

Adran yr Economi a'r Seilwaith
Department for Economy and Infrastructure



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

This document is an update to the 'Proof of Evidence – Planning & Sustainable Development' document. It contains an update following the addition of the eastbound off-slip in the DRAFT SUPPLEMENTARY (NO. 2) SCHEME ORDER and a general update on the sections related to the Magor Services Area.

Scheme Evidence Update

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Welsh Government, Planning and Sustainable Development

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1. AUTHOR

- 1.1 My name is John Davies. I currently work as a self-employed planning consultant under the title 'John Davies Planning' as a sole trader. My professional qualifications are set out in my main proof of evidence and are not repeated here.

- 1.2 The evidence provided in this Proof of Evidence has been prepared and is given in accordance with the guidance of my professional institution and I confirm that the opinions expressed are my true and professional opinions.

2. SCOPE AND PURPOSE OF THIS PROOF OF EVIDENCE

2.1 This Proof of Evidence provides updated evidence for the Welsh Government's Scheme as modified by the March 2017 draft Orders Supplement to include proposals for an eastbound off-slip road at Junction 23A.

2.2 This evidence supersedes my previous evidence in respect of all matters concerning the rest area. The following sections of my main evidence are thus withdrawn to be replaced with this evidence:

John Davies Planning & Sustainable Development Main Evidence
(WG 1.23.1)

Sections 192 & 193

2.3 In order to reach conclusions I draw on the updated evidence of other witnesses specifically Matthew Jones (WG1.1.6), Bryan Whittaker (WG1.2.6), Stephen Bussell (WG1.3.5), Dr Peter Ireland (WG1.7.4) and Ben Sibert (WG1.5.5).

2.4 My evidence is presented in the following structure, with a detailed contents provided at the start of the document.

1. Author
2. Scope and Purpose of this Proof of Evidence
3. Scheme Evidence Update

3. SCHEME EVIDENCE UPDATE

3.1. The EastBound Off-Slip Road

3.1.1. The Welsh Government published a supplement to the draft Orders in March 2017 to include an additional eastbound off-slip road at Junction 23A, affording a direct connection for eastbound traffic on the proposed new motorway. These supplementary proposals are described in PLI document 2.5.17.

3.1.2. To summarise the key features that make up the changes in the supplement:

- a) a new slip road with single lane cross section, diverging from the mainline to the north of the Llandeenny railway bridge, which would remain as in the original proposals;
- b) modifications to the size and position of the roundabout between the A4810 and the B4245 west of Magor, to which the supplementary slip road would connect;
- c) a route for non-motorised users of the B4245 would change from a grade separated route passing under the A4810 using an existing bridge and would be replaced by an at-grade route with signal-controlled crossing points of the proposed slip road and the A4810 Steelworks Access Road south of the roundabout.

3.2. Magor Services

3.2.1. Roadchef, the operators of the services at Junction 23A, and Rontec, the landowners, object to the access arrangements to and from the new section of motorway; even with the addition of the eastbound off-slip. The access/egress arrangements to/from the Magor Services with the eastbound off-slip in place are described in detail in the Proofs of Mr Ben Sibert (WG1.5.5) and Mr Matthew Jones (WG1.1.6). Motorists travelling in some directions on the new section of motorway

would take longer and travel further to use the Services than from the existing M4 (refer to Proof of Evidence of Mr Bryan Whittaker (WG1.2.6)). The impact on the Services in terms of visitor numbers and associated revenues is analysed by Mr Stephen Bussell (WG1.3.5), who also updates the economic appraisal and wider economic impact of the Scheme with the addition of the eastbound off-slip. Dr Peter Ireland (WG 1.7.4) sets out the environmental impacts of the proposed eastbound off-slip road.

