



Board Meeting

Agenda

Date 10th October, 2008 10.30 Location: Council Chamber, City Hall, Cardiff

1. Appointment of Chair & Vice-chair
2. Apologies
3. Minutes of previous meeting on 14th March 2008 and matters arising not covered on the agenda
4. Presentation on the proposed International Business Park, (Byron Davies, Chief Executive Officer, Cardiff)
5. Future Capital Funding and Transport Grant 2009/10 (Chair of Finance & Planning Manager)
6. European Structural Funds Programme 2007–2013 - Progress Report (Programme Manager)
7. Updates from Partners
8. Consultation responses (Assistant Secretary)
8a Response to OOR Periodic Review
8b Response to Wales RSU Consultation
9. WLGA Transport Members / Chairs of Consortia Meeting (Chair of Directorate)
10. Dates of future meetings.



Board

Minutes

Date 27th June 2008.

Location: Ferrier Hall, City Hall Cardiff

1. Appointment of Chair

- 1.1 Because not all authorities could be represented at this meeting, it was agreed that a Chair would be appointed for this meeting only. Councillor Clarke proposed Councillor Parker for Chair. This was seconded by Councillor Hayward, and Councillor Parker was unanimously elected as Chair for this meeting.

2. Appointment of Vice Chair

- 2.1 It was agreed to defer this appointment until the next meeting.

3. Apologies

- 3.1 Apologies were received from Councillors Leighton Smart, John Cunningham, Robert Greenland, Anthony Earnest and Jeff James, and from Brian Kemp and Martin Buckle.

4. Minutes of previous meeting (14th March 2007).

- 4.1 The minutes of the meeting held on the 14th March 2008 were accepted as a true record.

5. Matters arising

- 5.1 *Paragraph 3.5 – through ticketing.* Councillor Parker asked if there was more information available on through tickets to Europe. **SP agreed to check with First Great Western and report back.**

6. Presentation 'Evolution of Sewta' by Anthony O'Sullivan, Chair of Directorate

- 6.1 Introducing the presentation AOS said that the aim was to update Members on the progress that Sewta had made, and where it had to move to in the future. Successes achieved by Sewta to date included the re-opening of the Vale of Glamorgan Line and the Ebbw Valley Railway to passenger traffic, Blackwood Bus Interchange, Cwmbran Rail Interchange and Newbridge Park and Ride.
- 6.2 The emphasis was now changing to delivering the strategies as a region rather than as individual authorities, and the concentration would be on programme management, the political interface, outcomes and measuring performance.
- 6.3 There was a need to improve Member engagement, and this would be done through seminars and briefings in between Board meetings. AOS said that input back from Members on what was needed to improve their understanding would be welcomed.

6.4 The Consultative draft of the RTP and the 5 Year Programme would be covered in a later item of this agenda. AOS stressed that it was for Members to agree the Programme: the suggestion was that over the 5 year period £350 million would be needed across Sewta, and providing this funding would be the biggest issue. Better guidance was needed on funding mechanisms such as Convergence Funds and the Heads of the Valleys Initiative.

6.5 Future areas for consideration included more promotion of travel planning, extending the concessionary fares scheme to youth, and building on the success of walking and cycling schemes already in place.

6.6 Councillor Parker referred to the recent competition success by Sustrans for funding for cycle routes in Britain. LW said that it was a £50 million bid for the UK, and there were 7 schemes in the Sewta region which would require match funding. It was hoped that Convergence Funding could provide this for 4 of the schemes, but there were 3 others where match funding still had to be identified. Councillor Bowen referred to one of these schemes, involving a bridge from Cardiff to Penarth, which was ready to go apart from the match funding issue.

7. Central Support Unit and Programme Management

7.1 It was agreed that this item be deferred to a future meeting.

8. Updates from Partners

(i) Passenger Focus.

8.1 SP said that Passenger Focus was an independent body funded by Central Government with the overall aim of getting the best deal for rail passengers

8.2 The main work currently being undertaken was:

- The twice yearly National Passenger Survey. This obtained the views of 25000 passengers on all aspects of rail travel, and the next release would be on the 8th July.
- Research work for input into the Wales Route Utilisation Strategy (WRUS), which would be the basis for Network Rail's business plan for the development of infrastructure over the next 10 years. 4 routes in Wales had been covered, which included the Marches Line and Valley Lines.
- Monitoring of queuing at stations. Cardiff Central had been one of the stations covered.

8.3 Councillor Parker asked if staff shortage was a reason for the long queues at Cardiff Central on Sundays. MV said that this was more due to the large numbers travelling on Sundays, and SP added that they were trying to encourage more use of ticket vending machines which were often unused even at times when there were long queues.

(ii) Bus Users UK.

8.4 PH said that Bus Users UK in Wales was funded by the Welsh Assembly Government to represent bus passengers interests, mainly by dealing with complaints and arranging bus surgeries across Wales. He added that complaints were of the order of 40 per month.

- 8.5 Bus Users UK were concerned about the pressure being put on operators as a result of the fuel price increases, and the knock on effect this had for local authorities and WAG on the cost of the concessionary fares scheme. Nationally Bus Users UK were pressing the Westminster Government for an increase in the Fuel Duty Rebate for bus operators.
- 8.6 Councillor Hayward said that though long distance coach services to the Midlands passed Monmouth, only one in each direction daily stopped there. Some form of bus pull in was required to encourage more services to stop. **PH said that he would take this up with National Express.**
- 8.7 Councillor Townsend asked if there was a reason for the small number of complaints received by Bus Users UK from bus passengers. PH said that the first point of contact for passenger complaints should be to the operator or local authority, with Bus Users UK becoming involved where this route had failed. SP added that a survey had indicated that bus passengers were much less likely to complain than rail passengers.
- (iii) Confederation of Passenger Transport (CPT)**
- 8.8 JG said that CPT represented the interests of bus operators. Overall there had been a 1% growth in passenger numbers year on year, and Stagecoach had seen much larger increases on some routes resulting from the introduction of new vehicles, and increasing the frequency of services. This had been particularly evident on the Blaenavon to Newport and the Blackwood to Newport routes.
- 8.9 The fuel price rise was a major issue, especially for the smaller operators, and this had not been helped by the WAG decision not to move the level of Bus Service Operators Grant in line with the fuel duty increase. JG said that the number of complaints received last year was about 1400, which was a small reduction on the previous year. They tried to view complaints as an opportunity to improve the service as the majority of complaints were genuine.
- 8.10 Councillor Atwell asked if there was any intention to raise fares in the near future. JG said that Stagecoach had increased their fares last in April this year, and were hopeful that that increase would hold for 12 months. Regarding complaints JG said that in most cases complaints would come firstly to the operator, with Bus Users UK only being involved where the complainant was not satisfied with the operator's response.
- 8.11 Councillor Hayward suggested that a 1% growth was small and asked for the reasons. JG said that the main competitor to bus was the private car, and the figure reflected the difficulty of attracting people out of their cars. Also the figure should be compared with the 1980' and 1990's when passenger figures were falling by 3-4% year on year. Delays caused by road works and congestion were also a major impediment to attracting car users onto buses, and anything that could be done with regard to bus priority and control of road works would be of immense benefit to bus service reliability. SS added that getting bus service reliability through bus priority and better share of the road space was essential to getting people out of cars and onto buses.

(iv) Arriva Trains Wales.

- 8.12 MV reported the success of the Ebbw Valley Railway, which had carried 210,000 passengers since opening. On occasions, particularly Saturdays and school holidays it had been necessary to double up trains to provide additional capacity. The December 2008 timetable had been released for consultation, and Arriva Trains Wales were currently evaluating the Wales RUS, the deadline for which was 22nd August 2008.
- 8.13 Performance was continuing to improve, with 95.2% of Valley Lines trains arriving on time or less than 5 minutes late. ATW were also monitoring the effect of fuel price rises on passenger numbers.
- 8.14 Councillor Townsend asked if ATW were satisfied that all stations were adequately served by buses meeting trains. MV said that there was a need for physical work at some stations to allow bus access, and there was a need to look at the whole journey for passengers from origin to destination. Discussions were taking place with relevant bodies, but there was a funding issue involved. Councillor Parker said that there was a need to pursue such schemes to ensure they were implemented. AOS added that integrated ticketing was another issue that needed to be pursued.
- 8.15 SS said that it was important that interventions of this type were reflected in the RTP to ensure that the funding was locked in to carry out the improvements..

(v) Sustrans.

- 8.16 LW referred to the barriers that prevent people giving up their cars. Over half of car journeys were less than 3 miles, and there was a need to move these journeys in particular away from a transport system based on oil. WAG had put revenue funding into areas such as encouraging walking and cycling, and the concessionary fares scheme, but capital funding was still biased towards roads schemes.
- 8.17 Sustrans provided practical ways of getting people out of cars which also benefited their health and it was important to realise the health benefits from more sustainable forms of transport. To encourage cycling it was important to provide attractive routes that were separated from roads, and there was a need for a change of emphasis away from road building.
- 8.18 Councillor Parker asked if any funds had been drawn down from the Heads of the Valleys Initiative. LW said that Sewta had drawn down £1 million last year, but it had to be used on schemes that could be implemented quickly, and these were mainly the provision of cycle routes alongside often busy existing highways, and this would not bring about the required change in behaviour.

(vi) Welsh Assembly Government.

- 8.19 SS outlined the current discussion regarding the funding process. The aim was to move away from the micro-management by scheme to a position where the Consortia would have more flexibility. To do this would require robust RTPs as a framework for determining priority and evaluating performance against objectives. The Funding Group was currently taking stock of the comments received, and was drafting a paper to get a steer from the Minister. Once the Minister had given his view the paper would go back to the Funding Group to finalise it for consultation.

8.20 Transitional arrangements were being discussed which looked at how to keep the committed schemes going whilst freeing up funds to allow the Consortia to develop new schemes. Funding for larger schemes could be sought through the Strategic Capital Investment Fund, and there would be a need to prepare evidence to support that approach. On staff SS said that he now had 4 planners in place, and a Senior Planner had just been appointed.

8.21 Councillor Stephens said that it would be helpful to have by March 2009 clarity on who was responsible for funding decisions. SS said that the Transport Grant programme was over spent and local authorities have not been able to deliver the full programme within the timescale. Part of the current dialogue was looking at whether schemes would continue to be funded scheme by scheme, or whether the money could be rolled out as a pot which the Consortia could then re-allocate. On RTP funding SS said that the Minister was minded not to micro-manage, with the aim of allocating funds to each Consortia to implement the RTP.

(vii) Making Connections.

8.22 RM said that the aim of the deferred item 7 was to identify the need to change the governance of the Consortia to meet the requirements of the new funding arrangements referred to by SS. These arrangements will put more responsibility on Sewta to decide priorities, and there would be a need for a separate meeting, possibly during July, to brief Members on this. He added that it was essential that officers fully brief their Members on this as the new structure would need to be in place by Christmas 2008.

8.23 Councillor Teesdale asked what preparation there would be to the public, as this was an issue often overlooked. There would be a need to convince the public that what we were doing would be in their best interests. RM said that it was accepted that more was needed to be done in taking the views of the public into account, and that there was also a need to better brief Members before meetings.

