

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 – Chief Witness’ document WG 1.1.1. It contains a scheme evidence update following the recent Department for Transport announcement that tolls on the Severn Crossings will be removed by the 31st December 2018.

Scheme Evidence Update

Matthew Jones BEng (Hons), CEng, MICE

Welsh Government, Chief Witness

Document Reference: WG 1.1.7

1.	Author	3
2.	Scope and Purpose of this Proof of evidence	4
3	SCHEME EVIDENCE UPDATE	5
	3.1 Severn Crossing Tolls	5
	3.2 Value for Money	5
4	Conclusions	7

1. AUTHOR

- 1.1 I am Matthew Richard Jones. Since 2013 I have been responsible for managing strategic consideration of a solution to the problems associated with the M4 around Newport and subsequently managing the preparation and publication of the draft Orders, the Environmental Statement and associated reporting for the M4 Corridor around Newport project. My professional qualifications are set out in my main Proof of Evidence and are not repeated here.
- 1.2 The evidence, which I have prepared and provided in this Scheme Evidence Update, 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 Scheme Evidence Update provides updated evidence for the Welsh Government's Scheme regarding the impact of the removal of the Severn Crossing tolls.

2.2 The following sections of my main evidence are updated by this evidence:

Matthew Jones Proof of Evidence (WG 1.1.1)

Sections 8.18 and 8.19

Matthew Jones Summary Proof of Evidence (WG 1.1.2)

Section 17

2.3 Aspects of my evidence interface with the evidence of other witnesses including:

- a) Mr Stephen Bussell (Economics)
- b) Mr Ben Sibert (Engineering)
- c) Mr Bryan Whittaker (Traffic)
- d) Dr Michael Bull (Air Quality)
- e) Mr Phillip Evans (Noise and Vibration)
- f) Mr Jon Davies (Ecology and Nature Conservation)
- g) Mr Tim Chapman (Carbon)

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
4. Conclusions

3 SCHEME EVIDENCE UPDATE

3.1 Severn Crossing Tolls

- 3.1.1 The final outcome and government response to the Severn crossing tolls consultation was released on 15th September 2017. The outcomes were that the Severn crossings will be given over to public control on 8th January 2018 and the tolls will be abolished on 31st December 2018¹.
- 3.1.2 The traffic forecasting for the Scheme, which was published in December 2016 Revised Traffic Forecasting Report (WG 2.4.13), explains that the M4CaN transport model assumes, under the core scenario, a half toll scenario. Due to the recent announcement regarding the removal of the Severn crossing it is now proposed that the core scenario in the transport model is a no toll scenario.
- 3.1.3 Mr Bryan Whittaker, Mr Ben Sibert, Mr Tim Chapman, Dr Michael Bull, Mr Phillip Evans, and Mr Jon Davies will provide an update on any changes to the traffic forecast, engineering proposals, carbon, air quality, noise and ecological aspects which result from the announcement that the tolls will be removed before the proposed scheme opening date in their respective Scheme Evidence Updates.
- 3.1.4 The Scheme Evidence Updates are supported by the information contained within the October 2017 Environmental Statement Supplement (No. 6).

3.2 Value for Money

- 3.2.1 Mr Stephen Bussell has previously provided a sensitivity analysis for the removal of the Severn crossing tolls in his June 2017 Scheme Evidence Update (WG 1.3.5). The Initial BCR (direct transport benefits which exclude the Wider Impacts) for the Scheme and the Adjusted BCR (when Wider Impacts are included) for the half toll and no toll scenarios are provided in Table 1 below.

¹ Refer to Public Inquiry Document (PID) 141

Table 1: Half toll and No toll BCR summary

Benefit	Half toll scenario	No toll scenario
Direct Transport Economic Benefits (Initial BCR)	1.66	1.87
Direct and Wider Economic Benefits (Adjusted BCR)	2.27	2.52

- 3.2.2 The economic appraisal demonstrates that the benefits of the Scheme with a no toll scenario would substantially outweigh its costs and therefore the Scheme represents value for money.
- 3.2.3 Mr Stephen Bussell also discusses the implications for the economy if the Severn crossing tolls were reduced in combination with improving the M4 around Newport, in PIQ029 (refer to paragraphs 2.13 to 2.15).

4 CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 Overall, the recent announcement that the Severn crossing tolls will be abolished on 31st December 2018 does not change the conclusions stated within my main Proof of Evidence (WG 1.1.1). However, with the removal of the Severn crossing tolls and the proposed change to the core scenario, the economic and traffic case for the Scheme is strengthened.
- 4.2 The October 2017 Environmental Statement Supplement (No.6) discusses the effects associated with the change in predicted traffic flows, due to removal of the Severn crossing tolls, in terms of air quality, noise, carbon and ecology. These effects are also discussed in the Scheme Evidence Updates of the respective Welsh Government witnesses. In summary, the changes in effects, when compared to the assessments contained within the previous Environmental Statement Supplements, are considered to be insignificant.
- 4.3 The Welsh Government is in continued discussions with ABP with regards to mitigation measures at Newport Docks. The scope of mitigation measures may have implications on economic or other evidence which will be updated in due course, if necessary.