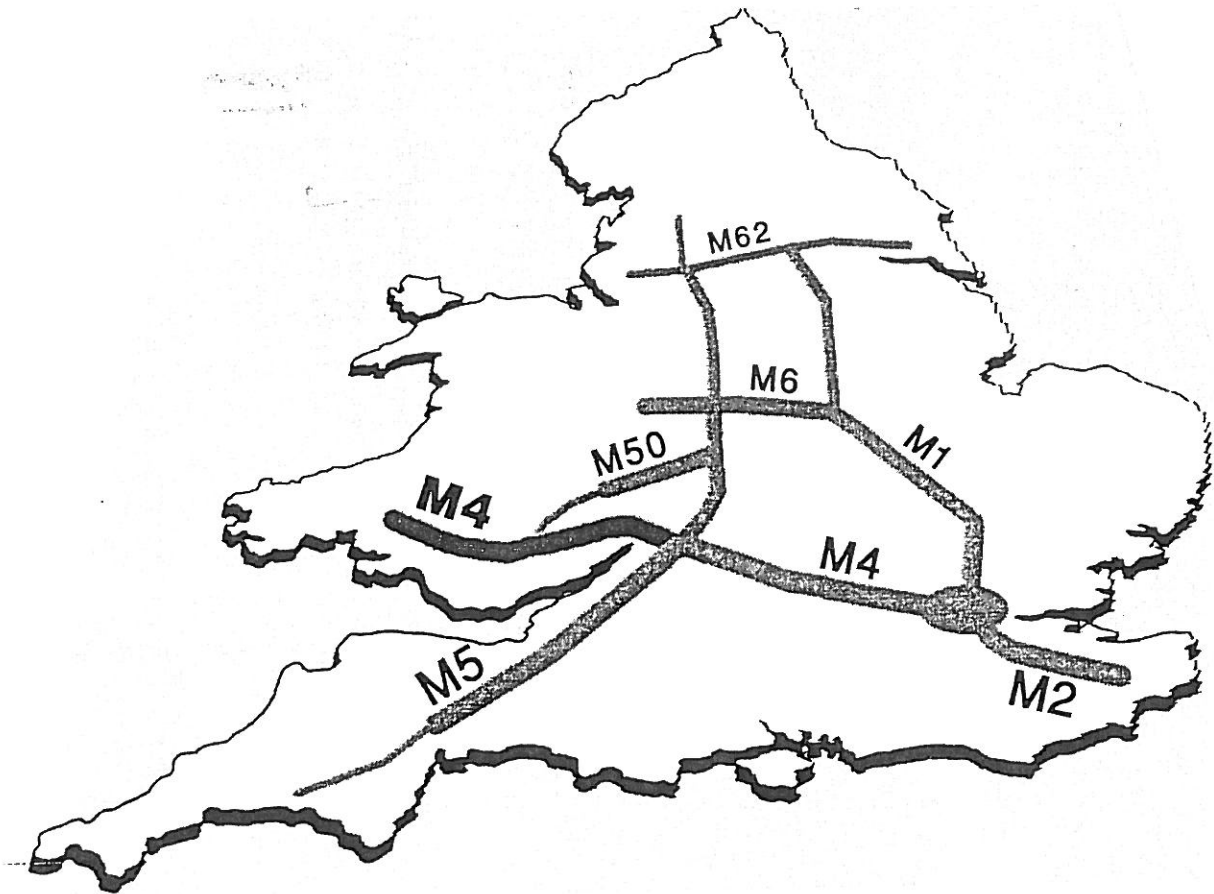




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M4 CORRIWUK STUDY

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES 1995



STANDING CONFERENCE ON REGIONAL POLICY IN SOUTH WALES

CYNHADLEDD SEFYDLOG POLISI RHANBARTHOL YN NE CYMRU



M4 CORRIDOR STUDY

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES
1995

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report updates the study undertaken by the Planning Officers' Group into the potential for development opportunities at M4 motorway junctions within the Conference area (1993). The report is an update of the factual basis of the study using 14 hectares as the criteria for a strategic site rather than the 20 hectares used previously.
- 1.2 Although the M4 corridor has been an unqualified success in terms of generating economic growth and attracting inward investment to south Wales, the request for the original study was in response to mounting concerns over the way in which the Development Plan system should respond to continuing development pressures. In particular, there was a concern over the potential conflict between further development and conservation policies, and the pressures to develop high quality, prestige sites for what might be regarded as inappropriate uses. Underlying such concerns is a growing awareness of the principle of sustainable development with its emphasis on the interaction between the economy and the environment and, above all, the finite nature of resources. There is now much greater emphasis on the redevelopment of 'brownfield' sites in urban areas rather than the development of greenfield sites which normally have only limited access by public transport.
- 1.3 Pressures for further development at, or in close proximity to, the motorway's junctions has continued to grow unabated along many sections of the M4 corridor, and in both Structure Plan and Local Plan terms there was seen to be a clear need to establish an appropriate framework to guide future development at such locations. In addition, it was anticipated that the Study would also contribute to an all-Wales Strategic Planning guidance exercise, in which the issue of motorway-related developments has also been raised.
- 1.4 The Study has examined existing, and committed developments and Local Plan proposals within a one mile radius of junctions 22 to 49 i.e. from Newhouse Park in Gwent adjacent to the Severn Bridge to Pont Abraham in Dyfed. The framework for this has been provided by approved Structure Plans and Local Plan proposals. The appropriate officers of district councils along the M4 were also consulted to confirm the factual information contained in the report.



2. THE M4 CORRIDOR AS A LOCATION FOR INWARD INVESTMENT

