

Our ref: NA/KH

12 October 2001

Siwan Davies
Environment Planning & Transport Committee
National Assembly For Wales
Cardiff Bay
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Dear Ms Davies

Re National Assembly For Wales Policy Review of Public Transport

Thank you for giving the Board the opportunity to comment on the above consultation paper.

These comments have been prepared following a discussion by the Board's Executive and have been agreed by those members of our Board who sit on our Strategy Sub Board. The comments are supported by the following documents:-

- Paper commissioned from Professor Stuart Cole from Glamorgan University specifically in response to this consultation paper to illustrate further the comments made.
- Sustainable Transport For Tourism Wales – Campaign Report and Conclusions on the development of Public Transport Tourism. This is a campaign which brings tourism interests and public transport operators together to promote the use of public transport by the visitor. WTB has, in the past, supported the campaign and is represented on their steering group.
- Tourist Friendly Transport Interchanges – A report by John Davies of DSW Rail that was commissioned by the Sustainable Transport for Tourism Campaign to draw up criteria for the development of tourist friendly transport interchanges.

Travel is an integral part of tourism, yet tourism travel has special characteristics with tourists' needs not always the same as those of local residents. Unless the special characteristics of tourism travel are recognised by both policy makers and public transport operators, there will be limited success in trying to encourage more of our visitors to utilise public transport.

Siwan Davies

12 October 2001

The special needs of tourists can be grouped under the following headings:-

- **Information** – The visitor requires a one stop shop for travel information, which provides information from journey start to journey finish, incorporating train and local bus information to get them to their final destination. The provision of multi-modal information from a single point is essential, not only should this include trains and buses but also phone numbers of suitable taxi services where there is only a limited bus service. On bus service information should be provided electronically on the name of bus stops and what destinations they serve such as a visitor attraction or museum to assist visitors who are unfamiliar with an area.
- **Integration** – Train and bus services need to be integrated in terms of timetabling to facilitate a visitor travelling from London to reach their final destination using train, bus and possibly taxi. Through ticketing to cover both train and bus are essential with a simplified, easier to understand fare structure for the railways. The use of exact change on local buses discourages use by visitors and infrequent local users and therefore should be avoided.
- **Passenger Interchanges** – The visitor is likely to be burdened down with luggage, they may well have young children with them or could be impaired in terms of their mobility due to age or physical disability. The ease with which they can change between modes from train to bus or taxi will be critical to determining their experience of public transport and whether they would wish to use it again.

A paper delivered by Professor Stuart Cole at a conference at Aston University suggested the following criteria for seamless interchanges:-

- Clear, comprehensive information on the interchange characteristics;
- Ease of movement (particularly for those with heavy luggage or young children);
- Secure parking for cycles, cars and motorcycles;
- Undercover links between modes;
- Clear directional signs;
- Short walking distances;
- Good timetable displays;
- Well maintained litter and graffiti free infrastructure, clean toilets etc;
- Personal security;
- Left luggage;
- Car Hire Provision.

Siwan Davies

12 October 2001

- **Investment** – Before significant efforts can be made to promote public transport to the visitor there will have to be a very significant increase in the quality of public transport in terms of reliability, quality of rolling stock and value for money, to match the expectations of those familiar with the quality public transport to be found in Germany or the Netherlands. In this context, the proposed quality “kite mark” is to be particularly welcomed.

Currently only a small percentage of all UK trips to Wales are by public transport – 4% by train, 4% by regular coach/bus and 3% by organised coach tour – out of a total of 10.9m trips in 1999. A far lower proportion than the equivalent figures for England and Scotland. It will only be possible to achieve a significant modal switch to public transport by visitors if we are able to offer them a fully integrated public transport system with quality services that are reliable and which recognise and meet their special needs.

WTB welcome the Assembly’s vision for public transport to be integrated, accessible, affordable and a favoured mode of transport for the people of Wales. The vision statement could however also include reference to visitors to Wales.

It is imperative that tourism interests are represented in whatever organisational structure for transport planning that is adopted if the special characteristics of tourism travel are to be taken into account. Establishing a Passenger Transport Authority for Wales would appear to be the best option to ensure a more strategic approach to public transport planning, though this would need to recognise the special needs of South East Wales.

WTB would welcome Recommendation 1 that a quality kite mark be developed, initially covering bus services and extended to rail and other modes. This, providing it was rigorously applied, should help drive standards up so that public transport can be marketed to the visitor with greater confidence. To deliver this improvement in quality will also require Recommendation 2, that the historic levels of under investment in public transport are to be addressed.

