

Carmarthenshire County Council – Response to the Consultation on the draft Transport (Wales) Bill

Introduction

The Draft Transport Wales Bill (DTW) was issued on 27th May 2004 and seeks powers to enable the National Assembly for Wales to facilitate integrated transport in Wales.

Responses to the DTW Bill are invited from individual local authorities, regional transport consortia and the Welsh Local Government Association as well as other stakeholders across Wales.

Carmarthenshire County Council response to the DTW Bill

The Council welcomes the opportunity to respond to the draft Bill and to influence the detail included within it, which the Council believes has the capacity to fundamentally impact on the way in which integrated transport is developed, facilitated and promoted across Wales.

The Council supports the Bill in giving the Assembly the ability to provide a stronger and more focused lead on transport in Wales, through the duty placed upon it by the Bill, through the development of a Welsh Transport Strategy and through more focused monitoring of local transport plans.

The Council supports the Bill in giving the Assembly powers of direction over the SRA which it believes will deliver more “Wales” focused rail services and enable better integration between rail and other transport objectives and proposals in Wales.

The Council supports the Bill in giving the Assembly powers to provide financial assistance to commercially unviable public passenger transport and air services in Wales.

The Council strongly supports the need for local authorities to work closely together to deliver integrated transport networks that match travel patterns and desire lines rather than authority boundaries. Carmarthenshire is already an active participant in the South West Wales Integrated Transport Consortium (SWWITCH).

In SWWITCH the 4 west Wales local authorities have worked closely together on regional transport issues and have developed a strategic transport framework within which each constituent authority can develop local solutions applicable to their specific needs. The Council vigorously opposes the development of regional level Local Transport Plans. The development of a regional strategy (such as that being developed by SWWITCH) should provide the guiding principles (supportive of the Welsh Transport Strategy) and key objectives, but it should be locally developed and supported Local Transport Plans that determine the mechanisms by which objectives are delivered in each local authority area.

The Council believes that the establishment of Joint Transport Authorities would be a retrograde step. These bodies (funded by local authority levy and direct financial assistance) would make it more difficult to deliver an integrated approach to transport in the region, as it would separate decisions on transport and access (and particularly public transport) from planning for, and decisions on, Land Use, Economic Development, Social Services, Education and Leisure. It would also sever the link between democratically accountable elected Members and the delivery of targeted services to match local community needs. This is of particular concern in a region as diverse as SWWITCH and it also runs in direct opposition to the principle and practice of Community Planning.

Sue Miles
Transport Strategy Engineer
8 June 2004