2.1 Inward investment, particularly from overseas sources, is a vital component in the continuing efforts to regenerate the south Wales' economy following the decline of the region's traditional heavy industries. However, whilst factors such as labour supply, regional incentives and the availability of greenfield sites can be key factors in attracting inward investment, the existence of high quality transport infrastructure is often the catalyst. In the case of the M4 corridor, the combined presence of these and other favourable factors has presented the south Wales region with an unparalleled record on inward investment, despite fierce competition at both national and international levels. As a result, the corridor now constitutes a very significant growth element in the regional economy, the benefits of which are considerable.

2.2 An indication of the strength of the M4 corridor's attractive power can be gained from an analysis of inward investment to Wales during the period

1988-91. During this period, total inward investment at the all-Wales level amounted to £2.494bn, of which 62% (£1.422bn) was destined for districts bordering the M4 corridor. Furthermore, the corridor was equally attractive to both U.K. and overseas investment, accounting for 65.8% of the respective totals. In employment terms, the overall impact of this investment in just three years has been to safeguard an estimated 7,500 jobs whilst creating 14,700 new jobs.

3. DEVELOPMENTS TO DATE

3.1 Since the early 1970s over 100 hectares of land adjacent to M4 motorway junctions has been developed for major individual employers occupying sites of 4 hectares or more in the industrial and office sectors. Most of the investment has taken place in Gwent and at Forest Farm, with the eastern sector which enjoying success for many years in attracting numerous employers to the areas including, Panasonic, TSB Trust, the Patent Office and CSO, although more recently major developments have spread westwards as far as junctions 35. The 25 mile strip from Chepstow to Cardiff is a particularly attractive location for warehouse and distribution business because of its excellent motorway access and its connections to the rest of the UK. This can be illustrated, for example, by the development of the Tesco distribution centre at Magor (Junction 23). Investment west of Bridgend has in the past been impeded to a certain extent by the missing Baglan to Lon-Las section of the M4. However, the opening of the 'missing link' in December 1994, following a two year, £97 million building programme will help encourage economic regeneration in this western sector.



- 3.2 A particular feature of the development which has taken place to date is the attraction of junction locations for major multi-national companies in the prestige manufacturing and high technology sector, as well as offices relocating from the more congested and high cost South East of England. Some examples of such developments are given below:

Sony, Pencoed, Junction 35 (Mid Glamorgan Science Park)

A development of 64.6 hectares, comprising a first phases of 31.6 hectares for Sony and the remaining 33 hectares for use as a business park for Sony subsidiaries, providing an ideal site for office and high tech laboratory accommodation. Some 2000 jobs, producing T.V. components are expected to be provided on completion.

Bosch, Miskin, Junction 34

A development of 65 hectares. The first phase was completed in 1990 (12 hectares). Total employment is expected to reach 1200 by 1996, with some 80% of production being exported.

