

Welsh Government

**M4 Corridor Enhancement
Measures (CEM)**

**Participation Report Executive
Summary**

Issue | 5 August 2013

This report takes into account the particular instructions and requirements of our client.

It is not intended for and should not be relied upon by any third party and no responsibility is undertaken to any third party.

Job number 117300-73

Ove Arup & Partners Ltd
4 Pierhead Street
Capital Waterside
Cardiff CF10 4QP
United Kingdom
www.arup.com

ARUP

Executive Summary

This Participation Report summarises the M4 Corridor Enhancement Measures (CEM) Programme and results of its engagement and consultation process. This Participation Report fits within a wider suite of WelTAG¹ reports, prepared as part of the M4 CEM Programme. The aim of these reports was to help the appropriate Welsh Government Minister to make an informed, evidenced-based decision on whether to progress any of the M4 CEM options.

The M4 CEM Programme was based upon the ability to deliver any identified measures in phases to improve affordability.

As a result of on-going discussions with the UK Government there has been a significant change in the assessment of the affordability of a major enhancement of the M4. On 26 June 2013, Edwina Hart AM CStJ MBE, Minister for Economy, Science and Transport, published the following written statement:

“Addressing the capacity and resilience issues on the M4 around Newport is the top transport challenge that we face in ensuring that Wales has an effective economic infrastructure which improves our competitiveness and access to jobs and services...As a result of ongoing discussions with the UK Government there has been a significant change in the assessment of the affordability of a major enhancement of the M4. Building on the extensive development and consultation work undertaken on M4 Corridor Enhancement Measures (CEM), we will be consulting formally over the summer with Natural Resources Wales in order to go out to public consultation this September with a finalised draft Plan and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Report. If implemented, the draft plan would lead to a motorway being built south of Newport.”

The Welsh Government has also commissioned a separate study and report on proposals to develop a metro system for South East Wales. The report will focus on how a metro system could support economic growth and regeneration at key locations across South East Wales. As such, public transport measures will not form part of the draft Plan.

The consultation responses reported within this M4 CEM Participation Report, in addition to the wider engagement and consultation that helped shape the development of the M4 CEM Programme, has helped inform the development of an M4 Corridor around Newport draft Plan and therefore remain of relevance moving forward.

The M4 Corridor around Newport consultation documents will include a finalised draft Plan and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Report and other associated assessments.

¹ Welsh Transport Planning and Appraisal Guidance

Introduction

The M4 CEM Programme was set up to explore and resolve issues of capacity, safety and resilience along the M4 corridor around Newport, in south-east Wales.

Many people using the M4 Corridor and the surrounding highway network around Newport are affected by the congestion and potential hazards that result from the large number of vehicles using the M4 between Magor and Castleton. At peak times the volume of traffic is greater than the road was designed to accommodate. Travellers and local residents are also affected by the disruption caused by unexpected events and incidents. It can take a long period of time following an incident before traffic flows normally again; this suggests that the resilience of the M4 and surrounding highway network needs to be improved.

The aims of the M4 CEM Programme were subject to public and stakeholder engagement and were to:

1. Make it easier and safer for people to access their homes, workplaces and services by walking, cycling, public transport or road.
2. Deliver a more efficient and sustainable transport network supporting and encouraging long-term prosperity in the region, across Wales, and enabling access to international markets.
3. To produce positive effects overall on people and the environment, making a positive contribution to the overarching Welsh Government goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to making Wales more resilient to the effects of climate change.

Further information about what was the M4 CEM Programme can be found at www.m4cem.com, which will remain accessible but will no longer be updated. A link to the new website for the draft Plan will be provided in due course.

Engagement and consultation

Recognising the potential level of public interest in transport issues within the M4 corridor around Newport, and the numbers of people potentially affected by any new measures presented as part of the M4 CEM Programme, the Welsh Government undertook wide-ranging and focussed engagement with stakeholders and local people from September 2010. The engagement work was appropriately aligned, in terms of timing and decision making, to the technical assessment process of the M4 CEM Programme, which helped to shape the M4 CEM Consultation Document. During the engagement process, the Welsh Government and its project team conducted dialogue and deliberative sessions both with internal and external specialists and expert stakeholders, as well as with communities and other organisations who were likely to be interested in and affected by any transport related interventions.

The M4 CEM Consultation, which asked participants to comment on a range of options that could contribute towards a strategy to reduce traffic congestion on the M4 around Newport, ran between March and July 2012.

