



Cynulliad National  
Cenedlaethol Assembly for  
Cymru Wales

## **Enterprise and Learning Committee**

### **Report of Committee's consideration of the Fuel and Road Haulage Petition**

#### **Background**

1. The Petitions' Committee considered petition P-03-145 on Fuel and Road Haulage in Wales at its meeting on 25 June 2008. A copy of the petition is attached at Annex 1. The Committee requested that the Enterprise and Learning Committee investigate the issues raised.
2. On 3 July 2008, the Enterprise and Learning Committee discussed a paper setting out handling options for a number of petitions that had either been formally remitted or referred to the Committee for further consideration. In the case of petition P-03-145, the Committee resolved to elect a rapporteur group to scrutinise the issue on its behalf. David Melding AM; Janet Ryder AM; and Kirsty Williams AM were duly elected.

#### **Introduction**

3. The group met informally with representatives of the Freight Transport Association (FTA) on 4 November 2008. The FTA provided a written memorandum, which is attached at Annex 2. The FTA was represented by:

Bill Simons, Transport Manager, Capper & Co Ltd (Talbot Green)

Ian Jarman, Environmental & Legislation Manager, Owens Road Services

Vincent J M Brickley, Director, Tandem Transport Services Limited

Ian Gallagher, Policy Manager, Midlands Southwest & Wales, FTA

Stephen Kelly, Head of Policy, Midlands Southwest & Wales, FTA

The group is grateful to the FTA for providing written evidence and for briefing us on the latest position with regard to fuel prices.

4. The group and other members of the Enterprise and Learning Committee also had the opportunity of questioning Richard Brunstrom, Chief Constable of North Wales Police and spokesperson for the Association of Chief Police Officers in Wales on road safety issues

during a video conference session as part of a formal Committee hearing on 12 November. We are particularly grateful to the Chief Constable for his assistance and for the oral evidence he provided.

### **Fuel Prices and the Global Economy**

5. Fuel prices are notoriously volatile. The recent collapse of global financial markets has brought about a rapid decrease in the price at the pump from a high of 119.7p for unleaded petrol in mid July, to a UK average of 98.6p per litre at the end of October, with prices continuing to fall. Over the same period there has been a 40.9 per cent decrease in the cost of crude oil to \$78.83 in October.
6. We were told that world oil price volatility was having a huge impact on the supply chain, creating uncertainty for operators in predicting future costs. One company informed us that it paid £132,000 more for the same volume of fuel in January 2008 than in January 2007.
7. A further increase in fuel duty of 1.84 pence per litre (ppl) is due in the UK on 1 April. Again, we were told that this could mean between £3,000 to £15,000 additional costs for the key contracts for one of the companies which provided evidence. In the context of the financial downturn, it would be difficult to pass on these costs to the customer.
8. There are some predictions that the price of oil could rise again to as much as \$300 within the next 18-24 months.

### **Economic activity in Wales – Business rates**

9. In the current economic climate, we explored what might be done to make current trading conditions more favourable for business. The issue of using a lever on business rates was raised.
10. Various forms of relief are available to reduce the amount of business rates for which ratepayers are liable, some of which are mandatory and some discretionary. We are advised that it is not possible to vary business rates according to a group or classification of business in Wales, except by reference to rateable value. We acknowledge the specific relief that has been given to small businesses and are aware of the Welsh Assembly Government's consultation on expanding the Small Business Relief Scheme. **We urge the Welsh Assembly Government, given the current economic downturn, to consider a further extension of the categories of business which would be covered by the small business relief scheme and to use all available levers on rates to support business at this difficult time.**

## Development of Welsh Ports

11. Given the need to stimulate economic activity in Wales, ports such as Port Talbot, could be developed along the lines of Felixstowe and Southampton, to enable freight to be loaded and quickly transported along the M4 corridor by the domestic road haulage industry. **We recommend that the Welsh Assembly Government informs the forthcoming review of Welsh ports by the Welsh Affairs Select Committee of the need for a survey of Welsh ports to determine where additional capacity can be found to improve access to freight and to promote the operation of the road haulage industry in Wales.**

## Decoupling

12. The FTA raised the need to implement separate taxing for commercial vehicles and private vehicles to underpin future viability, but acknowledged that this would be expensive.

