

P-05-886 Stop the Red Route (A55/A494 corridor), Correspondence – North Wales Mersey Dee Business Council to Committee, 04.12.19

In relation to Janet's recent request for our views on the Red Route (A55/A494 corridor), please see below our feedback/response:

The existing road infrastructure on the A55 / A494 is one of the main arterial access points into North Wales and is very frequently congested for a variety of reasons e.g. volume of traffic, broken down vehicles or accidents blocking one or both lanes of the carriageway .

This congestion then has negative knock on effects for the local commuter traffic (originating in both England and Wales), through Tourism traffic (North Wales has around 30 million tourism visits a year) and HGV traffic heading to and from our International Port of Holyhead. These negative knock on effects damage our regional economy and result in lost productivity and growth in both the immediate, medium and longer term, especially for the numerous businesses operating in the immediate vicinity e.g. Deeside Industrial Zone.

We are therefore, with the detail we currently have available, broadly supportive of the Red Route, as this major road improvement scheme would increase substantially the resilience of transport infrastructure in our current road network. The lack of resilience currently in our major transport infrastructure is a significant issue for the North Wales economy and our local businesses, especially for the pivotal cross-border connectivity between North Wales and North West England.

Before we can be 100% supportive of this particular road improvement scheme though, we would need to understand some of the detail from the Business Case for the investment, including:

1. The current and forecasted traffic usage and congestion in the area.
2. The negative impacts economically and from a health perspective e.g. air pollution, of the current and forecasted congestion.
3. The options appraisal (differing options for solving the issues in points 1 & 2) that resulted in opting for the red route. Options appraisals for solving the issues on capacity and resilience, should also include looking at investment options in public transport as part of the solution.
4. Detail that the red route option will offer the capacity/resilience we need, based on the traffic forecasts.
5. If the red route would not cover all the capacity/resilience we need for the foreseeable future, how does this investment coupled with other planned investments e.g. in Public Transport, work together to provide the capacity and increased resilience we need.

6. The overall carbon emissions impact of the scheme – so the balance between the additional carbon expended in its construction and the loss of carbon sinks VS. the carbon saved from congestion reduction and improvements in air quality.

If the overall carbon emissions for the scheme mean net additional carbon/Greenhouse Gases (GHG's), then what are the carbon/GHG mitigation schemes that would commence before construction starts (e.g. afforestation / tree planting) and continue during and after its construction, to offset these additional net GHG emissions. We have a UK wide legally binding target of net zero carbon emissions by 2050, so major infrastructure investments moving forward have to take this into account

7. As the finer details on the exact design of the red route are not available, we are not able to comment on the negative or positive impacts on the biodiversity of the area.

Should you have any questions at all, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Many thanks.