



Asiant Cefnffyrdd Gogledd a Chanolbarth Cymru
North & Mid Wales Trunk Road Agent



A487 Dolgau Farm Improvement

Scheme Update

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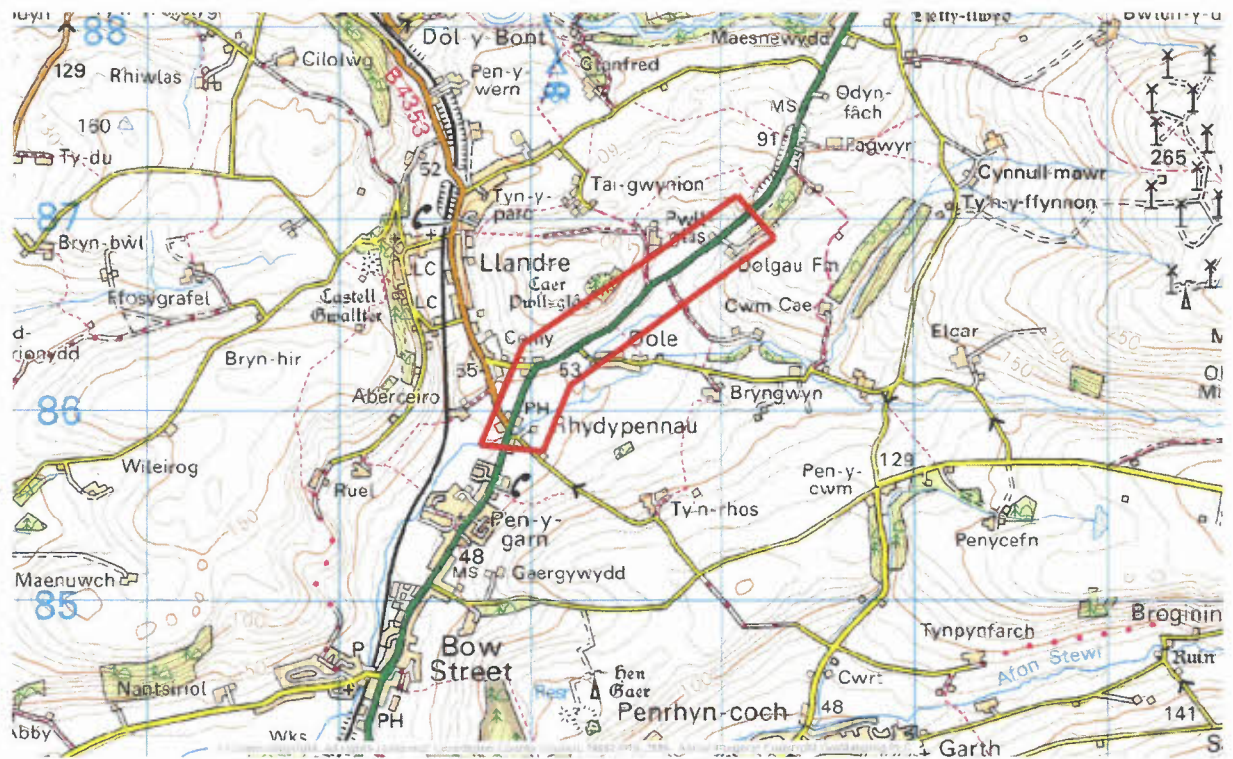
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Ordnance Survey extract showing general location of site
 (Study area approx centre Grid Ref SN 638 868)
Figure 1

1. Brief Description of Site

1.1. Background

The Dolgau Farm Improvement scheme runs northwards from the northern end of Rhydypennau for approximately 1.2km. The study area is predominantly within a rural setting typically with hedge banks rising from the edge of carriageway.

A major improvement proposal was initially prepared in April 1995 in Dyfed County Council and Welsh Office days. A Preliminary assessment report and draft design drawings were completed by Ceredigion County Council in August 1995. No further work was carried out until 1999/2000 when a Stage 1 Environmental Impact Assessment was carried out by Parsons Brinckerhoff, which was submitted to WAG along with a feasibility report in October 2000.

A Geotechnical Investigation was commissioned in March 2002, following which the GI report was issued to WAG in October 2002. Many queries and adjustments were made to the design in September 2000, to comply with the current standards.

A brief in 2010 requested that consideration be given to "smaller scale, more localised improvements than previously considered, including appropriate relaxations and / or departures from standard, to address specific road safety issues."

A brief was received in May 2013 to complete the detailed highway design on the full scheme, to review the environmental report and to prepare CPO/LR plans.

2. Design

With regards to the May 2013 brief design of the A487 horizontal and vertical alignment has been completed to standards, which in the main follows the

same alignment as the original design of 1995. Additional survey work was identified in order to carry out junction and access designs. However, Ceredigion County Council were unable to obtain the necessary permissions to carry out these additional surveys. Work on finalising the junction and access design layouts is still outstanding.

3. Environmental Data

3.1 Environmental data

A Stage 1 Environmental Assessment (EA) was initially undertaken in 2000 and related specifically to the major improvement that was originally proposed. A further Ecological report was prepared in March 2009. The West Wales Biodiversity Information Centre (WWBIC) were also asked in 2009 for a copy of their records for this site.

