



Transport Policy

Introduction

There are 33,100 kilometres of highway in Wales. There are also 1,700 kilometres of passenger railway lines. 75% of households in Wales have one or more cars/vans available, with a higher proportion in rural Wales. Some 70% of personal journeys in Wales are by car, slightly above the GB average. Bus, coach and rail use are below the GB average. Only 2% of journeys are by bicycle. Transport accounts for around 14 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions in Wales. Of this, road transport is the greatest contributor, with more than 90 per cent of emissions.

The Welsh Assembly Government is the responsible for Trunk Roads and Motorways, whilst the 22 local highway authorities are responsible for other highways. The *Transport (Wales) Act 2006* and the *Railways Act 2005* gave Welsh Ministers new powers in relation to transport matters in Wales.

Overview of current statutory powers of the Assembly

Under the *Government of Wales Act 2006*, the National Assembly for Wales can seek legislative competence through Acts of Parliament or Legislative Competence Orders (LCOs) to make a piece of law in the form of an 'Assembly Measure'. Measures can only be made in a specific policy area (or 'Matter') added to one of the 20 'Fields' (or broad subject areas) which are contained in Schedule 5 of the Act.

As "Highways and Transport" is Field 10 of Schedule 5 to the Act, the National Assembly for Wales can seek Measure-making powers in this area. Currently there are no Matters in this field, but the Local Transport Bill currently before Parliament would add a Matter relating to Trunk Road user charging.

Responsibility for roads is devolved to Wales (see the Topic Brief on Roads). Some aspects of road safety are also devolved (see the Topic Brief on Road Safety). The *Railways Act 2005* gave new powers to the Assembly in relation to the railways in Wales (see the Topic Brief on Railways). The *Transport Wales Act 2006* gave Welsh Ministers new powers including:

- a duty to develop and implement policies for the promotion of safe, integrated, efficient, economic and sustainable transport facilities and services;
- a duty to prepare a Wales Transport Strategy, setting out those policies;
- provisions for joint working arrangements and for joint transport authorities in Wales so that Local Authority transport functions are carried out on a regional basis;
- powers to secure the provision of public passenger transport services where the requirement for such services would not otherwise be met; and
- a power to establish a new Public Transport Users' Committee for Wales.

The Welsh Assembly Government currently has some limited powers over the provision of bus services in Wales. It operates a concessionary fares scheme for travel on buses and has provided financial support for long distance bus routes. It is also providing financial support for an air route between Cardiff and Anglesey.

Matters reserved to the UK government include: ports and shipping; most aspects of civil aviation; some aspects of bus regulation; policing; national speed limits; road signs; vehicle construction and use regulations.

Forthcoming EU and UK primary legislation

The Local Transport Bill currently before Parliament also includes additional powers for the Assembly Government relating to road pricing and to the provision of bus services.

Key Welsh Government strategy documents and action plans:

The Assembly Government's *One Wales* document includes the following commitments:

"We will improve transport between communities across Wales by investing in many different modes of travel. We will develop and implement a programme for improved North-South links, including travel by road and rail.

We will reduce rail travel time between the North and South of Wales.

We will press ahead with improvements to major road links between the North, the West and the South of Wales, investing over £50 million for this purpose over the four year Assembly term.¹"

*One Wales: Connecting the Nation*², the transport strategy for Wales was published in May 2008.

This sets out the following five key areas where the Assembly Government says that substantial progress needs to be made:

- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions and other environmental impacts;
- Improving public transport and better integration between modes;
- Improving links and access between key settlements and sites across Wales and strategically important all-Wales links;
- Enhancing international connectivity; and
- Increasing safety and security.

The strategy will be followed by a National Transport Plan in 2009 and four Regional Transport Plans to be prepared by the Regional Transport Consortia. The Welsh Assembly Government set out their plans for the future maintenance and improvement of trunk roads in Wales, in the March 2002 report, *Trunk Road Forward Programme*³. Following a review of Transport Policy in 2004, the Assembly Government issued updated information on the programmes⁴

A Rail Planning Assessment for Wales setting out the options for the development of the railway over the next 20 years was published by the Department for Transport and the Welsh Assembly Government in 2007⁵.

Useful links

- Welsh Assembly Government website transport pages: <http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/transport/?lang=en>
- Department for Transport: <http://www.dft.gov.uk/>
- South East Wales Transport Alliance (SEWTA): <http://www.sewta.gov.uk/>
- South West Wales Integrated Transport Consortium (SwwITCH): <http://www.swwitch.org.uk/default.asp?id=1>
- TraCC (Mid-Wales): <http://www.tracc.gov.uk/>
- Taith (North Wales): <http://www.taith.gov.uk/>

Further information

For further information about transport in Wales, please contact please contact Graham Winter, Members' Research Service (Graham.Winter@wales.gsi.gov.uk), 029 2089 8166

¹ *One Wales: A progressive agenda for the government of Wales*, An agreement between the Labour and Plaid Cymru Groups in the National Assembly, June 2007

² Welsh Assembly Government, *One Wales: Connecting the Nation, The Wales Transport Strategy*, May 2008

³ Welsh Assembly Government, *Trunk Road Forward Programme2002*

⁴ Welsh Assembly Government, *Trunk Road Forward Programme2004 Update*

⁵ Department for Transport and the Welsh Assembly Government, *Wales Rail Planning Assessment*, July 2007