

A55 Knock Road widening public inquiry

Roads Service responses to RACKS questions in statement of case dated 8 Oct 2010

Appendix	RACKS questions – summary	Ref	RS response
1	Prioritisation and decision making process for transportation schemes – A55 scheme ‘cherry picked’ regardless of best value for money	Q1.1 Q1.2 5-22(2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BMTP endorsed by NI Assembly in 2004 – included proposals for A55 Knock Rd – as well as arrange of other transportation proposals • Plan has indicative implementation programme for a range of initiatives (Table 10.1) – all subject to separate economic appraisal, statutory procedures and availability of funding • Programme for Government – NI Assembly strategic context for both budget and investment strategy • Investment Strategy for NI (2008 – 18) sets out investment priorities under the following ‘pillars’ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Networks ▪ Skills ▪ Health ▪ Social ▪ Environment ▪ Productive • Networks pillar key goals are : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rapid transit ▪ Upgrading key transport corridors (incl A55 scheme) ▪ Replacing railway stock ▪ Investment in single electricity market ▪ Improving communications network • Roads sub pillars are <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Key transport corridors (incl A55 scheme) ▪ Remainder of strategic road network (link corridors) ▪ Non strategic major works ▪ Local road improvements and safety measures • DRD Corp and Business Plan 2010/11 sets out investment strategy for Roads, Public Transport and Water – approved by

			<p>DRD Board and Minister</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roads Investment Delivery Plan identified A55 scheme in the 2013/14 – 17/18 timeframe – RS Board and Minister approval. A55 lower priority to other schemes EWay incl in DRD's Public Transport Investment Delivery Plan for implementation between 2011/12 and 13/14 – ie before A55 scheme Therefore – very clear accountability and approval trail for funding priorities for all major transportation projects through DRD Board, DRD Minister and NI Executive
1	Has DRD assessed effectiveness of other junctions on the Knock Road?	Q2.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No practical and justifiable proposals could be identified to provide capacity enhancements to adjacent junction (e.g. Kings Rd). The capacity of the A55 at peak times is determined largely by the signal controlled junctions. Improvements to Kings Rd unlikely to increase capacity for through traffic movements due to limitations of adjacent junctions (e.g. Upper N'ards Rd/Glen Rd/Ballygowan Rd etc)
1	Without improvements at Kings Road, how can Roads Service evidence that the proposed scheme will result in increased capacity and reduce attractiveness of rat-running?	Q2.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity for through traffic will be increased as there will now be two lanes for through traffic at the Shandon Park junction. Right turning facilities will also improve capacity along this stretch of road.
1	Evidence that consultation process has been effective – views of RACKS taken into account	Q3.1 Q3.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed response to this issue is contained on pages 1 – 5 of the RS 'Responses to Objectors' paper under the headings of : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of proper engagement Lack of equality of opportunity Proposed option not included as one of original 3 Adherence to Government public consultation procedures
1	<p>What measures have been incorporated/how does scheme meet policy commitments (in BMTP) :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To reduce negative impacts of traffic on non strategic road network/residential area 	<p>Q 3.3, 3-5(1)(2) 3-7(2) 6-17(2) 106(2) 6-4(1)(2)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traffic calming has already been introduced to reduce the impact of traffic in the residential area – consistent with the Plan's proposals The TC will ameliorate the effects of any additional traffic travelling through the area by controlling traffic speeds and discouraging rat-running

