

South West Wales Integrated Transport Consortium (SWWITCH)

Response to Transport (Wales) Bill

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The South West Wales Integrated Transport Consortium (SWWITCH) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the provisions of the Bill (Cm 6195). The consortium comprises the unitary authorities of Carmarthenshire, Neath-Port Talbot, Pembrokeshire and Swansea.
- 1.2 SWWITCH is concerned however about the short time available to respond to what will be a major piece of transport legislation for Wales. As a consequence, the comments set out hereinafter are Officer views and have not been through the political process. In terms of SWWITCH it will not be possible to do this until the SWWITCH Steering Group meets on 16 July 2004 after the local Council elections. This paper may therefore be subject to amendment once the Steering Group has had an opportunity to consider it.
- 1.3 The SWWITCH comments have been divided into two parts in the attached Appendix as follows:
 - (i) Matters that are supported by SWWITCH;
 - (ii) Matters that are not supported by SWWITCH.

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**Appendix
Part 1 – Issues that have the Support of SWWITCH**

Section and Clause No.	Issue	SWWITCH View	Other Comments
§ One	General Transport Duty	SWWITCH welcomes the duty to be placed on WAG, which will clarify its role in terms of transport policy.	
§ Two	Wales Transport Strategy	SWWITCH welcomes the duty to be placed on WAG to produce, publish, consult upon and keep under review a Wales Transport Strategy.	Such a strategy will provide a clear focus and framework into which regional and local transport strategies, plans and policies will fit and complement.
§ Three & Schedule 1	Local Transport Plans	Whilst SWWITCH supports the principle of closer scrutiny of Local Transport Plans and the powers to “not accept” those which fail to support the Welsh Transport Strategy, SWWITCH <u>does not support</u> regional Local Transport Plans.	SWWITCH believes that regional strategies developed by consortia like SWWITCH should provide the strategic framework within which local authority local transport plans are developed.
§ Six	Financial assistance: local transport functions	SWWITCH supports these powers.	
§ Seven	Provision of public passenger transport services	SWWITCH supports these powers, but with the proviso that WAG should have a duty to consult with the relevant	

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		local authority(ies) involved so that there is always close co-operation and co-ordination to avoid duplication and inefficiency.	
§ Eight	Rail Passengers' Committees	SWWITCH supports this provision.	
§ Nine	Power to give directions etc to the Strategic Rail Authority	SWWITCH supports this provision.	
§ Ten	Agreement with Strategic Rail Authority on exercise of franchising functions	SWWITCH supports this provision.	
§ Eleven	Financial assistance: air transport services	SWWITCH supports this provision.	

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**Appendix
Part 2 – Issues that do not have the Support of SWWITCH**

Section and Clause No.	Issue	SWWITCH View	Other Comments
§ Three	Local Transport Plans	SWWITCH does not support regional local transport plans.	SWWITCH believes that local transport plans should reflect local solutions to local problems within a regional framework developed by consortia such as SWWITCH.
§ Four	Arrangements for discharge of transport functions	SWWITCH does not support any enforced arrangement for the discharge of transport functions.	SWWITCH believes it is well placed to develop and promote regional issues through its work with its constituent authorities acting as a Joint Committee.
§ Five	Joint Transport Authorities	SWWITCH does not support the establishment of Joint Transport Authorities. This is viewed as retrograde step that will make it more difficult to link public transport services and facilities to the planning and delivery of land use, economic development, education, social services and leisure activities.	These Authorities would sever the link between democratically elected Members and the delivery of locally targeted services and have an adverse impact on local accountability. They would also further erode the pool of specialist transport staff and finance available to local authorities to carry out their residual transport functions. SWWITCH is also

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			concerned at potential adverse impact on relationships with stake-holders, which at best, would need to be re-established by the Authority.