All available documents published as part of the engagement and consultation process associated with the M4 CEM Programme can be found at www.m4cem.com.

Activities undertaken

The M4 CEM Programme involved public and stakeholder participation in three key phases:

1. To help identify all relevant travel-related problems, aims and goals in the M4 Corridor around Newport and to establish if there was a need for a transport intervention;
2. To explore a wide range of possible approaches to achieving the goals and aims of the Programme; and
3. To ensure that Welsh Government benefit from understanding public views, as well as those of key stakeholders, to allow them to identify measures that represented a better economic, social, environmental and technical solution to the problems affecting travel on the M4 corridor between Magor and Castleton.

A comprehensive promotion and publicity campaign was undertaken to make people across South Wales aware of the opportunity to engage and comment on the M4 CEM Consultation. The then Minister for Local Government and Communities advised all AMs and MPs in the South Wales area of the public consultation. All Local Authorities and Clerks of Community Councils in the Newport were also notified. The Welsh Government arranged for adverts to be placed in Newport Matters, Capital Times and the Cardiff and South Wales Advertiser to try to reach as many of the public as possible. In addition, Public Notices about the Consultation were published in local papers including the South Wales Echo, South Wales Argus, Glamorgan Gazette, South Wales Evening Post and Western Mail. There were also adverts on Newport Buses, on the Big Screen in Cardiff, and at Motorway services along the M4 (Magor to Swansea). Newsletters were left in a number of public buildings around Newport. Following feedback from some of the attendees of the original drop-in exhibitions about the failure of some of the original publicity attempts to raise awareness, the Welsh Government arranged for three additional drop-in public exhibitions and the Welsh Government also extended the Consultation period by a month. To advertise these exhibitions and the extended period for responses, the Welsh Government arranged for some 80,000 leaflets to be distributed in the Newport area. To further highlight the public consultation and the additional exhibitions, a radio advertising campaign was held on Real Radio and Gold Radio.

Summary of M4 CEM Consultation results

After processing, a total of 674 responses to the Consultation Document were received and analysed. Participants included members of the public as well as a range of organisations; some of which represented Welsh communities, economic, environmental and transport interests. 54 of the responses received overall were identical or largely identical responses from a campaign group².

The Welsh Government analysed all comments, equally. All participants are listed at the end of the Participation Report.

Whilst a total of 674 responses were made directly to the Consultation Document, more than 2,100 people attended an M4 CEM event and approximately 1,100 people attended external (non-M4 CEM specific) events, at which members of the project team were available to discuss the Programme. Some 11,247 visits were made to the dedicated website www.m4cem.com between March and December 2012, equating to an average of over 1,100 visits per month over this 10 month period.

Most participants provided online responses. Of the participants who responded, most were either daily or weekly users of the M4 around Newport; and used the motorway for leisure or commuting trips.

Problems

The problems, goals and aims of the M4 CEM Programme were the subject of dialogue during the early stages of the engagement process, with public and stakeholders. 17 problems were established; which encompassed themes of capacity, (network) resilience, safety and sustainable development. Respondents were asked to prioritise up to four problems out of the full list of 17. Although 130 of the 674 respondents did not select any of the problems, all of the problems were selected at least once, suggesting the majority of respondent agreed a problem exists.

Of the 130 who did not select any of the problems, 54 comprised a campaign group response, which argued that ‘a ‘do nothing’ option in combination with existing, planned and proposed improvements to traffic management and sustainable transport would achieve the Welsh Government’s aims’, whilst ‘a new dual carriageway [to the south of Newport] would cause an adverse impact on the unique wildlife and landscape of the Gwent levels and add to climate change’.

Of the other 76 participants who did not select a problem, the majority did not respond directly to the consultation questions at all. This group included Newport City Council, who in their response suggested that there is a need to do something and stated that ‘Option A (an additional high quality road to the south of Newport) offers the greatest benefits in terms of the transport efficiency and the economy’ and that ‘such benefits should assist in making Newport a more accessible location and a more attractive option for investment, with the least amount of disruption for existing routes’. Newport Unlimited, in their response, also suggested that there is a need to do something and stated that ‘longer-term plans for investment are clearly important, but must not replace the need to make the

² 54 responses followed a format that did not directly answer the Consultation questions, co-ordinated by campaign group Campaign against the Levels Motorway (CALM); in all but seven cases of these cases each response is identical. See <http://www.savethelevels.org.uk/>.

impact in the short term that businesses tell us they need'. The CBI simply stated that 'the number one infrastructure priority in Wales should be the construction of the M4 Relief Road' and that 'the future security of the Welsh economy requires a speedy solution to this problem.' This view was shared by the South Wales Chamber of Commerce who stated that 'there can be no other option but to bring the M4 relief road back in to the equation and proceed with that as a one of the key priorities of the Welsh Government'.