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To support reduction of traffic on non strategic road network To implement traffic calming measures on local roads in residential areas To enhance existing traffic calming facilities To introduce 'Home Zones'/20mph speed limit Will discourage/reduce through traffic and counter rat-running 	<p>3-7(1) 6-22(1) 9-2(1) 9-10(1) 171 106(1)</p> <p>Q 4(d) 6-22(2)</p> <p>6-22(4) 9-10(4)</p> <p>6-22(5) 9-2(2) 9-3(3) 9-8(2) 9-10(2) 41(1)(2) 106(3)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scheme not specifically designed to reduce traffic in residential area (6.14) – not a key objective. Junctions on the strategic A55 designed to make access into/out of area safer. TC has been introduced to satisfy objectives on the non-strategic road network (6.45) Fully controlled right turn facilities at Shandon Pk/Knock Rd junction will help to reduce rat-running through Knockvale Pk – traffic currently turns right into Knockvale Pk to access Sandown Rd due to the right turn ban at peak hours at the adjacent junction Shandon Pk junction will have short green time to minimise additional traffic that may turn right into Shandon Pk at peak times. Overall amount of additional traffic is estimated to be relatively small Main thrust of the scheme is to make main road safer by improving junctions. No proposals to enhance existing TC measures. Effectiveness of TC will be reviewed after 3 years – any further measures will be considered then if necessary. Initial indications are that measures are effective in reducing traffic speeds. No evidence of any injury accidents in area to date. Home zones/20mph speeds limit/electronic speed measurement signs are options that can be considered as part of the future assessment – but not likely to be necessary or appropriate
1	What traffic modelling has been carried out on a wider scale?	Q4a.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BTM provided a strategic model across the entire greater Belfast area - including the A55.
1	Has DRD determined the origin of the AM peak traffic?	Q4a.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes - as part of the strategic modelling process - equally local surveys enabled DRD to evaluate the source of locally generated traffic.
1	Has DRD assessed how traffic returns in the PM?	Q4a.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PM peak traffic counts were undertaken to determine level of traffic that uses Cherryvalley and Kensington Road. Once the right turn ban is lifted at Shandon Park, there will be an increase of traffic between 16:30 and 18:00. This will, however, be subject to a limited green-time during each cycle in order to ensure through traffic isn't affected too much, but more importantly, to discourage any rat-running.

1	Could DRD confirm that it has assessed the risk to pedestrians, residents, motorists on the Kensington Road?	Q4a.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There have been assessments carried out in response to queries raised by RACKS in February 2007. These are contained within the Residents Association Options Report. All alternative options were assessed against the Governments key criteria (Environment, Accessibility, Safety, Integration, Economy) - this included assessments on pedestrian, cyclists and community effects.
1	What is the Value for Money justification for Ascot Link?	Q4a.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Between 2001 and 2008 the Ascot Park / A55 junction has recorded a total of five accidents, with three classed as serious and two classed as slight in severity. Two of these serious accidents were caused by the driver losing control of the vehicle with the other serious accident caused by a lane conflict. One of the slight accidents was caused by a right turn conflict from minor to major roads e.g. the vehicle turned out of Ascot Park onto the A55.
1	What assessment has DRD made on the risks of collisions at foot of Ascot Link	Q4a.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The vertical alignment has been designed to the standards required in DMRB & Creating Places and with the implementation of traffic calming features (by way of table-tops and speed humps) high friction surfacing should not be required. The requirement for high friction surfacing can be reviewed post construction as and if required.
1	What were terms of reference and scope of environmental assessment?	Q4c.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Environmental Statement follows the recommended guidance as set out by the DMRB Volume 11. The residential areas have been incorporated into the Environmental Statement where required. With reference to Section 4.0 Air Quality, Section 8.0 Landscape Effects and Section 10.0 Noise & Vibration of the Environmental Statement these sections detail specific impacts with and without the scheme in place at sensitive residential receptors.
1	Why did DRD not carry out environmental assessment of the increased flow of traffic through our area?	Q4c.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The future traffic flows in the residential areas were not incorporated into the Environmental Statement as they were not required by DMRB.
1	Why does ES not consider the impact on people on the RACKS area?	Q4c.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The residential areas have been incorporated into the Environmental Statement where required. With reference to

