

**Appendix 4 – Response to Route Strategies Initial Overview Consultation Questions
(London to Wales Report)**

Route Overview:

The London to Wales route is in the south of England; which includes 167 miles of the SRN. It runs from the M25, passing through several counties, from Greater London in the east through to the west of England and the River Severn crossings at the border with Wales. Please use this space for general comments on the selected route:

London to Wales

For example: How well does this Initial Overview Report identify the challenges? How well does it map out a way forward?

No comment (our comments are included within the responses below)

Please select which chapters you would like to comment on for the selected route:

London to Wales

Please note you can pick more than one chapter to comment on. Select the All Chapters option to comment on all chapters specifically.

All Chapters

**What specific comments would you like us to consider in relation to Chapter (1)
Introduction?**

None

**What specific comments would you like us to consider in relation to Chapter (2) The
Route?**

The report suggests that economic development is confined to Reading, this should at least include “and the surrounding area” or could specifically mention Wokingham as this is where a large proportion of future development is proposed.

**What specific comments would you like us to consider in relation to Chapter (3)
Engagement with Customers and Neighbours?**

As a borough we have been involved in some of the workshops described, this appears to be a good reflection of these discussions. The engagement has been appreciated and it is hoped this can continue and be a key component of decision making for future projects.

**What specific comments would you like us to consider in relation to Chapter (4)
Network Integration?**

For clarity the A3290/A329(M) provide access to Reading from the M4 whilst the A329(M)/A322 provide connectivity to Surrey (in the opposite direction rather than onward connectivity). Junction 10 of the M4 remains a concern for many in the local area following previous works by (then) Highways England which have still not been addressed.

Regarding Freight, the need for additional capacity in the vicinity of Wokingham is noted and investment in this area is welcome.

Whilst diversion routes are agreed there remains an issue that excessive use of these routes (particularly during the Smart Motorway upgrade) leads to degradation of local roads and both inconvenience and poor health outcomes to those living on these routes.

What specific comments would you like us to consider in relation to Chapter (5) Challenges and Issues?

Growing the economy – note that the Local Plan update referred to here is the consultation document from 2022, it should be noted that this is not the final approved Local Plan Update which is still in development.

Improved environmental outcomes – the report suggests that severance is an issue in the Wokingham area as well as being a Noise Important Area, an AQMA with receptors close to the M4, and flooding south of the M4, however these are not considered key challenges. Given the number of issues on this short stretch and the potential for further development in this area, these issues are likely to be exacerbated and should be considered a challenge for the future.

What general comments would you like us to consider in relation to Chapter (6) Initial Route Objectives?

Comments related to specific objectives can be given in the Chapter 6 - Objective questions following this question.

Would you like to provide feedback on Chapter 6 - Objective 1?

Objective 1: Safe and reliable journeys

Provide safe and reliable journeys through provision of a resilient and consistent route particularly on the M4 in Berkshire, Bristol and the A417.

Options: Yes, No

No

Would you like to provide feedback on Chapter 6 - Objective 2?

Objective 2: Strategic Connectivity and access to key gateways

Support strategic connectivity between England (M49, M4, M48, M5 and M32) and South Wales as well as facilitating efficient access to key gateways at Heathrow Airport, Port of Bristol and Bristol Airport.*Options: Yes, No*

Yes

The M25 south west quadrant and its relation with M3-M4 connectivity is an ongoing concern to Wokingham Borough. It is not clear whether any specific routes have been identified, however the A322/A329(M) and the A33 are both key routes whilst previous studies have hinted at a new link or improved links between the two motorways, we would prefer that mode shift and smart infrastructure are considered and supported by National Highways. It should be noted that the expanded ULEZ and work by Heathrow Airport are likely to impact on many people's travel behaviour and this could lead to changing travel patterns regionally but particularly to the airport itself.

Would you like to provide feedback on Chapter 6 - Objective 3?

