

August 8th 2008

REGIONAL TRANSPORT PLAN VITAL FOR S E WALES SAYS SEWTA

A successful, safe and sustainable integrated public transport network has a key role in the future prosperity of South East Wales says transport alliance Sewta.

Launching the public consultation exercise for their Regional Transport Plan, Sewta (the South East Wales Transport Alliance), a consortium comprising the 10 local authorities of South East Wales working in partnership with public transport operators and users, has based its plan on the “uncomfortable truth” that the present situation cannot continue.

The foreword to the Sewta plan states:

“We cannot build the roads needed to carry the extra traffic, and climate change is likely to bring significant changes to the way we look at our relationship to our environment – particularly in the way we travel and use transport.

“The RTP therefore seeks to play its part in halting the trends of the last 100 years and helping the move towards a more sustainable environment for work, for the economy and for personal travel and recreation.”

With climate change now a major challenge the Sewta Draft RTP therefore contains policies that encourage good environmental stewardship. In the UK, transport is currently estimated to produce between 17% and 30% of UK carbon emissions (depending on the data source), the major cause of climate change. Road transport is the fastest growing source of CO².

Some 80% of CO² emissions from the transport sector come from road transport. Reducing overall CO² emissions from vehicles is essential if the UK is to meet its climate change objectives.

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The Sewta Draft RTP builds on last year's Outline RTP and contains strategies that promote: a balanced programme of investment and support for all modes of travel; a programme of interventions which integrates transport planning with land-use and public service planning and balances the conflicting requirements of protecting the environment, addressing problems of social exclusion and promoting the economy.

Some of the key areas that are addressed in the plan are those of improving accessibility; improving road safety; reducing crime and fear of crime on the transport system; reducing traffic congestion and mitigating climate change and the environmental damage caused by transport.

Sewta proposes:

- Continuing investment in the regional rail network
- Improving the quality of the bus service
- Developing public transport integration
- Making better use of the existing road system
- Developing a smarter choices programme (including walking and cycling)

But Sewta also says that just providing a more sustainable transport system will not be enough - people need to engage with the plan, examine their travel habits and make informed new travel choices which still serve their needs.

Sewta will review the RTP in the light of comments received and submit a Final Draft RTP to the Welsh Assembly Government in December 2008 for approval. It is anticipated that the RTP will be formally endorsed by the Sewta Board and its 10 Local Authorities during the first three months of 2009. The consultation period for the Sewta draft RTP will end on September 30 2008.

The Sewta Draft RTP is available on CD in libraries in S E Wales on the Sewta web site at www.sewta.gov.uk and by request from: Sewta, Ty Gwent, Lakeview, Llantarnam, Cwmbran NP44 3HR. Telephone 01633 876345.

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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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