

IAN126/15 Annex A: Record of Determination, Welsh Government, Economy, Science and Transport. For use with Annex II relevant projects only.

Name of project: A55(T) Abergwyngregyn – Tai'r Meibion Improvement	Location (including national grid reference): A55(T) and adjacent land between Junctions 12 and 13, Gwynedd. (NGR: 262050, 371200 to 265270, 372768).
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Qualifying criteria for Annex II relevant project (tick as appropriate):

Improvement element of project is >1ha	✓	Project is located within 'sensitive' area		Other with potential for significant effect (e.g. adjacent to sensitive site)	✓
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A. Description of project:

Improvement of a 2.2km length of the A55(T) Chester to Holyhead Trunk Road carriageway between Junctions 12 and 13, approximately 6.5km east of Bangor, Gwynedd. A 1m wide hard strip and 2.5m wide grassed verge will be added to each side of both carriageways. A new, concrete safety barrier will be built in the central reserve to replace the current steel barrier. All of the existing accesses and gaps in the central reserve will be permanently closed. A Non-Motorised User (NMU) route will run parallel with the eastbound carriageway from the Abergwyngregyn interchange (Junction 13) west to Wig farm. West of Wig farm the NMU will be combined with a Private Means of Access (PMA) serving Wig Farm. The PMA will become a County road west of the junction with Wig Crossing cottages to the Tal-y-Bont interchange (Junction 12). A new agricultural access track will be created through fields from Roman Road (Henffordd) north-east to link with the existing Wig farm cattle creep access track. An 850m section of Roman Road (Henffordd) will be widened to accommodate agricultural vehicles. The project is approximately 8.6ha in total area.

B. Description of sensitivity or value of local environment, including statutory and non-statutory designations:

The scheme is situated in a rural area; the predominant land use is agricultural (pastoral) and the main habitat is improved grassland. However, watercourses, woodland and hedgerows are also present and provide valuable wildlife habitat in the agricultural landscape. Y Fenai a Bae Conwy SAC and Traeth Lafan SPA/SSSI/LNR are located 600m to the north of the scheme at the closest point and are connected to it via several watercourses, which flow north underneath the A55(T) carriageway and carry drainage from it. The Railway Line Wood 2 Local Wildlife Site is located immediately north of the eastbound carriageway. The Snowdonia National Park is approximately 25m to the south at its closest point and overlooks the scheme location. The scheme is located within both the North Arllechwedd and the Ogwen Valley Landscapes of Outstanding Historic Interest (LOHI). Other designations within close proximity to the scheme include Coedydd Aber SSSI and SAC (0.8km south-east), Eryri SSSI and SAC (1.2km south-west), Scheduled Monument CN218 (enclosure) and CN007 (Aber Castle Mound) (350m south-east in Abergwyngregyn), a Grade II Park and Garden at Penrhyn Castle (1.7km north-west) and two Grade II*-listed and 14 Grade II-listed buildings.

C. Details of environmental impact assessment work undertaken including a summary of the results of any internal and external consultation undertaken:

An Environmental Statement was previously published for this scheme in 2008. Although the proposals have not changed significantly since then a scoping exercise was completed to identify the current potential environmental impacts and the additional work needed to complete the current assessment. The scoping stage involved a review of the previous ES and supporting information, obtaining currently available information via desk studies and consulting the following statutory bodies: Cadw, Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service (GAPS), Gwynedd Council planning department, Natural Resources Wales (NRW), North and Mid Wales Trunk Agent (NMWTRA) and the Snowdonia National Park Authority (SNPA). Relevant items raised by these bodies were considered in the survey, design and environmental assessment of the scheme. From the scoping exercise it was determined how much further work was required to obtain information about each topic's baseline condition and to update previous data that were no longer representative of current conditions e.g. traffic flow data and ecological features.

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D. Summary of likely main environmental effects of the project:

The main potential environmental effects that have been identified in relation to the scheme are as follows:

- Short-term impacts from dust and PM10 emissions during the construction phase
- Medieval, Roman and Iron Age archaeological features are likely to be destroyed. Potential adverse impacts on the setting of listed buildings and two Landscapes of Outstanding Historical Importance.
- Loss of existing landscape features (e.g. hedgerows and mature trees). Visual impacts to local sensitive receptors due to changes to the existing road corridor and local access roads.
- Permanent habitat loss and temporary disturbance for protected species such as badgers, otters, bats, reptiles and nesting birds until replacement habitats re-establish. Potential for accidental water pollution and site drainage runoff affecting the Y Fenai a Bae Conwy SAC and Traeth Lafan SPA/SSSI/LNR. Approximately 600m² of habitat is anticipated to be lost from Railway Line Wood 2 Local Wildlife Site. There will be a number of underpasses which could be used by wildlife.
- Permanent adverse impacts to local soil characteristics if any soil disturbed is not stored and reinstated appropriately. The soil within all areas of land required temporarily could suffer from compaction and disturbance. The apparent lack of any current contamination means that any contamination would have a major adverse impact on the area affected.
- Extraction and transport of primary raw materials, the manufacture of products and their subsequent transport to and use on site. Construction waste generated from surplus materials.
- Varying temporary adverse impacts from construction noise and vibration and increased level of road surface affecting a small number of residential receptors. Low-noise surfacing could reduce noise levels.
- Four PRoWs would be closed where they currently meet the A55(T) and require diversions. NMU access would be improved via a new access link between Junctions 12 and 13. Traffic disruption during the construction period would require effective construction sequencing to minimize this. Long-term benefits are envisaged for vehicle travellers due to the improved highway.
- Permanent and temporary loss of mainly agricultural land; at least 3ha of agricultural land is anticipated to be permanently lost, around half of which is Grade 3a quality.
- Eight watercourses that flow underneath the carriageway are at risk of pollution during the construction period. An upgraded drainage design within the new scheme will improve future water flows and provide increased resilience to climate change as well as an opportunity for improved wildlife passage underneath the A55(T). The provision of an attenuation pond would contribute to the enhancement of local wildlife habitat.