From a tourism perspective, the following priorities identified in Recommendation 3 are particularly welcomed:-

- Pilot “all mode” information centres across Wales. WTB’s own Destination Management System will have a role to play in providing comprehensive information to the visitor via the internet;
- Develop interchanges between modes of public transport;
- Develop park and ride facilities;
- Improve long distance coach provisions in Wales.

-4-

Siwan Davies

12 October 2001

WTB also welcomes Recommendation 11 that the National Assembly for Wales and local authorities agree an evaluation framework for measuring the benefits of targeted public transport at national, regional and local levels but would ask that the special needs of tourists are built into the framework.

WTB has, for a long time, been concerned about the difficulties cyclists face on travelling with bikes on public transport and some years ago commissioned the study Bikes on Trains from Swansea Institute. If we are to promote more sustainable forms of tourism, we need to make it easier for visitors with bikes to utilise our public transport, this may well require investment in new rolling stock

Finally, I would quote the following passage from Bill Bryson's "Notes From A Small Island" which graphically illustrates the perils that face the tourist trying to travel around Wales by public transport.

"The bus dropped me in the centre of town near the terminus of the famous Blaenau Ffestiniog Railway, now a private line run by enthusiasts and which I hoped to take through the cloudy mountains to Porthmadog. The station platform was open, but all the doors to waiting rooms, toilets and ticket halls were padlocked and there was no-one around. I had a look at the winter timetable hanging on the wall and discovered to my dismay that I had just missed – literally just missed – a train. Puzzled, I dragged my crumpled bus timetable from my pocket and discovered with further dismay that the bus was actually scheduled to arrive just in time to miss the one midday train out of Blaenau. Running a finger down the rail timetable, I learned that the next train would not be for another four hours. The next bus would follow that by minutes. How could that be possible and, more to the point, what on earth was I supposed to do with myself in the Godforsaken, rain-sodden place for four hours? There was no possibility of staying on the platform. It was cold and the rain was falling at such a treacherous slant that there was no place to escape it even in the furthest corners".

If you have any queries regarding the above comments, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Nigel M Adams
Head Of Development Planning

POLICY REVIEW OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT RESPONSE BY THE WALES TOURIST BOARD

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Policy Review of Public Transport does not specifically focus on the needs of tourists travelling to/from and within Wales. The WTB hope that the final report of the Environment, Planning & Transport Committee into public transport will highlight the points made in this response regarding the special characteristics of tourist travel. There are, however, several aspects of public transport in the report where provision for tourists becomes an important element in achieving integrated passenger transport; and a change in modal split from the motor car based on a quality and level of provision, which persuades the traveller to change. In its response the WTB seeks to highlight how these aspects can best be improved to achieve that objective.
- 1.2 The Tourist is a traveller with many objectives - leisure, of course, but including not only those on longer distance infrequent holiday but also sports and entertainment linked trips. This form of travel also includes retail shopping and business travel. In general it excludes those making regular work, education and health related journeys although it is recognised that some trips will be multi-purpose.
- 1.3 The Review and the responses it seeks to identify are:-
- ∃ Short term changes within the existing statutory, regulatory and organisational framework which would facilitate the delivery and take-up of improved and integrated services.
 - ∃ Longer term changes to the statutory, regulatory and organisational framework relating to public transport which would facilitate the delivery of improved services.

2. SUMMARY OF POLICY REVIEW

- 2.1 The Review focuses on the following areas:-
- ∃ Identifying quality standards for public transport enabling improvements to be measured.
 - ∃ Assessing the potential of existing organisational structures to deliver such improvements.
 - ∃ Analysing alternative regional organisational structures, before making any recommendations on changes needed to the existing structures.
- 2.2 The Review contrasts the current problems with the provision of public transport in Wales with the needs of consumers. Perception of public transport is poor with a continuing modal shift from public transport to the use of the car.

The most widely used form of public transport in Wales is the bus, however, passenger numbers are in decline. By contrast there has been a steady increase in rail passenger numbers despite the recent problems.

- 2.3 The NAW vision for public transport is for it to be integrated, accessible, affordable and a favoured mode of travel for the people of Wales. They suggest that a quality Akite mark≡ be developed for public transport services in Wales. They further suggest that regional transport strategies should guide decisions on funding made by NAW and that this be targeted alongside local authorities own investment to achieve maximum effect. Also they suggest that a number of projects could be taken forward such as Aall mode≡ information centres and interchange improvements.
- 2.4 The Report assesses the existing voluntary regional transport consortia and their potential to deliver improved public transport at the regional and local level. They concluded that there is a need for leadership at an all-Wales level. They identified three options for Wales:-
- ∃ An all-Wales Passenger Transport Authority.
 - ∃ A Passenger Transport Authority for south east Wales given its heavy pattern of commuting.
 - ∃ Develop existing partnership arrangements, while encouraging other innovative ideas to be identified.
- 2.5 They recommend that there should be an evaluation framework for measuring the benefits of targeted public transport investment at national, regional and local levels, which contributes to a base of evidence for future policy development. The role of passengers is key and they should be involved in drawing up the framework.

