

Monmouthshire Local Access Forum

SUBJECT: PROPOSED MON LANE CARE SCHEME
MEETING: MONMOUTHSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM
DATE: 28 APRIL 2015

AGENDA ITEM: 4

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To consider the proposed adoption of a Lane Care Scheme for appropriate Unclassified County Roads (UCRs).

2. RECOMMENDATION:

- 2.1 The Local Access Forum supports the operation of a pilot Lane Care Scheme by Tread Lightly under the management of the Highway Network Manager and that the results of this pilot be reported back to a future LAF meeting.

3. BACKGROUND:

- 3.1 Summary details of the proposed volunteer scheme have previously been circulated and considered by LAF members and the executive summary prepared by Tread Lightly is reproduced as an appendix for member's information.
- 3.2 The site visit prior to the meeting will visit a potential route to aid discussion.

4. AUTHOR:

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5. APPENDIX:

Executive Summary: Mons Lane Care Proposal by TreadLightly

Appendix 1: Mons Lane Care Proposal by TreadLightly

Executive Summary

Further to presenting to the LAF and various meetings with the individuals within the RoW and Highway department, we have discussed projects within other counties and the lack of surveys and maintenance carried out on UCR's (namely unsurfaced green lanes) within Monmouthshire. In the main this is due to limited resources, funding, and re-organisation.

TL have offered assistance to the county council to help maintain and improve (within reason) the existing green lane network within the county for all user groups to enjoy. This could be anyone from walkers, to cyclists and horse riders. A well maintained green lane can be enjoyed not only by vehicular users but all the above.

Quite often these lanes are little used and therefore become out of maintenance and overgrown quickly, this reduces the users who can gain access to enjoy the countryside safely, however it can be said that a well maintained driveable lane is also likely to satisfy the requirements of other non-motorised users. All users have the right to use a green lane, unless it carries a restrictive traffic regulation order, however many are best suited for a reasonably equipped 4x4 vehicle.

A well signposted route also aids individuals and landowners in ensuring the correct unsurfaced legal route is used. TL volunteers wish to use and maintain some of these lesser used routes, many of which may carry some historic significance, whilst continuing to enjoy using their vehicles and driving skills in pleasant surroundings, often as part of a social club trip. For those visiting the area this can often bring some additional revenue to the county with regards to B&B's, campsites, pubs and shops.

Scope of Work

As a pilot exercise recently, myself and Highways visited a handful of lanes in the county representing a typical cross section of green lane maintenance issues to discuss the issues.

Majority were just overgrown with small trees and hedgerow overgrowth. Some others required some minimal culvert clearance or drainage or some legal exits checking with planning or RoW dept. We were all in general agreement that the lanes would provide a sustainable selection if they had some volunteer work carried out. In the main this would be manual labour and cutting back of overgrowth or overhanging trees.

TL currently cover all volunteers with liability insurance to the value of £1 million, however we are not currently insured for the use of mechanical machinery or power tools, we are also limited as volunteers are not officially trained or certified in the use of chainsaw equipment, which is often required to make such tasks quicker and easier. This is something the CC may be able to offer us in return for our labour as they have a training centre in Usk.

TL would like to agree a new partnership with Mons CC Highways department, and carry out a pilot exercise on around a dozen green lanes between Oct 1st 2014 and Apr 1st 2015. This would be ideal to be done throughout the winter months, and

only the minimal amount of overgrowth would be removed or surfaces graded in order for the lane to become passable in a 4x4 vehicle. The remote nature and characteristics of the lane wish to be kept as much as possible, with little disturbance to surrounding landowners or wildlife.

We do not wish to bring in any new materials (unless for ruts or drainage reasons, whereby road planings have been offered), and we will aim to disperse of any cuttings and overgrowth nearby where appropriate or remove them ourselves. Any surface ground material requiring work will be graded and moved around within the immediate vicinity where possible, i.e.: to grade slopes level or fill small holes. Generally this is soil or small stones.

