

Ken Skates AC/AM
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros yr Economi a Thrafnidiaeth
Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Transport



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Cllr. Andrew Morgan
Leader Rhondda Cynon Taf Council

Andrew.Morgan2@rctcbc.gov.uk

27 February 2018

Dear

Andrew

A465 Heads of the Valleys Dualling Abergavenny to Hirwaun – Sections 5 & 6 Dowlais to Hirwaun.

I am writing to you following the meeting on 19 January 2018 between the Welsh Government's project team and your officers in relation to the above scheme and the recent response from our Technical Advisers, Jacobs to your email dated 6 July. I am grateful for the ongoing input from your officers in providing detailed consideration of our proposals for the A465 dualling between Dowlais and Hirwaun.

I would like to confirm the following in relation to the published scheme.

Impact of the dualling on Llwydcoed and the A4059 Cynon Valley Gateway

It is clear from the figures generated from our traffic modelling that the closure of the Trewaun junction and the re-configuration at the Baverstock junction, proposed as part of the dualling scheme, contributes to a substantial increase in traffic on some of the local roads within the Llwydcoed community.

It is also clear that the construction of the northern extension of the A4059 Aberdare Bypass (known as the Cynon Valley Gateway) makes a significant contribution to mitigating the impact on the local roads in the area by connecting the A4059 to our new junction at Croesbychan, proposed as part of the A465 dualling.

The implementation of the Cynon Valley Gateway contributes to the Value for Money case for the A465 dualling including an increase to the Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) for the scheme.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Canolfan Cyswilt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400
Gohebiaeth.Ken.Skates@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Ken.Skates@gov.wales

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

The Welsh Government is aware that delivery of the Cynon Valley Gateway scheme to connect the northern end of the A4059 Aberdare Bypass to the A465 is a priority project for Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council (RCTCBC) as identified in Policy CS8 of the adopted Local Development Plan. The Welsh Government recognises the benefits the scheme can bring in supporting the development of the Cynon Valley area and complementing investment in the A465 dualling.

However, because of the procurement model being used to deliver the A465 dualling and the current stage of development of both schemes, the Welsh Government does not believe it feasible to include the delivery of the Cynon Valley Gateway as part of the dualling scheme.

Instead, I can confirm that the Welsh Government is committed to working in partnership with RCTCBC to progress development of the Cynon Valley Gateway scheme with a view to opening the link as soon as it is practicable to do so to minimise the period of time where the substantial traffic impacts on Llwydcoed arising from the dualling scheme are unmitigated.

The junction provided at Croesbychan as part of the dualling is important in meeting the objectives of the scheme and connecting into the current local road network. However it also accommodates the future connection of the Cynon Valley Gateway onto the improved A465. The project team are working with officers of RCTCBC and your consultants to agree the detail around how the projects would tie-in to each other.

In light of concerns raised by Council Members during consultation, my officials have reviewed the junction arrangements for connecting the B4276 Merthyr Road and Swansea Road. Our plan is to replace the T junction currently proposed in the published scheme with a roundabout in order to improve the flow of traffic movements between the Baverstock Junction and B4276 Merthyr Road. This revised proposal will be implemented during the detailed design stage and will be a contractual requirement.

Tie in details between the A465 dualling and local roads

There have been a number of discussions between Welsh Government's Technical Advisers and your consultants regarding how the published scheme ties in to RCTCBC's local road network and development sites. In particular tie-in proposals at the Hirwaun interchange, the roundabout at Trewaun and access into the proposed NSA8 development as well as the connections at Croesbychan.

It is our understanding that RCTCBC are, in principle, content with the proposals in the published scheme but there remain reservations with the details at the strategic roundabouts that are still to be resolved. Both our Technical Advisers and your consultants are continuing to work to resolve these matters and the agreed proposals will be addressed by our appointed contractor as a contractual requirement at detailed design stage.

I can confirm that the contract documents will include a mandatory requirement for the appointed contractor to consult with yourselves and agree the details of the tie-ins at the strategic junctions etc. during the detailed design phase and prior to construction.

De-Trunking

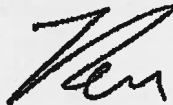
As you are aware, a consequence of the published scheme is that the length of the existing A465 between Trewaun and Hirwaun will be de-trunked with responsibility and ownership of this length of road handed to RCTCBC.

An inventory of the existing asset features has been prepared along with details of the current asset condition in order to understand the extent of any long term maintenance liabilities that RCTCBC will be taking on in the future.

It is agreed that an assessment of the condition of this asset will be undertaken jointly by the Welsh Government and RCTCBC and subsequently any remediation works required to bring the asset up to an agreed standard prior to handover will be undertaken by the Welsh Government. I do not propose that the de-trunking remedial works are undertaken as part of the main contract but are instead procured as a separate works package to follow construction of the dualling which will be procured and administered by the Welsh Government. It is agreed that RCTCBC will receive a commuted sum for future maintenance of the additional assets as a result of the de-trunking works. We will continue to maintain dialogue with yourselves through the next stages of the project in order for this to be achieved.

I trust that this letter clarifies Welsh Government's position in relation to the main areas of concern raised by RCTCBC. I look forward to receiving your response.

Yours sincerely



Ken Skates AC/AM
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros yr Economi a Thrafnidiaeth
Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Transport

