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Mr Darren Millar AM
Chair of the Public Accounts Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
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Dear Darren

WELSH GOVERNMENT LAND ACQUISITIONS – M4 RELIEF ROAD

On 21 April, the Committee noted my letter of 26 March concerning Welsh Government land acquisitions and proposals for the M4 Relief Road. In addition to the details set out in that letter, you asked me to confirm the date of sale for the seven of 22 properties acquired by the Welsh Government that have since been sold on. Those dates are as follows:

Land at the Stud Farm	26 March 2004
Lower Lakes Farm, Nash	5 January 1997
Pye Corner House, Nash	16 January 2002
Ysgwbor Newydd, Coedkernew	31 January 2004
Moorbarn House, Nash	2 July 1997
The Maerdy, Coedkernew	4 November 2003
Rose Cottage, Undy	1 July 2011

You also asked me to confirm which of the 22 properties would be affected by which routes. In looking into this issue, I have referred to the black, red and purple routes that have been the subject of more recent consideration by the Welsh Government and the original 1995 preferred route that was the reason why most of the 22 properties were acquired as a consequence of statutory blight rules.

Wales Audit Office staff raised a query with Welsh Government officials previously about the extent to which the 22 properties listed in my previous letter were potentially affected by the various different route options. In response, Welsh Government officials confirmed that all 22 properties could be said to be potentially affected by any of the three routes under recent consideration. Officials emphasised that many of properties are not necessarily physically affected but would fall within the vicinity of the different route options.

The maps that the Welsh Government provided to Wales Audit Office staff vary in their detail. They include a detailed map showing each of the 22 properties compared with the current 'black' route. We also have a detailed map showing the 1995 route but without the properties marked, and a much less detailed map of the current black, red and purple route options, again without the properties marked.

Wales Audit Office staff have looked again at these maps. They do appear to confirm the feedback from Welsh Government officials and it appears that the points at which the different routes diverge noticeably, including the 1995 route, are in different locations to the 22 properties listed. Wales Audit Office staff would be happy to share with you the maps they have examined.

Finally, my previous letter noted that the date of acquisition for the land south of the former LG site was unknown. I am now able to confirm my understanding that the land was acquired on 30 September 2004, at the same time that the former LG site itself was acquired.

Yours sincerely



HUW VAUGHAN THOMAS
AUDITOR GENERAL FOR WALES