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Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Welsh Government
Consultation – summary of responses

Road and Street Works Strategy

Summary of responses

June 2016

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.
This document is also available in Welsh.

The National Approach for Road and Street Works in Wales – summary of consultation submissions and Welsh Government response.

Introduction

The Welsh Government carried out this consultation to invite views on the National Approach for Road and Street Works in Wales.

The consultation asked a range of questions on various interventions the Welsh Government could make to improve the way road and street works are planned and implemented in Wales.

The Welsh Government is not initially proposing changes to existing legislation, but seeks to work with both undertakers and highway authorities through WHAUC to improve the management of road and street works within the existing legislative framework. With direct responsibility for the trunk road network, the Welsh Government can take the lead in the adoption of best practice.

These proposals were in 5 key areas;

- The planning, co-ordination and implementation of road and street works;
- The Delivery of Major Projects
- Communication with the Public and Business
- Skills and Training; and
- Culture

These proposals were put forward in response to recommendations from the Wales Audit Office report 2011 and more recently the National Assembly for Wales Public Accounts Committee inquiry in 2015.

This report summarises the consultation comments and provides information on the course of action to be taken by Welsh Government in response to these.

Welsh Government had 35 replies in total. These were made up of;
1 response for National Government, 8 local authorities, both North and Mid Wales and South Wales Trunk Road Agencies and JAG (Joint Authorities Group) and the Welsh Local government Association representing highway authority views.
6 utility companies and NJUG and WJUG (National and Wales Joint Utility Groups) representing statutory undertaker views.
10 representatives for construction industry, emergency services, training providers and street works providers.
4 individuals responded.

A summary of the responses is given below.

*It should be noted that not all respondents replied to all questions and therefore the tables below do not always total 35.

Summary and Government response

Improving the Planning and Co-ordination of Works

Intervention 1; *Welsh Government conducts a review of all the Regulations and Codes of Practice in force in England and develops a programme for the introduction of those that would be beneficial to Wales by April 2016.*

	Effective	Not effective	Don't know
Highway Authority & HA Representative organisations	9		2
Statutory Undertaker & SU Representative organisations	3		5
Construction & Street Works industry partners	9		
Individual	3		1

Summary of comments

There was good support for this intervention and respondents recognised the need to review legislation for use in Wales. It was recommended by several respondents that before any changes are made it is necessary to understand the level of compliance in Wales and why these regulations are not meeting the requirements in Wales. Any review should be extended to include a review of English Authorities and Scotland and includes lesson learnt.

Several respondents who work in both England and Wales stated there must be recognition of cross border issues for companies operating in each area and implications on the technical specification for software supporting street works operating systems.

Given the implications for companies and authorities working in Wales respondents felt that any changes to regulations must be supported by a business case and must be appropriate for Wales and it would be useful for a schedule of changes should be produced so that any changes could be planned for. One respondent requested a tightening of FPNs and noticing procedures would be assisted by removing loops holes in legislation or codes of practice.

Most respondents made the point that for any improvements to be made within street works all works must appear on the street works register.

One respondent advised that innovation should be explored and investment made into issues such as deterring long term damage.

The main concern raised about this measure was regarding the timescales proposed for any review.

Welsh Government response

Welsh Government recognises the need to review the level of compliance and will ensure any review looks UK wide. Any changes to Regulations will require an impact assessment which will look at the business case as well as internal, operational, technical and cross border issues. Any changes will be prioritised as each will need to be consulted upon and programmed for Ministerial approval.

It is believed that many disputes within the street works sector are caused by varying interpretation of the existing regulations rather than weaknesses in the legislation. Therefore if the outcome of the review is to retain the regulations as existing the Welsh Government will look to develop guidance in association with Welsh HAUC if clarification is required.

Welsh Government will review the work done in Scotland regarding long term damage although currently this has only minor application to the trunk road network.

Welsh Government agrees that the timescale for review of the Regulations should be extended.

Intervention 2; *Welsh Government ensures that all work (including its own) on the trunk road is “noticed” in accordance with guidance and regulations from June 2016 and encourages other highway authorities in Wales to follow suit.*

	Effective	Not effective	Don't know
Highway Authority & HA Representative organisations	8	1	2
Statutory Undertaker & SU Representative organisations	6		2
Construction & Street Works industry partners	8	1	
Individual	3	1	

Summary of comments

There was generally good support for this intervention and it was recognised that noticing all works is essential for effective planning and co-ordination and it was suggested by some respondents that this should include 3rd party road works such as Section 38 and Section 278 works. In addition consideration should be given to non notifiable works such as events.