## Cabotage

13. According to Department for Transport data, the number of foreign trucks entering Britain on international journeys reached an all time high of 1,719,000 in 2007. UK hauliers now account for 19 per cent of international road haulage between Britain and continental Europe.
14. Diesel duty for UK transport is 50ppl, compared with the European average of 25 ppl. We are aware that this disparity of costs exposes UK hauliers to an uneven playing field, thus undermining their competitiveness. In particular, we share the industry's concerns regarding the impact of lorry journeys beginning in Ireland.

## Road safety

15. The issue of road safety as a result of the increasing presence of non-UK registered vehicles on the roads of Wales, and in particular the A55 and M4, concerns us greatly. It is widely reported that these lorries are frequently overloaded, that drivers regularly exceed safe hours limits, and that many lorries are simply not roadworthy.
16. VOSA, the Vehicle and Operators Services Agency, is responsible for checking legal compliance of lorries and their drivers and monitors operators who most frequently break regulations on roadworthiness, overloading and drivers' hours.
17. The FTA indicated that the numbers of unsafe lorries on roads in Wales meant unfair competition, since non-UK registered vehicles have lower maintenance costs under less robust road safety laws.

18. The Chief Constable of North Wales indicated that this raised serious issues. He acknowledged that commercial traffic was more properly regulated in the UK than in some parts of Europe and quoted figures of 1 per cent of non-UK registered lorries doing business in the UK being responsible for 8 per cent of fatalities. He also referred to a VOSA press release of 14 October 2008, which highlighted the results of a recent clampdown on unsafe lorries. The press release is attached at Annex 3. Of 3,628 vehicles tested during "Operation Boston" on 1-5 October 2008, 2,273 were registered outside the UK and 1,206 were breaking the law. Of the 1,355 UK registered vehicles stopped, 683 were breaking the law.
19. We were glad to learn of new powers given to VOSA and the police by legislation that will be implemented on 1 April 2009, whereby they will be able to impose road side fines: non-UK registered vehicles will not be exempt, making them subject to UK law for the first time.
20. We also explored the impact that unfair competition and more robust UK legislation had on the economy and Welsh businesses. The Chief Constable informed us that tougher enforcement along the A55 corridor would only lead to traffic using Liverpool and thus have a detrimental impact on business in North Wales. Clearly tackling this issue would require a UK wide approach and makes particular Welsh initiatives problematic.
21. The Chief Constable also referred to the forthcoming road policing manifesto to be published jointly by the Welsh Assembly Government and the police. **We recommend that the Welsh Assembly Government uses the forthcoming road policing manifesto to make known its strategic policy decisions on road safety.** Following publication, we will undertake an inquiry on implementation and policy development.

### **Severn Bridge Toll Charges**

22. The Severn Bridge currently costs £15.90 for a freight lorry on an inbound journey to Wales, with an increase of £0.70 per crossing announced for 1 January 2009 in line with inflation. For a company making an average 880 journeys per month, this equates to an annual charge of £167,904 and an additional cost of £3,168.
23. We are concerned that the impact of this toll, combined with the possibility of tolls on a future M4 relief road and the possible introduction of congestion charges in Cardiff, could mean that transporting freight to and from south Wales could become increasingly unattractive and untenable. We would not wish the region to lose out to Bristol and south west England.

## Efficiency of the Road Haulage Industry

24. The road haulage industry works to a standard of eight miles per gallon for maximum weight vehicles. Given the need to recover additional costs to maintain viable operations, many operators are looking at efficiency savings with regard to vehicle design – the right trailer for the right job, monitoring tyre inflation more closely, and driver training on fuel efficiency.
25. We welcome these developments and commend the industry for taking such steps to ensure future sustainability whilst having a positive environmental impact. We were however concerned to learn that appropriate fuel efficiency driver training, SAFED (Safe and Fuel Efficient Driving) is available in England and Scotland, but not in Wales. This will become increasingly significant, given the introduction of new legislation in 2009, which will entail a statutory duty of vocational training for drivers in order to retain their licenses. **We recommend that the Welsh Assembly Government provides adequate funding to ensure that SAFED training can be delivered in Wales.**

## **Summary of Recommendations**

- **We urge the Welsh Assembly Government, given the current economic downturn, to consider a further extension of the categories of business which would be covered by the small business relief scheme and to use all available levers on rates to support business at this difficult time.**
- **We recommend that the Welsh Assembly Government informs the forthcoming review of Welsh ports by the Welsh Affairs Select Committee of the need for a survey of Welsh ports to determine where additional capacity can be found to improve access to freight and to promote the operation of the road haulage industry in Wales.**
- **We recommend that the Welsh Assembly Government uses the forthcoming road policing manifesto to make known its strategic policy decisions on road safety.**
- **We recommend that the Welsh Assembly Government provides adequate funding to ensure that SAFED training can be delivered in Wales.**

