

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



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Objection Ref OBJ6903

File Ref WG/REB/OBJ6903/- Ann Williams

Response to Objector's Evidence: Ann Williams

(Member of Llangattock Community Council)

1. GROUNDS FOR OBJECTION

1.1. Details

- 1.1.1. Ann Williams has submitted a Statement of Evidence dated 1 February 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. It is understood that Ann Williams is a member of Llangattock Community Council but that no response from the Community Council has been received.
- 1.1.3. The Welsh Government understands the evidence submitted within Ann Williams' Statement to be based on the following:
 1. Concerns about the environmental impact of the Scheme upon the flood plains and the ecosystem of the Gwent levels.
 2. Concerns that 70% of the proposed route would impact upon the SSSIs.
 3. Concerns about the impact of the proposed upon landscapes of historic interest and Special Areas of Conservation.
 4. Concerns about the cost of the Scheme.
 5. Concerns that areas such as the Heads of the Valleys will not benefit from Welsh Government investment due to the costs of the Scheme.
 6. Suggests that the Blue Route would be less disruptive, would protect the Gwent Levels whilst reducing congestion. It would also be a cheaper option.

2. WELSH GOVERNMENT'S VIEW

2.1. Points Raised

2.1.1. Some of the Objector's points have already been covered in previous correspondence and proofs of evidence. 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	2.2.1
2	2.1.2	5	2.3.1
3	2.1.2	6	2.1.2

2.1.2. The Objector's points that have already been covered in proofs of evidence are as follows:

1. Response to **Point 1, Point 2 and Point 3** (*Concerns about the environmental impact of the Scheme upon the flood plains and the ecosystem of the Gwent levels, concerns that 70% of the proposed route would impact upon the SSSIs and concerns about the impact of the proposed upon landscapes of historic interest and Special Areas of Conservation.*) / The effect of building and operating the new section of motorway on the environment is set out in the Environmental Statement (Document 2.3.2) and its Supplements (Documents 2.4.4 and 2.4.14). The Environmental Statement clearly identifies the magnitude and significance of effects on a wide range of environmental features and assets, including all of those mentioned by Ann Williams.
2. Response to **Point 6** (*Suggests that the Blue Route would be less disruptive, would protect the Gwent Levels whilst reducing congestion. It would also be a cheaper option*) / The Proof of Evidence of Matthew Jones (WG1.1.1) at section 3 and paragraphs 23.10 to 23.13 considers the Blue Route. An Appraisal of Objectors' Alternative Blue Route Proposals Report (Document 6.2.35) considers the Blue Route and

confirms it would not address the problems or achieve the objectives of the M4 Corridor around Newport. As set out in WG1.1.1 para 24.17, the Scheme is considered by Welsh Government to be the long term, sustainable solution to the serious problems experienced on the M4 around Newport. In collaboration with the Welsh Government's proposals for a South Wales Metro, it forms a vital part of the vision for an efficient and integrated transport network for Wales. There is a compelling case in the public interest for the Scheme to proceed. The Blue Route has been considered further during the Inquiry when its promoter Cycling UK provided their evidence to the Inspectors.

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

2.2. Stephen Bussell (Economics)

2.2.1. Response to **Point 4** (Concerns about the cost of the Scheme)

1. The economic appraisal suggests that the Scheme would provide value for money. The core scenario for the Scheme is based on the central (or most likely) traffic growth forecasts and assumes that the tolls on the Severn Crossings are half their current level. Under this scenario, the Scheme has an initial benefit to cost ratio (Initial BCR) of 1.62. The initial BCR takes into account only the direct economic benefits of the scheme. If Wider Impacts (indirect economic benefits) are included in the assessment, the BCR for the Scheme is 2.23. In other words, the benefits of the scheme outweigh its costs by a ratio of over 2 to 1.

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

2.3. Matthew Jones (Chief Witness)

2.3.1. Response to **Point 5** (Concerns that areas such as the Heads of the Valleys will not benefit from Welsh Government investment due to the costs of the Scheme):

1. The revised Wider Economic Impact Assessment (Document 2.4.11) considers how geographical areas would benefit from the Scheme, including locations along the A465 Heads of the Valleys Road. Table 20 of Document 2.4.11 shows how with the Scheme there would be positive

changes in effective density and impacts on GVA. Stephen Bussell provides evidence on the economy (WG1.3.1) and explains in his section 5.8 how the Scheme will deliver a net overall increase in investment in the study area, rather than simply a redistribution of employment from one part of the study area to another. This would have a net positive impact on employment and GDP in South Wales.

2. The Project would be funded through a combination of UK Government borrowing and Welsh Government Transport capital budgets. We would not be allocating the full amount of our borrowing capacity to this scheme, important though it is. The balance of the current borrowing limit, over £500m, will be available to fund schemes in other parts of Wales from 2018/19 onwards when Stamp Duty & Landfill Tax are planned to be devolved to Welsh Government.
3. The Proof of Evidence of Matthew Jones (WG1.1.1) at paragraph 13.5 explains that funding for the delivery of this project has been explicitly identified and provision set aside within the Welsh Government's published capital plans for the next four years. Allocations are not made beyond a 4 year period but suitable forecasts are in place to enable assurance to be given that the full funding requirements associated with the project are available within a reasonable timescale should the decision be taken to proceed.

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