the completion of the scheme plus a period of review and data gathering to monitor the effects, and, as such, it was too early to be able to evidence them at the time of the final evaluation. However, consultees from the delivery team were confident that they would be achieved in due course. The key reasons for this were removing the farm vehicle access points from the main carriageway, providing designated underpasses and county road access for farm vehicles, improving traffic flow, reducing the likelihood of accidents, and improving drainage systems to prevent flooding.

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### Footnotes

[46] The original baseline was calculated using TrafficMaster data.

### 7.3. Assessment of wider outcomes

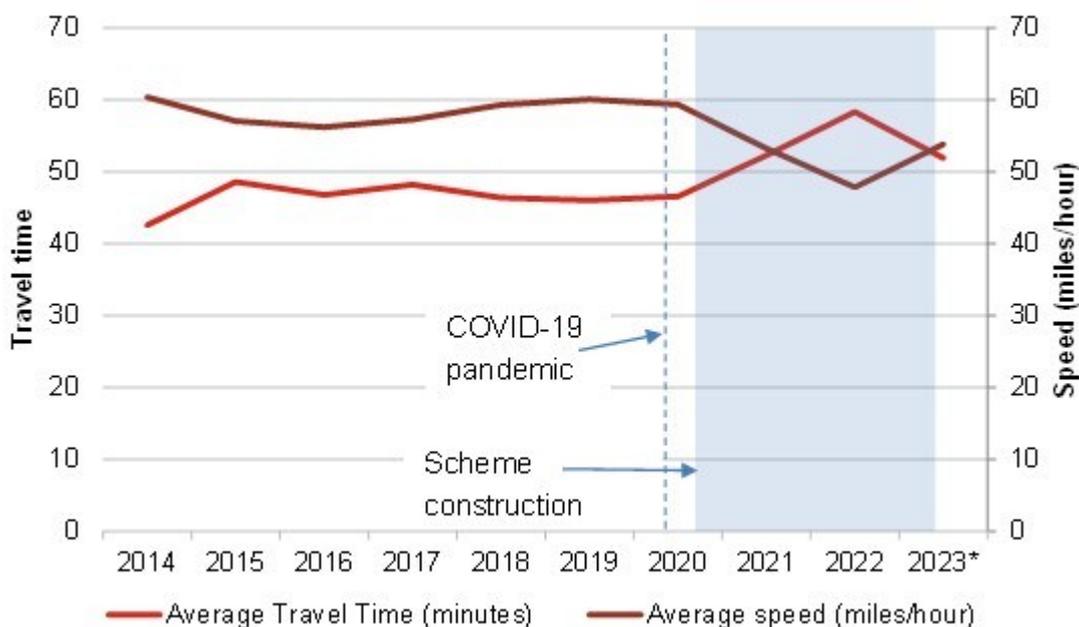
Various wider outcomes were anticipated as a result of the A55 Abergwyngregyn scheme, as set out in the logic model (see Annex A). This section sets out stakeholder perspectives on the outcomes that were likely to be realised.

#### 7.3.1. Improvements to travel time reliability

The most common anticipated outcome of the A55 Abergwyngregyn scheme noted by consultees was improvements to journey times and journey reliability. Consultees thought this would be particularly beneficial during summer months due to the increased levels of traffic as a result of people choosing to holiday in North Wales. One consultee noted that as the works had reduced the likelihood of disruption and accidents in the future, this would enhance travel times overall in the long run.

One consultee described that, from a community perspective, the main rationale appeared to be to increase the speed of traffic along the A55. This was considered to have a more strategic focus rather than to benefit the local community directly. As a result, some local people were concerned about the level of disruption they would experience as a result of construction to the benefit of the wider road network. However, local benefits were anticipated by other consultees, such as improving the wait times in accessing the A55 from particular junctions.

**Figure 7.1: Average travel time (minutes) and average speed (mph) on the A55 per annum (minutes); Tal-y-bont (Bangor) (J11) to Penmaenmawr (J15a)**



Source: SQW analysis of INRIX travel data <sup>[footnote 47]</sup> \*Data for 2023 covers January-April

#### Footnotes

[47] [UK Highways Agency – INRIX data \(inrix.com\)](https://www.inrix.com)

INRIX highway data, from Tal-y-bont to Penmaenmawr, has been analysed to understand changes in the average travel time (minutes) and average speed (mph) on the A55 and any changes over time. This shows that the average travel time has remained relatively static from 2014 to 2020, with a slight increase in 2021 and 2022, whilst average travel speed has reduced slightly from 60 in 2014 to 48 in 2022. These changes are likely a result of speed restrictions while the works on the main carriageway were undertaken.

Due to data discontinuities with the original baseline data, a new baseline from 2016 has been calculated for comparative purposes. The original metric used in the business case (86 kph/53 mph) was calculated using Trafficmaster data which is no longer recorded in the same format. Therefore, a new methodology needs to be used. For consistency, a new baseline has been calculated using INRIX data for the purposes of comparing performance in future years. It has been calculated using vehicle average speed data for the month of May 2016 between 8-9am for the two road directions. The baseline average speed for both directions across all days of the week is 63 mph <sup>[footnote 48]</sup>. Calculating a new baseline does not mean that the original target has been rebased, it simply enables future years to be compared with the pre-investment position on a new dataset.

In addition, some initial data has been analysed comparing average speed and average travel time post-construction, once speed restrictions had been removed from both carriageways, with the new baseline data. Comparing 2016 and 2023, average speed increased by 3% and travel time reduced by 2% travelling eastwards in 2023. In terms of travelling westwards, there was a 1% decrease in average speed and a 1% increase in travel time in 2023. Increases in the average speed were higher on weekends (5-7%) than weekdays (1-2%). This data will need to be analysed again in future to determine whether the scheme has resulted in shorter journey times and a 5-10% increase in the average speed.

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#### Footnotes

[48] To ensure this captures almost free flowing traffic average speed, data has been filtered to exclude junction information and only includes time periods when there were no reported road closures.

### 7.3.2. Improved network resilience

The resilience of the network was expected to improve significantly as a result of the highway improvements. Previously, a number of challenges were experienced on the road due to flooding and safety issues, which often resulted in road closures. One consultee stated that this had a significant impact on businesses and emergency services because of a lack of alternative viable routes. By alleviating flooding issues, the scheme can also be seen as contributing to adaptations to climate change.

Data from the North Wales Traffic Management centre on all incidents reported on the A55 between J11 and J15a indicated that between December 2019 and January 2023 11 instances of flooding were reported (one in 2019, four in 2020, three in 2021, two in 2022 and one in 2023 <sup>[footnote 49]</sup>). There were three instances of flooding relating to J12 Tal-y-bont in 2019 and 2020, pre-construction, and one incident relating to J13 Abergwyngregyn in February 2022, during construction. The extent of the 11 incidents varied, with some affecting one lane whilst others affected multiple lanes and not all led to the carriageway closing. The data on whether the scheme has reduced the likelihood of flooding is inconclusive at this stage and should continue to be monitored to discern whether the scheme has reduced the likelihood of flooding <sup>[footnote 50]</sup>.

