

P-06-1275 Call on the Government to reconsider its decision to withdraw from the Llanbedr bypass scheme

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 23 May 2022
Petitions Committee | 23 Mai 2022

Reference: SR22/2716-6

Petition Number: P-06-1275

Petition title: Call on the Government to reconsider its decision to withdraw from the Llanbedr bypass scheme

Text of petition:

Following months of constructive discussions, the Government withdrew from the scheme to build the bypass at Llanbedr, Gwynedd, based on flawed information in their report.

Not only will abandoning the bypass be detrimental to the environment as hundreds of cars will continue to queue in the village, the decision is also a huge blow to any hopes of developing high quality jobs at the airport – the main hope of providing good work for our local people in this part of Meirionnydd.



1. Background

Roads review panel

In June 2021 in a statement to Plenary, the Deputy Minister for Climate Change announced that a roads review panel would be established to review planned Welsh Government road investments. The Deputy Minister announced a pause on all new road schemes while the existing pipeline of schemes is reviewed, except in cases where “there are currently diggers in the ground”.

Membership of the panel and its terms of reference were subsequently published in September 2021.

The panel is tasked with reviewing the Welsh Government’s pipeline of road investment to ensure alignment with priorities set out in the Wales Transport Strategy (WTS), including the sustainable transport hierarchy.

In February 2022 the panel published its initial report, setting out the criteria it will use to review each scheme along with a list of the schemes within the scope of the review. It aims to publish its final report setting out recommendations on whether each scheme should proceed this Summer.

Llanbedr Bypass

At the time the panel was established, the Welsh Government asked it to provide a specific view on the Llanbedr bypass scheme within 4 weeks. This was due to the pressing nature of the scheme’s timetable linked to European funding deadlines.

The scheme was granted planning permission in March 2020 and involved creating a bypass to the west of Llanbedr to ease traffic through the village, along with improving access to Llanbedr Airfield.

Given its request for the panel to review the scheme within 4 weeks, the Welsh Government requested the panel focus on two key questions:

Has sufficient consideration been given to non-transport solutions and solutions other than those increasing private car capacity on the road network?; and

Has sufficient consideration been given to whether the road proposal will lead to increased CO2 emissions on the road network, or cause significant impediment to achievement of... decarbonisation targets?

The Welsh Government acknowledged “this quick view may not benefit from the inputs of the full panel”.

In November 2021 the panel published its findings concluding the scheme does not align with the WTS and therefore should not be taken forward.

The Deputy Minister accepted the panel’s recommendation and announced the Welsh Government would not support any further work on the scheme. The Deputy Minister also stated he was:

...committed to providing funding for the development and implementation of an alternative package of measures to address the negative impact of traffic in Llanbedr and in other villages on the A496, whilst also encouraging modal shift and reducing CO2 emissions. The package can also consider access requirements to the airfield to support associated developments.

2. Welsh Government action

In his letter to the Chair dated 6 May 2022, the Deputy Minister states he will not amend his decision on the matter.

The letter outlines that Welsh Government officials and Transport for Wales (TfW) are working with Gwynedd Council to consider sustainable transport options and that community engagement events will be held to gather local views on alternative options.

In February 2022 it was announced that Lord Burns would lead the North Wales Transport Commission and develop recommendations for transport projects across north Wales.

3. Welsh Parliament action

In November 2021, Mabon ap Gwynfor MS raised the issue of access to services in villages like Llanbedr with the Minister for Climate Change, Julie James. The Minister stated:

...The road would've cost several million pounds. We are very, very happy to work with Gwynedd Council to see how we can invest that money in local greening services to make sure that we do have a public transport infrastructure that works for the people of Gwynedd.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.