

National Assembly for Wales
Enterprise and Business Committee

Rugby World Cup Transport Planning

December 2015

Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales



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Enterprise and Business Committee

The Committee was established on 22 June 2011 with a remit to examine legislation and hold the Welsh Government to account by scrutinising its expenditure, administration and policy, encompassing economic development; transport and infrastructure; employment; higher education and skills; and research and development, including technology and science.

Current Committee membership:



William Graham (Chair)
Welsh Conservatives
South Wales East



Mick Antoniw
Welsh Labour
Pontypridd



Mohammad Asghar
Welsh Conservatives
South Wales East



Jeff Cuthbert
Welsh Labour
Caerphilly



Keith Davies
Welsh Labour
Llanelli



Dafydd Elis-Thomas
Plaid Cymru
Dwyfor Meirionnydd



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Plaid Cymru
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Eluned Parrott
Welsh Liberal Democrats
South Wales Central



Gwenda Thomas
Welsh Labour
Neath



Joyce Watson
Welsh Labour
Mid and West Wales

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Recommendations

Recommendation 1. All stakeholders should urgently review the travel plan for major events in Cardiff. This should include steps to ensure there is a single, integrated command structure. (Page 14)

Recommendation 2. This process should include consideration of what is an acceptable period of waiting following a game. The RWC has shown that flow can be improved. Lessons learned on the need for better queue management and improved movement of passengers through the station must be applied. (Page 14)

Recommendation 3. Communication is key - greater efforts must be made by event organisers and transport companies to ensure fans are better informed of the options available and their expectations regarding queuing managed. (Page 14)

Recommendation 4. Coach travel should have a greater role in travel planning, particularly while constraints at Cardiff Central Station remain. This should include use of coaches both as a main mode of travel but also as a contingency to relieve pressure at the station. (Page 14)

Recommendation 5. The planning group needs to work with those involved in the redevelopment of Central Square to ensure that the impact of works outside the station on major event transport is minimised, and the maximum amount of space is available and used as effectively as possible. (Page 14)

Recommendation 6. Welsh Government should work with Network Rail and the UK Department for Transport to ensure that the significance and serious impact of the capacity constraints at Cardiff Central are understood and further capacity improvement work undertaken as a matter of urgency in rail Control Period 6 (2019-24). (Page 16)

Recommendation 7. Network Rail must ensure Cardiff area signalling improvements are delivered as swiftly as possible. (Page 16)

Recommendation 8. Welsh Government should work with Network Rail and Department for Transport to consider how the network can be upgraded to ensure that non-event passenger services and freight can be accommodated during stadium events. We believe this could be

considered during delivery of electrification programmes and might include use of Cardiff Queen Street Station. (Page 16)

Recommendation 9. In the meantime, those responsible for major event planning should discuss with train operating companies, freight operators and their customers whether the re-scheduling of freight and provision of additional trains is needed and/or desirable for future major events at the Millennium Stadium. (Page 16)

Chair's foreword

The Enterprise and Business Committee was greatly concerned by the transport difficulties experienced by fans travelling to and from Rugby World Cup matches in Cardiff and some of the media reporting of these difficulties.

These major events are an economic opportunity for Wales to sell itself to the world as a great place to visit and do business.



I am grateful to the rail and bus operators, South Wales Police, Cardiff Council and England Rugby 2015 Ltd (the Rugby World Cup organisers) for giving us the full story on what led to transport problems during the first three games of the Rugby World Cup, and how they were overcome for the final five games held in Cardiff.

It is clear to us that the root problem here is the aging infrastructure at Cardiff Central station. There is a clear need for substantial investment in the station to create a facility fit for the 21st century, and the expectations of passengers.

Despite the criticism we heard, there is also a positive story to tell. Following severe difficulties at the first three matches, the final five games at the stadium showed that it is possible to deliver an experience which allows fans to leave quickly without excessive waiting. We commend those involved for their hard work, under significant pressure, to respond to the initial difficulties. We believe the bar has now been raised for future events, and we are urging all involved to continue to work together to maintain that standard.

All the evidence suggests that expectations are rising both for fans and organisers, and to remain one of the world's leading venues for major events, Cardiff needs to boost its aspirations and continue to improve its transport planning and delivery.

