

M4 Corridor Enhancement Measures
Engagement Team

**M4 (Magor to Castleton) -
Corridor Enhancement Measures**

Councils Workshop Transcript
Report

11-

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Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



ARUP

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1 Introduction

In early 2011 the Welsh Assembly Government hosted a workshop for Councils in the area of the Magor to Castleton transport corridor, as part of the M4 Corridor Enhancement Measures Engagement Programme. 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 transcript of the worksheets and flipcharts produced at the workshop and the text has not been changed, other than simple editing where something was unclear. A summary report of the workshop can also be found on the above website.

1.1 Transport Problems

1.1.1 Comments on current Welsh Assembly Government list of problems

Participants were asked to review the Welsh Assembly Government’s current analysis of the main transport problems on this transport corridor, indicate whether they agreed with the problem and add comments or amendments. The worksheets they used are transcribed below.

Text highlighted in yellow refers to undecipherable text received on completed worksheets.

Problem 1. Difficulties maintaining adequate traffic flows on the M4 at the times of temporary disruption (for example, following accidents, problems caused by severe weather, or during major events)	
✓	Exacerbation of certain sections. Communication difficulties compound management and services. Difficulty in parallel/ comp?? with ÷ local/city network. Pressure on local/city network -= access and egress – to compensate
	Robustness of network.
	Serious accidents are the main issue due to lack of hard shoulder and resilience.
✗	

Problem 2 . A greater volume of traffic uses the M4 around Newport than it was designed to accommodate, resulting in regular congestion at peak times	
✓	Never designed to cope. Too many junctions – 24, 25a, 26, 27. Mileage through city? Reduction in number of junctions would compound problems on local/city network
✗	
?	Why aren’t sustainable alternatives being considered?
	What is the purpose of the M4? Can it have a dual purpose i.e. long distance travel and local transport across the city?

Problem 3. Traffic levels are forecast to continue to increase, therefore problems 1 and 2 will worsen over time	
✓	Assume traffic growth. Cardiff Park & Ride lessons – intercept traffic before reaching local/city network → unless significant investment in public transport and communication on alternative modes of travel – bus – rail – Park & Ride. School travel plans.
	Peak periods are extending
	Morning and evening peaks will extend in time. Will growth continue due to recession/economic forces? Is it growing at a greater rate than the model predicts?
✗	
?	If this has been identified and proven, why then is sustainable travel (or lack of alternative transport) not been identified as a problem e.g. dedicated bus lanes, Park & Ride facilities

Problem 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)	
✓	Also consider that the tolls on the Severn crossings are a particular factor.
	International freight travel to Ireland → alternatives via shipping/trains. Common practice within Europe.
	Linked to SSC [Second Severn Crossing]/Severn Crossing tolls. Situation could be exacerbated by essential maintenance work. Enhance capacity and level service/welcoming to counter other growth centres e.g. Bristol/Gloucester
✗	P Employer/business behaviour. Consumer models – 24hr stores. Not network responsibility/burden. s/b more responsible recruitment/business models. Planned delivery models across 24 hours.

Problem 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	
✓	Tunnel maintenance could be a significant problem in the coming years.
	Major and additional impact 4. Limited space for essential maintenance reduces flexibility for work and extends period of working. Negative working assists maintaining flows, but may nuisance to local people/residents
✗	P 24 hour work programme. ↑ T&C motorway workforce
?	Not enough emphasis to alternative networks e.g. rail

Problem 6. HGVs cope badly with congestion as they take longer to get going again once they've stopped, thus adding to the congestion.	
✓	Also adds additional fuel consumption and extra costs for hauliers.
	Gradient → impacts on HGV stop-start
✗	Highly qualified, time served drivers public perk bigger than Ford Ka no greater addition to congestion
	Experience suggests this not true. Problem due to incident on tail gating (through 50mph section)

Problem 7. The congested, slow moving traffic on the motorway around Newport adds to air pollution problems	
✓	The reduced speed limit (50mph) over last 18-24 months has been shown to improve air quality.
	Evidence base
	AQMA– St Julian’s, Kalpas, J27, Coldra. 50mph = note dropt in certain pollutants in the AQMA over 18 months
	Potential exceedence may result in EC actions on ??? This may be assisted by controlled motorway. *
✗	

