

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



**Objection Ref OBJ0206**

Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

**File Ref WG/REB/OBJ0206 Rogiet Community Council**

**Response to Objector's Evidence: Rogiet Community Council**

## **1. GROUNDS FOR OBJECTION**

### **1.1. Details**

- 1.1.1. Rogiet Community Council has submitted a Statement of Evidence dated 9 January 2017 in relation to the draft statutory Orders associated with the Welsh Government's proposals for the M4 Corridor around Newport, which has been received via the Programme Officer.
- 1.1.2. The Welsh Government responded to Rogiet Community Council's objection letter dated 3 May 2016 on 19 September 2016. That response addressed a wide range of concerns including biodiversity, heritage, private assets, flooding, visual impact, air quality, noise, economics, engineering design, traffic, active travel, planning, construction and suggested alternatives.
- 1.1.3. The Welsh Government understands the evidence submitted within Rogiet Community Council's current Statement to be based on the following only:
  1. Concerned that the proposal to construct a new junction at Llanfhiangel, Rogiet, would route the new motorway closer to Magor than the existing M4.
  2. Concerned that the Scheme would isolate the existing motorway services at Junction 23A.
  3. Suggested that the Scheme would be a waste of public money.
  4. Suggested that the 'Green Route' is sympathetic to the environment of Magor and Rogiet.
  5. Suggested that the 'Green Route' is an economically viable alternative.
  6. Suggested that the 'Green Route' has the support of the residents of Rogiet and the adjoining community and town councils.

## 2. REBUTTAL

### 2.1. Points Raised

2.1.1. Some of the above points have already been addressed in previous correspondence. Others are dealt with by topic by the relevant witness in the following sections, in addition to their general proofs of evidence, to which readers should also make reference in their entirety for a full understanding of the Welsh Government's case. For ease of reference the places where the above points are addressed in this Rebuttal are listed in the table below:

Objector's point reference	Rebuttal paragraph reference	Objector's point reference	Rebuttal paragraph reference
1	2.1.2	4	2.3.1
2	2.2.1	5	2.4.1
3	2.1.2	6	2.2.2

2.1.2. Some of the Objector's points have already been covered in previous correspondence and proofs of evidence as follows:

1. **Point 1** (*Concerned that the proposal to construct a new junction at Llanfhiangel, Rogiet, would route the new motorway closer to Magor than the existing M4*) / Paragraphs 4.41-4.45 of Ben Sibert's Proof of Evidence (Document 1.5.1) outline the design development of and reasoning for the junction arrangement at Junction 23 M48 Roundabout and Junction 23A Magor. Matthew Jones (WG1.1.1) explains in section 4.13 and 4.14 of his Proof of Evidence that the junction layouts in Magor/ Undy/ Rogiet area were re-assessed during the development of the Plan between 2013 and 2014. The July 2014 Junction Strategy Report (Document 4.6.4) provides the assessment of junction options considered at the time of publishing the Plan in July 2014. The addition of the connections between the M4/M48/B4245 to improve motorway resilience between Undy and Rogiet necessitated a change to the April 2006 TR111 junction layout and the recommended option arising from this report, option 4, became the layout chosen for the 2014 TR111 Preferred Route. Physical effects on Community and Private Assets including residential properties and Community Land and Facilities in Magor considered in Chapter 15 of the ES (Document 2.3.2). Paragraph 24.8 of Matthew Jones' Proof of Evidence (WG1.1.1) outlines how, taking into account the rights of those

affected by the Scheme, the impacts on those affected needs to be considered against the local, regional and national benefits the Scheme would deliver.

2. **Point 3** (*Suggested that the Scheme would be a waste of public money*) / Stephen Bussell provides evidence on economic appraisal, including the BCR calculations in his Proof of Evidence (WG1.3.1). The economic appraisal of the Scheme compares the cost of investment with the benefits that the Scheme is expected to deliver. This indicates that the scheme provides value for money. When Wider Impacts are included in the assessment, the Scheme shows a Benefit-Cost Ratio of over 2 to 1. In other words, the benefits of the Scheme outweigh its costs by a ratio of over 2 to 1.

