

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



Objection Ref OBJ0247 - Cycling UK

Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

File Refs **WG/REB/OBJ0247-1- Professor S Cole**
 WG/REB/OBJ0247-2 - Dr S Melia
 WG/REB/OBJ0247-3 - R Geffen / H Mackay

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1. AUTHOR

- 1.1 I am 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 which I have prepared and provide 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

- 2.1.1. Cycling UK have submitted Statements of Evidence in relation to the draft statutory Orders associated with the Welsh Government's proposals for the M4 Corridor around Newport (the Scheme), which has been received via the Programme Officer.
- 2.1.2. The evidence of Cycling UK is provided in three proofs of evidence from different witnesses as follows:
1. Professor Stuart Cole (OBJ0247)
 2. Dr Steve Melia (OBJ0247)
 3. Mr Roger Geffen & Mr Hugh Mackay (OBJ0247)
- 2.1.3. My evidence will respond to the points raised in Cycling UK's evidence mainly where it relates to the policy aspects of the Scheme: the M4 Corridor around Newport (hereafter referred to as the Scheme), comprising a proposed new dual three lane motorway to the south of Newport and complementary measures. I focus on the Implications of the objector's suggested alternative known as the 'Blue Route' for housing delivery in Newport.
- 2.1.4. 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. Blue Route Alternative Rebuttal and Conclusions

3. REBUTTAL – CYCLING UK

3.1. The Implications of the Blue Route for Housing Delivery in Newport

3.1.1. Whilst the Welsh Government is not promoting or supporting the Blue Route alternative, it is obliged to consider it so that the Inspectors conducting the Inquiry can report on the relative merits to the Welsh Ministers. As such, an assessment was undertaken of the 'Blue Route' suggested alternative and that has been published in an Appraisal of Objectors' Alternative Blue Route Proposals Report (Document 6.2.35) dated 14 December 2016. That report should be referred to for a full history and detailed appraisal of the merits and likely impacts of the Blue Route.

3.1.2. I address the key issues and points made in the evidence submitted by Cycling UK associated with the Blue Route suggested alternative and its likely implications for housing delivery in Newport in this section of my rebuttal.

3.1.3. The Newport Local Development Plan 2011-26 (the LDP) spatial strategy includes development of the Eastern Expansion Area (EEA), which is the subject of Policy SP11. The EEA includes the former Llanwern Steelworks Regeneration Site known as Glan Llyn, which has planning permission for a mixed use development including 4,000 dwellings, a 39.5 hectares employment site and related community uses. It also includes land west of Llanwern Village with permission for 1100 dwellings and two further housing sites with a combined capacity for 265 units. The LDP states that the area enjoys good access to the City Centre via the Southern Distributor Road and Usk Way, which facilitates good public transport opportunities. It also emphasises that the Glan Llyn development is integral to the LDP strategy stating:

Achievement of the Local Development Plan and Sustainability Appraisal objectives is underpinned by the allocation and delivery of this 240 hectare regeneration site.

3.1.4. The LDP strategy was endorsed by the Inspector who carried out the Examination. In his report he stated:

The spatial strategy reflects clear principles of strengthening the city centre, making appropriate use of land in the most sustainable locations, and utilising previously developed land in preference to greenfield land where this is suitably located.

3.1.5. The Blue Route is based on upgrading the Southern Distributor Road (A48) and A4810, which provide access to the EEA together with several commercial and industrial operations, including TATA steelworks, Gwent Europark, Magor Brewery and Wales One Business Park. The December 2016 Report 'Appraisal of Objectors' Alternative Blue Route Proposals' (Document 6.2.35) concludes that the Blue Route would provide better access to Newport but would offer little relief to traffic congestion on the existing M4 motorway. The Report points out the difficulties of constructing the Blue Route along the line of the A48 and A4810; the significant traffic management required; and the congestion and disruption caused by the construction of grade separated junctions.

3.1.6. Construction of the Blue Route is estimated to last for 8 years. During this lengthy construction period there would inevitably be traffic disruption on the A48 and A4810, affecting access to the Glan Llyn regeneration area and other sites in the EEA, which would have an impact on the rate of housing development on these sites. Traffic disruption over a number of years would also be likely to have a significant impact on the businesses depending on the A4810 as a main access route.

3.1.7. It is impossible to say with any certainty what the impact on housing delivery overall would be in the context of the LDP and Newport as a whole. However, bearing in mind first, that the Glan Llyn development is integral to the LDP strategy and second, the length of the construction period and hence traffic disruption, the potential

consequences could be serious. A shortfall in the rate of housing delivery could lead to pressure for the identification of new housing sites in a future LDP Review, which may in turn lead to pressure for development on greenfield sites. This would be contrary to the LDP strategy and national planning policy in paragraph 4.9.1 of PPW Edition 9, which emphasises the preference for the re-use of land.

3.1.8. By contrast the Scheme would be constructed off-line and would not affect the existing highway network other than for limited periods, notably when connecting the proposed new section of motorway route into the existing network at interchanges and intermediate junctions. There would be no imposition of construction works and vehicles for a lengthy period on the A4810 and no disruption of development on allocated and permitted housing sites. Nor would through traffic movements be imposed on a road network designed to cater for local access.

3.1.9. In view of the implications for the development of the EEA and consequent likely impact on housing delivery in Newport, I consider the underlying principle of the Blue Route, based on upgrading part of the existing road network designed to provide local access, to be flawed and likely to undermine delivery of the housing strategy of the Newport LDP.