

Isle of Anglesey County Council

Report to:	The Executive
Date:	July 2026
Subject:	Resilience of the Menai Crossing
Portfolio holder(s):	Councillor Gary Pritchard Leader and Portfolio Holder for Economic Development Councillor Ieuan Williams Portfolio Holder for Highways Waste and Property
Head of service / director:	Christian Branch – Head of Service Regulation & Economic Development Service Huw Percy – Head of Service for Highways, Waste and Property
Report author:	Tudur H. Jones – Chief Officer Economic Development
Local members:	Relevant to all

A – Recommendation(s) and reasons

Recommendations:

- 1) **To raise awareness and the profile of the report by sharing with all regional stakeholders (public sector i.e. North Wales Police, Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board etc.) and private sector partners**
- 2) **To share the report with UK Government's Secretary of State for Wales, and Welsh Government's Cabinet Minister for Enterprise, Connectivity & Energy and the Deputy Minister for Transport**
- 3) **To secure a meeting with the above Ministers to discuss a collaborative approach to the issue of the Menai Crossing, agree governance structures and a proposed timetable for next steps and ensure progress.**

This report builds upon the previous papers presented to the Executive on the 18th of July 2023 ([Executive 18072023](#)) and also on the 29th February 2024 ([Executive 29022024](#)) whereby serious concerns and reservations surrounding the resilience of the Menai Crossing have been made.

There has not been a new bridge built across the Menai Strait since 1850. The Menai Bridge was originally completed in 1826, making it 200 years' old this year. The Britannia Bridge was completed in 1850, albeit some of it was rebuilt after a fire in the 1970s. The Green Book (2026) advises a project lifecycle of 60 years for infrastructure projects – this means that the Menai Bridge has already been operating for 3.3 times its anticipated lifecycle (and that is the expected lifecycle for a bridge that opens now with modern design and technology). The Britannia Bridge has been operating for 2.9 times its anticipated lifecycle.

The negative impacts from the sudden closure of the Menai Bridge in October 2022 (four years ago) cannot be underestimated. These impacts were made significantly worse in the week of the Eisteddfod yr Urdd when the Menai Bridge was forced to close 3 times in 24hrs because of overweight vehicles crossing. What should have been a celebration of Welsh

language, arts and culture and the Island in itself, was partially over shadowed by the chaos caused by the closure of the Menai Bridge.

A Third Menai Crossing is not a typical road scheme – it is not (only) about traditional transport user benefits but also provides long term resilience for access between Anglesey and the mainland and would also enable and facilitate:

1. Economic growth
2. Societal benefits
3. Transport related benefits
4. Environmental benefits

The Council has made clear its reservations over the findings of the North Wales Transport Commission (NWTC) in its previous report in February 2024. Whilst it was the Council's opinion none of the recommendations would resolve the issue of the resilience of the Menai Crossing, it is disappointing that no progress at all on implementing any of the recommendations has been forthcoming.

The ongoing congestion and lack of resilience is severely limiting and having a profound negative impact on social, economic, educational, health and cultural connections to and from the rest of the country.

It is also hampering the island's ability to attract the businesses and economic activity it needs to reduce a cycle of job losses, lower on-island employment and increasing reliance on off-island jobs. Tourism is an important sector to the Anglesey Economy, repeated closures including short notice closures and the issues it causes negatively affects the attractiveness of Anglesey as a tourist destination.

The ongoing lack of resilience exacerbates the challenges faced by the island's economy and hinder the successful implementation of key policy decisions that seek to rebuild our employment base and reduce the need of our residents to leave the island to work. This is now pressing against the backdrop of recent policy announcements (of which the Council has worked tirelessly to secure) aimed to stimulate economic activity such as the Porthladd Rhydd Ynys Môn (Anglesey Freeport), the AI Growth Zone and of course the Wylfa Small Modular Reactor investment.

Each of these will increase demand for travel by both businesses and residents and therefore increase pressure and reliance on the crossings.

But the vital need for a Third Crossing is not only about Anglesey's socio-economic future – it is also about North Wales as a region (as well as Welsh, UK-wide and international connectivity). Affecting not only Anglesey, the current situation introduces an undesirable fragility to regional resilience as a whole.

Regionally, across North Wales, many businesses from neighbouring counties serve, service and benefit from a market on Anglesey. Many larger businesses from, for example, Northeast Wales trade further afield with various markets in Ireland (and vice versa).

A Third Crossing thus becomes vital to achieving regional coherence and resilience, as well as outcomes from, for example, the North Wales Growth Deal. Key regional partners delivering vital services, engaging with customers and clients, and drawing workforce daily across the Menai Straits (such as those outlined in Recommendation 1 above), thus

constitute an essential part of the conversation in moving this matter forward and need to be involved.

The long-term solution is a third crossing of the Menai Strait. The case for this has already been made by Welsh Government through previous studies which in 2016 concluded that “Do nothing” was not an option. In the intervening 10 years, the situation has worsened.

The Council therefore welcomes the announcement made by Welsh Government on the 9th June 2026 that “*Looking at the longer term, we will now start looking at detailed options for a third Menai crossing, building on the work already undertaken*” and that we will continue to work with the Welsh Government on this critical infrastructure and ensure that meaningful progress is made in its development.

B – What other options did you consider and why did you reject them and/or opt for this opinion?

Doing nothing is not an option – given the historical issues with the resilience of the crossing to the mainland, the Council must continue to respond robustly to this ongoing issue.

C – Why is this a decision for the Executive?

Securing the formal support and endorsement of the Executive is important given the importance of the subject at hand and the high degree of local stakeholder interest.

This also builds on previous discussions held, including that at the Full Council on 23rd May 2023

<https://democracy.anglesey.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=127&MId=4173&Ver=4&LL=0>

Also, 18th July 2023

<https://democracy.anglesey.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=134&MId=4208&Ver=4&LL=0>

Ch – Is this decision consistent with policy approved by the full Council?

Yes

D – Is this decision within budget approved by the Council?

No impact on internal budgets.

Dd – Assessment of potential impacts (if relevant)

1. How does this decision affect our long-term needs as an island?

Securing the resilience of the Menai Crossing is essential to the future of Anglesey and its residents.

