

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



File Ref WG/REB/OBJ6910 - Blank

Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Objection Ref OBJ6910

Response to Objector's Evidence: Jane Blank

1. GROUNDS FOR OBJECTION

1.1. Details

- 1.1.1. Jane Blank has submitted a Statement of Evidence 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 understands the evidence submitted within Jane Blank's Statement to be based on the following:
1. Concerns that the Scheme operates a short term mentality which will create huge problems for future generations.
 2. Concerns that the Scheme will damage ecosystems and quality of life, which does not make long or medium term economic sense.
 3. States that we cannot make decisions that will cause the wilful destruction, fragmentation or displacement of wildlife anymore.
 4. States that we should start thinking and planning both laterally and vertically: imagining the consequences of our actions multiplied across countries worldwide; anticipating the effects of our actions in the struggle of future generations.
 5. States that future generations will not praise us that we took drastic action to move more cars more quickly from Bristol to Cardiff.

2. REBUTTAL

2.1. Points Raised

2.1.1. One 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 & 2.2.1	4	2.2.3
2	2.2.2	5	2.2.4
3	2.3.1		

2.1.2. The Objector's point that has already been covered in previous correspondence and proofs of evidence is as follows:

1. **Point 1** (Concerns that the Scheme operates a short term mentality which will create huge problems for future generations.) / This matter is addressed within the Proof of Evidence of John Davies WG1.23.1 paragraph 35.

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

2.2. John Davies (Sustainable Development)

2.2.1. In response to **Point 1** (Concerns that the Scheme operates a short term mentality which will create huge problems for future generations):

1. In the evidence of John Davies (WG1.23.1) it is explained the ways in which the assessment of the Scheme takes a long term view. The evidence for the Welsh Government explains the problems associated with the M4 that exist today. The last element of the sustainable development principle of the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 is 'acting to solve the identified problem'. It is accepted that there are changes in technology that in time will influence the way we travel but they will not address a problem that exists today and which will become

even more intolerable by the time those changes have any meaningful effect. Hence this Scheme is entirely in line with the fundamental sustainable development principle of taking action today to solve the identified problem.

2.2.2. In response to **Point 2** (Concerns that the Scheme will damage ecosystems and quality of life, which does not make long or medium term economic sense):

1. It is accepted that the Scheme would have significant long-term impacts on the Gwent Levels SSSIs and on protected species (para 89 of proof of evidence). However, Planning Policy Wales paragraph 5.5.1 emphasises the importance of balancing conservation objectives with wider economic needs. The economic benefits are set out in paragraph 175-191 of John Davies' Proof of Evidence WG1.23.1 and in paragraphs 242-249 it is explained that the benefits of the Scheme provide a compelling case in its favour that outweighs other considerations.

2.2.3. In response to **Point 4** (States that we should start thinking and planning both laterally and vertically: imagining the consequences of our actions multiplied across countries worldwide; anticipating the effects of our actions in the struggle of future generations):

1. The Well-being of Future Generations Act requires all public bodies including the Welsh Government to think and act differently, to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. John Davies in evidence WG1.23.1 deals with the sustainable development principle in paragraphs 35-44 and concludes, in paragraph 48 that the actions of the Welsh Government in the development of the Scheme have been in accordance with this principle.

2.2.4. In response to **Point 5** (States that future generations will not praise us that we took drastic action to move more cars more quickly from Bristol to Cardiff):

1. The Scheme is not simply about moving cars more quickly. The problems associated with the M4 around Newport, described by the Gwent Police as the main arterial route to south Wales from England, affect firms trying to run efficient businesses, people going to their place of work, people going about their daily life and those simply wanting to visit Wales.

Incidents regularly cause the motorway to come to a standstill, in turn leading to gridlock in Newport and the surrounding area, affecting those travelling by public transport as well as by car. The Scheme is necessary to address this severe problem that is affecting the quality of life of people living in this part of Wales.

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

2.3. Keith Jones (Ecology)

2.3.1. In response to **Point 3** (States that we cannot make decisions that will cause the wilful destruction, fragmentation or displacement of wildlife anymore):

1. 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 acknowledges the importance of the Gwent Levels and clearly identifies the magnitude and significance of effects on a wide range of environmental features and assets.

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