In addition respondents advised that co-ordination should take place at a strategic level and that there should be better consultation with stakeholders especially where there are many communities along the route. Early notification to emergency services should be given due to the implications on response times due to delays at road works and associated diversion routes.

Several respondents felt that due to the importance of this it is insufficient to ‘encourage’ authorities to notice their own works; it should be a regulatory requirement and tightening up on noticing procedures will remove loopholes in current practices. By not making this a regulatory requirement the Welsh Government is giving mixed messages. Evidence is already available from the Quality Performance Scorecard indicating how utilities and local authorities are noticing works.

It was noted by some respondents that improved noticing will improve performance as indicated by the performance scorecard and these improvements must be made prior to considering further changes to regulations. Noticing all works will enable consistency in the measurement of performance and it was also noted the Scottish Road Works Commissioner uses this as a measure of performance.

Respondents suggested the Welsh Government should investigate a central database for noticing.

Several respondents raised concerns about this measure. One respondent stated that confusion may arise if the noticing and co-ordination of trunk road schemes is split between the local authorities and the Trunk Road Agents.

One respondent stated reduced funding by the Welsh Government has reduced the capacity for Local Authorities to notice their own works and increased levels of funding are required in order for the Trunk Road Agents to be able to notice works on the trunk road network and improvements to the Welsh Government’s software system, IRIS, are required.

Respondents recommended that noticing of road works has a phased implementation.

Welsh Government Response

Welsh Government recognises that successful noticing requires all works to be noticed including Section 38 and Section 278 works. Whilst not subject to the Traffic Management Act or New Roads and Street Works Act events are increasingly becoming an issue and notification methods need to be investigated, for example annual events being included in ASD.

Welsh Government needs to learn lessons from incidents on the network and will look to improve co-ordination at the strategic level. Emergency Services are copied into the weekly road works report, but Welsh Government will look at whether further methods are required.

The issue of a Road Works Commissioner has been investigated and rejected on the basis that there is no evidence that existing street works are being poorly managed under the current arrangements. Major changes to existing legislation would be required and the cost effectiveness of such a role has not been proven.

The issue of a central database has been considered by is unlikely to be cost effective given the amount of investment utility companies and local authorities have made in developing and maintaining their current systems.

Welsh Government does not accept that a shortfall in funding reduces the capacity for local authorities to notice their own works. Local authorities have a duty to notice their own works under the Traffic Management Act and whilst overall funding to Local Authorities has been reduced, the Local Authorities need to prioritise their funding to meet their statutory duties.

Intervention 3; *Welsh Government updates the street gazetteer for the trunk road network (including Additional Street Data) on a monthly basis from June 2016 and encourages other highway authorities in Wales to also do this.*

	Effective	Not effective	Don't know
Highway Authority & HA Representative organisations	8	2	1
Statutory Undertaker & SU Representative organisations	6		2
Construction & Street Works industry partners	8	1	
Individual	2	2	

Summary of comments

There was good support for this measure and respondents agreed it will greatly assist in planning and delivery.

One respondent advised that with additional data available under DTF8.1 it will be even more important to ensure asset information is correct.

Respondents suggested this would be suitable as a performance indicator.

One respondent advised that regardless of which system is used there should be a single point of reference that an interested party should be able to use to get any current or future activities on any part of the highway network within Wales.

Several respondents raised concerns about this intervention suggesting that due to the importance of this it is insufficient to 'encourage' authorities and no mandatory minimum requirement is given. In addition some respondents felt the requirement does not go far enough and should include all data, e.g. Section 58 should be included on the register to avoid conflicts once works are underway.

One respondent stated resourcing and guidance are required.

Welsh Government Response

Welsh Government agrees with the comments made and have undertaken the task of getting the trunk road gazetteer in order. The trunk road agents successfully migrated to a single operating code on 4th April 2016 and will carry out the updates as planned. They are proposing to appoint a dedicated custodian to manage all the trunk road data.

Intervention 4; Welsh Government encourages all undertakers working in Wales and highway authorities to perform monthly downloads from the national hub from June 2016.

	Effective	Not effective	Don't know
Highway Authority & HA Representative organisations	11		
Statutory Undertaker & SU Representative organisations	8		
Construction & Street Works industry partners	8	1	
Individual	3	1	

Summary of comments

This intervention was fully supported by the utility company respondents and is already being carried out by some utility companies.