- 3.2.2. As set out by Mr Whittaker and Mr Bussell, depending on the route and time of day, the extra travel time incurred by drivers on the proposed M4 who choose to stop at Magor Services would increase by some 2.5 to 3.0 minutes eastbound and around 3 to 5 minutes westbound. I share Mr Bussell's view that the extra time taken would be likely to have an impact by deterring some travellers from stopping at the Services with some consequent loss of trade. However, the impact needs to be qualified in terms of the convenience of alternative service areas; the types of customers most likely to be affected; and the increased traffic and hence potential customers approaching the Services because of the Scheme.
- 3.2.3. Mr Bussell sets out a detailed analysis of the impact of potential loss of customers on the Services taking account of the high visitor numbers; degree of competition, and growing market for the Service Area in terms of passing traffic. Based on that analysis, whilst acknowledging a detrimental impact on the Service Area, he concludes that the Magor Services would only cease to be viable if the Scheme were to result in an improbably large reduction in the inclination of M4 users to stop at the Service Area. Based on his thorough and detailed analysis and reasoning, I am satisfied that whilst there may be a reduction in customers this would not be on a scale likely to threaten the continuation of Magor Services.

- 3.2.4. With the addition of the eastbound off-slip, Mr Bussell in his updated evidence calculates that for the core traffic growth scenario and Severn Crossing tolls at half their current level, an initial benefit to cost ratio (Initial BCR) of 1.66, with an Adjusted BCR taking account of the wider economic impact of 2.27. These figures are marginally higher than those in my original proof (WG1.23.1, para 171) but the difference is not such as to affect my conclusions on the economic benefits of the Scheme (WG1.23.1, para 196).
- 3.2.5. Mr Sibert and Mr Jones deal with convenience and safety. Eastbound traffic on the new M4 would use the eastbound off-slip at Junction 23A, whilst westbound traffic would use the new westbound free flow link from Junction 23 and the existing Junction 23A slip road. Whilst the distance between Magor and Leigh Delamere Services exceeds that recommended in Government guidance (TD 69/07), this is already the case, and the Scheme would increase this only marginally, by 0.2 miles.
- 3.2.6. The eastbound off-slip at Junction 23A and the westbound free flow link from Junction 23 to Junction 23A would therefore provide convenient access to the Services from both directions on the proposed M4. Advance information signs would direct drivers to the Services and allow them to decide whether to stop or not. Whilst travellers would have a more indirect route to exit the Services and re-join the motorway network, there are several options in the westbound direction as described by Mr Jones and Mr Sibert. Those travelling east would exit onto the J23-J23A Trunk Road Link to join the motorway at Junction 23. Ease of access and egress would not be significantly different from the existing situation. Bearing in mind the Services at Junction 30 (Cardiff Gate) and the convenient access to the Magor Services, I am satisfied that the Scheme with the inclusion of the eastbound off-slip at Junction 23A, properly provides for the needs of motorway travellers, should they desire to stop.

- 3.2.7. Dr Peter Ireland deals with the environmental impacts of the proposed eastbound off-slip. The Welsh Government published a third supplement to the Environmental Statement in March 2017 (the March 2017 ES Supplement) that assessed the proposed off-slip road. This change would cause traffic on the proposed new section of motorway to the east of Glan Llyn to increase. Traffic patterns on the B4245 would change with an increase in traffic entering Magor from the west and a decrease in traffic entering Undy from the east.
- 3.2.8. Dr Ireland describes the main effects as the loss of part of a mature linear woodland belt bordering Magor Brewery; an imperceptible noise change of less than 0.1 dB at the nearest noise sensitive receptors; and the route for non-motorised users no longer being entirely off-road. These effects are not significant in environmental terms. The eastbound off-slip would not significantly affect the conclusions of the March 2016 ES assessments on all other aspects of the Scheme. I therefore conclude that the inclusion of the eastbound off-slip at Junction 23A would not have a significant environmental impact.
- 3.2.9. To summarise, the inclusion of the proposed eastbound off-slip at Junction 23A would improve access to Magor Services for eastbound drivers on the new section of motorway, thereby providing convenient access to the Services from both directions on the new M4. Its inclusion in the Scheme properly provides for the needs of motorway travellers. The addition of the proposed off-slip road to the Scheme would have no significant environmental impacts. Whilst there may be a reduction in customers, this would not be on a scale likely to threaten the continuation of Magor Services. The marginal changes to the Initial and Adjusted BCRs do not change my conclusions on the economic benefits of the Scheme. The inclusion of the eastbound off-slip at Junction 23A does not alter my conclusion that the adverse economic impacts of the Scheme, including the potential effect on Magor Services, are heavily outweighed by its likely cumulative economic benefits.