8.24 RM said that Sewta as an organisation would be geared up to undertake this improved consultation, and this would have to be undertaken by local authorities using their own funding. LW suggested that allowing partners to take part in Members briefing would carry benefits. Councillor Bowen referred to press coverage of the opening of the Ebbw Valley Railway as an example of why there needed to be good control over publicity.

9. Consultative Draft RTP.

9.1 Introducing the report CS said that it was to inform Members of progress with the RTP, and to seek approval to undertake formal public consultation on the Consultative Draft RTP, including the draft 5 Year Programme.

9.2 In December 2008 members would be asked to approve the Finalised Draft RTP for submission to WAG. This would set out Sewta's vision, objectives and priorities for the transport system of South East Wales and further propose a number of policies, actions and capital investment schemes that Sewta believes must be implemented to achieve the vision, objectives and priorities.

- 9.3 The Consultative Draft RTP would be sent to statutory consultees and other interested parties, and would be available in local authority offices and libraries.
- 9.4 Councillor Atwell said that the dates for schemes, especially rail, must be realistic in order to satisfy the public. CS said that the rail scheme dates were based on the agreed Sewta Rail Programme which has been discussed with WAG, and the 5 Year Programme took into account advice from WAG that existing funding levels were likely to be continued. Implementation of rail schemes would be centrally funded from WAG. Councillor Atwell asked for an additional paragraph which would make it clear that the 5YP was what we were trying to achieve, but the dates could change. **CS said that he would amend the Consultative Draft RTP appropriately.**
- 9.5 RM suggested that there was a need for a single page summary identifying the realistic schemes that could be implemented. The focus must be on the key schemes that Sewta could support as a region.
- 9.6 Councillor Wilcox was concerned that disability was only mentioned twice, and more consideration was needed for this issue especially with regard to public transport.
- 9.7 Councillor Stephens said that it was not clear what was being committed to in financial terms, particularly regarding match funding for EU supported schemes. AOS said that the intention was to pursue all possible avenues of funding.
- 9.8 **The recommendations that:
Members are asked to**
1. Note the work undertaken to date in developing the RTP and the supporting documents.
2. Approve the Consultative Draft RTP for public consultation.
Were accepted.
- 10. Structural Funds Programme 2007-2013 Progress Report**
- 10.1 Introducing the report CS said that it provided an update on the Sewta Structural Funds Programme. Sewta's Structural Funds Programme Board, which has representatives from each of the main working groups, had agreed a Programme Brief and prepared an Action Plan.
- 10.2 The first version of the Programme Overview Document had been agreed by the Board in December 2008, and an updated version would be brought to the next Board meeting. This would update the sections on Rail and Walking & Cycling, and include new sections on Interchanges and Travel planning.
- 10.3 Councillor Stephens referred to his earlier comment that match funding would be a major issue and more clarity was needed as to where this would come from. CS said that for capital schemes the general idea was that the match funding would come from RTP funding.

- 10.4 **The recommendation:**
that the approach to the Structural Funds Programme set out in this report be endorsed.

Was accepted.

11. **Financial Reports (Chair of Finance)**

(i) 2007/8 Closing of accounts

- 11.1 Introducing the report IC said that it was to inform the Board of the end of year financial position and to seek approval of the Draft Statutory Accounts (subject to audit).

- 11.2 IC outlined the background to Sewta funding and referred to the Income and Expenditure Budget Schedule which showed an overall underspend of £137,281. The majority of this related to underspending on WelTAG and RTP projects which was a timing issue and the money had been required to be spent in the first quarter of 2008/09 to complete the work.

11.3 **The recommendations that:**

1. **The Board are asked to note the Income and Expenditure Budget Schedule.**
2. **The Board are asked to approve the South East Wales Transport Alliance Joint Committee, Statement of Accounts 2007/08.**
3. **That the Chair evidences the Board's approval by signing the document in the appropriate place(s).**

Were accepted.

(ii) 2008/9 Draft Budget

- 11.4 This report asked for the approval of the 2008/9 budget. Since the report was written confirmation had been received from WAG of the £640,000 funding for Sewta. IC added that he was also recommending that the £15,000 contributed by each local authority in 2007/8 be made non-refundable as necessary work remained outstanding.

- 11.5 The proposed budget for 2008/09 had a total cost of £749,408, which was forecast to leave a reserve carried forward into 2009/10 of £55,530. This represented a prudent reserve that could be utilised for any unexpected expenditure. The budget included £40,000 for work carried out by the working groups, and allowed for the phased introduction of the new structure.

- 11.6 Councillor Townsend said that one of the difficulties Sewta would face would be letting people know what we were doing, and he was therefore concerned that we were proposing to spend less on Communications and PR than last year. **AOS agreed to bring a report on this issue to the next meeting of this Board.**

- 11.7 **The recommendations that:**
1. **The £15,000 contributions made by each authority in 2007/08 become non-refundable due to reasons contained in section 2 above.**
 2. **It be noted that no contributions from member authorities are required in 2008/09.**
 3. **That the Board approve the attached budget.**

Were accepted.

(iii) Future Funding

- 11.8 IC introduced the report which was to update Members on proposals by WAG to change funding mechanisms from 1st April 2009. The three options under consideration were described in the report, and consultants employed by WAG were consulting with stakeholders on these.
- 11.9 The annual budget for Sewta was likely to go from under £1 million to perhaps £70 million, and there would need to be a structure in place to manage this programme to ensure that outcomes were delivered, and to manage the financial risk.

- 11.10 **The recommendation:**
That the Board note progress to date.
Was accepted.

12. WLGA Transport Members/Chairs of Consortia Meeting.

- 12.1 AOS referred to the information circulated with the agenda regarding this event, and encouraged all to attend if possible.

13. Date of next meeting.

- 13.1 The next meeting of the Board will be at 10.30 am on Friday 10th October 2008 in Ferrier Hall, City Hall Cardiff.

Meeting attended by:		
Name	Initials	Representing
Councillor M. Parker		Caerphilly (Chair)
Councillor D. Wilcox		Blaenau Gwent
Councillor C. Teesdale		Bridgend
Councillor D. Bowen		Cardiff
Councillor M. Stephens		Cardiff
Councillor R. Hayward		Monmouthshire
Councillor D. Atwell		Newport
Councillor E. Townsend		Newport
Councillor A. Morgan		Rhondda-Cynon-Taf
Councillor R. Clarke		Torfaen
Michael Vaughan	MV	Arriva Trains Wales
Paul Harley	PH	Bus Users UK
John Gould	JG	Confederation of Passenger Transport
Simon Pickering	SP	Passenger Focus
Lee Waters	LW	Sustrans
Simon Shouler	SS	Welsh Assembly Government
Robin Morrison	RMo	Blaenau Gwent
Alun Evans	AE	Blaenau Gwent
John Duddridge	JD	Bridgend
Richard Metford	RMe	Bridgend
Anthony O'Sullivan	AOS	Caerphilly
Paul Carter	PC	Cardiff
Dave House	DHo	Merthyr Tydfil
Dave Harris	DHa	Monmouthshire
Glyn Stickler	GS	Newport
George Jones	GJ	Rhondda Cynon Taf
Roger Waters	RW	Rhondda Cynon Taf
Ian Colbourne	IC	Torfaen
Clare Cameron	CC	Vale of Glamorgan
Christian Schmidt	CS	Planning Manager
Cheryl Owen	CO	Travel Plan Co-ordinator
Phil Wall	PW	Secretariat
Apologies received from:		
Councillor T. Rogers		Merthyr Tydfil
Councillor L. Smart		Merthyr Tydfil
Councillor R. Greenland		Monmouthshire
Councillor J. Cunningham		Torfaen
Councillor A. Earnest		Vale of Glamorgan
Councillor J. James		Vale of Glamorgan
Brian Kemp		Newport
Martin Buckle		Programme Manager

Report To:	Board 10th October 2008	Item 5
Report Subject:	Corporate Budget 2007/8 and Future Funding	
Report Author:	Chair of Finance Working Group	

1.	<p>Purpose To inform the Board of the current position regarding Sewta's corporate budget for 2008/9. (<i>See Appendix 1</i>)</p>
2.	<p>Background</p> <p>The 2008/09 financial Budget was approved by the Board on 29th June 2008 at which time it was reported that the WAG funding of £640,000 had not yet been approved by The Minister. I am pleased to report that The Minister has now approved funding and that the level of funding was £640,000 as forecasted. Therefore, no amendments to the approved budget is required.</p> <p>At the Board Meeting on 29th June 2008 it was reported that the issue over future funding, both Capital and Revenue, was still yet to be decided.</p> <p>Whilst quarter 1 monitoring information is compiled using all available information, it must be noted that it remains early in the financial year and therefore the information contained should be used with caution.</p> <p>Close financial monitoring continues on a monthly basis to ensure that budgets are adhered to.</p>
3.	<p>2008/09 Quarter 1 Out-turn Projections</p> <p>Quarter 1, 1st April 2008 to 30th June 2008, shows expenditure of £112,195 against an annual budget of £749,408 (See Appendix 1).</p> <p>At present it is forecast that savings in relation to the Central Support Unit are likely due to the delay in appointment of staff and the potential introduction of a new staff structure.</p> <p>In all other areas of expenditure it is envisaged that the approved budgeted levels of expenditure will be utilized but not exceeded.</p> <p>It is prudent at this stage to retain any savings until such time as any changes in organisational structures and management are fully agreed.</p> <p>It must be noted that SEWTA will fully utilize the £640,000 grant provided by</p>

	WAG during the financial year and there is no expectation of any claw back.
4. Future Funding	<p>On the 16th/17th October the 2008 WLGA Transport Cabinet Members' Meeting is due to be held whereby WAG will give a clear indication of plans for 2009/10 and latest thinking on the options for 2010/11 and beyond.</p> <p>Attached as Appendix 2 is an email from Tim Peppin (WLGA) which outlines the likely direction that will be taken.</p> <p>Each Authority to date has been formally requested to bid for Transport Grant for 2008/09 but is restricted to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schemes already receiving Transport Grant support • New safe Routes in Communities schemes <p>Bids are required to be submitted by 10th November 2008.</p> <p>No news on grant funding for Sewta core functions in 2009/10 have yet to be published.</p>
5. Staffing/Personnel Implications	None
6. Consultation	Sewta Finance Working Group, Sewta Directorate
7. Recommendations	The Board are asked to note the budgetary position.
8. Reasons (Sewta Objectives)	Fundamental to the successful future for Sewta

Sewta Corporate Budget: 2008/09 First Quarter Review (As of 7th July 08)

