

Extract from Inspector's Opening Remarks dated 28 February 2017

Objections and Support

As I read the evidence there is something in the order of 200 unique pieces of correspondence that clearly expressed support for the scheme, although in my view S181 from the Coal Authority cannot be classified as support. There is a long list of individuals where each signatory has commented on why the road should be built. I said that most of these letters were unique but a few of them are written in similar term. However, the vast majority of them are unique and arise from individuals and those representing companies and organisations mainly across South Wales.

Some frequent points made by those offering support are that the scheme would:

- facilitate development in the Newport area and regenerate the city
- improve local air quality and assist the aspirations of the Well-being of Future Generations Wales Act 2015, even though it may be detrimental in the medium term. It would help the fight against Global Warming
- remove contaminated land and provide good views for thousands of travellers from stretches of the road
- improve the local and national economies recognising that 80% of South Wales business is conducted through traffic movement along the M4
- remove a corrosive impact to investment in south, central and west Wales
- remove the perception and reality of inaccessible access to the holiday resorts in West Wales
- enable local traffic to be carried on the existing M4 instead of less suitable roads
- improve access to the docks and industrial areas
- remove the unacceptable arrangement of the existing M4 being little more than a collector distributor Road, necessary for the distribution of traffic in northern Newport and to the valley roads but completely unsuited as a through route for strategic traffic
- remove the predictable unpredictability of travel time thereby being a major benefit for local commuters
- remove a barrier to recruitment in Newport
- improve access to Heathrow and the city of London which is seen as essential by the South Wales business community
- remove a large concentration of unsatisfactory junctions on a very soft short stretch of substandard motorway
- provide good junctions that would serve large housing and commercial areas well thereby facilitating an expansion of Newport which would be sustainable
- provide a modern high quality strategic route which is clearly superior to its alternatives

Against that there have been something in the order of 340 unique objections, of which 70 are from statutory objectors and some local petitions have been submitted. Topping those unique objections up are the fruits of campaigns which have resulted in something like 6000 emails, all of those are similar or identical in nature. I say in the order of because some contain more than 1 name, one from Llandeenny Residents carried 20 names. One Obj-106 carried none (anon). They were widespread across the UK -inc 1 from Orkney (GL=Braz rain forest). Petitions are attached inc one

very democratic one from Llanfiangel Rogiet which contained opposition to the Draft Orders and Support. Really democratic. Having just survived Storm Doris... one objection predicted that a similar storm would overtop The flood wall on the southern flank of the Levels and sweep away a £bn of investment. So, before it does let's move on and set out what the other main themes behind the objections are. These say that the scheme cannot be justified on grounds of:

- unproven traffic need and cost to the public purse
- value for money
- the diversion of money from other publicly funded projects
- current accident rates
- current air and noise pollution
- its potential to contribute towards global warming and the threat of flooding
- its effects on an historic landscape
- its impact on the environmentally rich and established Gwent levels and on wildlife
- its impact on sites of special scientific interest and designated special areas of conservation
- its impact on local industry, on commercial interests and on farm businesses
- its effect on the operation of Newport docks
- an adverse effect on an established motorway service area and its impacts on the communities of Magor, Llandevenny, Undy and Rogiet in the east and on Coedkernew, Wentlooge and Marshfield in the west
- impact on the Park golf club at Coedkernew
- potential for alternatives to be developed that would be satisfactory in terms of road transport less costly and damaging to the environment or to local communities
- and a succession of individual local concerns.
- and incompatibility with the goals of the Well-being of Future Generations Wales Act 2015.