Problem 8. Stop-start traffic movement on the M4 results in greater greenhouse gas emissions that free-flowing traffic	
✓	Results in significant extra consumption of fuel.
	Linked to 7 – increase in fuel costs. Evidence base.
	Similar issue to No 7.*
✗	

Problem 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)	
✓	Snow and ice.
	Definitely a risk but pattern of risk needs to be defined more accurately. Standards of drainage are no longer fit for purpose arising from climate change – rain incidence and intensity
✗	Flooding

Problem 10. Traffic noise from the motorway is a problem for local residents	
✓	Need to consider further mitigation.
	See glazing, noise barriers.
	Residents noise concerns. Cutting shrubbery/screening. Night time construction work (typically 2am-3am).
	M4 notified as a noise action are a (candidate) under the EC Noise Directive. Night time noise from maintenance operations is a major issue.
✗	

Problem 11. Welsh Assembly Governments aim for an improved gateway into Wales is not currently met by the M4 corridor	
✓	Agree – existing M4 is not fit for purpose.
	Combination of M4 tolls. Alignment of route avoid Junction 27 (sharp curve). Bottleneck.
	What is this aim and where is the gateway defined? Is this a perception issue or one of traffic management? Clarification required. Wider issue a major concern – may be constrained by access on the motorway.
✗	Major gateway. Trans Europe freight locations. → s/b train service bus operators

Problem 12. The existing transport system limits what local Councils can do to develop their areas	
✓	M4 outside the jurisdiction of the local authority. M4 should have gone further north. Potential for improving access to communities e.g. developing Park & Ride, alternative options. Joined up approach – financial consultants of rail, local budgets, strategic investment. Better integration required.
✗	Not convinced

Problem 13. The current accident rates on the Mr between Magor and Castleton are high than average for UK motorways	
✓	We anticipate that the VSL will help this situation. Before 50mph limit. Agree. But note that the accident rate has dropped following the reduction in speed limit to 50mph (Gwent police report to full council). Is there evidence to support this? Will variable speed limits increase or decrease the accident rate – compared to the 50mph speed limit.
✗	The controlled motorway will improve the situation...actions taken.
?	How has the accident rate changed since the implementation of 50mph limit

Problem 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	
✓	Agree. Inadequate capacity for peak flows and lack of resilience. Can cause major disruption – traffic standstills – major economic and social effects – missed appointments, travel plan disruptions
✗	

1.2 New problems

Participants were asked to consider whether there were any other important transport problems in the corridor and write them down on strips of flip chart paper. The strips were put up at the front of the room and in some cases the facilitator asked for clarification. The notes of clarification are in the right hand column. The problems were put into rough categories with the assistance of the participants and shown together, hence the numbering being out of order.

PROBLEM	<i>Flip chart notes and clarifications on strips from plenary discussion</i>
15. Not enough sustainable alternatives to the single occupancy car e.g. bus priority, park and ride facilities, rail capacity in particular.	
20. Not enough emphasis paid to alternative freight options rather than road.	
16. Lack of public transport capacity to take cars off M4.	
17. Absence of integrated transport options. Lack of easy, clear, friendly access to rail and bus services.	<i>Must have links to take people between transport modes. Add long distance HGV's into this – no provision to take them off onto rail.</i>

