

# Transport Secretary Ken Skates officially opens multi-million pound M4 junction 28 roundabout construction project

The £13.7million project, which started in February 2017, aims to reduce delays on the M4 and encourage more motorists to use the Southern Distributor Road in Newport.

Transport Secretary Ken Skates planted a tree at the roundabout today (Wednesday, 21 November) to mark the official opening of the project.

The tree planting will contribute to the Welsh Government's Green Corridors initiative, which aims to improve the landscape and environmental quality of the urban and rural transport network in Wales.

The roundabout, together with the adjacent roundabouts of Bassaleg and Pont Ebbw, is used by more than 6,000 vehicles an hour at peak times.

Benefits from the work include reduced delays to movements between the M4, A48, A467 and the Southern Distributor Road, as well as enhanced road safety at junctions. It is hoped that improvements to all three junctions will boost economic regeneration by providing access to jobs, safe and reliable journeys and improved resilience for the trunk road and local network in south east Wales.

During the opening ceremony Ken Skates also had the opportunity to view a simulated driving unit which Arup, the project designer, are developing. The project involves the use of virtual reality and computer gaming technology to develop a simulator that allows people to look at designs.

In the prototype development Arup have used the design data from the Junction 28 project to prepare a demonstration driving simulator.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Ken Skates said:

"I am delighted to mark the completion of this £13.7million construction project that will not only boost traffic flow but also improve road safety in the area.

"This vital construction work will benefit thousands of motorists every day at a junction that is a principal link between the M4 and the major employment area of west Newport. The junction also provides a link between the eastern South Wales Valleys and west Newport, so this construction project should have a massive impact on transport links for motorists.

“It was fascinating to see the virtual reality simulator that helped contribute to the planning of this project and gain an insight into the cutting edge technology that can be used in future.

“It is important that we have a strong transport network across Wales that can support not only businesses but the wider population too. We need to invest in our infrastructure in projects like this and ensure that every effort is made to support the Welsh economy.”

Tom Kenyon, Project Manager for Costain, the Principal Contractor for the M4 J28 improvements scheme, said:

“We are really pleased to have completed this much needed project and we are very grateful to the travelling public and nearby communities for their tolerance and support during the 20 month construction programme.

“There remains some ongoing work with A467 southbound morning peak time traffic flows, otherwise the new arrangements seem to be operating very effectively.”