

## **Ymgyrch Diogelu Cymru Wledig**

### **Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales**

#### **Comments on Invitation to submit on Policy Review of Public Transport in Wales.**

Reference is made to submissions made to WTAG by the CPRW on issues such as the vertical integration of rail transport within Wales. The recent announcement of a Wales & Borders Rail Franchise is to be welcomed, but there should be a similar 'Railtrack Zone' in place to reflect the new franchise area, similar to the arrangement in Scotland.

The Assembly should recognise the opportunities available to pursue modal transfer from road to rail without jeopardising future opportunities, by either the selling of BRB land or the CPO of land for road developments (e.g. Holyhead), without first looking for alternative solutions.

A greater cognisance of Public Transport expertise must be given by the Assembly, e.g. Officers in the Association of Transport Co-ordinators who are at the forefront of what is actually happening to public transport in Wales. The Assembly should be more aware of the gradual withdrawal of 'socially necessary' services due to smaller budgets in the Unitary Authorities. The Rural Bus Grants and the Transport Grant are not being targeted correctly and a much of it is being wasted.

Unless Officers and Members of the Assembly actually use public transport in their constituency on a regular basis and not just for a publicity stunts, they will not appreciate the true situation.

Tighter criteria must be drawn together as the issue of social exclusion will deteriorate significantly. If the Assembly and the Government wish to address the thorny issue over the price of fuel and the effect on the environment, then the provision of an adequate and quality alternative forms of transport must be provided.

Community Transport must be encouraged in professional circles, to play it's part in providing forms of alternative transport, unfortunately it is very much the 'Cinderella' in local authorities priorities.

Even though the CPRW called for parity of powers with Scotland with regard to Railways in Wales, it is essential that all colours of the political spectrum urge the Secretary of State to lobby the Cabinet to relinquish the DETR of these powers immediately, thereby permitting Objective 1 money and other grant-aid to improve our mainly rural network. We will only have this one chance to invest for the future!

12<sup>th</sup> October 2000

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