# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE**  | **A465 Heads of the Valleys Dualling Project**  |
| **DATE**  | **06 June 2018** |
| **BY** | **Ken Skates, Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Transport** |

I am writing to update Members on progress with the A465 Heads of the Valleys Dualling Project.

As set out in my Written Statement of 27 November 2017, section 2, from Gilwern to Brynmawr,is a very challenging project. The site topography, traffic management requirements and complex ground conditions has meant that the project has been far more difficult to deliver than originally envisaged.

As a result, I requested a comprehensive commercial project review be carried out, the conclusions of which were outlined in my Written Statement of 27 November 2017.

In light of this, my officials are assisting the Wales Audit Office who are carrying out a review of the procurement and delivery processes used on the project to date. This review is ongoing and will be reported in due course.

We will not compromise on the quality of the project we committed to at the Public Inquiry in spring 2014 and Transport officials continue to actively manage the project to ensure the work is being delivered in the most efficient way to meet programme and cost requirements. They are also working with the contractor, Costain, using mechanisms in the contract to resolve the issues that are in dispute between the parties. This dispute is ongoing and it is not be appropriate to say any more about these issues at this time.

Nevertheless, work is continuing at pace and the project is now about two-thirds complete. It is delivering a range of community benefits around local employment, education and training. The Valleys Taskforce is exploring how we can maximise these benefits when the project is completed at the end of this next year, to help deliver the vision set out in ‘Our Valleys, Our Future’. A seminar was held with stakeholders from across the Valleys in March and the outcomes are currently being collated. A plan for action will be discussed with stakeholders during a follow up event in the autumn.

Everyone involved in the project continues to be very grateful to those living and working in the area for their patience whilst the works are carried out.