

## ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Date: Wednesday 13 March 2002  
Time: 2:00 pm to 4:30 pm  
Venue: Committee Room 1, National Assembly for Wales

### Attendance:

#### *EPT Committee Members:*

Tom Middlehurst, Chair	Alyn and Deeside
Lorraine Barrett	Cardiff South and Penarth
(substituting for Richard Edwards)	
Eleanor Burnham	North Wales
David Davies	Monmouth
Geraint Davies	Rhondda
Sue Essex, Minister for Environment	Cardiff North
Helen Mary Jones	Llanelli
Val Lloyd	Swansea East
Karen Sinclair	Clwyd South
Rhodri Glyn Thomas	Carmarthen East and Dinefwr

#### *Officials:*

Martin Evans	Director of Transport, Planning and Environment Group
Keith Bush	Office of the Counsel General

Gerry Quarrell (item 2)	Countryside Division
Angharad Huws (item 2)	Countryside Division
Robin Shaw (item 3)	Director of Transport
Meryl James (item 3)	Transport Policy Division
Tom Cassidy (item 4)	Chief Executive, Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments
Richard Avent (item 4)	Head of Inspectorate, Cadw
Andrew Hood (item 4)	Head of Presentation, Cadw
Douglas Hogg (item 4)	Chief Architect, Cadw

***External Organisations:***

Huw Davies (item 2)	Forestry Commission
James Llewelyn (item 3)	Gwent Consultancy
Chris Gibb (item 5)	Wales and Borders Trains
Chris Turner (item 5)	Virgin Trains
Mark Barker (item 5)	First North Western

***Secretariat:***

Siwan Davies	Committee Clerk
Vaughan Watkin	Deputy Committee Clerk

**Opening Remarks**

1. Tom Middlehurst was appointed temporary Chair, according to Standing Order 8.17, for the duration of Richard Edward's temporary absence from the National Assembly. He would also temporarily take over Richard Edwards' role as one of the Committee's public appointments nominees.

0.2 The Chair advised the Committee that Planning Decision Committee (PDC) 2002/3 had met on 4 March, and thanked Geraint Davies, Rhodri Glyn Thomas, and Val Lloyd for making

themselves available.

0.3 Following Plaid Cymru's reshuffle, Helen Mary Jones would be moving to a new role as Shadow Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning. The Chair thanked her for a valuable contribution to the work of the Committee.

## **Item 1: Apologies, substitutions and declaration of interests**

1.1 Apologies had been received from Richard Edwards, for whom Lorraine Barrett was substituting.

2. The Chair invited members to declare any interests under Standing Order 4.5, which were as follows:

- Val Lloyd - Member of Swansea City and County Council.
- Geraint Davies - Member of Rhondda County Borough Council

## **Subordinate Legislation: Proposals for an amendment to the Waste Management Licensing Regulations 1994**

1.3 The Minister made a statement regarding proposals for an amendment to the Waste Management Licensing Regulations 1994 to make provision for mobile plant for the recovery of Ozone depleting substances from refrigeration equipment (copy attached at annex 1). The Committee agreed that the amendment should proceed via Executive procedure.

## **Item 2: Subordinate Legislation: Additional CROW Act Regulations -**

EPT-06-02 (p 1)

1. The Minister sought the Committee's views on proposals for implementing provisions of the CROW Act 2000 on: (i) restrictions on access; and (ii) the voluntary dedication of land as access land.

2.2 Members asked that the following comments be addressed as part of the proposals for restrictions on access:

- Notice of restrictions – possible confusion about the term "normally" in relation to the five days notice period for restrictions;

- Information on restrictions – consideration be given to the provision of a public information phone-line providing taped messages of current restrictions;
- Appeals - procedures should not be bureaucratic.

2.3 The Committee would receive a report in the Summer term on the outcome of the consultation exercises on the proposals for both sets of regulations and on how the views expressed would be taken into account. The Committee would then decide whether it wished to be consulted on the draft regulations.

2.4 The Minister's approach to Committee scrutiny of draft secondary legislation implementing the provisions of the CROW Act, which had been presented in manageable pieces and in logical order, was commended as a model for best practice for subject committee involvement generally in relation to secondary legislation.