## **ANNEXES**

### **Annex 1 – P-03-145 Fuel Prices**

#### **Petition Wording**

‘Fuel and Road Haulage in Wales

We the undersigned call upon the National Assembly for Wales to recognise the crippling financial impact of rising fuel prices on Welsh Haulage businesses and ask the National Assembly for Wales to instigate a review / inquiry into the competitiveness and future sustainability of the Welsh Road Haulage industry. The outcome from any inquiry should then be used to shape supportive measures for the Road Haulage Industry here in Wales and to lobby the National U.K. Government where any measures fall outside the National Assembly for Wales’ remit.’

This petition was submitted by Mr. Martin Palmer from Sully.

The petition collected signatures from 35 road haulage companies.

## Annex 2 – Written memorandum – Freight Transport Association

### The UK Supply Chain

**Road:** The dominant mode of transportation within the UK is road, accounting for 82%<sup>1</sup> of all goods lifted. The amount of goods moved by road has increased by 75% since 1980, but appears to have been stable since 1995. This is due to improved performance by the freight industry in areas such as vehicle utilisation and vehicle weights resulting in a decoupling of freight traffic from growth in GDP. Users of transport services are placing greater emphasis on agile supply chains that are responsive to customer and consumer needs and can provide door to door services – demands which trucks and light vans are well equipped to respond to. Sectors adopting this approach to supply chain management, such as manufactured white goods, drink and foodstuffs have become much more significant to the UK economy.

Goods tend to move from international gateways or sites of production to distribution centres across the UK. Exceptions to this would include products such as coal or aggregates which would move direct to their site of use. Distribution centres can be either national or regional, depending on the business model. They are placed to ensure that within constraints (e.g. driver's hour's rules) they can be received and redistributed to customers' bases in the most economically effective method. That tends to place distribution centres close to transport infrastructure such as motorways, trunk roads and multi modal freight facilities.

#### ***Facts and Figures***

- Every lorry load of goods arriving at a supermarket will be taken away by approximately 400 cars
- Despite its dependence on the road network, lorries are not the biggest road users. 63 cars are registered for every goods vehicle over 3.5 tonnes
- Only 1 in 18 vehicles on Britain's major roads is a goods vehicle over 3.5 tonnes, and only 1 in 9 is a van

*(sources: DfT Transport Statistics Great Britain, Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders)*

**Rail:** Rail freight, after a long decline, has seen a growth in the share of UK freight movements since the mid 1990's. This has been due to a reduction in rail freight costs through reduced Track Access Charges, the increased need for container service as production has been outsourced internationally, and improved rail freight services, resulting from competition in the rail freight market since privatisation. Increased unreliability of road services has also been a factor. The traditional market for rail is bulk commodities such as coal and aggregates, but the significant growth area is container traffic – of both industrial and consumer goods. The main strategic routes in the UK for container services are from the major container ports to the West Midlands and London, and north-south for domestic services from the Scottish central belt to the Midlands. These are the lines with the potential for growth.

---

<sup>1</sup> DfT Focus on Freight



### **Facts and Figures**

- Rail's share of GB freight movements has remained broadly stable over the last 20 years (8% of total tonne km); this compares to a 30% market share in 1960
- Rail is used for movement of bulk freight such as coal and coke. In 2004, 82% of coal and coke moved by rail compared to 53% in 1980.
- The movement of international containers by rail is also an essential element in the UK industry supply chain. The number of containers coming into UK ports has increased by 46 per cent between 1993 and 2003. The number of goods vehicles coming into GB ports on ro-ro ferry services has increased by 59 per cent over the same period
- Rail freight volumes on services through the Channel Tunnel have declined by 45 per cent since 2000.

*(sources: DfT Transport Statistics Great Britain, Channel Tunnel)*

**Water:** Water provides an alternative means for domestic freight movements in the UK. Of this, coastal short sea shipping forms the larger part, with inland waterways playing a small role for domestic movements.

### **The Local Supply Chain**

The final leg of the supply chain is the local delivery which encompasses the following:-

- Deliveries to shops, shopping malls, restaurants, public houses, markets and retail parks;
- Fuel to garage forecourts;
- Equipment and supplies to offices and commercial premises;
- Raw materials and finished goods to and from manufacturers / wholesalers;
- Supplies to hospitals, schools, municipal and other public buildings;
- Building materials to construction sites;
- Refuse collection and disposal, street cleansing and maintenance; and
- Domestic deliveries and furniture removal.