TSB, Tredegar Park, Junction 28

The first of three phases was completed following planning permission for 300,000 sq. ft. development of a 10 hectare site. The development is the result of the relocation of the Company's General Insurance Division. In 1994 TSB located its new national Phone Bank operation at this location.

- 3.3 In addition to the major industrial and office users, well over 40 hectares has been developed for hotels and motorway service areas. Land has also been developed for smaller scale users, usually on industrial/warehousing estates and high-technology business parks. Examples of these are mainly in the eastern part of the corridor, such as Newhouse Park, Chepstow (Junction 22) and Cleppa Park, Newport (Junction 28).



4. INDUSTRIAL LAND AVAILABILITY

4.1 Land identified for potential industrial use at each of the motorway junctions was categorised in terms of its availability as follows;

Category	Availability
1	Sites immediately available
2a	Sites programmed to commence within 2 years
2b	Sites programmed to commence within 5 years
3	Unprogrammed sites capable of commencing within 2 years if necessary and involving no extraordinary expenditure
4	Other sites - longer term including those with extraordinary costs.

4.2 The results of the above categorisation are shown in Table 1. A total of 1395.58 hectares of land has been identified for potential industrial and business use within one mile of the motorway junction in south Wales (Gwent and the three Glamorgans).

4.3 The greatest proportion of land is located in the central area, 42.5% (Junctions 30-37), amounting to 592.88 hectares. However, 71% of this land is accounted for by 420 hectares at Sarn Park (Junction 36). 38.1% of available land is located in the western sector (Junctions 38-48), while the remaining 19.4% is in the east.

4.4 However, only 16.2% of the total amount of land identified is immediately available (225.98), 72% of which is located in the eastern area. Junction 28, Tredegar Park, Newport has the greatest concentration of immediately developable land i.e. most services are already available on site or are currently being provided.

4.5 Approximately 20% (276.7 hectares) of all land identified is programmed to be serviced within 5 years, (categories 2a and 2b).

4.6 Excluding a large site at Junction 36, Sarn Park (420 hectares), sites with longer term development potential are generally concentrated in the western area.

4.7 Finally, a range of sites have been identified which are unprogrammed, but which could commence if finance became available. These include sites at Junction 23 (Magor), 24 (Coldra), 28 (Tredegar Park), 33 (Capel Lanilterne), 35 (Pencoed), 37 (North Cornelly), 38 (Margam), 41A (Port Talbot) and 42 (Jersey Marine).



5. FUTURE DEMAND

- 5.1 Experience has shown that sites which are visible from the motorway are especially attractive to inward investors, particularly those concerned with product image, e.g. Sony at Pencoed. However, when the visibility requirement is less important, investors have been prepared to consider a wider range of sites provided they still retain good access to the motorway e.g. British Airways near Llantrisant. In both cases, therefore, proximity to the motorway and the availability of a large serviced site have been key determinants in their location decisions. Although the scale of land required varies from project to project, evidence would suggest that sites in excess of 14 hectares are required if large scale investments are to be attracted to the region in the face of international competition.
- 5.2 Whilst the study has identified land which may be capable of accommodating large scale, single user developments (14 hectares plus), the majority of it cannot be made available within the short term. The reasons for this include ownership, servicing requirements and the absence of necessary finance. The study has identified 12 possible sites in this category. 3 sites are available for immediate development. These comprised Newhouse Park (Junction 22, Chepstow) 14.8 hectares; Gwent Euro Park (NBC) (Junction 23, Magor) 60.3 hectares and; Celtic Lakes Phase 1 (Junction 28) 47.8 hectares. A further 5 sites could possibly be brought forward within the next two years if private sector finance becomes available. These comprise Whitbread Brewery (Junction 23, Magor) 19.2 hectares; Celtic Lakes Phase II (Junction 28, Tredegar Park) 20.2 hectares; Margam Business Park (Junction 38) 26 hectares; Margam Science Park (Junction 38) 24 hectares and; Jersey Marine (Junction 42) 44 hectares. In terms of maximising the market potential of south Wales, it is clearly essential that a servicing programme be established to enable sites to be brought forward so that the region can compete effectively with other regions and indeed other countries. The defining of this programme, the appropriate site servicing levels and securing the necessary finance, are therefore major factors requiring urgent consideration with the WDA and Welsh Office.
- 5.3 Concerning the accommodation of smaller industrial developments on high quality, junction related sites, the range identified would seem to offer a reasonable choice in terms of location, size and timescale, although the longer term options are more limited in the eastern and central areas of the corridor. Likewise, it is generally considered that service industries requiring high quality sites with motorway access can also be accommodated on these smaller developments. Again, image and perception figure predominantly in the criteria governing such investments, and it has been suggested that there may be scope for promoting a small string of high quality business parks along the M4. Sites of approximately 5 hectares would be required and their



identification would help to avoid any undesirable encroachment on larger sites which have considerably greater strategic value.

