



Jack Sargeant MS
Pensions Committee
Welsh Parliament
Cardiff Bay, Cardiff, CF99 1SN
[Returned via email to petitions@senedd.wales]

14th March 2024

Dear Jack Sargeant MS,

Re: Petition P- 06-1299 Welsh Government Freeze on road building to include a clause for cases that pose a danger to life (Rhondda Fach Relief Road)

I refer to your letter dated 12th December 2023 and apologise for the late response on this matter.

I would confirm that the Porth Relief Road which was a single carriageway from Porth to Pontygwaith was successfully constructed between 2004-2007 and was fully funded via the Welsh Assembly Government's Transport Grant Fund.

The Upper Rhondda Fach Relief Road which is the continuation of the Porth Relief Road is from Pontygwaith to Maerdy and is identified in the RCT Local Development Plan up to 2021 (adopted March 2011) under policy no NSA 20(2), the route is currently safeguarded for this scheme. I would respectfully bring your attention to the fact that the Local Development Plan is under review and subject to statutory and public consultation and is being led by RCT's Planning Service Area. Furthermore, the relief road was included in the South East Wales Valleys Local Transport Plan (Jan 2015) which will be subject to a Regional Transport Plan which work is currently underway and led by the Cardiff Capital Region.

As the local highway and planning authority in Rhondda Cynon Taf, the Council recognises that the construction of new infrastructure can facilitate economic development in an area as well as mitigate against the adverse effects of traffic congestion and poor air quality in an area.

The ability of the Council to progress this proposed scheme would be subject to the outcome of a comprehensive business case and appraisal covering this scheme and then securing funding to take it through the various stages. The Welsh Government's latest transportation strategy "Llwybr Newydd : The Wales Transport Strategy 2021" clearly identifies the priority to focus on walking , cycling and public transport to encourage a modal shift from car usage. In the recent Roads Review undertaken by the Welsh Government, only two transportation projects in RCT were identified as part of the process and underwent the review, the Upper Rhondda Fach Relief Road was not one of these schemes as it was not sufficiently developed to be assessed.

A historic evaluation of the potential route was undertaken between 10-15 years ago and there were significant constraints identified together with a very basic indicative range of estimated cost. Due to the very indicative findings the route did not progress to feasibility stage, with the then Welsh Government not supportive of this due to the issues involved and funding constraints. I confirm that RCT has not bid for any funding from the Welsh Government to undertake a feasibility study and costings of the Upper Rhondda Fach Relief Road and has also not utilised its own resources for a said study.

The Council is always actively exploring ways of improving transport links within the Rhondda Fach and ensuring that communities will benefit from the investment taking place in the South East Wales Metro. It should be noted that the Council has:

- Undertook minor infrastructure works along the existing Rhondda Fach active travel route for the removal of selective barriers to provide better access and undertaken various enhancements to ensure that the active travel route meets current standards.
- Previously invested over £1M including a substantial contribution from Dwr Cymru Welsh Water to undertake the upgrade of nearly 2 miles of main road carriageway along the Rhondda Fach.
- Has been involved in a Transport for Wales study to investigate options for improving transport links between the Rhondda Fach and the new transport hub in Porth.
- Constructed Phase 1 and 2 of the Active Travel route from Maerdy to Pontygwaith which will link to the existing Active Travel route at Pontygwaith. Applied for funding from Welsh Government to construct Phase 3 and 4 in 2024/25 and design of Phase 5 with construction in 2025/26.

Yours sincerely,



Y Cyngorydd Andrew Morgan OBE
Arweinydd Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Rhondda Cynon Taf
Councillor Andrew Morgan OBE
Leader of Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council

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