The following problems were the most selected:

- Problem 1: A greater volume of traffic uses the M4 around Newport than it was designed to accommodate, resulting in regular congestion at peak times over extended periods;
- Problem 5: The 2-lane Brynglas tunnels are a major capacity constraint;
- Problem 7: Difficulties maintaining adequate traffic flows on the M4 and alternative highway routes at times of temporary disruption; alternative routes are not able to cope with M4 traffic; and
- Problem 9: When there are problems on the M4, there is severe disruption and congestion on the local and regional highway network.

However, key stakeholders predominantly prioritised problems 1, 9, 15 and 17 (Problem 15: There is a lack of adequate sustainable integrated transport alternatives for existing road users; Problem 17: The existing transport network acts as a constraint to economic growth and adversely impacts the current economy). This demonstrated that whereas problems of capacity and resilience were prioritised the most by respondents; problems of sustainable development were prioritised to a much greater extent by key stakeholders³.

Goals

15 goals were established during the early stages of the engagement process with public and stakeholders. Each of the M4 CEM goals aimed to address one or more of the problems. Respondents were asked to prioritise up to four goals out of the full list of 15 and the following goals were selected the most times by the 463 respondents who responded to Question 2a (for information, a total of 468 respondents responded to Question 2b):

- Goal 1: Safer, easier and more reliable travel east-west in South Wales;
- Goal 4: Best possible use of the existing M4, local road network and other transport networks;
- Goal 5: More reliable journey times along the M4 Corridor; and
- Goal 7: Improved safety on the M4 Corridor between Magor and Castleton.

However, Goal 6 (increased level of choice for all people making journeys within the transport corridor by all modes between Magor and Castleton, commensurate with demand for alternatives), and Goal 15 (a cultural shift in travel behaviour towards more sustainable choices), were prioritised above others by key stakeholders.

³ Key stakeholders are considered to be organisations that have a strategic interest and/or detailed experience of addressing travel related issues in South Wales, and/or represent the environment, community or economy of South Wales. They are listed in Table 4.1.

Public Transport

A series of public transport measures were developed during the engagement process, supported by a Public Transport Overview report⁴. Respondents were asked to choose from, and comment on, a list of six public transport measures, identifying all those that would make the best contribution to relieving traffic on the M4 between Magor and Castleton.

453 respondents commented on one or more of the public transport measures. Of those 453 respondents; 60 suggested that the public transport measures would be helpful to some extent and a further 65 respondents commented that the public transport measures would help to address the problems to a limited extent, or expressed support for public transport measures with caveats. 106 of the respondents argued that none of the public transport measures would help to address transport related problems or meet their travel needs.

Of the possible public transport measures selected, the majority of respondents prioritised more park and ride facilities, additional rail services and better modal integration. Additional bus and/or coach services were the least selected options (and not selected at all by key stakeholders).

Highways Infrastructure Options

The options presented within the Consultation Document included:

- Highway Option A: additional high quality road to the south of Newport.
- Highway Option B: at grade junction improvements to the A48 Newport Southern Distributor Road (SDR).
- Highway Option C: grade separated junction improvements to the A48 SDR.
- Highway Option D: online widening on the M4 between Junctions 24 and 29, including an additional tunnel at Brynglas.

Respondents were asked to reflect and comment on how each of the four options addressed the problems and goals they prioritised. Questions 4a, b, c and d attracted 437, 424, 387 and 397 responses respectively.

Highway Infrastructure Option A attracted the most comments as a preferred or supported Option (128), whilst a further 32 respondents provided qualified support for the option. This option was supported by most key stakeholders and members of the public, many cited its possible benefits to transport and the economy. 44 respondents in their comments to question 4a directly stated that they challenged or opposed Option A. Concerns expressed about Option A predominantly included the potential cost of delivery and the potential adverse environmental effects of its construction on the Gwent Levels.

