



Board

Minutes

26th June 2009

Location: Council Chamber, Ty Penallta, Ystrad Mynach.

1. Apologies

1.1 Apologies were received from Councillors, Richard Clark, David Attwell, Delme Bowen, Ed Townsend, Antony Ernest, Colin Teesdale, Ken Privett and Tony Rogers, also Martin Buckle, Chris Aldridge and Margaret Everson.

2. Election of Chair and Vice-chair

2.1 Cllr. Jeff James was elected as Chair and Cllr. Andrew Morgan as Vice-chair.

2.2 Cllr Spanswick suggested that the term of Chairman be two years and that he be succeeded by the Vice-chair. It was agreed that a report to this effect be brought to the next meeting of the Board.

3. Minutes of previous meeting.

3.1 The minutes of the meeting held on the 20th March 2009 were accepted as a true record.

4. Presentation – St Athan. Rob Thomas, Vale of Glamorgan

4.1 Rob Thomas explained that St Athan was chosen by Metrix as a core site for bids. A development brief was prepared and in May 2009 two outline planning applications were submitted in May for:

1. The Defence Technical College
2. The Aerospace Business Park, and associated Highway Works

4.2 RT confirmed that in terms of transportation issues, there is a railway line that runs south of the site with stations at Rhoose and Llantwit Major. Because the Barry to Bridgend line has issues with am/pm peaks in terms of capacity, their favoured option at the moment is to look at transfers for Bridgend, Barry and Cardiff.

4.3 Councillor Wilcox asked that the original plans for the Ebbw Vale line to go through Cardiff & Maesteg be revisited, as he felt that this would give a greater opportunity for people from Blaenau Gwent to obtain employment on the site. He also felt that Cardiff bus transfers would be a disincentive for employment.

4.4 Councillor Wilcox also commented that the presentation made no mention of DARA staying on site and asked if they would remain there.

4.5 RT replied that DARA would possibly be relocated but still on the Business Park site.

5. Sewta Finance

- 5.1 IC introduced the report which was to inform the Board of the current position of the Sewta Draft Outturn 2008/9, Future Funding for Capital and Revenue Funding, Budgets 09/10 and also the Draft Statement of Accounts 2008/09.

The recommendations that the Board:

- 3.1 Draft Outturn 2008/9 -The Board were asked to note the outturn position**
- 3.2 Future Funding –The Sewta Board were asked to note progress on revenue and capital future funding.**
- 3.3 Budgets 2009/10 -**
 - 3.3.1 That the Board notes the changes to funding & expenditure for 2009/10.**
 - 3.3.2 That the Board considers the budget changes put forward by the author of this report in relation to the Central Support Unit, Expenses, Travel Plan Co-ordinators Resources and Meeting Costs, and if agreed approve the revised budget (Sewta Corporate Budget 2009/10 – Revised June 2009).**
 - 3.3.3 That the Board agrees to retain the projected reserves of £51,810 pending WAG’s announcement on future revenue funding.**
- 3.4 Approval of the Draft Statement of Accounts for 2008/09 –**
 - 3.4.1 The Board were asked to approve the South East Wales Transport Alliance Joint Committee, Statement of Accounts 2008/09**
 - 3.4.2 That the Board authorises the Chair to evidence the Boards approval by signing the document in the appropriate place(s). *Approval was agreed.***

6. International Business Park.

- 6.1 AO’S referred to the report on the International Business Park (IBP) and added, that Sewta had forwarded a clear view. He went on to say that Sewta recommends this development, but with some concerns as reflected in the report around junction 33, and that Sewta would like an influence on the way IBP develops in terms of Transport.
- 6.2 AO’S also asked that the Board note that the three neighbouring Local Authorities have responded as Local Planning Authorities, and their views will differ from Sewta’s view which has a regional transport perspective.
- 6.3 JD commented that he was slightly disappointed with paragraph 3.1 in the report where it was stated rail would not be used. He also considered that paragraph 3.7 of the report provided insufficient evidence to safeguard the status of the IBP.

Resolved that Sewta formally responds to the proposal for an International Business Park at Junction 33 off the M4 as outlined in paragraph 3.1 – 3.7 in the report.

