

25th June 2009

SEWTA BACKS RAIL ELECTRIFICATION FOR SOUTH EAST WALES

Transport alliance Sewta is firmly backing calls for Rail Electrification in South East Wales.

In addition to the London to Swansea Great Western Main Line, Sewta (the South East Wales Transport Alliance) is recommending that electrification should also take place on the Valleys Line network, the Maesteg and Vale of Glamorgan lines, and the Chepstow and Abergavenny lines.

Sewta says the opportunity to electrify the London to Swansea line comes at a time when a decision has to be made on the future of the High Speed Train – which has served South East Wales to London passengers for more than 30 years.

In examining options for the HST replacement, the case for an all-electric train is gaining support and although an electrified railway has higher initial costs than a diesel railway, in the long term the operating costs of an electrified train and network are cheaper and more sustainable.

Electric trains are also lighter and do not cause the same amount of wear and tear on tracks. They use energy far more efficiently than a diesel-powered train.

In 2007 the United Kingdom Government Department for Transport promoted the delivery of “a Sustainable Railway” and this has been taken forward by Network Rail with the case for an electrified railway. The Government will soon decide which UK regions benefit.

The Great Western Main Line is one of the core routes identified by Network Rail for early electrification, and the Welsh Assembly are pressing for the whole of the Great Western Main Line (from London to Swansea) to be electrified.

More...

The Chair of Sewta, **Councillor Jeffrey James**, of the Vale of Glamorgan said:
 “Rail electrification in the South East Wales area would bring great benefits to the people of the region. Newer, more sustainable and faster trains could run with increases in the number of services allowing more people to catch the train to Cardiff and Newport and home again - substantially reducing carbon-heavy road use.”

At its Board meeting on 26th June 2006 at Caerphilly Council’s Penallta House offices, Tredomen, (10.30a.m.) members will be asked to support the recommendation:

“Sewta support for the early electrification of the Great Western Main Line as far as Swansea, and electrification of the Valley Lines network including the Maesteg and Vale of Glamorgan lines and that Sewta works with SWWITCH [its South West Wales equivalent], to achieve these goals.”

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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