

Petition: Road Safety Improvements Along the A487.

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 13 Medi 2016

Petitions Committee | 13 September 2016

Research Briefing:

Petition number: P-05-701

Petition title: Road Safety Improvements Along the A487 Trunk Road between Cardigan and Aberystwyth, to Include Passing Places

Text of petition:

Following numerous incidents along the A487 Trunk Road particularly between Cardigan and Aberystwyth, I petition the Welsh Assembly to make improvements along this coastal road, including passing places at various locations, in order to alleviate the build-up of traffic behind slower moving vehicles. I'm of the opinion that having strategically located passing places would reduce driver frustration and risk taking when attempting to overtake.

When this Fishguard to Holyhead Trunk road is closed due to an incident, the alternative diversion route is along minor roads which can be a nightmare especially when Heavy Goods Vehicles, buses and coaches meet each other in opposite directions.

Background

The A487 trunk road forms part of the north-south network of trunk roads linking Fishguard in Pembrokeshire with the Northern areas of Wales. It joins the A470 at Cross Foxes near Dolgellau, re-emerging as the A487 north of Trawsfynydd. A map of the Welsh trunk road network is available [here](#).

The Welsh Government is the highway authority for the Welsh trunk road and motorway network, including the A487. Maintenance and operation of the network are the responsibility of the [South Wales Trunk Road Agent](#) (Fishguard to Cardigan) [North and Mid Wales Trunk Road Agent](#) (north of Cardigan).

The [North and Mid Wales Trunk Road Agent website](#) describes the road:

The A487 carries **significant levels of Heavy Goods Vehicles all year and heavy tourist traffic during the summer period and commuter traffic in localised areas**. It also provides a corridor for public transport, serving the surrounding towns and villages, rural businesses, schools and leisure activities.

The A487 corridor is predominantly single carriageway and with varying standard throughout.

The [Road Safety Foundation](#), a UK road casualty reduction charity, is a partner of the [European Road Assessment Programme \(EuroRAP\)](#), an international not for profit association whose purpose is to promote safer roads. The Road Safety Foundation published annual British EuroRAP results for Britain assessing the safety of British roads, **including a risk map** indicating providing an assessment of safety. Past reports, including those for [2013](#), [2014](#) and [2015](#) are available on the Foundation's website.

The Risk maps provide a five level risk rating ranging from low to high risk roads showing the “statistical risk of death or serious injury” occurring on the road. The Foundation describes the methodology used:

The risk is calculated by comparing the frequency of road crashes resulting in death and serious injury on every stretch of road with how much traffic each road is carrying. For example, if there are 20 crashes on a road carrying 10,000 vehicles a day, the risk is 10 times higher than if the road has the same number of collisions but carries 100,000 vehicles.

In 2013 the A487 was assessed as **medium risk from south-west Wales to Dolgellau**, and **low-medium risk for the remainder of its length**. In 2014 the risk increased to **medium to high-risk road to Dolgellau**, and **medium risk for the remaining northern leg**. The 2015 map showed the road as **medium risk along its entire length**.

Welsh Government action

The [Welsh Government's Road Safety Framework](#), published in 2013, sets out the Government's road safety targets and associated actions. For all Welsh roads by 2020 the Welsh Government wants to see the following compared to the average for 2004–2008:

- 40% fewer people killed and seriously injured on Welsh roads;
- 25% fewer motorcyclists killed and seriously injured on Welsh; and
- 40% fewer young people (aged 16–24) killed and seriously injured on Welsh roads.

The framework identifies “vulnerable groups” and considers “collision causation”, engineering “safer roads” as well as approach and governance arrangements. In terms of “safer roads” it says “highway authorities are encouraged to use the collision evidence available to develop engineering measures to positively affect road safety”.

The Welsh Government's [National Transport Finance Plan](#) commits to “deliver the actions set out in the Road Safety Framework for Wales” through to “2020 and beyond”, and to deliver “a programme of road safety improvements outside schools on the trunk road”. The plan lists two highway schemes on the A487: the A487 Caernarfon to Bontnewydd bypass, and the A487 Dyfi Bridge. Both are planned to open in 2019. Further information on both is available on the [Government's website](#). The Welsh Government website lists casualty reduction

among the objectives for both projects. However, both are north of Aberystwyth and therefore outside the area identified as a particular priority by the petitioners.

The letter to the Chair from the Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure regarding this petition says that mid-Wales trunk roads, including the A487, are being surveyed to see whether overtaking opportunities can be introduced. The Cabinet Secretary says that the survey will consider whether “2+1” arrangements are possible, subject to funding, and he will be able to report findings later in the year.

A “2+1” road consists of two lanes of travel in one direction and a single lane in the opposite direction providing overtaking opportunities in the two lane direction, while overtaking in the single lane direction is prohibited. These can, where possible, be alternated at different points along the road permitting overtaking in each direction.

National Assembly for Wales action

Plenary discussion

Plenary discussion of the A487 since the beginning of the Fourth Assembly has focused on plans for delivery of the bypass and Dyfi bridge discussed above.

On 4 April 2014 Elin Jones AM raised the issue of safety on the A487 around the school in Llanarth, suggesting that it is inappropriate to have a speed limit of 40mph on a trunk road near a school. The then Minister for Economy, Science and Transport referred to a review of schools on the trunk road commenting “this is one of the issues that we will be looking at”.

Petitions Committee

The Petitions Committee in the Fourth Assembly considered a petition calling for “a mandatory 40mph speed limit on the A487 at Blaenporth Ceredigion”. The petition was first considered in October 2012 and closed in September 2013 following confirmation from the then Minister that a 40mph speed limit was planned for introduction in early 2014.

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.