TL feel they can achieve and improve the maintenance of around 6 lanes over several weekdays or weekends of manual labour utilising between 6-12 volunteers, half a dozen vehicles and manual tools, possibly with a small trailer. Ideally with chainsaw use after some training, this would speed up and help the workforce. We will provide a generic and relevant RA document.

We would then look to drive the lanes at least twice a year and survey check them or make further pro-active recommendations if required, almost a lengthsman adoption type scheme would be preferred, similar to the existing Pathcare scheme on footpaths. We feel other user groups and the community should support such projects, which allows users to give something back to the community and bring together likeminded people with social interaction.

We would look to create some basic 'before and after' documentation and carry out informal signposting where necessary to advise users and landowners of the correct legal route. Our waymarkers and 'keep to the track' signage has been agreed, and successfully implements in other counties and is often now nationally recognised by vehicular user groups who drive the limited amount of unsurfaced green lane network in the UK. These neighbouring counties include Powys and further afield in Ceredigion.

Monmouthshire Local Access Forum

SUBJECT: UPDATE REPORT
MEETING: MONMOUTHSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM
DATE: 28 APRIL 2015

AGENDA ITEM: 5

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide an update to the Local Access Forum on work programme items.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 For information only

3. BACKGROUND

- a) Local Transport Plan and Active Travel

- 3.1 The Local Transport Plan has been submitted to Welsh Government and contains a significant number of walking and cycling proposals including active travel plans for Abergavenny & Llanfoist, Magor & Undy, Caldicot, Chepstow, Gilwern and Monmouth. The plan can be viewed at <http://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/app/uploads/2015/01/5a-Monmouthshire-LTP-appendix-1-28-01-15.pdf>

- 3.2 The Active Travel Act mapping requirements in Monmouthshire will only apply to the built up areas of the main settlements.

- b) Projects and External Funding

- 3.1 Since the last meeting confirmation has been received of a new Coastal Access Improvement Programme 2015-20, the continuation of Rights of Way Improvement Grant (ROWIP) funding for 15/16 and final bids submitted for Core NRW Partnership Grant and Offa's Dyke Path National Trail Management Grant.

- 3.2 The relevant programmes / proposed outcomes are as follows:

ROWIP Grant (£41K -100% grant): currently planning for this to be addressed to prioritised maintenance tasks;

Core NRW Partnership Grant (expected £41,300 - 50% grant):

- Friends Groups and linking schools;
- BioBlitz event (Monmouthshire Environment Partnership)
- Extending involvement via the "Building Bridges" project for 14-24 year olds with additional needs;

- Establishing and empowering Local Ways Groups (including pathcare, volunteer support, guided walks);

Offa's Dyke Path National Trails Management Grant (expected £7,300 improvements, various surfacing projects - 100% grant and £4,900 maintenance, predominantly vegetation clearance - 75% grant)

Wales Coastal Access Improvement Programme: This will now take a different form, expected £8,975 grant as 75% towards maintenance costs (based on national formula) and NRW's direct procurement of improvement projects (via a Regional Officer). However the overall allocations are significantly reduced. Potential projects over 15/16 & 16/17 are

- Alpha Rd Junction - Victoria Road, Chepstow:
- Innage Farm:
- Mathern Palace:
- Blackrock

3.3 In addition a stage 2 bid for £130K (having successfully passed stage 1) is under preparation for the Big Lottery Coastal Communities Fund, which if successful would fund interpretation, marketing, business and community engagement along the Wales Coast Path.

c) Wentwood: Section 16 Application

3.4 As part of the "Circuit of Wales" section 16 application to de-register common land in Blaenau Gwent the proposed "replacement land" (i.e. land that would become registered as common land) includes 113ha of land at Wentwood Forest. The application has been the subject of a Public Inquiry and the Inspector's report is now awaited.

