

James Davies  
Welsh Affairs Committee  
House of Commons  
7 Millbank  
London SW1A 0AA

15<sup>th</sup> June 2004

#### **DRAFT TRANSPORT (WALES) BILL 2004**

Thank you for consulting Sustrans on the above.

We welcome this legislation and the way it will strengthen the Welsh Assembly's strategic control over the provision of transport facilities and services in Wales.

While we generally support the Bill, however, we think there are a number of aspects of it which require particular scrutiny.

#### **General Transport Duty**

We think the duty as described in Section 1 (a) should be broader. The Welsh Assembly has a statutory obligation to promote sustainable development in all its activities under the Government of Wales Act. This obligation logically extends to the Assembly's provision of transport. Therefore, Section 1 (a) must include an obligation to promote transport that is also 'sustainable'.

Section 2(a) describes the facilities and services to be covered within the General Transport Duty as those required to meet the needs of people both within Wales and from outside it. It follows from this that transport facilities and services provided under the powers of the Bill must be

'socially inclusive' and reference to this should be included within the duty described in Section 1 (a).

Section 3 states, by way of clarification, that the facilities and services to be provided are to include those for pedestrians. Reference to cyclists should be included here, for the sake of clarity, and because there is no other mention of cycling as a transport mode within the Bill.

## **Wales Transport Strategy & Local Transport Plans**

We welcome the requirement within the Bill to develop a Wales Transport Strategy, the powers to establish joint transport authorities and the requirement for local transport plans to be developed in the context of an overarching national strategy.

The Wales Transport Strategy must support the Welsh Assembly's commitment to sustainable development, social inclusion and equal opportunities, and should integrate with the objectives of its wider policy agenda. In particular, the strategy must focus on :

- **Climate Change:** recognising the effects of transport on climate change and meet national targets on carbon dioxide reduction
- **Health :** encouraging more walking and cycling - Active Travel - to promote better health
- **Sustainable Communities:** reducing car dependency and making neighbourhoods more liveable by creating better conditions for walking and cycling
- **Road Safety:** encouraging more walking and cycling by making roads safer
- **Land Use Planning:** locating and designing development in a way that reduces the need to travel, reduces travel distances, and encourages sustainable modes
- **Knowledge Economy:** recognising the value of the knowledge economy, and how this can reduce the need to travel and the need for more road building
- **Rural Economy:** recognising the economic value of the Welsh environment to tourism in Wales ,and the role that sustainable transport can play in supporting the rural economy
- **'Soft' Measures:** promoting cost-effective soft measures such as travel plans and individualised marketing (TravelSmart) to stimulate behaviour change

The strengthening of the role of regional transport bodies is to be welcomed and the benefits of regional-level action are already evident

from the work of existing consortia such as the South East Wales Transport Alliance, with whom Sustrans works closely on the Alliance's Regional Cycling Strategy and other matters.

It is essential that Wales Transport Strategy and the new regional transport strategies cover all transport modes in a balanced way. This is particularly important for walking and cycling as these modes are often wrongly perceived as incidental to other transport facilities or of only local significance. Walking and cycling must be developed strategically at every level, national regional and local.

### **Walking & Cycling Strategy for Wales**

The Wales Transport Strategy must obviously incorporate and, where appropriate, expand upon the proposed actions of the Assembly's Walking & Cycling Strategy for Wales, published in December 2003.

We would like to place on record our concern at the lack of progress by the Assembly on taking forward the action points in the strategy, since its publication. We hope this does not reflect a waning of the Assembly's commitment to develop walking and cycling, particularly in the light of evidence in the recent House of Commons Health Committee report on obesity that highlighted the role that these modes can play in tackling ill-health.

### **Financial Support for Air Services**

We note the inclusion of these provisions and would ask the Committee to consider what evidence there is that public subsidies to air services in Wales will actually provide value for money.

I hope the Committee finds these comments helpful.

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