2. Is this a decision that is anticipated to prevent future costs/dependencies on the Council? If so, how?

Addressing the resilience of the Menai Crossing has the potential to prevent future costs/dependencies on the Authority by stimulating economic growth and prosperity and removing barriers that currently exist.

3. Have we collaborated with other organisations to come to this decision? If so, with whom?

Yes – there has been previous working with key partners and stakeholders across North Wales.

4. Have the citizens of Anglesey played a part in drafting this way forward, including those directly affected by the decision? Explain how.

This aspect will come further however we are cognisant of the strength of feeling that exists at the lack of resilience.

5. Note any potential impact this decision would have on the protected groups under the Equality Act 2010.

This has the potential to have significant positive impacts for all our residents.

6. If this is a strategic decision, note any potential impacts the decision would have on those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage.

We envisage that this has the potential to have potential positive impacts for all citizens especially considering that Anglesey suffers from deprivation and a number of its residents are at a socio-economic disadvantage.

7. Please note any potential effects that this decision would have on opportunities for people to use Welsh and not treat the language less favourably than English.

N/a.

E – Who did you consult with and what were their comments?

1. Chief Executive / Leadership Team (mandatory)	Supportive
2. Finance / 151 Officer	Supportive
3. Legal / Monitoring Officer (mandatory)	Supportive
4. HR	N/A
5. Property	N/A

6. IT	N/A
7. Procurement	
8. Scrutiny	
9. Local members	

F – Appendices

The Case for a Third Crossing (June 2026)

Ff – Background papers (contact the report author for more information)

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Ynys Môn

THE ISLE OF Anglesey

DRAFT: The Case for a Third Menai
Crossing

JUNE 2026



CYNGOR SIR
YNYS MÔN
ISLE OF ANGLESEY
COUNTY COUNCIL

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1 Introduction

‘People in Ynys Môn and across north Wales have been let down for too long when it comes to the resilience of the Menai crossings. This new Welsh Government will act with greater urgency and focus.’

Deputy Minister for Transport, Mark Hooper MS, Written Statement - 28th May 2026

‘Looking at the longer term, we will now start looking at detailed options for a third Menai crossing, building on the work already undertaken.’

Deputy Minister for Transport, Mark Hooper MS, Oral Statement – 9th June 2026

- 1.1 **The Isle of Anglesey County Council (IACC) welcomes the recent written and oral statements released by Mark Hooper MS** which acknowledges both the lack of progress that has been made to date, and the need for Welsh Government to act with greater urgency and focus to deliver short term and long term solutions.
- 1.2 In particular, we welcome the commitment to look at detailed options for a Third Menai Crossing. The intention is that the evidence set out in this document helps to make the case for a Third Menai Crossing more quickly and we look forward to collaborating with the Welsh Government to do so.
- 1.3 **There has not been a new bridge built across the Menai Strait since 1850.** The Menai Bridge was originally completed in 1826, making it 200 years’ old this year. The Britannia Bridge was completed in 1850, albeit some of it was rebuilt after a fire in the 1970s. The Green Book (2026) advises a project lifecycle of 60 years for infrastructure projects – this means that the Menai Bridge has already been operating for 3.3 times its anticipated lifecycle (and that is the expected lifecycle for a bridge that opens now with modern design and technology). The Britannia Bridge has been operating for 2.9 times its anticipated lifecycle.
- 1.4 **The Menai Bridge was built for horse and cart.** The approach of the previous Welsh Government was to extend further the bridge’s life through a programme of maintenance that has been proven not to work – the bridge is still frequently shut and the problems caused during Urdd Eisteddfod have shone a spotlight on the issues. Extending the life of a bridge that is 200 years’ old, and that was built for horse and cart, is an ineffectual response to a much bigger problem.
- 1.5 Our position is that the only pragmatic solution is to **progress urgently work on the Third Crossing project**, ensure that **short term measures are implemented to mitigate existing issues** as much as possible, and for the **Menai Bridge to be for cars, walking and cycling**, supporting tourism and community wellbeing. We welcome that the Welsh Government appear to be of the same view and are looking at detailed options for a Third Menai Crossing.
- 1.6 The Island is at a critical point in determining its future trajectory. After decades of major business closures and job losses that have led to a significant loss of its working age population, it now has the opportunity to secure major inward investment that is likely to

significantly increase traffic flows to and from the Island. A new crossing is therefore required to:

- Ensure that the **Island does not continue its economic decline** – with the knock-on effects on the **Welsh language** and community cohesion as people are forced to leave the Island for work
- To maintain and grow the role of **Holyhead Port** both for the north Wales economy but also acknowledging its strategic importance to the UK economy providing a key connection in the “land bridge” from Ireland to the rest of Europe and as the UK’s second largest roll-on roll-off ferry port after Dover.
- To ensure that delivery of benefits of the transformational, Welsh Government supported, projects including the **Freeport** (which will deliver 5,000 jobs) and the **North Wales Growth Deal**
- To ensure that the resilience and reliability of the crossings **do not stifle the ability of residents of North Wales to take advantage of employment opportunities** on the Island, including as a result of the transformational projects set out above
- **Support the delivery of Wylfa** and ensure that any **cost savings are realised** associated with combining elements of the projects
- To ensure that the **communities both sides of the Menai Strait can assess the community services they require** and to safeguard provision (by enabling people to get to their place of work)

1.7 **The Isle of Anglesey County Council has consistently advocated for a long-term solution to the reliability and resilience of the Menai Crossings** and we look forward to working closely with this new Welsh Government to ensure that the short term and long-term measures that are required are delivered.

1.8 The remainder of this report sets out

- 1.8.1 **The Problem (Section 3)** – the issues with the bridges, the direct economic and social consequences and the long-term implications of not progressing the Third Menai Crossing.
- 1.8.2 **The Solution (Section 4)** – the long-term solution is a third crossing of the Menai Strait, closing the Menai Bridge to traffic heavier than cars and making it a walking and cycling option and implementing short term measures to mitigate immediate impacts. This section sets out this case.
- 1.8.3 **The Roads Review (Section 5)** – We welcome the Government’s change of approach reverse the previous Welsh Government’s decision to cancel the proposed Third Menai Crossing project – we summarise our position in this section.
- 1.8.4 **Next steps (Section 6)** – We support the Government’s approach to urgently progress the implementation of short and longer term plans, and look forward to working collaboratively to do so.