This is prescribed by Section 60 of NRSWA, but some respondents did not feel utility companies perform this requirement. It is recommended Welsh Government works in collaboration with the NSG Concessionaire to ensure this requirement is met.

Respondents felt that this will allow all parties to plan effectively.

Respondents were concerned at the timescales and also one respondent felt that the intervention did not go far enough and greater powers should be sort to achieve this.

Welsh Government Response

Welsh Government agrees with the comments made and is advised that many of the utility companies are performing these tasks already. Welsh Government will collaborate with the NSG Concessionaire to improve compliance.

Intervention 5; *Welsh Government works with stakeholders to establish whether there is a robust business case for the introduction of permit schemes in Wales by April 2016.*

*	Effective	Not effective	Don't know
Highway Authority & HA Representative organisations	5	2	5
Statutory Undertaker & SU Representative organisations	1	3	4
Construction & Street Works industry partners	8		1
Individual	2	2	

Summary of comments

There was a mixed response to this measure. Respondents advised that evidence from England shows that well designed schemes directed at improving the quality of information provided and reducing network occupancy at key points and at key times has helped improve journey time reliability and the quality of information sent to authorities. Any scheme should consider the use of zero charge permits where the driver is improving data quality rather than reducing occupancy.

Respondents agreed that permit schemes should be cost neutral and the business cases for English schemes should be reviewed to determine if the objectives have been met.

One local authority claimed that effective network management can not be sustained in the current financial climate.

Respondents advised that for permitting to work all works must be on the street works register and all existing powers should be utilised.

Respondents stated economic benefits would be delivered from authority permit schemes and the delivery of such would allow achievement of goals such as gazeteer updates, data quality, communications, collaboration, etc. with the cost burden being shared by the community and not funded solely by the authority.

Respondents advised a permitting approach would be beneficial as S74 charges are not effective enough deterrents to encourage utilities to ensure works carried out in a timely fashion. These issues cause disruption on traffic sensitive routes.

There were a lot of concerns raised about this measure.

Some respondents advised that effective co-ordination of road and street works to minimise disruption and drive up standards can be delivered at much less cost using the existing noticing regime, supplemented by voluntary measures, such as the Bristol Code of Conduct. They stated that permits should only be considered after;

1. Review implementation of existing legislation and compliance (all works promoters)
2. Ensure existing legislation is fully utilised
3. Review compliance with (2)
4. Establish reasons for non-compliance
5. Evidence that existing powers are not effective
6. Consider business case for targeted Permit Scheme, supported by relevant demographical data for Wales

Respondents advised that there is a need to better understand the criteria that will be used to establish the justification for the implementation of a permit scheme, over and above existing legislative requirements. They suggested Wales should review the Bristol Voluntary Code of Conduct to ensure all workable alternatives are covered. In addition they advised that it is necessary to consult further to see if permit schemes have made a difference.

Respondents feared that additional cost of permits and associated conditions may have an impact on the commercial viability of utilities investing in new assets.

Respondents doubted there is a proven benefit to permit schemes.

One respondent commented that permits would be most suited to the strategic road network. However the motorways and trunk road dual carriageways were already designated as 'protected streets' which placed sufficient restrictions and it is therefore doubtful if permits would provide any additional benefit. Permits may therefore be more appropriate for the single carriageway network.

Utility companies stated they have experienced problems with local authorities using differing variations of permit schemes.

Respondents stated it is not yet proven that permitting schemes will reduce traffic congestion.

Some respondents stated current noticing regimes work effectively and proactive co-ordination can effectively be achieved with noticing and use of the current powers.

Respondents advised that permits cause additional administration burdens and excessive costs. Permit schemes are driven by costs rather than the quality and operation.

One respondent suggested Wales should adopt the Scottish system with a shared register with area HAUC meetings to discuss performance, challenges, etc.

Respondents requested that guidance is produced in view of the difficulties and costs this may cause a local authority carrying out its own works.

Respondents raised the potential of local authority reorganisation following the Williams Commission and proposed that the introduction of permit schemes should be delayed until the details of the Williams Commission report are known.

Some respondents felt the timescales are challenging.

Welsh Government Response

The limited response from local authorities does not give the Welsh Government the remit to promote permit schemes for Wales. Welsh Government will therefore maintain its current position of considering to any local authority application, should they wish to apply to Welsh Ministers.

