National Assembly for Wales

Enterprise, Innovation and Networks Committee

Network Rail

Executive Summary

Network Rail operates over 1400 Track Miles within Wales. Currently, 1043 passenger trains operate each weekday within and to/from Wales. Arriva Trains Wales (ATW) is the principal train operator in Wales, operating 910 scheduled services each weekday.

First Great Western operates 93 daily scheduled services with Central Trains operating 28, Virgin West Coast operating 10 and Virgin Cross Country operating 2.

At present there are 238 operational stations on the Welsh rail network, with a new station (Llanharan) scheduled to open in Spring 2007.

Wales generates 2% of national rail journeys in the UK, and approximately 15% of UK rail freight. Heavy and intensive steel and coal freight flows in Wales are concentrated along the South Wales Main Line between Port Talbot and Llanwern, with significant longer distance flows from South Wales to the Midlands and Avonmouth.

A proxy measurement of Network Rail's ability to deliver reliable infrastructure to Train Operating Companies (TOCs) is through the Public Performance Measure (PPM). PPM combines figures for punctuality and reliability into a single performance measure:

It covers all trains all day

It covers all franchised passenger TOCs to provide benchmarking and comparators

There are two PPM measures, comprising (i) 10 mins late for long distance operators and (ii) 5 mins late for all other operators

Measures punctuality at final destination

Compares performance against the number of trains planned to run

As the only Wales-wide train operator, ATW's PPM for Period 6 was 87.9% against a target figure of 85% and a Moving Annual Average (MAA) of 84.6%.

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Network Rail, measures key performance indicators around the causes of infrastructure and other related delays to train services.

ATW total delay minutes for the Wales and Marches Area between April and September 2006 comprised 533,258 minutes. Of these total delay minutes 37% (198,439) arose from Network Rail infrastructure or operational issues.

Causal analysis of the April to September 2006 Network Rail delay minutes within the Wales and Marches Area identifies 39% of Network Rail Delay Minutes were the result of issues with points, signalling and other assets (this figure being 43% in 2005/2006) with 27% of Network Rail related delays resulting from network management issues. 17% of Network Rail delays resulted from external issues (predominantly trespass and vandalism) as opposed to 22% in 2005/2006. Between April and September 2006, 9% of Network Rail's delay minutes resulted from track issues, with 8% arising from severe weather and structures issues.

Between 2006 and 2009, Network Rail will invest over £123M in maintaining the infrastructure of the railway system in Wales. This represents an 8% increase against the maintenance spend in Wales for 2005/2006. In addition, during this period Network Rail has committed to spend over £182M in renewing the Welsh railway infrastructure. This significant investment programme in asset renewals equates to an increase of 40% against the renewal expenditure in Wales for 2005/2006.

Network Rail is committed to working closely with the Welsh Assembly Government and the Regional Transport Consortia of Sewta, SWWITCH, TRaCC and TAITH to identify, develop and deliver enhancements for the Welsh rail network.

The creation of the Network Rail Route Enhancement Team has significantly benefited the development of new enhancement schemes within Wales, with 3 Scheme Sponsors working full time on Welsh enhancement schemes.

Working with Welsh Assembly Government funding and utilising Network Rail's internal enhancements funding source (known as the Network Rail Discretionary Fund), it is currently forecast that Network Rail will deliver £21M of rail enhancements in Wales during 2006/2007, of which £8.5M originates entirely from NR funds.

Subject to the successful outcome of ongoing feasibility and development studies and appropriate contractual agreements, the value of enhancements to be delivered on the Welsh rail network is anticipated to rise to around £40M in 2007/2008 and over £100M in 2008/2009.

Enhancement Schemes currently, or imminently in delivery include:

Reconstruction and extension of Newport Platform 4 (funded entirely by Network Rail)

Valley Lines Platform extensions (involving the extension of 41 platforms)

Pontypridd to Merthyr Frequency Enhancement (comprising the construction of a new station and Abercynon to replace the present Abercynon North and South and an intermediate loop between Abercynon and Merthyr Tydfil to permit half hourly services)

Llanharan new station

Gwaen Cae Gurwen Freight Branch

Flint Station refurbishment (Grade II-listed)

A significant pipeline of new enhancements schemes in various phases of development within Network Rail's Guide to Railway Investment Projects (GRIP) exists and includes:

Enhancement of linespeeds on the South Wales Relief Lines between Severn tunnel Junction and Cardiff to 75 mph

Enhancement of infrastructure in Cardiff and the Valleys to increase reliability and capacity

Redevelopment of Newport Station

Enhancement of capacity between Swansea and Llanelli

Implementation of ERTMS signalling on the Cambrian Mainline and Cambrian Coast

Enhancement of infrastructure to permit an hourly Cambrian Mainline service

Enhancement of capacity between Wrexham and Chester

Enhancement of infrastructure to permit haulage of 1M tonnes per annum of slate waste from Blaenau Ffestiniog

Enhancement of signalling and platforming flexibility at Shrewsbury

Enhancement of service frequencies to Maesteg

Enhancement of Station infrastructure at Bangor, Llandudno and Prestatyn

Finally, as part of Network Rail's obligations as custodian and steward of the national railway infrastructure, the company is currently developing and delivering a major programme of signalling renewal schemes costing in excess of £450M along the South Wales Mainline from Severn Tunnel to Swansea.

Currently, the Port Talbot Resignalling scheme is in delivery, upgrading the entire signalling system between Bridgend and Swansea. whilst similar interrelated and interdependent Schemes at Newport and Cardiff are programmed for completion in 2010 and 2011 respectively.

Upon completion, the entire 70 miles of complex and intensively used mainline through South Wales will be controlled from one "state of the art" signalling centre.