Group Responsibility	Reference Code	Project Title	Budget Holder	Billing Body	Allocation (2008/09)	First Quarter Spend (as of 30th June 08)	Remaining Allocation	Comments
Secretariat	R707	Central Support Unit (Staff - Inc. TPC's)	Secretary	Capita Symonds	£430,831	£69,438	£361,393	See Notes for spilt of spend
	R708	Central Support Unit - Expenses	Secretary	Capita Symonds	£12,442	£3,730	£8,712	Includes normal CSU expenditure plus £370 for ACT / Travelwise membership for Sewta. PTI Cymru invoice paid in July 08 by TCBC for £56.25, this will be included in the second quarter review.
	R702	Meeting Refreshments	Secretary	Cardiff Catering	£750	£0	£750	Order placed for Catering (tea, coffee and buffet) for board meeting on the 27th June. Expect invoice for this in second quarter.
	R703	Accounts Auditing	Secretary	Wales Audit Office	£1,500	£0	£1,500	Accounts yet to be audited.
	R704	Translation (Business Plan only)	Secretary		£1,000	£0	£1,000	No spend this quarter
	R705	Graphics Support	Secretary	Capita Symonds	£500	£0	£500	No spend this quarter
	R701	Financial Support	Secretary	Capita Symonds	£12,000	£1,563	£10,437	
	<i>Secretariat Sub Total</i>					£459,023	£74,730	£384,293
Regional Transport Plan	S711	WelTAG Phase 1	CAS	Capita Symonds	£20,000	£18,583	£1,418	WelTAG Phase 1 complete.
	S803	WelTAG Phase 2	CAS	Capita Symonds	£30,000	£0	£30,000	
	S802	Further topic studies for the RTP - Bids	CAS	Various	£40,000	£0	£40,000	
	S707	RTP Report Production	CAS	Capita Symonds	£20,000	£1,309	£18,691	Costs for translation of RTP, paid by VOG. Commission approved in July 08 to produce documents (with CS), spend to occur on this element in second quarter.
	Sf614	Basemap Accession	CAS		£5,270	£0	£5,270	
	S706	SEA Work	CAS	Capita Symonds	£40,000	£0	£40,000	No expenditure to date this financial year.
	<i>Regional Transport Plan Sub To total</i>					£155,270	£19,892	£135,378
Programme Management	S710	Economic and Employment Outputs	MB	Caerphilly / Capita Symonds	£30,000	£0	£30,000	Commitment of £23k against this head for a Maesteg Line Frequency Enhancements Business Case. £6,756.25 has been invoiced and will be spend in the second quarter, representing the 25% on appointment fee from Jacobs.
	S801	Structural Funds (inc Advisor)	MB	Capita / Euro 24	£35,000	£750	£34,250	Two invoices from Euro24 for April £450 and May and June (£300)
	S701	Objective 1 / Convergence Administration	CN	RCT / Capita Symonds	£15,000	£1,503	£13,497	
	S804	Transport Grant Submission	MB	Capita Symonds	£10,000	£0	£10,000	No expenditure to date this financial year.
	<i>Programme Management Sub Total</i>					£90,000	£2,253	£87,747
Other	R710	PR / Communication Advisor	EH / RM	VOG / Bridgend CBC	£20,000	£5,000	£15,000	Last payment made on 3 month extension of contract for Giraffe.
	R711	Car Share Database Licence	CAS	Liftshare.com	£4,000	£3,780	£220	Invoice paid by VOG. To be reclaimed from TCBC.
	R713	Smart Card Costs	HM	Caerphilly	£21,115	£6,540	£14,575	Wayfarer Transit System invoice for June 08.
	<i>Other sub total</i>					£45,115	£15,320	£29,795
2008/09 Budget TOTAL					£749,408	£112,195	£637,213	

From: Tim Peppin [mailto:tim.peppin@WLGA.GOV.UK]

Sent: 25 July 2008 09:51.gov.uk

Subject: Transport update

Dear colleagues,

I had a constructive meeting this morning with Simon Shouler and Alison Teague in WAG and thought it would be helpful to provide you with an update on a number of fronts as follows:

- **Regional Transport Plan funding** – as you will be aware there is a joint WAG/WLGA/Regional Consortia work group looking at future funding arrangements. WAG has been considering the group's range of views to date and looking at the practicalities of implementing change. There is still much to determine, particularly regarding allocation methodology, financial accountability and governance arrangements. They have also been looking at the amount of funding headroom from the Transport Grant budget that might be available next year and this does not look very promising. As you know the Transport Grant programme has increased in cost substantially and is therefore taking much longer to complete. Therefore, (subject to Ministerial approval) they will continue the transitional arrangements into 2009/10. They will shortly issue guidance on bidding to maintain the momentum of spend on local transport. This will allow time for the review to be fully thought through and discussed with local government/consortia.
- Alison Teague has been appointed as a dedicated manager in WAG to take the funding issues forward and manage the future programme. She is currently putting together an outline work programme for the coming year to ensure that all the necessary building blocks are in place for new arrangements in 2010/11. Once developed, this will be shared with local authorities/consortia, so there is awareness and understanding to assist in their own forward planning.
- **Local Transport Services Grant** – WLGA has received a number of queries from authorities on this grant. The attachment shows the way the allocations were calculated for this year. The allocation formula was unchanged (with population and 'rurality' elements) but updated population data were used (2006 mid year estimates). As a result there are five authorities that have experienced a slight decline in funding – all with significant rural populations.
- **Consortia** – WAG want to engage in dialogue with authorities on future revenue funding arrangements for Consortia. They recognise that authorities are putting officer resources in to support consortia work and that there was a financial contribution in one region last year to supplement the grant from WAG. However, future funding must recognise the collaborative approach to delivering the RTPs and the need for Consortia to develop to take on any new roles as part of the new funding arrangements. The governance arrangements will also need to be thought through carefully as part of the consideration of any changes in funding – this will be important from both a WAG and local authority perspective
- **Cabinet Members' meeting on 16th/17th Oct** – Directors should already have received a diary marker for these new dates for the WLGA Transport Cabinet members' meeting (rearranged due to the strike). By the time of this meeting the funding position should have been discussed with the Minister and it will be possible for Simon to give a clear indication of plans for 2009/10 and latest thinking on the options for 2010/11 and beyond. Further details on the event will be issued to Directors in due course.

Tim

Tim Peppin

Director of Regeneration & Sustainable Development / Cyfarwyddwr Materion Adfywio a Datblygu Cynladwy

Welsh Local Government Association / Cymdeithas Llywodraeth Leol Cymru



Report To Board 10th October 2008

Item 6

Subject European Structural Funds Programme 2007–2013
Progress Report

Author Programme Manager

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To provide an update on progress with Sewta's Structural Funds Programme.
- 1.2 To seek approval for an updated version of Sewta's Programme Overview Document, including updated proposals for rail, interchange and walking & cycling schemes.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Sewta Board agreed on 13th December 2007 that the first version of Sewta's Programme Overview Document, containing proposals for rail and walking and cycling schemes, be approved as the basis for discussions with the Wales European Funding Office and other partners, and for the preparation of bids for European Structural Funds finance. It was agreed that project submissions would reflect the Sewta Rail Strategy, and a first phase of the Valleys Cycleway Network being developed with Sustrans, which reflects Sewta's Cycling and Walking Strategy.
- 2.2 As reported to Board on 27th June 2008, these propositions have been reviewed in the light of this year's Transport Grant approvals, further discussions with our partners and with WEFO, and further progress on project development. As a result, an updated Programme Overview document has now been prepared, as outlined in this report. Copies of the full report can be made available on request. The report can also be viewed on Sewta's web site at www.sewta.gov.uk.

3. Present Position

Project Submissions

- 3.1 The application process begins with a request to the Wales European Funding Office (WEFO) to submit an expression of interest (EOI). This is the formal entry point into the application process, and will be followed by a formal submission of an EOI, and then the formulation of a full application including a business case and project plan, which when successfully completed leads to an approval.

Rail Projects

- 3.2 The following submissions were put forward as requests to submit expressions of interest, and confirmation was received from WEFO that these schemes could progress further:
- i. Central Valleys Rail Package Phase One: Bargoed to Rhymney frequency enhancements, incorporating Energlyn new station and Abercynon Park and Ride;
 - ii. Western Valleys Rail Package Phase One: Maesteg Line frequency improvements, Brackla new station and Wildmill Park and Ride;
- 3.3 A key requirement in securing funding approvals will be match funding, and both schemes were included within the Transport Grant submissions for 2008/09, but regrettably without success. Accordingly, at the last Board, it was agreed to amend the packaging of rail schemes for EOI submission. Following further progress on project development, the packaging of schemes now proposed in the new version of the Programme Overview document is as follows:
- R2.3 Central Valleys Rail Package Phase 2: Rail Park and Ride Schemes; Abercynon, Bargoed, Pengam, Rhymney & Taffs Well;
 - R4 Valleys Station Improvement Schemes;
 - R2.1 Central Valleys Rail Package Phase 1: Bargoed to Rhymney frequency enhancements, incorporating Energlyn new station;
 - R1 Western Valleys Rail Package: Maesteg Line frequency improvements, Brackla new station and Wildmill Park and Ride.
- 3.4 This approach enables early progress in using existing TG match funding for the Park & Ride schemes, and WEFO approval for a full funding application for has been secured. Agreement had also been reached on the inclusion of an extension to Ebbw Vale Parkway station car park within this package, but this project is now progressing under the previous Objective One programme.
- 3.5 In addition, using committed TG funding, together with funding from rail industry partners and WAG, through the National Station Improvement and Access for All Programmes, work has progressed in confirming the scope of the first phase of a Station Improvements package. Further details can be found at Appendix One. Sewta funding has also been identified to update the business cases for the two frequency enhancements schemes, and discussions are continuing with WAG to secure the full match funding.
- 3.6 Securing progress in implementing the Sewta Rail Strategy involves close partnership working with Network Rail, the train operating companies, and WAG (Transport & Strategic Regeneration Group). From resulting discussions, WAG have now lodged Project Information Forms with WEFO, with a view to progressing the following elements of the Rail Strategy through the Structural Funds Programme:
- Central Valleys Phase 3: Additional turnback facilities (bay platforms) at

- Caerphilly and Pontypridd;
- Eastern Valleys : Ebbw Valley Phase 2.

Discussions are continuing with colleagues in WAG and WEFO on progressing these packages as EOIs.

- 3.7 Since the approval of the original Programme Overview document, Network Rail have published a draft Wales Route Utilisation Strategy (RUS) for the whole of the Wales rail network. Sewta has responded comprehensively to that document, and is in further discussion with Network Rail. A final RUS will be published before the end of 2008. This and other changes to the strategic context will require Sewta's Rail Strategy itself to be reviewed and updated. Sewta's Rail Working Group has identified this as a key priority for the year ahead.

Valleys Cycleway Network

- 3.8 From the Walking & Cycling Strategy, the initial EOI submitted jointly with Sustrans and SWWITCH, the regional consortium for South West Wales, sought to progress the network in its totality through future bid submissions. WEFO subsequently advised that, to secure an early funding approval, a first phase submission should focus on readily available match funding. Accordingly, WEFO have now agreed that a full revised application can now be made, using established Lottery funding under the Connect 2 programme, some existing Transport Grant commitments, and funding from Sustrans. Further details can be found at Appendix Three. Further phases of the Cycle Network are also under consideration.

Interchange Proposals

- 3.9 Sewta's Interchange Strategy prepared for RTP purposes, has been drawn upon to provide the framework for funding submissions. The rail park & ride schemes referred to above represent the first phase of implementation. A second phase submission, focusing on bus interchange and park and ride proposals, is under discussion.