Improved network resilience was also seen to have regional benefits, as the reduction in road closures or disruption on the network benefits those travelling on the A55 to the port in Holyhead or using the road for business purposes. A couple of consultees noted that there would be indirect benefits for Anglesey linked to greater resilience and safety on the A55. As referenced earlier, this may be reinforced by the announcement of the new Freeport.

“Much of Anglesey’s economic development activity trades off the fact that Holyhead is a gateway port between Ireland and the UK (and beyond). Having a well maintained, modern and safe trunk road is integral to this offer, so this project supports the wider economic ambitions in the area.”: Local Authority representative

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#### Footnotes

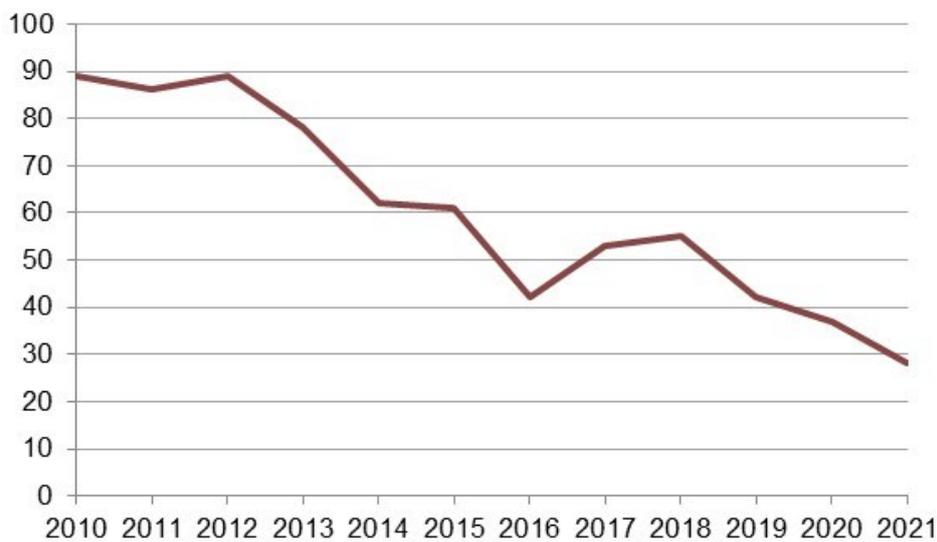
[49] The instance of flooding in 2023 related to J14 Madryn, which is outside the scope of the road scheme.

[50] In future, the data on the number of reported flooding incidents needs to be paired with data on the rainfall measured at the time the flooding happened. With appropriate historical data, this would allow a comparison between the level of rainfall pre- and post- the road improvements that trigger flooding.

### 7.3.3. Reduction in the number of collisions

Consultees noted that the road improvements were likely to lead to a reduction in the number of accidents, particularly due to removing farm vehicle access points. Analysis of accident data on the whole A55 shows that from 2010 to 2019 there were, on average, 60 accidents per annum (see Figure 7.2). Over this period, the highest number of accidents were observed in 2010 and 2012 (89). Since then, the number of accidents per annum has steadily declined (to 28 in 2021). This data follows a similar trend to that seen across Wales as a whole, with the number of accidents halving between 2020 and 2021. Accident data should continue to be monitored to determine whether the scheme has partly contributed to a reduction in accidents.

**Figure 7.2: Number of accidents per annum recorded on the A55**



Source: SQW analysis of Accident level data, StatsWales

### **7.3.4. Increased provision and improved experience for pedestrians and cyclists**

The section of A55 carriageway being upgraded was not suitable for pedestrians and cyclists and presented a potential hazard to this group. The operation has improved provision for pedestrians and cyclists through a new, segregated road which runs adjacent to the eastbound carriageway between the Tal-y-Bont Interchange and Abergwyngregyn Interchange. Consultees thought that this would make Active Travel safer and more attractive. It also adds to the wider improvements to Active Travel that are being undertaken by Gwynedd Council <sup>[footnote 51]</sup>.

At the time of the Interim Evaluation, one community consultee explained that this was a notable positive for the local village and reiterated the Town Council's support for the route. The walking and cycling provision aimed to encourage healthier lifestyles and permeability of the local area <sup>[footnote 52]</sup>.

### **7.3.5. Improved journey times and journey reliability for public transport**

As a result of the highway improvements, it was expected that journey times and journey reliability would also improve for public transport, namely buses operating on the route. The journey time savings could increase the attractiveness of this as a mode of transport. While there was limited detail known on the plans for public transport on the A55, consultees described that there was greater opportunity to promote the use of public transport and to look at alternative fuels (e.g., electric buses) to support wider environmental objectives.

### **7.3.6. Enhanced biodiversity through replanting hedgerows and trees as well as improved access underneath the carriageway**

Consultees noted that environmental benefits, such as promoting biodiversity, were expected through the operation. These included improved underpasses along the scheme to allow animals to safely cross under the carriageway, environmental fencing to prevent mammals crossing the main carriageway, and replanting hedgerows.

### **7.3.7. Reduction in noise pollution**

It was anticipated that the new road surface, coupled with the environmental works, such as planting hedgerows, would help to reduce noise from traffic on the A55 disturbing the community. This has been proven by academic research <sup>[footnote 53]</sup>. The reduction in noise pollution was thought to be particularly beneficial to those living closest to the road.

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#### Footnotes

[51] [Active travel \(llyw.cymru\)](http://llyw.cymru)

[52] Welsh Government (2020) A55 Abergwyngregyn to Tai'r Meibion Business Plan

[53] Fern Ow, L. and Ghosh, S. (2017) *Urban cities and road traffic noise: Reduction through vegetation* Applied Acoustics; Biocca et al (2019) *Noise attenuation provided by hedges* Journal of Agricultural Engineering

## 7.4. Value for money assessment

During the development of the scheme, and in order to evaluate the economic benefits generated by the proposed works, an economic appraisal was undertaken by Gwynedd Consultancy in 2008 using Transport Users Benefit Appraisal (TUBA 1.7a). Based on a number of assumptions, this produced a benefit to cost ratio of 0.221. This did not include accident benefits as TUBA does not calculate accident benefits <sup>[footnote 54]</sup>. Another economic assessment was calculated using a cost benefit analysis (COBA) to assess the impact of the scheme in terms of accident rates and costs. Based on a number of assumptions, this produced a benefit to cost (BCR) ratio of 1.723.

