



Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1568  
Ein cyf/Our ref KSNWT/01991/25

Carolyn Thomas MS  
Chair - Petitions committee

17 December 2025

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for your letter of 05 December regarding Petition P-06-1568 - Return all the M4 to the 70mph speed limit.

Speed limits are placed on public roads to promote safety, improve journey times, contribute to improving air quality and ultimately saving lives.

We have reduced speed limits to 50mph to reduce nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) pollution and improve air quality. Detailed information is available at [50mph speed limits to reduce pollution | GOV.WALES](#)

Further data on how effective these measures have been at five key sites across Wales, including M4 Port Talbot and M4 Newport, can be found at [Annual data on NO2 concentrations for the motorway and trunk road network | GOV.WALES](#).

Following the decision not to proceed with the M4 Relief Road, the South East Wales Transport Commission (SEWTC) was established to consider congestion issues on the M4 and make recommendations to the Welsh Government. The Commission operated independently and examined a wide range of options. Its final recommendations, accepted by the Welsh Government, acknowledge that further measures are needed to address wider issues along the M4 corridor. More information is available at [M4 corridor around Newport | GOV.WALES](#).

The 50mph speed limit between junctions 24 and 28 was introduced following SEWTC's recommendations to reduce congestion, including the air pollution section between junctions 25 and 26. The replacement of the variable speed limit with a fixed 50mph limit was one of several measures implemented after the Commission's interim findings. Analysis showed that variable speeds and late lane changes often caused breakdowns in traffic flow, particularly near the Brynglas Tunnels. While the variable limit helped during off-peak periods, it had limited impact during peak times, and a fixed limit was recommended as more effective.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

It is acknowledged further measures are needed to tackle the wider issues along the M4 corridor around Newport and this is reflected in the Commission's [Final Recommendations](#) report, accepted by the Welsh Government. You can follow the progress of delivering these measures online at [The Burns Delivery Unit | TfW](#).

Significant progress has been made in moving forward delivery of Lord Burns' recommendations, not least the commitment by the UK Government in their latest Comprehensive Spending Review to fund capacity improvements to the South Wales Mainline and construction of new stations on it in South East Wales.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ken Skates', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

**Ken Skates AS/MS**

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Drafnidiaeth a Gogledd Cymru  
Cabinet Secretary for Transport and North Wales