

Date · Dyddiad 19th February 2019
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Pembrokeshire County Council Cyngor Sir Penfro

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Please ask for
Os gwelwch yn dda gofynnwch am

Darren Thomas

Mr David J Rowlands AC/AM
Chair of Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Dear Sirs,

Petition P-04-667 Roundabout for the A477/A4075 Junction

Thank you for your letter dated 29 November 2018, and chase up email dated 18 February 2019. I apologise for the delay in responding.

As noted, the Fingerpost Junction on the A477 is on trunk road, for which the Highway Authority is Welsh Government. This Authority has been aware of some serious and fatal accidents at the junction and have been approached on several occasions by local members, Pembroke Town Council and some local employers (Collins and the former Texaco – both mentioned in the Petitions Committee work), who have raised with us their concerns about road safety at the junction. We, in turn, have indicated they should contact Welsh Government as the Highway Authority, in order the concerns can be reviewed and responded to.

It is worth mentioning that the road leading off the Fingerpost Junction is a highway maintained by this Council – the A4075. This provides access to Pembroke Town, but more significantly onward to the major energy sites on the Angle Peninsular – that of Valero and Pembroke Power Station, but also access to the Firing range at Castlemartin, which also attracts abnormal and heavy loads. To this end, the junction does receive frequent instances of large vehicles turning – oil tankers, chemical carriers, cranes, and other large maintenance vehicles. That said, it has been our understanding that these types of flows have been previously examined and reviewed by Welsh Government. Perhaps this issue could be re-examined though, and assurance sought in terms of the nature of the traffic using the junction, coupled with fluctuating levels of flows, associated with shutdowns and the like, which at times can be substantial.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh and English, and will respond within a maximum of 15 working days. We will respond in the language in which the correspondence is received (unless you ask us to do otherwise). / Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg a Saesneg a byddwn yn ymateb cyn pen 15 diwrnod gwaith fan bellaf. Byddwn yn ymateb yn yr un iaith â'r ohebiaeth a dderbyniwyd (oni bai eich bod yn gofyn i ni wneud yn wahanol).

For a copy in large print, easy-read, Braille, audio, or an alternative language, please contact Pembrokeshire County Council on the number above. / Os am gopi mewn print mawr, fformat hawdd ei ddarllen, Braille, sain neu mewn iaith arall, cysylltwch â Chyngor Sir Penfro ar y rhif uchod.

I would also highlight that the A4075, and the B4319 / B4320 are on what the Council termed the "Southern Strategic Route" (SSR) – a strategic road corridor linking the energy sites with the trunk road system at Fingerpost. A number of significant improvements have been carried out along this route over the last few years. The total budget approved budget for all the works was £9.555M. The specific aims of the SSR were:

- To improve the route between the A477 trunk road and the energy / development sites to mitigate the impact of the proposed Power Station and future energy developments.
- To produce general highway and development benefits by improving the accessibility of the energy / development sites on the southern shore of the Haven with the A477 trunk road network.

The community benefits of the project were envisaged as:

- To invigorate the local economy.
- To improve the link between the development site on the south bank of the Haven and the Trunk Road Network.
- Improve accessibility for visitors, emergency vehicles and other transport users, and link with the integrated transport agenda.
- Promote and provide facilities for sustainable transport.
- Provide a good standard route for heavy goods vehicles which avoids them passing through the historic core of Pembroke.

It is worth highlighting the emphasis on accessibility, improved transport linkages and provide a good standard route for heavy goods vehicles.

I am aware that the local member that covers the locality of this junction (also our Cabinet Member for Social Services – Cllr Hodgson) wrote to Welsh Government in July 2018. She highlighted that the stretch of A477 from Slade Cross to the Fingerpost Junction is a very busy arterial route serving locals, holidaymakers and the vital ferry port at Pembroke Dock. Cllr Hodgson raised concern that recent improvements to the Fingerpost Junction were considered to have failed to improve safety and her understanding is that accidents both minor and major had increased at Fingerpost since the improvement work was undertaken. Cllr Hodgson called on Welsh Government to look at this busy stretch of road and examine ways to make some road safety improvements. She suggested a roundabout at the Fingerpost, as this was considered a much safer option. She also explored the idea of improved signing and lining, as she had seen some measures similar to this on a recent road scheme the County Council had undertaken – in the form of warnings painted on the road and red tarmac to alert drivers to vehicles turning right.

Cllr Hodgson also wrote to the Minister, Ken Skates in November 2018 to further raise her concerns. I further understand that, given the high concerns in the local community, that an alliance of local members, MP, AM and Town Council has met to further discuss their concerns, with a view of raising them with Welsh Government. Although this Council were not directly involved in that meeting process, having limited access to the detailed technical information regarding road safety audits, highway management data, etc, for this particular section, following their meeting to discuss the current concerns, it is understood those parties agreed next steps, including gathering more evidence, publicity through social media and at a future date a meeting with representatives from Welsh Government. We would be happy to be involved and support such engagement.

In terms of the way forward, if this were a PCC Highway, we would be undertaking the following the activities:

1. Review of accident record.
2. Recorded of Speed Record.
3. Review of Historical design data and highway management information.
4. Consideration of the comments and complaints.
5. All with a view to providing a response to address the concerns raised, which might involve some consideration to additional or new measures to address concerns.

In this particular situation, a specific aggravating factor is the nature of the traffic using the junction: its importance as a strategic route to key Energy Sites, and as a result, the nature and type of traffic using it. I understand these factors have been considered by Welsh Government previously, but given the high level of concerns raised, would appear worth reviewing further. In addition, the perception of risk should also be considered further and addressed.

I hope this feedback is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "D. Thomas". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "D" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Darren Thomas
Head of Infrastructure

cc: Councillor David Simpson, Leader
Cllr Phil Baker, Cabinet Member for Planning & Infrastructure
Cllr Tessa Hodgson, Cabinet Member for Social Services
Ian Westley, Chief Executive