4. Further Project Development

- 4.1 The Programme Overview document will continue to be developed in conjunction with the RTP, and will eventually set out Sewta's Structural Funds aspirations across all modes over the lifetime of the programme to 2015. It is proposed to bring forward further updated versions of the document for Directorate and Board approval, including new sections on Bus Transport and Travel Planning.

Bus Proposals

- 4.2 Sewta's Bus Working Group has been progressing a Bus Strategy as a framework for funding bids. In addition, scheme development funding in Sewta's budget is now committed to fund an extension to the Pontypridd Transportation Study, to develop bus priority measures for inclusion in a projected Structural Funds application. In addition to the proposals for bus interchange outlined above, work is also progressing on a bid which will focus on comprehensive bus information provision.

Travel Planning

- 4.3 Initial proposals have been developed for an enhanced travel planning service across the whole Sewta area. These are now being developed further, focused on the Convergence Zone. A key challenge will be assembling match funding for what is essentially a revenue funding proposition.

5. Proposals for Action

- 5.1 It is proposed that this report, and the updated Programme Overview document, be agreed as the basis for the developing programme of Sewta's Structural Funds applications.

6. Financial Implications

Match Funding

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report, although successful Structural Funds bids will bring resources for implementing the RTP (See Appendix Two). However, match funding will determine the progress achieved. A key source of match funding had been expected to be the RTP Five Year Programme. However, the proposed continuation of the current Transport Grant programme for a further transitional year, will require submissions to be closely co-ordinated with the Convergence Programme.
- 6.2 An additional source of match funding will be the new Targeted Match Funding (TMF) pot, which is now operational. WEFO will act as the single point of contact for both the Structural Funds and TMF applications.

Project Development Funding

- 6.3 A key constraint on progressing bids is the availability of project development resources. While some funding is available within Sewta's revenue budget this year, its limitations will constrain progress in developing projects.

7. Staffing / Personnel Implications

- 7.1 The requirement to engage with WAG, WEFO and other stakeholders will need to continue to be accommodated within the work programme of the Core Support Unit.

8. Consultation

- 8.1 Sewta's Directorate have been consulted on the issues addressed in this report, together with colleagues in WAG and WEFO.

9. Recommendation

- 9.1 It is recommended that the approach to the Structural Funds Programme set out in this report be endorsed.

10. Reasons (Sewta Objectives)

- 10.1 The actions proposed will help to advance Sewta's objectives 1, 2 and 5, working in partnership with the people and organisations with a stake in transport in South East Wales, delivering the transport strategy through an appropriate mix of projects, and seeking to increase the resources for transport.

MB v0.1 29.09.08

APPENDIX ONE: Sewta Regional Transport Plan

European Structural Funds 2007 – 2013

Programme Overview Version 2 - Extract 1

Rail Package R4 Valleys Station Improvement Schemes

1. In parallel with service capacity changes, and to ensure continued rail passenger growth, there is a need improve access to the network and the attractiveness of stations. It is important not to overlook the overall travel experience. Measures include:
 - Station facility improvements - such as improved waiting shelters and, at larger staffed stations, toilets;
 - Station access improvements - such as improved vehicular, pedestrian and cycle access, cycle parking, integrated bus and taxi facilities, and facilities for the mobility impaired;
 - Customer information and marketing improvements - including real-time information (and associated trackside train detection) which increases passenger confidence;
 - Safety and security measures - including CCTV and lighting; and
 - Park and ride expansion and quality improvements.
2. These station improvements will be developed as packages of works on their respective lines, particularly where the investment involves line side measures such as the provision of cabling for electronic customer information systems and the extension of the CCTV system. Investment will take account of the latest standards for station design, and where appropriate the measures implemented will seek to improve access for the mobility impaired, as well as for those with pushchairs, prams, shopping and heavy luggage.
3. The stations identified include some of the busiest within the Sewta region, and the co-ordinated approach will not only secure improved access to and from the Convergence zone, but will also coincide with the frequency increases. The priority locations within the Convergence Zone for general station facility improvements are:

Rail Package R4.1 Station Improvement Schemes Phase One 2008 - 11

- Western Valleys: Bridgend, Maesteg, Pencoed and Pontyclun;
- Central Valleys: Aber, Aberdare, Caerphilly, Llanbradach, Mountain Ash, Pengam, Pontlottyn, Pontypridd, Porth, Rhymney, Taffs Well, Tonypany, Ton Pentre, Treorchy and Ystrad Mynach;
- Eastern Valleys: Pontypool & New Inn.

Rail Package R4.2 Station Improvement Schemes Phase Two 2012 - 15

- Dinas Rhondda, Llwynypia, Penrhiwceiber, Pyle, Sarn, Trefforest Trefforest Estate, Ystrad Rhondda;
- New Station Studies: Llanbradach Park & Ride, Llantarnam, Sebastopol.

APPENDIX TWO: Sewta Regional Transport Plan**European Structural Funds 2007 – 2013****Programme Overview Version 2 - Extract 2****Sewta Bid Packages - Summary**

Scheme	Convergence Zone (£000s)			
	ERDF	TG	Other	Total
R1	10,663	12,337		23,000
R2.1	9,726	11,254		20,980
R2.3	2,850	3,298		6,148
R4.1				
WC1	2,598	2,200	807	5,605
Total				

Notes: EU / Total Conversion = 46.36% intervention rate;

APPENDIX THREE: Sewta Regional Transport Plan - European Structural Funds 2007 – 2013**Programme Overview Version 2 - Extract 3 - Walking and Cycling Schemes Phase 1**

Scheme Ref.	Scheme description	Total (£000's)	Comments
RCT31 & RCT34	Pontypridd Proposals & Treforest Connect 2	800	Improve existing links from Pontypridd TC to the Celtic and Taff Trails. Improve links to University of Glamorgan Glyntaff Campus to the South, and Coed-y-lan Comprehensive to the North. Scheme also includes improved walking and cycling routes around Treforest.
BG21 & T17	Royal Oak to Swffryd & Crumlin to Pontypool	785	Shared usage off road route linking Royal Oak residential area, Llanhilleth to Swffryd. Would link to new railway station in Llanhilleth. Cross boundary scheme partly utilising old A472 alignment.
RCT30, 32 & RCT35	Pontypridd to Tonyrefail via Church Village and Llantrisant & Route from University of Glamorgan Treforest to Llantrisant	2500	Route follows disused railway line from University of Glamorgan's Treforest campus to Llantrisant then to Tonyrefail, providing a safe alternative to the A4119. Links between uni, Treforest and surrounding employment and shopping areas. Proposal will also link into cycling and pedestrian improvements implemented as part of Church Village Bypass.
MT10	Merthyr Tydfil Connect 2 bid route	520	Construction of a new bridge over the A4060 Trunk Road at Pentrebach and improvements to the network leading into the town centre.
B5	Llynfi Valley Cycle Route	700	Cycleway / community route linking NCN 4 and top of Llynfi Valley. Route would link a number of communities in the valley.
RCT21	Talbot Green to Thomastown	300	Upgrade of existing route and completion of missing section of route to provide complete route to Thomastown past Coed Ely land reclamation scheme. Scheme follows route of the old railway line.
Phase 1 Total		5,605	

Partner update: Passenger Focus – September 2008

Update on National Passenger Survey

Passenger Focus has begun survey work for the next wave (Autumn 2008) of the National Passenger Survey (NPS) that gives an overview of passenger satisfaction with rail services provided by franchised train operators. Survey work will take place for approximately 10 weeks at around 650 stations. Results will be available in January 2009.

Consultation responses on Wales RUS and ORR's Periodic review

Passenger Focus has recently submitted consultation responses to the Wales Route Utilisation Strategy (RUS) and the Office for Rail Regulation's Periodic Review 2008 draft determination. Our RUS response supported the introduction of schemes outlined in SEWTA's rail strategy, as well as emphasising the need for rail strategy in Wales to support social inclusion and tourism, and the need for further investment in stations and rolling stock. Our response to the ORR consultation was also in-line with that submitted by SEWTA highlighting the need for progressing the scheme for line re-doubling between Swindon-Kemble, as well as emphasizing the need for the rail industry to better manage the disruption caused by engineering work

Mystery shopping report on the Assisted Passenger Reservation Service (APRS)

Passenger Focus has recently completed a 'mystery shopping' project of the Assisted Passengers Reservation Service (APRS) that is offered by all train companies to book assistance for rail passengers, particularly for disabled and elderly travellers. Journeys were undertaken across Britain including Wales. The project report was released on 17 September and is available from our website, www.passengerfocus.org.uk/news-and-publications/document-search/document.asp?dsid=1897.

Current work

Among the work that Passenger Focus is currently undertaking includes a study to contribute passenger views into the new Intercity Express rolling stock design project (there is to be a new design of train, commissioned by the DfT for long distance routes). Another project is looking at the fares system including how passenger perceptions of value for money can be improved.

Paper to:	Sewta Board
Author:	Michael Vaughan, Head of Franchise, Arriva Trains Wales
Subject:	Partner Update
Date:	10 October 2008

1. Train Service Performance

For the period 17 August to 13 September 2008, the Public Performance Measure (PPM) for Valley Lines' train services was recorded as 94.0% which is 2.1% below that achieved for the corresponding period in 2007. The principle effect was as a result of the prolonged rain which fell on 04 September which caused flooding on the Rhymney Valley and Treherbert lines of route. On the Rhymney Valley line, a landslide occurred at Llanbradach, effectively disconnecting Caerphilly from Ystrad Mynach, and a special timetable was implemented to cater for customers travelling north of Caerphilly. Unfortunately Network Rail were unable to restore the line for normal running until 18 September. On 12 September, PPM was further compromised by a set of cracked points at Cogan Junction. This incident affected train services throughout the day. The average PPM at the end of this period was recorded as 95.5%.

Following this period, customers have since experienced major disruption following a decision by Driver Managers to take industrial action for a 24 hour period from 1200 hrs on 16 September. The managers established picket lines at its depots at Carmarthen and Cardiff (St Davids House). Unexpectedly, Drivers chose not to cross those picket lines. Cancellations were sustained from early afternoon on 16 September and continued for the remainder of the period of industrial action. A near normal service was restored on Valley Lines services by 1500 hrs on 17 September.

2. Passenger Journeys

- The number of passenger journeys on Ebbw Valley services as at 13 September totalled 235,000
- The number of passenger journeys attributed to Llanharan station as at 13 September totalled 35,000



Report To Board 10th October 2008

Item 8

Subject Consultations and Responses

Author Assistant Secretary

1. Purpose

1.1 To inform members of the current position with respect to external consultations.

2. Background/Present Position

2.1 The following table summarises the current and ongoing position. Copies of submissions are appended as appropriate.

2.2	Title of Consultation	Consulting Organisation	Sewta Position	Deadline
	Office of Rail Regulation: Periodic Review 2008: Draft Determinations.	Office of Rail Regulation	Response sent September 2008	
	Wales Route Utilisation Strategy – Draft for Consultation	Network Rail	Response sent August 2008	

3. Financial Implications

3.1 None

4. Staffing / Personnel Implications

4.1 None. The draft responses are prepared by existing CSU and/or LA officers and the internal consultation, amendment and submission processes managed by your CSU officers.

