



Representation by:  
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Ref. or location in Representation	Text extracted from Representation	Department for Infrastructure (DfI Roads) response
Paragraph 1	<p><b>1.0 INTRODUCTION</b></p> <p>Mid Ulster District Council (the Council) welcomes this opportunity to respond to the consultation on the supplementary information to the Environmental Statement Addendum (2022) for the proposed A5 Western Transport Corridor (A5WTC). The Council recognises the importance of the A5WTC in saving lives, enhancing connectivity and addressing regional imbalance.</p>	<p>Thank you for your response to the A5 Western Transport Corridor (A5WTC) public consultation and for your support for the progression of the Proposed Scheme.</p>
Paragraphs 2-7	<p><b>2.0 OVERVIEW OF MID ULSTER</b></p> <p>The Mid Ulster District Council area represents a multicultural population of more than 146,000 across 1,714 km<sup>2</sup> (14% of the NI land mass) and is the fastest growing new Council area in Northern Ireland (its population is expected to grow to 165,000 by 2030). The area is within a 30-minute reach of Belfast (Dublin - 2 hours), and shares a land border with Republic of Ireland providing access to 450,000 people within a 50km radius.</p> <p>Mid Ulster is recognised as one of the most entrepreneurial and enterprising regions in Northern Ireland (NI). Its economy is private sector driven, boasting the largest business base outside the Belfast Metropolitan area with over 9,200 VAT registered businesses. Approximately one-third of businesses in</p>	<p>Thank you for providing an overview of Mid Ulster. We note your comments regarding the high productivity, export-intensive and entrepreneurial focuses within the region.</p>

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	<p>the Mid Ulster area are urban based and two thirds are located in dispersed rural communities.</p> <p>The region has higher productivity per head of population compared to the NI average and a GVA1 of £3.97bn (producing 8.1% of NI's economic output).</p> <p>The Council area has strengths in key sectors, including Manufacturing &amp; Engineering; Food and Agri Food; Construction; Retail, IT and Hospitality. Our businesses are the most export-intensive, accounting for 12% of NI's exports. Mid Ulster businesses embrace innovation, and the region has the largest uptake of Invest NI's Innovation Accreditation Awards outside of the Belfast region.</p> <p>Historically, Mid Ulster has been a great place to start and grow a business, and it is home to some of NI's best companies. The area has an international reputation for manufacturing excellence, hosting several of NI's leading advanced manufacturers, leading it to be recognised as the centre of manufacturing and engineering in Northern Ireland, where it accounts for 29% of the local economy (approx. 17,066 jobs), compared to 11% in NI. The sector is estimated to deliver c£1.67bn GVA contribution to the local economy and over £710m in local wages, directly and indirectly. This world class cluster is of profound importance to the area's economy – especially in key specialisms such as the manufacture of mining and quarrying machinery, production of general and special purpose machinery</p>	

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	<p>etc., which have linkages and supply chain associations with the construction and food and agri-food sectors. For instance, the area boasts a world-class High Growth Cluster that manufactures more than 40% of the world's mobile crushing and screening equipment.</p> <p>Its business base provides the lifeblood of the local economy, whilst the skills and capabilities of its workforce and strategic road connectivity are vital to its sustainability and growth.</p>	
Paragraphs 8-11	<p><b>3.0 CONSULTATION FEEDBACK</b></p> <p>The Council recognises that the single largest impediment to our region's economic growth and prosperity is the absence of the basic economic infrastructure. Connectivity drives the economy and Mid Ulster's ability to move people and goods is vital to the success of our businesses and the growth of our economy.</p> <p>Historically, the Mid Ulster region has suffered from significant underinvestment in road infrastructure despite its business base contributing billions into the NI economy. The Council views this as completely unacceptable and this lack of investment is a major barrier to economic growth and prosperity in Mid Ulster.</p> <p>Investment in long overdue infrastructure West of the Bann should be prioritised to drive the regionally balanced growth agenda and tackle levelling-up</p>	<p>We agree that upgrading the A5 road to a modern dual carriageway standard is necessary to enhance road safety and provide a wide range of other benefits, such as those you have cited, for all road users and communities.</p> <p>The higher-level objectives of the Proposed Scheme are stated as balancing regional infrastructure, improving competitiveness and economic prosperity through improving connectivity and accessibility across the region.</p> <p>The Department has developed a non-exhaustive list of anticipated benefits from the Proposed Scheme which can be found at:  <a href="https://www.a5wtc.com/Scheme-Benefits">https://www.a5wtc.com/Scheme-Benefits</a></p>

