

P-05-1031 Inhibit the diversion of Heavy Goods Vehicles through residential areas

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 3 Tachwedd 2020
Petitions Committee | 3 November 2020

Reference: RS20/14079-3

Petition Number: P-05-1031

Petition title: Inhibit the diversion of Heavy Goods Vehicles through residential areas

Text of petition: We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to inhibit the diversion of Heavy Goods Vehicles through residential areas. These County Council adopted roads are being used as diversion routes for HGVs during Trunk Road closures and putting residents, their properties and the roads at significant risk.

There has been strong evidence of residents suffering serious sleep deprivation due to HGVs passing within feet of their properties. This causes noise and vibration of the walls and doors of their homes with every large HGV passing during overnight diversions due to Trunk Road repair work. Also, there are risks to the fabrications of the properties. Short and long term sleep deprivation has significant risk to every day activities along with added risk of unhealthy increase on emissions. All this can be avoided by using better planning and strategies of contraflow systems. These roads are not built to support such heavy traffic and County Councils are continually battling to repair their roads. Residential properties, both the older and newer, were



never built to withstand the level of HGVs on our roads today. Bypasses have been built to avoid residential areas and since coming into being, this calibre of traffic has increased substantially. It is no longer acceptable to consider diverting HGVs along densely populated public highways.

1. Background

The Welsh Government is the highway authority responsible for the trunk road and motorway network in Wales. Local authorities are the highway authorities responsible for local roads.

The Welsh Government has established two trunk road agents, the South Wales Trunk Road Agent (SWTRA) and the North and Mid Wales Trunk Road Agent (NMWTRA), to manage, maintain and improve the network. Major trunk road projects such as the A465 dualling programme are managed by the Welsh Government directly.

The petitioners argue that roadworks taking place on trunk roads can lead to traffic being diverted through residential areas which is disruptive and a safety concern, particularly as this often includes the diversion of Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs).

The petitioners suggest that, as opposed to closing roads and creating diversions, the Welsh Government should use contraflow systems. These involve traffic being temporarily directed onto the opposite side of the carriageway, moving in the opposite direction to its normal flow.

The concerns raised by the petitioner in relation to a particular scheme in North Wales have been reported in the local media. The local authority in this instance has responded that a contraflow system is “not possible”.

Similar concerns have been reported in the media in relation to other road schemes, including concerns over the diversions created as a result of the A465 dualling programme.

2. Welsh Government action

In a letter to the Chair dated 16 October 2020, the Minister for Economy, Transport and North Wales outlines the Welsh Government's approach to roadworks and diversions.

The Minister states that the preferred option is to use overnight lane closures as opposed to whole road closures leading to diversions. However, he says this isn't always possible.

The Minister goes on to say that where the option taken is to completely close the carriageway overnight and divert traffic, the diversion route is agreed with the relevant highway authority. In the case of residential areas this is the local authority.

With regards to the use of contraflow systems, as suggested by the petitioners, the Minister states that:

Contraflows, which close one carriageway, cannot be achieved on overnight works as they take approximately 2 days to install. A contraflow would have to be in place 24/7 whilst the works were undertaken.

3. Welsh Parliament action

In 2018, the Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee undertook an inquiry into the state of the roads in Wales. During the inquiry, the Committee heard evidence from the Freight Transport Association (FTA) which suggested that an online portal of planned roadworks in Wales could help HGV drivers plan better for roadworks and diversions. The FTA stated:

...not all the diversion routes are actually suitable for HGVs. So, our transport planners each week, when they're planning their routes, if they could actually go in and see online exactly where all the roadworks were going to be in Wales, then it would obviously be something that they could plan ahead for.

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