⁴ Public Transport Overview, available to download at <http://www.m4cem.com/reports%20and%20newsletters.html>

Statements about Highway Infrastructure Option B indicated that its relatively inexpensive cost is attractive, but there were concerns over its potential adverse impact on local traffic flows. Many compared Option B unfavourably to Option C as a measure that could utilise the SDR to address the problems and goals of the M4 CEM Programme. Whilst some supported a variation or element of Option B, many also suggested that it could be delivered alongside another Highway Infrastructure Option in order to provide increased resilience on the road network. Option B attracted many comments of opposition and/or challenge (89).

71 respondents offered qualified support or support with a caveat to Highway Infrastructure Option C, they favoured its potential to improve resilience but there were concerns about it not increasing road capacity on the highway network. Many considered Option C to be preferable to Option B, although 50 respondents challenged it as a solution or clearly stated that they did not believe Option C would address the problems or achieve the goals they chose.

Highway Infrastructure Option D was favoured by 42 respondents, supporting it largely on the basis of it being an online solution (making best use of existing infrastructure) and it was thought to effectively address the perceived bottleneck at Brynglas. A significant number of comments expressed strong concerns about its potential impact on property and land take. It attracted the most comments of opposition and/or challenge (92).

Common measures

Common measures comprised a mix of other highway infrastructure, demand management, alternative modes and smarter sustainable choices. They were selected from a long list of more than 100 possible interventions considered effective in a strategic package of public transport and highway infrastructure measures, to address travel related problems on the M4 Corridor, Magor to Castleton⁵. Respondents were not asked directly to comment on these in the Consultation exercise but some provided comments as part of their answers to one or more of the Consultation questions.

Many respondents demonstrated an appreciation of the important role that the common measures would play in the package to be chosen but were not considered to be measures that would contribute substantially, particularly in isolation, to resolving transport related problems.

Some responses also proposed a range of alternative strategies to the public transport and highway infrastructure options. Many of these suggestions echoed elements of the common measures presented in the Consultation Document, though very few responses referred to the common measures explicitly. Examples include better information systems; at-grade junction improvements; changes to junctions and feeder roads; and different policing or traffic management strategies.

⁵ Alternatives Considered that were not progressed through the M4 CEM Programme are available to view in the Alternatives Considered Workbook at www.m4cem.com.

Additional comments

444 responses were analysed as additional comments (Question 5 in the consultation response form). Of these 444 responses, 381 directly responded to Question 5 of the response form as part of a participant's answer. However, 63 participants provided comments without using the response form provided, using either their own response format or submitting a comment by email. These responses were analysed as additional comments. Of the 63 responses that provided representations that did not respond to the Consultation questions specifically, 54 comprise a campaign group response.

General comments made on the highways infrastructure options included over 100 concerns over the environmental impact of the options, in particular the detrimental impact that there could be on wildlife and landscape. More than half of these 100 responses, which included the 54 campaign groups responses and some key stakeholder responses, challenged Highway Option A; primarily on its potential adverse environmental impact on biodiversity.

90 respondents made comments about the data presented in the Consultation Document. Criticisms related to the age of the data used and more than 60 responses, including those 54 from the campaign group who challenged the highway infrastructure options, felt that incorrect assumptions about continuing traffic growth were used.

More than 50 responses expressed concerns that the options would negatively impact on recreational activities, tourism and property prices.

More than 30 respondents referred to the importance of modal shift and a number of responses highlighted the importance of public transport in addressing local transport problems.

More than 5 respondents expressed their disappointment that the M4 relief road proposal was announced as being unaffordable in 2009. Comments included that none of the options would be as effective as the proposed M4 relief road and expressed a desire for it to be reinstated.

Current Situation

Although the M4 CEM Programme is not being progressed further, its website www.m4cem.com will remain accessible but will no longer be updated. A new website will be set up for the forthcoming public consultation on the M4 Corridor around Newport draft Plan. When operational, it will contain a link to the M4 CEM website.

All those who attended an M4 CEM stakeholder or public event, or who have responded to a previous associated consultation, have been offered the opportunity to provide contact details for future developments. Those people and/or organisations will be notified by Arup in due course of the new website and the start date of the public consultation on the draft Plan and its associated assessments.

Whilst this Participation Report summarises the M4 CEM Programme engagement and consultation process, a Participation Report will also be produced to summarise the M4 Corridor around Newport draft Plan Consultation, which will commence from September 2013.