ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Date: Wednesday 14 February 2001

Time: 2.00 to 5.00 pm

Venue: Committee Room 3, National Assembly Building

POLICY REVIEW OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT: EMERGING ISSUES

Purpose

1. To seek the committee's agreement on priorities for the remainder of the policy review of public transport.

Background

2. The terms of reference for the review were as follows:

- To consider the Assembly's public transport policies (covering bus, rail and community transport services) and to identify any short-term changes within the existing statutory, regulatory and organisational framework which would facilitate the delivery and take-up of improved and integrated services;

- To consider whether any longer-term changes to the statutory, regulatory and organisational framework relating to public transport would facilitate the delivery of improved services.

3. The committee has heard the views of a wide range of organisations, both via consultation responses and at committee meetings, and others views will be heard in the presentations today. Issues have been raised along the spectrum of public transport: from the private car, through community transport, to mass people movement on the railways.

Vision of integrated public transport in Wales

4. A vision is starting to emerge, and committee members will also be looking at best practice elsewhere and assessing the applicability and affordability of these schemes for Wales. Elements of the vision for integrated public transport in Wales appear to be:

- Rail network coherence – establishing a single franchise network, encouraging modal transfer, and driving up profile of rail;

1. Public subsidy levels - building up network and usage, increasing attractiveness of public transport, providing vehicles and stock to 21st century standards, targeting markets, easing the use and effectiveness of public transport, providing passengers with a step change improvement in support services;

1. Community transport - developing all forms of transport between the private car and buses;

- Implementation toolbox – developing greater incentives for public transport, driving up the level and efficiency of intermodal transfer, and enforcing restrictions on car usage;

- Second generation public transport - preparing for when the capacity and effectiveness of conventional public transport on conventional roads runs out.

Delivering the vision

5. The committee may wish to consider the arrangements needed to deliver this vision. To avoid duplication with programmes and research projects being taken forward by the Minister for Environment and others, members may wish to focus on the following areas:

Shorter tem

- Accessibility – consider options for improving accessibility of public transport in both rural and urban areas, linked to Minister's forthcoming review of community transport;

- Enforcement – consider whether existing enforcement powers are adequate to support public transport and ensure passengers' safety;

- Bus Services - consider options for improvement (e.g. comparison of quality contracts and quality partnerships at improving bus services);

- Financing innovation – consider options for funding pilot projects and encouraging innovative improvements to be developed alongside existing service provision (e.g. interchange demonstration project);

- Cycling and walking – consider feasibility of affirmative financial actions or short-term policies directed at integration with cycling and walking, taking into account work being taken forward by the Minster's Transport Forum (initial proposal scheduled for

discussion on 26 March).

Longer-term

- Second generation public transport – consider how far new systems (e.g. new bus, Light Rapid Transit (LRT) or guided bus systems) are relevant to the scale and circumstances of Wales;

- Increased powers – consider whether changes in primary legislation to devolve responsibility for all transport policy in Wales to the National Assembly are necessary to deliver benefits in public transport provision;

- Organisational structures – consider whether partnership consortia can deliver the vision, and assess feasibility of alternative models of national and regional control of public transport, including Passenger Transport Authorities and other European regional transport structures.

Timetable

6. The committee has set a target of end summer term 2001 for completing a draft report, and end autumn term for presenting the final report to plenary. Discussions are scheduled for a further five committee meetings before the end of the summer term.

Next steps

7. Once the committee's priorities for the review are agreed, further work will be undertaken to establish a sound evidence base against which members can assess the pros and cons of various options, before making recommendations on the way forward. For each priority, this will include:

- collecting baseline data (and identifying any gaps);
- identifying best practice outside Wales and analysing evidence demonstrating success;
- analysing effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation of public transport policies and programmes in Wales (and identify any gaps);
- assessing established criteria used in transport appraisal in Wales, proposing improvements (if needed) and highlight any areas where further research is needed.

Conclusion

8. Members are invited to agree priorities for the review, as suggested in paragraph 5 above.

Committee Secretariat

February 2001