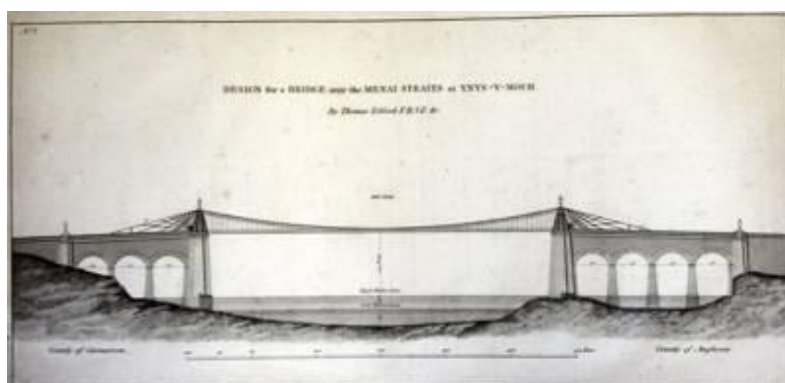
2 The Problem

- 2.1 There has not been a new bridge built across the Menai Strait since 1850 – before roads were designed for cars. Currently there are two bridges that connect Anglesey to the mainland – both are old, not designed for the uses required today, and far beyond their reasonable use.
- **The Menai Suspension Bridge (A5)** – between Bangor and Menai Bridge.
 - **Britannia Bridge (A55)** – between Capel-y-graig and Llanfairpwllgwyngyll.
- 2.2 The A55 / E22 Britannia Bridge is a main arterial route in Anglesey connecting the mainland with the Port of Holyhead.

The Menai Bridge

- 2.3 The Menai Bridge was originally completed in 1826, making it 200 years' old this year. It was designed for horse and cart.
- 2.4 As Mark Hooper MS (Deputy Minister for Transport) set out in the Senedd on the 9th June 2026: ***'This is a 200-year-old structure never designed for modern traffic demands, and it will continue to present challenges.'***

Figure 2-1: Telford's original design of the Menai Bridge



- 2.5 The Green Book (2026) advises a project lifecycle of 60 years for infrastructure projects – this means that the Menai Bridge has already been operating for 3.3 times its anticipated lifecycle (and that is the expected lifecycle for a bridge that opens now with modern design and technology).
- 2.6 The Bridge is in a state of near continuous maintenance with a combination of longer planned and shorter unplanned periods of closure since its full closure of 6 months in October 2022. Both have a knock-on impact on the wider road network, the traffic flows over the Britannia Bridge.
- 2.7 Short term closures are becoming increasingly common and there are more frequent occurrences of drivers disregarding the rules. This was highlighted recently during Urdd

Eisteddfod – disappointingly what should have been a celebration of Welsh language, arts and culture was partially over shadowed by the chaos caused by the closure of the Menai Bridge, which was closed three times over a 24-hour period.

2.8 Between the 10th April and the 2nd June, the Menai Bridge was shut six times as a result of suspected overweight vehicles (10th April, 27th April, 26th May, 2th May twice and the 2nd June). There were also maintenance works that either partially or fully closing the crossing:

- 13 and 14 May between 10am and 6pm – lane closure, traffic lights facilitate travel in both directions
- 15 May from 2pm until 16 May at 6pm - full bridge closure
- 17 May from 8pm until 18 May at 6am – lane closure, traffic lights facilitate travel in both directions
- 18 to 21 May, daily between 10am and 6pm lane closure, traffic lights facilitate travel in both directions

Figure 2-2: BBC news



- 2.9 The closures caused by suspected overweight vehicles crossing the bridge, violating the 7.5t restriction, resulted in the Welsh Government to release the following statement:

"We reiterate that only vehicles under 7.5 tonnes may use the bridge. Following recent breaches, traffic lights will operate for the duration of the Urdd Eisteddfod. Overweight vehicles will be turned away, with non-compliance referred to the police. We have increased Police and Welsh Government Traffic Officer presence to ensure safety and keep the crossing open.

We urge the public to respect those working on the bridge and follow their instructions."

- 2.10 The overlap with the Urdd Eisteddfod has both put issues of resilience in the spotlight and has both highlighted and escalated the frustration of the local community – but this is not a new issue.

- 2.11 The problems are exacerbated when there is an issue on the Britannia Bridge.

The Britannia Bridge

- 2.12 The Britannia Bridge was completed in 1850, albeit some of it was rebuilt after a fire in the 1970s. It has already been operating for 2.9 the expected lifecycle of a bridge built today. It has not had any major maintenance work for several years and is therefore vulnerable to closures due to wind, incidents and accidents.
- 2.13 While the Britannia Bridge has not had the extreme issues seen at the Menai Bridge in recent years – we cannot and should not take for granted its structural integrity. It is a vital part of the strategic transport network connecting the Island to the mainland, Holyhead Port to the rest of the UK, and linking people, economies and communities on both sides of the Menai Strait. As set out below, when there are issues with the Britannia Bridge – the knock on effects are significant, and this would be even greater if it coincided with a closure of the Menai Bridge. There has not been any long term closures required for maintenance of the Britannia Bridge in recent years but that is not to say that there will not be in the future and therefore effective and proactive planning is required now.
- 2.14 The Britannia Bridge is the only single carriageway section of the A55 and acts as a significant bottleneck to commuter, port and holiday traffic. It is therefore more vulnerable to accidents compared to dual carriageways, especially on the approaches.
- 2.15 Given the design and (necessary) weight restrictions on the Menai Bridge, it is the only connection between the mainland and Anglesey, and importantly Holyhead Port, which can carry wide, high or heavy loads. Congestion on the bridge increases around the times that a ferry is arriving or leaving.
- 2.16 During particularly high winds (gusts above 70mph) the bridge is fully closed – with no possible diversion route for vehicles over 7.5 tonnes. This creates issues as HGVs wait on the A55.
- 2.17 In May 2023 there was unfortunately a fatal road collision near the Britannia Bridge. This resulted in the closure of the bridge from 03:00 until 12:35 and the effects were significant on the residents of Anglesey including the students of David Hughes who were sitting important,

external exams. There were also wider secondary issues on the diversion of traffic through Llanfairpwll which forced all vehicles on the old A5 which is no longer fit-for-purpose for those volumes and vehicle types.

