

To Whom it may concern

I am writing in support of the M4 draft orders for the new road to the south of Newport.

I have lived in south Wales for over 30 years and have seen the volume of traffic on the M4 increase substantially over that time. Building a new road will not magically remove all the traffic from the current M4 through Newport as traffic will still be joining it from the A449 at Jt24, A4042 from Pontypool at Jt26 and the traffic from Rogerstone and Risca and the valley above at Jts 27 & 28 but for traffic which crosses the Severn bridge and whose destination is beyond Newport then it has to be a boon and will remove this through traffic from the mix of the all the other traffic joining at the various junctions along the route which by the very act of joining slows the flow of traffic down.

I think what may have been forgotten is that the current M4 between Jt24 and Jt28 was not built as a motorway – I have an old opening brochure for the road which I brought from a charity shop and it quite clearly states on the front Newport Bypass (M4) 1969 so it was built as a bypass not a motorway. Where else in the UK is there a motorway with 6 junctions in only 7 miles or so with such steep bends up and down hills and a tunnel? Very rarely can traffic travel at the national speed limit along this stretch of the motorway in fact most of the time it is 50mph and when people approach the Brynglas tunnel from the east they automatically break as they are going down hill into the tunnel – coming from the west at certain times of day you are blinded by the sun approaching the tunnel so have to slow down. The road was obviously not designed even back in the 1960s as a motorway and I'm sure standards must have changed significantly since then. Let the road go back to being what it was designed for – a bypass for local traffic to avoid Newport town centre – not a high speed route for international traffic getting mixed up with locals using it for it was designed for – a bypass.

When I visit friends in England and I'm asked where I live and I say south Wales - many times the response is "oh is that where the Tunnels are? You have lots of traffic jams there – it sounds awful".

It can be bad, very bad, and the traffic jams, although relative, are not a good advertisement for Wales – either south or north (not that the Politician's in north Wales want any money spend in south east Wales but what they don't appreciate is that the bad publicity for south Wales is actually bad publicity for Wales – full stop.)

I'm losing track of how many times when a large event is being held in Cardiff, be it a rugby international or a large stadium pop concert, there is a traffic announcement on national radio announcing there are queues are back to Chippenham from Newport. These events must bring in £100s of thousands of pounds but how long before a major promoter doesn't want to be associated with the traffic chaos and stops putting on concerts in the Principality Stadium. How long before our elected members wake up and realise it isn't good publicity for Wales nor is it likely to be good for the economy in the long term.

Tourism is another very large industry for Wales and during the school holidays and half term breaks the queues on a Friday night coming into Wales and on a Sunday leaving Wales have to been seen to be believed. Again not a good advertisement and probably puts some people off coming back again.

This new road is needed not only help the traffic flow and keep the through traffic away from more local traffic but also for resilience of the road network. Only this week there was an accident west bound at Jt27 Highcross early in the morning – before 6am - and the queues were reported on the radio 2 traffic bulletin as going to back to Jt34 – that is over 18 miles.

I've read about the alternative Blue Route which somebody called Professor Cole has suggested but I haven't seen the actual route proposed – I'd need to spend £10.00 to do so which doesn't seem very open. However I understand it basically utilises the current Southern Distributor Road (SDR). Really? Has he ever actually driven the road? It has 8 or 9 tight roundabouts on it – one of which to follow the road is an almost 90 degree turn and runs right alongside the river and the Grade 1 listed Transporter Bridge, City bridge, three sets of traffic lights, numerous residential housing estates all along the route and the municipal tip. The road which passes the tip is like a rollercoaster – it goes up and down like a wave. Whenever there is an incident on the M4 and traffic is diverted along the SDR it becomes gridlocked very very quickly. How does this route with its bridge across the same river which is protected as the proposed route going to get around the same issues? How is the bridge going to be widened – 2 lanes in either direction is not going to solve the resilience or through traffic issue. Why would you want to bring through traffic into the city anyway?

I understand about the SSSIs and how passionate people can be about preserving nature but some of the articles I've read in the local papers it really is a case of “not letting facts get in the way of a good story”. I attended one of the exhibitions and asked to be shown the area which was causing a lot of angst in the local paper. It quickly became apparent to me “that the Wetlands which were going to be destroyed by the new road” weren't (going to be destroyed that is).

The whipping up of misinformation is what has in the end galvanised me to writing in support of the scheme. I saw the massive environmental statement at the exhibition I attended and read bits of it and I believe that they have considered large amounts of stuff – public foot paths who knew there were so many of them in the area. They appear not to be saying “we aren't going to make inroads into the SSSI” but accept they are and this is what we intend to do to minimise the impact there.

As a local I see on a regular basis how much Newport needs relief from the relentless pressure of traffic so please consider this letter as support for the scheme.

Yours faithfully

Mrs Miggins