

William Powell AM  
Chair,  
Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA  
(by email)

Dear Mr Powell,

Thank you for your letter of 30 July regarding the Junction 41 closure on the M4 at Port Talbot.

I should start by saying that the Council was clear in its opposition to the earlier more comprehensive proposal for junction closures both east and west bound, reflecting views locally. However, to her credit, the Minister for Economy, Science and Transport listened carefully to the representations made by the Council, the local community and the business community. Following Mrs Hart's meeting with the Leader of the Council and local interests earlier this year, there has been close consultation in recent months with all interested parties over the more limited peak period trial closures that are now in place. At the time of writing, you will appreciate that it is too early to comment on the trial itself as it has been in operation for little more than a week.

Whilst it is, of course, the responsibility of the Welsh Government to manage motorways and trunk roads, the Council has a clear responsibility to engage in this process to manage and mitigate the impact on the local road network. This is what we have been doing in close consultation with the Minister's officials and local people.

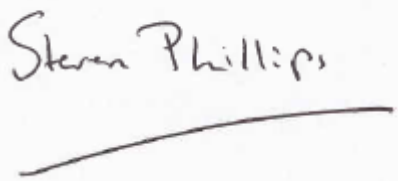
I should stress that the Council also has wider issues to take into account (arguably from J38 at Margam to J43 at Llandarcy and including Port Talbot town centre itself). In other words, given the full range of regeneration programmes in the area - and related infrastructure improvements - there are wider considerations to ensuring optimum traffic flows and access. These include the following (this part of my letter might be best read against a road map of the area):

- The completion of the Harbour Way Peripheral Distributor Road last Autumn;
- The redevelopment of the Port Talbot Parkway Railway Station (ongoing and for completion by June 2015 at the latest);

- The completion of the Quays/Baglan Energy Park Bridge (also ongoing and for which the Minister has provided additional funding to accelerate the construction programme for completion by March 2015);
- The construction of the new school at Seaway Parade which is scheduled to commence by the end of this year or early next (and is linked to the new bridge – above – in terms of providing a potential safe route to school);
- The construction of the new Health Centre at the Quays which is scheduled to be completed by the end autumn of 2015 (also linked to the new bridge in terms of improving access);
- The completion of the second Swansea University Campus at Fabian Way and the currently ongoing Highways Infrastructure works which are due to be completed by April 2015; and
- The ongoing development of the Coed Darcy site at Llandarcy.

These are in addition to other mitigation works on Pentyla Baglan Road, the Rutherglen Roundabout, Seaway Parade and Ty Draw Hill. All these local road improvements will be part of the evidence base that will be submitted to the Minister in the context of her review of the part time closures before a final decision is taken on whether to proceed with full time closures next year. Meanwhile, the Council has given a commitment to continue to work constructively with the Welsh Government and local interests on this matter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Steven Phillips", with a long horizontal line underneath it.

**Steven Phillips**  
**Chief Executive**