# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE**  | **M4 Corridor around Newport Project** |
| **DATE**  | **07 December 2018** |
| **BY** | **Carwyn Jones, First Minister** |

This statement updates members regarding decision making on the M4 Corridor around Newport Project.

During 83 sitting days over a period of more than a year, two independent inspectors scrutinised many thousands of pieces of evidence in the most comprehensive Public Inquiry into a road scheme ever held in Wales. The scale of the Public Inquiry is a reflection of the seriousness with which the Welsh Government is considering what would undoubtedly be a significant infrastructure investment for the whole of Wales.

There are potentially two steps in this process; firstly a decision whether to make the statutory Orders which is effectively a decision to grant development consent. The second step will involve decisions concerning entering into a contract for the construction of road; effectively the final investment decision to proceed with building work.

To ensure procedural fairness to everyone who contributed to the Inquiry, the statutory Orders decision must be made by the Welsh Ministers on the basis of the evidence submitted to the Public Inquiry; the 500+ page inspectors’ report and taking into account the complete legislative framework within which the decision sits. This will of course include careful consideration of the requirements of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act and the Environment Wales Act.

The Orders decision must also be informed by a number of related decisions including consideration of potential impacts on protected habitats, allotments and common land. Again, comprehensive advice needs to be presented to and considered by Ministers for each of these before a decision on whether to make the statutory Orders.

Due to the need for thorough and robust due diligence on all these points, a decision on the Orders has not yet been made. That Orders decision will not now be taken by me, but will be made following the appointment of the new First Minister, likely to be sometime in the new year.

Whilst this may be frustrating, this important matter cannot be rushed. Also, members must be afforded good time to review the inspector’s report and the Orders decision before the committed debate.

The Welsh Government has always been clear that given the significance of the M4 Project to Wales and the strong feelings on all sides, Welsh Government will, once the Orders decision making process is complete, bring forward a debate in its own time so the Assembly can discuss the project.

To assist members consideration of the issues associated with the project in advance of the Inspector‘s Report being published I have instructed officials to provide links to the Public Inquiry Library of Evidence on the Welsh Government website.