



Ein cyf/Our ref MA-P/KS/1968/17

06 June 2017

Dear Assembly Members

I am writing in response to a question raised during First Minister's Questions on Tuesday 16 May regarding the process for assessing proposals for new railway stations in Wales.

As outlined in my letter to Assembly Members on 26 April, a methodology has been developed for assessing proposals for new rail stations which can be applied in a cost effective and proportionate way. The assessment methodology follows a three stage approach. This will mean that the more costly work on producing detailed cost estimates for a new station and timetable modelling is only carried out on the highest priorities:

The first stage in this work programme has now been undertaken. The regional stations identified for further assessment were the ones that scored the highest across all the criteria tested.

I have enclosed a copy of the Stage 1 Assessment Report on New Rail Stations Prioritisation which includes the transport case assessment criteria (at Annex A).

The stage two assessment will look in more detail at the strength of the financial and economic case for a new railway station, including advice from Network Rail on deliverability. This is an on-going and iterative process and once the assessment of the priority list is completed there will be an opportunity to then consider the next group of regional stations.

Despite the Welsh Government's call for the devolution of funding for rail infrastructure, the responsibility for its funding remains with the UK Government. By undertaking this work we are increasing the ability of station proposals to be in a position to benefit from funding calls and I will keep Members updated on the proposals as they progress.

Yours sincerely

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

New Rail Stations Prioritisation – Stage 1 Assessment Report

Issue

1. This reports sets out the process for identifying new rail station schemes, proposed assessment and prioritisation process.

Background

2. Despite the Welsh Government's call for the devolution of funding for rail infrastructure, the responsibility for its funding remains with the UK Government.
3. From time to time the UK Government makes funding available for new stations through specific funding calls. Stations where there is an existing developed business case are at an advantage in such calls. We have therefore developed a methodology to accelerate the development work that is needed and develop a project pipeline so that, when UK funding opportunities occur, there are Welsh projects at an appropriate stage of development that can be submitted for consideration and stand the best possible chance to secure funding.
4. It should be noted that any proposal is only likely to be successful in securing funding with a sound business case. By undertaking this work we are increasing the ability of station proposals to be in a position to benefit from funding calls.

Station identification

5. Proposals for new stations have come forward from a range of sources. Following a public consultation exercise, a list of potential locations was published in the National Transport Finance Plan, 2015 along with a commitment to develop assessment criteria (NTPF Reference RI10) and, using those criteria, develop a prioritised list.
6. The National Transport Finance Plan stated:

RI10 - Develop assessment criteria and using those criteria, a prioritised list of new station proposals for further consideration (in relation to securing funding from the rail industry).The following stations will be assessed as part of this process:

- *South East Wales: Roath Park/Wedal Road, Crwys Road, Gabalfa, Ely Mill/Victoria Park, Caerleon, Llanwern, Newport West (on Ebbw Line), Crumlin, St Mellons, Newport Road/Rover Way, Brackla, St Fagans, Magor.*
- *South West Wales: Templeton, St Clears, Cockett, Landore.*
- *Mid Wales: Bow Street, Carno, Howey, Abermule.*

- *North Wales: Broughton, North Wrexham, Deeside Industrial Park/Northern Gateway (as alternative to upgraded Hawarden Bridge Station), South Wrexham, Llangefni.*
7. The proposals for new stations have been identified by a number of reports and studies including Cardiff Capital Region Metro proposals, SWWITCH Rail Strategy (November 2013) and report of the North East Wales Integrated Transport Task Force (June 2013). Some further locations have also been identified through correspondence with the Welsh Government from interested parties and through work on the South East Wales Metro. These have been added to the stations identified in the National Transport Finance Plan to give a list of 46 stations for consideration:
- South-East Wales: Abertillery, Brackla, Bridgend College, Cardiff Airport, Carleon, Coedkernew, Crumlin, Crwys Road, Cwmbach North, Ely Mill/Victoria Park, Gabalfa, Glyncoch, Herbert Street Bridge, Hirwaun, Llanwern, Loudon Square, Magor, Maindy, Mamhilad, Miskin, M4 J34, Nantgarw, Newport Road/Rover Way, Newport West, Roath Park/Wedal Road, Sarn Park, Sebastopol, Splott, St Athan, St Fagans, St Mellons, Upper Boat, New line through Llantrisant, Talbot Green, Beddau.
 - South-West Wales: Cockett, Landore, St Clears, Templeton.
 - Mid Wales: Bow Street, Carno, Howey, Abermule
 - North Wales: Broughton, Deeside Industrial Park/Northern Gateway, North Wrexham, South Wrexham, Llangefni.

