



CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE LEVELS MOTORWAY
Ymgyrch dros achub Gwastadeddau Gwent

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CALM WELCOMES FINAL BURNS REPORT

BUT CALLS FOR QUICKER ACTION TO IMPROVE TRANSPORT ALTERNATIVES TO THE M4

CALM today described the final Report of the SEWTC as “a well thought-out strategy to create sustainable transport and land use planning in SE Wales as we emerge into the post-Covid era”. However they called on Welsh Ministers to “speed up its implementation”.

Catherine Linstrum (CALM Co-Chair) said “The Commission has answered the challenge posed by the Climate and Biodiversity emergencies, as well as congestion levels on the M4. **The report is also good news for the unique wildlife and landscape of the Gwent Levels which would have been devastated by the bypass, and still faces far too many pressures from developers.** Anyone who still claims *There is No Alternative to an M4 By pass* should look objectively at the map on page 18 showing the network of public transport alternatives recommended by the Commission.”

Hugh Mackay (Cycling UK) added “ This is a practical report. **The Commission’s work shows we can eliminate most congestion on the M4 if we can reduce traffic flow by just 20%.** It then sets out how we will do this, by making several forms of alternative transport - bus, rail, and cycling - far more attractive and accessible. Transferring car journeys to public transport and active travel (or home working) will bring other major benefits for individuals and society, including better air quality, lower carbon emissions and healthier citizens.”

CALM agrees with the Commission that Newport will become a much more attractive and pleasant city with a shift from car-domination to one based on sustainable transport. Major investment in Public Transport and Active Travel infrastructure is a prerequisite for this transition. At the heart is the recommendation to create a commuter rail ‘backbone’ by upgrading and reorganising the South Wales Main Line between Severn Tunnel Junction, Newport and Cardiff. This will allow for a significant expansion in the number of commuter stations on the line and for trains to operate at up to 90mph, at service frequencies of 4 trains per hour, a dramatic improvement on the current timetable.

CALM welcomes other improvements recommended by the Commission to make public transport an attractive alternative to private cars. New or improved rail and bus stations (and bus stops) will form a vital element of the improved services, allowing easy access to a more integrated transport system. Over 90% of people in Cardiff and Newport would live within one mile of a rail station or rapid bus corridor. Zonal ticketing interchangeable between rail and buses is another key component.

Rob Hepworth (CALM Co-Chair) said “ **CALM urgently requests the Welsh Government to commit to implement the key recommendations in the report, and to provide sufficient resources so that work can start immediately.** Getting the rail backbone right is the key to everything else in the report. But it is disappointing that Burns feels it will take 10 years to complete. CALM feels that the First Minister should insist on a more ambitious timetable”.

CALM suggests that the implementation timetable should also incorporate “quick wins' ' such as improved rolling stock and frequencies, and perhaps some temporary station halts. While welcoming the report's view that new express buses can bridge the gap before the upgraded rail spine is operational, CALM argues that the Commission's bus improvements could also be accelerated. On top of that, swift improvements in air quality and carbon emissions in Newport could be gained by introducing a 100% electric bus fleet operating an improved timetable of services in the area to reduce commuting times as soon as social distancing ends.

Encouraging active travel is an important feature of the Report. CALM particularly welcomes the new cycle routes including two linking Newport and Cardiff, and other measures to improve the safety and attractiveness of cycling. We also support the recommendations to improve the safety and convenience of both cycle and pedestrian access to public transport hubs. **Again CALM feels that this is an area where some swift and relatively inexpensive, tangible improvements for both cyclists and pedestrians could and should be rapidly introduced during 2020-21.** We also welcome the talks already underway between Ministers and Newport City Council about implementing the active travel and bus proposals.

The report's conclusions on modernising land use planning are also welcome. **The mixed use developments advocated within close range of public transport will be a radical, 21st century change for the better,** and many would welcome the end of developments on the outskirts of Newport close to the motorway.

Overall CALM congratulates Lord Burns and his team for preparing such a progressive report to guide the greening of our transport in SE Wales for future generations !

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The Campaign Against the Levels Motorway is a longstanding alliance of local people and organisations to protect the Gwent Levels from the previously proposed Relief Road and find better solutions to travel needs in south-east Wales.