Cardiff will welcome football's Champions League Final in 2017 – the most watched annual sporting event in the world with an estimated global TV audience of 180 million in over 200 countries. It is vital that the lessons of the Rugby World Cup are learned quickly and put in place for that event.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William Graham". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial 'W'.

William Graham AM,
Chair, Enterprise & Business Committee.

1. Background

1. During the Rugby World Cup 2015, Wales' Millennium Stadium played host to eight games. The first three games in particular triggered significant complaints from spectators about the travel arrangements, which at some points led to difficulties for fans travelling to Cardiff and queues of up to four hours in order to leave the city.
2. The Enterprise & Business Committee decided to invite a range of stakeholders for a one day inquiry on 5 November 2015 to investigate the planning and delivery of transport provision around the Rugby World Cup and to see what lessons could be learned for future high profile events.
3. Specifically, the Committee wished to consider:
 - the planning process for the Rugby World Cup;
 - reports of significant queues and overcrowding on train services, including their causes and impact;
 - the appropriateness and effectiveness of public transport provision for the events more generally (for example bus and taxi services and infrastructure);
 - the effectiveness of communication around the events;
 - any public safety or other concerns arising from the organisation of these events and any lessons learnt for future events of this type.

2. Evidence gathering

4. The Committee is grateful to the following stakeholders for providing written evidence to the committee:

- [South Wales Police](#)
- [Cardiff Bus](#)
- [National Express](#)
- [Arriva Trains Wales](#)
- [Great Western Railway](#)
- [Network Rail](#)
- [Rail Delivery Group](#)
- [England Rugby 2015 Ltd](#)

5. Representatives of the England Rugby 2015, South Wales Police, Cardiff Bus, Arriva Trains Wales, Great Western Railway, and Network Rail, plus the Confederation of Passenger Transport and Cardiff Council, all appeared before the committee on [5 November 2015](#).

6. The committee also considered media and social media reports relating to Rugby World Cup transport in Cardiff.

3. Key facts

7. 564,524¹ fans attended the eight RWC games in the Millennium Stadium.
8. 158,969² extra fans watched RWC games at the Cardiff Arms Park fanzone.
9. The pattern of attendance was very different to Six Nations or Autumn International Series rugby matches.
10. Just 25% of tickets for Wales' games were sold to postcodes in Wales³.
11. Only 5% of tickets for the six other games, were sold to postcodes in Wales⁴.
12. Consequently most rail passengers were travelling east to England after matches.
13. Cardiff Central Station has only three station platforms which can take trains heading to the East – to Newport, Bristol and London.
14. The close proximity of the Millennium Stadium to Central Station means there is little time for crowds leaving the stadium to disperse before they arrive in the station queuing area.

¹ Cardiff Council infographic

² Cardiff Council infographic

³ England Rugby 2015 (RWC organisers) written evidence, p3, based on data from Ticketmaster

⁴ England Rugby 2015 (RWC organisers) written evidence, p3, based on data from Ticketmaster

4. Conclusions

15. The committee heard clear evidence that there were significant problems around the first three games to be held in Cardiff, and substantial frustration for spectators queuing for long periods before being able to return home.

16. However there was very low levels of public disorder, and all spectators were – eventually – able to be transported away from the city for all games.

17. Following urgent meetings to address spectator dissatisfaction at the first two games, a new plan was put in place for the third game, with additional coaches made available. However, this had a limited effect, as it proved difficult for spectators to access the extra coaches.

18. For subsequent games further more radical changes were made, including a revised queuing system, faster loading of trains, and full use of additional coaches. These allowed a much faster evacuation of the station area.

19. Spectator satisfaction ratings recorded by England Rugby 2015 Ltd, the RWC organisers, suggest that the overwhelming majority of fans had a positive transport experience for the final five games in Cardiff.

5. Recommendations

Cardiff's major event travel planning

20. From our evidence, it appears that familiarity with events at the Millennium Stadium has bred a certain amount of complacency among those in Cardiff responsible for travel planning. However, the positive spectator ratings of the final five games shows what can be achieved with effective collaboration between all the parties involved.