19. Rail service not modern enough (slow, not electrified) and too expensive to deter M4 use.	<i>Not everyone agreed with this, but did agree that it depends on the time of day. Rail demand is at capacity now.</i>
18. Congestion on the M4 is the biggest problem that local bus operators have. Any congestion or hold-ups immediately impacts their services.	<i>Local buses don't use M4 much, but when they do, congestion is a huge problem for them. Many buses use intersections though and they, along with Newport busses which don't operate on or via the M4 at all are affected by any congestion on the motorway.</i>
32. Congestion on Pont Ebbw and Tredegar Park roundabouts.	
30. No access to Caldicot / Severn Tunnel Junction areas, have to use Magor junction.	<i>Traffic is pushed onto local roads as it can't access the motorway.</i>
29. Not enough attention paid to local alternative roads to detract from M4.	<i>Including when there are accidents. People should consider using local roads for local journeys.</i>
26. Knock on effect on local roads following congestion and accidents on M4.	
27. Poor communication between Welsh Assembly Government and NCC regarding road works around the M4, which impact on M4 traffic.	
28a. Road works and congestion on adjacent roads.	
28b Lack of comparable East-West route (alternative when M4 closed)	
21. No sufficient escape routes or management to redirect traffic following an accident on M4. Insufficient road space to use as a re-directed route. Insufficient emergency facilities.	<i>There is not enough capacity E/W when there is a problem.</i>
22. Motorway work involving restrictions requires more clarity / advice to public.	
23. Takes too long to clear accidents.	
31. Local Development plans nearly finished. No junction.	<i>Why are we discussing all this now and not earlier, when Newport was developing its local plan? Now the plan is finished and there is no new junction.</i>
25. New development around motorway junctions adds to the problems.	
24. Fundamental issue of building adjacent to M4 corridor encouraging more usage of M4 when the M4 is unable to cope with the capacity.	
26. Ireland is one of our large trading partners, congestion around Newport might be having wide ranging economic effects.	
33. Too many junctions – lack of adequate local links between junctions.	

2 Transport Goals

2.1 Comments on current Welsh Assembly Government transport goals

Participants were asked to review the Welsh Assembly Government’s current analysis of the main transport goals on this transport corridor, indicate whether they agreed with the problem and add comments or amendments. The worksheets they used are transcribed below.

Goal 1. Make it easier and quicker to travel East-West in South Wales	
✓	s/b strategic – plus “safer” [ed] i.e. “make it easier and quicker and SAFER to travel...” In addition more reliable (5) and safe (8)
✗	Disagree. This is an over-simplification. The M4 accommodates a wide range of movements, particularly regional movements between the Valleys, Newport and Cardiff.

Goal 2. Improve transport connections to England, the Republic of Ireland and the rest of Europe etc	
✓	Using the rail network for international [freight] traffic; motor rail. Integrated – multi-modal transfer points Should include increased use of rail infrastructure to maximise connectivity
✗	

Goal 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	
✓	Only if project includes improvements to local/city network Including Duffryn link road, Llanwern Steel works site
✗	
?	What about ‘other modes’ for all journeys, not just local journeys?

Goal 4. Make best possible use of the existing M4 and local road network	
✓	Better use of technology and driver (and transport user) information
✗	
	Add: and other transport networks.

Goal 5. Make journey times along the M4 corridor more reliable	
✓	And safer. Reliability, particularly at peak times.
✗	

Goal 6. Increase the level of choice for all people making journeys within the transport corridor between Magor and Castleton	
✓	The goal need not be restricted to increasing the choice between 23a and 29 – the goal could be widened.
	New → use more demand restraint methods
	Including measures for improving rail links. Park and ride (east/west Newport)
✗	Why not Magor and Castleton. Should be for all E-W travel but also North from A449 – Midlands and further north (also air and bus/coach connections)

Goal 7. Make it easier for people to access key services as well as residential and commercial centres	
✓	However, an increase in junctions would introduce safety/time issues
	Also convenient and reliable access
✗	

Goal 8. Improve safety on the M4 between Magor and Castleton.	
✓	
✗	Improve safety on the whole transport network.