Lorries play an indispensable role in servicing our towns and cities. The lorry's unique ability to move freight literally from door-to-door determines its pre-eminent role in distributing goods at this level.

The Government has made clear its policies about the need to regenerate and revitalise our urban areas. Such policies are coupled with those which aim to reduce reliance on the private car, primarily by improving public transport and encouraging alternative modes such as walking and cycling. However, such measures are irrelevant to the movement of goods as industry's reliance on the lorry for urban freight movement will remain undiminished for the foreseeable future. If policies to regenerate our towns and cities are to succeed, the importance of efficient and reliable access and

movement for freight via the lorry must not only be recognised, but promoted at both national and local level.

The increasing use of home delivery of internet purchases is creating greater need for freight services to individual residencies. In the longer term this will logically create different local freight patterns.

Reconciling the need for access for goods and services with local social and environmental concerns is vital. Industry takes these issues seriously and has taken significant steps to minimise local nuisance when undertaking delivery operations in order to reduce the environmental impact.

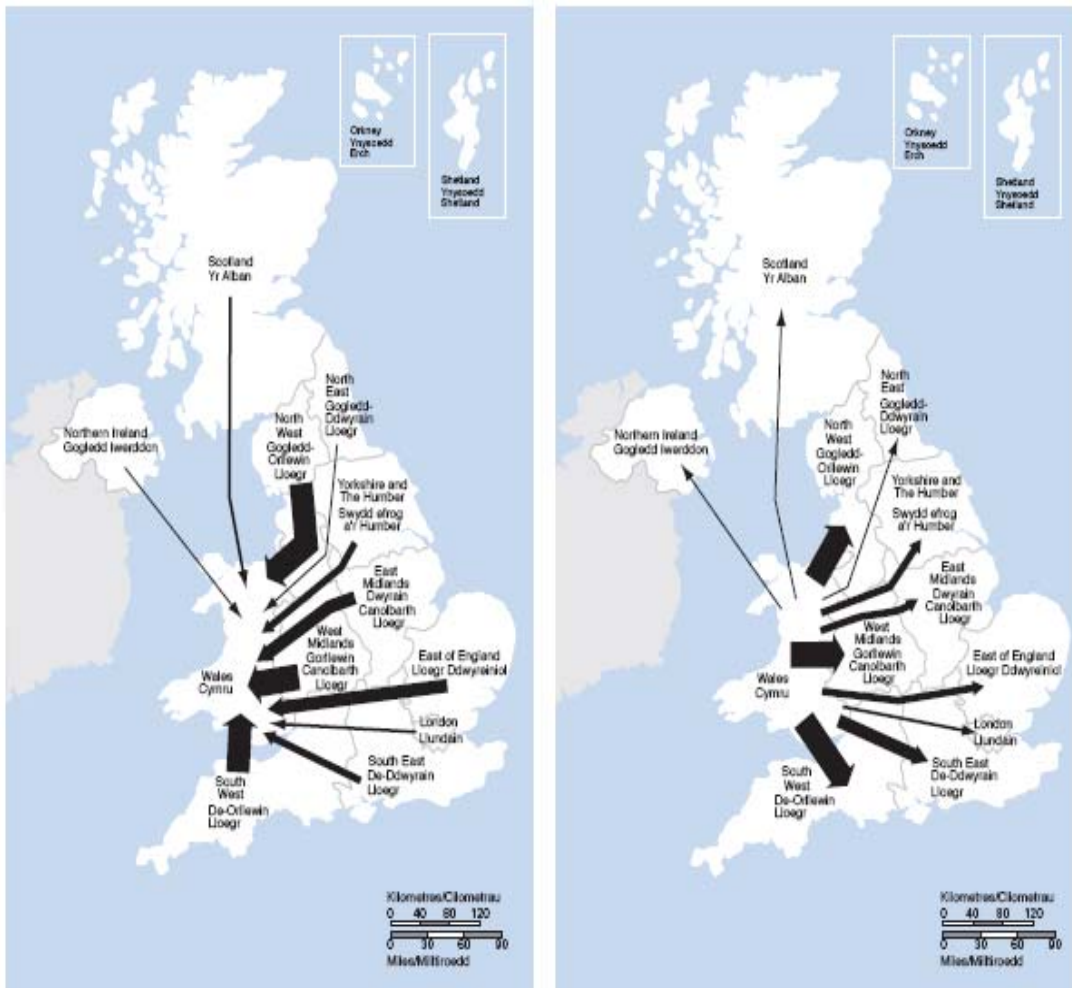
## **Freight in Wales**

Movement of freight in Wales is predominantly by road. The main areas of conurbation are centred along two corridors in the North and South and serviced by two important trade routes namely the A55 and M4. Connectivity between these two areas is limited by the nature of the geography.

