

M4 CEM Engagement Team
**M4 (Magor to Castleton) -
Corridor Enhancement Measures**
Drop-ins Summary Report

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Llywodraeth Cymru
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ARUP

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1 Introduction

First of all, the Welsh Assembly Government thanks everyone who came to the drop-in exhibitions to find out more about the M4 Corridor Enhancement Measures Programme: Magor to Castleton. The time participants spent reflecting on the material presented, and giving feedback has provided many tens of pages of useful views and comments, which will feed into the plans for the programme in the next stage of its development.

1.1 Who came to the Drop-in exhibitions?

Nearly 90 people came, of whom about half came to the exhibition in Magor; others came to exhibitions in Newport City Centre, Lliswerry and Duffryn. On average people spent 45 minutes reading, talking to the team and other people and writing their comments.

1.2 Why did the Welsh Assembly Government run them?

The Welsh Assembly Government is engaging with people who live and work along this stretch of the M4, to hear what they see as the main problems on this transport corridor and to hear what people think the Welsh Assembly Government should be trying to achieve.

The comments received at the exhibitions are now being studied to help ensure that any possible solutions, or measures, proposed by the Welsh Assembly Government within the scope of the programme, address as far as is possible the travel related problems experienced in the M4 corridor: Castleton to Magor, and help achieve the goals set.

1.3 How did people hear about the exhibitions?

Invitations were sent to local elected representatives and to social, business and environmental groups whose members the Welsh Assembly Government think could have an interest in travel related issues between Magor and Castleton. Posters were also displayed in local libraries, community centres, Newport University Campus and other public places. The events were advertised on the Welsh Assembly Government website and on Newport CC website business pages. Press releases were sent to local media.

1.4 How did participants rate the drop-in exhibitions?

9 out of 10 people attending the exhibitions indicated they found it easy to give their views. Some comments indicated that the exhibitions had not been advertised widely enough – greater publicity would have enabled more people to give their views.

Two thirds of participants said just the right amount of material was presented at the exhibitions. A third of participants indicated they would have liked to see more information. Of these, a number of people said they would have liked more technical information and evidence to have been presented; others said that they would have liked to comment on possible solutions. One person commented: “there was more than I had expected”.

Everyone who commented said that the material presented was quite easy or very easy to understand.

1.5 Participants’ views in full

A full transcription of every comment made at the drop-in exhibitions is available as a download from: www.wales.gov.uk/transport.

Reports from other events convened by the Welsh Assembly Government in order to open the dialogue about travel related issues within the M4 Corridor area: Magor to Castleton, are also available on this website. As are the full list of aims, problems and goals on which views were sought.

1.6 Participants’ views in summary

The comments received suggest that the Welsh Assembly Government have identified the most significant traffic related problems within the M4 Corridor: Castleton to Magor.

A small minority of participants expressed the opinion that the problems identified by the Welsh Assembly Government are too general, and not all are unique to this stretch of the M4 corridor. Rather, it was suggested that they are problems common to most transport corridors around UK cities.

Participants gave detailed descriptions of several specific local problems. Several of these specific problems were raised repeatedly, e.g. problems with J23A; problems with J28; the Brynglas tunnels are a bottleneck; planning (of different types) by Welsh Assembly Government and the local authorities is not joined-up enough; there is not enough investment in public transport, walking and cycling.

1.7 Participants’ views on the problems:

Of the 14 problems presented by the Welsh Assembly Government, those attracting most comment and most responses expressing agreement relate to:

- difficulties maintaining adequate traffic flows on the M4 at times of temporary disruption,
- the design of the M4 results in regular congestion at peak times,
- that both these problems (above) will worsen in the future,
- WAG’s aim for an improved gateway into Wales is not currently met by the M4 corridor.

Also agreeing with the problem expressed overall, but with fewer numbers of responses, participants indicated their concern about:

- pollution and greenhouse gas emissions problems, resulting from slow-moving traffic and congestion on the M4, and
- Essential major maintenance over the next five – ten years leading to lane and speed restrictions adding to congestion problems

There was a less clear response from participants about whether an increasing risk of disruption due to extreme weather events within the corridor is a problem. About half those who commented, said they had not experienced problems caused by flooding on the M4, suggested this problem is not significant compared to other causes of disruption, and stated “All road and rail systems are at risk of disruption due to extreme weather events. This is not a problem specific to the M4”.

Your views on whether noise is a serious problem varied and at least two causes of problem noise were identified: motorway traffic, and maintenance and improvement works at night. Many people said they did not experience any problems resulting from traffic noise on the M4.