Welsh Government maintained the requirement for the Welsh Ministers to approve any application so that lesson could be learnt from England and developments in permit schemes assessed for their relevance to Wales.

Welsh Government accepts the comments and reiterates that any application for a permit scheme will have to follow the WelTAG process which requires the analysis of all options by the 5 case business model. Within the strategic case stage of WelTAG all options raised by the utility companies will need to be evaluated prior to any decision being made to carry the options through to an outline business case stage.

Welsh Government accepts the timescales are too tight and the consideration of the business case shall be extended

Intervention 6; *Welsh Government develops Welsh guidance on permit schemes in Wales by April 2017, if it is established that this is the best approach for improving the planning, co-ordination and implementation of road and street works.*

	Effective	Not effective	Don't know
Highway Authority & HA Representative organisations	9		2
Statutory Undertaker & SU Representative organisations	2	3	3
Construction & Street Works industry partners	8		1
Individual	2		2

Summary of comments

Whilst there was a mixed response to the measure regarding the introduction of permits there was generally good support for this measure, if permit scheme are to be introduced. Respondents advised guidance should be informed from lesson learnt from other authorities to reduce the cost burden.

One respondent hoped work currently being undertaken by a Welsh Local Authority will assist in developing guidance.

Respondents stated that the business case must be proven and statutory undertakers involved.

Respondents acknowledged that an all Wales permit code of practice is beneficial as utilities have experienced problems with local authorities using differing variations of permit schemes. Any such guidance must be suitable and appropriate.

Respondents stated guidance is needed for local authorities and the trunk road agents.

Utilities stated they have experience from England which will assist in developing appropriate guidance and supporting an element of consistency amongst proposed and existing permit schemes. They requested that all utilities working in Wales should actively contribute to any guidance.

Respondents raised concerns about this measure stating that it is believed that a permit scheme is not necessarily the best option for Wales.

Respondents stated that the existing noticing regime and its provisions already allows an authority to dictate when and where works take place,

Respondents made reference to Bristol Code of Conduct and Staffordshire 'Heineken' project which encourage co-ordination, including co-location of local authority and utility company staff to jointly plan works.

Some respondents suggested permit schemes should be limited to trunk roads only.

Welsh Government Response

Welsh Government did not publish a Code of Practice when the Regulations for Permits were introduced in 2009. A Code of Practice needs to be drafted in case a local authority reaches the position of being able to implement a permit scheme. This process will run in parallel with the development and assessment of a business case by a local authority. Welsh Government will not publish a code of Practice until such time as a local authority is in a position to implement a permit scheme.

Welsh Government recognises the importance of having experience from English schemes and will set up a working group to develop a draft Code of Practice. Representatives from the Utility industry with experience of permit schemes will be asked to join the working group.

Welsh Government aims to develop a template for Wales so any local authority operating a permit scheme in Wales will follow a common scheme template.

Welsh Government currently operates a Road Space booking system and will review the need for a permit scheme on the trunk road network.

Intervention 7; *Welsh Government works with WHAUC to develop a voluntary code of practice to improve collaborative working on major transport projects with the aim of all stakeholders signing up to it by September 2016.*

	Effective	Not effective	Don't know
Highway Authority & HA Representative organisations	6	2	3
Statutory Undertaker & SU Representative organisations	7		1
Construction & Street Works industry partners	8	1	
Individual	2	1	1

Summary of comments

There were mixed responses to this intervention. Whilst respondents supported this initiative it was recognised that any initiative will require the commitment and leadership from works promoters.

Respondents noted that pre-planning requires particular attention and early engagement at the design stage to achieve accurate cost estimates and programme.

Respondents agreed that a voluntary code should help avoid escalating costs and disruption and improvements to diversionary works.

It was suggested that a voluntary code should be devolved to all works similar to the Bristol Code of Conduct.

NJUG advised that there are existing initiatives; NJUG Vision for Street Works, HAUC(UK) Code of Conduct and NJUG Principles of Good Collaboration which promotes case studies which demonstrate good practice.

Despite some concerns raised by respondents, utilities advised that they are supportive and will ensure their respective sector specifics are understood.

Amongst the concerns raised respondents advised that long term planning is not always possible due to some planning requirements not being flexible.