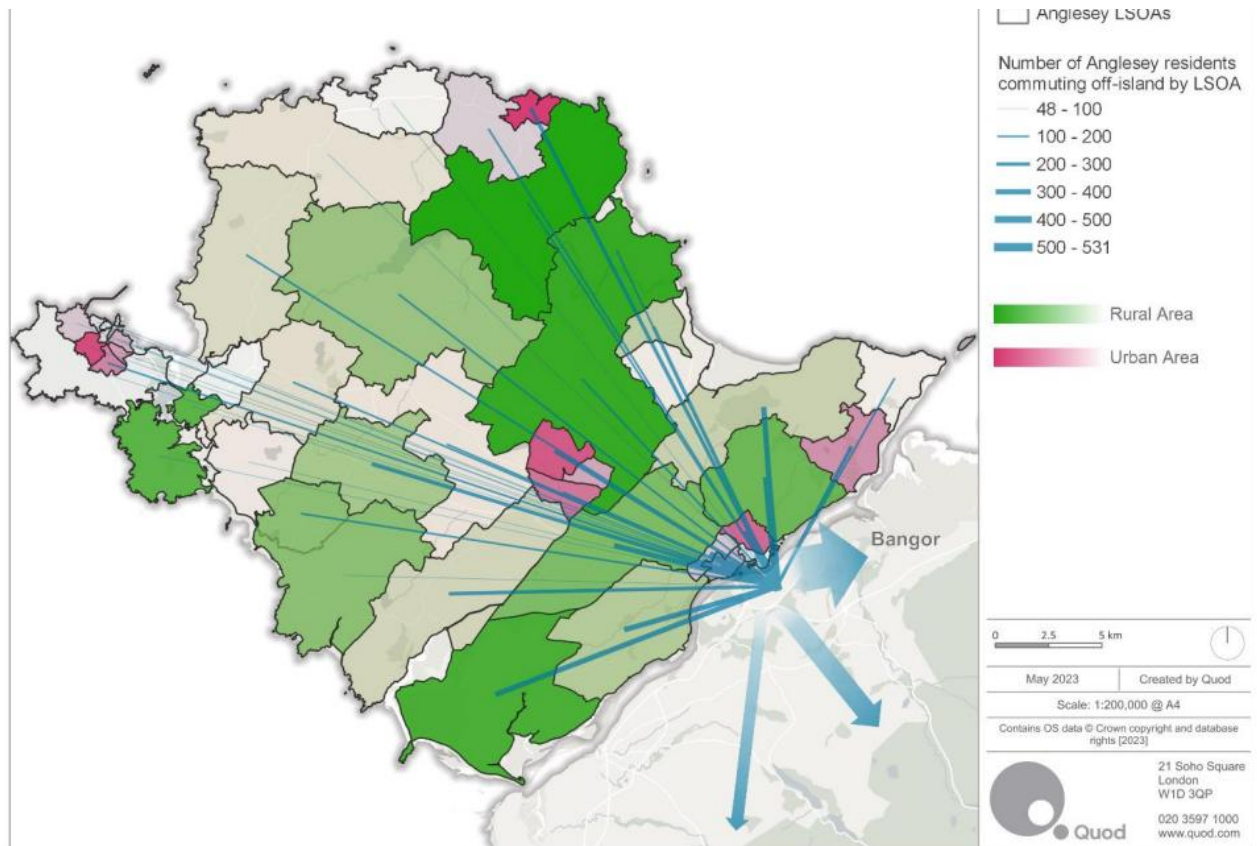
The consequences

2.18 The immediate and direct consequences of the closures are economic and social.

Direct economic consequences

- 2.19 **Repeated closures undermine the competitiveness of Holyhead Port** – this is a national issue given the strategic importance of the Port providing a key connection in the “land bridge” from Ireland to the rest of Europe and as the UK’s second largest roll-on roll-off ferry port after Dover. It is not just the actual delays (which have time and cost implications), it is also the perception or risk of delays that also impact the competitiveness. As set out above the Menai Bridge was shut six times between the 10th April and the 2nd June as a result of suspected overweight vehicles in addition to several periods where it was fully or partially shut for maintenance.
- 2.20 **This makes it more difficult to attract businesses and inward investment, including to the Freeport and it makes constructing the SMR project at Wylfa more difficult.** Anglesey has suffered from repeated factory closures over the last 20 years – most recently the 2-Sisters site in Llangefni shut (moving its operations closer to Chester) in part due to transport costs. There is office demand from businesses in established areas all along the A55 from Chester to Conwy in North Wales, but not further. This is likely to be driven by the difficulty of accessing Anglesey and the high transportation cost of getting to the Island
- 2.21 Tourism is also an important sector to the Anglesey Economy, repeated closures including short notice closures and the issues it causes negatively **affects the attractiveness of Anglesey as a tourist destination**. Since tourists add to the strain on the crossings, the issues are exacerbated at peak times and holiday periods. This affects both tourists (who tend to be in the area at points when the issues are worst) and residents / businesses (who experience even worse effects during the tourism season).
- 2.22 **It severs a functional economic area and makes it more difficult to live in Anglesey and work on the mainland (and vice versa).** Nearly 40% of Anglesey residents commute off the Island for work and mostly reside close to the existing two bridges. Anglesey has the only travel to work area (TTWA) in the Wales that is severed by water. This means that an area that is functionally economically linked is severed by a lack of reliable crossing.
- 2.23 It also limits the ability of residents of North Wales to take advantage of employment opportunities on the Island, including as a result of the transformational projects including Wylfa and the Freeport.

