Public consultation on A5 Supplementary Environmental Information

23 December 2022

Summary of Logistics UK View

Logistics UK strongly supports the Proposed Scheme A5WTC, compared to alternatives, as it will deliver the following outcomes:

- reduced congestion and delay at pinch points
- improved journey time reliability
- increased overtaking opportunities
- reduced number of accidents and fatalities
- reduced emissions
- improved connectivity between key urban economic hubs of Northern Ireland and Co. Donegal
- improved access to the international gateways of Foyle Port, City of Derry Airport & the Republic of Ireland

Our members are frustrated by the continued delay in the delivery of this key logistics route and are firmly of the view that the construction programme must meet the 2028 deadline for opening to traffic.

About Logistics UK

Logistics UK is one of the UK's largest business groups and the only one providing a voice for the entirety of the UK's logistics sector. Our role, on behalf of over 20,000 members, is to enhance the safety, efficiency and sustainability of freight movement throughout the supply chain, across all transport modes. Logistics UK members operate over 200,000 goods vehicles - almost half the UK fleet - and some one million liveried vans. In addition, they consign over 90 per cent of the freight moved by rail and over 70 per cent of sea and air freight.

Response to consultation

Logistics UK welcomes the opportunity to respond to this public consultation on new and other updated reports as supplementary environmental information to the ESA 2022 for the A5.

Having considered the following reports:

- Traffic Forecast Report
- Economic Appraisal Report
- Strategic Context and Policy Report
- Alternative Scheme Options – Environmental Review Summary Report
- Tully Bog Special Area of Conservation
- Phasing Report – Addendum
- Agricultural industry Impact Assessment 2022

We would make the following key comments.

A5WTC – a key national and local transport infrastructure link

Logistics UK shares central and local government's strong ambition to improve the A5 corridor as a key national and local transport infrastructure link and has been a long-time supporter of the upgrade to the A5 to make it a dual carriageway.

The existing A5 is one of five Key Transport Corridors identified in the Regional Transportation Strategy for Northern Ireland which are components of the Regional Strategic Transport Network (RSTN). As the Strategic Context and Policy Report sets out, it is a commitment in several political agreements and is strategically aligned to several key governmental strategies and policies over several years that are important building blocks for trade and economic growth.

A5WTC – reducing congestion, improving journey time reliability and increasing overtaking opportunities.

The A5 is the strategic logistics route which links the northwest of Northern Ireland to Aughnacloy at the border and with the Republic of Ireland via Derry/Londonderry, Strabane, Omagh and Ballygawley. It connects with the A2 at Derry/Londonderry, part of the Northern Transport Corridor, and with the N2 at the border, with onward connections to Monaghan and Dublin. It also connects with the N14 / N15 routes west of Strabane at Lifford in the Republic of Ireland, and with the A505 / A32 east-west corridor at Omagh. It is a key economic route for the members of Logistics UK who are negatively impacted by the quality of the existing A5 with unreliable journey times caused by congestion created at bottlenecks at junctions in key towns, a lack of overtaking opportunities and slow-moving agricultural traffic along the route; factors which combine to act as a barrier to economic growth for the logistics industry and wider economy.

We note with concern that without any intervention, journey times along the A5 would continue to worsen in the future. This is in contrast to the traffic forecasts which show that the A5WTC dual carriageway scheme would provide significant relief to the existing A5, typically reducing traffic by between 23% to over 90% on completion of the proposed scheme, with average reductions in traffic using the existing A5 of around 69% relative to the 'Do Minimum' scenario. The A5WTC scheme would also result in substantial journey time savings. Over the entire length of the scheme, journey time savings are predicted to be around 23 minutes in 2028 and in excess of 27 minutes in 2043.

The maximum speed limit for Goods Vehicles in Northern Ireland on single carriageway roads is 40mph and on a dual carriageway is set at 50mph. Cars on the same road can drive at a maximum 60mph which leads to long tailbacks of cars travelling behind lorries. The consequence of this is that some car drivers overtake lorries on inappropriate sections of the A5 which is a serious road safety issue for all road users and in addition, these tailbacks lead to longer and unreliable journey times. Analysis of alternative scenarios shows that conflict between HGVs and agricultural vehicles, and other road users is likely to worsen with traffic growth in the absence of the provision of a new dual carriageway to separate different vehicle types and to provide an additional lane for overtaking.

For the above reasons, the Proposed Scheme commands the support of our members.