Goal 9. Improve air quality in areas next to the M4 around Newport	
✓	Link with speed limits (e.g. improvements made in air quality in last 18 months)
	Also applies to other communities, not just Newport. Needs to be a corridor based objective, not just specific to the M4.
✗	

Goal 10. Reduce the disturbance to people of high noise levels, from M4 traffic between Magor and Castleton	
✓	Improved screening/road surface. Work with home owners on improved sound proofing (e.g. Newport city houses)
	Change goal to → reduce disturbance to people of high noise levels from all transport modes and traffic within the corridor.
✗	

Goal 11. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions per vehicle and/or person kilometre	
✓	
✗	

Goal 12. Improve the travel experience into South Wales along the M4 Corridor	
✓	(including Severn Bridge tolls)
✗	

2.2 New goals

Participants were asked to consider whether there were any other important transport goals in the corridor and write them down on strips of flip chart paper. The strips were put up at the front of the room and in some cases the facilitator asked for clarification. The notes of clarification are in the right hand column. The goals were put into rough categories with the assistance of the participants and shown together, hence the numbering being out of order.

GOAL	<i>Flip chart notes and clarifications on strips from plenary discussion</i>
13. More use of local rail stations. Greater use of rail network for commuter traffic.	
21. Encourage modal shift and change in travel behaviour.	
17. To introduce more strategic parkways to encourage rail travel.	
16. Promote alternative travel options to single car occupancy use of M4.	
22a. To develop an integrated transport system which is an exemplar for Wales, UK and Europe.	
22b. To present a joined up focus to integrate the transport and land use processes and outcomes.	<i>Land use planning (UDP) and regional transport plan are currently integrated, but only up to a point – there is room for improvement.</i>
14. Encourage and promote off peak travel.	
23. Encourage and prioritise alternative A449 / A470 and HOV routes to reduce demand on M4.	
18. Prioritise education for foreign HGV drivers, young drivers who are not required as part of the driving test to be assessed on motorway driving and foreign drivers in general.	
20. Prioritise enforcement on the M4 corridor	<i>The group felt that there were quite a number of foreign HGV's that shouldn't be on the M4 as they didn't meet the required standard.</i>
19. Improve the way accidents are dealt with.	<i>Better inter-agency co-operation.</i>
15. Discourage local trip movement(s) on M4 around Newport.	
Should there be a goal on the identification of what the junction or functions of the motorway should be?	<i>NB this was on a worksheet, not presented as a strip.</i>

2.3 Plenary discussion on Goals

There was a small amount of additional general discussion on goals which was recorded on flip charts, as set out below:

- Need to clarify the function of the M4 – whether it's for short or long distance travel. So, a goal could be to make it a local (or) long distance strategic route. This is key and needs to be sorted out.
- Reduce level of pollution generated by vehicles by improving design – perhaps a role for Welsh Assembly Government to lobby for this.
- At present, people travelling south from Valleys, wanting to travel East or E/W, are channelled down to the Newport junctions. It would be useful to know more about the volume of this kind of journey. If there are many, we could look at directing them to join the M4 further west or east.

3 Overall Aims

3.1 Comments on current Welsh Assembly Government overall aims

Participants were asked to review the Welsh Assembly Government’s current analysis of the overall aims for the M4 Corridor Enhancement Measures programme, indicate whether they agreed with them and add comments or amendments. The worksheets they used are transcribed below.

2010-2020 Aim 1. 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....	
✓	More than just people to services – but should be providing services to people e.g. ambulances, fire services. Is it therefore “access” to services? But keeping in mind the general function of the motorway as the highest level of strategic highway. Concentrate on improving the local highway network and transport options to remove local traffic from the M4.
✗	Change aim No 1 from Social to Accessibility Revise aim to – To make it easier for people to reach services such as shops commercial centres, regional NHS facilities, hospitals, leisure service and places of work, by road, public transport, (walking or cycling) ←local.... s/b Strategic social s/n before local/city split Local transport needs Strategic long distance time lines business support
?	Re-order: walking & cycling, public transport or road. Note: stop the use of the car for the school run would remove most of the road capacity issues

2010-2020 Aim 2. 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	
✓	“Economic region of South Wales” rather than the gateway to SW Recognising impact on the local (Newport) economy. → Diversification of the Welsh and local economies. Strategic aim and entirely appropriate
✗	
?	This is too narrow a geographical perspective – it is important to all of South Wales and parts of Mid Wales. It is also part of the Trans European Road Network.