### **Item 3: Road Safety Strategy – EPT-06-02 (p 2)**

3.1 The Minister sought the Committee's views following the consultation exercise prior to finalising the Road Safety Strategy for 2002-2010.

#### 2. Discussion focused on the following aspects of road safety:

- Differences in accidents rates of various groups, in particular children and adults;
- Driving under the influence of drugs;
- Driving using a mobile phone;
- Encouraging safer alternative modes of transport to the car;
- Local community involvement in road safety projects;
- Need for and effectiveness of speed limits and home zones;
- Particular hazards associated with motorcycling;
- Particular health and safety considerations of those employed to drive, or who drive as part of their work.

2. The Minister planned to launch the Road Safety Strategy for Wales in the summer. The Committee asked that the Minister considers the road safety issues relating to the gypsy-traveller community prior to finalising the strategy.

### **Item 4: Cadw – Draft Corporate Plan 2002-2003 - EPT-06-02 (p 3)**

1. Tom Cassidy sought the Committee's views on Cadw's draft corporate plan and targets for 2002-03.

## 4.2 Discussion focused on the following issues:

- Admission charges – reasons for the difference between Cadw’s pricing policy and free admission to museums and galleries in Wales;
  - Equal opportunities –guidance on access for the disabled to listed buildings, an access audit on the monuments in care, and the need to publicise progress;
  - Appeals – The mechanism for appeals against listing which could be made to the Minister, and ultimately to the Courts;
  - Listing –that "group value" was taken into account by Cadw in listing decisions, and might affect the number of properties listed in – for example – a garden village.

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4.3 The Committee would consider the need to review the policy of charging at Cadw sites as part of the Quinquennial Review process. A draft report on stage 1 of the Review would be considered in the summer term.

## **Item 5: Rail Services in Wales**

5.1 Representatives from three of the train operating companies providing rail services in Wales were present to answer questions on the quality of those services. Copies of the presentations made by Mark Barker (First North Western), Chris Gibb (Wales and the Borders) and Chris Turner (Virgin Trains are at annexes 2, 3 and 4.

5.2 Members drew attention to the need to improve the following aspects of passenger services:

- Integration of West Wales rail services with ferry services to Ireland;
- Frequency of services West of Cardiff and Swansea, particularly for commuters;
- Maximising the tourism potential of the Heart of Wales Line;
- Relieving overcrowding and improving quality of service on Valley Lines;
- Improving information to passengers, particularly regarding late changes to services;
- Increased investment in rail infrastructure in Wales generally (for Railtrack and the Strategic Rail Authority);
- Safety on late night trains;
- Better links between services in North East England and West Wales.

5.3 The Chair thanked the train operating companies for attending the meeting and recorded the Committee's disappointment that First Great Western had not sent a representative.

## **Item 6: Minutes of the meeting 27 February**

6.1 The Committee adopted the minutes of the meeting held on 27 February.

## **Date of next meeting**

7.1 The next meeting of the Committee would be at 2.00 pm on Wednesday 17 April 2002 at the National Assembly for Wales.

## **Committee Secretariat March 2002**

**ANNEX 1**

## **STATEMENT BY SUE ESSEX AM, MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT**

### **Proposals for an amendment to the Waste Management Licensing Regulations 1994 to make provision for mobile plant for the recovery of Ozone depleting substances (ODS) from refrigeration equipment.**

You will be aware that we have provided a specific grant to local authorities to assist them in the additional burden they now face regarding the disposal of domestic fridges following EU Regulation on ozone depleting substances.

Mobile plant is now available that can recover the ODS from the fridges which will offer an opportunity to reduce this burden. However, the existing Waste Management Licensing Regulations 1994 (regulation 12) do not cover this type of mobile plant. As a result, despite the availability of the plant, they can not operate.

DEFRA intend, without public consultation, to bring Regulations into force in the next few days which will allow such mobile plant to operate. However, this will only allow companies based in England to operate in England. To allow Welsh companies to operate these plants and to give Welsh local authorities access to it we propose to introduce similar amendments in Wales.

To reduce the disadvantage to Welsh businesses and local authorities to the minimum, I can

see no alternative but to recommend to my cabinet colleagues that these Regulations are made under the Executive procedure.

I have no specific details available at the moment but I will be carrying out a short consultation soon, in which you will of course be included, and I will keep you informed of developments.

