

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

April 2011



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



ARUP

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1 Executive summary

This workshop was one of a number of events convened by the Welsh Assembly Government in early 2011, in order to seek views on travel related issues within the M4 Corridor: Magor to Castleton. Participants were from Local Authorities on or near the M4 Magor to Castleton transport corridor and were a mixture of officers and elected members. Assembly Members and MPs whose constituencies overlap with the M4 Corridor area were invited, as were officers of the Welsh Assembly Government. The purpose of the workshop was to inform participants about the M4 Corridor Enhancement Measures Programme, to seek their views on the Welsh Assembly Government's analysis of transport related problems, and to hear views on the goals and aims of the Programme, which runs until 2020. Participants were also invited to tell the Welsh Assembly Government about any additional problems they experience, and to suggest new goals and aims, that seek to resolve one or more of the problems identified.

Broadly speaking, participants did not disagree fundamentally with the list of problems, goals and aims put forward by Welsh Assembly Government but did add quite a few comments to them and proposed a number of additions.

A theme which emerged early on was the need to clarify the role of this section of the M4. It is heavily used for both short and long distance travel and many participants thought that a decision should be made as to whether it should primarily serve as a strategic route for long distance travel, in which case measures should be put in place to discourage local travel (e.g. closing junctions).

Sustainable alternative modes of transport featured in all the discussions and there was a widespread (but not necessarily unanimous) view that any solution should include serious consideration of this aspect.

The knock on effects of problems on the M4 came up under various headings and they were generally considered to be highly problematic. At peak travel times, and in particular at times of temporary disruption local roads are affected very quickly, which in turn then affects local bus services, for example. Participants felt that there was room for better management of such situations, whether it be accidents, weather- related events or other causes. The problems were said to be exacerbated by a lack of suitable alternative routes.

Better 'joining up' was the other theme which emerged. In relation to land use planning and regional transport studies, it was felt that they could be better integrated. In dealing with accidents, there should be better inter agency co-operation.

2 Introduction

As part of the M4 Corridor Enhancement Measures Engagement Programme, in early 2011 the Welsh Assembly Government hosted a workshop for Councils in the area of the Magor to Castleton transport corridor. The workshop was one of several events and more information about them and to find out further information about the M4 Corridor Enhancement Measure please visit the Road scheme pages of the Welsh Government Transport website www.wales.gov.uk/transport.

This document is a summary report of the workshop – a transcript of the worksheets and flipcharts produced at the workshop can also be found on the above website. The workshop was designed and facilitated by engagement specialists Catrin Ellis Associates.

3 Purpose of workshop

The purpose of the workshop was to inform participants about the M4 Corridor Enhancement Measures Programme and to seek their views on the Welsh Assembly Government's analysis of transport related problems, and the goals to be achieved in order to address one or more problems. Having looked at the problems and goals, participants were also asked to give some thought to the bigger picture, by considering the aims of the M4 Corridor Enhancement Measures Programme until 2020, and beyond.

As well as asking participants why they might agree or disagree or want to amend a particular problem, goal or aim, suggestions for additional problems, goals or aims were invited.

At this early stage in the process of talking and listening to people and stakeholders, the Welsh Assembly Government intend to understand any differences of opinion or emphasis about the problems to solve, and thereby to frame the scope of the M4 Corridor Enhancement Programme, by setting appropriate aims and goals. Hence, it was explained to participants that they were not being asked, at this stage, for suggestions for solutions to the transport problems; an opportunity to do this would come later in the year. However, quite a number of solutions were proposed; they have been noted and will contribute to the next stage of the work.

Participants were officers and elected members from the Local Authorities most immediately impacted by the M4 Magor to Castleton transport corridor and represented a number of departments in addition to Transport.

4 How participants' views were gathered

Participants were seated at tables of between four and six people, who together represented a range of views and perspectives. (For example, an elected Member holding a particular interest in his council's transport issues or portfolio, was seated with an officer from a different council, with responsibility for environmental or access issues, alongside an officer of the Welsh Assembly Government DESH, and someone from the South East Wales Transport Alliance). The small group discussions at each table were intended to encompass as varied an array of experience and perspective on transport related issues as possible, so that participants would be stimulated by wide-ranging dialogue and would together come to holistic views on the issues being talked about.

To help the groups' focus, they used worksheets, which guided them through the Welsh Assembly Government's view of the transport related problems encountered within the corridor area, the goals to be achieved and the aims of the M4 Corridor Enhancement Measures Programme.

Groups were encouraged to comment on those problems, goals or aims which they considered to be of most relevance, or which are in their view most important or urgent. Hence, not all groups commented on all points presented.

