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Dirprwy Brif Weinidog /Deputy First Minister



Eich cyf/Your ref
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Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

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National Assembly for Wales
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During the National Transport Plan debate in Plenary on 27 April, I promised to write to you about some of the issues you raised.

Torfaen County Borough Council are taking forward a project considering some of the issues and possible solutions associated with the road between Pontypool and Talywain, and have appointed a consultant to identify improvements along the corridor in respect of accessibility and journey time reliability. Whilst this does not extend as far as Blaenavon, it will offer benefits and improved linkages to the Blaenavon World heritage site. Sewta has identified the road from New Inn to Blaenavon as a potential highway scheme within their Regional Transport Plan, but will need to undertake further feasibility and design work.

You asked about the location and timings for the new station in Ebbw Vale. We have identified a location for the new station at the regeneration site, where the old steelworks were, and we have asked Network Rail to undertake a detailed technical feasibility into identify the costs and planning for developing the new station and extending the line. We will be able to provide more detail on the timings for the project, once we have the results from the feasibility study.

You also asked about a strategy for road maintenance. We already have a strategy in place to establish road maintenance needs on a national basis. Since 2005, we have worked with the local authorities to calculate the annual local road maintenance backlog. This initiative is unique to Wales. Whilst investment decisions are a matter for the local authorities, on the basis of the results of this collaboration, we have provided local government with additional capital funding for road maintenance totalling £45m over the last three financial years. I have also recently extended the grant by £5m for 2010/11. In addition to this, I have also provided £2.75m to local authorities to assist them with potholes caused by the adverse weather in January. I will consider the need for financial support from 2011/12 on following receipt of this year's backlog figures at the end of the summer.

Ieuan Wyn Jones
Gweinidog dros yr Economi a Thrafnidiaeth
Minister for the Economy and Transport