7. Regional Transport Plan, Update.

- 7.1 CS introduced the report, the purpose of which was to inform Members of progress with the RTP, commenting that they were now working on the final draft with only minor changes other than the 5 year programme which needs updating. The timetable is now final with deadlines from WAG set in late September.
- The report was agreed.**

8. Updates from Partners

- 8.1 Passenger Focus – referring to the report, SP said that the next release of the National Passenger Survey, Spring 2009, is scheduled for 30th June 2009. A report has also been produced to look in detail at the levels of satisfaction and priorities for improvement of rail passengers in Wales.

Passenger Focus is in the final stages of producing a Welsh Language Scheme. They anticipate public consultation of the scheme to commence shortly, and hope the final scheme will be published in late Summer 2009.

Passenger Focus also reported that they oppose the First Great Western (FGW) increase in cost of weekend supplements for first class upgrades on the Wales to London route, and have voiced their displeasure to FGW.

- 8.2 Arriva Trains Wales – MV reported that public performance measures continue to improve and is now up to 96% reliable overall. The only negative effects were largely due to delayed services associated with the rugby events held at the Millennium Stadium.

- 8.3 Bus Users UK – PH presented on behalf of Bus Users UK and highlighted the fact that Stagecoach have introduced the use of low floored buses on the X4 routes to Cardiff, which serves the Sewta area in Pontypridd, Merthyr and across the Heads of the Valleys. These new buses have been extremely well received.

- 8.4 Confederation of Passenger Transport – JPo referred to the second item on his report, and added that he was pleased with the good attendance at the series of road shows held by CPT over the funding review and also of the helpful comments from ATCO, WLGA and particularly from the Sewta Bus Group.

- 8.5 First Great Western (FGW) - JPo presented the report. Councillor Spanswick voiced his concerns about FGW headline Cardiff-London fares going up to £176.00. He considered with the South Wales valleys people being amongst the lowest paid in the UK they would be unable to afford to travel on FGW.

JPo responded that only about 8% of FGW passengers paid headline fares, with the vast majority paying considerably less.

- 8.6 Network Rail – No report was submitted from Network Rail to the board.

Chair commented that the board would like an update from partners even if unable to attend.

- 8.7 Sustrans - LW said that they were very pleased that after two years of negotiations, Sustrans now have sixteen million pounds worth of investment to start on the infra structure, but also LW emphasised that Sustrans are ready to start to work on 'making the changes'.

AO'S commented that sixteen million pounds is a great deal of money to be spent across the entire region. Members may wish to receive a presentation from Sustrans at a future Board meeting.

9. Railway Electrification

- 9.1 A report was presented to the board explaining that since the last meeting a consultative report has been issued by Network Rail seeking the views of Local Authorities and Transport Consortia on plans for future electrification.
- 9.2 The Chair commented that there is a large amount of work to be carried out for the need and justification of the rail electrification, and asked if Sewta can do anything to help with that process, perhaps encourage the Local Authorities that are linked to these routes to do work to promote rail electrification.
- 9.3 AO'S also commented that it is important that rail electrification is kept 'high profile' with Sewta's response and that Sewta needs to ensure they take every opportunity to seek to influence people properly. It was agreed that Sewta needs to ensure that it links with the Wales Transport Research Centre and where any work is being progressed Sewta's response should be sought.
The meeting agreed that electrification should not just be from London to Swansea, but the debate should also include the valleys lines which would include Ebbw Vale and Maesteg.
- 9.4 The Chair commented that any large projects being looked at like International Business Park (IBP) and St Athan should be included to promote rail electrification.

Resolved that Sewta supports:

A) the early electrification of the Great Western Main Line as far as Swansea and the electrification of the valleys Lines network including the Maesteg and Vale of Glamorgan lines.

B) that Sewta works with SWITCH to achieve these goals.

10. European Convergence Programme 2007–2013 - Progress Report

- 10.1 MA presented the report on behalf of Martin Buckle (Chair of the Officer Programme Group). He explained that there are two main elements to the report, the first element is the progress being made on gaining funding for rail projects and the second is the progress on convergence funding.

10.2 Rail Projects

The four main initiatives for the rail projects which are the Rail Park & Ride Schemes, Valley Station Improvement Schemes and the two Frequency Enhancement Schemes. Sewta has been successful in securing Transport Grant Funding and has also received WEFO approval for the Rail Park & Ride Schemes, which gives a total of just over £6 million.

The Station Improvement Schemes are well advanced with 32 Stations led by Arriva with match funding from the National Station Improvement Programme. The total package being worth about £9 million.