The objective of the workshop was to gather views and information derived from a wide range of Local and National Government perspectives, to begin to understand differences in opinion or emphasis compared to the perspective put forward by the Welsh Assembly Government Department of Transport, Housing and Regeneration – Projects Infrastructure Unit.

The groups were asked as far as possible to come to a collective view. However, if there were strongly held alternative views in any group, they were encouraged to feedback more than one view on any given problem, goal or aim. There was also an opportunity in the final question of the workshop evaluation form, for participants to express individual views, and to send a message to Welsh Assembly Government about how the M4 Corridor Enhancement Measures should be taken forward.

5 What participants thought of the workshop

Participants completed an evaluation form, telling us what they thought of the workshop, and of the briefing materials, which described and provided evidence to support the appraisal made by the Welsh Assembly Government about problems, goals and aims, sent in advance of the workshop.

The great majority of participants who responded thought the briefing material was quite helpful or very helpful. One or two considered the information sent in advance did not give enough information about the geographical scope of the project, and suggested that it may have deterred some participants, as it seemed to indicate the Programme is concerned primarily with issues around Newport.

Several expressed disappointment that “solutions” were not covered in the briefing materials and workshop.

Fifteen of twenty one participants who answered rated the workshop 7/10 or higher, 13 out of 21 saying it had fully met its aims, while 8 said it met its aims only in part. Several again expressed their disappointment about not being consulted on solutions yet. 19 of 21 responses indicated they had found it easy or very easy to express their views, with comments expressing appreciation at the opportunity to listen to the views of others, and applauding the round table format. 2 people indicated they did not find it easy to express their views.

Responses to the final question of the feedback form, which invited participants to give an individual message to the Welsh Assembly Government as it goes forward with the M4 Corridor Enhancement Measures Programme, are reproduced in full in section 9. This question generated a very wide range of comment, from messages on strategy and ways of working together, e.g.:

- “Need to address the funding of key infrastructure in Wales”;
- “Consider ‘future proofing’ options and solutions which take account of long term issues such as carbon emissions, climate change, natural framework, and sustainable communities”
- “There is a need for stronger linkages between the M4 CEM process, regional transport plans and land use planning”;
- “Allow further input into the management of the M4 and decision making for local authorities”;

There were also suggestions for a wide range of solutions, e.g.:

- “Build a parkway at Severn Tunnel junction”;
- “Is it congestion or congestion at peak? Can we incentivise off peak car use?”

A little under a third of participants took the opportunity to indicate their desire for the development of a new M4. Several cited the need to enable the separation of short distance and longer distance road-users, promoting the M4 (or a new M4 for strategic travel); while several also recognised the important function played by the M4, enabling access to and from Newport.

6 Transport problems

6.1 Comments on the Welsh Assembly Government list of problems

Broadly speaking, participants' comments indicate the Welsh Assembly Government's analysis has identified the main transport problems in the corridor. However, some differences of emphasis in terms of the urgency to solve these, and in terms of opinions about their route cause and contributing factors emerged:

- Some people saw economic growth (Problem 4) as more the responsibility of employers and businesses than the transport network and there was a suggestion that businesses could be more flexible e.g. planning deliveries over 24 hours.
- Not everyone agreed that HGVs cope badly with congestion (Problem 6). It was suggested that highly qualified and experienced drivers did not add to congestion, whilst another group cited experience of tail gating through the 50 mph section.
- The lack of sustainable transport alternatives was highlighted and this theme was explored further in the goals and aims discussions.
- Another aspect raised here, which also featured in later discussions, was the role of this stretch of the M4 and whether it should continue to serve both local and long distance traffic.
- The 50mph limit was stated by some groups to have helped reduce air pollution and accidents. In fact, in relation to Problem 13 (higher than average accident rates), although participants agreed that it had been a problem, they thought that it had possibly been resolved through the Variable Speed Limit and 50mph section.
- Four out of six groups commented on Problem 10, all agreeing that noise is a problem; two of them identified night time maintenance as a particular issue.
- Two groups agreed that the existing transport system limits what Councils can do to develop their areas (Problem 12). One group of participants said they were not convinced that this was a problem.

6.2 New problems

Participants were invited to consider whether there were any significant problems which were not yet covered by the WAG analysis and a number were put forward.

- A lack of provision of alternative modes of transport (to the car)

Five new problems related to the perceived lack of adequate and sustainable alternative modes of transport. Linked to this was a concern that transport options are not integrated.