### ***Facts and figures***

- In 2006 there were an estimated 754 thousand tonnes of export by road from Wales - an increase of 96 thousand tonnes since 2005
- An estimated 427 thousand tonnes of imports were carried by road to Wales in 2006 - 3% less than 2005
- In 2006, 75 per cent of the tonnage of exports by road from Wales were to Belgium, Luxembourg, France or Germany. The same four countries together account for over four-fifths (81%) of the tonnage of imports by road in 2006.
- In 2006, there were an estimated 330 thousand tonnes of chemicals exported by road from Wales. This was 108 thousand tonnes (49%) more than in 2005
- In 2006, around 63 million tonnes of goods were moved within Wales by UK registered HGVs and a further 57 million tonnes were moved between Wales and the rest of the UK
- More than half (54%) of the tonnage of goods leaving Wales by road in UK registered HGV's, were transported both to the North West of England and to the West Midlands (28% and 26% respectively). The South West of England accounted for a further 18%.
- In 2006, over a quarter of the tonnage of goods entering Wales by road in UK registered HGVs came from the North West (26%). The West Midlands and the South West of England each accounted for 20% and 22% respectively

*Source: Wales Transport Statistics 2007*



Goods lifted by road into Wales, by origin of goods, 2006

Goods lifted by road out of Wales, by destination of goods, 2006



(Source – Wales Transport Statistics 2007)

**Rail Freight** - The UK rail freight industry has grown significantly in the 10+ years since privatisation, increasing its market share and largely reversing the long-term decline in demand for rail freight observed over the preceding 40 years or more. Rail freight traffic is forecast to continue to grow, with the biggest increase in the volume of maritime containers, which is predicted to double over a ten year period. The vast majority of rail freight services in Wales run without direct subsidies. Most current rail freight services run in South Wales, with some services in North Wales and very limited operations in Mid Wales.

**Ports** - The UK port sector is largely privatised and deregulated. However, port and harbour authorities are established by an Act of Parliament and have statutory powers and responsibilities. In Wales, private ports predominate and as well as being nodes for transfer of goods from land to water, ports also support a range of related industries and functions, ranging from full scale

manufacturing and processing to storage and consolidation of cargo in transit. Most international freight arrives or leaves the UK by sea and the Welsh share of UK port traffic was just over 10% at 58.1 million tonnes (in 2004). There are 15 commercial ports in Wales, but the three major ports (Milford Haven, Port Talbot and Holyhead) carry over 80% of all Welsh throughput.

**Air** - Direct Welsh air freight is essentially confined to Cardiff International Airport, which transported some 2,391 tonnes in 2006/7<sup>2</sup>. The most significant air freight flow in Wales relates to the Airbus wing factory at Broughton. However, this is a closed operation, using bespoke aircraft specifically designed to carry aircraft parts. In general in Wales, air freight tends to be of high value and contained in the belly hold of the aircraft.<sup>3</sup>

#### **Employment in the logistics sector – Wales<sup>4</sup>**

01.1.1 There are 7,410 logistics sector workplaces in Wales accounting for 7.5% of all workplaces nationally. However many micro businesses do not need to register for VAT and may not be included in the figures. Given the large number of micro businesses operating, this may mean that many workplaces are excluded from these figures.

01.1.2 Wholesale workplaces make up 61% of the sector and freight transport by road a further 26%. The majority of the workplaces are small to medium sized enterprises with 86% of them employing 1-10 people. 59% of the workforce is employed in workplaces with less than 50 people. Freight transport by road accounts for a further 26%. The majority (87%) of wholesale workplaces employs between one and ten employees and within freight transport by road the percentage is 93%. Courier businesses account for 5% of workplaces. 11% of logistics employers employ between 11 and 49 staff meaning 3% of workplaces employ over 50 staff.

01.1.3 The logistics sector in Wales is responsible for the direct employment of 60,950 people. However, by including people in logistics related employment in other sectors, the true size of logistics employment in Wales stands at 90,950. This accounts for 7% of all employment nationally. Process, plant and machine operatives and elementary staff make up 50% of the employment. 10% of the workforce is self-employers and 16% work part-time.

