



A5 Western Transport Corridor (A5 WTC)

Appendix TNI – Theme Report: Scheme Development and Consultation 2013 - 2016

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Consultation on the Appropriate Assessment process

1. Following the Court ruling of April 2013, when the Minister's decision to make the Direction Order and Vesting Order was quashed, the Department initiated the appropriate assessment process not only for the River Foyle and River Finn Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), but also other SACs and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) in the vicinity of the scheme.
2. As a result, four draft reports for consultation were developed to assess impacts on the integrity of all potentially affected European designated environmentally sensitive sites. A public consultation exercise on these draft reports was undertaken in 2014 and responses received (18 no.) will be taken into consideration in the final Reports to Inform the Appropriate Assessment. This will also be informed by any issues arising out of the Public Inquiry process.

Development of the New Environmental Statement and Draft Orders

3. Given the lapse in time that would derive from compliance with the appropriate assessment process, the Department decided to also update the Environmental Statement for the scheme, including the updating of key species ecological baseline data; revised approach to phased delivery; and an assessment of all other issues that had the potential for change such as air quality, traffic and noise.
4. A new draft Direction Order, draft Vesting Orders and Stopping-up of Private Accesses Orders were also prepared to reflect any changes arising out of the original Public Inquiry process and to take account of any interim changes in legislation and design standards. The original line of the proposed new dual carriageway was however unaffected.
5. Three new draft Vesting Orders were developed to reflect the phased delivery programme (see Scheme Phasing Paper) as follows:

- a. Phase 1a - from New Buildings to north of Strabane;
 - b. Phase 1b - from south of Omagh to Ballygawley; and
 - c. Phase 2 - from north of Strabane to south of Omagh.
6. The draft Direction Order includes for the length between New Buildings and Ballygawley, with the length between Ballygawley and the border at Aughnacloy not included in line with the recommendations within the Inspectors Report from the 2011 Public Inquiry. This section is however included in the new Environmental Statement which must take account of the full extents of an overall scheme.

Publication of Notices 2016

7. Publication of the new draft Orders and Environmental Statement took place week commencing 15 February 2016, followed by a public consultation period extending to 4 April 2016.
8. A composite Notice was placed, weeks commencing 15 February and 22 February 2016 (Appendix 1), in the Irish News; Newsletter; Belfast Telegraph; Derry Journal; Dungannon Observer; Londonderry Sentinel; Strabane Chronicle; Strabane Weekly News; Tyrone Courier; Tyrone Constitution; Tyrone Times; and the Ulster Herald together with the Northern Standard, Donegal News and Donegal Democrat in the Republic of Ireland. At the same time, the Notice was also uploaded to the A5 WTC scheme specific website, www.a5wtc.com.
9. In accordance with Article 7 of the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive (2011/92/EU) a description of, and information in relation to the scheme was also sent to the Irish Government.
10. Four public exhibitions were subsequently held between 1 March 2016 and Friday 4 March 2016 at the Everglades Hotel in Londonderry (1 March); the Silverbirch Hotel, Omagh (Wednesday 2 March); the Fir Trees Hotel, Strabane (Thursday 3 March); and Smyth Memorial Hall, Ballygawley on

Friday 4 March 2016. There were 1054 registered attendees at the exhibitions.

11. During this consultation period the Department became aware that the text of the Non-Technical Summary (which forms part of the Environmental Statement) did not fully reflect the content of the main body of the Environmental Statement. To ensure anyone who may only have read the shorter Non-Technical Summary had been appropriately informed, it was decided to re-consult on the Environmental Statement which included a revised Non-Technical Summary.
12. Publication of a the revised Non-Technical Summary took place week commencing 18 April 2016, followed by a further consultation period extending to 2 June 2016.
13. A Notice was placed, weeks commencing 18 and 25 April 2016 (Appendix 2), in the Irish News; Newsletter; Belfast Telegraph; Derry Journal; Dungannon Observer; Londonderry Sentinel; Strabane Chronicle; Strabane Weekly News; Tyrone Courier; Tyrone Constitution; Tyrone Times and the Ulster Herald together with the Northern Standard, Donegal News and Donegal Democrat in the Republic of Ireland. At the same time, the Notice was also uploaded to the A5 WTC scheme specific website, www.a5wtc.com.
14. A total of 1001 representations were received in response to the above consultation periods. This number includes one petition letter of 400 signatories and 41 letters in support of the scheme.
15. Given the significant number of representations made the Department announced the holding of a Public Inquiry to be held in the autumn of 2016. The Public Inquiry will be administered by the Planning Appeals Commission.