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Orders Branch
Transport
Department for Economy, Science and Transport
Welsh Government
Cathays Park
Cardiff, CF10 3NQ

3rd May, 2016

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: M4 Corridor Around Newport

In response to the draft orders for a new proposed section of the M4, Monmouthshire County Council (MCC) agrees that there is a need for investment in transport infrastructure and services to bring about a modern, accessible, integrated and sustainable transport system for South East Wales. We believe that the proposals, when considered alongside other major public transport infrastructure improvements such as those outlined within the Metro and City Deal programme, will contribute to this and therefore support in principle the new motorway as part of a package of major infrastructure projects to solve the problems on the existing M4 around Newport and improve road and public transport links overall.

The proposal should provide better access for south Monmouthshire residents to Cardiff and South East Wales, and we welcome the additional access to the motorway network sited between Undy and Rogiet. The new access should also reduce the volume of traffic coming from the Caldicot area having to pass through Magor and Undy along the B4245. Monmouthshire County Council has a long-standing policy to provide a by-pass for Magor and Undy, and the new junction arrangement would effectively provide this bypass. Similarly, the proposed junction east of Undy would improve access to Severn Tunnel Junction parkway station where the MCC strategic transport plan recognises the need for a park and ride facility.

The Council seeks to ensure Welsh Government's active commitment to minimise and mitigate the environmental, social and wellbeing impact of Welsh Government's proposals on the Communities of Magor with Undy, and to identify opportunities to secure benefits from Welsh Government for the communities of Magor with Undy as a means of off-setting impact. In this context we welcome the positive proposals within the overall scheme, including

- the creation of 2,000 jobs which MCC would wish to see focused on opportunities for the Severnside community
- the setting of the new section of the motorway to the west of Magor lower than the existing ground to minimise views and potential noise disturbance and the significant amount of new woodland planting to further screen views where it rises out of the ground to cross over South Wales Mainline,

- the proposals to provide a foot/cycle link from Barecroft Common to Rush Wall which would complete a continuous pedestrian and cycle route between Magor and Newport,
- the proposals include a new bridge over the proposed motorway for the B4245 Newport Road with a footway on the northern verge and a cycle track on the southern verge,
- the provision of an underpass at St. Brides Road,
- giving consideration to construct a length of new footway along the south side of the B4245 east of Undy where the road would become a trunk road.

We welcome the extra employment that the scheme should generate but also acknowledge the disruption to our residents during the construction phase. Such a major scheme will inevitably create some disruption but we seek good communication links between WG, contractors, the local authority and residents to ensure that frustration is minimised and all are well informed of progress.

The draft orders and the previous information made available provides much clarification on many matters however Council officers will prepare a further note on specific issues including what measures may be considered to limit the impact of the new route upon the existing Magor Services which employs 190 local people.

I hope that this response clarifies MCCs position in supporting the M4 CaN along with the other sustainable transport projects, and trust that the Welsh Government and its consultants will continue to work closely with MCC officers in clarifying some of the detail design of the scheme in order to ensure that it offers the maximise benefits to the local and wider community of Monmouthshire.

I would point out that the Council timetable has required that this response is based upon member and officer engagement through our Strategic Transport Group and by written correspondence. Members will consider the response further at the next suitable Council meeting.

Yours sincerely

Cllr Bryan Jones
Cabinet Member for Operations