

6th May 2009

SEWTA WELCOMES MAJOR PARK AND RIDE SCHEME FUNDING

Transport alliance Sewta's bid for European cash to provide and improve Park and Ride facilities at four South East Wales rail stations has been successful.

The total cost of the package of schemes on the Rhymney Valley and Taff Vale Lines is £6.122m with the Welsh Assembly Government's Rail Forward Programme providing £3.239m match funding and the balance from European Convergence Funding.

The schemes, which will be completed by 2011/12, will encourage more Heads of the Valleys and Mid Valleys motorists to switch to rail by providing Park and Ride facilities at Abercynon and Bargoed rail stations for the first time, and will extend existing Park and Ride facilities at Pengam and Rhymney rail stations - a total of 365 new Park and Ride spaces.

Sewta's Park and Ride projects capitalise on the recent and proposed capacity and frequency enhancements on the Rhymney and Taff Vale lines, and contribute to the development of a more sustainable transport system, by increasing the attractiveness of rail to a wider section of the community, improving travel choice and providing an acceptable alternative mode of travel to the private car.

The projects represent a key step forward in implementing Sewta's new Regional Transport Plan. Sewta's aim is to promote schemes which open up the rail network to the surrounding Valleys communities, enhance accessibility and capacity, and improve connections to the wider region.

The latest schemes make better use of the area's existing transport infrastructure, and offer better access to jobs and services, education and training opportunities and major employment locations in the lower Taff and Rhymney Valleys, Cardiff and beyond. These schemes will help to reduce traffic, particularly on the roads into Pontypridd, Caerphilly and Cardiff.

It is Sewta's and the Welsh Assembly Government's vision to eventually extend half-hourly services to all the Heads of the Cardiff Valleys rail network.

More...

Details of the Park and Ride Schemes announced today are:

Abercynon Park and Ride

The new Park and Ride will provide 150 parking spaces on derelict land to the east of the station. The facility will be accessed from the east via a new river bridge, which will provide a direct link to Navigation Business Park, located just off the A470, and the surrounding catchment areas. There is currently no Park and Ride facility at Abercynon and yet the location of the station on the strategic highway network provides an excellent opportunity to encourage those commuting by car to switch to rail for their journey to work. The facility will also benefit from the increase service frequency of four trains per hour to Cardiff.

Bargoed Park and Ride

The scheme will provide 90 Park and Ride spaces, safe walking routes to the adjacent bus and rail stations, along with additional street lighting and CCTV. It will be located in the northern part of Bargoed with access to the facility off the new roundabout on the eastern side of the A469. Demand for Park and Ride in Bargoed has increased following the introduction of Arriva Wales' Standard Pattern Timetable, which increased the frequency of services from Bargoed to Cardiff from two to four trains per hour. The ongoing Greater Bargoed Community Regeneration scheme has provided the opportunity to build a new Park and Ride facility.

Pengam Park and Ride Extension

An extension to the Park and Ride facility at Pengam will respond to evidence of excess demand with cars currently parking on the station access road and nearby residential streets. The scheme will extend the Park and Ride facility at Pengam utilising derelict land adjacent to the existing Park and Ride. The extension will increase the number of spaces from 60 (made up of 34 formal and approximately 26 informal spaces) to 160 spaces. The scheme includes improvements to the existing pedestrian facilities, street lighting and CCTV provision.

Rhymney Park and Ride Extension

The project will extend the Park and Ride facility at Rhymney station by utilising derelict land adjacent to the existing Park and Ride. The scheme doubles the size of the existing facility, by increasing the number of spaces from 25 to 50. The proposed Park and Ride facility will support the wider regeneration of Rhymney by providing modern transport facilities for those living in the Heads of the Valleys area and by improving connections to the wider region.

More...

The Chair of Sewta, **Councillor Jeffrey James**, of the Vale of Glamorgan said:

“These schemes reflect the value of close collaboration between Sewta, the Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO) and the Welsh Assembly Government. Park and Ride provision at rail stations is an important way of encouraging greater use of rail services. These important new facilities on the Rhymney Valley and Taff Vale lines will significantly increase access to the rail network and encourage Valleys’ car users to change to rail for a significant part of their journey removing traffic from the busy routes into Pontypridd, Caerphilly and Cardiff.”

Sewta Board Member, **Councillor Rob Gough**, who is also Caerphilly County Borough Council cabinet member for transportation and planning, said:

"We are delighted that the Caerphilly County Borough will benefit from three major schemes within this area. Bargoed, Pengam and Rhymney will soon gain much-needed park and ride facilities that will provide a major boost to the transport network in the County Borough. We are keen to get more people out of their cars and onto public transport, and this announcement demonstrates that successful partnership working is helping us achieve this goal."

The Vice Chair of Sewta, **Councillor Andrew Morgan**, who is also Rhondda Cynon Taf Cabinet Member for Transport and Customer Care, said:

“Park and Ride schemes have a big part to play in sustainable transport, both from an environmentally friendly point of view and in terms of reducing congestion on the roads. The A470 is a very important but also very highly used route between the Valleys and the Cardiff capital region and rail travel is proving an increasingly useful and popular alternative. Of course, not everyone lives within walking distance of a railway station and these park and ride schemes such as the one at Abercynon will make rail a more viable and attractive option for many commuters and passengers.”

Ends

Note to editors:

Sewta is the alliance of local authorities charged with developing transport policy and delivering public transport projects on behalf of the 10 local authorities in South East Wales and their partners, both in the operating industry and in organisations representing passengers’ interests.

Sewta’s membership includes the local authorities of Blaenau Gwent, Bridgend, Caerphilly, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Monmouthshire, Newport, Rhondda Cynon Taf, Torfaen and the Vale of Glamorgan. Partners are the Confederation of Passenger Transport, Arriva Trains Wales, Network Rail, Bus Users UK, Passenger Focus and Sustrans. Sewta works closely with the Welsh Assembly Government.

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