2010-2020 Aim 3. to prevent and reduce negative effects of the M4 Corridor Enhancement Measures programme on people and the environment and, where practicable, provide improvements to balance against them.	
✓	Should also support the wider objectives and requirements for carbon reduction, climate change adaption and network framework/green infrastructure. Should also <u>enhance</u> , not only reduce/prevent/avoid negative effects – support positive effects. Should include an aim not to increase carbon emissions. It is not certain that these are achievable in the period up to 2020 – they are longer term
	To provide a transport package to support local need What is the function of this road – is it a strategic bypass or feeding local need
✗	

3.2 New overall aims to 2020

Participants were asked to consider whether there should be any additional overall aims to 2020 and write them down on strips of flip chart paper. The strips were put up at the front of the room and in some cases the facilitator asked for clarification. The notes of clarification are in the right hand column. The aims were put into rough categories with the assistance of the participants and shown together, hence the numbering being out of order.

AIM 2010 - 2020	<i>Flip chart notes and clarifications on strips from plenary discussion</i>
5. Greater role for Local Authorities in shaping / managing the M4	<i>e.g. via delegated powers from Assembly</i>
8. Widen the transport choices available to most people.	<i>e.g. Newport currently poorly served in terms of stations</i>
7. Future proof the effectiveness of the corridor (at least until 2020)	<i>Future is uncertain, e.g. who knows what will happen to oil prices? And what will happen to economy beyond 2020</i>
4. Establish the role of the M4 (strategic route) and enforce it.	
Change the public perception to see M4 as a long strategic route demand management tool awareness influence incentivise behaviour moral gesture	<i>NB this new aim added on a worksheet, placed next to 4 as they are very similar.</i>
6. Find a solution that meets a social, economic or environmental aim without seriously prejudicing either of the others.	<i>Implicit judgements made in ranking these aims. Concerned about how any solution may meet one aim but harm others – any solution should meet <u>all</u> aims.</i>

3.3 New overall aims from 2020 onwards

Lastly, participants were asked for suggestions for overall aims for beyond 2020, again working on strips of flipchart paper.

AIM 2020 onwards	<i>Flip chart notes and clarifications on strips from plenary discussion</i>
Increase prosperity and economic growth and manage the resulting traffic growth.	<i>Look at assumptions that link prosperity / economic growth to traffic growth. What evidence do we have that they are linked?</i>
Build the new M4	

Worksheet notes on aims from 2020 onwards

Other worksheet notes recorded by participants on the above topic included:

- Long term issues
- Sustainable communities – “post peak oil”/middle cost
- Infrastructure will need to be flexible to adapt to changing economic, social and environmental conditions
- Therefore aim should be to develop an integrated transport infrastructure which is sustainable and robust for changing conditions and provides choice to users
- Consider the wider social, economic and environmental changes such as post peak oil, sustainable communities – need to future proof transport solutions:-
- Therefore high level aim: “to develop integrated transport solution(s) which are sustainable, flexible and robust for changing long term economic, social and environmental conditions, and provides choice to users

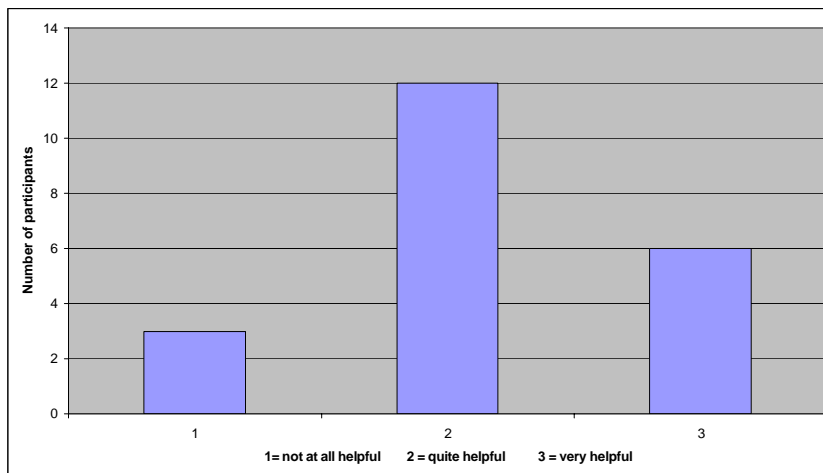
3.4 Plenary discussion on aims (to 2010 and beyond)

Discussion also highlighted that the transport hierarchy should start with walking and cycling, with sustainable transport modes taking precedence over the private vehicle.