Some respondents felt that a voluntary agreement is not strong enough and there may be problems obtaining full sign up. Previous attempts in 1998 and 2002/2003 failed due to a lack of support from the telecom utilities. The disagreement centred on the principle aims of the document rather than the content. It is recommended that a review of the Code of Practice for Diversionary Works together with a framework of supporting SI Regulations provides the best opportunity for collaborative working and settle the ongoing issues on financial arrangements and payments.

Respondents felt a major challenge is the disparate and poorly synchronised sources of funding. They suggested that if Welsh Government were to agree to 5 year funding plans there would be greater opportunity for collaboration. They advised that currently Welsh Government bidding and spending deadlines are diametrically opposed to effective long term planning and Welsh Government should provide a framework for budget provision that enables effective long term planning. In order to resolve this respondents suggested the Welsh Government should ring fence funding for network management duty planning.

Welsh Government Response

Welsh Government will set up a working group within Welsh HAUC to develop a code of practice. The existing work already done by NJUG will be referenced and incorporated where appropriate.

Welsh Government will proceed on the basis of a voluntary agreement, but recognises the comment that this type of agreement may not be strong enough and two previous attempts failed. However Welsh Government wants to investigate this issue to understand exactly why this previously failed and identify the reason to determine whether further action is appropriate.

Intervention 8; Welsh Government works with WHAUC to improve the quality of road and street works information available to the public and business by 2017:

	Effective	Not effective	Don't know
Highway Authority & HA Representative organisations	10	1	
Statutory Undertaker & SU Representative organisations	8		
Construction & Street Works industry partners	9		
Individual	2	1	1

Summary of comments

There was good support for this measure; however several respondents made the point that the quality of information is dependant upon all works being noticed and entered onto the street works register. It was suggested the Welsh Government and local authorities should make their capital investment plans, particularly road surfacing, available to all works promoters as early as possible and at least 12 months before commencement.

Respondents advised that a consistent and measured approach to all data related themes is essential and with the increased use of social media the information must be managed and made available through agreed protocols.

Respondents advised that any initiatives must be driven from the ground up and the Elgin model assists in this.

The utility company respondents advised that many of them are already doing this, via communication apps and websites and there are good case studies from the NJUG Communication Awards.

NJUG advised that they are producing a Principles of Good Communication document which assists in achieving this intervention.

Several respondents were concerned at resourcing and suggested further investment is required from Welsh Government to enable local authorities to progress this.

One respondent commented that the introduction of permit schemes will enable improvements to information.

Welsh Government Response

Welsh Government has provided funding to enable local authorities to have the basic version of Elgin. This has enabled information to be gathered on a central system, but Elgin has its limitations as it only shows current works

Welsh Government will look at case studies and the work that NJUG has already done.

Improving the Standard of Skills & Training in the Sector

Intervention 9; *We carry out a consultation exercise during 2016 to establish whether the existing training regime is effective in ensuring standards are maintained or whether the introduction of a formal reassessment process will drive up standards.*

*	Effective	Not effective	Don't know
Highway Authority & HA Representative organisations	9	1	1
Statutory Undertaker & SU Representative organisations	8		
Construction & Street Works industry partners	7	1	2
Individual	2	1	1

Summary of comments

Respondents were in support of this measure and stated there are advantages to being aligned with England, especially in relation to cross border working. They advised that currently there are three systems; Scotland, England and Wales and a change to alignment with England would be welcomed.

Respondents stated that any change must drive up standards for all personnel working on the road network.

Several respondents raised concerns about this measure with regard to the financial implications which must be recognised and they advised that it will be necessary to manage the cultural change and agree a reasonable amnesty period to enable the changes to take place.

Welsh Government Response

Welsh Government agrees that there are merits in aligning training and accreditation with England due to the proximity of England and the cross border operation of many of the utility companies. Welsh Government will carry out a consultation under the new Assembly administration covering the EU compliance issue, whether to introduce re-assessment into Wales and alignment with England for the new Street Works qualification units and card.

Promoting a Culture of Continual Improvement

Intervention 10; *Welsh Government develops a measure of availability of the trunk road network by April 2016 and encourages all other street authorities in Wales to do the same:*

	Effective	Not effective	Don't know
Highway Authority	7	2	2
Statutory Undertaker	3		5
Constr. & Street works industry	8	1	
Individual	2	2	

Summary of comments

Respondents gave strong support for understanding the network availability and this is seen as assessing the effectiveness of the network management functions. One respondent suggested the measure of network availability should be extended to include a measure of the resilience of the network, e.g. flooding incidents which can determine the location and design of infrastructure improvements.

