



## THE MARCHES & MID WALES FREIGHT STRATEGY

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This strategy was commissioned by the following organisations:

Ceredigion Council

Growing Mid Wales Partnership

Gwynedd Council

Herefordshire Council

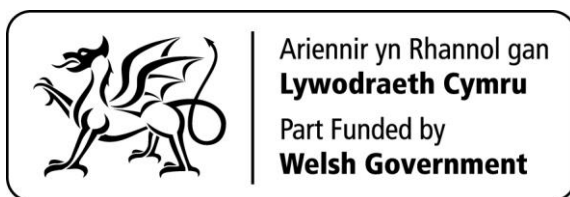
Marches Local Economic Partnership

Powys Council

Shropshire Council

Telford & Wrekin Council

Welsh Government



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Strategic scope

The Marches Local Economic Partnership, the Growing Mid Wales Partnership, the Welsh Government, and Ceredigion, Gwynedd, Herefordshire, Powys, Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin Councils jointly commissioned this freight strategy. Its objective is to provide an evidence base to determine the interventions in the freight sector that will support the economic development and operational efficiency of businesses in the Marches and Mid Wales, while also seeking to enhance the quality of life of its residents and reduce environmental impacts from freight transport activity.

The commissioning and development of this strategy has been managed by a steering group of officers from the commissioning organisations.

### Aim of the strategy

The overall aim of the Marches and Mid Wales Freight Strategy is:

**To ensure the efficient movement of freight in the Marches and Mid Wales while minimising impacts on the environment and residents.**

In essence, the strategy should lead to a reduction in costs for the freight and logistics industry and its customers and at the same time reduce the negative impacts of freight movements on people who live and work in the Marches and Mid Wales.

### Key issues

The key issues that emerge for businesses in the Marches and Mid Wales are:

- The quality of the single carriageway road network and the resulting slow door-to-door journey times and lack of journey time reliability;
- Tailbacks and slower journey times due to the number of farm vehicles that use the network to access farms and fields;
- Levels of congestion at some junctions and through some towns and cities.

### Interventions

Some 33 interventions were identified and appraised, which would help the Marches and Mid Wales to meet its strategic objectives in relation to freight and logistics. The interventions were established following a review of best practice, discussions with the Steering Group and receiving

feedback from businesses through the stakeholder consultation programme. The business community stressed, in particular, the importance of interventions that would increase the capacity of the road network in the Marches and Mid Wales and reduce the impact of bottlenecks thereby increasing journey time reliability, as well as the need for improved maintenance of the road network.

The interventions were grouped into the following categories:

- **Highways management and maintenance:** defining, for the purposes of transport planning, a Freight Route Network (FRN) on which strategic freight movements are likely to be concentrated and upon which infrastructure enhancements can be focused. This also includes interventions on the FRN to maintain the existing highway network and ensure that it is fit for purpose for freight movements.
- **Highways enhancements:** specific schemes on the FRN that would reduce journey times and increase journey time reliability for the freight and logistics industry and their customers.
- **Planning and regulation:** interventions to ensure that development opportunities take account of the associated freight movements, to reduce emissions from HGVs and LGVs in areas of poor air quality and to ensure that HGVs are only using appropriate routes.
- **Rail freight:** potential interventions to encourage a switch of some traffic to rail.
- **Dissemination & liaison:** provision of accurate information to users of the road network to facilitate informed decision-making by transport operators alongside other soft' interventions to develop solutions to conflicts between the interests of road hauliers and their customers and local residents.

## Highways enhancements

The key interventions, which were also highlighted by the business community, relate to the need to reduce journey times and increase journey time reliability for freight movements to, from, within, and through, the Marches and Mid Wales area, while relying on an essentially single carriageway network. The strategy therefore includes several interventions that would provide opportunities for the overtaking of farm vehicles and slow-moving HGVs by other freight vehicles and cars. These interventions would also reduce driver frustration and increase safety on the network. The proposed interventions are:

- Short sections of '2 on 1' roads, Differential Acceleration Lanes (DALs) and crawler lanes to provide safe overtaking opportunities on otherwise single carriageway roads;
- Online enhancements, such as straightening, removing bends and widening of narrow sections at selected locations;
- A programme of enhancements to selected structures to allow 44 tonne HGVs to operate across the whole of the FRN.

Schemes for increasing the number of opportunities for overtaking, online enhancements, and enhancements to selected structures, should be considered as part of route strategies on the FRN; this is likely to include the following routes in the Marches and Mid Wales: A49, A483, A470, A5, A487, A458, A44, A438, A456 and A40 as well as the M54 and M50 motorways.

There are also a number of major schemes which would reduce the impact of bottlenecks on the FRN, providing journey time savings and increased journey time reliability for freight movements. These are:

- Hereford Bypass and Southern Link: bypass to the west of the city with a new crossing of the River Wye, with the objective of removing north-south strategic traffic from the centre of the city.
- M54 link to northbound M6/M6 Toll: new motorway link so that northbound traffic on the M54 can access the M6 directly rather than via the A449; the scheme would also provide a direct link between the M54 and the start of the M6 Toll road.
- A49/A5 Dobbies Island Junction Improvement: enhancements to the junction to the south of Shrewsbury between the A49 north south route and the A5 Shrewsbury ring road.
- Leominster Bypass: a bypass to the southwest of Leominster allowing east-west traffic on the A44 to avoid the town centre.
- New Dyfi Bridge: a scheme to replace the bridge across the River Dyfi (which is prone to flooding) on the A487 to the north of Machynlleth.
- A483 Pant to Llanymynech Bypass: bypass of two villages on the A483 between Welshpool and Oswestry, which will reduce journey times between Mid Wales and Deeside and the North West of England.
- A458 Buttington Cross to Wollaston Cross: scheme to improve about 9km of sub-standard trunk road, which will reduce journey times between Mid Wales and the West Midlands via Shrewsbury and also improve the accident record on the route.
- Shrewsbury North West Relief Road: a scheme to complete the final section of the ring road around Shrewsbury to link the A49/A53 at Battlefield to the A5/A458 at Bicton Heath, which will reduce journey times between the west and the north of Shrewsbury.

The estimated benefits for HGV traffic from the implementation of the major highways projects included in the strategy are **£149 million**. This excludes benefits for vans and for passenger traffic. Most of these benefits for heavy freight traffic would be secured initially by the freight transport operators but would then be passed on to shippers and receivers of freight through competitive market forces. These benefits would also therefore help to reduce the cost base of businesses located in the Marches and Mid Wales and support the creation or retention of employment.

Figure 1: The Marches & Mid Wales, identifying major schemes

