

*December 31<sup>st</sup> 2008*

## **REGIONAL TRANSPORT PLAN VITAL FOR SOUTH EAST WALES SAYS SEWTA**

Transport alliance Sewta is proposing a £350m five year investment programme to progress their vision of a sustainable regional transport network for South East Wales.

After public consultation, the *Final Draft* of Sewta's Regional Transport Plan (RTP) has been submitted to the Welsh Assembly Government. It foresees an accessible, integrated and sustainable transport network. This network will increase opportunity, and promote prosperity for all, while protecting the environment. Walking, cycling, public transport and sustainable freight will provide real travel alternatives.

Sewta, the consortium comprising the region's 10 local authorities, working in partnership with public transport operators and users, says a safe, sustainable and integrated regional transport network has a key role in ensuring future prosperity. The plan is based on the "uncomfortable truth" that present trends cannot continue.

The RTP says we have to:

- invest more in public transport
- improve accessibility for all to reduce social exclusion
- reduce climate change emissions
- improve regional connectivity
- improve integration, information and ticketing
- promote sustainable travel choices
- make better use of the existing road infrastructure

To achieve this Sewta are proposing a £350 million investment programme for 2010-2015 to achieve their vision. This programme will support the Welsh Assembly Government's transport priorities contained in the Wales Transport Strategy.

**More...**

The Welsh Assembly Government will now assess Sewta's plan, and its request for funding. WAG will complete its assessment (and provide interim funding for 2009/10) by March 2009, with decisions on future funding later in the year.

Sewta's RTP proposes a balanced programme of investment and support for all modes of travel. It also needs a programme of action that interlaces transport planning with land use and public service planning, to provide a more effective transport network, and to manage the demand for travel.

The RTP proposes improving public transport to offer sustainable alternatives to the car and to tackle social exclusion with improved access to key services, including health, education and employment.

Continued investment in increasing rail capacity and frequency is a core ingredient of the strategy. Rail serves most of the key towns in the region, and provides a vital link along many of the main traffic corridors.

Bus travel accounts for much more travel than rail. It can offer a realistic alternative to the car in corridors where buses are given priority, and also provides essential transport for people with difficulties accessing services. The strategy aims to significantly improve the quality of bus services.

Sewta considers that limited integration in the public transport network is a key barrier. It seeks better integration through improving interchanges, with better bus and rail stations, more integrated ticketing, and better public transport information.

Sewta's proposals for roads centre on making better use of the current network. However, Sewta has identified key priorities for new highway schemes which are included in the Plan as part of a regional network management strategy.

More...

Sewta also plans to provide better opportunities for people to walk and cycle, including as part of linked trips by public transport. Walking and cycling are the most sustainable and healthy forms of transport, and will be encouraged as part of a Smarter Choices programme.

Chair of Sewta Councillor Jeffrey James said:

“We are delighted to have completed the Final Draft of the Regional Transport Plan. It will have a significant impact on the way we travel, as the threat of climate change must challenge the way our travel behaviour impacts on the environment.”

The Final Draft RTP can be accessed on on-line at [www.sewta.gov.uk](http://www.sewta.gov.uk)

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.*

**For further information contact:**

**Peter Curtis**

*Giraffe* pr

Mobile: 0780 1790640