One respondent advised that the measures could give an indication of delays avoided by carrying out interventions by monitoring before and after traffic flows should be considered. This could also give an indication of carbon emissions.

In addition several respondents advised that the number of days saved through collaborative working and better co-ordination should be measured and would demonstrate how the voluntary code on collaboration is delivering outcomes. The measure of network availability should be extended to local roads as the greater proportion of road and street works occur on these roads.

Several respondents raised concerns about the practicalities and effectiveness of measuring network availability for local roads and the actual value of the data gathered was also questioned. It was recommended that guidance should be produced.

One respondent felt that the intervention did not go far enough and greater powers should be sort to achieve this.

Welsh Government Response

Welsh Government agrees with the comments made and will work with the Trunk Road Area Managers to review the data collected and assess its relevance and look at mechanisms for determining network resilience.

Intervention 11; *Welsh Government works with WHAUC to develop a “balanced score card” approach to measuring organisational performance in Wales with the aim of all stakeholders signing up to it by April 2017.*

	Effective	Not effective	Don't know
Highway Authority	11		
Statutory Undertaker	3		5
Constr. & Street works industry	9		
Individual	2	1	1

Summary of comments

There was good support for this intervention and respondents advised the scorecard should be simple, relevant and drive the right behaviours to meet the stated objectives.

Respondents recognised that it will give the governance that the Local Authorities are meeting their network management duty and evaluate effectiveness.

Some respondents suggested Wales should investigate the role of a Road Works Commissioner in relation to performance monitoring.

Several respondents raised concerns about this measure, stating that performance is already recorded on the England and Wales scorecard and funding will be required if it is intended to depart from the current system.

One respondent advised that Scotland is to join the England and Wales scorecard making it a national performance indicator tool and therefore Wales should not develop a separate system.

Welsh Government Response

Welsh Government does not see the value of developing a separate score card for Wales at this time and it work with Geoplace to ensure that Welsh data can be effectively extracted from the national score card.

Welsh Government considers information contained on the score card to be essential in determining the level of compliance in Wales and will promote this in Wales to ensure local authority participation.

The issue of a Road Works Commissioner has been investigated and rejected at this time on the basis that there is no evidence that such a move would significantly improve the current arrangements. Major changes to existing legislation would be required and the cost effectiveness of such a role has not been proven.

In addition to the comments attached to the 11 interventions, respondents also commented on other aspects of street works and traffic management.

Additional comments

Comment; NJUG has worked with the Local Government Association to develop and implement the LGA / NJUG “What Good Looks Like”, which sets out good practice principles ensuring the effective and efficient delivery of essential good practice.

NJUG’s Vision for Street Works outlines seven pillars that NJUG and its members promote.

Welsh Government Response; Welsh Government is interested in such projects and will look to incorporate these principles where appropriate.

Comment; Several Utilities expressed concern about the impact of the Williams Commission, which will significantly change the Authority landscape in Wales. It would seem reasonable to complete this significant change before considering the potential introduction of permit schemes in Wales.

Welsh Government Response; Welsh Government will continue to progress the interventions within the National Approach for Road and Street Works in Wales, but will not finalise a particular measure until the outcome of the Williams Commission is known if that measure will be directly affected.

Comment; Not all issues are created by works on the network but accidents and breakdowns can easily cause massive tailbacks. The linear North South nature of the SE Wales network with few East West connections rapidly goes from movement to stagnation. Most routes would appear close or above saturation at traffic sensitive times. Accidents on the motorway around Newport can cause rippling out ward traffic problems and traffic jams of 30miles or so. Public events in Cardiff such as concerts or rugby matches can result in more 30 mile long jams.

Welsh Government Response; Welsh Government is continually monitoring the traffic via the Traffic management Centres and is developing initiatives to deal with incidents on the network. Welsh Government acknowledges this comment and will include it in its on going review.

Comment; Whilst traffic officers are employed on the Trunk road network is there any possibility of them carrying out intervention on the A road network?

Welsh Government Response; Welsh Government will review its incident management plans to look at the interfaces with the local authority network, but traffic offices can only operate on the network for which the Welsh Government is the traffic authority.

