

Petition: P-4-686 Install a Traffic Lights System at Cross Hands Roundabout

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 29 Mehefin 2016

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Research Briefing:

Petition number: P-4-686

Petition title: Install a traffic light system at cross hands roundabout

Text of petition: A recently published statistic shows that Cross Hands roundabout is the 3rd most dangerous in Wales for traffic accidents and people hurt. Anyone who is based in the area or travels through regularly will know how treacherous it has become. Please sign and share to force through a resolution.

Background

Responsibility for Welsh highways is divided between the Welsh Government, as highway authority for the motorway and trunk road network, and local authorities, which are highway authorities for the local road network. The Cross Hands Roundabout connects the A48 with A476 at Cross Hands, and forms part of the [Welsh trunk road network](#).

The [National Transport Finance Plan](#) (2015) does not make reference to any proposed improvements at the Cross Hands Roundabout. However, it does include a high level intervention on “adopting a corridor approach [to maintenance and operation of the trunk and motorway network] [identifying] where there are resilience issues on the network which justify the need for improvements”.

In July 2013 the Welsh Government published its [Road Safety Framework for Wales](#). This sets out the road safety targets and the actions being taken to achieve them. By 2020, compared to the average for 2004–2008 the Welsh Government wants to see:

- 40% fewer people killed and seriously injured on Welsh roads;
- 25% fewer motorcyclists killed and seriously injured on Welsh; and
- 40% fewer young people (aged 16–24) killed and seriously injured on Welsh roads.

The framework encourages “route analysis”, including consideration of collision rates on routes as “key to selecting a package of interventions”. In doing this, the framework says the Welsh Government will:

- Continue to address existing cluster sites on trunk roads and encourage local authorities to do the same on their network.
- Adopt a route analysis approach to road safety on the trunk road network and recommend that local authorities do the same.
- Produce guidance to support highways authorities adopting a route based approach.

Carmarthenshire County Council is currently promoting the [Cross Hands Growth Zone](#), a regeneration project comprising five development sites which are intended to contribute to the economic growth of the Swansea Bay City Region. Cross Hands is a designated strategic employment site for the City Region, and is identified in the [Swansea Bay City Region Economic Regeneration Strategy 2013–2030](#) (PDF 7.4MB).

To support delivery of the Growth Zone, proposals for a Cross Hands Economic Link Road (ELR) were originally included in the South West Wales Integrated Transport Consortium (SWITCH) Regional Transport Plan (RTP). The ELR is now included in the [Joint Local Transport Plan for South West Wales](#), prepared jointly by Carmarthenshire, Neath Port Talbot, Pembrokeshire and Swansea Councils.

The ELR is being delivered in phases and, once complete, will link the A48 to the A476 cutting out the Cross Hands Roundabout. Alongside providing access to some of the Strategic Employment Sites comprised in the growth zone, the Joint Local Transport Plan states:

The ELR will ease congestion at the A48 Cross Hands Roundabout which is part of the Trans European Network (TENS) as well as improve safety at the "6 ways" junction in Gorslas.

The Welsh Government publishes a statistical bulletin on “Accident cluster sites and fatal road accidents on the Welsh Trans–European Network – Transport [TEN–T]”. The most recent was in [April 2016](#). This identifies “5 [accident cluster] sites on the A48 between Pont Abraham and Carmarthen at Pont Abraham and Cross Hands Roundabouts”. It should be noted that this refers to the TEN–T road network, a subset of the trunk road network comprising roads of European strategic significance.

Welsh Government action

While no specific schemes are identified for Cross Hands Roundabout in the National Transport Finance Plan, the letter from the previous Minister for Economy, Science and Transport to the former Chair of the Petitions Committee, provided as a paper to the Committee, says:

We are aware of the local concerns regarding this roundabout and have improved the lane markings during recent years with a view to reducing collisions. We are also undertaking a detailed collision mitigation study this year.

The Minister's letter also refers to £1.325m of Welsh Government funding in 2015/16 from the Welsh Government's [Local Transport Fund \(LTF\)](#) to support delivery of the ELR, with a further bid submitted for 2016/17.

The LTF is a Welsh Government funding stream to support local and regional transport projects. In March 2015 the Welsh Government announced LTF funding of £450k to support delivery of phase 2 of the ELR (connecting the Black Lion Road to the A476). A further £875k was allocated in February 2015. In March 2016 the Welsh Government announced LTF funding of £581.6k for delivery of the ELR for 2016/17.

National Assembly for Wales action

Research Service has found limited reference to road safety issues at the Cross Hands Roundabout. However, in January 2010 the then Minister for Economy and Transport in the Third Assembly responded to a written question (WAQ55431) on "future programmes to improve road safety across West Wales". While it is not clear that the response is referring specifically to the roundabout, the Minister replied:

I announced on 25 November 2009 the intention to improve road safety at the junctions on the A48 between Pont Abraham and Carmarthen. **The section between Pont Abraham and Cross Hands has been given priority due to the high accident rate; a scheme is currently in development to reduce conflicts in the central reserves through this length.** Carmarthenshire County Council is currently working towards publication of the necessary statutory orders.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.