5. Consultation

5.1 Wide internal consultation is undertaken before submission of responses, including members of relevant Working Groups, Directors and Partners as appropriate.

6. Recommendation

6.1 Your Directorate recommends that the Board endorses the submitted responses.

7. Reasons (Sewta Objectives)

7.1 Objective 1 – To work in partnership with people and stakeholders with an interest in transport.

Objective 2 – To promote the essential role of transport

PW 30/08/09



Board 10th October 2008 Item 8a

Mr Bill Emery
Chief Executive
Office of Rail Regulation
One Kemble Street
London
WC2B 4NN

Please reply to/Anfonwch eich ateb yn ôl at:
Mark Youngman
Sewta Rail Working Group
c/o Monmouthshire County Council
County Hall
CWMBRAN
NP44 2XH

Our Ref/Ein Cyf:
T4801-ORR PR2008

Your Ref/Eich Cyf

Date/Dyddiad:

Dear Mr Emery

OFFICE OF RAIL REGULATION: PERIODIC REVIEW 2008: Draft Determinations

I write on behalf of the South East Wales Transport Alliance (Sewta) in response to the Office Of Rail Regulation's (ORR) consultation on its Periodic Review 2008 Draft Determinations.¹ Our response will focus on just one scheme. The proposal to redouble the single-line between Swindon and Kemble. Sewta was extremely disappointed to note the exclusion of the scheme from the 2009-2014 infrastructure programme. In our response we will seek further clarification on ORR's assessment "*that the scheme was not needed to deliver the explicit requirements of the HLOS and are not justified on other criteria.*"

The impact of Swindon-Kemble on South Wales services

It is well reported on the constraints caused by the long 13 mile single-line section of track between Swindon and Kemble on the number of services which can be provided to Gloucester and Cheltenham: key destinations in their own right. However, for passengers travelling to and from Wales the line plays an important role in providing a diversionary route for London to South Wales trains when the main route via the Severn Tunnel is closed, be that for planned closures at weekends for engineering and maintenance or during weekday periods.

Even when the closure of the Severn Tunnel is unavoidable, the diversion via the Swindon-Kemble route can have a significant impact on rail services to and from South Wales. With the growing use for national and international sport and entertainment events at the

¹ - Sewta is a consortium of 10 local authorities; the Councils of Blaenau Gwent, Bridgend, Caerphilly, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Monmouthshire, Newport, Rhondda Cynon Taf, Torfaen and the Vale of Glamorgan. Sewta works with stakeholders, partners and the Welsh Assembly Government to improve regional transport in south-east Wales. We represent the regional transport interest of 1.4 million people and are the largest of the four transport consortia in Wales.

Millennium Stadium and Wales Millennium Centre in Cardiff at weekends leading to sustained strong levels of rail passenger demand on Saturday and Sundays to and the Welsh Capital, the hour long diversion via Kemble and the performance impacts associated with running extra services along the single-line section are seen by some passengers as being unattractive. However, any diversion of South Wales to London Trains via Kemble would because of the capacity limitations to the single line section to two trains per hour, require the current half hourly South Wales service be reduced to an hourly service. Such a scenario occurred in the summer of 2006 when the Severn Tunnel was closed for engineering work. Although the reduced timetable was scheduled the impacts of the worsening of service was strongly felt across South Wales, undoing the positive benefits of a half hourly Cardiff service between London and Cardiff

Rationale for Re-doubling Swindon to Kemble.

In the same way that the constraints on the single line section are well-documented, there is little dispute as to the rationale for Swindon to Kemble redoubling. The Ove Arup and Partner's *Engineering Advice on Network Rail's Enhancement Programme Final Report*, set out the key outputs (as they apply to London to South Wales services) as being:

- Capacity benefits, as journey times will be reduced due to the simplification of the layout at Swindon, and the constraint of the current single line operation will be removed;
- Performance benefit achieved through elimination of delays caused to trains awaiting clearance of the single line;
- The re-doubled route would provide greater flexibility when the line is used as a long-distance diversionary route, for example when the Severn Tunnel is closed.

In addition, the HLOS (High Level Output Statement) aims: *"to secure a reduction in delays experienced by passengers and an improvement in their ability to predict with confidence their end-to-end journey time."*

As this applies to the Great Western Main Line, a public performance measure (PPM) of 92% has to be achieved by the end of Control Period 4, and within the same timescale a 36% reduction in lateness and cancellations. Sewta does not believe that these HLOS targets could be achieved on the Great Western Main Line, and on South Wales to London services without the contingencies offered through a redoubling of Swindon to Kemble.

As a footnote although PPM is a useful tool for measure performance of rail services, it has its limitations in that it codifies for example scheduled diversions and extended journey times. With all timetabled trains subject to PPM, this means that on South Wales to London services diverted via the Kemble and Gloucester route, PPM will already account for the additional journey time and therefore the spare time allocated in the train's running time to meet the published timetable. On a recent Sunday trip via the Swindon and Kemble section, my train was held for nearly 7 minutes outside of Gloucester because it was running early.

Sewta position.

In South Wales, Sewta with the support of the Welsh Assembly Government has been instrumental in developing a rail network. This has seen Sewta implement a number of infrastructure enhancements schemes to cater not only for increasing passenger numbers, but importantly providing a more robust and reliable railway for the people of South Wales.

We have been able to do this because of the powers devolved to the Welsh Assembly Government and willingness of them to support the development of a rail network.

Outside of South Wales our role is limited although given the importance of the Great Western Route to South Wales cannot be underestimate we would strongly urge ORR to revisit its decision on not proceeding with the redoubling of the Swindon to Kemble route.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Mark Youngman
Vice Chair, Sewta Rail Working Group

Wales RUS Consultation Response
National RUS Programme Manager
Network Rail
Eighth Floor
40 Melton Street
London NW1 2EE

Please reply to/Anfonwch eich ateb yn ôl at:
Mark Youngman
Sewta Rail Working Group
c/o Monmouthshire County Council
County Hall
CWMBRAN
NP44 2XH

(by e-mail)

Our Ref/Ein Cyf:
T4801-WalesRUS

Your Ref/Eich Cyf

Date/Dyddiad:
14th August 2008

Dear Sir

WALES Route Utilisation Strategy – Draft for Consultation

The South East Wales Transport Alliance (Sewta) is a consortium of 10 local authorities; the Councils of Blaenau Gwent, Bridgend, Caerphilly, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Monmouthshire, Newport, Rhondda Cynon Taf, Torfaen and the Vale of Glamorgan. Sewta works with stakeholders, partners and the Welsh Assembly Government to improve regional transport in south-east Wales. Sewta represents the regional transport interest of 1.4 million people and is the largest of the four transport consortia in Wales.

We are pleased to submit our comments on the draft Wales Route Utilisation Strategy (RUS) to Network Rail. Our response will draw on the Sewta Rail Strategy, the Sewta Prioritised Investment Programme and our draft Sewta Regional Transport Plan, currently out for consultation and in which we envisage rail playing a key role in meeting the needs of the region.

Sewta wishes to record its thanks for the discussion and meetings between itself and Network Rail staff during the development of the draft Wales RUS. Furthermore, we were pleased to attend and contribute to the discussion at the May 2008 Stakeholder workshop in Abergavenny. We also note the dialogue that Network Rail has had with Jacobs who provided the technical work in the development of Sewta's various rail studies.

Sewta broadly welcomes the RUS, and subject to the comments attached to this letter, would support its proposals.

We trust you will find our comments of use and Sewta looks forward to continuing dialogue with Network Rail in advance of the final Wales RUS published in 2009. If you need clarification on any aspect of our response please do contact me at 01633 644727 or by e-mail: MarkYoungman@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Yours sincerely

Mark Youngman
Vice Chair, Sewta Rail Working Group

SEWTA RESPONSE TO WALES ROUTE UTILISATION STRATEGY – DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

Chapter 2 Dimensions and Planning Context

Sewta notes the inputs to the Wales RUS from the Wales Spatial Plan (WSP); *One Wales: Connecting the Nation* and Sewta's Draft Regional Transport Plan. Sewta particularly welcomes the reference to the further development of integrated public transport within South East Wales (Capital Network) spatial plan area.

It is useful to note that of the 14 key settlements identified in the South East Wales-Capital Network WSP area, 12 are already on the existing rail network at Abergavenny, Cwmbran/Pontypool, Newport, Caerphilly, Cardiff, Barry, Merthyr Tydfil, Aberdare, Pontypridd and Bridgend. The exceptions being Ebbw Vale which is proposed to be served by an extension of the train service to a station at Ebbw Vale Town, and Blackwood being served by a rail-link bus.

Furthermore, the Capital Network area's two Strategic Opportunity Areas (SOA), for employment purposes, at St Athan and Llantrisant are either adjacent or close to the rail network. A third SOA is located around the town of Hirwaun, which has retained its rail infrastructure and although not on the current passenger rail network is served by a well-established rail-link bus service. While previous studies have concluded that the business case for extending the Aberdare rail passenger service to Hirwaun is not strong, the potential for major new development in the Hirwaun area suggests that these conclusions will need to be reviewed.

The specific transport priority for the South East Wales Capital Network, in order for the area to realise its full potential is for: *"A fully integrated high quality transport system is necessary for this to happen. Over the 20 year horizon of the Wales Spatial Plan, all the Area's key settlements should be linked to Cardiff or Newport by suitable high capacity public transport."* The WSP goes on to suggest that for the Capital Network, three (of a series of) principles relevant to the rail network are:

- *Stretching targets should be set for improving journey times by bus and rail between the key settlements*
- *Public transport should operate sufficiently frequently that passengers have the confidence to "turn up and go"*
- *Seating capacity should be sufficient to meet normal demand, reducing the need for passengers to stand*

External links are also important, and the WSPs aspiration for the Capital Network is to have good transport links to the likes of the Swansea Bay and Bristol – which the South East Wales rail network currently provides with the main South Wales Main Line from Bristol Temple Meads / Bristol Parkway through to Bridgend.

Sewta is represented at Officer level in the development of the Wales Spatial Plan and we will continue to press for the rail network to play a full role in meeting the aims of the WSP.

The Sewta draft Regional Transport Plan (RTP) which is now out for public consultation sets out clearly the role that the current rail system has in connecting key settlements and many other places throughout the region to Cardiff and Newport. The draft RTP proposes a number of specific rail policies detailed below:

- Sewta will work to improve the capacity of the existing rail system, including train lengthening and frequency improvements.
- Sewta will plan to further extend the rail system through selected line and station reopening.
- Sewta will promote enhancing quality of trains including track enhancements to improve running speeds and reliability, improving existing stations and improving information for travellers.
- Sewta will encourage rail freight traffic where it does not conflict with Sewta's plans to improve passenger services.

We will use the development and consultation around the RTP to feed into Sewta's continuing role to play in promoting further improvements to the rail system, and to ensure that rail developments fit with wider sustainability objectives.

In seeking to implement the RTP and Sewta's Rail Strategy, Sewta has been working closely with partners in the railway industry and in the Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO) to bring forward funding for rail schemes under the Convergence Programme. Further details are set out in this paper.