Comment; Would a spy in the sky, or a system such as Elgin or Google, pinpoint log jams and allow officers to be despatched? (A recent bus breakdown in one local authority area caused traffic tailbacks for about 5 hours and for miles around)

Welsh Government Response; the comment is noted. Currently the extensive system of CCTV cameras linked to the Traffic Management Control Centres combined with information gathered by social media enables Traffic Officers to be dispatched to incidents on the network.

Comment; Other jams on the network arise from Welsh Government funded works .These need co-ordination at a strategic level not just at local level. Often the funding profiles

require works in a vicinity to be undertaken at similar times which suggest the limitations are not just highway ones but accountancy created ones as well.

Welsh Government Response; Welsh Government is looking at ways to improve its co-ordination both within its team structure and within the scheme management software.

Comment; These improvements would appear to be against a background of still increasing vehicle numbers which creates its own rationale for limiting the time that roads are have ongoing maintenance.

Welsh Government Response; Welsh Government acknowledges this comment and will reference other policy areas that have an impact on vehicular use.

Comment; We anticipate that the trunk road network is usually capable of taking displaced local authority traffic but clearly the local authority networks are not capable of taking displaced trunk road traffic. Or after .These problems exacerbated during peak travel and windows before and after when severe incidents occur. Is there any intention to open up Motorway hard shoulders to traffic as Highways England has done?

Welsh Government Response; Welsh Government is looking at management of the M4 and has projects underway using variable speed limits. However, currently we are not proposing to extend this to Smart motorway status with hard shoulder running due to the limitations of the existing network as unfortunately, the areas that could potentially benefit from additional lanes are typically areas with discontinuous (M4 Newport), narrow (A470) or non-existent (A55) hard shoulders.

Comment; Could any matrix boards be placed outside of the trunk road network to flag overloaded local roads and possible alternate routes?

Welsh Government Response; The Welsh Government already work alongside neighbouring authorities who possess Variable Message Signs and share any information that can be used to provide advance warning to motorists approaching the trunk roads. Additionally, media broadcasters are based within our Traffic Management Centre (Cardiff) that enable swift radio bulletins to be issued to road users, regardless of current location.

Comment; Is there any smartphone technology available to assist with information but that does not cause a hazard to drivers

Welsh Government Response; The Welsh Government has developed an App (Traffic Wales) for both android and Apple devices. However, this is intended for pre-trip or passenger use. The issue of smartphone use whilst driving is outside our area of responsibility.

Comment; One authority is genuinely concerned about the quality and durability of utility company trench reinstatements on its network. It is considered that we cannot lose sight of this issue in terms of ensuring that we have a good indication of the scale of the problem and recommends that the investigation of long term damage as a result of utility company works is undertaken.

Welsh Government Response; Welsh Government notes this comment and will assess the work done within Scotland on determining long term damage.

Comment; The Welsh Government could look at the development of a works planning portal, for use by small non 'ETON subscribing' contractors, or for use within contracts that traditionally fall outside traditional street works. It is recommended Welsh Government working with Geoplace on this subject, in order to determine if this could be included in a data maintenance portal that it is believed that this organisation may be developing for gazetteer and GIS data maintenance.

Welsh Government Response; Welsh Government notes this comment.

Comment; Awareness of www.traffic-wales.com needs to be raised so road users can see who is responsible for carrying out works and be able to make contact with them if the works overrun for any reason.

Welsh Government Response Welsh Government notes this comment and this will be considered in future developments of the website. However as Welsh Government are responsible for the information initial contact is via the control room to ensure consistency of information supplied.

Comment; It is hoped that the final National Approach for Road and Street Works in Wales document will not be released with the lane with a road closure sign on the front. It is considered that this gives the impression that Wales' networks are closed to traffic', rather than efficient and free flowing; which is clearly what this Approach is trying to achieve.

Welsh Government Response; Welsh Government agrees and will review the document.

Comment; Concern raised by one individual that roads are having to be resurfaced by local authorities after utility company activity and that works should be guaranteed for 5 years, more on motorways.

Welsh Government Response; Welsh Government is awaiting advice from Welsh HAUC regarding updating the Specification for Reinstatement of Openings in the Highway and will be consulting on a new version for Wales.

Comment; Concern raised by one individual regarding the maintenance of the M4, junction 45 to 49 and the poor state of the carriageway surface.

Welsh Government Response; The trunk road agents carry out regular inspections of the carriageway surface in compliance with their maintenance contract. The results of the inspections are fed into the Welsh Government asset management system, which prioritises futures carriageway resurfacing programme.