3. **RATIONALE**

- 3.1 The key objective of integrated transport is to provide an accessible and affordable mode of travel which is both sustainable and becomes the preferred mode of travel in Wales.

However, Wales has different spatial characteristics from densely populated urban areas (e.g. Cardiff - Newport, up to Merthyr and Ebbw Vale; Swansea; Wrexham), through major towns (Neath, Port Talbot, Llanelli, Aberystwyth, Llandudno) and important rural centres (Carmarthen, Haverfordwest, Castell Newydd Emlyn, Llandeilo, Brecon, Newtown, Ruthin, Denbigh) to Adeep rural≡ Wales (Ceredigion, Gwynedd). The potential for transfer to public transport therefore, varies between urban and rural areas. But even such a difference can be narrowed.

- 3.2 Improvements are required in the public transport system before car users can be persuaded to change and non-car owners be able to make reasonably timed and priced journeys.

- 3.3 In a study for the English Tourism Council, Professor Stuart Cole identified four Als \cong which form the integration equation:-

$$\text{Integration} = \text{Information} + \text{Interchange} + \text{Investment}$$

The absence of any of the latter three elements will hinder or prevent the development of an integrated passenger transport system.

- 3.4 The Wales Tourist Board would, therefore, wish to test any new organisational structure against these criteria on the premise that integrated provision of public transport is its aim. These criteria can be applied to those tests in the Policy Review (p.53) which relate to tourism and the role of tourism marketing:-

- ∃ Relevance to the area.
- ∃ Development of an integrated public transport network.
- ∃ Effective rail and bus and highway powers.
- ∃ Influence on land use planning.
- ∃ Impact on passenger travel (must be able to stimulate public transport).
- ∃ Capital investment.

- 3.5 By examining each of the three determinant criteria - Information, Interchange and Investment - the WTB believes the best organisational structure in terms of the tests can be obtained.

4. **INFORMATION** - before departure, en route, on arrival

4.1 Visitors, particularly those coming from overseas, need to know more than simply how to undertake the first stage of their journey. They need to know how to travel beyond any given intermediate transfer point and on to their chosen destination. Each mode of transport can provide information about its services, such as the National Rail Enquiry Service, airport hotlines, as well as coach and bus timetables and route planners.

- 4.2 The drawback of this system is that whilst it works for single one-mode journeys, planning more complex travel in advance is not well served. Additionally, it assumes that all travellers are the same, and does not cater for differences in visitor types or specific markets such as people with disabilities. Any new system (e.g. PTI Cymru) will need to have multi-modal information.

- 4.3 Train and bus operators have low budgets available to promote these modes when compared with car manufacturers. The majority of the public may also perceive car travel costs as being Apetrol only \cong and, subsequently have little appreciation of the true costs of motoring, and the relative costs of train/bus options.

- 4.4 Currently, the pricing structure of rail tickets (where cheaper fares can only be booked in advance) penalises both tourists making last-minute plans as well as those not aware that tickets bought on the day are more expensive. Greater information needs to be made available here with a simplified, easier to understand fare structure for the railways. Some of the train operating companies have also to stop penalising turn-up-and-go passengers with significantly higher fares than advanced booking, reflecting the British travellers' preferences. The SRA have to ensure such conditions in future franchise contracts.
- 4.5 New technologies are being developed, including:-
- ∃ Direct booking and travel information via the Internet.
 - ∃ Increasingly sophisticated computer systems.
 - ∃ Improved communication networks.
- 4.6 These provide an excellent opportunity for local authorities and private operators targeting different market segments to acquire market and trends data which enable them to develop appropriate pricing solutions. It will also be possible to integrate information and provide a complete service, not only to face to face visitors but also to those enquiring by other communication means from across the world. Tourism Information Centres are an important resource to collate and impart this information, and local authorities will be able, under the Transport Act, to require bus and rail companies to supply a reasonable timetable information to them.
- 4.7 The naming of bus stops and provision of on bus information on the name of stops and the destinations that they are serving will assist visitors who are unfamiliar with the area. The use of GPS techniques will enhance the identifying of the particular bus and the correct direction of travel involved at bus stops. Colour coded buses with associated road and diagrammatic route maps in urban centres on the lines of the Paris network would help visitors to large urban centres to utilise the public transport systems.
- 4.8 The development of NRES and PTI Cymru as part of the Great Britain system, Transport Direct goes a long way towards the one stop shop. However, the system has made no move towards incorporating taxi service >phone numbers (licensed by county councils) which are essential in areas/at times of infrequent bus provision, particularly in rural areas in Wales.
- 4.9 WTB's Destination Management System in providing comprehensive information for visitors via the internet which will go live next spring and will incorporate an online facility to book tourism products, will have a role to play in providing all modal information to visitors.