Methodology

8. A methodology has been developed for assessing early stage proposals for new rail stations to identify which stations should be initially prioritised for further work.
9. The assessment methodology follows a three-stage approach. This means that the more costly work on producing detailed cost estimates for a new stations and timetable modelling is carried out in a focused manner. The assessment criteria is set out in Appendix 1.
10. The Stage 1 assessment involves an initial sift of the stations identified using the Welsh Transport Appraisal Guidance (WelTAG) criteria and consideration of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 goals.
11. Stations prioritised from the Stage 1 assessment will be taken forward to Stage 2. This will involved the application of a standard assessment model to assess the anticipated demand, a preliminary assessment of the strength of the financial and economic case for a new station and advice from Network Rail on deliverability. This stage will be done using in-house resources and some technical assistance may be required.

12. Stations prioritised from Stage 2, will then be taken forward to Stage 3. This will involve development and assessment of the highest priorities, including a WeITAG Stage One Report, business case and Network Rail's Governance for Railway Investment Projects (GRIP) process.

Stage 1 Assessment

13. The Stage 1 assessment has been undertaken using the 'transport case' criteria (Appendix 1). Stations have been selected to be taken forward on a regional basis. The regional stations identified for further assessment were the ones that scored the highest across all the 'transport case' criteria tested.

14. Based on this initial sift, it is proposed that the following stations are taken forward for further assessment:

- South East Wales: Ely Mill/Victoria Park, Llanwern, Newport Road/Rover Way and St Mellons.
- South West Wales: Cockett, Landore, St Clears.
- North Wales: Deeside Industrial Park/Northern Gateway, North Wrexham, South Wrexham, Llangefni.
- Mid Wales: Bow Street.

Next Steps – Stage 2 Assessment

15. The stations prioritised from the Stage 1 assessment will be taken forward to Stage 2, and following this, they will be developed further in Stage 3. It is anticipated that Stage 2 will take around 6 months to complete. Once the assessment of the priority list is completed there will be an opportunity to then consider the next "batch" of regional stations, if appropriate.

Appendix 1 – Assessment Criteria

			Criteria	
STRATEGIC CASE - the case for change and the fit with other policies	A prosperous Wales	TRANSPORT CASE - the social, environmental and economic impacts of the change	Accessing major ports, airports and rail terminals	
			Linking main centres of population and economic activity	
			Links areas of high economic inactivity to employment sites	
			Benefit to Cost Ratio	
			Forecast Passenger Numbers	
			Improved access to services	
			Reduces cost of public transport services	
			Improves access in areas with no bus transport alternative	
			Improves access in areas with poor access to services	
A resilient Wales	TRANSPORT CASE - the social, environmental and economic impacts of the change	Ensuring end to end connectivity		
		Improved access to tourist sites and cultural attractions		
		Air Quality Improvement		
		Noise Reduction		
		A healthier Wales	TRANSPORT CASE - the social, environmental and economic impacts of the change	
		A more equal Wales	TRANSPORT CASE - the social, environmental and economic impacts of the change	
A Wales of cohesive communities	TRANSPORT CASE - the social, environmental and economic impacts of the change			
A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	TRANSPORT CASE - the social, environmental and economic impacts of the change			
A globally responsible Wales	TRANSPORT CASE - the social, environmental and economic impacts of the change			

	Criteria
FINANCIAL CASE - is the proposed spend affordable?	Scheme Cost
	Match Funding
DELIVERY CASE - Can the scheme be delivered?	Land Ownership
	Environmentally sensitive area
	Physical geometry/topography
	Design/Build Complexity
	Network Rail/TOC Support
	Delivery Stage

Consider constraints e.g. Environmental (SSSI, SAC), Physical (Geometry of scheme), Technical (see complexity - approvals required, specialisms)