

# Newtown bypass to be officially opened ahead of schedule

Construction of the bypass began in February 2016 and traffic will be allowed to travel on the road for the first time following the official opening.

The development to the south of Newtown is approximately 6.3km long and has two lanes in one direction and one lane in the opposite direction to provide safe overtaking sections of the road.

The Newtown bypass will ease traffic congestion through the town centre by between 40 and 50 per cent resulting in reduced journey times in the area and better access to jobs and services. It will also improve safety by removing the need for large high sided heavy goods and agricultural vehicles from travelling through nearby residential areas.

A strong emphasis has been placed on investing in Welsh businesses during the construction phase with £46.8 million being spent on goods, services, or overheads from companies in Wales.

In addition, £10.7 million has been spent on employing people, including apprentices, living in Wales as a result of the scheme.

Alun Griffiths contractors who built the bypass have provided local employment and training opportunities in partnership with Coleg Powys through the Skills Academy Programme. This has resulted in 18 apprentices and graduate trainees gaining valuable skills and experience by working on the bypass.

Active travel provisions have also been included as part of the bypass including a link from Newtown to the Mochdre Industrial Estate.

Ahead of the official opening, Economy and Transport Minister Ken Skates said:

“I am delighted to officially open what is a significant development in Mid Wales.

The Newtown Bypass has been delivered ahead of schedule and completed to the very highest standard. The scheme improves north-south and east-west links and will provide a real step change in how people travel in the area, as well as to and beyond Newtown.

The amount of traffic passing through the town will reduce as a result of the development leading to shorter journey times and improved air quality in the area.

The new bypass will strengthen the local economy by making it easier and better for people to access jobs and services and

businesses will benefit too as the new route makes it simpler to import and export goods. It also provides improved links to tourist destinations which will be a boost for the industry.

I have been impressed with the role apprentices and graduate trainees have had working on the construction of the bypass. I'd like to congratulate them, Alun Griffiths and everyone who has worked on delivering this excellent feat of engineering.

I'm also very pleased with the level of community engagement and projects that have been delivered as a result of the project. From fundraising for charities to educational link programmes such as visits to schools, this scheme has had a real community element to it.

The Newtown Bypass is an absolutely fantastic example of how Welsh Government investment and commitment is delivering for the benefit of residents in Mid Wales."