Self employment in the Welsh logistics sector stands at 10%, in comparison to 13% for the Welsh all sector figure. The numbers of self-employed in the sector are mainly due to the high numbers of self-employed within freight transport by road and wholesale sub-sectors. Self-employment in national post activities, the second largest logistics sub-sectors in the region, is very low.

---

<sup>2</sup> Wales Transport Statistics 2008

<sup>3</sup> Wales Freight Strategy

<sup>4</sup> SfL - Welsh Logistics Sector National Profile 2007

The Welsh logistics sector has significantly fewer part time workers in comparison to the rest of the Welsh economy – 16% compared to 27%. The third largest sub sector, freight transport by road, has only 8% of its workforce working part time. However a fifth of national post activities employees work part time.

The age of the Welsh logistics sector workforce loosely mirrors the Welsh all sector workforce, bar the lower numbers in the youngest age group. However, it is notable that within road freight, the majority of employment comes from the older age groups and that employment figures in the 55+ age group are greater than the average for the logistics sector with over a fifth of the workforce in this category. The aging workforce does highlight the growing concerns of the future workforce supply as there are very few employees in the 16-24 age grouping.

### Fuel Cost Predictions

**Supply/Demand** - Oil prices peaked in early July at an all-time high of \$147 per barrel. Since then prices have been in steady retreat, influenced by the turmoil in the world's financial markets and the implications that a shrinking world economy would have on future oil demand. Oil demand growth continues to weaken, offsetting the impact of hurricane related disruption and lower OPEC output. However, prices remain very volatile, with unprecedented daily swings.

Estimates of global demand growth this year and next continue to be revised downwards.

	2007 demand	2008 demand	2009 demand
Actual	86.1 million barrels / day		
IEA projection of world oil demand as at October 07		88.0 million barrels / day	
IEA projection of world oil demand as at October 08		86.5 million barrel / day	87.2 million barrels / day

Source: IEA

OPEC has grown increasingly concerned over the extent of falling oil prices. Asia's financial crises in 1998 pushed oil to below \$10 a barrel. In an attempt to stabilise the market, at an emergency meeting on 24 October a 1.5 million barrels per day cut in output (or about 4.5 per cent) from November was agreed. But the reduction, which in normal times should have led to a jump in prices, failed to stop the slide in the crude price. It fell on Friday to \$62.65 a barrel, the lowest level since June 2007.

Many commentators expect the price of oil to slip below \$50 per barrel. However, the expectation is that the fall will be temporary. Prices did not bottom for three months after the last cycle of formal OPEC cuts began in October 2006, suggesting higher prices in early 2009.

## **Sterling / US Dollar exchange rate**

Over the last quarter, Sterling has fallen sharply against the US dollar as the UK's exposure to the financial crisis becomes clearer and the prospect of a recession is increasing likely. Between the end of June and the end of September, Sterling lost 10.5 per cent of its value.

The drop in Sterling's value has meant the effect of falling world oil prices has been much more muted. Had Sterling remained broadly unchanged against the US Dollar, diesel prices as at the end of October would have been 6.5 pence per litre lower.

## **Bulk diesel price forecast to Q4 2009**

	Rotterdam Diesel Product Price \$ / tonne	Sterling / USD Exchange Rate	Bulk Diesel Price incl. UK Duty (ppl)
3Q 2008	1,098.5	1.89	<b>101.1</b>
4Q 2008	725.0	1.75	<b>87.0</b>
1Q 2009	733.8	1.75	<b>87.4</b>
2Q 2009*	775.8	1.75	<b>91.2</b>
3Q 2009*	813.0	1.74	<b>93.2</b>
4Q 2009*	820.7	1.72	<b>94.1</b>

\* Based on 1.84 pence per litre diesel duty increases as announced in Budget 2008

## **Forecourt Price Wales**

Over the three month period from July to October 2008, the average price for forecourt diesel in Wales reduced by 10.8 per cent. This is a slightly larger reduction than the UK (minus Wales) average over the same time period, which shrunk by 10.6 per cent. Overall, the average price paid for forecourt diesel (incl VAT) in Wales is lower than the UK average.