- 5.4 Future demand could be adversely affected by the removal of the M4 from Assisted Area Status which could prove problematical in attracting major development beyond Cardiff. However, the Second Severn Crossing, due for completion in 1996 will remove a significant physical and psychological barrier to further inward investment, and enhance the attractiveness of south Wales in comparison with the south west and particularly Bristol.
- 5.5 The Study was deliberately restricted to sites within a one mile radius of motorway junctions, since an examination of market demand factors has highlighted the particular value in regional strategic terms of land adjacent to and within sight of the motorway. However, inward investment is by no means limited to such a narrow area, since the attraction to the M4 itself extends much more widely. As a result, sites with direct access to the primary road network also have an important role to play in securing the economic regeneration of the region through inward investment. The definition of the M4 corridor adopted for the purpose of this report would not therefore, detract from the need to ensure release and servicing of other strategic sites in accordance with structure and local plan policies. Such sites will also require adequate safeguarding if they are to realise their full potential for accommodating quality jobs.



6 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 The study has not considered potential new sites adjacent to motorway junctions. This must be a matter for detailed investigation and proposals in structure and local plans. However, as figure 1 shows, most of the land at junctions is either developed or committed, and where this is not so it is evident that there are normally environmental considerations which would argue strongly against development. The significance of this is that land with development potential is clearly a finite resource, which must be carefully managed. This is particularly important when there can be a time lag of 10, 15 or even more years between the approval of a site and development actually taking place. The development plan process must, therefore, be capable of giving long term protection to such sites.

6.2 It is clear from the preceding analyses that the availability of motorway-related sites is a key element in the attraction of inward investment to south Wales. If the region is to maintain its record on inward investment then development plans will need to ensure the following:

- i) The provision of sufficient, readily developable 14 hectare sites along the M4 corridor to allow for a potential take up of one every two years. These sites, in appropriate circumstances, will be regarded as being of regional significance, and they could therefore be additional to land needs already identified in structure plans and local plans.
- ii) That sites of 14 hectares identified within the M4 corridor as being suitable for inward investment and capable of supporting a single user, are safeguarded for that particular purpose. Motorway-related land is a finite resource, and the regional significance of 14 hectares sites should be a prime consideration in development control decisions. In particular, such sites should not be allocated on a piecemeal basis to service such uses such as hotels, service areas and retail activities, in advance of large scale inward investment projects.
- iii) The sites with good access to the primary road network, but beyond the one mile radius, can still be attractive to inward investors and may therefore warrant strong protection policies where industrial land is in short supply.

6.3 Although the appraisal of potential industrial land suggests that the overall supply of land is unlikely to have a constraining influence on future development needs, the analysis also reveals considerable variations within the region so far as the availability is concerned. In particular, the data masks considerable variations in the scale of



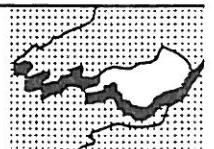
individual sites and, in particular, their suitability for large single developments. Nevertheless, the assessment of land availability has shown that for the short and medium term there is a reasonable supply of motorway related sites capable of accommodating large, single users, provided that sufficient sites can be serviced. In this respect, there is an urgent need to prepare a prioritised servicing programme if the region is to maximise its inward investment opportunities.

- 6.4 There is at the same time, a need to initiate discussions with the Welsh Office and the WDA in order to ascertain how many potential 14 hectare sites should be available to support the region's efforts to attract inward investment. In particular, issues such as availability, developability, quality and planning feasibility will require more detailed consideration. This process will also need to incorporate consideration as to how such sites are to be serviced and marketed, involving other consultees as appropriate.
- 6.5 Finally, it is clearly important to ensure that any selection of new sites should take into account environmental considerations, energy efficiency, accessibility and the need to maximise scarce resources. At the same time, it is essential when assessing suitable sites consider the capacity of the M4 and the proposed duplicate motorway in view of their roles as essential national and international movement corridors. The availability of public transport facilities should also feature in these assessments, together with the location of the site in relation to population centres.