3.5 In practical terms as the site is managed by NRW as part of the public forest estate if it were to be designated as common land it would have little impact on access, nor on the current bridleways which bound or cross the area in question. In due course the designation of common land would lead to its designation as "open access" land – however as the 10 year review has only just been completed this would not be for another 10 years. In the long term designation would add to the protection of public access. We made representations, and the applicant has agreed, that in the event of the application being confirmed that it will be offered for Access Land designation on a voluntary basis.

d) NRW

3.6 NRW's internal reorganisation is proceeding and is creating two catchment based place teams covering Monmouthshire, for the Usk and Wye catchments in SE Wales. Operational forestry local management arrangements are also changing.

4. **AUTHOR:**

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LAF Secretary

Monmouthshire Local Access Forum

SUBJECT: ISSUES PRIORITISATION SYSTEM

AGENDA ITEM: 6

MEETING: MONMOUTHSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

DATE: 28 APRIL 2015

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.2 To provide members with information on the operation of the issues prioritisation system.

2. RECOMMENDATION:

- 2.1 The Local Access Forum considers the operation of the issues prioritisation system.

3. BACKGROUND:

- 3.1 At the last meeting the LAF had information presented on the operation of the issues prioritisation system, which looked at issue resolution by priority banding.
- 3.2 The presented information is appended to this report for member's information and consideration.
- 3.3 A further breakdown of the performance indicators is being prepared and will be presented at the meeting to aid the LAF's discussions. One area for discussion may be whether, or how, we should prioritise community led improvement schemes which address protracted enforcement and maintenance issues / deliver significant public benefits.

