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27 April 2009

Mr Richard Edwards AM
Chair of the Environment,
Planning & Transport Committee
The National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
CARDIFF CF99 1NA

Dear Mr Evans

RE: Policy Review of Public Transport

Further to your letter dated 25th July 2001 regarding the above, I detail below our views and recommendations on public transport in Wales.

Since deregulation local authorities seemed to have worked alone in providing services to the community. Before 1996, this was done on a much larger area than now. With only eight counties in Wales the planning was far more effective than it is now with the present twenty-two.

It is said that the Trawscambria is the only commercial long distance service in Wales because operators do not believe that there is another route, which would be viable. There has been and there is much talk about the need for more long distance coach routes, but there has never been the initiative from the counties to get together and provide one. This is typical of the lack of inter-county strategy in operation, and it is only recently that some have at last got together, because of the threat of a PTA.

I see no improvement in a regional set up. This is almost going back to pre 1996, where there was little evidence of working together. The SWITCH, the SWIFT and the TIGER initiatives are fine in their own areas; however, they, as separate entities, do not provide a

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strategy for the whole of Wales. TAITH in North Wales, does not seem to be showing any signs of moving forward with a strategic plan.

It is therefore likely that if a regional set-up comes about, there will be no inter-region strategy and then we would end up with a patchwork quilt type of transport system in Wales.

There is a need to appoint an “*Overlord*” to ensure that a regional set-up works to a strategy and that the whole of Wales receives the benefits of an integrated transport plan.

The “*Overlord*” or Director of Transport could have the dual role of being the Traffic Commissioner for Wales, whilst also being responsible for the development of and implementation of a Welsh Transport Strategy.

Also important, but controversial, is the fact that local authorities would have only an advisory role and the Director is directly responsible to the appropriate Minister. Thus, contracts and Quality Partnerships would be set by the National Assembly and county boundaries ignored.

Yours sincerely
For **ARRIVA Cymru Ltd**

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