

Flintshire County Council

Welsh Government A494/A55/A548 Corridor, Red / Blue option consultation process

Appendix 2 - Flintshire County Councils Response

Flintshire County Council considers that on balance, the most beneficial route to the Council and North Wales would be the Red Route Option on the following basis:

- The red route offers both strategic long term network improvements and opportunities for modal inter-connectivity, as well as providing for improved economic and social connectivity and benefits locally.
- The route would provide improved network resilience and transport security by the provision of a second gateway into Wales. It would also reduce the impact on the Local Highway Network during periods of disruption on the Trunk Rd Network.
- There would be a significantly reduced impact on both the Local and Trunk Road network during the construction period – The Blue Route option will involve traffic interruption and diversions over the full period of the construction work, rather than the significantly shorter period of disruption required whilst the two tie in sections are completed for the Red Route option.
- The Red Route option will remove the significant long term maintenance risks associated with Flintshire County Councils continued ownership of Flintshire Bridge.
- The Red Route option provides improved access to the A548 and opens opportunities for regeneration in the areas both north and south of the estuary and provides improved links to Mostyn Docks.
- The proposals will provide a complete circulatory 'outer ring road' of the B5129 Deeside Corridor and will have positive impact on traffic levels and subsequent congestion levels along this key corridor.
- The improved capacity of the interchanges (by the provision of grade separated junctions along the new route) will improve access from/to DIP and reduce the congestion at the current access points onto the A548 from the park.
- The route will improve the business case for the development of the key Rail/Road infrastructure at the proposed Deeside Parkway station within DIP.
- The route provides the opportunity for a new Truck Stop on existing public land within DIP. This will reduce the level of ASB associated with truck parking along the existing A55 corridor.
- The route provides an improved "Gateway to Wales" experience for visitors and businesses.
- The route removes the through traffic and a significant number of LGV vehicles from the residential area of Aston/Garden City/Deeside.

The Council considers that in order to maximise benefit from the overall project, the following additional elements (some of which are contained within the Blue Route option) should also be included within the final proposals.

- There should be some limited junction realignment and rationalisation, together with the provision of a short section of service road, along the existing route along Aston Hill. This will improve road safety on this key section of the alternative route.
- The provision of the proposed noise barriers along Aston Hill should continue in line with the proposals contained within the Blue Route option – this will provide some noise protection for residents from the existing route traffic, particularly during periods of disruption on the main route over Flintshire Bridge.
- Remodelling of Ewloe Interchange to provide additional capacity and priority to traffic from the A55 (from the Chester direction). This will remove the regular west bound peak delays at this interchange and improve the safety of the existing Ewloe interchange.
- The existing A494 route should continue to be designated as a Trunk Road in order to provide resilience to the national road network into Wales.
- There will be a need for careful design considerations for the proposed grade separated interchange at Northop - where the two routes will converge. The new arrangement needs to ensure that there is sufficient capacity to deal with the traffic flows from both the existing A55 and the new route over Flintshire Bridge, without causing the delays which currently occur at Ewloe.
- Hard shoulders should be provided along as much of the proposed route as possible in order to provide refuge for vehicles in the event of emergency, without creating delays for other road users.
- The existing 50mph on Aston Hill should remain in force to encourage through traffic to utilise the new route.
- With either solution there is a significant risk that the gradient on the West bound carriageway (before the Halkyn interchange) will cause delays which will result in traffic tailbacks similar to those created by Aston Hill. A crawler lane is therefore required for the West Bound traffic along the length of the hill.
- The non-standard junctions on the North and South Bound A55 carriageway in the Halkyn and Northop areas should be improved or closed on the grounds of safety.
- Improved Tourism signage (Brown signs) should be provided for all attractions in the east of Wales e.g. Talacre, Hollywell etc.
- Measuring and mitigating the environmental impacts by use of defra's Biodiversity Offsetting Metric to deliver biodiversity benefits in a measurable way.