



Department for

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Ms Ruby McClaren  
Public Inquiry Administrator

Strategic Road Improvement Team  
County Hall  
Drumragh Avenue  
Omagh  
BT79 7AF  
Tel: 02882254033  
Email:  
[seamus.keenan@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk](mailto:seamus.keenan@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk)

Your ref: 2019/D001

Our ref:

Date: 5 December 2022

By Email

Dear Ms McLaren

### **Public Local Inquiry into the A5 Western Transport Corridor Road Scheme**

I refer to your letter of 21 November 2022 which raised a number of issues for this Department.

The Commission has requested “*dimensioned elevations and long sections showing proposed road deck altitudes in relation to existing ground levels, construction materials and the final external appearance of the road across its entire length.*” The Department was unaware that the Commission intended to raise this point at the mid-inquiry meeting and was unable to consider it in detail given the time limitations on the evening. The Department is of the view that the already published information complies with Article 67(6)(a) of the Roads (Northern Ireland) Order 1993 in that it comprehensively describes the project and its design.

The Department nevertheless intends to fully comply with the Commission’s request and sample drawings (Drawings 1, 2 and 3 attached) have been prepared based on the Department’s interpretation of the Commission’s request. Drawing 1 illustrates the general layout of the new road over approximately 1.5km of its length, with an equivalent long section indicating the vertical profile with existing ground and proposed new road levels. It would be the intention to have a minimum of one cross section per drawing, either at a specific or a general feature that may be of influence to the visual impacts of

the road within that 1.5km stretch. This would result in a total of approximately 60 such drawings over the length of the scheme. Drawings 2 and 3 are one-off, with typical cross sections of the new road and proposed structures along the length of the scheme.

Prior to the Department investing time and resource on the compilation of the full set of drawings across the length of the scheme, the Department would be grateful if the Commission could confirm as soon as possible that the sample drawings combined with the detail above satisfies its request.

In relation to the “*three other matters*” raised in your letter, the Department would comment as follows:

- A matrix showing the link between the Environmental Statement and subsequent addendums is being prepared by our engineering consultants. Release of this matrix is targeted for 16 December 2022. A copy will be sent to the PAC and Mr Watts. It will also be published on the [www.a5wtc](http://www.a5wtc) website.

The information published for consultation on 7 November 2022 by the Department was supplementary to the ESA 2022. The Department takes the view that, as such, it does not require an update to either the body of the ESA 2022 or the accompanying Non-Technical Summary (NTS). In preparing the further information now requested by the PAC for publication and consultation, further consideration will be given to the need to update the main body of the ESA 2022 and NTS at that time.

- In relation to the Outline Business Case (OBC) which is currently being prepared for the scheme, as requested, a copy of the minutes from the recent meeting between DfI and DoF officials referred to at the mid-inquiry meeting, together with presentation is attached. The Department is content with the PAC’s proposed approach to the OBC, this document being of a non-statutory nature.
- I can confirm that the Department is not relying on an operational protocol produced by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency setting a threshold for ammonia emissions affecting protected habitats of 1% of the critical load.

The Department looks forward to an early response in relation to the proposed drawings in order to proceed with the new publication / consultation exercise as soon as practically possible.

In your letter of 21 November 2022, the Commission noted its intention to write to all parties setting out new dates for the re-opened inquiry once representations made in respect of the requested drawings have been received. The initial consultation period ended in May 2022 and the original date for the Public Inquiry was January / February 2023. Given the time previously required, the Department would seek assurance that the Commission will use the forthcoming consultation time period to make the necessary public inquiry arrangements. Once the Commission has confirmed that it is content with the proposed drawings, the Department will provide proposed consultation dates to facilitate the making of the necessary arrangements.

Yours sincerely

Seamus Keenan  
Project Sponsor