			Section 4.0 Air Quality, Section 8.0 Landscape Effects and Section 10.0 Noise & Vibration of the Environmental Statement these sections detail specific impacts with and without the scheme in place at sensitive residential receptors.
1	Will DRD consider setting a 20mph limit in the RACKS area?	Q4d	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traffic calming has already proved to be a success in the area (from 2006 to 2010, the presence of traffic calming in this area lowered average vehicle speeds from 33mph to 24mph). A 20mph zone is not being considered at this present time.
1	How does DRD justify £135,000 for Kingsden Link?	Q4e	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One of the key design issues of the A55 Knock Road widening scheme is to enhance the safety of access and exit from properties for residents living on the Knock Road between Shandon Park and Kensington Road. Currently, these residents have to exit directly onto the Knock Road via substandard accesses with poor visibility. The construction of the new road will affect these accesses further so an alternative access road must be provided to mitigate this problem.
1	What part of surplus land will be utilised for environmental buffer?	Q4f	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The scope of any environmental buffer will vary across the site. The detailed planting plan will give an indication of proposed planting at any given location.
2	Letter to Minister	No questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No response
3	DRD minutes with Minister	No questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No response
4	Why does ES state that traffic will divert to Gilnahirk Road	Q1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarity needed in relation to question being asked.
5	Effectiveness of Consultation Process	No questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed response to this issue is contained on pages 1 – 5 of the RS 'Responses to Objectors' paper under the headings of : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of proper engagement Lack of equality of opportunity Proposed option not included as one of original 3 Adherence to Government public consultation procedures

6	Review of Environmental Statement		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation: In line with DMRB Volume 11, consultations with both statutory and non-statutory organisations were undertaken. A full list of the bodies consulted, and replies received, as part of this assessment is included as Appendix 3.1 in the ES. Further consultation was undertaken through Public Information Days held at various stages of the project in order to indicate proposals to the public and enable comment on those proposals. • Environmental Assessment: Each environmental section assesses the potential impact of the proposed scheme on the existing situation. Mitigation measures are then suggested to help remove or reduce that predicted impact. The ES concentrated on assessing potential significant impact of the proposed scheme. The residential areas have been incorporated into the Environmental Statement where required. With reference to Section 4.0 Air Quality, Section 8.0 Landscape Effects and Section 10.0 Noise & Vibration of the ES these sections detail specific impacts with and without the scheme in place at sensitive receptors. • Noise: The study area is defined as all land within 2km of the proposed road including all side roads off the A55. The study area is currently dominated by road traffic noise, predominantly from the existing A55 Knock Road and to a significantly lesser extent the various side roads that branch off the existing A55 Knock Road. Side roads have been assessed and included in the Environmental Statement as determined by guidance in the DMRB Volume 11 Environmental Assessment. • In all, 135 receptors were included in the noise model. It is not necessary to include all properties within 300m of the proposed road within the noise model. Nevertheless, all properties likely to experience any significant noise impact from the proposed road have been included and in some instances, the worst impacted of a cluster of similar properties has been included in order to be representative of that cluster of properties.
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			receptors on the main A55 Knock Road. The predicted levels of pollution on side roads are well within the UK and EU threshold levels for NO2 and PM10. This is due to the significantly low levels of traffic on the side roads adjoining the A55.
7	Photographs	No questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No response
8	<p>What measures have been incorporated/how does scheme meet policy commitments (in BMTP) :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To create a safer environment to encourage parents/children to get to school by walking/cycling To satisfy 'Safer Routes to School Initiative' To encourage more walking and cycling To make residential area safer for vulnerable people, particularly children and older people To make roads, footpaths and cycle ways safer for all road users 	<p>3-9(2)</p> <p>3-9(1) 9-2(1)(2)</p> <p>9-8(3) 9-10(3)</p> <p>9-3(1)(2) 9-8(1)</p> <p>47(1)(2) 109(1)(2)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Making travel safer is a key aim of the plan' (9.22) – proposals consistent with this objective Scheme has no proposals relating to 'Safer Routes to School (SRS) ' initiative – this is being delivered by RS as part of Local Transport and Safety Measures programme. SRS is implemented in collaboration with local schools and RS would be quite willing to consider requests for schemes SRS, however, relates to encouraging more sustainable modes of travel including walking and cycling Scheme includes specific measures for cycleway along both sides of road to extend existing facilities on A55 and link to Comber Greenway The associated footway widening on both sides of A55 will improve the environment for pedestrians - existing widths are relatively narrow and create a hostile and uncomfortable environment for pedestrians TC in residential area has reduced traffic speeds and helped to create a safer environment for both cyclists and pedestrians – which in turn should encourage more walking and cycling as proposed in the Plan Some TC features make the crossing distance shorter and safer for pedestrians Scheme supports Plan proposals relating to children and older people <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TC to reduce traffic speeds Wider footways Retention of bus stops and right turn into Clarawood estate to facilitate existing bus service – would otherwise have closed median for safety reasons

