DCC/REB/10

A380 South Devon Link Road (Kingskerswell Bypass)

Public Inquiry

Devon County Council's Response to

Proof of Evidence of Kevin McGrath

(Obj 64): OBJ/MCGRATH(64)/P/1

Response by David Black

with contributions by Bethan Tuckett-Jones

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This document provides rebuttal to the Proof of Evidence provided by Kevin McGrath, Objector number 64 **(OBJ/MCGRATH(64)/P/1)**. The main points are:

- Concern that the reduction in journey times will not result in the wider economic benefits envisaged or justify the effect on countryside;
- The cost of the Scheme will increase;
- The number of journeys on the A380 will increase;
- The Scheme will result in increased car use in an age of global warming;
- The A380 sometimes gets busy but no more so than other roads.

1.2 The objection letter dated 1st November 2008 is similar in content to the Proof of Evidence. DCC's response to the objection letter is contained in DCC/P/1 paragraphs 11.3.1 – 11.3.5, DCC/P/6 paragraphs 11.9.1 – 11.9.2 and DCC/P/10 paragraph 8.2.1.

2 JOURNEY TIME SAVINGS OF '1.7 MINUTES'

2.1 The Proof of Evidence refers to journey time savings of 1.7 minutes in either direction between Newton Abbot and Torquay.

2.2 The journey time savings quoted are for a baseline of 2005. With reference to DCC/P/4, Diagram 21 it can be seen that by 2028 the journey time saving between Ware Barton and Riviera Way as a result of the Scheme will be 10 minutes southbound and 5½ minutes northbound in comparison with the Do Minimum. DCC/P/4, Diagram 3 and Diagram 17 show that there will also be more resilience in the road network and hence journey times will also be significantly more reliable, as the road will operate within the section of the speed-flow curve before speeds start to decrease and congestion starts to build. As a result the road will be able to perform its proper function as a Regionally Significant Route (RSR), as defined within the South West Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS).

2.3 The most recent data on current journey time reliability is provided in David Black's evidence DCC/P/4, paragraph 3.9 and Table 4. This shows that average journey time from Ware Cross to Kerswell Gardens in the interpeak can be 5 minutes longer than the free flow time and can on occasions be 12 minutes longer. This demonstrates the very poor journey time reliability of the route.

2.4 The perception of peripherality and delay is as important as the actual delay. Indeed there are supporters of the Scheme who have cited significant delays encountered by their business which are far in excess of the modelled improvements (notably HavMain (Rep.108) suggests that their vehicles can by delayed by as much as 30 minutes each day due to congestion). Similarly Stagecoach Southwest (Rep 73) suggests the scheme would greatly improve the reliability of its services leading to greater patronage. National Express (Rep 104) similarly support the Scheme.

3 PROJECTED COST OF '£130 MILLIONS'

3.1 The Proof of Evidence quotes a scheme cost of £130 millions and also refers to 'a recent Channel 4 'Dispatches' programme' which gives evidence of cost overrun of DfT projects averaging over 40%.

3.2 The Quantified Cost Estimate for the Scheme is £120.859M (DCC/P/4, Table 32).

3.3 The DfT recognise cost overrun within their projects. To account for the 'systemic appraisers to be overly optimistic about key parameters' (CD 4.45 DfT, WebTAG unit 3.7.8), the DfT advise the use of Optimism Bias in scheme appraisal.

3.4 At Order Publication / Works Commitment stage, WebTAG guidance suggests an optimism bias of 15% should be used. However, the DfT have advised Devon County Council, for the purposes of the appraisal of the Scheme, an optimism bias of 44% should be used.

3.5 With Optimism Bias added to the cost of the scheme, the scheme still represents excellent value for money with over £7 earned for every £1 spent (see DCC/P/4, Table 37).

4 INCREASING THE NUMBER OF JOURNEYS

4.1 Reference has been made to the increased number of trips on the A380 corridor due to the Scheme.

4.2 The traffic modelling shows that there will be an increase in traffic from Exeter and Newton Abbot to Torbay as traffic utilises the new bypass. DCC/P/4, Table 29 gives the model summary statistics for the Scheme. The table shows that there is only a marginal increase in vehicle kilometres travelled (22.83 million km in the Do Minimum compared to 22.97 million km under the Scheme) but an overall decrease in vehicle hours over the whole model. This result shows that vehicles will travel more efficiently under the Scheme due to traffic moving away from the congested urban road networks and unsuitable parallel routes and onto the new bypass.

5 THE SCHEME IS A 'SCANDALOUS WASTE OF PUBLIC MONEY'

5.1 The Scheme is described as a 'scandalous waste of public money' within the Proof of Evidence.

5.2 The analysis shows that the Scheme will relieve current congestion at the existing "bottleneck" on the A380, which is a Regionally Significant Route (RSR). It would provide "very high" value for money as shown in David Black's evidence DCC/P/4 paragraph 11.6.2 Appendix 4 and Appendix 10.

6 THE SCHEME WILL RESULT IN INCREASED CAR USE IN AN AGE OF GLOBAL WARMING (CONTRIBUTION BY BETHAN TUCKETT-JONES)

6.1 Mr. McGrath suggests that the Published Scheme may encourage more commuters into their car and that this is inappropriate in the light of potential global warming.

6.2 The Air Quality Proof of Evidence (DCC/P/10) provides an assessment of the change in carbon emissions anticipated with the Published Scheme. The conclusion of the assessment is that a slight numerical increase in road traffic emissions will occur but that the impact of the increase will be neutral since, taking into account at all trips of relevance to the Scheme, the carbon dioxide emissions will increase by less than 1% of the total emissions anticipated if the Scheme does not proceed.

7 THE A380 SOMETIMES GETS BUSY BUT NO MORE SO THAN OTHER ROADS

7.1 Mr. McGrath in his proof suggests:

"The three mile stretch of the A380 between Penn Inn, Newton Abbot and the Kerswell Gardens Roundabout, Torquay, sometimes gets busy but no more so than the approach roads to any medium size town or seaside resort at peak times".

7.2 David Black's evidence DCC/P/4 shows in paragraph 3.4 that there is very little variation in the flow on the A380 throughout the day and throughout the year. It is consistently running at capacity for approximately 3,000 hours per year, as shown in DCC/P/4 Diagrams 4 and 5. This is most unusual as generally in other locations traffic flows freely during off peak periods, with an increase in flow during peak hours and during the summer season. This is not the case with the A380 in this location as shown by DCC/P/4 Diagram 1.