Typically, a BCR of 1.7 would be considered as offering medium value for money. It should be noted however that the economic appraisal took place several years ago – and eight years before the operation was approved for ERDF funding. To provide a fresh assessment of value for money, it would be possible to re-run the appraisal using updated usage and accident/ incident data once sufficient time has elapsed to enable evidence to become available, the final outturn costs and current assumptions relating to whole-life costs and environmental disbenefits. This may be a useful exercise to provide updated evidence on the economic value of road schemes in the context of the Welsh Government’s current transport policies.

As the scheme was delivered within the original budget and it is expected to achieve its outcomes, this would suggest that the BCR of 1.7 would be achieved, or even slightly surpassed given the additional benefits delivered, e.g., construction years of employment.

From a qualitative perspective, consultees were asked whether they thought the scheme would deliver value for money. It is generally hard for most consultees to provide an informed view on this, since the alternative use of the investment is unknown. But on the whole, consultees were in agreement that the scheme offered public value, in broad terms. The reasons for this included the safety improvements and the future climate resilience. It was also noted that the scheme has implemented lower maintenance options, such as choosing a concrete barrier rather than a steel barrier. Research has shown that concrete barriers are stronger, safer and require less maintenance than metal barriers. This will reduce costs in the long run which makes it a better value option <sup>[footnote 55]</sup>. However, there were some concerns raised about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and changes to commuting habits, which would not have been forecast at the time of the original value for money assessment. Were an economic appraisal of the operation to be re-run, these factors could be taken into account.

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### Footnotes

[54] Accident benefits represent the value of lives saved and non-fatal accidents avoided.

[55] National Highways (2023), [Concrete barrier takes shape \(nationalhighways.co.uk\)](https://www.nationalhighways.co.uk)

## **7.5. Conclusions**

The operation successfully delivered its two ERDF output indicators and has delivered all of the physical wider outcomes envisaged in the Environmental Statement (with the remaining two wider outputs linked with training and construction employment mostly delivered). While it is too early to know whether the journey speed, network resilience and accident outcomes will be delivered, consultees were positive that they would be. A range of other benefits have also been delivered linked with active travel and environmental sustainability, adding value to the cross-cutting themes discussed in the previous chapter.

## **8. Conclusion and recommendations**

This section sets out a summary of the findings of the final evaluation and the key conclusions. Based on this, a number of recommendations will be presented for future schemes.

### **8.1. Assessment of continued strategic fit**

Since the development of the scheme, the policy context in Wales has changed quite radically, including the creation of a new Minister for Climate Change portfolio, which brings together a number of portfolios including transport (May 2021). This aligns with the suite of climate change objectives set out within the Programme for Government and the Welsh Government's strong emphasis on decarbonisation as a theme running through all activity.

Despite this, a review of local and national policies and strategies confirmed that the A55 Abergwyngregyn operation continue to align with the Welsh Government's objectives to improve regional connectivity and existing transport infrastructure through investment to support economic development and improved wellbeing. While there has been a significant shift, both nationally and locally, in priorities regarding low-carbon and environment aims and targets, strategic consultees from the Welsh Government thought the operation remained relevant. In particular, the operation had ambitions to protect biodiversity and promote active travel.

### **8.2. Summary of progress**

Since the A55 Abergwyngregyn operation was approved for funding in 2016, it largely progressed as expected against the original timetable. However, in March/April 2020 the construction phase was delayed by approximately six months, due to capacity issues resulting from the COVID-19 outbreak. The delivery team were able to progress with the detailed design work in the meantime and construction commenced in autumn 2020. Further delays during construction were experienced, due to further impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic and supply chain issues, with construction completed by the end of March 2023.

At the start of the project, total approved costs were £22.4m, with ERDF funding accounting for 66% of this. By the end of the scheme, total eligible costs were £21.7m, with the ERDF funding accounting for £20m. The increase in the intervention rate from 66% to 92% was due to reallocation of funding within the broader programme of ERDF operations to maximise the portfolio spending.

### **8.3. Assessment of project management and monitoring arrangements**

The project management arrangements were seen as effective and working well. This was due to the knowledge and experience of the project delivery team, effective information flows and the partnership arrangements with local stakeholders.

The monitoring systems at a project delivery level were robust, and sufficient information was provided to the Welsh Government to enable effective management and oversight. Monitoring reports to WEFO have been comprehensive with a regular dialogue established between Welsh Government's Infrastructure Delivery Division and WEFO and the wider delivery team.

Overall, feedback from local consultees was positive on the level of communication and engagement on the operation, particularly in regard to the role of the PLO. However, some wider stakeholders (particularly in local authorities) considered that they had limited knowledge of the operation and would have benefited from more information regarding the key activities and updated timescales.

### **8.4. Cross-Cutting Themes**

Good progress was made against the CCT, particularly since construction work started on site. Measures were put in place to ensure environmental considerations were taken into account, positive relationships had been developed with local residents, and the Welsh language had been promoted through material produced and careers events. Active Travel improvements were implemented as part of the scheme and an Active Travel forum was set up to facilitate input from relevant stakeholders. Several community initiatives were supported during construction, which had been received positively.

In terms of embedding the CCT in future projects, the main suggestion was to ensure they are included in the tender and contract documentation, as they had been for the A55 operation, to ensure contractors are aware of the requirements early on. More broadly, given that European funding is coming to an end, consideration should be given to how the themes embedded in the Well-being of Future Generations Act can be further embedded in future project delivery, and the potential role of a central team in this.

## **8.5. Progress against outputs and outcomes**

By the time of the final evaluation, the majority of the outputs had been achieved, including the two ERDF outputs. The works on the main carriageway were completed and the road was open to road users. The scheme overdelivered on the amount of footway or cycleway created, with 4km of new or reconstructed paths for Active Travel users, against a target of 2km. This was partly as a result of additional funding from the Welsh Government.

The four outcomes from the A55 Abergwyngregyn operation were dependent on the completion of the scheme and a period of monitoring following completion, and, as such, robust evidence was not available at the time of the final evaluation. However, consultees from the delivery team were confident that they would be achieved in due course.

Several wider outcomes were anticipated by consultees, including improvements to travel time reliability, improved network resilience, reduction in the number of collisions, improved experience from Active Travel users, and enhanced biodiversity among others. These outcomes were viewed positively by consultees and were expected to impact the local area and the broader north Wales region.

## **8.6. Value for money assessment**

The original benefit to cost ratio, calculated in 2008, ranged from 0.221 to 1.7. Typically, a BCR of 1.7 would be considered as offering medium value for money. The final cost of the scheme and expected outcomes suggest this original figure would be met if the analysis was re-run, but an updated BCR appraisal once sufficient evidence is available would be able to confirm this. From a qualitative perspective, consultees were in agreement that the scheme offered public value, in broad terms. The reasons for this included the safety improvements and the future climate resilience.