E. I hereby request a determination for the above named relevant project as required by Highways Act 1980 (as amended) Section 105A (3b)

Signature Project Manager:



Dated: 02/09/2016

F. File reference for supporting assessment records for future reference:

A55(T) Abergwyngregyn – Tai'r Meibion EIA Scoping Report, YGC 2016

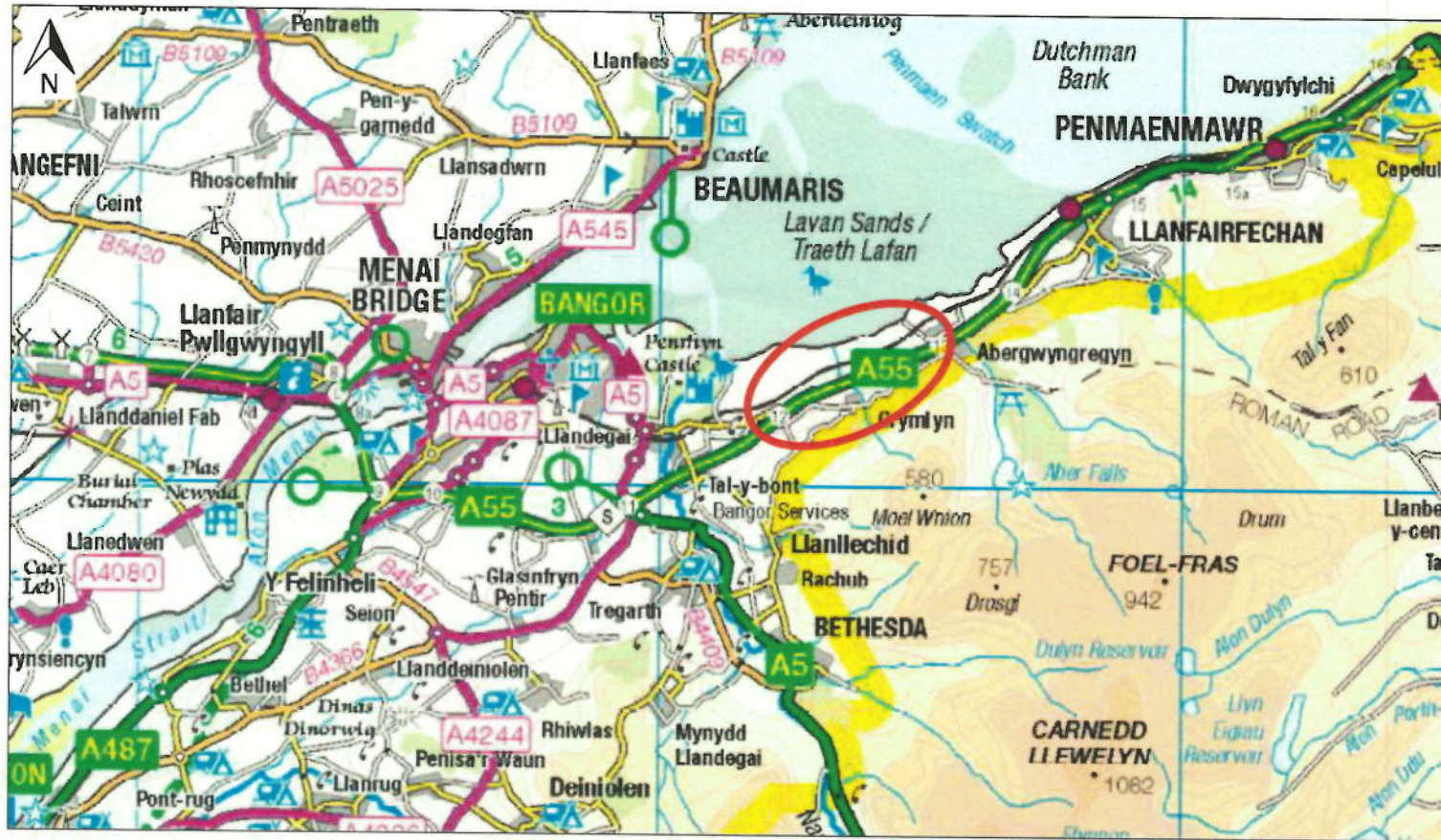
G. In accordance with the requirements of the Highways Act 1980 (as amended) Section 105A (3b) I have determined that a statutory Environmental Impact assessment is required for this project due to the following:

The proposed scheme is an Annex II 'relevant project' as defined by the Highways (Assessment of Environmental Effects) Regulations 1999, as amended. Following consideration of the information summarised in this document and the Council Directive 2011/92/EU¹ Annex III screening criteria, it is concluded that an Environmental Impact Assessment is required. This is due to the characteristics of the project including its size (approximately 8.6ha), the use of natural resources to construct and maintain it, production of waste associated with its construction, potential pollution and nuisance caused during its construction, its location close to several sensitive sites and the characteristics of potential impacts as identified in Section D above.

¹ Directive 2011/92/EU was revised by Directive 2014/52/EU in March 2014. Member states have a three year period in which to transpose the legislation into their domestic legislation. Requirements of the revised Directive need not be implemented until spring 2017.



Signature Welsh Minister's Nominee  Mr Layzell
Dated: 6/9/16



April 7, 2016

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Figure 1: Scheme Location Plan