Figure 2-3: Residents commuting off the island



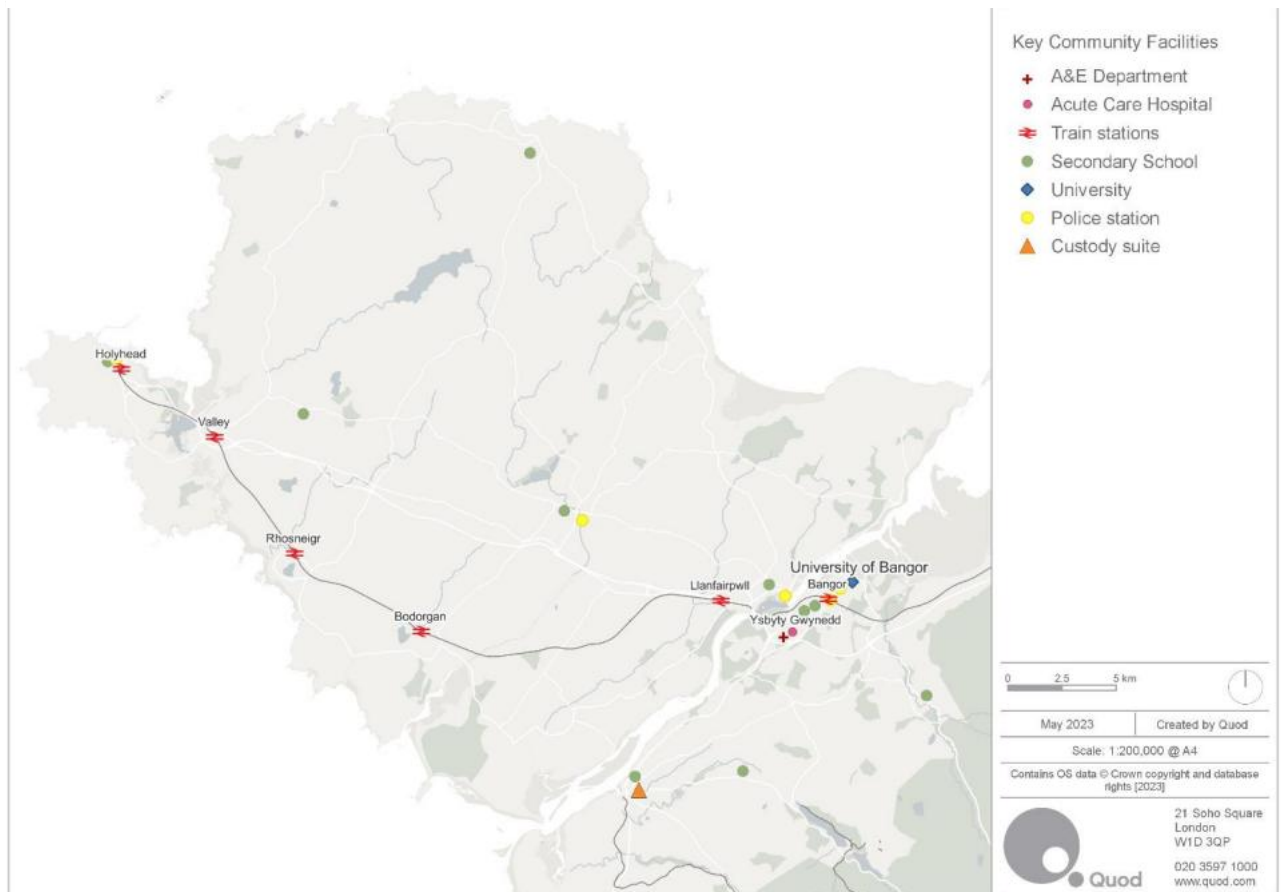
Direct social consequences

2.24 Anglesey residents are unusually reliant on the bridges. Many key healthcare, educational and crime and justice facilities are located on the mainland. Social consequences include:

- Impact on emergency services access since the closest A&E is on the mainland with both staff and patients unable to access Ysbyty Gwynedd.
- Impact on education due to school with students and staff unable to access schools and especially Ysgol David Hughes, Menai Bridge Primary, Ysgol Llanfairpwll and Bangor.
- Road safety concerns outside schools due to lack of alternative routes and rat running of HGVs when disruption occurs.
- Increased air and noise pollution – particularly Lon Refail in Llanfairpwllgwyngyll, which runs alongside the A55 between J8 and J8a has increased air pollution, noise and vibration levels for local residents.
- Poor resilience for all journeys including public transport, thus disincentivising the use of buses, which can only cross on the Britannia Bridge due to weight restrictions.

2.25 The closest community facilities such as an A&E department, acute care hospital and a university are all located on the mainland in Bangor. The closest custody suite is located in Caernarfon (on the mainland), which is even further from the two crossings and the emergency mental health services are in Ysbyty Gwynedd. Access to these critical facilities is dependent on the reliability and resilience of the existing crossings across the Menai Strait. These are shown in Figure 3.4.

Figure 2-4: Most Community Facilities are on the mainland



Longer term implications

- 2.26 Ultimately the long-term risk is a continued decline in job opportunities and out-migration, which in turn has effects on community resilience, healthcare and the Welsh Language, particularly if generations of young people move out.
- 2.27 This results in risks and challenges for the Anglesey community associated with:
- increased pressures on healthcare facilities
 - a rise in the dependency ratio and the need for care
 - reduction in the size of the labour market
 - loss of Welsh culture and speakers of the Welsh language
- 2.28 The competitiveness of, and growth of the Port of Holyhead, also risks being restricted if logistics firms seek more reliable routes for trade (including outside the UK).

The opportunity – and the importance of getting this right now

- 2.29 Anglesey is a potentially at a turning point – significant work undertaken by the Council and its partners alongside UK and Welsh Governments means that Anglesey has a genuine opportunity to reverse some of the significant economic decline that it suffered after the decommissioning of Wylfa and the string of factory closures. We do not want that success to be in any way undermined by the publicity of repeated closures impacting the Island's image, profile and reputation as a place to live, work, invest and do business.
- 2.30 The Freeport will support 5,000 jobs onsite and is of strategic national importance in regard of the land bridge via Holyhead Port.
- 2.31 The North Wales AI Growth Zone, backed by the Anglesey Freeport, means Anglesey and North Wales is at the forefront of digital research and development.
- 2.32 An SMR nuclear development at Wylfa will be one of the UK's most significant infrastructure projects in terms of size, scale and complexity, and is critical to energy security and net zero ambitions
- 2.33 Each of these will increase demand for travel by both businesses and residents and therefore increase pressure and reliance on the crossings.
- 2.34 It is crucial that the lack of reliable crossing does not risk maximising the benefit of these interventions or make their delivery significantly more difficult.

