



Ein cyf/Our ref KS/06350/19

Janet Finch-Saunders AM
Chair - Petitions committee

Government.Committee.Business@gov.wales

06 June 2019

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter of 3 May regarding petition P-05-886 Stop the Red Route (A55/A494 corridor).

Whilst the Red Option crosses the Lead Brook Valley and its Ancient Woodland, the crossing location has been selected at a point where the steep-sided valley can be spanned by a viaduct with minimum effect on the watercourse and vegetation. Various types of structure will be considered to maintain continuity between the severed woodland and allow continued movement of wildlife beneath the road deck. Mitigation would include substantial, targeted areas of new woodland planting to replace or improve screening in the long-term.

The A494 River Dee Improvement is required to address the life expired existing River Dee Bridge. This improvement will assist in addressing the existing 'chicane' arrangements on the A494 in the westbound direction, but it will not address the overall traffic congestion problems within the Flintshire Corridor area.

We are not anticipating needing to upgrade the Flintshire Bridge and as part of the next stage of development we will be investigating the need for any additional lanes on the A55 from Northop towards Holywell. This investigation will also include an economics assessment to ensure any requirements for additional lanes do provide value for money.

In terms of traffic surveys, roadside interview surveys were undertaken in late September and early October 2015, in accordance with national transport appraisal guidance. All the roadside interview surveys were planned to be conducted for a 12 hour period (between 07:00 – 19:00). The survey dates were: Tuesday 29 September 2015; Wednesday 30 September 2015; Thursday 1 October 2015; and Tuesday 6 October 2015. Additional automatic traffic counts were also collected during October and November 2015 at 14 locations and video surveys were undertaken at 5 locations where data was collected for 7 days at each location.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Manual classified (vehicle type) counts were also undertaken at 32 locations in October 2015 where data covered the twelve hour period between 07:00 and 19:00 for one neutral weekday at each location.

These traffic surveys were used to develop a traffic model of the Flintshire Corridor area which was validated to ensure the model represented the actual traffic flows on the existing roads.

Three time periods have been modelled, as recommended by national transport appraisal guidance. Specifically, the traffic model represents an average Monday to Thursday 'typical' weekday in 2015 in line with national traffic modelling guidance. The modelled time periods are morning peak hour (between 08:00 and 09:00); Inter-peak hour (average of 10:00 to 16:00); and evening peak hour (between 17:00 and 18:00).

The results of the traffic were therefore representative and were used to develop a transport model of the Flintshire area. Traffic forecasting was then undertaken using the transport model to determine the impact of both the Red and Blue options. The traffic surveys were therefore representative, carried out in accordance with national standards, and used correctly to determine the economic benefits of both the Red and Blue options.

A twelve week public consultation was undertaken between 13 March and 5 June 2017. Two public exhibitions were held week commencing 20 March for two days at two local venues. Ewloe and Connah's Quay were selected for the consultation exhibitions as they were seen as the most convenient and accessible venues for the majority of those affected by both route options. They were advertised widely through various channels including local papers, radio stations, posters displayed locally and on our website. The public consultation exhibitions were also advertised through 5000 letter drops to properties within 500m of the routes. Following feedback, a further exhibition was held on 10 May at the Wrexham Glyndwr University Northop Campus. Letters advertising the exhibition have been distributed to those affected by the scheme in the Northop area. 1,842 people attended the exhibitions and 2,436 questionnaires were returned with a further 100 comments being received by email, letter and telephone. The consultation was therefore widespread and considered to be effective.

My vision for transport in North Wales and the North East Wales Metro was published in March 2017. The focus is on creating integrated transport hubs at key employment sites across north Wales and the wider Mersey Dee area. It is about better connectivity within, to and from and between the hubs. In North Wales these hubs are centred in the Bangor/Menai, Colwyn Bay/Llandudno/Conwy, Abergele/Rhyl/St Asaph, Wrexham, and Deeside areas.

Transport for Wales has been commissioned to develop schemes for an integrated Shotton station and a new Deeside Parkway station working in partnership with Network Rail and Flintshire County Council. I also awarded c£2.8 million of funding in 2017-18 to Flintshire County Council for integrated transport schemes in the Deeside area that will contribute to the delivery of the North East Wales Metro. The funding was for schemes to improve access to and within Deeside Industrial Park by supporting the acquisition of a site for a proposed park and ride service, enhancing the Deeside shuttle service, providing active travel and bus facilities within the Park and improving the bus link from Zone 2 to Zone 3. I awarded further funding of just under £1.5 million in 2018-19 for further bus and active travel facilities in the Deeside Industrial Park.

Funding of over £4.3m for 2019-20 was announced on 16 May for further active travel and bus priority measures in Deeside. These schemes will improve access to and within Deeside Industrial Park and the wider Enterprise Zone, linking communities with jobs and services. The schemes offer a low carbon travel option enabling people to leave their own vehicle at home which will be of benefit to our environment.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ken Skates', written in a cursive style.

Ken Skates AC/AM

Gweinidog yr Economi a Thrafnidiaeth
Minister for Economy and Transport