1.7.1 Additional problems described by participants

- There are specific problem areas and times, and there is a knock-on effect of congestion on the motorway resulting in problems on local roads e.g. “the bottleneck is the Brynglas tunnels, not the motorways leading to and from them”; “Congestion at J28 is a problem – it affects both M4 and SDR traffic flows”.
- Bus and Rail alternatives to this stretch of the M4 are inadequate and expensive
- Mixed use of the motorway by local and long distance traffic is a problem, e.g. “M4 is being used for cross town commuting”; “The M4 at Newport is a convenient cross town road and attracts excess traffic which makes the temporary disruption found on all the motorway even worse”.
- Through traffic using local roads is a problem, especially during times of congestion and / or temporary disruption on the M4.
- There were suggestions that these last two problems are linked to “inadequate infrastructure in Newport” or “no alternative to the M4”.
- In addition to congestion on the M4, a lack of effective alternatives, including other modes of transport and the effect of the Toll crossing at the Severn Bridge were linked to the hampering aspirations for a better gateway into Wales.

1.7.2 Participants’ views on the Goals to be achieved

Of the 12 Goals identified by the Welsh Assembly Government, most comments participants made, expressing broad support were about:

- making best use of the existing M4 and local road network,

- promoting more effective use of alternatives to the M4, including other parts of the transport network and other modes of transport for local journeys around Newport
- making it quicker and easier to travel E-W in South Wales
- increasing the level of choice for journeys, in the corridor: Magor to Castleton, and
- making journey times in the corridor more reliable
- goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions levels per journey and to reduce pollution were widely supported

1.7.3 Additional Goals described by participants

- Improve traffic management, especially following incidents. A number of people suggested seamless traffic management integrating the motorway and wider travel network should be strived for, and this would lead to measures like “better signage of problems before motorway entry so alternative route could be selected”.
- Positively encourage people to use forms of transport other than their car
- Change attitudes and behavior so we increasingly make more sustainable travel choices. Your suggestions included: “raise awareness of alternatives to the car, or of deciding not to make single journeys”; “greater investment in public transport”; “make greater use of capacity on rail” and “convincing people to use public transport”.
- Develop a transport plan for the M4 corridor: Castleton to Magor which is part of a unified local and national plan.

1.8 Aims

Having asked participants for the views on problems and goals to be achieved, they were asked to consider the bigger picture, by giving their comments on the Social, Economic and Environmental Aims identified for the M4 Corridor Enhancement Measures Programme.

While there was broad agreement expressed with all three aims, the aims relating to environmental and economic outcomes attracted most responses. Several people disagreed or wanted to modify the environmental aim – for very different reasons. Comments ranged from “Don’t do it – build New M4 instead”, to “Why not make the environment better?”.

For some, encouraging economic prosperity across SE Wales by delivering a more efficient transport network was their top priority. In response to this aim, others suggested that there are “other ways of investing to support and encourage prosperity in Newport”.

There were many responses to the invitation to suggest Aims for the longer term – 2020 and beyond. Many suggested a particular direction for policy: “Improve the M4 as much as possible”; many were in fact suggestions of possible solutions “built for the future” e.g. “high-speed rail link: London to Swansea”; “new road

built on top of barrage (think outside the box!)”; “light-rail Severn Tunnel Junction – Cardiff Airport”; and some of these aims are beyond the scope of the Welsh Assembly Government’s direct powers, e.g. “improve CO2 emissions from cars”.

1.8.1 **What additional messages did participants send the Welsh Assembly Government about the M4 Corridor Enhancement Measures Programme?**

Many participants responded to questions about the problems they experienced or to goals by offering specific solutions to problems. Many also used the final comment section to offer several, or more commonly, their one preferred solution. Overall, a very wide range of solutions were suggested by participants at the exhibitions. These will be considered during the next phase of the work, and are not described further here.

A number of participants indicated a real sense of urgency about finding solutions to the problems being experienced.

Several people said they hoped and expected the views gathered at the exhibitions would be listened to by the Welsh Assembly Government, and indicated their interest in commenting further on possible solutions, or measures, when these are presented.

1.9 **Where can I find out more and what happens next?**

The Welsh Assembly Government sincerely hope participants at the exhibitions will continue to help shape this project, and encourage new people to do so too. The website will be regularly updated with news of the M4 CEM engagement opportunities and developments.

Many thanks to all who took part and gave their views.

