



## CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE LEVELS MOTORWAY

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### 12,000 SIGN PETITION AGAINST M4 BYPASS

The group campaigning against a £2 billion bypass through the Gwent Levels handed in a petition with over 12,000 signatories to the Welsh Assembly last week. This was 8 times the number on the petition supporting the bypass submitted by the S Wales Chamber of Commerce earlier this month.

The Petition calls on the Welsh Government to “**drop plans to construct the M4 motorway across the beautiful Gwent Levels and invest in public transport instead.**” It will now be considered by the Assembly Petitions Committee

CALM warns in the petition that “*The current plans to extend the M4 motorway would cut across the 'Amazon Rainforest' of Wales, the Gwent Levels, which is a haven for wildlife. If we want to protect the environment for future generations we need to come up with alternatives to big polluting motorways. The Assembly's own environmental regulator and advisory body, Natural Resources Wales, is against these plans.*”

Last month CALM endorsed the alternatives to the motorway recommended by the Welsh Future Generations Commissioner, Sophie Howe, which include boosting investment to ensure the Metro can improve access to jobs and leisure for the whole population in South Wales.

CALM Chair Rob Hepworth said “*Two Welsh Government expert advisory bodies are on the record in opposing the Black Route. We know Welsh Ministers have just been warned that even the estimated costs of an M4 bypass have more than doubled to over £2billion in the 3 years since 2015 when the First Minister assured the Assembly that it would be well under £1 billion. The names on the CALM petition have doubled in less than 3 weeks to over 12,000. There is now widespread public alarm about the costs and environmental damage of a bypass.*”

Catherine Linstrum (CALM) said “*For every person signing a petition in favour of the road, eight people signed the petition opposing it. That's a pretty strong sense that the public want things to change. They want smart solutions to transport, not more environmentally-damaging miles of concrete.*”

Hugh Mackay (Cycling UK) said “*It would be an utter waste of Wales investment budget which is needed for overdue projects right across our nation, including much more investment in active travel and public transport to benefit our whole population over the next 50 years.*”



The **Campaign Against the Levels Motorway** is an alliance of local people and organisations formed to protect the Gwent Levels from the proposed M4 Relief Road and find better solutions to travel needs in south-east Wales.

Vic Warren (Vice Chair of the Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales) added “ *The Assembly’s own cross-party Economy & Infrastructure Committee of the Welsh Assembly has now recommended that building new roads should be a last resort, and that maintaining the current road network - including active travel routes - should be the priority for a sustainable transport policy. The Government need to take the repeated advice from independent advisers and the Assembly Committee seriously and rule out the Black Route without forcing us to take the issue to Court*”.

Ian Rappel (CEO of Gwent Wildlife Trust) said “ *Even without the damage to the Gwent Levels, the rising costs and poor economic and transport case for the Black Route are persuading many people to oppose it. When the damage to priceless and irreplaceable wildlife is added, the arguments are frankly overwhelming. The Black Route is the wrong choice for wildlife and people*”

**Background:** The evidence against the Black Route has been piling up throughout 2018. CALM estimates that its final costs could top £2 billion. From this almost £200 million will be spent on repairing unnecessary damage from driving the bypass through Newport Docks.

As the Future Generations Commissioner’s report <sup>1</sup>showed last month, the Black Route is incompatible with the need to address climate change seriously. Wales’ targets to reduce carbon emissions are being missed because we have become too dependent on cars<sup>2</sup>. The United Nations Report published in early October by IPCC warned Governments that they must decide carbon emissions (to which the Black Route would add 500,000 tonnes) immediately to prevent dangerous global warming<sup>3</sup>. Last week’s report by the Assembly’s Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee under the Chairmanship of Russell George AM advised that “*every new road project should be subject to challenge to ensure the Well-being of Future Generations Act has been rigorously applied in the scheme.*” and recommended that “*the forthcoming Wales Transport Strategy should set a clear priority for maintaining the existing road network, mainstreaming and upgrading active travel infrastructure, and prioritising access, in preference to building new roads.*”

Sophie Howe’s report in September 2018 exposed the flawed assumptions made by the recent Public Inquiry, which failed to examine **any** alternatives properly, in breach of Welsh legislation protecting the wellbeing of future generations. Her report found the case for building the Black Route relies on an assumption that time savings to individual drivers of between 2½ and 5 minutes each day are worth **20 times more** to society than a combination of lowering carbon emissions, improving human health, reducing pollution and giving a fair deal for those on lower incomes. And that’s before any value is put on the unique wildlife and landscape of the Gwent Levels, and the ecosystem services it provides local people !

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CALM’s petition is still open for signatures on the 38 Degrees site -  
<https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/stop-the-proposed-m4/>

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Transport Fit for Future Generations’ by Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, September 2018.

<sup>2</sup> Decarbonising Transport in Wales, Institute of Welsh Affairs, June 2018  
[http://www.iwa.wales/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/IWA\\_Decarbonising\\_Transport-1.pdf](http://www.iwa.wales/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/IWA_Decarbonising_Transport-1.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> See for example <https://www.vox.com/2018/10/8/17948832/climate-change-global-warming-un-ipcc-report>