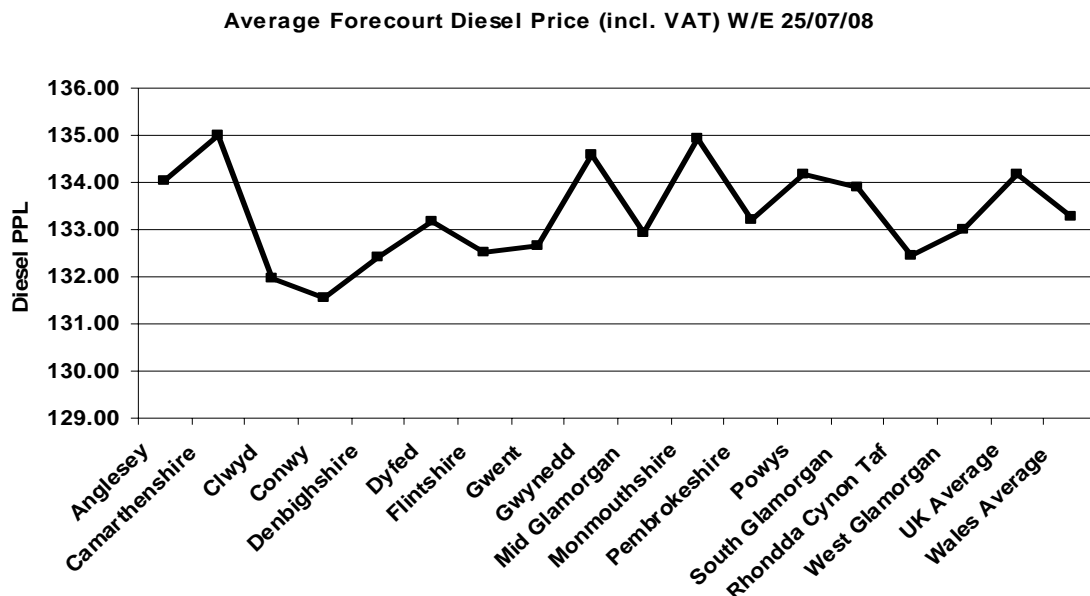
The following table and figures demonstrate the trends in forecourt diesel prices (Incl. VAT) in pence per litre (ppl) for Welsh towns and regions compared to the average for Wales and the UK (minus Wales) at two points in a three month period.

Table 1 illustrates the percentage change over the three months; figures 1 and 2 show the average price of diesel (including VAT) for week ending the 25 July 2008 and week ending the 19 October 2008.

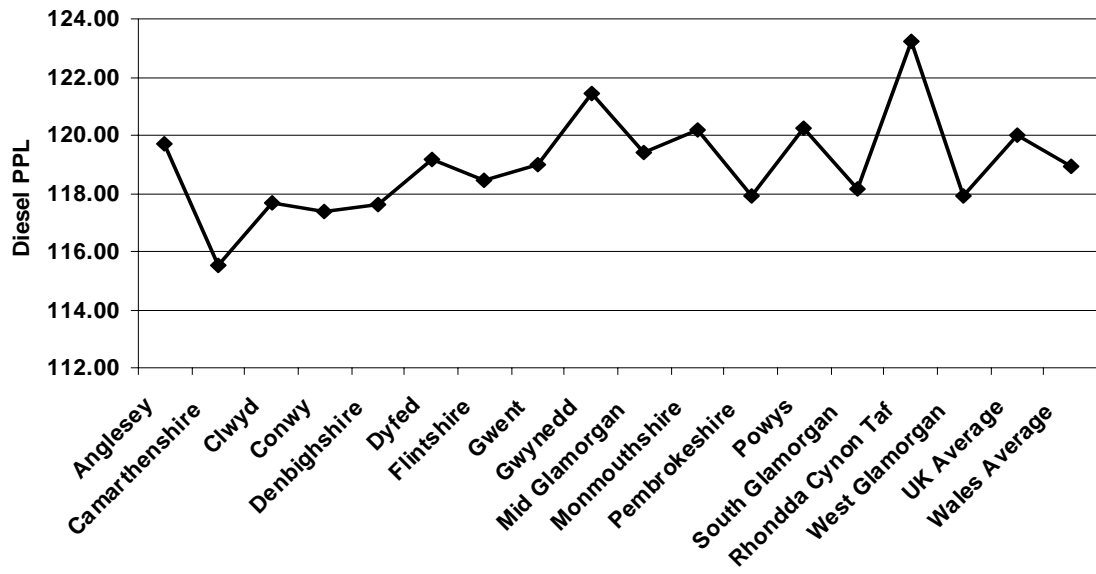
**Table 1: Comparison of average diesel price per litre for Wales and UK**