4 Evaluations

At the end of the workshop, participants were asked to complete an evaluation form. Results are detailed below.

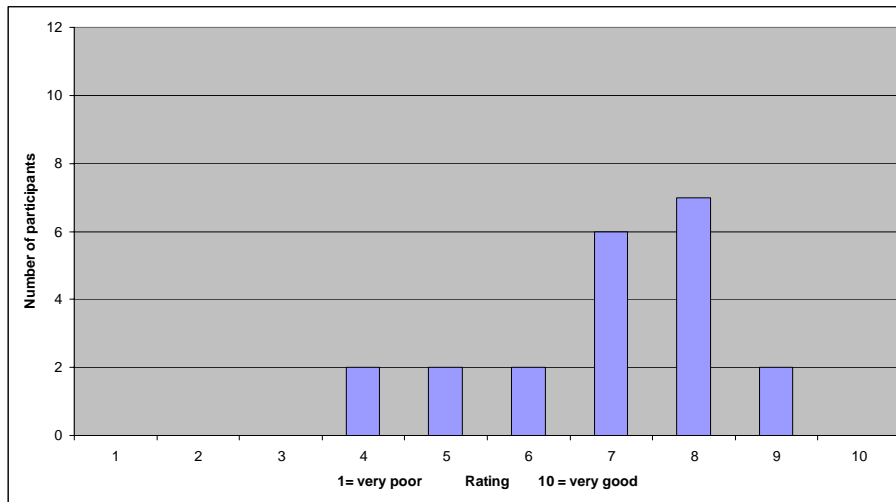
How helpful did you find the pre-workshop briefing material that you were sent in advance?



Comments

- Good notes on board
- An effective way of obtaining views and comments
- It would have been helpful to have more information on the geographical context of the corridor measures
- As a member of the project group I found nothing new.
- It indicated subject was around Newport only and deferred attendance
- Did not get a pack, being a late replacement for a colleague
- Very helpful. However! There could have been a discussion on practical measures which could be implemented to achieve the goods etc – but I assume this comes next. People had lots of ideas but no chance here to express them. * (see Q3)

Overall, how did you rate this workshop?

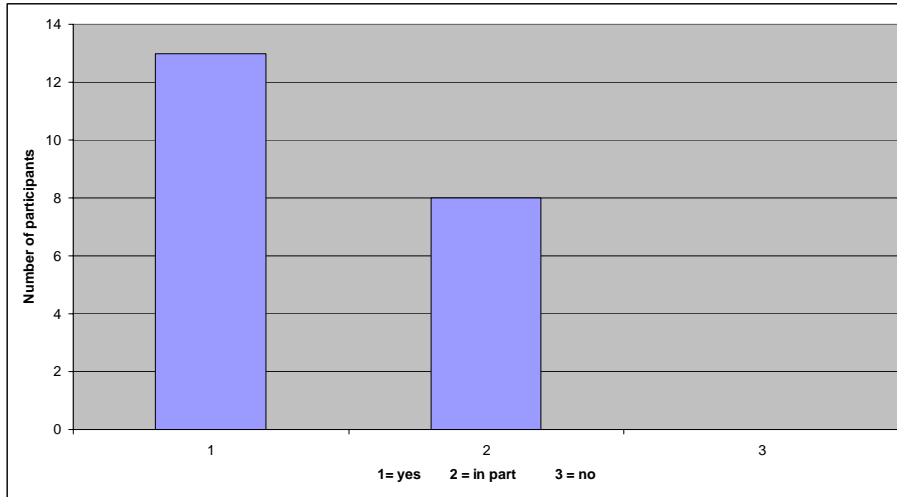


Comments

- Recognising that this was ‘high level’ – those discussion of the possible solutions would have been useful
- Facilitators helped → more re^{???} on objectives?
- Good format
- As above. From an audience a wide range of backgrounds
- Well structured process which was effectively managed
- Not particularly well managed. The definition of the tasks was somewhat confusing.
- Presentations were repetitive as already had the info in the pre-workshop material
- The early **plethora** of presenters and instructions could have been taken at a more leisurely pace to prevent the confusion that initially occurred for some!!

