

# Petition: Widen the A470 Pontypridd to Coryton to 3 lanes

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 13 Rhagfyr 2016  
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## Research Briefing:

Petition number: P-05-725

Petition title: Widen the A470 from Pontypridd to Coryton to 3 Lanes

Text of petition: We call for the Welsh Assembly to invest into one of the major artery roads into the capital by widening the existing dual carriageway into a 3 three lane road from Pontypridd to Coryton interchange.

The existing road suffers with high levels of congestion on weekday mornings and evenings which is causing misery for motorists travelling to/from the Valleys to the city. It is believed this is a key limiting factor effecting the prosperity of the people and businesses of Cardiff, as well as the Rhondda, Caerphilly, Merthyr and Rhymney Valleys who rely on good road links with the M4 and the city.

From Pontypridd southbound the road is particularly congested due to several factors which include the build-up of traffic queueing to join on to the M4 at Coryton and the large number of cars joining existing traffic from Merthyr and Aberdare at Pontypridd, Upper Boat, Nantgarw and Tongwynlais, all bringing traffic from the Rhondda and Caerphilly Valleys meaning the road struggles to cope.

From Coryton Northbound the road is slightly better, however the high volume of joining traffic from the M4 causes confusion and hesitation for road users at Coryton. The road then continues to be congested and slow until it reaches Pontypridd until lots of traffic have taken exits at various slip roads. When slip roads themselves are congested (such as at Nantgarw and Upper Boat) the flow of traffic is exceptionally slow.

While no data is available at present it can be hypothesised that the financial cost benefit ratio of this investment in the regions' infrastructure is positive and we hope at the very least the government consider the proposal seriously.

## Background

The Welsh Government is the highway authority for the Welsh trunk road and motorway network. It is responsible for maintenance and improvement of the network, including the A470 which the [Welsh Government](#) describes as “our main trunk road linking north and south Wales.”

While statutory responsibility rests with the Welsh Ministers (the Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure), two Welsh Trunk Road Agents are responsible for day to day operation, maintenance and minor improvement of the network:

- the [North and Mid Wales Trunk Road Agent](#); and
- the [South Wales Trunk Road Agent](#).

As part of their operational responsibilities, the Agents manage a team of [Traffic Officers](#) to manage incidents on the network to reduce the impact of congestion.

The Agents operate in partnership with local authorities. Their central planning function was moved into Welsh Government in April 2015, as announced by the then Minister for Economy, Science and Transport in a [statement in plenary](#) on the 11 November 2014, following the conclusion of a review into the management and operation of motorway and trunk roads in Wales. **Welsh Government directly plans, manages and delivers major trunk road improvement and new road schemes.**

The [National Transport Finance Plan 2015](#) (the NTFP) sets out how the Welsh Government proposes to deliver the outcomes identified in the [Wales Transport Strategy](#) between April 2015 to March 2020 (short term) and beyond (medium term). The Plan provides timescales for the financing and delivery of schemes to be undertaken by the Welsh Government, identifies potential funding sources and lists projects which will seek funding under the European Regional Development Fund.

## Welsh Government action

The NTFP does not set out any plans for the delivery of an A470 widening scheme between Pontypridd and Coryton, either in the short or medium term. The NTFP delivery schedule does however identify bus priority corridor improvements along the A470 Pontypridd–Cardiff, A470 Sardis Gyratory and A470 Upper Boat Gyratory for delivery in 2015/16 in relation to Metro Phase 1 (scheme reference CCRM5, see NTFP page 34).

These improvements, along with other relevant NTFP and Local Authority delivered schemes, have been highlighted in the letter to the Chair from the Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure regarding this petition. The letter says that:

We have undertaken a number of improvements to help relieve congestion on the A470 between Pontypridd and Cardiff and in the Radyr and Coryton area. These include our most recent schemes at junction 32 of the M4 and improvements to the traffic signals at Coryton gyratory.

Works at the interchange at Upper Boat have recently been completed by Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council and include further traffic signals on the Upper Boat roundabout, lane segregation, widening works, controlled pedestrian crossings, new road markings and enhanced signing. These works aim to increase the flow of traffic in the area and reduce queue lengths from the roundabout onto the A470.

The [M4 Junction 32 Coryton Interchange project](#) work was completed in August 2014 and officially opened in September 2015. The Welsh Government says that the scheme has improved capacity with a review of traffic since scheme completion concluding that:

overall the scheme has been a success, in line with the original model results. The review has shown that the scheme has helped to improve the capacity of the junction, which experiences congestion and lengthy queuing at peak periods. The dedicated lane has eased queuing and delays on the M4 westbound off slip, and so helped save on journey times and increased journey time reliability. The scheme has also improved the local road network by providing improved access at the junctions onto the roundabout.

The Welsh Government invested a total of £9.3m in the Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council Metro linked [Sardis Road Gyratory and Upper Boat Gyratory](#) scheme.

The letter also says that public transport provision and park and ride facilities have been improved along with the extension of the Traffic Officer Service (to include the Radyr and Taffs Well areas) and the progression of South Wales Metro proposals. Overbridges, retaining walls and the local environment and typography are listed as '**severe physical constraints**' which would make a widening scheme in this area '**particularly complex, environmentally intrusive and costly**'. The Cabinet Secretary says the Welsh Government is in the process of developing a programme to tackle congestion "at the most heavily congested locations on the trunk road network".

## National Assembly for Wales action

In response to a question in [plenary on 12 July 2016](#) following his statement on the Priorities for Government, the First Minister said:

the metro is hugely important. There is no way, for example, that a solution can be found to congestion on the A470 by widening the road. It's impossible, because of the way the road narrows towards Cardiff. So, it will be hugely important to see the metro established across the south of Wales, and, indeed, looking at the concept of Metro North, to make sure that that is taken forward as well, because we know that improving public transport is an important part of resolving the issues of traffic on the road.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.