## 8.7. Looking ahead

While the project was significantly delayed, expenditure was within the amount originally approved for the scheme. Looking to the future, there will not be any further European funding for road schemes due to Britain's exit from the European Union. The outcome of the Roads Review suggests there will also be lower levels of capital funding for road schemes in Wales going forward. However, there are some key findings from this report which could inform future similar projects:

- the role of Public Liaison Officer at the contractor was of great value in building good relationships with local residents and businesses, and in delivering community benefits as part of the project
- the project delivery team took a creative and ambitious approach to delivering the CCT, with their actions exceeding the original targets. Whilst the CCT are strongly integrated into European funding, they are relevant to the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act and a similar approach could be taken in future in terms of embedding them in the contract and ensuring commitment to deliver against them by the contractor and project team
- the integration of Active Travel evolved over time with the scheme over-delivering on its original commitments. Having an Active Travel forum meant key stakeholders were involved in decision making and ensured the scheme met the needs of Active Travel users
- taking a proactive approach during construction, by building more contingency time into the workplan and being flexible to adapt to changing circumstances, helped to minimise the impact of delays and use resources more efficiently. A similar approach should be taken on future construction projects

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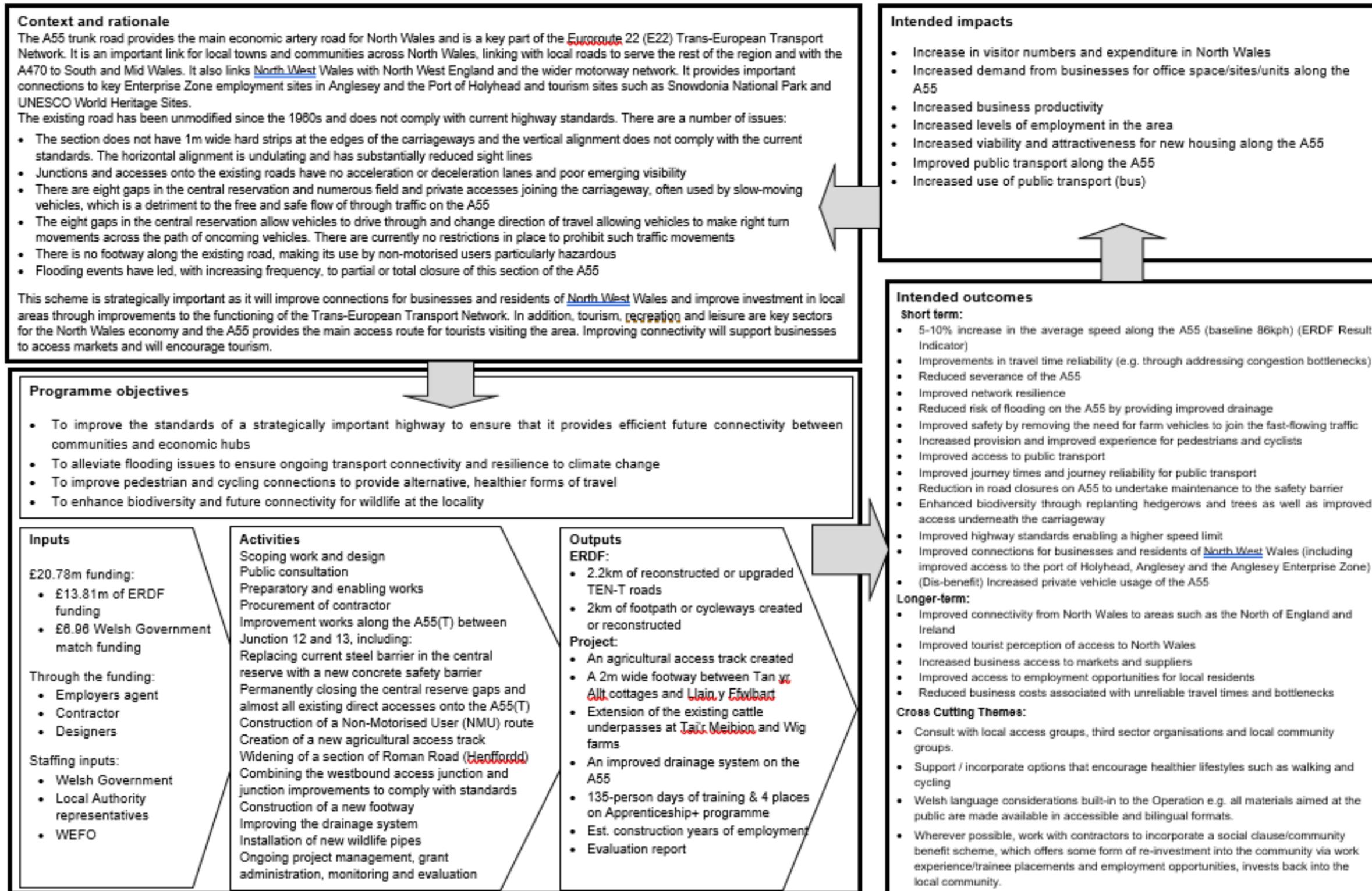
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Welsh Government (2022) Welsh Government's Net Zero Strategic Plan

Welsh Government (2022) Working Together to Reach Net Zero

# Annex A: Logic model

Figure A.1: A55 Abergwyngregyn logic model



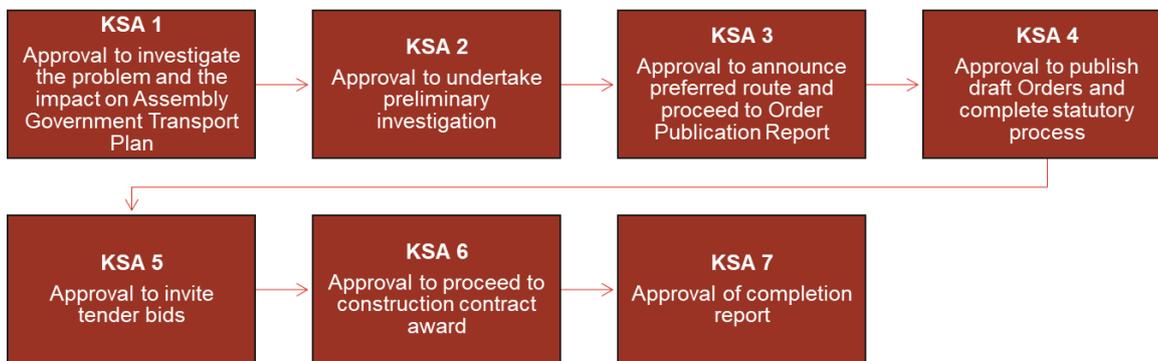
Source: SQW

## Annex B: Overview of the management and delivery model for the project

The Welsh Government's Transport Infrastructure Delivery Division is responsible for the delivery of the operation through the procurement of a private sector contractor which is responsible for construction.

The operation is being delivered through a Design and Build Contract, which the Welsh Government manages with the support of contractors engaged as an Employer's Agent. Delivery of the operation is split into seven key stages, which cover design, statutory process, construction and aftercare in accordance with the Transport Infrastructure Delivery Division's Key Stage Approval Process (see Figure B.1).