Region	25/07/08 average diesel price (ppl)	19/10/08 average diesel price (ppl)	% Change
Anglesey	134.03	119.70	10.69
Camarthenshire	135.00	115.50	14.44
Clwyd	131.96	117.67	10.83
Conwy	131.55	117.40	10.76
Denbighshire	132.40	117.60	11.18
Dyfed	133.18	119.15	10.53
Flintshire	132.52	118.46	10.61
Gwent	132.66	118.98	10.31
Gwynedd	134.57	121.42	9.77
Mid Glamorgan	132.94	119.43	10.16
Monmouthshire	134.93	120.15	10.95
Pembrokeshire	133.19	117.89	11.49
Powys	134.18	120.25	10.38
South Glamorgan	133.90	118.15	11.76
Rhondda Cynon Taf	132.44	123.20	6.98
West Glamorgan	133.00	117.93	11.33
<b>UK Average</b>	<b>134.16</b>	<b>120.01</b>	<b>10.55</b>
<b>Wales Average</b>	<b>133.28</b>	<b>118.93</b>	<b>10.77</b>

**Figure 1**



Average Forecourt Diesel Price (incl. VAT) W/E 19/10/08





### **Annex 3 – VOSA press release – 14-10-08 – Biggest ever clampdown on unsafe lorries**

The Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA) carried out its biggest ever clampdown on dangerous commercial vehicles between 1-5 October 2008, with checks at 97 different locations across the country.

The 5-day national clampdown, code-named Operation Boston, was the start of a national campaign introducing VOSA's new capability to provide roadside presence across Britain on a 24/7 basis, targeting vehicles and drivers that break the law. The Department for Transport (DfT) allocated £24m extra funding earlier this year enabling VOSA to step up its enforcement activities targeting high risk traffic. The campaign was supported by Road Safety Minister Jim Fitzpatrick when he attended one of VOSA's enforcement check sites on 2 October.

During Operation Boston VOSA targeted more high risk vehicles than ever before, carrying out over 3,600 vehicle checks and issuing nearly 1,900 prohibition notices. VOSA is using a smart, intelligence-led approach in tackling unroadworthy UK and non-UK vehicles, utilising modern technology including Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) linked with Weigh in Motion Sensors (WIMS), and a device that links directly to operator databases and highlights those at risk of non-compliance. By using this approach, VOSA is able to target the non-compliant operators and reduce the burden on those who do comply.

#### **Results of checks on vehicle condition, drivers' hours and overload:**

The results of the operation clearly show that there are unacceptable numbers of unsafe vehicles on Britain's roads. VOSA examiners inspected a total of 3,628 dangerous UK and non-UK registered commercial vehicles. Of those, a total of 1,889 unroadworthy vehicles were taken off the UK's strategic road network for offences including dangerous mechanical condition, tired drivers flouting drivers' hours limits, overloading and other offences.

Of these 3,628 vehicles 2,273 were registered outside the UK and 1,206 were breaking the law. Out of the 1,355 UK registered vehicles stopped by VOSA, 683 were breaking the law.

#### **Examples of vehicles and drivers found to be a risk to road safety include:**

- A driver stopped near Holyhead was found to be carrying a false licence and two digital driver cards, which he could use to falsify his drivers' hours records. Both cards were registered to two unknown Dutch drivers. The driver was arrested by the Police.

- Another driver, stopped at the Humber Bridge, had been driving for 19 consecutive days without the required period of rest. The driver was required to take a 45-hour rest period with immediate effect.

- A VOSA stopping officer on the M6 observed that the rear wheels on the trailer unit of a loaded articulated vehicle were misaligned. During the inspection it was discovered that there were no attachment nuts remaining, and the twin wheels were about to fall off.
- On the M1 a rigid goods vehicle was found to be 150% overweight.
- On the M6 it was discovered that the rear axle on a French oil tanker's trailer was insecure to the extent that it was in danger of failing. This vehicle was in immediate danger of causing an accident.

VOSA Chief Executive Stephen Tetlow said:

“Operation Boston was the first operation of its kind where VOSA was able to extend its 24/7 presence nationwide. We used all available targeted enforcement technology and newly recruited shift working staff. As a result, VOSA officers dealt with a staggering 3,628 vehicles and prevented a lot of accidents waiting to happen on the UK's strategic road network. The number of offences is unacceptable. We will continue to improve road safety with the national rollout of additional enforcement staff targeting high risk traffic across the country.”