3 The Solution

- 3.1 The long-term solution is a third crossing of the Menai Strait, closing the Menai Bridge to anything heavier than cars and making it a walking and cycling option.
- 3.2 The case for the Third Crossing has already been made by the Welsh Government and a Strategic Outline Case was produced in 2016 – this is summarised below.
- 3.3 In the short term, we would ask the Welsh Government to:
 - 3.3.1 Consider improvements to the Britannia Bridge to improve reliability
 - 3.3.2 Better manage the weight restriction across the Menai Bridge.

The case for a third crossing

- 3.4 In 2016, a Strategic Outline Case (SOC) was produced by AECOM for a Third Menai Crossing.

The ‘Do Nothing’ option was unacceptable in 2016 and is an even worse option now

- 3.5 The SOC identified the key problems associated with the current travel situation. These primarily relate to congestion and rat running (affected by daily commuting, holiday peaks, and freight traffic) and poor network resilience due to safety requirements and resulting bridge closures.
- 3.6 The Strategic Case of the SOC identified that a ‘Do Nothing’ option would be unacceptable. Not addressing the current issues and projected traffic growth would be a major risk to economic growth and regeneration of Anglesey.
- 3.7 The identified impacts of doing nothing include:
 - Worsening traffic congestion on the existing bridges
 - Diversion of trade away from the Port of Holyhead, as a result of comparative advantage of alternative freight distribution routes.
 - Loss of economic competitiveness, leading to businesses locating elsewhere.
 - Congestion worsening accessibility for local residents, including for work opportunities and day-to-day services
 - Congestion affecting attractiveness of the area for tourists, resulting in loss in visitor spending.
- 3.8 These issues have become more acute – the regular closure of Menai Bridge and issues with the Britannia Bridge means disruptions and congestion have got worse with more significant impacts on local people, businesses, tourists and the operation of the port. The strategic importance of the Port of Holyhead has also grown since 2016 post Brexit and a result of the Freeport.

The economic case was strong – even though it likely underestimated the benefits

- 3.9 The SOC concluded that a third crossing would double the capacity of the A55, improve journey times (and journey time reliability), improve the accessibility and service quality for non-motorised users, as well as reduce frequency and severity of accidents.
- 3.10 The scheme has a good Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) of between 1.8 and 2.26 with 90% of total benefits from journey time savings.
- 3.11 This BCR is likely to be understated because:
- Resilience and reliability benefits are not fully captured by Welsh Transport Appraisal Guidance (WelTAG)
 - The WelTAG underweights the value of freight. The Port of Holyhead is the UK's second largest roll-on roll-off ferry port after Dover.
 - The benefits do not capture effects on business investment and land use changes, e.g. changes in freight trips. This will underestimate the role of a resilient crossing in maximising the benefits of the Freeport, making the delivery of Wylfa easier and supporting growth at the port.
- 3.12 A Third Menai Crossing is not a typical road scheme – it is not (only) about traditional transport user benefits but also provides long term resilience for access between Anglesey and the mainland and enables economic growth. A typical transport appraisal would fail to capture the full economic, social and community benefits of the scheme.
- 3.13 Many of these issues have been considered and addressed in England for the recently approved Lower Thames Crossing (LTC). That project seeks to address similar issues to the Menai Crossing including port access, reliability issues and supporting growth in a key part of the country addressing severance within a labour market area. The LTC has strong support for the UK Government and it has a much lower BCR than the proposed Third Menai Crossing.
- 3.14 The benefits to the economy, society, environment and transport network are set out below – these are clearly inter-related.

3.15 Benefits to the economy:

- **Supporting employment opportunities through inward investment** and land use development in North Wales. A more resilient and reliable crossing will help reduce out-commuting from Anglesey and increase travel to Anglesey due to job creation:
- **Freeport** – The Anglesey Freeport is now in its operational phase and is forecast to bring 5,000 jobs to the tax sites and further indirect jobs throughout north Wales. The Freeport, and the customs sites, will also support growth in competitiveness of Holyhead Port. A reliable crossing will ensure the benefits of the Freeport are maximised.
- **Anglesey Energy Island Programme** – Anglesey's geography means it has a uniquely placed to delivery energy projects. This includes nuclear SMR at Wylfa but also hydrogen and tidal (Anglesey has the largest consented tidal scheme in the world). This is important not just to Anglesey and North Wales but the UK as a whole.

- **Visitor economy** – the number of visitors travelling to Anglesey has increased in recent years and it is one of the largest employment sectors. The third crossing will ensure that visitor numbers can remain high (as the resilience of the road network will improve) and the popularity of the island as a sustainable visitor destination remains.
- **Connecting communities and commodities** – the Port of Holyhead is the second busiest roll-on roll-off port in the UK (after Dover) and is a critical part of the “land bridge” between Ireland, the UK and mainland Europe. Reliability and resilience of this link is crucial to support growth and strategic importance of the area.
- **Reduced goods / services prices due to improved journey times.**
- **Reduced transport / logistics costs.**

3.16 Society benefits:

- Social inclusion: improved connectivity and permeability will improve social inclusion by better connecting communities.
- Physical fitness – segregated facility for pedestrians and cyclists will encourage more use of active modes across the Menai Strait, which will improve physical fitness. Currently, pedestrians banned from the Britannia Bridge. This would be further improved if the Menai Bridge was restricted to no vehicles heavier than cars and walking and cycling.
- Improved access to work, education, health and leisure activities – including access for emergency services vehicles and residents’ access to emergency healthcare

3.17 Transport related benefits:

- Improved journey times and journey time reliability along the A55 during peak periods - this includes for residents, tourists, business and emergency services
- Improved resilience of the network to events such as scheduled maintenance and emergencies such as accidents or the impacts of bad weather.
- improving the safety of the crossing through e.g. improved junction designs etc.

