



Eich cyf/Your ref
Ein cyf/Our ref SF/EH/4310/13

Alun Ffred Jones AM
Chair
Environment and Sustainability Committee

19th March 2014

Dear Alun Ffred

Dafydd Elis – Thomas wrote to me on 13th February about the M4 Corridor around Newport.

Alternatives to the draft Plan submitted during the M4 Corridor around Newport consultation exercise such as the “Blue Route” are being appropriately assessed to consider whether they are a ‘reasonable alternative’ to the draft Plan. The findings of this assessment will be reported in due course.

Information on the process followed to date is summarised in “Section 4 Previous Work” in the draft Plan “Consultation Document” which is available at www.M4Newport.com along with more detailed assessments and reports. Section 4 summarises the M4 Corridor Enhancement Measures programme, its consideration of alternatives and the results of consultation. Under M4CEM a long list of possible solutions was explored and a comprehensive stakeholder consultation process undertaken between 2010 and 2012. M4CEM identified¹ four options, and showed that the only option worthy of further consideration was a new high quality road to the south of Newport.

Discussions between the Welsh Government and HM Treasury/Department for Transport in 2013, as well as the work of the Silk Commission, have created

¹ M4 Corridor Enhancement Measures WeITAG Stage 1 (Strategy Level) Appraisal Report, March 2013 (available on www.m4cem.com and www.m4newport.com)

future funding opportunities for Welsh Government infrastructure projects and therefore a further appraisal² was undertaken to inform the strategy for the M4 Corridor around Newport. This appraisal, cognisant of the recommendations of M4CEM appraisal, concluded that a new section of 3-lane motorway to the south of Newport following a protected route, in addition to complementary measures, would best achieve the goals and address the problems of the M4 Corridor around Newport, and should be progressed for further appraisal. This subsequently formed the basis for the development of the draft Plan which was taken to consultation.

M4CEM analysis also identified that, whilst they would only have minimal impact on traffic flows on the M4, public transport enhancements would achieve wider benefits and should be separately progressed. Subsequently the Welsh Government decided to progress public transport enhancement measures such as the Cardiff City Region Metro, Valley Lines and Great Western Main Line electrification which will also improve inter-rail accessibility.

An M4 enhancement would be complementary with public transport improvements. The Metro is seeking to improve accessibility to local employment sites, educational facilities and services within the Cardiff Capital / south east Wales region. Potential enhancement of the M4 is seeking to improve accessibility for people, Welsh goods and services to international markets by addressing capacity and resilience on the main gateway into South Wales.

Regarding your invitation to attend a Committee meeting, I am mindful that the draft Plan consultation process is quasi-judicial and informs the exercise of the Welsh Ministers' functions as a statutory decision maker. I am therefore unable to accept an invitation to attend a Committee meeting whilst this process is ongoing.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'C. I.', is located below the main text.

² M4 Corridor around Newport WelTAG Stage 1 (Strategy Level) Appraisal Report, June 2013 (available on www.m4cem.com and www.m4newport.com)