2.1.3. The other points are responded to by specialist topic in turn in the sections following.

## **2.2. Matthew Jones (Chief Witness)**

2.2.1. Response to **Point 2** (Concerned that the Scheme would isolate the existing motorway services at Junction 23A):

1. Matthew Jones addresses potential impacts on Magor Rest Area in section 21 of his Proof of Evidence (WG1.1.1).
2. The Welsh Government will respond to the Statements of Roadchef and Rontec about the likely impacts of the Scheme on Magor Rest Area separately. The Welsh Government will provide evidence that supports its position that the impact of the Scheme on the Magor Rest Area would allow it to continue to operate successfully. Responding to ongoing engagement with Roadchef / Rontec since summer 2015, the Welsh Ministers decided to publish draft Orders Supplements for an eastbound off-slip in March 2017, alongside associated reporting (Documents 2.5.1 to 2.5.17). This would provide access into the rest area at Magor of similar ease from all directions compared with the existing situation. The only routes that would thus be more indirect than existing would be the exits from the rest area to join the M4 motorway, eastbound or westbound. Engagement with Roadchef and Rontec is ongoing to help address any remaining concerns.

Response to **Point 6** (Suggested that the 'Green Route' has the support of the residents of Rogiet and the adjoining community and town councils):

1. The objectors' suggested alternatives are subject to consultation as is set out in section 23 of Matthew Jones' Proof of Evidence.
  2. The public acceptability of the Green Route is appraised within the Objectors' Suggested Alternatives Report (Document 4.7.2). It clarifies that the Green Route is likely to be supported by residents located on the B4245 through Rogiet, residents in Llanfihangel and residents in the west side of Magor but is likely to be opposed by residents in the north-east side of Rogiet, in the north-west side of Caldicot, in Bishton and in Wilcrick.
- 2.2.2. I confirm that the statement of truth and professional obligations to the inquiry from my main proof still applies.

### **2.3. Peter Ireland (Environment)**

2.3.1. Response to **Point 4** (Suggested that the 'Green Route' is sympathetic to the environment of Magor and Rogiet):

1. The environmental impacts of the Green Route is appraised within the Objectors' Suggested Alternatives Report (Document 4.7.2). It clarifies that with the Green Route:
  - a) Noise: The overall effect would be similar to the Published Scheme. Slight beneficial impact to properties on the west and north-west of Magor and to properties along the B4245 in Rogiet. Slight adverse impact to properties in Bishton and Wilcrick, and slight adverse impact to the north-west corner of Caldicot. Slight reduction in traffic on new motorway due to increased length, and increase in traffic on existing motorway, resulting in slight adverse impact to properties along the existing M4 corridor. Slight adverse impact through Magor due to increased traffic on the B4245, particularly at the western end.
  - b) Local air quality: The overall effect would be similar to the Published Scheme. Slight beneficial impact to properties on the west and north-west of Magor and to properties along the B4245 in Rogiet. Slight adverse impact to properties in Bishton and Wilcrick, and slight adverse impact to the north-west corner of Caldicot. Slight reduction in

traffic on new motorway due to increased length, and increase in traffic on existing motorway, resulting in lesser beneficial impacts to properties along the existing M4 corridor. Slight adverse impact through Magor due to increased traffic on the B4245, particularly at the western end.

- c) Greenhouse gas emissions: Increased greenhouse gas emissions due to the increased length of the alternative route (With regard to climate change, the Green Route would result in increased greenhouse gas emissions because of the greater length (0.95 km) of the route and hence would not perform as well as the preferred route in terms of tackling climate change and the Welsh Government's duties under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016).
- d) Landscape & townscape: No impact on the Llanfihangel Rogiet Conservation Area and reduced impact on the Gwent Levels SSSI but an adverse visual impact along part of the alternative route as it would need to be raised on embankment and structures. Whilst the infrastructure of the Green Route is less than that of the published Scheme between J23a and the M4/M48 interchange, the scale of the Green Route junction west of J23a and of the new junction on the M48 (both of which are, unlike the published scheme, remote from existing junctions) are such that in overall consideration of both landscape and visual impacts, it is judged to have greater impact than the published scheme due to the magnitude of change that would take place at those locations. The Green Route would pass through more rural land between Wilcrick Hill and Bishton than the semi-urban land between Magor and the A4810. As such it will affect new and different visual receptors (residential, PRow's etc.) to the WG Scheme as well as affecting a different area of Local Landscape Character Area (LLCA) 5: Chepstow Woods South West (which is classed as moderate sensitivity, the same as LLCA9: Magor and Undy) where extensive earthworks would be required, this being located within the comparatively undisturbed countryside landscape between the railway line and the existing M4, rather than the landscape around Junction 23 (where the published scheme is noted as affecting LLCA5).

