

**Ken Skates MS**  
Minister for Economy,  
Transport and North Wales

**CC: Rt Hon Mark Drakeford MS**  
First Minister of Wales

14th September 2020

**Re: Stop the Red Route A55-A548 destroying Leadbrook Woods and meadows, Flintshire**

Dear Minister,

We, the undersigned, write to you as farmers, business people, homeowners, local politicians and lovers of the landscape and wildlife of the Leadbrook Woods and Meadows area. We urge you not to destroy our businesses and livelihoods, and the countryside we love, by approving the construction of a huge new four-lane highway, which would go straight through this ancient and beautiful landscape in Flintshire, North Wales.

This enormous dual carriageway is by far the largest new highway proposal in the whole of Wales. It would destroy massive areas of our precious farmland, including an award-winning organic farm, sever our businesses, which are already suffering from the COVID pandemic, destroy our homes and communities and cause irreparable damage to our wildlife and landscape heritage. It would rip through ancient woodland and old flower-rich meadows, damage this historic landscape, and destroy viable farm holdings.

Your government's own estimates of the costs have risen from £210 million in 2016, to £242 million in 2017 and to £300 million in 2019, showing that the costs are spiralling out of control, at a time when Wales' economy is struggling with emerging from the COVID pandemic. At a cost of approximately £23 000 per metre, this would be a vast misdirection of funds, at a time when we are desperately short of nurses, doctors and agricultural support in Wales.

Your government is rightly concerned about sustainability, and passed a ground-breaking law on it. Sustainability is all about finding solutions to problems such as traffic congestion which don't destroy the environment, and we urge you to do just that in this case. The Future Generations Commissioner, Ms Sophie Howe, has expressed concern about the processes you have used to develop this road plan (WelTAG).

In stating on the 10th June this year in the plenary of the Welsh Parliament, that the government is "looking at the longer term recovery from coronavirus in a way that builds back a fairer, greener, more resilient economy", you rightly pointed out that things will not be the same in a post-COVID Wales, and that recovery must be green.

Pursuing this highway scheme would take no account of the likely large reduction in traffic because of changed work patterns after the coronavirus pandemic, with working from home for example remaining far higher than before. It also would not take into account the big changes which are afoot on the international scene from the 1st January next year, when changing trade arrangements between the UK and Ireland may well result in a further reduction in the need for a huge new dual carriageway in this area.

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The increase in carbon emissions which would happen as a result of this highway constitute swimming against the tide of public opinion and your government's own policies, in an era when we are supposed to be taking serious steps at all levels to avoid catastrophic climate change.

We recognise that there are problems with congestion in this area, but we are equally confident that they could be addressed without massive new highway construction, using imaginative sustainable solutions that create a more resilient Wales.

Please rethink this damaging mega-scheme, and let us work together to create a sustainable and productive Flintshire and Wales.

Yours sincerely,

Iolo Williams, Naturalist and TV presenter  
Rachel Sharp, CEO, Wildlife Trusts Wales  
Natalie Buttris, Director of Wales, Woodland Trust / Coed Cadw  
Frances Cattanach, CEO, North Wales Wildlife Trust  
Mick Green, Chair, Welsh Ornithological Society  
Ryland Jones, Interim Deputy Director, SUSTRANS  
Joe Mault, County Advisor (Clwyd and Montgomeryshire), NFU Cymru  
Jenny Hawley, Policy Manager, Plantlife  
Bob Gaffey, Chair, Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales, Clwyd Branch  
Sarah Kessel, CEO, Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales  
Clive Faulkner, CEO, Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust  
Adam Taylor, CEO, Gwent Wildlife Trust  
Darylle Hardy, CEO, Radnorshire Wildlife Trust  
Mark Hughes, Chair, Clwydian Range Branch, NWWT  
Keith Davies, Chair, Clwyd Beekeepers  
Keith Davies, Clwyd Bat Group  
Andrew Charles-O'Callaghan, Môn Gwyrdd Environmental Youth Forum  
Roberta Owen, Holywell Transition  
Cllr Chris Dophin, Flintshire County Council  
Cllr Rita Johnson, Flintshire County Council  
Cllr Marion, Flintshire County Council  
Cllr Marion Bateman, Flintshire County Council / Northop Community Council  
Cllr Haydn Bateman, Flintshire County Council  
Cllr Paul Ashley, Northop Community Council  
Cllr John Carling Northop Community Council  
Cllr Alison Brebner, Northop Community Council  
Cllr Pauline Lawton-Hughes, Northop Community Council  
Cllr Rachel Hayward, Northop Community Council  
Cllr Alan Watkin, Northop Community Council  
Cllr Rob Mackey, Northop Community Council  
Cllr Linda Deane, Northop Community Council  
Cllr Jarred Livesey, Northop Community Council



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