

P-04-556 No to Junction 41 Closure – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Clerking Team, 05.02.15

Dear Kayleigh,

Thanks for your timely reminder concerning my petition against the closure of Junction 41. The trial has been in place for some months now and during this time I have been part of the group of local residents who have met with representatives of the WAG and NPTCBC.

My observations to date are :

1. Data Collection

The effects of the part time closure on the town centre businesses are particularly noticeable

after 3.30 pm as people leave the town prior to the closures. I am not sure that the collection of footfall data is reflecting this. In addition, there are ongoing issues with the methods of footfall data collection in terms of accuracy. Results to date do not reflect the statistics collected by the more sophisticated system employed by the Aberafan shopping centre.

The car park ticketing statistics are also only providing a skewed picture of town traffic. The vast majority of shoppers and those accessing the town for 1–2 hrs use Tesco's car park rather than the expensive car parks. Tesco's have reported a drop in footfall after 3.30 PM.

I understand that we are looking at general trends but still feel that these should be based upon solid statistics.

2. It has been reported that traffic at J 41 is moving more freely on the M4. This would appear to be at the expense of J42. Traffic is a nightmare there as cars join the M4 at this crossover junction. This will be exacerbated by the traffic from the Coed D'Arcy development and with the traffic from the new quays/Baglan Energy Park link bridge as highlighted by The Chief Executive. Is this junction being monitored effectively as part of the trial?

3. I would like to see the effect of the new 50 mph Average Speed Cameras on the westbound junction without the closure. I feel that this should have been considered prior to the junction closure.

4. That the use of hard shoulder running was discounted on grounds of expense is truly galling when the cost of this trial is considered. The health and safety rationale is also spurious as there are other examples of hard shoulder running under the Smart Motorways initiatives – eg. M1 j10–13.

5. The chaos caused on local roads during the closures is creating havoc in some parts of the town. The mitigation measures are unable to stop drivers from 'rat running' which, again, causes problems which are not being properly monitored.

These are some of my ongoing concerns with regard to the closure. I hope that the committee will give consideration to these very real problems.

Many thanks,

Rose David