3.3.1 The 2000 Environmental Assessment in summary

The report considered the potential impact of the major scheme on the surrounding environment. Areas considered in the report were as follows:

- Cultural Heritage
- Air Quality
- Disruption due to Construction
- Ecology and Nature Conservation
- Landscape and Visual Impact
- Land Use
- Traffic Noise and Vibration
- Pedestrians, Cyclists, Equestrians and Community Effects
- Vehicle Travellers
- Water Quality and Drainage
- Geology and Soils
- Policies and Plans

For each of these subject areas baseline conditions, assessment of environmental effects, recommendations for further investigative work and

possible mitigation measures have all been considered. In conclusion a considerable number of further surveys are likely to be required as a part of any further Environmental studies for this location. It is likely that further consideration of mitigation measures will be necessary, prior to completing the detailed design.

3.3.2 Ecological report 2009

The Consultants were asked, whilst undertaking surveys in relation to the 2009 Ecological report, to consider the likelihood of bats, badgers and otters being identified within the site limits. It was considered that generally the whole of the site was unfavourable for badgers and otters with little likelihood of any being identified. However, bats were considered likely to be using nearby buildings, hedgerows and trees. More detailed surveys for bat roosts and nesting birds are recommended at all sites being considered for improvement.

The "Stage 1 Environmental Assessment" Report by Parsons Brinckerhoff in 2000 included a habitat survey in September 2000 and identified the significance of the hedgerows and mature specimen trees and recommended a number of mitigation measures, as follows:

- the broadleaved woodland / unimproved grassland at the northern end of the scheme on the northbound side to remain undisturbed;
- species rich hedgerow (with TPOs) to remain undisturbed;
- retain mature roadside trees where possible;
- only one side of carriageway hedgerow to be removed, and existing areas of broken hedgerow to be used for widening where possible;
- translocation of hedge banks where possible;
- truly indigenous species to be used in replanting;
- fauna survey prior to start of works;
- and Archaeological trial pits and full photographic record, and contingency.

The 2004 Determination Report by PB concluded **that EIA will not be required.**

A further habitat survey by Sarah Andrews in March 2009 confirmed the above recommendations and included the need for:

- retaining / restoring verges and NOT using rye-grass /clover seed mix
- *safe passage for wildlife through culverts for water crossings;*
- badger surveys;
- bat surveys of mature trees to be felled.

The follow up survey by Alison Heal on April 3rd 2012 confirmed all the above and noted the following additional information and recommendations:

- road crossing point for large mammal, probably badger, at grid ref 264199 287058 to be retained / reinstated;
- hedge bank material from Dolgau farm northwards should be used in new hedge banks to retain the bank vegetation species diversity;
- probable large mammal crossing at 263963 286867;
- culvert at 263963 286867; long culvert from grid reference 263711 286701 under the road to 263655 286662 should be shortened and include suitable culvert for wildlife;
- wide ditch / small pond at 263582 286569, should be reinstated and provides good opportunity for habitat enhancement.

3.3.3 WWBIC data 2009

The WWBIC data considered a 10m buffer zone around the limits of the whole of the area being considered for both major and minor improvements. One search was for protected species, priority species, species of conservation concern or other species occurring within 10m of the site limits. No species or statutory and non-statutory sites were encountered. The second search was for Phase 1 priority semi-natural habitats occurring within

10m of the site. Areas of semi-natural broadleaved woodland and unimproved acid grassland were identified near to Dolgau Farm and are likely to be in close proximity to the current proposals although may still remain unaffected by the works.

3.3.4 Environmental data summary

A licence will be required for disturbance to hedgerows as lengths of hedgerows affected exceed 30m. In addition, due to the length of time that has elapsed since the original Environmental Assessment of 2000, further updates are likely to be required for badgers, bats and bird nesting sites at locations in the immediate vicinity of the minor schemes being developed.

The major improvement scheme when developed will require further environmental investigation in addition to the above updates. Due to the overall size of the improvement a determination report would be required to establish whether or not further Environmental Impact Assessment is required. However, once the nature of the proposed improvement has been decided, discussions should be held with Consultants with a view to undertaking further survey work and the possibility of updating the original 2000 report.

4.0 Public Utility Apparatus

Section 84 Notices were sent to the public utilities back in 1999 and the total cost of consequential works then amounted to £658,000.00. Section 84 enquiries have not been updated since then. However this will be done as soon as the design has been completed and the figures above can then be updated.

5.0 Land Requirements

It is understood that the land affected by the proposals falls under the ownership of five landowners. None of the landowners have been approached regarding the proposals. Land plans and Land reference Schedules will need to be produced.

6.0 Ground Investigation Survey.

A Geotechnical Investigation was commissioned in March 2002, following which the GI report was issued to WAG in October 2002.

It is anticipated that further localised investigation will be required at the location of the culvert structure.

7.0 Construction Cost Estimates

Construction Cost	£1,950,000	
Public utility Costs:-		
Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water	£250,000	S84 1999 prices
Wales and the West	£5,000	S84 1999 prices
Scottish Power	£3,000	S84 1999 prices
BT Openreach	£400,000	S84 1999 prices
	=====	
	£2,608,000	