**Figure B.1: The Welsh Government's Key Stage Approval (KSA) process for major road projects**



Source: Welsh Government, adapted by SQW

A Core Management Team is responsible for the day-to-day detailed management of each scheme, as set out in Figure B.2.

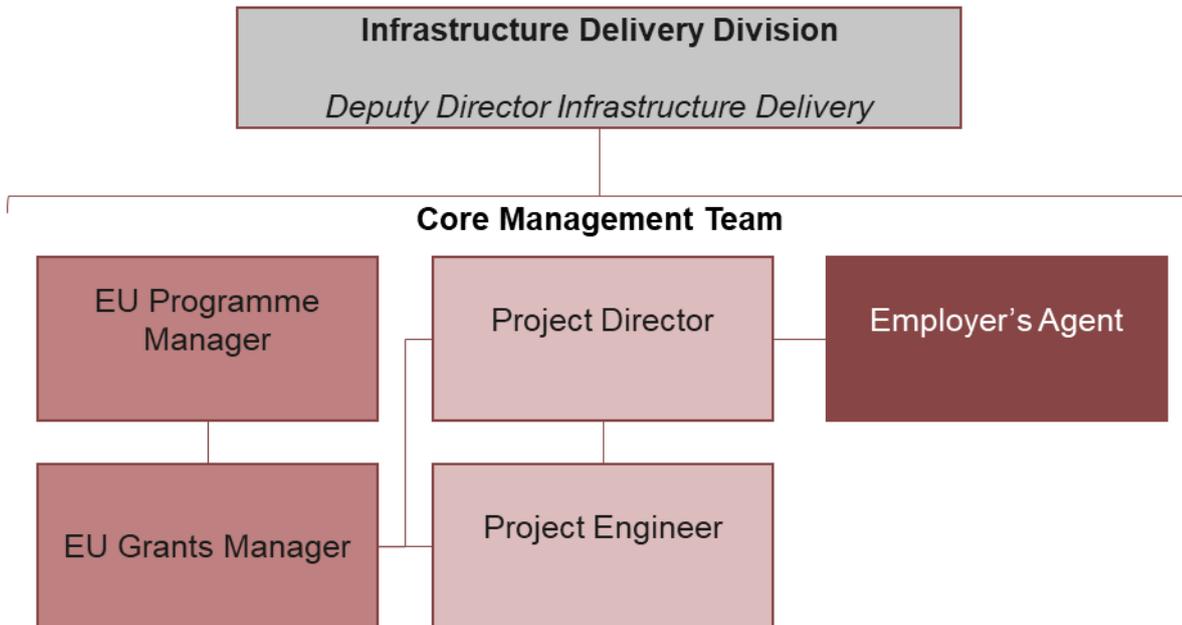
The Core Management Team comprises the Welsh Government Project Director and Project Engineer/s, representatives of the Employer's Agent and members of the contractor's team. The Team's primary activities include:

- promoting the scheme both internally and to external partners and stakeholders
- ensuring the scheme delivered is the optimum solution
- ensuring scheme activities comply with Welsh Government policy
- ensuring the scheme complies with its commitment to the Sustainability Objective of the Welsh Government
- ensuring the scheme is delivered to budget & programme

- ensuring the scheme delivers Value for Money within delegated financial commitments

The Core Management Team is supported by the EU Grants Manager who leads on fulfilling the specific requirements of delivering ERDF funded projects including addressing requirements for publicity, CCT, monitoring and reporting on Operation delivery to the Managing Authority (the Welsh European Funding Office).

**Figure B.2: Infrastructure delivery organogram**

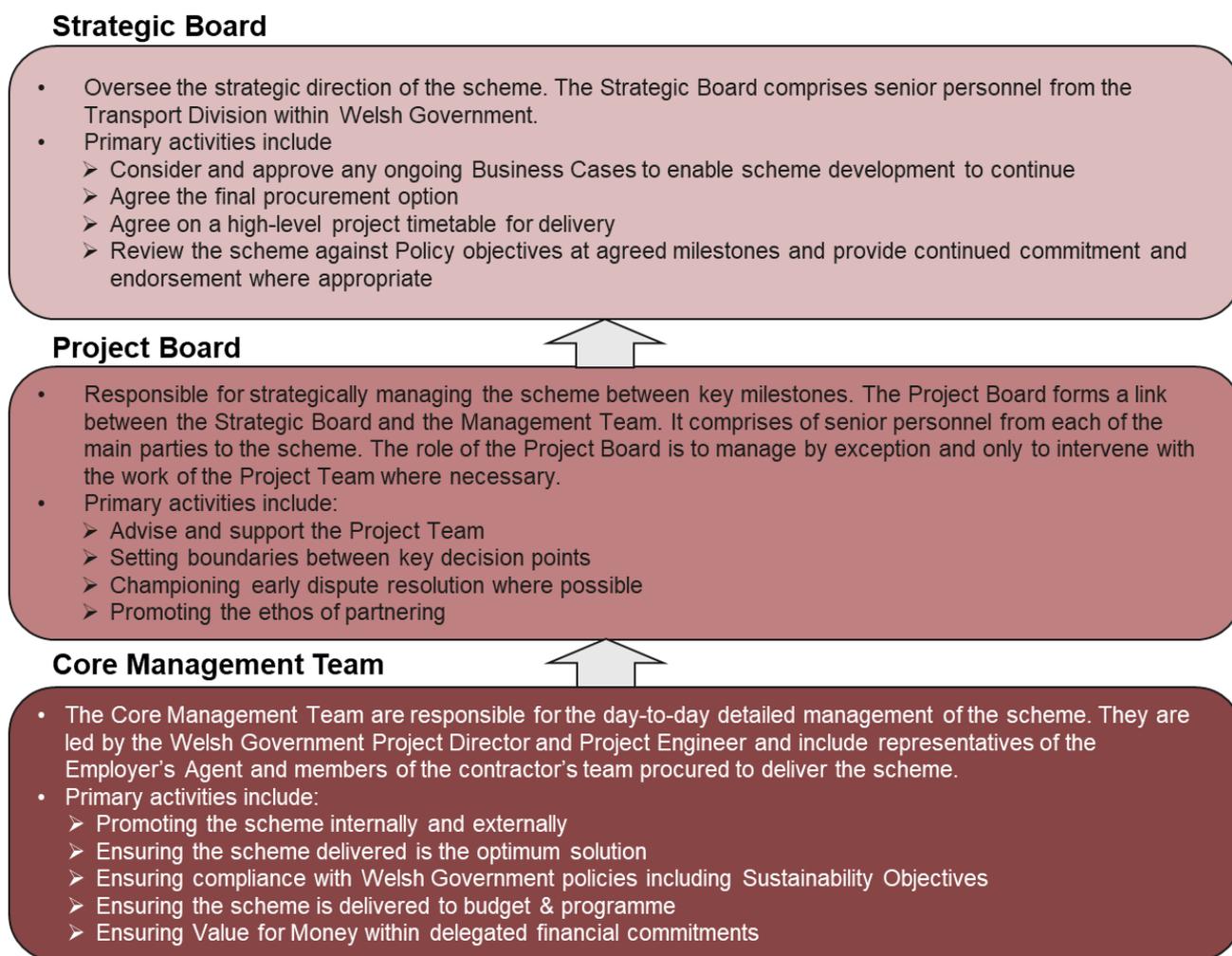


Source: Welsh Government, adapted by SQW

The governance structure and responsibilities for oversight of transport road projects is set out in Figure B.3. The Core Management Team reports to a Strategic Board which oversees the strategic direction of the scheme. The Strategic Board comprises senior personnel from the Transport Division within the Welsh Government.