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Safer junction arrangements for local traffic ▪ Off c'way cycling facilities
8	<p>What measures have been incorporated/how does scheme meet policy commitments (in BMTP) :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To improve traffic flows and capacity on strategic road network and distributor roads • To improve infrastructure at 'accident cluster' spots • To provide capacity enhancement schemes to address key bottlenecks and provide consistent standard of roads 	<p>3-7(3) 6-17(1) 6-22(3)</p> <p>106(1)(2)(3)</p> <p>3-5(1) 6-13(1)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheme satisfies the 2025 strategy to 'safely and effectively cater for long distance movements to and from and between different parts of the BMA' (6.14) • Also satisfies 'capacity enhancements to address bottlenecks and provide consistent standard of road' (6.15) • Proposals will provide a more consistent and appropriate standard of road, reducing journey times and improving reliability for strategic traffic – thus helping to attract traffic currently using less suitable non-strategic roads as an alternative route to A55. • Specific proposals for A55 route detailed in 6.37 – focus is on the A55 Outer Ring Road 'being able to fulfil it's strategic function' • No practical and justifiable proposals could be identified to provide capacity enhancements to adjacent junction (eg Kings Rd). The capacity of the A55 at peak times is determined largely by the signal controlled junctions. Improvements to Kings Rd unlikely to increase capacity for through traffic movements due to limitations of adjacent junctions (eg Upper N'ards Rd/Glen Rd/Ballygowan Rd etc)
8	<p>What measures have been incorporated/how does scheme meet policy commitments (in BMTP) :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To assist in controlling air pollution • To reduce noise levels 	<p>9-14(1)(2)</p> <p>9-14(3)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air quality along the road with the scheme in place will meet the relevant UK and European air quality standards • Improved engine efficiency and moving the centreline away from the heavily populated northern side will add to the predicted air quality improvements • Overall, the majority of properties in the vicinity of the scheme will experience a minor decrease in noise levels as a result of the scheme • The increase in traffic flows and associated noise levels within the residential area are not likely to be significant
8	<p>What measures have been incorporated/how does scheme meet policy commitments (in BMTP) :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To deliver the EWay rapid transit 	<p>5-22(1)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No public transport alternative/option was considered as part of the scheme appraisal process. • Scheme has no proposals relating to implementation of EWay Rapid Transit project. This is a separate transportation project

	scheme		<p>being delivered by DRD which will be subject to separate statutory procedures, economic appraisal and funding availability – just like the A55 scheme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Non-strategic highway network traffic management strategy in the Plan (3-7) proposes measures on the A20 (Upp N'ards Rd) to reduce the attractiveness of the route for strategic traffic in conjunction with Eway which would provide an viable alternative for journeys on this radial route • EWay is one of a number of initiatives to encourage less use of the private car as identified in the Plan – others include Park and Ride schemes, Quality Bus Corridors and improvement to train and bus services etc • RS has worked closely with RT team to ensure A55 proposals do not mitigate against delivery of EWay – specifically the potential EWay route crossing on the former Comber railway line
8	How does DRD justify current the increased cost of scheme	6-4(4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Original BMTP proposals was a 4 lane road • Subsequent option appraisal process considered other options – 5 lane option with ancillary side road improvements taken forward • Capital costs increases due to : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2001 base estimate revised to 2007 ▪ Wider construction due to 5 lane ▪ Scheme longer (additional 0.3km) ▪ NIE service costs increased substantially ▪ Land costs increased due to market forces ▪ Kingston Link added • The economic appraisal was based on the 2007 scheme proposals and not the original 4 lane scheme. It indicated a positive Benefit to Cost Ratio.