Chapter 3 – Current Capacity, demand and delivery

3.5.3 Train Loads

The chapter on current capacity and overcrowding rightly focuses on the most crowded of services in South East Wales, which is from the Valley Lines area to and from Cardiff. However, the Wales RUS possibly underplays the importance and impact of overcrowding on other routes in the region. The growth being registered in South Wales is increasing overcrowding on routes like Maesteg and Bridgend to Cardiff, the Marches Line from Cwmbran and Abergavenny (and points north in England) to Newport and Cardiff, the Chepstow Line and South Wales to Bristol Temple Meads route via Severn Tunnel Junction.

Although overcrowding is an unintended consequence of a busy and successful rail network, it is arguable that the perception and actual impact of not getting a seat is felt more on longer regional journeys than on shorter urban journeys. In general, the shorter the journey and the more frequent the service, the more a passenger is liable to put up with overcrowding, or at worse having to wait for the following train.

However, the experience of not getting a seat on a journey in excess of 30 minutes or not being able to board a train at all, where the next train is not for another hour can see people chose an alternative mode of transport, normally the car, over the train. Such a result would run contrary to a key transport aspiration in the Wales Spatial Plan of: *“providing sufficient capacity [on trains] to reduce the amount of passengers standing.”*

In research to support their response to the Wales RUS, Passenger Focus surveyed passengers on the Marches Line and 94% of people said it was important that they were able to get a seat, with 8% saying that their use of the line would be limited because *“trains were too crowded.”*

Within the Valley Lines area, the effects of overcrowding are being, partly, addressed by the SEWTA Platform Extension programme and train lengthening. However, elsewhere in the SEWTA area, the opportunities for train lengthening are not so easy to achieve due to the main rolling stock type, the Class 175 unit, with its fixed formation of only 2 or 3 car train being fully utilised by Arriva Trains Wales across its operating area. Similarly, the Class 150 and 158 rolling stock used on the Cardiff to Bristol and Maesteg to Cheltenham routes cannot be easily strengthened because ATWs fleet is already heavily used, and the perennial problem of a national lack of supply of spare 15x stock.

Ultimately we acknowledge that the provision of additional rolling stock is not a matter solely within the remit of Network Rail. Nonetheless, we do feel that Network Rail has a key role in ensuring that there is a greater supply of rolling stock for the rail industry, and that more work is undertaken on issues such as selective door opening, greater use of ‘grandfather’ rights, gauge/route clearance and driver route knowledge.

3.7.1.1 Route 13 Great Western Main Line Capacity

Sewta notes the constraints on capacity and pressures on platforming of trains at Cardiff Central. We would suggest that a solution to these problems would be to extend some of the terminating services west of Cardiff to Bridgend, Swansea and into West Wales. A good example of how such a move can bring both operational and passenger benefits can be found in the operation of cross-Bristol services to the likes of Bath, Weston-Super-Mare and Taunton which have relieved pressure on platforms and capacity at Bristol Temple Meads, and created a range of new journey opportunities for passengers.

In our previous responses to the CrossCountry franchise and timetable consultation, and in dialogue on the South Wales to London services in the Greater Western franchise, Sewta has made the case for the train companies to further consider the benefits of running trains west beyond Cardiff Central.

3.7.5 Performance

The RUS does not seem to make mention of timetabling and pathing of trains, and the impact of PPM (Passenger Performance Measures) and Rules of Route on the attractiveness of the rail network and demand for the rail network. This is particularly relevant on the main line services and inter-regional services via the Marches and Chepstow lines.

First, as the draft RUS reports, there have been clear benefits and a growth in demand from ATW’s introduction of its Standard Pattern timetable in December 2005. Unfortunately, the benefits of the standard clockface timetable are still not fully felt because of the timetabling of operators running services in South Wales. On the South Wales Main Line between Newport and Bridgend, identified in the RUS as having a high capacity utilisation figure, ATWs hourly Carmarthen to Manchester service should combine with First Great Western’s hourly (and peak half-hourly) London to South Wales

service, to provide a maximum at peak times of three trains an hour between Newport and Bridgend.

However, since both companies timetables are dictated by pathing constraints elsewhere, you have a situation where in the one hour, after a 30 minute gap a FGW Paddington to Swansea train is scheduled to run just 8 minutes in front of an ATW service. Sewta acknowledges the challenges caused by pathing of long distance trains, although we would suggest that more could be done in looking at those sections of the network operated by different operators to ensure that the optimum timetable is being achieved.

Second, there are examples where Rules of the Route/Plan measures implemented and introduced by Network Rail and train operating companies do have an unintended consequence of worsening journey opportunities for passengers. An example of this exists at Bridgend where the local Rules of the Route on platform occupation and junction margins prevents under the current timetable, trains from Maesteg connecting with the Vale of Glamorgan service and access to Cardiff International Airport.

Thirdly, there is the impact of differential train timings on sections of track used by a number of different services and operators. To illustrate this issue we will use the westbound timetable between Newport and Cardiff. Despite rolling stock having the same operating speeds, there are occasions when one train will take six minutes longer to travel between Newport and Cardiff, than the previous train. The comparison is most marked around those trains running beyond Cardiff and services which are scheduled to terminate at Cardiff.

A previous operator on the services, now under the Cross Country franchise, frequently stated that they could not provide more stops at Chepstow and other stations on their Cardiff to Nottingham service because of an insufficient turn-around time at Cardiff Central. However, when an analysis was made of the timetable it was shown there to be a six minute PPM allowance for CrossCountry trains between Newport and Cardiff – sufficient time to have allowed for stops at the likes of Chepstow and Caldicot.

The inclusion of recovery time also has a negative impact on the passenger experience when a train either sits in a train station waiting for its scheduled departure time, or worse waits at a signal outside a station for a platform to become free. Both examples do give the impression of lost and unproductive time (and we know from the various passenger demand forecasting mechanisms the value to certain types of passenger of their overall journey time). Such an impression of wasting time is exacerbated when there is no explanation from the on-board staff as to why the train is not moving.

The final issue to do with PPM, recovery time and a need to provide a timetable which is there for the benefit of the passenger concerns connections. Connections at Newport (with the Marches Line), Cardiff (for the whole Valley Lines network), and to a lesser extent Severn Tunnel Junction (Chepstow Line) and Bridgend (with the Vale of Glamorgan Line and Maesteg line) are key to the overall attractiveness of the rail network for existing and potential rail users. Whilst we note that at Cardiff Central, the proposed re-signalling scheme will address and increase platform capacity issues, at other locations we feel a review of the Rules of the Route and other regulation measures could for relatively little cost, increase the overall capacity of the network and bring with it

extra benefits for passengers. Similarly, we do not feel that there is a sufficient dialogue between the train companies over the interaction between their respective timetables. Were this addressed, we would suggest that things like missed connections could be eradicated.

As the draft RUS itself reports in Chapter 7 Emerging Strategy, section 7.2 – principles, the general principle adopted throughout the RUS has been, “*to consider simpler and low cost intervention to more complex and expensive solutions.... [with] timetabling solutions been sought as preferable to infrastructure works.*”

In summary, Sewta believes that Network Rail as overseer of the timetable on the rail network has a key role in delivering a better public timetable designed foremost for the benefit of the passenger.

3.7.7.2 – Access to the rail network

The Sewta region is home to over a third of the stations in Wales, and 7 of the top 14 used stations. Sewta and its predecessors TIGER and SWIFT have been pro-active in ensuring that as much of the region as possible has good access to the rail network by the opening of new stations.

However, Sewta would argue that providing access to the rail station in the first place is an important issue which does not appear to be covered in any detail in the RUS. We consider this to be a surprise given how important the accessibility to a station is on determining demand for rail. Within South East Wales, Sewta has been and continues to be proactive in developing access to rail stations by the provision of improved walking and cycling routes, ensuring bus services serve rail stations and the provision of hundreds of additional car parking spaces. Sewta has been successful in developing a number of successful interchange schemes (e.g. Caerphilly, Llantwit Major) and additional car parking facilities (e.g. Taffs Well).

Nevertheless, Sewta is acutely aware of a number of stations on key routes and notably on those routes which have had recorded slower rates of demand, where car parking facilities at station is limited. In Monmouthshire for example, both Abergavenny and Chepstow stations have over-subscribed and limited car parking facilities. As part of their research to underpin their response to the Wales RUS, Passenger Focus surveyed passengers and on the Marches line, nearly 40% of passengers commented on the importance of parking facilities as a determinant as to whether they travelled by train or not.

In 2007 Passenger Focus produced research looking at car parking in East Anglia. Their study *Getting to the station* reported a number of key points about the impact of full or busy car parks on passenger demand:

- At some stations, some 17% of passengers would make their whole journey by car instead of the train, if it became difficult to park at their station. Furthermore the perception amongst non-rail users of a busy car park was calculated to some stations generated 19% fewer rail trips than would be expected.

- The report also suggested for the area of study, that only car parks currently at under 80% capacity would not be full by 2016.
- Finally, if a station car park becomes full during the morning peak, it was suggested this becomes a barrier to off-peak use when, generally, there are spare seats available on trains and additional passengers represent no extra cost to the railway.

Sewta would welcome a continuing dialogue with Network Rail and train operating companies to progress the further development of improving access to the rail network by provision of car parking facilities, more integration with other sustainable modes of transport, and improvements to station facilities and attractiveness. SEWTA would also wish for the impact of insufficient car parking facilities on constraining demand to be considered in appraisal of demand on routes such as the Chepstow and Marches Lines

Chapter 4 – Anticipated Changes in demand

4.1 Future Passenger Demand

Sewta noted the comments at the Abergavenny workshop in how the Welsh Assembly Government, Wales and by extension Sewta have kept ahead of demand in the planning and enhancement of the rail network. We note the work undertaken by Network Rail to produce sensitivity tests when looking at demand for the Wales RUS, and in particular how this results in higher commuting growth forecasts for Cardiff. However, as the draft RUS itself records:

“the demand forecasts include predictable changes to the underlying factors [of demand for rail travel] such as the economy and relative competitiveness of alternative modes of transport” but equally: “do not include any growth that may be stimulated by improvements to rail services over the RUS period.”

We would question if a 30% increase in fuel costs is a predictable change and although we acknowledge the challenges to provide a wholly 100% accurate demand forecast, Sewta would suggest that demand for rail travel in the Sewta region is likely to exceed the forecasts set out in the RUS.

In South Wales, the recent passenger numbers reported by Arriva Trains Wales show double digit growth on all routes (Valleys, South Wales Main Line, Marches Line and Chepstow line). Driven by an increasing competitiveness in favour of rail in relation to the private car, these are drivers of demand which the rail network in South East Wales can accommodate at the present. However for the long-term it is doubtful that without all the interventions put forward by Sewta, and possibly further interventions as well, the rail network in South East Wales may struggle to cope with the levels of expected demand. Even with a tapering off in demand from its current figures, the current demand for journeys in the Cardiff area will have quickly exceeded the 10 year forecasts in the RUS of 27% (commuting) and 22% (all-day).

