

PROOF OF EVIDENCE

THE DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL A380 SOUTH DEVON LINK ROAD (KINGSKERSWELL BYPASS) COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER 2008 AND

THE DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL (A380 SOUTH DEVON LINK ROAD (KINGSKERSWELL BYPASS) CLASSIFIED ROAD) (SIDE ROADS) ORDER 2008

This submission is on behalf of Devon & Cornwall Business Council as Chairman. This organisation represents over 40,000 businesses across both counties.

My Council have been closely involved in lobbying for the provision of this key infrastructure link for nearly ten years. Both my senior colleagues and I have also been involved in numerous meetings and briefings to support this project.

As part of our own internal investigations regarding this matter we have been able to assemble detailed information from numerous local businesses, we have also prepared a number of assessments regarding the economic impact that this link could bring and the induced benefits that could arise to the whole of the Torbay economy. Throughout this period of evidence gathering and assessment we can report 100% support from all businesses and organisations with whom we have been in contact and compelling evidence of the economic need for this investment.

We anticipate that you will be aware of the general state of the Torbay economy. Even prior to the current economic recession, Torbay was performing at one of the lowest levels in the South West region. The effects of this can be seen in respect of high levels of unemployment, levels of low pay, closure of long standing local businesses and significant changes in the pattern of support services including retail provision – over 80 shops are now vacant - many in prominent high street positions.

There are a number of reasons why this road link is so vital and I would summarise the principal reasons as follows:

1. The South West economy is significantly dependent on “just in time”, servicing. This in turn is highly dependent upon on access to markets. It is known that productivity drops by 6% for every 100 minutes of travel distance from London. This equation therefore means that the travel distance and duration of travel (travel time) have a massive negative impact on local productivity.
2. We have direct evidence of the dynamics of both inward investment and investment in indigenous businesses. Investor confidence is crucial. Many decisions regarding this and the funding of projects are made remotely from Torbay. The perception of accessibility is

crucial in decision making and the current external view is heavily biased against supporting future growth because of traffic delays.

3. A key element of sustainability for the Torbay Community is its traditional business base. This is still heavily dependent on Tourism. The nature of the tourist market in the South West has substantially changed in the last 10 years. From the traditional fortnight break it has evolved to principally short break. This is largely opportunistic and highly dependent upon weather windows and inevitably speed of travel. The predictions are that this sector of the tourist market will grow to become 60% of all activity. Inevitably therefore accessibility will be a key factor in stimulating growth. Without this there is an inevitable impact upon levels of local investment, quality, training and skills.
4. The impact of market forces needs also to be considered. The adverse impact of poor communication is widely broadcast to the detriment of Torbay. Both public and private sector bodies throughout the region capitalise upon this and many development opportunities which should have been directed into Torbay have been successfully promoted in other areas (but within the same general economic catchment). It is vital that this trend is reversed.



Tim Jones FRICS
Chairman