- e) Biodiversity: Biodiversity impacts of the Green Route are considered within the Objectors' Suggested Alternatives Report (Document 4.7.2). It clarifies that with the Green Route, whilst the three most westerly SSSIs would continue to be affected to the same degree, there would be a reduced impact on the Gwent Levels – Redwick and Llandeenny SSSI. There would be hedgerow loss within agricultural land to the west of Magor. The ecology surveys carried out for the published Scheme did not include the majority of the Green Route. However, protected species likely to be present include dormouse, badger, bats and birds (including Cetti's warbler). The effect of the Green Route on the Gwent Levels – Redwick and Llandeenny SSSI would be considerably reduced compared to the published Scheme, but would not be eliminated entirely as there would be minor incursions into the SSSI north of the crossing of the main railway line and east of the point where the Green Route alignment would re-join the published Scheme east of Tata Steel. The effect on the three other Gwent Levels SSSIs affected by the published Scheme would remain the same as the published Scheme. It is also the case that the Green Route would introduce a new corridor of ecological disturbance/severance west of Wilcrick Hill whereas the published scheme would have the advantage of largely follow the existing corridor of the M4 and A4810 in the section to the north and west of Magor. On the basis of the information currently available, the comparison between the Green Route and the published Scheme is finely balanced in terms of biodiversity. The Green Route affects less of the Gwent Levels - Redwick and Llandeenny SSSI so in that respect is preferable, but it introduces a new corridor of disturbance, so in that respect is more detrimental. Further survey work would be needed to determine the implications of the Green Route so that judgements could be made regarding its impact on biodiversity, but on information currently available it is not necessarily the case that the Green Route is as ecologically beneficial to the extent suggested by its supporters
- f) Heritage: the heritage impact of the Green Route is appraised within the Objectors' Suggested Alternatives Report (Document 4.7.2). This

identifies that the Green Route would have no impact on the Llanfihangel Rogiet Conservation Area or the Scheduled standing stone at Undy. It would avoid the need to demolish the Grade II listed Woodland House and would also avoid the known later prehistoric and Roman archaeological site to the west of Magor. The Green Route would have a slightly lower level of physical impact on the registered Gwent Levels historic landscape when compared to the Welsh Government scheme. However, the Green Route would have an impact on the setting of the Scheduled hillfort at Wilcrick Hill and also on the setting of the Scheduled deserted medieval village just west of Wilcrick Hill. There is the potential for impact on the setting of the Scheduled Bishton Castle motte. There is also the potential for the Green Route to impact on buried archaeological remains (as yet unknown) in the area south of the current M4 as far as the South Wales Main Line railway – this is the transitional land between the higher ground and the drained Levels and is considered to be of high archaeological potential. The Green Route roundabouts on the existing M48 and B4245 and the associated link road could impact on the settings of the Grade II listed Dewstow House and associated Grade II\* Grade II listed structures (grottoes, walls etc.), also the Grade II\* Registered Park and Garden Historic of Special Historic Interest at Dewstow House. This part of the Green Route could also impact on buried archaeological remains (as yet unknown).

- g) Water environment: The Green Route would involve increased construction on flood plains west of Wilcrick and at St Brides Brook, with a potential increase in flood risk due to loss of flood plain storage and conveyance.
- h) Soils: Reduced impact on the Gwent Levels SSSI but increased construction on areas of potential land contamination through the Llanwern Steelworks. The reduction in cut and increase in fill requirements would increase reliance on the import of fill and borrowed material.

## 2.4. Stephen Bussell (Economics)

2.4.1. Response to **Point 5** (Suggested that the 'Green Route' is an economically viable alternative):

1. The economic impacts of the Green Route are appraised within the Objectors' Suggested Alternatives Report (Document 4.7.2). It clarifies that with the Green Route:
  - a) There would be additional capital cost, resulting primarily from additional fill requirements.
  - b) It would comprise a 0.95km longer route, with associated increased journey times.
  - c) There would be reduced network resilience when the First Severn Crossing is closed as traffic would be diverted via J23A.
  - d) Access to Magor Motorway Rest Area would be improved.
  - e) By 2037 the section of M4 between J23A and J23 would start to experience congestion as traffic from the existing and new M4 converge onto the 3 lane section of motorway.
  - f) User benefits would reduce whilst scheme costs would increase, resulting in a reduced Benefit to Cost Ratio (BCR).
  - g) The alternative would follow a new corridor, whereas the Scheme more closely follows the existing corridor of the M4 and A4810. This would result in increased severance to the west of Magor, impacting agricultural land and potential viability of individual farms.
  - h) There may also be an increased impact on the operations of Tata at Llanwern Steelworks, which could also result in adverse economic impacts.
  - i) This option would do less than the Published Scheme to improve journey times and would therefore deliver less economic benefit.

2.4.2. I confirm that the statement of truth and professional obligations to the inquiry from my main proof still applies.