3.18 Environmental benefits:

- Less queuing traffic and idling means more efficient engine operation and fewer emissions.
- The segregated facility for pedestrians and cyclists will encourage the use of active modes of transport, which in turn will reduce emissions. While private vehicles are still (necessarily) be dominant, increased uptake of active modes of transport is still beneficial for the environment. Again, this would be further improved if the Menai Bridge was restricted to walking and cycling.

4 The Roads Review

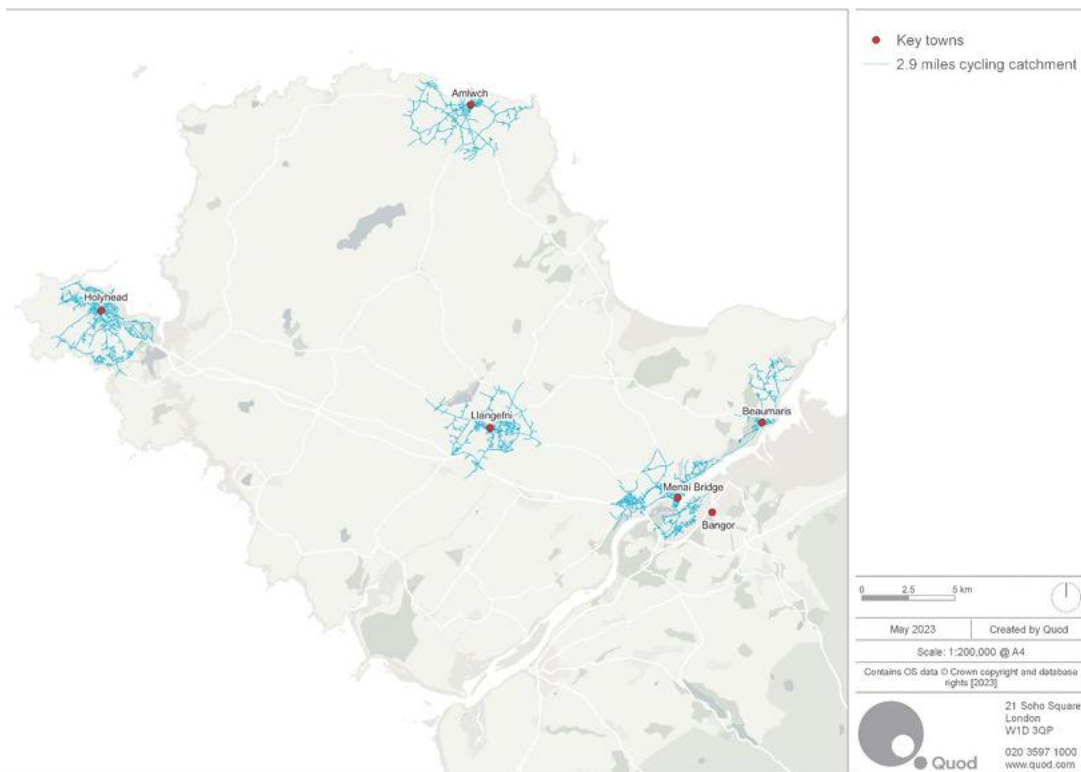
- 4.1 We welcome the Government's commitment **to looking at detailed options for a third Menai crossing**, thereby reversing the previous Welsh Government's decision (informed by the Roads Review) to cancel the proposed Third Menai Crossing project.
- 4.2 This report builds on the two previous reports submitted by the IACC to the previous Welsh Government:
 - 4.2.1 One in 2023 'Improving reliability and resilience across the Menai Strait' - a detailed evidence base to support the IACC's submission to the North Wales Transport Commission (NWTC) on the need for an improved multi-modal crossing of the Menai Strait.
 - 4.2.2 The second in 2024 which set out IACC's response to the NWTC's report 'Improving the Resilience of Connections Across the Menai Strait'. The Council had two fundamental concerns with, and challenges of, the report. Firstly, it did not consider options in the round since a third crossing appeared to have been ruled out at the outset. This leads to recommendations that are completely inadequate for addressing the challenges facing Anglesey and the wider area.
- 4.3 Whilst IACC shared the previous Government's commitment to tackling climate change, it does not believe that a blanket ban on new road construction is an appropriate response. IACC strongly supports the promotion of active travel and public transport, but policy has to recognise the places where they can make a bigger contribution and those (particularly rural areas) where road transport will remain relatively more important, especially for businesses, but also for residents.
- 4.4 IACC strongly agrees with the position set out in the National Infrastructure Commission Wales (NICW) Roads Review Response¹ which emphasised that urban and rural areas will make different contributions to reducing carbon emissions. Whilst the NICW report is not specific about its focus areas, it is notable that the review is illustrated by a single picture - of the Menai Bridge.
- 4.5 We also agree with the NICW's point that, "it is likely that active travel and public transport is less practical for more journeys than in Wales' urban areas." This is true of rural areas generally, but it is particularly true of Anglesey and the Menai Crossings. As the Commission recognises, access to public transport services in our sub-region is probably the worst of all the sub-regions and that bus services on Anglesey are infrequent and have limited operating hours (p.16). The crossings are vulnerable pinch-points where public transport and active travel do not provide adequate alternatives for private car and freight users.
- 4.6 Car travel is dominant in Anglesey because of a lack of realistic alternative. Nearly 85% of Anglesey households own at least one car or van. This is higher than the proportion for Wales

¹ [Reviewing the Roads Review – The National Infrastructure Commission for Wales](#)

as a whole (81%) and considerably higher than England and Wales (77%)². This further indicates that private car is the first choice of transportation means.

- 4.7 According to National Travel Survey, the average commute by bike is 2.9 miles. Figure 4.1 below demonstrates that such distance does not get people very far on Anglesey, where distances between towns and to the mainland are long.