- Impacts on buses

It was pointed out that, whilst local buses hardly use the M4 except at intersections, the impact of congestion or hold ups on the M4 is severe and immediate.

- Knock on impacts on local roads

Several new problems related to the knock on impacts on local roads of congestion or other problems on the M4.

- Alternatives to M4 when it is blocked / congested

Linked to the knock on impacts were new problems which stated that there are not adequate alternative routes when the M4 is blocked or heavily congested.

- Management of problems on or close to M4

This emerged as a theme in a number of the new problems. In the case of road works which impact on the M4, it was suggested that there was poor communication between WAG and Newport City Council. One group said that it took too long to clear accidents and another mentioned the need for clearer advice to the public when there were problems.

- Impact of new developments

Two new problems described the impact of new developments on traffic, in particular development around junctions, as well as simply along the corridor.

7 Transport goals

7.1 Comments on the Welsh Assembly Government list of goals

There was broad agreement with the Welsh Assembly Government's transport goals for the corridor.

- Goal 1 was to 'make it easier and quicker to travel East-West in S Wales'. One group wanted to add 'safer' and another 'reliable'. A third group felt that the goal should include regional movement as well.
- Alternative modes of transport were again highlighted in a number of responses to various goals. Alternatives to long distance travel should be considered as well as local travel (Goals 3 and 6) and North / South as well as East / West. Goal 2 could be clarified to include rail and multi modal transfer points.
- A broadening of Goal 9 on air pollution was sought, to take it beyond "areas next to the M4" to include the wider corridor.

- It was suggested that Goal 10 on noise should be extended to include high noise levels from all transport modes within the corridor (i.e. not just from the M4 itself).

7.2 New goals

- Alternative modes of transport

Five out of thirteen new goals related to alternative modes of transport. They included greater use of rail, encouragement to shift mode and a goal to develop an exemplar integrated transport system.

- Role of the M4

One new goal covered the future role of the M4, suggesting that this be clarified in terms of local / long distance travel and another specifically aimed to discourage local trips on the M4.

- Integration

Integration was at the heart of a goal which sought to improve the integration of land use planning and the regional transport plan and another one which saw better inter agency co-operation as the way forward to improving how accidents are dealt with.

- Vehicles and drivers

A concern about the standard of foreign HGVs was expressed as a goal to enforce regulations. Education of all foreign drivers and UK drivers who had not been trained on motorway driving was also considered important by some.

8 Overall aims

8.1 Comments on Welsh Assembly Government aims

8.1.1 Aim 1 Social

Aim 1 was about accessibility to services. There was no disagreement as such with the aim, but one group suggested that this aim would be more appropriate to the local highway network as the intention should be to remove local traffic from the M4 itself. Another group made a similar point about the different functions of local and strategic roads.

8.1.2 Aim 2 Economic

No-one disagreed with this economic aim to support and encourage prosperity in the region and across Wales.

8.1.3 Aim 3 Environmental

Again, there was no disagreement with this as an aim, with one group seeking to extend it to include carbon reduction and climate change adaptation and strengthen it to support positive effects.

8.2 New aims

Two of the six new aims were about establishing the role of the M4 as a strategic route.

The other new aims covered

- A greater role for Local Authorities in shaping / managing the M4
- Wider transport choices for most people
- Future proofing the corridor at least until 2020
- A concern that any solution that meets one of the aims (social, economic, environmental) does not seriously prejudice either of the others

8.3 New aims beyond 2020

Two new aims were proposed for beyond 2020. One sought to encourage economic growth and manage the resulting traffic growth (i.e. not seek to reduce traffic at the cost of economic growth). The other simply called for the building of the new M4.

In the worksheet notes one group envisaged the long term future e.g. peak oil and wanted to see an aim which called for a sustainable, integrated transport

infrastructure which could cope with changing conditions and offered choice to users. This was all part of “future proofing”.

9 Messages to the Welsh Assembly Government

Workshop participants completed feedback forms, which included an opportunity to send a message to WAG as they go forward with M4 CEM. The messages are reproduced below but grouped under themes.

M4 as strategic route (or not)

- Don't close access to the M4 in Newport
- Look at ways to remove traffic from M4 which does not need to use it e.g. Park & Ride, Duffryn Link and Queensway
- Build M4 (new) keeping existing M4 as strategic route. Close junctions for local traffic.

M4 relief road

- If M4 relief road is a priority then WAG must fund the proposal as any other solution will be short term only and may well restrict economic regeneration.
- Alternative forms of travel
- Focus on alternative travel rather than road improvements. Look at a long term rather than the usual short term arrangements/improvements. In reality an M4 will not be upgraded so we need to focus on improvements in public transport including freight arrangements.

