

PUBLIC HEALTH BODY BACKS WELSH GOVERNMENT CANCELLATION OF M4 RELIEF ROAD

An international scientific society concerned with the impact of transport on public health has welcomed the announcement in the Welsh Assembly on 4th June by the First Minister of Wales cancelling the M4 Relief Road in South East Wales.

The Transport and Health Science Group has commented:-

“We welcome the decision of the Welsh Government not to proceed with the M4 Relief Road. There is a climate emergency and further roadbuilding is not consistent with that emergency. Well done, Wales

“We welcome the Expert Commission to consider alternatives to the cancelled road scheme and hope that this Commission will be innovative and will consider ideas like automated highways and vehicle-carrying trains. We call for investment in active travel, and in Welsh railways and public transport.

“Now that the Welsh Government has had the courage to resist the road lobby and defend future generations we call upon the UK Government to follow suit and redirect investment from roads to more appropriate forms of infrastructure

“Investment in roads does not reduce congestion, except temporarily. It just increases road traffic until congestion returns to the same level.”

THSG’s international Board recently issued a call supporting the concept of a climate change emergency in which it said

“Climate change is one of the greatest threats to public health across the world. It threatens socio-political, economic and environmental sustainability and hundreds of millions of lives, through

- adverse weather events;
- rising sea levels resulting in flooding to coastal cities,
- drought and lack of water;
- disturbances of food supplies and other ecological changes;
- poor air and potable water quality;
- violence and war over limited resources; and
- the spread of infectious diseases.

“The worst-case scenario is that the human species itself could be part of a mass species extinction as we enter a new geological era, the Anthropocene Era.”

THSG is a sponsor of the award-winning Journal of Transport and Health and a co-organiser of the International Conference on Transport and Health, the fifth annual conference of which will be held in Melbourne later this year.

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