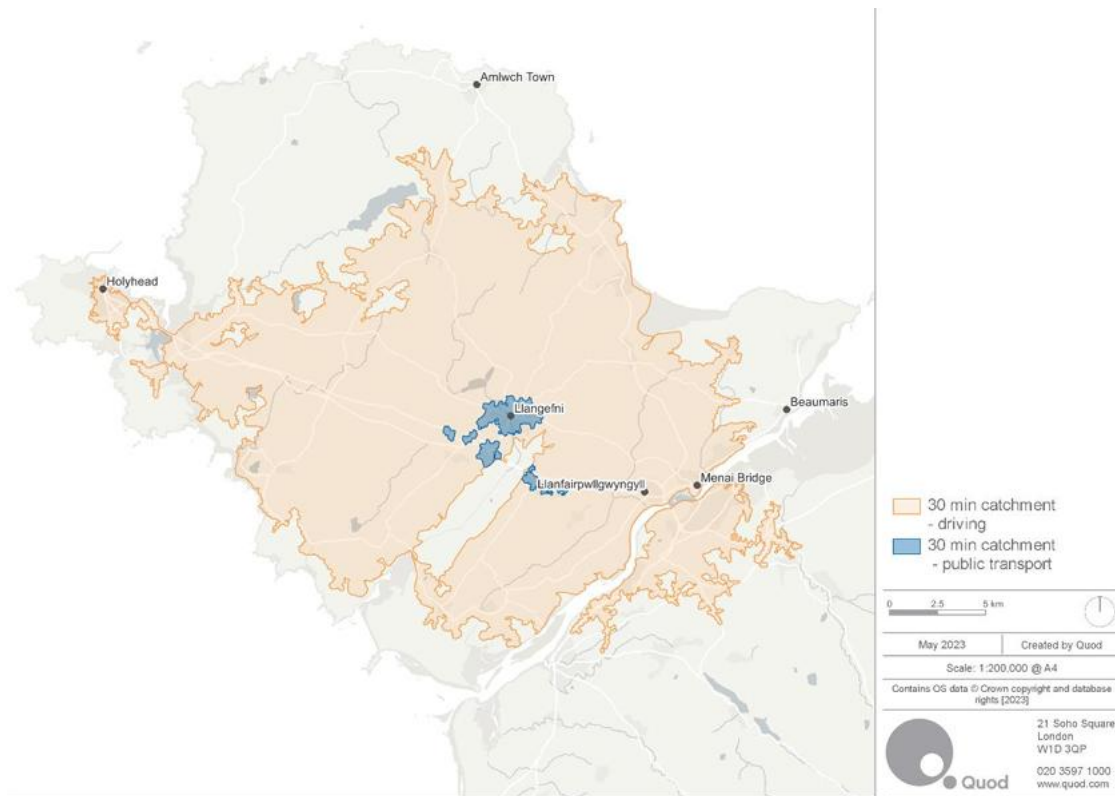
Figure 4.1: Cycle catchment from Anglesey's towns



- 4.8 Bus services on Anglesey are infrequent and have limited operating hours. The low ridership means they need to be heavily subsidised and many routes have been cut in recent years. Rail services are unlikely to make a significant impact. In a 30-min travel window, commuters are unable to travel far on a bus or a cycle compared to a private vehicle, which means they are likely to only use a bus or cycle for commuting from areas such as Menai Bridge to Bangor (close to the bridges on the mainland).
- 4.9 By way of example the map below shows a 30-minute travel on the bus (in blue) during the morning peak (08:30-09:00) from Llangefni compare to drive time (orange).

² Census 2021

Figure 4.2: Bus versus driving catchment from Llangefni



4.10 For reasons set out in the previous sections, we support the Government’s decision to progress work on the Third Menai Crossing and to deliver short term improvements to improve resilience in the meantime.

4.11 This is also in line with the North Wales Regional Transport Plan 2025 to 2030³ which is ‘*guided by a vision to create a safe, sustainable, affordable, resilient, and effective integrated transport network that supports our economy to thrive*’ and of particular relevance states that:

- The Strategic Road Network should be maintained to ensure that routes remain safe and reliable.
- The case for a Third Menai Crossing should be progressed.
- Measures that will improve resilience of the Menai Crossings should be progressed

³ <https://ambitionnorth.wales/media/o25b1eck/north-wales-regional-transport-plan-2025-2030-final.pdf>

5 Next steps

- 5.1 As set out in at the beginning of this report, the Isle of Anglesey County Council welcomes the recent statement made by the Welsh Government, in particular that:

“This new Welsh Government will act with greater urgency and focus.

Deputy Minister for Transport, Mark Hooper MS, 28th May 2026

‘Looking at the longer term, we will now start looking at detailed options for a third Menai crossing, building on the work already undertaken.’

Deputy Minister for Transport, Mark Hooper MS, Oral Statement – 9th June 2026

- 5.2 **We support the Government’s decision to progress work on the Third Menai Crossing and ask that it commits the resources to undertake the design, assessments and consenting process and consider funding opportunities, including via the UK Government.**

- 5.3 We also welcome the Government’s approach to consider measures to mitigate the impacts in the short term, as long as this is alongside progressing the Third Menai Crossing as a long term solution. Some of traffic management option can and should be implemented quickly.

- 5.4 Some options were considered within the NWTC’s report ‘Improving the Resilience of Connections Across the Menai Strait’. While our overarching view was that these measures would have a limited effect in the context of the overall scale of the issue (and we raised some issues around deliverability) we agree that is merit in bringing forward some of these interventions in the short term. Our view on the effectiveness and deliverability risk of intervention is set out in our response to the NWTC’s report and we would welcome collaboration with the Welsh Government on these options.

- 5.5 In the **short term**, we would therefore ask the Welsh Government to:

5.5.1 Collaborate on the improvements to the Britannia Bridge to improve reliability

5.5.2 Better manage the weight restriction across the Menai Bridge.

- 5.6 We look forward to working closely with the Welsh Government to deliver short term and long term solutions to provide a reliable and resilient crossing across the Menai Strait of benefit of the local and national economy and the community of Ynys Mon.

- 5.7 We echo the Welsh Government position that:

“Communities on both sides of the Strait deserve reliable connections, and we are determined to provide them.”

Deputy Minister for Transport, Mark Hooper MS, 28th May 2026