21. We were concerned to note that representatives of Cardiff Council felt that the plan had worked – in terms of meeting the challenge of providing sufficient capacity – when there were clearly delays and frustrations for spectators, particularly in the early games.

22. We also heard evidence suggesting that communication of travel options available could have been more effective, particularly on queuing arrangements and ensuring the full range of train times etc. were readily available to fans using the Rugby World Cup app and website.

23. We believe there is scope to improve the delineation and management of queues, and also to improve passenger loading operations to ensure better flow through the station onto platforms and trains. This was demonstrated at later Rugby World Cup matches.

24. We believe that the creation of a single integrated command in one place following initial difficulties improved management and should be replicated in future.

25. The committee is concerned that the extensive building work planned for Central Square could have an impact on events at the Stadium in the coming months and years.

26. Major events are a welcome addition to the life of the city and can provide a cultural and economic boost to residents. However, it is vital that consideration is given to residents and businesses in the city in planning major events so that the regular life of the city is not impeded.

Recommendations:

All stakeholders should urgently review the travel plan for major events in Cardiff. This should include steps to ensure there is a single, integrated command structure.

This process should include consideration of what is an acceptable period of waiting following a game. The RWC has shown that flow can be improved. Lessons learned on the need for better queue management and improved movement of passengers through the station must be applied.

Communication is key - greater efforts must be made by event organisers and transport companies to ensure fans are better informed of the options available and their expectations regarding queuing managed.

Coach travel should have a greater role in travel planning, particularly while constraints at Cardiff Central Station remain. This should include use of coaches both as a main mode of travel but also as a contingency to relieve pressure at the station.

The planning group needs to work with those involved in the redevelopment of Central Square to ensure that the impact of works outside the station on major event transport is minimised, and the maximum amount of space is available and used as effectively as possible.

Infrastructure

27. Fundamental to the problems at Cardiff are an aging station in need of modernisation. Rail operators were at pains to point out that this was a major challenge for them.

28. The Committee feel strongly that as a major gateway to Wales, Cardiff Central Station does not meet the needs and expectations of travellers. It is no longer fit for purpose to welcome visitors to a modern European capital. The station cannot cope with the demands placed upon it. It is vital that the capacity of the station is redeveloped as soon as possible in order to accommodate the growing numbers of passengers arriving and departing. This must be an urgent priority.

29. Redevelopment of Cardiff Central Station will cost “upwards of £200-£300million”⁵. However, competition for the next round of rail infrastructure improvements will be fierce, and political support could prove crucial in securing investment in Welsh projects.

30. Experts suggest that the Cardiff Area Signalling Renewal will improve the capacity of the tracks around the station. We are aware that this work has faced delays and it is vital that it is completed as soon as possible at the same time as seeking to secure further investment.

31. It was clear that one of the core considerations in transport planning was that regular services – including freight – should not be inconvenienced. However, in order to improve matters for the final games, some compromises were made including re-scheduling of freight and other passenger services.

32. The Committee believes that consideration should be given to whether it is practical to maintain a policy of no disruption to non-event services and freight routes during major events. Clearly it is desirable that any changes should be kept to a minimum and we believe that if properly considered during event preparations changes could be planned and communicated effectively minimising the impact, rather than being implemented at short notice amplifying the impact of disruption.

⁵ Paul McMahon, Network Rail, Enterprise and Business Committee, Record of Proceedings, 5 November 2015, para 242
<http://www.senedd.assembly.wales/documents/s45861/5%20November%202015%20-%20Draft.pdf>

Recommendations:

Welsh Government should work with Network Rail and the UK Department for Transport to ensure that the significance and serious impact of the capacity constraints at Cardiff Central are understood and further capacity improvement work undertaken as a matter of urgency in rail Control Period 6 (2019-24).

Network Rail must ensure Cardiff area signalling improvements are delivered as swiftly as possible.

Welsh Government should work with Network Rail and Department for Transport to consider how the network can be upgraded to ensure that non-event passenger services and freight can be accommodated during stadium events. We believe this could be considered during delivery of electrification programmes and might include use of Cardiff Queen Street Station.

In the meantime, those responsible for major event planning should discuss with train operating companies, freight operators and their customers whether the re-scheduling of freight and provision of additional trains is needed and/or desirable for future major events at the Millennium Stadium.