The scheme also includes a Project Board responsible for strategically managing the scheme between key milestones. The Project Board forms a link between the Strategic Board and the Core Management Team. It comprises senior personnel from the Welsh Government and the contractors for each of the schemes.

**Figure B.3: The Welsh Government governance structure and responsibilities for highways projects**



Source: Welsh Government, adapted by SQW

## **Annex C: Topic guides for consultations**

### **Questions for Welsh Government Delivery Team**

1. Please can you give me an overview of your role and your background in relation to the A55 road project?
  - a. What has your involvement been with the project to date?

#### Project progress

2. How would you characterise project delivery progress to date, and why?
  - a. How close is the project to completion?
3. At end-December 2022, was the project in line with the delivery plan, including key milestones?
  - a. Which key milestones had been achieved?
  - b. Had there been particular issues to overcome in meeting these milestones – internal to the project, and any external factors?
  - c. Which key milestones had been missed?
  - d. What issues led to milestones being missed?
4. At December 2022, was the project in line with the spend profile?
  - a. If not, why not?
  - b. What issues, if any, had arisen around the spend profile?
5. Are there any external factors that have influenced, or will influence, the ability of the project to deliver against its original objectives (e.g. impact of COVID-19 on the wider economic conditions, availability of staff/contractor, impact of Brexit, etc.)?

## Project management arrangements

6. Have there been any changes to project management processes since spring 2021? Probe on reporting mechanisms, risk management.
  - a. If so, what changes have been made and why? How effective have these changes been?
7. To what extent have the project management arrangements been effective in supporting project delivery?
  - a. What have been the key strengths in project management?
  - b. How has the effectiveness of project management evolved over time? What lessons (if any) have been learnt?
  - c. How could project management be improved in future projects?
8. Have there been any changes to the systems in place to monitor delivery?
  - a. If so, what changes have been made and why? How effective have these changes been?
9. To what extent have the monitoring systems supported the effective and efficient delivery of the operation? i.e. did the systems ensure the project was delivering on time and to resource?
  - a. If not, why not? What improvements could be made in future projects?

## Cross Cutting Themes

### Progress

10. To what extent has the operation implemented and delivered the CCT objectives? Sustainable Development, Equal Opportunities and Gender Mainstreaming, and Tackling Poverty and Social Exclusion
  - a. What has worked well/what has not worked well?
  - b. What problems have been identified and how have these been addressed?
11. Are there any external factors that have influenced the ability of the projects to deliver against their original CCT objectives?
12. How and to what extent, has the operation provided opportunities to promote the Welsh language through its activity?
  - a. How, and to what extent, did the operation provide opportunities for people to use and develop their Welsh language skills in the workplace?
13. How has the operation contributed to the goals of the Well Being of Future Generations Act?

14. From delivery to date, has there been any learning on good practice in environmental construction and supply chains?
15. What community benefits approaches have been applied for the operation?
  - a. What outputs/outcomes has this led to? (e.g., numbers of apprentices etc)
  - b. Which local employment and training schemes (if any) have you managed to link in with?
  - c. At what point in the project were these schemes engaged?
  - d. What has engagement with these schemes led to (no. of participants engaged etc.)?
  - e. Were there any approaches that were considered, but which were not taken forward? Why was that?
16. How has the inclusion of Active Travel interventions evolved over time and been embedded in the scheme?
17. [For contractors] How has delivering against the CCT impacted your delivery, expectations and future plans?
18. Are there any lessons learned around how to embed the CCT principles into future projects (in light of the withdrawal of EU funding)?

#### CCT monitoring

19. Have there been any changes to the systems that are in place to monitor progress against the CCT objectives? Prompt on:
  - a. If so, what changes have been made and why? How effective have these changes been?
20. Were there processes in place to identify key barriers/enablers to achieving the CCT?
  - a. If yes, please can you provide more information? How were these addressed?
  - b. If no, why not? How were risks identified?
21. Are there ways in which the monitoring arrangements for the CCT could be improved in future projects?
  - a. If so, how?

## Outputs/ outcomes

22. To what extent has progress been made in the achievement of the operation outputs?
  - a. Which outputs has progress been made against? Why?
  - b. Which outputs has progress not been made against? Why?
23. [If applicable] To what extent has progress been made in the achievement of the operation outcomes?
  - a. Which outcomes has progress been made against? Why?
  - b. Which outcomes has progress not been made against? Why?
24. Are there other outcomes not captured in the business case or discussed that have been, or are being achieved?
  - a. Locally – e.g. for the community
  - b. Regionally – e.g. for connectivity
  - c. Nationally – e.g. for the economy

## Final reflections

25. Do you think the scheme represents value for money? Why/why not?
26. Do you have any other reflections regarding the delivery or management arrangements of the ERDF road operation?
27. As part of the final evaluation, we are looking to speak with a range of local stakeholders, including businesses and community groups. The purpose of the consultations is to understand the outcomes that the operation is expected to deliver locally. Are there any contacts that you could put us in touch with?

[Thank and close]

## Questions for WEFO Cross Cutting Themes Team

1. Please can you give me an overview of your role and your background in relation to the A55 road project?
  - a. What has your involvement been with the project to date?
2. Are you aware of progress in the delivery of the operation? If so, how would you characterise project delivery progress to date, and why?
  - a. How close is the project to completion?

### Cross Cutting Themes

#### CCT monitoring

3. Have there been any changes to the systems that are in place to monitor progress against the CCT objectives since spring 2021?
  - a. If so, what changes have been made and why? How effective have these changes been?
4. Can you explain the systems that have been in place to monitor progress against the CCT objectives? Prompt on:
  - a. Has the delivery team regularly collected data on progress against Cross Cutting Themes objectives?
  - b. Has the delivery team provided CCT progress updates to Welsh Government/WEFO? If so, what data?
  - c. What CCT monitoring data has WEFO required? What format is this data requested?
  - d. Are you aware of CCT data that the delivery team/WG collects or reports on, that is not currently shared with WEFO?
5. Are there processes in place to identify key barriers/enablers to achieving the CCT?
  - a. If yes, please can you provide more information? How are these addressed?
  - b. If no, why not? How are risks identified?
6. Are there ways in which the monitoring arrangements for the CCT could be improved in future projects?
  - a. If so, how?