5. INTERCHANGES

5.1 High quality interchange facilities are an essential requirement to match the convenience of private vehicles. Particular attention needs to be paid to the ease of ticketing arrangements e.g. tickets that allow travel on different types of transport, and the physical environment of interchanges.

- a. Ticketing - The ability to purchase tickets for the entire journey, across all transport modes, needs to be improved, without introducing complex pricing structures that become a disincentive to travel. In addition, the case for issuing tickets allowing entry to certain attractions, as well as travel, needs to be considered. The use of exact change on local buses discourages use by the visitor and infrequent local user.
- b. Physical Environment - Tourists, usually with luggage, require ease and comfort when changing between transport modes, otherwise it will be difficult to persuade people of the benefits of using public transport. In order to make interchanges attractive and user-friendly, there is a need to provide for ease of movement; luggage storage facilities; secure parking for cycles, cars and motorcycles; undercover links; clear signage and timetable displays; short walking distances; well maintained facilities; and personal safety and security.

5.2 The visitor is likely to be burdened down with luggage, they may well have young children with them or could be impaired in terms of their mobility due to age or physical disability. The ease with which they can change between modes from train to bus or taxi will be critical to determining their experience of public transport and whether they would wish to use it again.

5.3 A paper delivered by Professor Stuart Cole at a conference at Aston University (2001) suggested the following criteria for seamless interchanges:-

- ∃ Clear, comprehensive information on the interchange characteristics.
- ∃ Ease of movement (particularly for those with heavy luggage or young children).
- ∃ Secure parking for cycles, cars and motorcycles.
- ∃ Undercover links between modes.
- ∃ Clear directional signs, between modes and to local destinations (e.g. town centre, hotels).
- ∃ Short walking distances.
- ∃ Good timetable displays.
- ∃ Well maintained litter and graffiti free infrastructure, clean toilets, etc.
- ∃ Personal security.
- ∃ Left luggage facilities.
- ∃ Car hire provision.

5.4 A report – Tourist Friendly Transport Interchanges(April 2001 by DSW Rail and Transport for Leisure deals in detail with these criteria and a copy is

attached to this response.

6. INVESTMENT

- 6.1 Despite a significant proportion of the trunk road, air transport and ferry systems having been built within the last 30 years, there is still a need for major investment, particularly in bus and rail services and in by-passes for towns and villages which have a significant pedestrian/vehicle conflict. This will ensure that all components of the transport system can offer high quality, attractive alternatives to private vehicle use. This may often be through partnership between public and private sectors.
- 6.2 Moreover, this investment can lead to an increased introduction of quality standards in public transport, which will highlight to passengers those operators who offer a high standard across their whole operation at an affordable price.

7 INTEGRATION

- 7.1 The ultimate objective is a high quality public transport service. The technique for achieving it is an integrated transport system. It is these two facets which lead to organisational decisions put into the context of issues discussed so far in this paper.
- 7.2 Several characteristics apply to the visitor to and within Wales and the resident travelling inside Wales:-
- a) They often travel to different parts of Wales.
 - b) They may wish to leave Wales at a location other than the one at which they arrived.
 - c) They require comprehensive information on all international (including to/from England), national and local public transport services (rail, bus, taxi, and in some rural areas, community transport).
 - d) They need to know how easy it will be to transfer from one mode to another at interchanges.
 - e) They need to know how to complete that particular journey to its final destination - friend's house, holiday cottage, camp site, hotel, or just visit a town for the day - and where that Alastap information (and possibly left luggage facilities) exists.
 - f) They need reliability of service and predictability of journey times is essential. If bus, long distance coaches and rail operations are to have integrated timetables then traffic management schemes (e.g. bus priorities) on routes to/from railway stations become an essential part of the jigsaw.
 - g) A provision of information, service quality and interface of services to enable all parts of Wales to benefit from the inward tourist.

8. ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

- 8.1 The WTB realises that the relationship between transport and land use planning is an important issue in the discussion of organisational structure. The WTB is, therefore, concerned about the outputs of such relationships and how, for example, new large entertainment, sport, leisure and holidaying facilities can be accessed by forms of passenger transport other than the car. This will provide the choice for the traveller - essential in the competitive tourism market.
- 8.2 Currently tourism in Wales is heavily dependent on the motor car. This is highlighted in the annual transport statistics report from the National Assembly and the annual United Kingdom Tourism Survey. In addition the Sustainable Transport for Tourism Wales Campaign Strategy report shows that for the top ten attractions in Wales, despite the critical mass of visitors, only 10% of their visitors arrive by bus, coach or train (and that influenced by the Ffestiniog Railway) .
- 8.3 At the beginning of this report the lack of specific mention of tourism was mentioned. The reverse is also true, that if transport services meet the needs of tourists, they will also serve local residents as well and it should be remembered that transport and the journey is seen by many of Wales visitors as part of the holiday experience. Its characteristics will enable travellers to enhance their enjoyment of the Welsh countryside which is a major part of marketing Wales as a tourist destination. It will also enable the people of Wales to enjoy travelling around their own country not only for leisure activities but also for day to day travel.

The integration on a greater than local scale is required for the public transport network.

9. RAILWAYS

- 9.1 The creation of the Wales and Borders rail franchise by the Strategic Rail Authority is imminent. The Government's recent decision to create a Scottish Railway with Scotrail providing trains and a new authority providing the track (reflecting the financial collapse of Railtrack in October 2001) is a parallel that may be valuable in Wales. The Rail Passengers Committee - Cymru has been pressing for the creation of a Railtrack zone - Wales to parallel the new franchise and there is a strong body of opinion supporting the transfer of responsibility for railways in Wales to the National Assembly.
- 9.2 The logical progression from this position is to have as part of the NAFW a parallel body to that proposed for Scotland and a body which also parallels the Highways Directorate at the NAFW. This will put public transport in a strong position when bidding for funds.

9.3 The organisational structure this implies is that of a Wales passenger transport Authority although the last word might be Partnership or Directorate. Its functions would be , on an equality basis throughout Wales to :-

- ∃ provide national funding for public transport.
- ∃ work with county councils on public transport capital funding for regional schemes through local passenger transport Boards/statutory consortia or Astatutory partnerships.
- ∃ provide a national public transport information system through developing PTI Cymru/Transport Direct.
- ∃ take the outputs of a research project on the information needs of the independent traveller currently being undertaken by the Wales Transport Research Centre for NAFW.
- ∃ Take the outputs of the "Tourist Friendly Transport Interchanges report (please see above)
- ∃ ensure integrated bus and rail services in Wales with good seamless interchange facilities of equal high quality throughout Wales.

9.4 At the regional level the rail franchises, bus companies, taxi firms and local authorities are all involved in the provision of local bus and taxi services. The spatial area of individual county councils has been seen as too small to provide appropriate public transport planning and has led in Wales to the creation of consortia of local authorities (TIGER, SWIFT, SWITCH, MWP and TAITH).

9.5 These consortia have, (to degrees largely associated with length of time since their establishment) produced regional plans and expenditure programmes. They provide a link with land use planning, local roads and bus provision. The latter requires a statutory link with the rail providers and with the National Assembly=s (both rail and trunk roads) funding of major schemes using existing investment facilities. The "PTA" would ensure that a consistently high level of provision was achieved throughout Wales. This is essential if we are to encourage tourists to spread their destinations and their expenditure, and not concentrate themselves in large cities or at honeypots. An organisation that ensures that passenger transport is of a high standard all over Wales is required. Thus travellers feel reassured, as for example they feel in Sweden, The Netherlands or Austria that public transport works, the information is reliable and comprehensive everywhere, and that interchanges for countrywide through journeys are provided for and where the timetables and ticketing is integrated; but where the need for local public transport to be organised locally and integrated into the national network is recognised . Wales is a small country and best practice lessons are more likely to be found in the states of the European Union with populations of under 10 million .Lessons for our urban centres may be found in comparative cities, for example in Sheffield, Dublin, Gottenburg ,Vienna, Dresden, and Portland.

9.6 In the short term the WTB recognises that the public transport consortia of local authorities have made considerable advances in integrating public transport, and is the only model available with existing legislation.

It will therefore continue to work with, and support the consortia as it did the work of Bws Gwynedd in the period before local Government reorganisation.

9.7 In the longer term the WTB would look forward to the creation of formal statutory bodies for Wales and for the regions with requirements to integrate the provision of rail, bus, taxi, road and traffic management in ways best suited to their areas as the best way forward. It will be essential however that tourism interests are represented in whatever body is established to ensure that the special characteristics of tourism travel are taken full account of.

Prepared for the Wales Tourist Board by

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October 2001