Objective 3: Support regionally significant and sustainable economic development in the Berkshire authorities, Swindon and Bristol

Support the delivery of regionally significant and sustainable economic development in the Berkshire authorities, Swindon and Bristol whilst maintaining the safe and effective operation of the network.

Options: Yes, No

Yes

Note that the Local Plan update referred to here is a consultation document from 2022, it should be noted that this is not the final adopted Local Plan Update which is still in development.

Would you like to provide feedback on Chapter 6 - Objective 4?

Objective 4: Support local connections and integration

Support effective local connections and integration with other transport modes to reduce short-distance travel demands on the SRN and promote the transfer to alternative modes of transport and reduce carbon particularly in the Berkshire authorities, Bristol and Swindon.

Options: Yes, No

Yes

We agree that that "the M4 serves a dual use in Reading" (though note that less than 1km of the M4 is in Reading borough, the majority passing through Wokingham and West Berkshire). Issues such as reducing car use on the SRN is highlighted in other reports such as "connecting the country"; this is of particular importance in the Wokingham/Reading area due to the known issue of short trips being made on the M4 (e.g. jn10 to jn11); reducing severance caused by the M4 for all modes but particularly bus and active travel should be further considered.

Would you like to provide feedback on Chapter 6 - Objective 5?

Objective 5: Support the needs of the freight sector

Support regional and national economies through the efficient movement of freight on the M4 and A417/A419, by enhancing lorry parking and driver facilities along with the transfer of freight to alternative modes, where appropriate.

Options: Yes, No

No

Would you like to provide feedback on Chapter 6 - Objective 6?

Objective 6: Reduce adverse impacts on communities

To be a better neighbour by safeguarding the environment and reducing the impacts of severance, adverse air quality and noise on local communities along the M4 in Reading, the M4 and M32 in Bristol and the A417/A419 in Swindon.

Options: Yes, No

Yes

Note that the severance, adverse air quality and noise referred to are mainly impacting on Wokingham residents not Reading; it is therefore essential that Wokingham communities are considered in addition to those in Reading. We do, however support and look forward to assisting in delivering this objective where possible.

We agree and support the development of new safe and suitable crossings for vulnerable road users along this section.

What specific comments would you like us to consider in relation to Chapter (7) Locational Areas for Consideration?

Whilst we broadly agree with the locations and area issues identified, it is suggested that the Junction 10-13 area of interest should be split into two. This is taking into consideration the change in nature of land use to the West of Junction 11 leading to fewer issues with Noise, Air Quality receptors and severance compared to the more urban areas which abut the M4 in the section from Junction 10 to 11.

What specific comments would you like us to consider in relation to Chapter (8) Next Steps?

None

Considering the route selected, **London to Wales, to what extent do you agree with the locational areas identified for further consideration in Chapter 7?**

*Options Please answer 1 - 5 , where 1 represents **Strongly Disagree** and 5 represents **Strongly Agree***

4 - Agree

Please could you tell us why you gave this rating?

As mentioned above, it is suggested that the Junction 10-13 area of interest should be split into two.

Considering the Initial Overview Report for **London to Wales, how well does this report consider your needs?**

Options: Please answer 1 - 5 , where 1 represents **Not Very Well** and 5 represents **Very Well**

4 – Well

Please could you tell us why you gave this rating?

Overall, the report covers the majority of the challenges and issues, however, some elements remain outstanding, though it is likely that they would be picked up as part of the next steps for the work.

- Firstly, the Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update is in development and so cannot yet fully inform the study, but any changes to the previously used version for this study will need to be accounted for.
- The report appears to confuse Reading and Wokingham areas, this should be clarified in future reports.
- Lastly, there continue to be outstanding issues which should be addressed such as:
 - the A329(M) junction works undertaken by Highways England which continue to require remedial work and;
 - the diversion routes through urban areas which the borough feels should be constructed to a higher standard and maintained accordingly at the expense of those projects leading to their use.

This page is intentionally left blank