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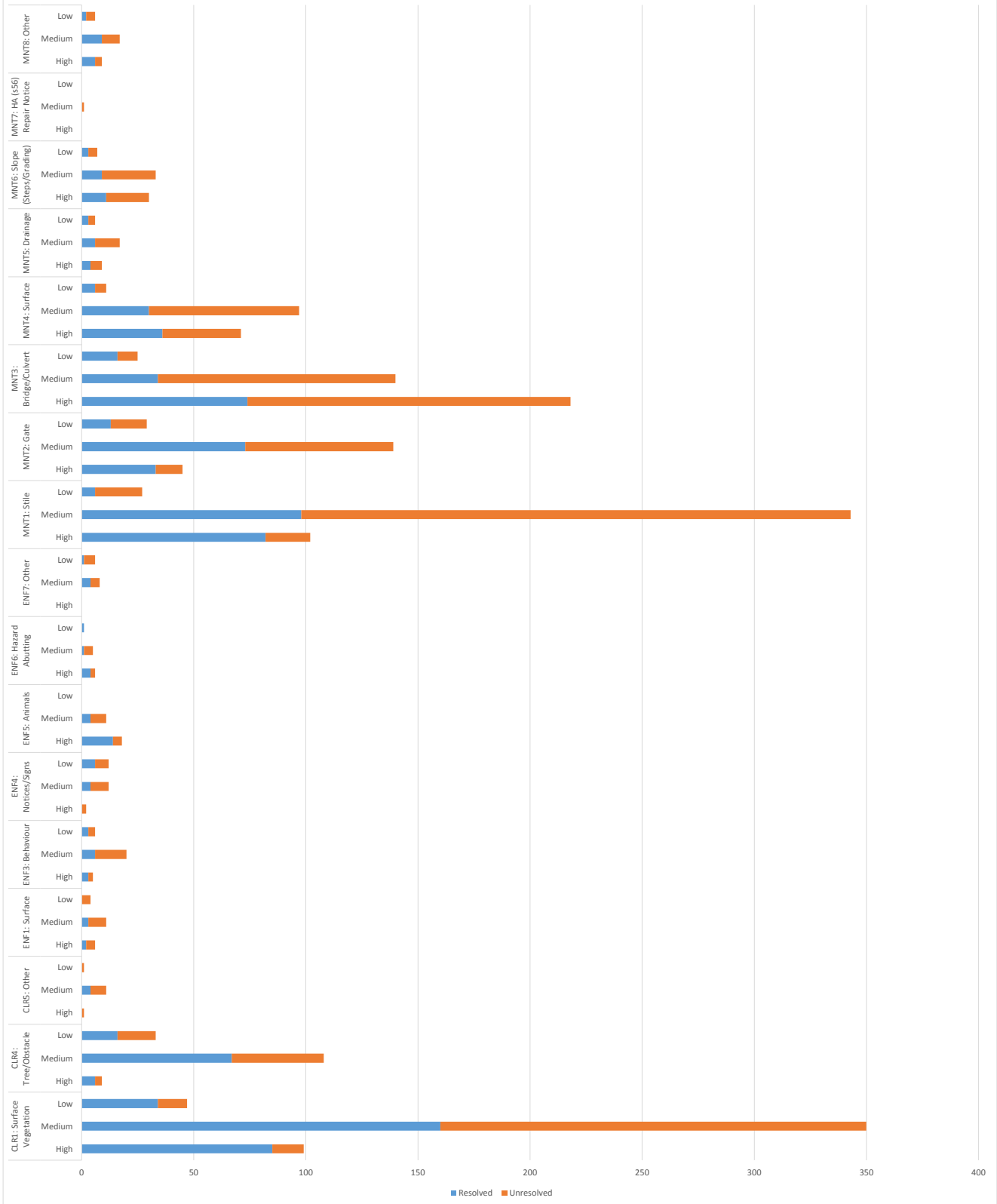
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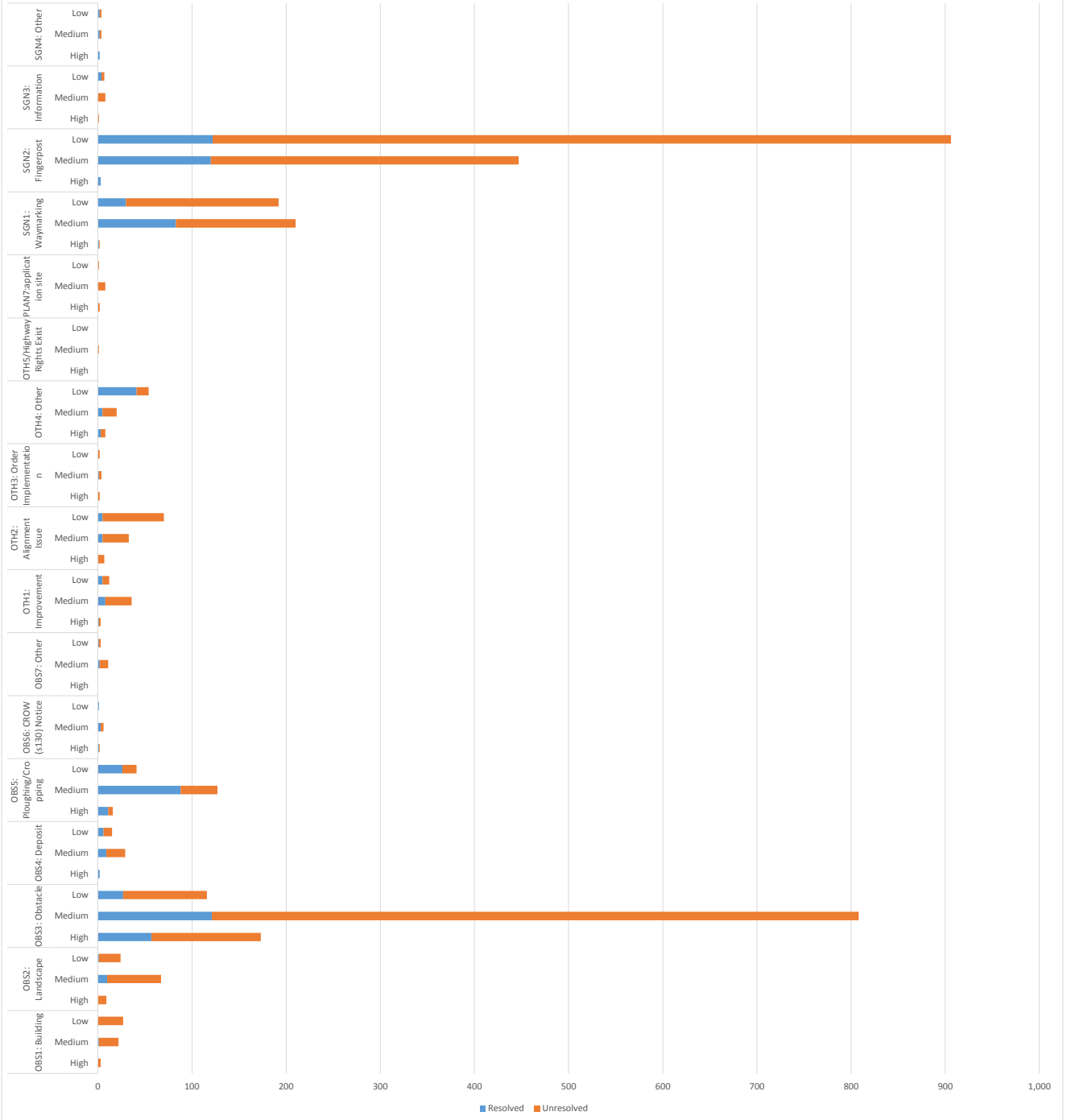
5. APPENDIX:

Graphs of issue resolution by priority banding

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Monmouthshire Local Access Forum

SUBJECT: LAF MEMBERSHIP
MEETING: MONMOUTHSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM
DATE: 28 APRIL 2015

AGENDA ITEM: 7

1. PURPOSE:

1.1 To provide an update on LAF membership.

2. RECOMMENDATION:

2.1 The Local Access Forum considers how it wishes to address the membership vacancy.

3. BACKGROUND:

3.1 Andrew James has indicated he is no longer able to attend regular meetings and has therefore with regret tendered his resignation from the LAF.

3.2 This reduces the LAF's membership to eleven; one below the minimum requirement set out in the Regulations, and therefore the Appointing Authority will require the LAF's guidance as to how you wish to proceed to fill this vacancy.

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Monmouthshire Local Access Forum

SUBJECT: FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME
MEETING: MONMOUTHSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM
DATE: 28 APRIL 2015

AGENDA ITEM: 8

| Item | Background | Reporting Arrangements |
|--|---|---------------------------|
| Standard Items: | | |
| Performance Measures | Include in “prioritisation system” report | Regular report to LAF |
| Funding | Include in “updates” report | Regular report to LAF |
| Consultations | Responses to NRW, MCC and other consultations as required | Report to LAF |
| Working Groups: | | |
| Tir Gofal / Glastir Permissive routes | Report as required | Sub Group / Report to LAF |
| Development/External Funding/Active Travel | Report as required | Sub Group / Report to LAF |
| A465 dualing implementation | To be established with Brecon Beacons LAF | Sub Group / Report to |

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| | | LAF |
| Work Programme Items | | |
| Training | Initial training session held 23 June 2014 at Shire Hall, Monmouth. Second session, for those unable to attend, to be agreed | Training sessions |
| Green Paper – Legislation Programme | Awaiting Green Paper publication by Welsh Government | Future report to LAF |
| Access to Water | | Future report to LAF |
| Production of Annual Report | 2014 / 2015 Report completed | |
| Definitive Map Modification Order & List of Streets and Definitive Map Records | “Procedures for investigating claims for unrecorded public highways/rights of way” and “1949 highway records and how the missing routes can be added to the definitive map, along with information on the backlog of DMMOs and how they are being progressed” | Address background in training / Future report to LAF |
| Prioritisation System | Reported to LAF 11 December 2014 | Report to LAF 28 April 2015 |
| Volunteering | Update / review | Future report to LAF |
| Natural Resources Wales | Natural Resources Wales Update | Future report to LAF |
| New M4 | To include consideration of sub group if required with Newport LAF | Future report to LAF |