5 – Planned Schemes

5.4.3 – Planned Enhancements in CP4, 2009-2014: Route 15 South Wales Valleys

In Sewta's Rail Strategy Prioritised Investment Programme (PIP), a series of four small measures were being reported as being developed by Network Rail. The measures aimed to improve the reliability of existing services, make better use of the existing network and for a more robust rail service.

The draft RUS refers to two of the schemes with the enhanced junction arrangements at Cogan, and additional turnback facilities at Barry station. We assume that at Cogan this refers to the conversion of freight loops to passenger operation, and at Barry the provision of an additional signal to allow trains to start back from the down platform

However, we cannot find mention in the draft RUS of the proposed intermediate signal at Llandaff, which would allow northbound trains to proceed closer to the junction at Radyr, thereby minimising delays caused by conflicting movements. Similarly, there appears to be no reference to the improvements on the Treherbet Line and lengthening of the Ystrad Rhondda passing loop. Can you please confirm that both of these schemes will be progressed through the RUS?

Continuing with planned schemes, there appears to be no reference to a priority scheme outlined in the Sewta Rail Strategy PIP, regarding increased passenger handling capability at Cardiff Queen Street station. Can Network Rail confirm the status of the scheme, which as we understand was to be funded in parallel with the Cardiff HLOS programme, and which had the express commitment of WAG?

Sewta notes the reference to creating "four through platforms for Valleys services at Cardiff Queen Street and Central stations", and supports this proposal. However, later references in the draft RUS refer to only one additional through platform at Central. Sewta believes that the absence of four through platforms at both stations will unnecessarily constrain flexibility in network operation, and request that further consideration be given to this issue.

6 – Gaps, Options and Proposed Solutions

Option 13A (GWML stopping train services performance/journey time) –

Sewta welcomes the confirmation that additional station calls are possible at Severn Tunnel Junction within the existing infrastructure layout. Sewta also notes that the Newport Area Re-Signalling Programme which will see the re-instatement of Platform 4 at Severn Tunnel Junction will further provide additional operational flexibility at the station, with the subsequent performance benefits important to such a busy section of rail line. The developments at Severn Tunnel Junction station support the aspiration of Monmouthshire CC and SEWTA for the station to become a 'parkway' type station serving not just East Wales but the English border areas around the Wye Valley and Forest of Dean.

Sewta has already submitted its initial proposals for issues to be looked at in the development of the Great Western RUS. They are:

- Passenger capacity on the Cardiff to Bristol route (case of 4 car trains);
- Frequency and pattern of services on the Cardiff to Bristol route (the need to balance express services against stopping trains); and finally
- The effects of rolling stock with a maximum speed of 75mph being used alongside trains capable of operating at 90mph.

We look forward to contributing to the development of the Great Western RUS.

Option 13B (improved Cardiff to Cheltenham local train services)

Sewta welcomes the analysis that there are no operational reason preventing additional services on the Chepstow corridor. We assume that this covers both the possibility of filling in the current gaps in the hourly Arriva Trains Wales (ATW) Cardiff to Cheltenham service, and additional station stops on the Arriva Cross Country (AXC) Cardiff to Nottingham service.

Sewta is however disappointed at the economic analysis which suggests there is no case for the filling of the current two hour gaps and provision of an hourly all-day service between Chepstow and Cardiff. It is a Sewta objective to achieve a basic hourly service on the route, and a long-term aim of providing a half hourly service linking one of the key settlements in the WSP, at Chepstow, with Cardiff and Newport. This would equally provide the supply on a key international corridor identified in the WSP, between South-East Wales and England.

ATWs Cardiff to Cheltenham route, which in the past was one of the less well-used services in the Sewta region, is currently recording according to train company, a 20% growth in usage. This is a noticeable increase in demand when put into context of the current service offering two hour gaps in service at key times of the day, and with no real marketing or publicity made on the route.

Similarly, the Cardiff to Cheltenham route parallels a number of congested main roads (between Gloucester and Chepstow it basically mirrors the single-carriageway A48; from Chepstow it's the M48 and M4 – where traffic has grown and congestion increased in recent years.) Sewta has not been made aware of any congestion alleviation plans for the A48, and although there is work regarding a new M4 Relief Road, the timescales involved will not see any benefits for road users being felt for many years. As well as the road congestion around the Chepstow area, car parking facilities at Chepstow station and public transport access to the station is limited and according to local surveys a suppressant to demand. Monmouthshire County Council is beginning work to identify possible solutions at Chepstow station.

Sewta feels there is an opportunity to revisit the proposal for the Cardiff to Cheltenham route in light of ATWs recent passenger growth and unlikelihood of congestion being addressed on the parallel roads. We would welcome further discussion on the appraisal, especially in line with the increases in passenger demand being experienced by ATW. We would especially seek clarification on the operating costs associated with the analysis, given research undertaken by the likes of Better Trains for Chepstow and

STAG that within the existing timetables operated by AXC, there is time to provide additional stops within current resources to provide the hourly service on the line.

Option 13C – Llanwern Station.

Sewta looks forward to the continuing discussions about the potential for a new station at Llanwern, with the caveat that any work undertaken as part of the Newport Area Re-Signalling scheme allowance is made for the long-term potential of the site.

Option 13D (longer-term impact of further Ebbw Vale route upgrade on the GWML)

Within Sewta's commissioned work on Ebbw Vale phase 2, a number of further options on extending the Newport services beyond Newport were considered. It is not clear if all of these were examined by Network Rail, as some – such as an extension of the service to run through to Chepstow or up the Marches Line to Cwmbran and Abergavenny, would negate need for some of the infrastructure changes at Newport, detailed in your analysis.

Given the potential for WAG and European Structural Funds finance in the period up to 2015, Sewta would not accept the statement "Third Party funding is not planned / likely before CP5". Nonetheless Sewta would endorse the statement "The demand forecast and business case results should be reviewed against the actual journeys and revenue of the newly provided service (from February 2008) before the scheme is developed further", and would encourage stakeholders to provide the funding for this review.

Option 13E (additional trains between Cardiff Central and Maesteg) –

SEWTA welcomed the recent joint announcement between Network Rail and the Welsh Assembly Government for a new bay platform at Cardiff Central. An increased Cardiff to Maesteg service (to 2ph) is justified due to the projected significant increase in housing developments in the Talbot Green area.

Our enthusiasm is however tempered with the suggestion that the additional Maesteg services would terminate at Cardiff. SEWTA has in its Rail Strategy proposed that any additional service from Maesteg to Cardiff continues eastwards to the Chepstow Line. Whilst Cardiff remains the core destination for people travelling within the whole of South Wales, as your own demand maps show there is currently a lot of cross-Cardiff traffic, and similarly the WSP focuses on the linkages to be made between the individual settlements in South East Wales.

An extension of the Maesteg service to Cheltenham could provide for the requested additional services at Chepstow, Caldicot and Severn Tunnel Junction. Furthermore, a combination of an increase Maesteg to Cardiff service, with an increased Cheltenham to Cardiff service would provide a much more efficient utilisation of rolling stock and make the economic case for the latter stronger.

The financial and economic analysis makes it clear that the new station at Brackla significantly strengthens the BCR from 1.3 to 1.7. The Brackla station remains as a key proposal within the SEWTA Rail Strategy, and SEWTA takes the view that this proposal

should be retained as a component of Option 13E while further development of this option progresses.

Option 13F – Revision to pattern of stopping train provision between Cardiff Central and Swansea.

Sewta would not wish to see any reduction in service at Pyle, a key railhead for Porthcawl, as growth from the station has been strong. Referring back to our general comments on the timetabling of trains, Sewta would also argue that a review of the current timetable between Cardiff and Bridgend should be undertaken. We see this as looking to see what the current spacing and timetabling of trains, along with any small scale incremental infrastructure improvements (e.g. greater use of freight loops by passenger trains) could be implemented to cater for the needs of four types of train between Bridgend and Swansea: Inter-City; Inter-Region; Local Stopping and Freight.

Option 14C (reduced journey times and improved frequency of services between North Wales and south Wales).

Whilst Sewta acknowledges the benefits of reducing journey times and improved frequency of services between South Wales and North Wales/Manchester, Sewta is strongly of the view that this should not be to the detriment of the other communities along the North and West route. In particular, Abergavenny, Pontypool and Cwmbran are key settlements in the WSP and would benefit from any work to improve the general service between North and South Wales.

The Cardiff to Manchester service via the North and West route is experiencing strong growth. Sewta would recommend that the RUS and the feasibility study for upgrading the North to South Wales service is done in conjunction with looking at service enhancements on the Marches line in general, and expected freight growth on the North and West route.

In the meantime, Sewta believes that there exists within the current timetable on the on the North to South route, time to provide some of the journey time reductions aspired to by WAG between North and South Wales. Referencing our comments on pathing and recovery time made, trains between Shrewsbury and Cardiff have long dwell times at the likes of Hereford, Cwmbran and Newport. If these dwell times were reduced, Sewta would suggest that they would free up sufficient time to for additional stops to be made at Pontypool and New Inn and cater for the suppressed demand there caused by the current level of service.

Option 14D (additional stopping train services between Cardiff and Abergavenny)

Following on from our comments in relation to Option 14C, Sewta is disappointed at the results of the analysis running a half-hourly train service between Cardiff and Abergavenny, and new stations at Caerleon (medium term), and Llantarnam and Sebastopol (longer term).

Sewta would wish to see further details on the work to produce a BCR of 0.2 for the proposal. The Jacobs February 2008 study for Sewta showed that, even allowing for the

significant infrastructure costs associated with the scheme, the Abergavenny service increase and Caerleon station scheme produced a BCR of 6.3.

Adding to our comments made in relation to the North-South journey time improvements, the Marches Line to Abergavenny is also experiencing strong levels of passenger growth. This is in part to the positive impact of ATWs standard pattern timetable and regular use of modern 175 trains on the route; and yet impressive when consideration is given to the barriers to rail usage.

At Abergavenny station, the lack of car parking spaces after 8 in the morning does see people travel to other stations (we are aware of rail-heading to the Ebbw Vale Line), or travel by car instead. As the Passenger Focus RUS research suggested, the ability to find a car parking space is an important consideration for potential rail passengers on the Marches Line.

At Pontypool and New Inn, the current level of service, and the condition of, and lack of facilities and access at, the station, suppresses passenger demand, with usage of the station not matching the expected demand for a station with such a catchment area. Although some potential users of Pontypool may use alternative stations such as Cwmbran or the Ebbw Vale line, we would suggest many more are lost to the railway completely.

The case for a new station at Caerleon is also strengthened by the increasing road congestion through the town, and on the roads into Newport. The impacts of increasing road congestion, and potential for modal shift to rail, are an issue along the whole route, particularly between Abergavenny and Pontypool where the neighbouring A4042 is a increasingly busy single carriageway road and with no proposals to address the congestion and heavy use made of that road. Similarly, around Cwmbran and Newport itself, the existing dual carriageways are experiencing increasing instances of congestion.

Preliminary studies of new stations at Llantarnam and Sebastopol have been undertaken, and have demonstrated the value of taking forward these proposals in the context of the introduction of more frequent local services to Abergavenny.