A5WTC – improving road safety

Many Goods Vehicles that are heavily laden have to brake harshly when confronted by slow moving vehicles entering the A5 from side roads, both private and public access roads. This represents a danger for those Goods Vehicles and other road users that may be forced to take evasive action. Limiting these junctions under the Proposed Scheme will significantly improve road safety for our members and the wider general public.

With 47 tragic deaths on the A5 since 2006, improving road safety is a crucial consideration. We welcome the findings of the COBALT analysis within the Economic Appraisal estimating that 2,733 accidents would be saved as a result of

the Proposed A5WTC Scheme during the 60-year appraisal period (2027-2086) and that the accident analysis also demonstrated that vulnerable road users generally benefitted from the Proposed Scheme.

A5WTC – improving vehicle efficiency and reducing emissions

Modern Euro 6 Goods Vehicles are extremely fuel efficient when driven at a consistent speed, normally under cruise control. The following is a good illustration of how inefficient braking and stopping is for Goods Vehicles. The average fuel consumption of a 40-tonne truck travelling at 50km/h with no stop is 28L/100km. However, when the same vehicle has to stop once every 1km over the 50km distance, fuel use increases by 85% to 52L/100km.

Fuel represents 30% of operating costs, therefore, a road network that allows Goods Vehicles to travel at a safe, consistent speed reduces the use of fuel thereby delivering economic benefits and reduced emissions. The operational cost for a typical 44-tonne lorry is £1 per minute, therefore, the improved journey time, along with more efficient fuel use, will result in economic benefits for those operating goods on the Proposed Scheme.

A5WTC - improving accessibility to key economic centres and international gateways

Logistics UK strongly supports the overarching theme of the Proposed Scheme: connectivity, safety, accessibility and economic growth. The existing A5 currently provides inadequate access to key economic centres of Northern Ireland and Co Donegal, including Derry/Londonderry, Strabane and Omagh. Logistics UK supports the Proposed A5WTC Scheme because it significantly improves access to these key trading and economic hubs.

Logistics UK also supports the A5WTC because it significantly improves access to international gateways. Foyle Port is a key marine gateway to the North West of Ireland for our members. Its importance to the local and regional economy of Derry/Londonderry and the North West is reflected in its position as a regional hub for international commercial trade. The primary access route from the south to Foyle Port is via the existing A5, before its connection with the A2 at Craigavon Bridge. The A5 road is also a vital strategic route for freight that connects the North West economy with the Ports of Belfast and Warrenpoint as well as Dublin Port. The quality of the existing A5 is inadequate in supporting the reliable movements of freight. Construction of the Proposed Scheme will significantly improve freight movements and assist in enhancing the economic and trading development of the port further contributing to local and wider economic growth.

It is also well acknowledged that airports play a prominent role in the economic and trading development of a region. It is essential that the appropriate transport infrastructure is in place to provide access to and from City of Derry airport. Logistics UK supports the Proposed Scheme because it will contribute to a high quality route connecting the airport, affording greater opportunity to expand trading potential.

Furthermore, our members are concerned that without the A5WTC, the importance of Foyle Port and the City of Derry Airport as regional hubs for international trade could potentially come under jeopardy.

Our members also support the Proposed Scheme because this resilient transport infrastructure will greatly improve access to current and future developments along the north-south corridor; strengthening links and opening up new opportunities for trade and economic growth throughout a region which has suffered from a long-term lack of growth.

Conclusion

As identified in the Regional Transportation Strategy (RTS), there is a strategic need for good quality north-south connections in Northern Ireland between key centres of economic importance and population, as well as cross border connectivity with the Republic of Ireland.

Logistics UK strongly supports the Proposed Scheme A5WTC, compared to alternatives, as it will deliver the following outcomes:

- reduced congestion and delay at pinch points
- improved journey time reliability
- overtaking opportunities increase
- reduced number of accidents and fatalities
- reduced emissions
- improved connectivity between key urban economic hubs of Northern Ireland and Co Donegal
- improved access to the international gateways of Foyle Port, City of Derry Airport & the Republic of Ireland

Our members are also supportive of the Proposed Scheme, above the alternatives, given its significant contribution to the higher-level objectives of balancing regional infrastructure, and improving competitiveness and economic prosperity through improving connectivity and accessibility across the region.

Our members remain deeply frustrated by the continued delays in delivering the A5WTC. Given the fact that both the Northern Ireland Executive and the Irish Government are fully committed to delivering the A5WTC scheme, it is imperative that the scheme is delivered in its entirety in order to satisfy the scheme objectives and that the construction programme achieves a 2028 opening to traffic.

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