

13 Socio-Economics and Tourism

Introduction

- 13.1 An assessment will be undertaken of the likely significant effects on socio-economic features as a result of the Proposed Project during the construction (including OHL removal), operation (including maintenance) and decommissioning phases.
- 13.2 The socio-economic issues that will be considered as part of the assessment include:
- Tourism: potential impacts on tourism businesses excluding an economic assessment of this), such as changes in access and/or amenity¹, that could affect the local tourism offer and the associated visitor response.
 - Recreation: potential impacts on areas used for recreational activities such as changes in current use, access and/or amenity. These areas include Public Rights of Way (PRoW), cycle routes, long distance walking routes, open access land, nature reserves and estuary-related leisure activities.
 - Community Amenity: potential amenity effects on community settlements.
 - Employment: an overview of the direct and indirect employment generation on a local and regional scale.
 - Supply chain: a qualitative overview of potential expenditure within the local supply chain.
- 13.3 Agricultural land is considered separately in Section 9 of this Screening and Scoping Report. Electric and Magnetic Fields (EMFs) are considered within Section 11.

Legislation and Policy

- 13.4 Legislation and planning policy relevant to the socio-economic assessment comprises:
- Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015;
 - The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000;
 - Welsh Government Planning Policy Wales: Edition 9 (2016);
 - Welsh Government Technical Advice Note (TAN) 13 – Tourism (1997);
 - Welsh Government TAN 16 – Sport, Recreation and Open Space (2009);
 - Welsh Government TAN 20 – Planning and the Welsh Language (2013);
 - Welsh Government TAN 23 – Economic Development (2014);
 - Gwynedd Council Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) Planning and the Welsh Language (2009);
 - Gwynedd Council SPG Planning for Sustainable Development (2010);
 - Gwynedd Council and Isle of Anglesey County Council Joint Local Development Plan (2017);

¹ Within the context of the assessment, 'amenity' is the term used to describe the overall pleasantness or attractiveness of the surroundings, which provide the setting for those living, working, visiting or travelling through the area. Detrimental effects on amenity are generally considered to arise when noise, visual and/or traffic disturbance effects coincide on a particular area or receptor.

- Gwynedd and Anglesey Draft Well-being Plan – draft (2017);
- Snowdonia National Park Authority Eryri Local Development Plan 2007-2022 (2011);
- Snowdonia National Park Authority SPG: Planning and the Welsh Language (2011); and
- Snowdonia National Park Authority SPG: Enabling Sustainable Development in the Welsh National Parks (2015).

Baseline Environment

- 13.5 Initial high-level baseline data collection has been undertaken to understand the context of potential socio- economic considerations for the Proposed Project. The Study Area for the socio-economic assessment will be defined as a 500m buffer around the Area of Search for Permanent and Temporary Works' within which socio-economic receptors or resources could be affected by the Proposed Project. A Wider 1km Study Area will be used to capture effects on tourism hubs and attractions.
- 13.6 Baseline data will be collated from the following sources:
- MAGIC Mapping (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) (2016);
 - 2001 Census (Office for National Statistics (ONS), 2001);
 - 2011 Census (ONS, 2011);
 - Annual Population Survey (Jan 2015 – Dec 2015) (ONS, 2015);
 - Business Register and Employment Survey (ONS, 2014);
 - Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ONS, 2015);
 - Visit to Tourist Attractions in Wales 2015 (Welsh Government, 2016); and
 - 2014 Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (Welsh Government, 2015).

Population and Communities

- 13.7 Initial data gathering indicates that the main centres of population within the Study Area are Penrhyndeudraeth and Minffordd. Within the Wider Study Area, the main centres of population are:
- Porthmadog;
 - Talsarnau;
 - Maentwrog;
 - Tremadog; and
 - Borth-y-Gest.
- 13.8 The Proposed Project is located in a predominantly rural area with generally low population densities, avoiding the majority of centres of population, with the exception of the village of Minffordd (population unknown).
- 13.9 An overview of the community profile (focusing on population, employment, education and deprivation) is provided in Section 15 (Health in Impact Assessment).

Tourism

- 13.10 There are no 'top 10' attractions² in Wales within the Study Area. Identified regional attractions in the Wider Study Area include:
- A high density of tourist and visitor accommodation (B&B, hotels, caravan parks and camp sites) in and around Porthmadog;
 - The historic village of Portmeirion approximately 1.7km to the south-west of the Proposed Project;
 - The Welsh Highland Heritage Railway, located approximately 2.5km west of the Proposed Project;
 - The Ffestiniog Railway and Welsh Highland Railway, approximately 3km west of the Proposed Project;
 - Oriel Rob Piercy – art gallery showing original artwork and paintings of Snowdonia, Portmeirion, and Wales; and
 - Bywyd Gwylit Glaslyn Wildlife Osprey Centre – community-led visitor centre.
- 13.11 The Study Area is crossed by National Cycle Route 8 at Llandecwyn and Minffordd. There are no Registered Parks and Gardens or Country Parks within the Study Area. Consideration will be given to recreational resources within the Study Area such as Public Rights of Way and open access land.
- 13.12 The Wider Study Area is situated in Snowdonia National Park which is known for its mountains, coastline, and lakes, as well as many historic sites. There are a wide range of outdoor pursuits on offer including hiking, cycling, horse riding, golfing, wildlife spotting, and water sports of all kinds.