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	<p>disparities. Addressing this recognised infrastructural imbalance to the West will enhance the potential for boosting economic growth and competitiveness North and South. The Council views the A5WTR as extremely important to the growth and development of the Mid Ulster economy.</p> <p>The Council notes in the published “A5 WTR Strategic Context &amp; Policy Report - OBC2022” that the proposed scheme aligns to a range of both central and local government plans and policies including the Council’s Community Plan and Local Development Plan - Draft Plan Strategy 2030. The proposed Scheme will play a central role in helping to realise a number of long-standing strategic policy objectives. The Council also welcomes the narrative that the new route would potentially attract inward investment to districts including Mid Ulster, making them better places to live work and visit.</p>	
Paragraphs 12-14	<p>Due to the reduction of services and its peripheral location, much of Mid Ulster has the poorest access to acute hospital and care provision. Two thirds of Mid Ulster’s population of 145,000 are rural; and by 2037 83% will be aged 65+ (against an NI average of 68%). This situation is compounded by the absence of adequate road infrastructure. For example, Mid Ulster has recorded some of the worst Ambulance response times, consistently higher than the NI average and increasing year on year, and also poor access to acute</p>	<p>The Department note your comments regarding ambulance and hospital journey times, as well as increased reliance on private vehicles within Mid Ulster.</p> <p>Without any intervention, the journey times along the existing A5 would continue to worsen in the future. The Proposed Scheme would provide significant relief to the existing A5 traffic, typically reducing traffic by between 23% to over 90% on completion, with average</p>

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	<p>provision – Mid Ulster travel time to a hospital with major injury treatment capabilities is over eight minutes longer than the NI average. The proposed Scheme will enhance rural connectivity to health provision which is critical to attain an equal, inclusive and fair society.</p> <p>With an absence of railways and approximately 85% of Mid Ulster households owning a private vehicle, high reliance on the car as a mode of transport is expected to continue in the future. Unfortunately, residents cannot rely on the poor public transport network that exists and which has been reduced further in recent years. For Mid Ulster residents the car is the only viable option.</p> <p>Council acknowledges that the proposed Scheme will reduce journey times for users, increase road safety and relieve congestion. Tragically, over the course of the last year (October 2021-October 2022) there have been ten fatalities observed along the existing A5 corridor.</p>	<p>reductions in traffic using the existing A5 of around 69% relative to the ‘Do Minimum’ scenario. The Proposed Scheme would also result in substantial journey time savings. Over the entire length of the scheme, journey time savings are predicted to be around 23 minutes in 2028 and in excess of 27 minutes in 2043.</p> <p>We are acutely aware of the significant numbers of collisions and resultant casualties on the A5 road. An accident analysis of the A5 corridor including the side roads accessing the A5 between New Buildings and Aughnacloy showed that there were 1,003 injury accidents, involving 1,589 casualties between 2015 and 2019. Over the course of the last year (October 2021-October 2022) there have been ten fatalities observed along the existing A5 corridor.</p> <p>The Economic Appraisal Report 2022* (EAR) finds with the development of the A5 scheme over 2,700 accidents would be prevented resulting close to 3,800 casualties’ reduction during the 60-year appraisal period.</p>
Paragraph 15	<p>The Council also welcomes the additional narrative and discussion that has been included in the Supplementary Information to the ESA 2022 in respect of climate and environmental impacts and the opportunity to mitigate significant effects, such as the proposed flood risk mitigation and habitat management works.</p>	<p>We note your comment welcoming the additional Supplementary Information to the Environmental Statement Addendum (ESA) 2022*.</p> <p>Collectively, the Environmental Statement (ES) 2016*, the ESA 2019* and ESA 2022* report the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the Proposed Scheme. The Non-Technical Summary*</p>

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		(NTS) of the ES and ESAs for the Proposed Scheme (last published in January 2023) provides an overview of the relevant content and findings of the ES and ESAs in a clear and concise manner.
Paragraph 16-18	<p><b>4.0 CONCLUSION</b></p> <p>Mid Ulster District Council welcomes the opportunity to restate its commitment to and support for the development of the much-needed A5 Western Transport Corridor route. The Council recognises the overall strategic importance of the A5 to the NI economy and the potential substantial benefits to the West.</p> <p>Investment in the A5WTR will strengthen the region's strategic and unique geographic location through enhanced economic infrastructure and will advance north/south and east/west cross border interactions and global transactions.</p> <p>The Council looks forward to an early resumption and positive conclusion of the Planning Appeals Commission Public Inquiry on the A5 Western Transport Corridor to enable the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) to progress the Scheme without delay.</p>	<p>We have noted your response to the public consultation and your support for the Proposed Scheme.</p> <p>Yours and all other responses received to this consultation exercise will be passed to the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) who are administering the Public Inquiry process. The PAC will be in touch with you in due course in relation to how and when the Public Inquiry will be taken forward.</p> <p>We appreciate the time you have taken to respond to the consultation.</p>





*\*Please note that all ESA 2022/Associated Documents and Core Documents are publicly available on the following website: [www.a5wtc.com](http://www.a5wtc.com).*