Progress (if relevant)

7. How have the CCT been promoted, supported and implemented by the operation?
8. To your knowledge, to what extent has the operation implemented and delivered the CCT objectives?
  - a. What has worked well/what has not worked well?
  - b. What problems have been identified and how have these been addressed?
9. Are there any external factors that have influenced the ability of the project to deliver against its original CCT objectives?
10. How and to what extent, has the operation provided opportunities to promote the Welsh language through its activity?
  - a. How, and to what extent, did the operation provide opportunities for people to use and develop their Welsh language skills in the workplace?
11. How has the operation contributed to the goals of the Well Being of Future Generations Act?
12. From delivery to date, are there any good examples of or learning on good practice in environmental construction and supply chains?
13. What community benefits approaches have been/ will be applied for the operation?
  - a. What do you anticipate this leading to? (numbers of apprentices etc)
  - b. Which local employment and training schemes (if any) have you managed to link in with?
  - c. At what point in the project were these schemes engaged?
  - d. What has engagement with these schemes led to (no. of participants engaged etc.)?
  - e. Were there any approaches that were considered, but which were not taken forward? Why was that?
14. How has the inclusion of Active Travel interventions evolved over time and been embedded in the scheme?
15. Are there any lessons learned around how to embed the CCT principles into future projects (in light of the withdrawal of EU funding)?

## Final reflections

16. Do you think the scheme represents value for money? Why/why not?

17. Do you have any other reflections regarding the delivery progress or management arrangements of the A55 road operation?

[Thank and close]

## Questions for strategic representatives from WG and regional/local partners

1. Please can you give me an overview of your role and your interests in relation to the A55 road project? Note that some consultees may not have been directly involved; their interests may be in the strategic implications of the operation (e.g. improved connectivity).
  - a. What has your involvement been with the project to date (if any)?

### Strategic alignment

2. How does the scheme align, in principle, to wider Welsh strategies/policies? Probe on:
  - a. Welsh Government's Prosperity for All strategy, including the Economic Action Plan (2017)
  - b. Cymraeg 2050
  - c. Wales Transport Strategy (2008)
  - d. The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (2015)
  - e. 2014-20 ERDF West Wales and the Valleys Operational Programme
  - f. Other
3. How does the scheme align, in principle, to wider plans/developments in the local areas, and in Wales more broadly – including with other Welsh Government and WEFO supported interventions? Probe on:
  - a. North Wales
    - i. Anglesey Enterprise Zone
    - ii. Tourism attractions – e.g. Snowdonia National Park, UNESCO World Heritage Sites
  - b. Local authority strategies / policies – e.g. local transport plans and economic development strategies

## Cross Cutting Themes

4. [If known] To your knowledge, how has the operation implemented and delivered the CCT objectives? Prompt on:
  - a. Sustainable Development
  - b. Equal Opportunities and Gender Mainstreaming
  - c. Tackling Poverty and Social Exclusion
5. How and to what extent, has the operation provided opportunities to promote the Welsh language?
6. How has the operation contributed to the goals of the Well Being of Future Generations Act?
7. What community benefits has the operation delivered? E.g.
  - a. Local employment opportunities (e.g. apprenticeships, new entrant trainees)
  - b. Training opportunities
  - c. Local supply chain investment
  - d. Community engagement
  - e. Engagement with schools
8. How and to what extent has the operation delivered on Active Travel interventions?

## Outputs/ outcomes

9. [If relevant to consultee] To what extent has progress been made in the achievement of the operation outputs?
  - a. Which outputs has progress been made against? Why?
  - b. Which outputs has progress not been made against? Why?
10. [If applicable] To what extent has progress been made in the achievement of the operation outcomes?
  - a. Which outcomes has progress been made against? Why?
  - b. Which outcomes has progress not been made against? Why?
11. Are there other outcomes not captured in the business case or discussed that have been or are being achieved? Prompt on:
  - a. Locally – e.g. for the community
  - b. Regionally – e.g. for connectivity

c. Nationally – e.g. for the economy

12. Are there any external factors that have influenced, or will influence, the ability of the project to deliver against its original objectives (e.g. impact of COVID-19 on the wider economic conditions, availability of staff/contractor, impact of Brexit, etc.)?

Final reflections

13. Do you have any other reflections regarding the delivery progress or management arrangements for the A55 road operation?

14. As part of the final evaluation, we are looking to speak with a range of local stakeholders, including businesses and community groups. The purpose of the consultations is to understand the outcomes that the operation/s are expected to deliver locally. Are there any contacts that you could put us in touch with?

[Thank and close]

## Questions for local authority representatives

1. Please can you give me an overview of your role and responsibilities?
  - a. How would you characterise your area? *Probe on functioning of local economy, key strengths, key challenges.*
2. Please can you give me an overview of your role and your background in relation to the A55 road project?
  - a. What has your involvement been with the project to date?
  - b. Are you aware of any issues with the A55 that needed addressing?

### Anticipated benefits

3. What would you say the A55 operation is looking to achieve? For whom? *Probe on:*
  - a. Economic benefits – e.g. access to jobs and markets, business/private investment
  - b. Social benefits – e.g. local employment and skills development
  - c. Environmental benefits – e.g. reduced emissions and improved air quality, increased use of cycleways/footpaths
  - d. Other benefits?
4. When can these benefits be reasonably expected?
5. How is the road scheme expected to bring about these benefits? *Probe on:*
  - a. What other factors is this logic dependent on (i.e. changes in road user behaviour)?
  - b. Are there other activities taking place locally (outside of the project/s directly) that may also contribute to the outcomes you have described?
6. Are there any disbenefits of the road scheme? Please explain.
7. How will the A55 operation impact on you/your business/es directly? Prompt on:
  - a. Improved connectivity
  - b. Access to markets
  - c. Access to talent
  - d. Improved journey times and reliability (potentially leading to greater efficient/productivity)
  - e. Other

8. When do you anticipate those impacts will be realised?

#### Project progress

9. To what extent has the Welsh Government/contractor kept the local authority informed on progress of the scheme?

- a. How has the Welsh Government/contractor communicated?
- b. Could this be improved in future schemes?

10. How would you characterise project delivery progress to date, and why?

11. [If known] At end-December 2020, was the project in line with the delivery plan, including key milestones?

- a. Which key milestones had been achieved?
- b. Had there been particular issues to overcome in meeting these milestones – internal to the project, and any external factors?
- c. Which key milestones had been missed? What issues led to milestones being missed?