Potential Impacts

- 13.13 The potential socio-economic impacts that could arise are summarised as follows.
- Construction phase: Temporary diversion or restricted access to recreational receptors e.g. PRow;
 - Construction phase: employment generation and spending impacts through the supply chain;
 - Construction phase: Demand for temporary accommodation, e.g. hotels, bed and breakfast, caravan pitches and self-catering accommodation and the impact this has on the tourism industry;
 - Operational phase: It is envisaged that the removal of the existing VIP subsection would result in permanent positive landscape and visual effects. This benefit would be experienced by visual receptors within the area, including visitors to the National Park. These effects will need to be balanced against any adverse effects of the new above ground infrastructure.
 - Decommissioning phase: It is assumed that the tunnel will remain in situ therefore effects during the decommissioning phase are likely to be less than those identified in the construction phase of the Proposed Project;

² As defined by Visit to Tourist Attractions in Wales 2017 (Welsh Government, 2018)
<https://gov.wales/docs/caecd/research/2018/180823-visitor-attractions-survey-2017-summary-en.pdf>

- All phases: Amenity impacts (linked to results of other technical chapters including noise, visual and traffic) of the Proposed Project on settlements, community and recreational facilities; and
- All phases: Potential cumulative impacts when considered with relevant other proposed developments.

Proposed Assessment Methodology

13.14 The following activities would be undertaken as part of the socio-economic assessment:

- A description of the existing socio-economic baseline conditions, including population and demography employment and income, tourism, recreation resources;
- Identification and assessment of changes to the existing baseline conditions, including desk-based research and evaluating likely significance of impacts;
- A high-level overview of the potential impact on employment and spending would be explored within both the local and regional populations;
- Interrogation of information on tourism attractions and hubs within the Wider Study Area for the Proposed Project, to identify the nature and sensitivity of these hubs;
- Identification of measures to avoid, manage or mitigate potential impacts followed by an assessment of residual effects of the Proposed Project.;
- Assessment of potential inter and intra project cumulative impacts (see Section 3).

13.15 The assessment will be co-ordinated with the Landscape and Visual, Noise and Vibration, and Traffic and Transport assessments to see if there are significant effects resulting from those assessments that may need to be considered from a socio-economic perspective. Where possible, the socio-economic assessment will report in a consistent manner within these areas of influence and at an appropriate scale.

Assessment of Impacts

13.16 The assessment will be made by considering baseline conditions and the potential to change those baseline conditions during the construction, operation and decommissioning of the Proposed Project. The significance of the effect will be formulated as a function of the receptor sensitivity and the magnitude of impact (change). Effects can be either beneficial or adverse.

13.17 The approach for defining the sensitivity of receptors would be set out for each topic within the socio-economic assessment. For example, for recreational resources sensitivity would be determined by whether the receptor is of local, regional or national importance. The number and nature of users would also be a key consideration. The following types of topic-specific questions would be considered in order to define sensitivity on a case-by-case basis:

- Is the attraction of national, regional or local importance?
- Is the attraction paid or free admission?
- Does the site attract a high volume of visitors?
- Is the resource primarily used by local people?
- Are any alternatives available?

13.18 The magnitude of impact represents the scale or extent of the change from the baseline condition, arising as a result of the Proposed Project. The magnitude of the impact would

not be assessed using set criteria definitions e.g. a 10% increase in employment is either a 'small' or 'large' magnitude of impact. Rather, the assessment would set the change within the context of the baseline, including trends, applying professional judgement as required. As such, the assessment would differ from that applied within other chapters, where more established guidance is available.

13.19 The following questions would be considered when assessing magnitude:

- How will the impact affect the operation of the resource?
- What is the potential reduction in visitor numbers (daily and overnight stays)?
- Are there any indirect impacts on other service provision, e.g. food and beverage, meetings, leisure?
- Is there a potential destination/perception risk in the short/medium/long term?

Table 13.1: Classification of Effects

| Sensitivity of Receptor | Magnitude of Impact | | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | High | Medium | Low | Very Low |
| High | Major | Major | Moderate | Minor |
| Medium | Major | Moderate | Minor | Negligible |
| Low | Moderate | Minor | Negligible | Negligible |
| Very Low | Minor | Negligible | Negligible | Negligible |

13.20 For the purposes of the environmental assessment, moderate and major effects would be considered to be significant.

Proposed Mitigation Measures

13.21 The assessment will seek to identify suitable mitigation to reduce, remove or compensate significant negative impacts and to enhance identified positive impacts.

Issues to be Scoped Out

13.22 Changes in the incidence of crime, or fear of crime as a result of the Proposed Project has been scoped out.

13.23 A quantitative assessment of employment and expenditure effects has been scoped out. While there would be some local employment generation and spending during the construction phase of the Proposed Project, this is likely to be minimal. The majority of construction employment will be sourced from outside of the local area due to the specialist nature of the works.

13.24 Effects on non-agricultural land take have been scoped out. The areas of temporary and permanent land-take are minimal. For effects on Land Use and Agriculture see Section 9 of this Screening and Scoping Report.

13.25 Effects on Welsh language have been scoped out as the number of workers and the duration of construction is unlikely to result in any effects on Welsh language.

Overview of the Likely Significance of Effect

- 13.26 The construction phase of the Proposed Project is likely to give rise to negative (although temporary and not significant) amenity effects through increased noise and vibration, traffic and visual effects. Conversely, the construction phase of the Proposed Project will create a source of employment and local revenue through the use of the local workforce, local services and suppliers.
- 13.27 During the operational phase of the Proposed Project there is the potential for the Proposed Project to bring about benefits to the amenity of the local area through pylon and OHL removal, which would be experienced by residents and tourist alike.