Were the aims of the day met? Namely, that you have

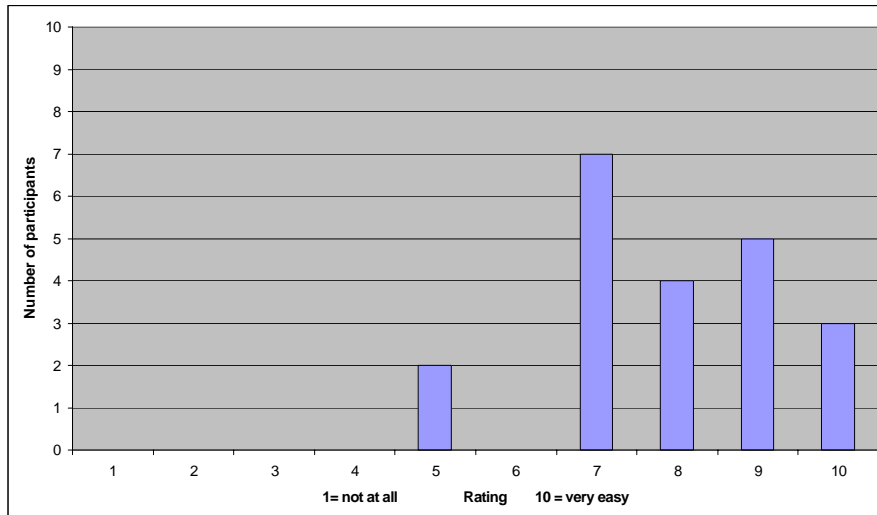
- Heard more about the M4 Corridor Enhancement Measures programme
- Contributed your views on transport related problems, goals and aims in the M4 Corridor, Magor to Castleton, between now and 2020, feeding into Welsh Assembly Government’s development of the M4 Corridor Enhancement Measures programme



If no, what was missing?

- Suggestions for solutions
- Welsh Assembly Government’s ideas for the future
- Heard nothing of the individual schemes that form the programme at this stage
- See answer to Q1*

Did the workshop format make it easy for you to express your views on the issues?



Comments

- Good to listen to other views
- Round table format was effective – but perhaps too much paperwork!
- What message would you like to give you Welsh Assembly Government as they go forward with M4 Corridor Enhancement Measures?
- Build a parkway at Severn Tunnel junction
- If M4 relief road is a priority then Welsh Assembly Government must fund the proposal as any other solution will be short term only and may well restrict economic regeneration
- Get it right first time
- Don't close access to the M4 in Newport
- Allow further input into the management of the M4 and decision making for local authorities
- Look at ways to remove traffic from M4 which does not need to use it e.g. Park & Ride, Duffryn Link and Queensway
- Comments on the public transport agenda were many and varied. Hopefully the strategy will support links to Severn Tunnel junction
- Build M4 (new) keeping existing M4 as strategic route. Close junctions for local traffic.
- Servicing the whole of S Wales and beyond through 2 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?

- There is a need for stronger linkages between the M4 Corridor Enhancement Measures process, regional transport plans and land use planning
- Consider contra-flow M4 in that existing motorway traffic travel east and a new M4 travel west or visa 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
- 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.
- Re open **H???**/Magor Undy. Remove traffic of roads M4/M48
- Keep the public and unitary authorities fully informed of proposals
- Ensure that the development of transport solutions are linked to and integrated with the wider land use planning, SD, 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.
- This consultation appears to be a delaying tactic to avoid having to embark on the project and spend money
- I am concerned that Welsh Assembly Government have 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.
- All in any group 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. Also suggest 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.