Local Authority role

- Allow further input into the management of the M4 and decision making for local authorities

Planning links

- There is a need for stronger linkages between the M4 CEM process, regional transport plans and land use planning
- Ensure that the development of transport solutions are linked to and integrated with the wider land use planning, SP, Carbon reductions and environmental shortages in SE Wales, Wales and wider UK. A full specialist planning context and RTPs. Also consider ‘future proofing’ options and solutions which take account of long term issues such as carbon emissions, climate change, natural framework, and sustainable communities.

Severn Tunnel Junction

- Build a parkway at Severn Tunnel junction

- Comments on the public transport agenda were many and varied. Hopefully the strategy will support links to Severn Tunnel junction

Communication and engagement

- Keep the public and unitary authorities fully informed of proposals

Other

- Get it right first time
- This consultation appears to be a delaying tactic to avoid having to embark on the project and spend money
- All of the groups were critical of the decision to cancel the proposals for the second M4 and comments that, at best, this exercise is only tinkering with the problems and cannot address current problems effectively. However, we agreed that the aims etc are worthy. Current economic conditions are peak oil issues, whilst it was suggested that it might be as affordable to maintain, consolidate and manage, rather than assume future economic growth and prosperity will increase beyond what we already have.
- Servicing the whole of South Wales and beyond through two lanes in the Brynglas tunnels is never going to work. The stimulus to the economy of a major road scheme (new M4) would be extremely valuable in helping the S Wales economy out of recession directly, as well as all the benefits of improved accessibility.
- Is it congestion or congestion at peak? Can we incentivise off peak car use?
- Consider contra-flow M4 in that existing motorway traffic travel east and a new M4 travel west or vice versa (less expensive option). Introduction of school buses especially at primary school level (this would solve a significant % of M4 usage). Open up or create more smaller railway stations by using/upgrading existing rail lines
- Need to address the funding of key infrastructure in Wales
- Re open station at Magor / Undy. Remove traffic off roads M4/M48
- I am concerned that WAG has made a decision to take 'soft' smarter choice measures, ignoring the longer term issue. However, the further studies on the 'softer' issues are showing negative results and therefore won't be implemented in full to negate the need for a new road.

Appendix A

Attendees at Workshop

A1 Attendees at Workshop

Local Authorities

Organisation	Attendee
Bridgend CBC	Richard Metford
Cardiff CC	Paul Carter
Merthyr Tydfil CBC	Gareth Chapman
Monmouthshire CC	Nigel Burgess
Monmouthshire CC	Paul Keeble
Monmouthshire CC	Colin Phillips
Monmouthshire CC	Cllr James Harris
Monmouthshire CC	Cllr Bryan Jones
Newport CC	Andy Williams
Newport CC	Andrew Morris
Newport CC	Graham Fry
Newport CC	Cllr Jeff Evans
Newport CC	Cllr Charles Ferris
Newport CC	Cllr Richard White
Newport CC	Cllr David Hando
Newport CC	Cllr Alexander Suller
Newport CC	Cllr Valerie Dudley
Newport CC	Bryan Kemp
Newport CC	Amanda Davies (Schools in Newport)
Vale of Glamorgan	Clare Cameron

MPs

MP	Sheryl Edwards
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Others

SEWTA central support team	Martin Buckle
SWTRA	Ian Duguid
WAG	Tim Dorken
WAG	Mark Newey
WAG	Gwynneth Evans

M4 CEM Team

WAG	Russell Bennett
WAG	Mark Dixon
Arup	Richard Sanders
Arup	Allan Pitt
Arup	Ian Amos
Catrin Ellis Associates	Catrin Ellis Jones, facilitator
Catrin Ellis Associates	Lynn Wetenhall, facilitator
Catrin Ellis Associates	Helena Poldervaart, facilitator

Appendix B

Pre-Meeting Briefing Papers

B1 Pre-Meeting Briefing Papers

Accompanying the invitation to participate at the workshop, participants were sent a short briefing paper - "M4 Corridor Enhancement Measures Programme Briefing note". Participants who confirmed their attendance were sent a more lengthy document - "M4 Corridor Enhancement Measures Programme Workshop Briefing Paper" describing the M4 Corridor Enhancement Measures Programme's Aims and why the Welsh Assembly Government were seeking to engage with stakeholders at this point, as well as presenting some of the evidence base describing some of the travel related problems encountered within the M4 Corridor Area. These can be downloaded from the Welsh Assembly Government Website:

www.wales.gov.uk/transport