7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- i) That the general conclusions of the M4 Corridor Study be endorsed.
- ii) That copies of this report be forwarded to all County and District Councils in the Standing Conference area for their assistance and guidance in the preparation of Structure and Local Plans.
- iii) That the Transportation Group be asked to consider the implications of the Study in terms of maintaining the role of the M4 as a strategic transport link and the capacity of interchanges.
- iv) That the conclusion of the Study be discussed with the Welsh Office and the Welsh Development Agency to consider in particular the funding problems of bringing forward prestige motorway related sites in the shorter term.



M4 CORRIDOR: INDUSTRIAL LAND AVAILABILITY (14 HECTARES AND OVER)

Junction	1 Immediately available Hectares	2A Programmed to commence in 2 Years Hectares	2B Programmed to commence in 2 - 5 Years Hectares	3 Unprogrammed could commence within 2 Years - No extraordinary cost Hectares	4 Other site longer term Hectares
22 Chepstow	18.60				
23 Magor	60.30			26.10	15.80
24 Coldra	12.40			3.60	
28 Tredegar Park	71.70			20.20	42.00
30 North Pentwyn	14.50	19.70	3.00		
32 Coryton	6.48				22.40
33 Capel Llanilltern			54.00		
34 Miskin			33.00	13.40	
35 Pencoed					
36 Sarn Park					420.00
37 N. Cornelly				6.40	
38 Margam				50.00	114.00
41A Port Talbot/Baglan	14.00			37.00	78.00
42 Briton Ferry Jersey Marine			40.00	44.00	
43 Llandarcy	3.00	6.00			
44/45 Morrision	25.00		40.00		
47 Velindre Tin Plate Works		65.00			
48 Penllergaer		16.00			
TOTAL	225.98	106.70	170.00	200.70	692.20
OVERALL TOTAL - 1395.58 ha					

AREA TOTALS

	1	2A	2B	3	4	TOTAL
EAST	163.00			49.90	57.80	270.70
CENTRAL	20.98	19.70	90.00	19.80	442.40	592.88
WEST	42.00	87.00	80.00	131.00	192.00	532.00

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POSSIBLE 14 HECTARE SINGLE USER SITES

LOCATION	AREA (HA)	CATEGORY	TYPE OF USE	COMMENTS
Newhouse Park, Junction 22, Chepstow.	14.8	1	B8 & Ancillary, B1	
South of Whitbread Brewery, Junction 23, Magor.	19.2	3	B1,B2	Identified in Deposit Monmouth Local Plan. Planning permission for access and Landscaping. Site constrained by S106.
Gwent Euro Park (NBC) Gwent Euro Park (MCB) Junction 23, Magor.	60.3 13.0	1 4	B8 B8	Tesco have developed 17.4 ha.
Duffryn Phase II, Junction 28, Tredegar Park, Newport.	42.0	4	B1&B8	Site recently revised by NBC.
Celtic Lakes Phase I	47.8	1	B1 & Ancillary, B8	Laid out for smaller plots could be considered for larger plots.
Celtic Lakes Phase II Junction 28, Tredegar Park.	20.2	3	B1	
Capel Llanilltern, Junction 33.	22.4	4	B1&B2	Proposed by Taff Ely Borough Council in Draft Local Plan and Mid Glamorgan Deposit Draft Replacement Structure plan. Major infrastructure required.
Margam Business Park, Langlands Lane, Junction 38.	26.0	3	B1,B2,B8	Services adjacent to site.
Margam Science Park, Junction 38.	24.0	3	B1	Services adjacent to site.
Port Talbot Tidal Harbour, Junction 41A.	78.0	4	B2,B8	In British Steel and ABP ownership.
Jersey Marine, Junction 42.	44.0	3	B1,B2,B8	Services adjacent to site.
Briton Ferry Industrial Estate, Junction 42.	40.0	2b	B1,B2,B8	In county council ownership.
Tawe Vale Business Park, Junction 44/45	40.0	2b	B1,B2	Services adjacent to site.

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