Previously we have made reference to the Wales Spatial Plan and its aim to link key settlements with Cardiff and Newport with a high frequency of public transport service. With the level of road congestion identified above, an uplift in services on the Marches Line has the potential to meet a key aspiration of WAG, Sewta and achieve significant modal shift.

Sewta believes that further work needs to be undertaken in assessing the business case for this option, and would therefore request that this is commissioned, and that Network Rail revisits the analysis for the Marches Line scheme.

Option 15B (South Wales Valleys: continued short-term growth (Vale of Glamorgan corridor) –

Sewta is disappointed at the results for an increase in service on the Vale of Glamorgan route. As is the case with most other routes in the Sewta region, the Vale of Glamorgan

line runs parallel to a number of roads which suffer from road congestion, increasing road journey times and no proposed schemes to alleviate those problems. Secondly, growth in the 3 years that the Vale of Glamorgan has had a restored passenger service exceeds expectations and the base growth figures used in the draft Wales RUS. This is despite the line only having an hourly service between Barry and Bridgend, a level of service which historically does not encourage modal shift from car to train.

Sewta notes the comments regarding a new station at St Athan, and its location as a potential site for a strategic employment area within the WSP we would agree may further strengthen the case for an increase in service. However, Sewta believes that the current case for providing additional frequency on the Vale of Glamorgan is already well-made. Sewta believes that further work needs to be undertaken in assessing the business case for this option, and would therefore request that this is commissioned, and that Network Rail revisits the analysis for this scheme.

Option 15D - South Wales Valleys (Rhymney Corridor)

Sewta notes the comments in relation to the timing of the Cardiff Area Resignalling Renewals programme, however we believe that as the case for a frequency enhancement to half hourly on the Bargoed to Rhymney section is so well made and so needed, we would not wish the infrastructure schemes at Tir Phil and Bargoed be delayed until the CASR programme is implemented.

Option 15F (South Wales Valleys: longer-term growth (Taff-Vale and Rhymney Corridors)–

Sewta looks forward to working closely with Network Rail, and DfT/WAG on the Cardiff Area Re-Signalling Programme (CASR) and the need to cater for the positive long term positive benefits of an enhanced Valleys Lines network of services. It is essential that the rail industry and on-going development of the final RUS, HLOS and SOFA (Statement of Funds Available) takes advantage of the range of external funding avenues which may provide added value to any funds from central sources.

We cannot find any reference in the draft RUS to a new station at Llanbradach, identified in the Sewta Rail Strategy PIP and in the Sewta draft RTP. The existing station has been identified as being in need of additional car parking spaces, however due to insufficient land being available on the existing site, one option which has been initially investigated as been to move the station. As the longer-term options for the Rhymney Valley Line are progressed, Sewta would wish to work with Network Rail to review the operational and economic feasibilities of providing a new Llanbradach Parkway station.

Finally, and whilst Sewta and WAG with the help of Network Rail have implemented a number of schemes to cater for future as well as current demand, as the draft RUS clearly states there will shortly be a once in a 30 or 40 year opportunity to take advantage of infrastructure replacement and renewals. Sewta would urge that any work to increase the frequency of services possible in the Queen Street to Cardiff Central corridor, does not introduce constraints that in the long term will prevent the provision of a third track north of Cardiff Queen Street which is outlined in Sewtas Rail Strategy PIP.

7 Emerging Strategy

7.2.2 - Appraisal

With the support of WAG and Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO), Sewta has put forward a number of schemes for possible EU Convergence funding. These schemes which are listed in Appendix A will have the potential to further strengthen demand for rail services in this area, and will have an impact of the deliverability of elements of the Wales RUS. Sewta would welcome further discussions with Network Rail on the implications of these proposals for the Wales RUS.

7.2.6 - Extensions to the Network

Sewta would not accept the statement in paragraph 7.2.6 that this aspect of the strategy for the Wales RUS area is effectively complete. In addition to the line between Gaer and Park junctions, it is proposed that the Ebbw Valley Phase Two scheme will include the extension of the line into Ebbw Vale Town. The track bed for this extension is currently being created through the reclamation scheme for the former Ebbw Vale Steelworks. This proposal has the potential to be implemented during Control Period 4. There are also longer term proposals, along the former track bed, for a spur off the Ebbw Valley line to serve the town of Abertillery.

Moreover the proposal to re-open the Beddau line links strongly with the proposal within the Wales Spatial Plan (WSP) for major growth in the Strategic Opportunity Area of Llantrisant which would be well served by the Beddau line. In addition, as stated earlier, while previous studies have concluded that the business case for extending the Aberdare rail passenger service to Hirwaun is not strong, the potential for major new development in the Hirwaun area as part of another WSP Strategic Opportunity Area suggests that these conclusions will need to be reviewed.

7.2.8 Rolling Stock

A key priority within Sewta's Rail Strategy PIP, is our support for previous work by Arriva Trains Wales and WAG on assessment of the opportunity to secure new rolling stock. By the end of the Wales and Borders franchise and period of the Wales RUS, some of the rolling stock used in the Sewta region will be at least 30 years old.

Sewta identified a number of key advantages to a renewal of rolling stock, some of which are listed below:

- Improved passenger environment / quality.
- Positive image impact for the region;
- Faster acceleration for journey time savings / performance benefits;
- Larger number of doors for faster access / egress;
- 2/3-car sets designed for improved capacity / lower operating costs
- Improved cycle carriage facilities; and better accommodation for pushchairs and wheelchairs.

Whilst SEWTA notes the comments in the draft RUS about a replacement of ATWs rolling stock fleet, we remain hopeful that an opportunity will arise within the period of the

franchise and RUS to secure new rolling stock for ATW. As our Rail Strategy PIP clearly sets out, new trains in themselves generate considerable growth and we would urge Network Rail to be in position to deal with any review of renewal of ATWs rolling stock.

7.3 Recommendations

In summary, and drawing from our more detailed comments on the proposed gaps and solutions identified in the draft RUS, Sewta's position on Network Rail's recommendations is as follows:

7.3.1 The national picture/north-south + mid-Wales

Control Period 3 (current, until March 2009)

Within Control Period (CP) 3, Sewta would wish to be involved with Network Rail and WAG on the feasibility study looking at the north-south Wales rail corridor, and suggests this work also incorporates looking at signalling on the Marches Line between Abergavenny and Newport, and new stations at Caerleon, Sebastapol and Llantarnam

7.3.2 South-east Wales (other than Valleys)

Control Period 3 (current, until March 2009)

Sewta can report that station improvements at Severn Tunnel Junction are likely to begin in CP3. Sewta and Monmouthshire County Council are discussing with the train operating companies the possibilities to provide additional station calls as a result of these improvements.

Sewta asks for Network Rail within CP3, or early within CP4 to revisit the economic case for providing additional station stops on the Chepstow line. We would wish to see this review progressed independently of any development of a new station at Llanwern.

Sewta would wish to see Network Rail revisit the options for a frequency enhancement on the Maesteg branch undertaken towards the latter stages of CP3 or as earlier as possible within CP4 to take advantage of external European funding opportunities.

Control Period 4 (2009-2014)

Sewta has already contributed in the early workshops on the Greater Western Route Utilisation Strategy and will continue to be involved in the development of this RUS.

Sewta would wish to see the future enhancements on the Ebbw Vale branch implemented in CP4 and not Control Period 5 (2014-2019) as proposed. A proposal for Ebbw Vale Railway Phase 2 has been submitted to WEFO and has the full commitment of WAG.

7.3.3 South-east Wales (valleys)

Control Period 3 (current, until March 2009)

Sewta would wish Network Rail to revisit the economic case for a half hourly service on the Vale of Glamorgan Line.

Control Period 4 (2009-2014)

Sewta would ask that Network Rail look at implementing the additional passing loop at Tir-Phil as early within CP4 as possible and not be dependent on the CASR programme.

7.4 Long term

Sewta notes the proposed work to look being undertaken by Network Rail on electrification of the Great Western Main Line between London and South Wales (Swansea) and wider expansion of electrification on the UK railway network (i.e. South Wales Valleys.) Sewta would welcome the opportunity to contribute to the development of both the High Speed Network and Network Route Utilisation Strategies.

Appendix One – Details of Sewta’s Proposals for European Convergence Programme Funding

Sewta has secured Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO) support for taking forward the following applications for European funding which is available over the period to 2015 (Intervention rate 46.36%)

1. Rail Park & Rides

Abercynon, the new park and ride which will accommodate 150 parking spaces;
Taffs Well the existing park and ride site will be extended from 93 to 149 spaces;
Rhymney, the car park will be doubled with the addition of 25 spaces;
Bargoed, which currently has no park and ride provision, a 100 space car park will be provided;
Pengam, provision will be increased from 60 to 160 spaces.
(consideration is also being given to including within this package an extension at Ebbw Valley Parkway from 70 to 146 spaces.
Of these 6 schemes, all except Rhymney (2011/12) would be capable of completion by 2009/10.

2. Station Improvement Schemes

Phase One 2008 - 11

- Western Valleys lines: Bridgend, Maesteg, Pencoed and Pontyclun;
- Central Valleys lines: Aber, Aberdare, Bargoed, Caerphilly, Llanbradach, Mountain Ash, Pengam, Pontlottyn, **Pontypridd**, Porth, Rhymney, Taffs Well, Tonypany, Ton Pentre, **Treforest**, Treorchy and **Ystrad Mynach**;
- Eastern Valleys lines: **Pontypool & New Inn**.

Phase Two 2012 - 15

- Central Valleys lines: Dinas Rhondda, LLwynypia, Penrhiwceiber, Pyle, Trefforest Estate, Ystrad Rhondda;
- New Station Studies: Llanbradach Parkway, Llantarnam, Sebastopol.

3. Rhymney Line - Bargoed to Rhymney Frequency Enhancements including Energlyn Station ;

4. Maesteg Line Frequency Enhancements including Brackla Station and Wildmill Park & Ride

Also under discussion with WEFO are schemes for Ebbw Valley Phase Two, and for additional turnback facilities at Caerphilly and Pontypridd. Longer term proposals for additional park and ride schemes, and for the Abergavenny Line frequency enhancements, are also under development.



Report To Board 10th October 2008 **Item 10**

Subject Dates for 2009/2010 Board meetings.

Author Assistant Secretary

1. Purpose

1.1 To notify Members of the dates for 2009/10 Board meetings.

2. Background/Present Position

2.1 Dates have been previously notified for meetings up to and including June 2009.

3. Proposal for Action.

3.1 The following dates have been confirmed with Cardiff City Council for 2009/10 Sewta Board meetings. All meetings will be at City Hall, Cardiff, commencing at 10.30 am.

- 18th September 2009
- 18th December 2009
- 19th March 2010
- 18th June 2010

4. Financial Implications

4.1 As with 2008/9 Sewta will be responsible for the cost of the buffet lunch for Board meetings, and Cardiff Council will bear the cost for teas/coffees/biscuits.

5. Staffing / Personnel Implications

5.1 None.

6. Consultation

6.1 The Chair of the Directorate and the management of City Hall were consulted.

7. Recommendation

7.1 That Members note the dates for 2009/10 Board meetings.

PW 30.09.08