With regard to the frequency enhancement schemes, even though Sewta did not get Transport Grant Funding for Rhymney & Maesteg, MA said that in the future those schemes will be delivered through the Welsh Assembly and the Wales

Forward Programme, though Sewta Officers remain actively involved to get those schemes delivered. The Maesteg Line revised expression of interest is under preparation, with the first phase likely to be the frequency from Maesteg to Bridgend.

There are further rail projects for which Sewta will bid for Convergence Funding. These projects relate to Turnback Facilities at Caerphilly, Pontypridd and Ebbw Valley Phase 2.

WAG is taking a lead role in the Ebbw Valley Line as part of the Rail Forward Programme and is currently conducting a study into extending the line north into Ebbw Vale and south to Newport.

Other Convergence Projects

In terms of Interchange proposals, there is a project being developed which include bus interchange facilities in Aberdare and Tonypany and Rail Park & Ride facilities in Pencoed and Sarn. This project will benefit from grant money already secured for Bridgend interchange and Porth Interchange.

JD said that he had an update with regard to item 3.7 (Station Improvement Scheme) in the report, BCBC were acting as the lead authority for this project with Arriva and WEFO. The package has now been identified as 'significant' and therefore WAG will now sponsor the Station Improvement Scheme themselves.

Councillor Wilcox commented that he was very pleased with the Ebbw Valley line, and hope that they will also get the Newport line and the line into Ebbw Vale Town Centre. He also said he would like to see in the convergence programme the development of the spur to Abertillery as in the original Ebbw Valley line plans. He considered that this would offset the withdrawal of the feeder buses to Llanhilleth Station.

The Vice-chair asked when a decision will be made on the Intervention level with WEFO funding and if match funding is increased as suggested, how will that impact on the RTP, will it be to the benefit or detriment to the forward programme.

MA responded that it makes the match funding easier, though it may not necessarily mean more funding coming through.

Resolved that the approach to the Convergence Programme set out in this report is adopted.

11. Consultation Responses

11.1 For information purposes only.

12. Date of next meeting.

12.1 The proposed date for the next meeting of the Board would be at 10.30 am on Friday 18th September 2009 in the Assembly Hall at Civic Centre, Newport.

Meeting attended by:		
Name	Initials	Representing
Councillor J. James		Vale of Glamorgan (Chair)
Councillor D. Wilcox		Blaenau Gwent
Councillor J. Spanswick		Bridgend
Councillor M. Parker		Caerphilly
Councillor J. Amos		Merthyr Tydfil
Councillor R. Hayward		Monmouthshire
Councillor A. Morgan		Rhondda-Cynon-Taf (Vice-Chair)
Councillor J. Cunningham		Torfaen
Michael Vaughan	MV	Arriva Trains Wales
Paul Harley	PH	Bus Users UK
John Pockett	JPo	Confederation of Passenger Transport and First Great Western.
Simon Pickering	SP	Passenger Focus
John Parsons	JPa	Blaenau Gwent
John Duddridge	JD	Bridgend
Richard Metford	RM	Bridgend
Anthony O'Sullivan	AO'S	Caerphilly
Terry Shaw	TS	Caerphilly
Paul Carter	PC	Cardiff
Dave House	DH	Merthyr Tydfil
Nigel Burgess	NB	Monmouthshire
Brian Kemp	BK	Newport
Mark Adams	MA	Rhondda Cynon Taf
Ian Colbourne	IC	Torfaen
Rob Thomas	RT	Vale of Glamorgan
Colin Eades	CE	Sewta Secretariat
Christian Schmidt	CS	Planning Manager
Peter Curtis	PC	Giraffe Communications
Sian Isgrove	SI	Sewta Administrative Co-ordinator
Apologies received from:		
Councillor C. Teesdale		Bridgend
Councillor A. Ernest		Vale of Glamorgan
Councillor D. Bowen		Cardiff
Councillor T Rogers		Merthyr Tydfil
Councillor D. Atwell		Newport
Councillor E. Townsend		Newport
Councillor K. Privett		Rhondda-Cynon-Taf
Councillor R. Clarke		Torfaen
John Gould		Confederation of Passenger Transport
Margaret Everson		Bus Users UK
Chris Aldridge		Network Rail
Martin Buckle		Programme Manager
SI 12 August 2009		