Appendix A: The material participants were asked to consider and to give their views on - the Welsh Assembly Government defined Problems, Goals and Aims of the M4 Corridor Enhancement Measures Programme: Magor to Castleton

After being greeted on arrival, and being asked to tell the staff where they had come from or where they lived (placing a dot on a map of the area), participants were given an introduction to what was at the exhibition, and how to get involved in the discussion by giving their views, either directly onto large paper sheets on display, or in feedback forms, which could be taken to tables, to complete more privately.

The first material displayed some context to the M4 Corridor Enhancement Measures Programme: Castleton to Magor. There was information about what was already being done to address some of the travel related issues in the M4 Corridor.

The boards then displayed the problems identified by the Welsh Assembly Government. Participants were asked to consider the problems identified and feed back their views. Next, the goals set in order to address one or more of the problems identified were presented. Participants in turn commented on these goals. Finally after having looked at problems and goals in detail, participants were asked to give some thought to the bigger picture and consider the M4 Corridor Enhancement Measures Programme's aims.

The full set of Problems, Goals and Aims are listed here:

1 Main problems surrounding the M4 Corridor: Magor to Castleton

This material is taken from the report: 'Addendum to Welsh Transport Planning and Appraisal Guidance (WelTAG) Planning Stage Report, Draft 1 Working Document May 2009'. It has been turned into 'plain English'.

The WelTAG process identified key problems as:

1. Difficulties maintaining adequate traffic flows on the M4 at times of temporary disruption (for example, following accidents, problems caused by severe weather, or during major events).
2. A greater volume of traffic uses the M4 around Newport than it was designed to accommodate, resulting in regular congestion at peak times.

3. Traffic levels are forecast to continue to increase, therefore problems 1 and 2 will worsen over time.
4. The existing transport network acts as a constraint to economic growth (for example, as freight companies see increasing delays in deliveries, they may decide not to invest in South Wales).
5. The M4 requires essential major maintenance within the next 5-10 years; this will involve prolonged lane and speed restrictions, thus increasing congestion problems.
6. HGVs cope badly with congestion as they take longer to get going again once they've stopped, thus adding to the congestion.
7. The congested, slow moving traffic on the motorway around Newport adds to air pollution problems.
8. Stop-start traffic movement on the M4 results in greater greenhouse gas emissions than free-flowing traffic.
9. The road and rail transport system in and around the M4 corridor is at increasing risk of disruption due to extreme weather events (for example flooding).
10. Traffic noise from the motorway is a problem for local residents.
11. WAG's aim for an improved gateway into Wales is not currently met by the M4 corridor.
12. The existing transport system limits what local Councils can do to develop their areas.
13. The current accident rates on the M4 between Magor and Castleton are higher than average for UK motorways.
14. The current problems on the M4 between Magor and Castleton at times have a significant knock-on effect, severely disrupting travel within South Wales.

2. WAG Transport Goals for the M4 CEM Programme

This material is taken from the report: 'Magor to Castleton. Addendum to Welsh Transport Planning and Appraisal Guidance (WelTAG) Planning Stage Report, Draft 1 Working Document May 2009'. It has been turned into plain English. The 'goals' (formally known as 'transport planning objectives') set out the kind of results that the M4 CEM programme should try to achieve.

1. Make it easier and quicker to travel East-West in South Wales,
2. Improve transport connections to England, the Republic of Ireland and the rest of Europe on the international transport network.
3. Promote more effective use of alternatives to the M4, including other parts of the transport network and other modes of transport for local journeys around Newport.
4. Make best possible use of the existing M4 and local road network.
5. Make journey times along the M4 corridor more reliable.
6. Increase the level of choice for all people making journeys within the transport corridor between Magor and Castleton.
7. Make it easier for people to access key services as well as residential and commercial centres.
8. Improve safety on the M4 between Magor and Castleton.
9. Improve air quality in areas next to the M4 around Newport.
10. Reduce the disturbance to people of high noise levels, from M4 traffic between Magor and Castleton.
11. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions per vehicle and/or person kilometre.
12. Improve the travel experience into South Wales along the M4 Corridor.

3. Overall aims of the M4 CEM programme, 2011 - 2020

As a part of South East Wales' transport strategy, the M4 CEM programme focuses on the M4 and the immediately surrounding area, known as the M4 corridor. The programme is looking at how to improve the ability of the corridor to cope with current journey levels in an efficient way and enable more journeys to be made than are now.

There are 3 overall aims

Social: to make it easier for people to reach services such as shops, hospitals, leisure service [and places of work, by road, public transport, walking or cycling....

Economic: to support and encourage prosperity in the region and across Wales by delivering a more efficient transport network on this important economic gateway to South Wales

Environmental: to prevent and reduce negative effects of the M4 CEM programme on people and the environment and, where practicable, provide improvements to balance against them.