



Department for

**Infrastructure**

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Your ref:

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Date: 31<sup>st</sup> October 2022

By Email

Dear Mr Morgan

## **A5 Western Transport Corridor (A5WTC) – PAC Public Inquiry**

### **Issue for Early Consideration**

Thank you for your email of 20<sup>th</sup> October 2022 providing information on the re-opening of the Public Inquiry on the A5WTC project proposal.

The purpose of this letter is to alert the PAC to the need for the Department to publish, for public consultation, further environmental information in the form of additional documentation as outlined below:

### Outline Business Case (OBC) – Emerging Findings

The Department is currently preparing a new OBC for the Proposed Scheme. It is unlikely that this document will be signed off and made available in advance of the re-opened Public Inquiry. In order to facilitate public debate at the inquiry hearing, the Department proposes to release three reports under the '*Outline Business Case (OBC) – Emerging Findings*' heading containing emerging findings from the on-going OBC development process. The reports are as follows:

1. Traffic Forecast Report (OBC2022);
2. Economic Appraisal Report (OBC2022); and
3. Strategic Context and Policy Report (OBC2022).

## Alternative Scheme Options: Environmental Review Summary Report (including Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions)

As well as summarising the environmental impacts of the alternative schemes, this report will include, as new information, a high-level review of the alternative schemes as well as the A5WTC on the topic of GHG emissions.

## Phasing Report - Addendum

The '*Phasing Report*' was published in March of this year as a supporting document to the Environmental Statement Addendum (ESA 2022). This has now been updated to take account of the scenario where the Proposed Scheme may be constructed in 'sections' (as originally planned in 2009), as opposed to phases.

## A5WTC Agricultural Industry Impact Assessment - Addendum Report

The '*A5WTC Agricultural Industry Impact Assessment 2022*' Report was published in March 2022. At the time of completion of this report, the areas for supplementary vesting of lands had not been confirmed and hence were not included within this overall assessment. The updated assessment now takes into account these additional lands.

## Development of Mitigation Options at Tully Bog Special Area of Conservation

This report provides background information on the development of environmental mitigation at Tully Bog Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The information was recently released in response to an Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) request.

While the end results of this development work are reported in the ESA 2022 and the Reports of Information to Inform an Appropriate Assessment (RIAA) for Tully Bog SAC, for completeness it is felt that this opportunity be taken to have this information made available to the wider public.

Overall, the Department has taken legal advice on these issues and has formed the view that while it may not be legally obliged to provide the above information, it nevertheless wishes to deal with the substance of some of the objections raised and facilitate public debate through the Public Inquiry process by publishing this updated and relevant information with a formal consultation notice to appear in the local press on the week commencing 7<sup>th</sup> November 2022. A mandatory six-week consultation period would ensue, closing on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2022. A copy of the proposed notice is attached for information.

It is suggested that the public availability of this information will also provide sufficient time for objectors and others to consider the information provided and respond back to the PAC within its stipulated timeframe of 9<sup>th</sup> January 2023.

To assist further in the process, the Department would propose to furnish the PAC with any representations made directly to the Department by the 23<sup>rd</sup> of December with the Department's rebuttals to those representations furnished by a date to be agreed.

The Department sincerely apologises for any inconvenience this may cause the PAC but hopes that the logistics around this new consultation can be accommodated. If the PAC is in agreement, these matters can be discussed at the scheduled pre-inquiry meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2022.

Yours sincerely

D J Millar