



Ein cyf/Our ref KS/07200/19

Dawn Bowden AM

Dawn.Bowden@assembly.wales

05 August 2019

Dear Dawn,

Thank you for your query of 18 July regarding an update on the A465 Heads of the Valleys Road, Sections 5 and 6.

As you are aware, I agreed to make the draft Orders in February 2019 following a Public Local Inquiry in April and May 2018 in front of an independent planning inspector. The Orders were made on 2 May 2019 and the High Court Challenge Period ended on 13 June 2019.

The project is the first being delivered as a Public Private Partnership (PPP) using the Welsh Government's Mutual Investment Model (MIM). The project is part-way through the process to procure a private sector partner to finance, build and then operate and maintain the A465 between Dowlais and Hirwaun for a period of 30 years. The procurement involves three committed bidders and each consortium includes international contractors with extensive PPP experience, partnered with Welsh contractors who have knowledge of the area and local supply chain.

Tenders will be submitted in January 2020 and project business cases will be reviewed to ensure that the project continues to meet Ministerial priorities, remains affordable and delivers value for money. If Ministers are content to proceed, the contract will be awarded in mid-2020 with construction due to start soon after. Construction is expected to take 3 to 4 years to complete.

Whilst the procurement is progressing, Welsh Government is undertaking extensive ground investigation surveys along the route to gain a better understanding of the site conditions underground and will require entry to private land along the route in order to take soil samples and sink boreholes.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir 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.

Bidders are also meeting landowners and local authority officials to discuss the outline design and explore potential for improving building conditions and reducing cost and risks. Any changes required will be implemented by the successful bidder.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ken Skates', with a long, sweeping flourish extending upwards and to the right.

Ken Skates AC/AM

Gweinidog yr Economi a Thrafnidiaeth
Minister for Economy and Transport