12. Are there any external factors that have influenced, or will influence, the ability of the project to deliver against its original objectives? (e.g. impact of COVID-19 on the wider economic conditions, availability of staff/contractor, impact of Brexit, etc.)?

#### Strategic alignment

13. [If not already spoken about] How does the scheme align, in principle, to wider Welsh strategies/policies? Probe on:

- a. Welsh Government's Prosperity for All strategy, including the Economic Action Plan (2017)
- b. Cymraeg 2050
- c. Wales Transport Strategy (2008)
- d. The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (2015)
- e. 2014-20 ERDF West Wales and the Valleys Operational Programme
- f. Other

14. How does the scheme align, in principle, to wider plans/developments in the local area, and in Wales more broadly – including with other Welsh Government and WEFO supported interventions? *Probe on:*

- a. North Wales
  - i. Anglesey Enterprise Zone
  - ii. Tourism attractions – e.g. Snowdonia National Park, UNESCO World Heritage Sites
- b. Local authority strategies / policies – e.g., local transport plans and economic development strategies
- c. Any plans relating to key sites or proposed developments

15. How important is well-functioning road infrastructure to:

- a. The local economy (including businesses located in the immediate vicinity of the A55 improvements)
- b. Tourism
- c. The local community

(probe for examples of specific issues raised by, for example, businesses and community representatives over time)

#### Cross Cutting Themes

16. [If known] To your knowledge, how has the operation implemented and delivered the CCT objectives? Prompt on:

- a. Sustainable Development
- b. Equal Opportunities and Gender Mainstreaming
- c. Tackling Poverty and Social Exclusion

17. How and to what extent, has the operation provided opportunities to promote the Welsh language?

18. How has the operation contributed to the goals of the Well Being of Future Generations Act?

19. What community benefits has the operation delivered? E.g.

- a. Local employment opportunities (e.g. apprenticeships, new entrant trainees)
- b. Training opportunities
- c. Local supply chain investment

- d. Community engagement
- e. Engagement with schools

20. Are you aware of any activities/progress made in these areas?

21. How and to what extent has the operation delivered Active Travel interventions?

Outputs/ outcomes

22. To what extent has progress been made in the achievement of the operation outputs?

- a. Which outputs has greater progress been made against? Why?
- b. Which outputs has greater progress not been made against? Why?

23. [If applicable] To what extent has progress been made in the achievement of the operation outcomes?

- a. Which outcomes has greater progress been made against? Why?
- b. Which outcomes has progress not been made against? Why?

24. Are there other benefits / outcomes not captured in the business case or discussed that have been or are being achieved? Prompt on:

- a. Locally – e.g. for the community
- b. Regionally – e.g. for connectivity
- c. Nationally – e.g. for the economy

Final reflections

25. Do you have any other reflections regarding the delivery progress or management arrangements for the A55 road operation?

26. As part of the final evaluation, we are looking to speak with a range of local stakeholders, including businesses and community groups. The purpose of the consultations is to understand the outcomes that the operation is expected to deliver locally. Are there any contacts that you could put us in touch with?

[Thank and close]

## Questions for businesses and business facing organisations

1. Please can you give me an overview of your role/your business and your background?
2. Please can you give me an overview of your knowledge of the A55 road project?
  - a. When did you first become aware of the A55 operation and how?
3. Has delivery of the A55 operation progressed as you expected?
  - a. If not, why not?

### Anticipated benefits

4. What would you say the A55 operation is looking to achieve? For whom? *Probe on:*
  - a. Economic benefits – e.g. access to jobs and markets, business/private investment
  - b. Social benefits – e.g. local employment and skills development
  - c. Environmental benefits – e.g. reduced emissions and improved air quality, increased use of cycleways/footpaths
  - d. Other benefits?
5. When can these benefits be reasonably expected?
6. How is the road scheme expected to bring about these benefits? *Probe on:*
  - a. What other factors is this logic dependent on (i.e. changes in road user behaviour)?
  - b. Are there other activities taking place locally (outside of the project/s directly) that may also contribute to the outcomes you have described?
7. Are there any disbenefits of the road scheme? Please explain.
8. How will the A55 operation impact on you/your business/es directly? *Prompt on:*
  - a. Improved connectivity
  - b. Access to markets
  - c. Access to talent
  - d. Improved journey times and reliability (potentially leading to greater efficient/productivity)
  - e. Other
9. When do you anticipate those impacts will be realised?

## Progress against outcomes

10. [If applicable] To what extent has progress been made in the achievement of the operation outcomes?

- a. Which outcomes has greater progress been made against? Why?
- b. Which outcomes has progress not been made against? Why?

11. Are there other benefits / outcomes not captured in the business case or discussed that have been or are being achieved? Prompt on:

- a. Locally – e.g. for the community (including support for skills and employment opportunities as part of the development process)
- b. Regionally – e.g. for connectivity
- c. Nationally – e.g. for the economy

## Final reflections

12. Do you have any other reflections regarding the delivery progress or the benefits of the A55 operation?

[Thank and close]

## Questions for community representatives/ organisations

1. Please can you give me an overview of your role in the community and your background?
2. Please can you give me an overview of your knowledge of the A55 road project?
  - a. When did you first become aware of the A55 operation and how?
3. Has delivery of the A55 operation progressed as you expected?
  - a. If not, why not?

### Anticipated benefits

4. What would you say the A55 operation is looking to achieve? For whom? *Probe on:*
  - a. Economic benefits – e.g. access to jobs and markets, business/private investment
  - b. Social benefits – e.g. local employment and skills development
  - c. Environmental benefits – e.g. reduced emissions and improved air quality, increased use of cycleways/footpaths
  - d. Other benefits?
5. When can these benefits be reasonably expected?
6. How is the road scheme expected to bring about these benefits? *Probe on:*
  - a. What other factors is this logic dependent on (i.e. changes in road user behaviour)?
  - b. Are there other activities taking place locally (outside of the projects directly) that may also contribute to the outcomes you have described?
7. Are there any disbenefits of the road scheme? Please explain.
8. How will the A55 operation impact on you/your community directly? Prompt on:
  - a. Access to amenities
  - b. Access to leisure
  - c. Access to job markets
  - d. Access to education
  - e. Improved journey times and reliability
  - f. Reduced congestion
  - g. Environmental benefits

h. Safer highways

i. Other

9. When do you anticipate those impacts will be realised?

#### Progress against outcomes

10. [If applicable] To what extent has progress been made in the achievement of the operation outcomes?

a. Which outcomes has greater progress been made against? Why?

b. Which outcomes has progress not been made against? Why?

11. Are there other benefits / outcomes not captured in the business case or discussed that have been or are being achieved? Prompt on:

a. Locally – e.g. for the community (including support for skills and employment opportunities as part of the development process)

b. Regionally – e.g. for connectivity

c. Nationally – e.g. for the economy

#### Final reflections

12. Do you have any other reflections regarding the delivery progress or the benefits of the A55 operation?

[Thank and close]