## **ANNEX 2**

### **PRESENTATION BY FIRST NORTH WESTERN (MARK BARKER)**

#### **FIRST NORTH WESTERN PERFORMANCE**

- Current Performance
- Performance Issues
- Actions
- Conclusions

#### **CURRENT PERFORMANCE**

- First North Western Performance in Wales for 4 weeks ending 2<sup>nd</sup> March was above Passenger Charter Targets
- North Wales Interurban
- Reliability: Target 99%, Actual 99.4%
- Punctuality: Target 91%, Actual 92.6%
- North Wales Branches
- Reliability: Target 99%, Actual 99.3%
- Punctuality: Target 90%, Actual 93.3%
- Similar performance for previous four weeks
- Strong recovery trend starting to re-emerge following end of leaf fall season and recent poor weather

#### **PERFORMANCE ISSUES**

- Overview
- Network Congestion & Growth
- Fleet
- Operations
- Safety enhancements
- Railtrack

#### **OVERVIEW**

- Performance profile is similar to comparable Train Operators
- First North Western performance is generally better, but all show impact of external factors
- High level of performance through 1999/2000 and early 2000/1 followed by steep decline
- Sustained improvement now evident
- Interactions are complex – "multiplier" effect of delays increasing delay minutes per incidents

## **NETWORK CONGESTION & GROWTH**

- Key corridors at saturation point before growth
- Significant growth in both passengers & freight along key corridors e.g Manchester Deansgate – Ardwick, Birmingham New Street
- Station dwell times now insufficient
- Perturbations have greater impact than before

## **FLEET**

### **Class 175s**

- Only one supplier to meet timescales of Franchise Agreement commitment
- £80m invested in fleet of 27 trains and £15m in dedicated depot and 15 year maintenance contract to ATSL
- Significant effort at all levels of F.N.W & First PLC to ensure delivery to time & specification
- Reality: Late delivery, poor availability & reliability
- Substitution of other rolling stock, but North Wales services priority

### **Newton Heath Fleet**

- Rolling Stock cascade delayed
- Class 101 fleet retained and supplemented to provide resilience
- Existing fleet worked harder to compensate for lack of 175s leading initially to:-
  4. Deferred non-safety maintenance
  5. Availability vs Reliability
  6. Higher casualty rates

## **OPERATIONS**

- Drivers: F.N.W unable to compete on salary or challenge of work, hence turnover rates beyond those that could have been predicted
- Over 200 drivers recruited in last 18 months but has barely kept up with turnover

- Over 100 Conductors recruited in last 18 months – market in some areas exhausted
- Revised training to meet enhanced safety standards reduces flexibility of new drivers ( due to limited route & traction knowledge)
- Additional Safety training & briefings
- Late 175 deliveries have disrupted training programmes

## **SAFETY ENHANCEMENTS**

**Punctuality and Reliability have necessarily been affected by recent Safety innovations:-**

- SPAD mitigation measures: 20mph speed restriction at Manchester Piccadilly
- Defensive Driving techniques
- Rule Book changes widening the definition of safety equipment whose failure requires train to be withdrawn from service
- TPWS Buffer stop protection
- Operational changes at Manchester Piccadilly

**Safety has to be paramount; these are challenges that the Industry has to rise to**

## **RAILTRACK**

- Responsible for 50% of decline in performance since 2000/1 Q.1
- Gauge Corner cracking particularly affected Birmingham – Crewe-North Wales services
- Flooding Autumn 2000 and Winter 2001/2
- Infrastructure fragile and increasingly unreliable
- National Recovery Programme has stabilised network, but:-
- Higher level of delay minutes than hitherto
- Network recovery slower than forecast
- North West Zone forecast for current year and 2002/3 is worse than 2000/1
- Focus on GCC to detriment of routine maintenance has led to increase in Condition of Track restrictions & asset failures

## **ACTIONS**

- Fleet
- Operations
- Railtrack

## **ACTIONS: FLEET**

### **Class 175s**

- Extensive modifications included in revised contract with ATSL
- Reliability modifications underway
- Increased manpower at Chester depot
- Improved Materials/Spares process
- Reliability Growth Engineer and support team appointed
- Performance targets redefined
- Close liaison between F.N.W, ATSL, Alstom & Porterbrook to improve fleet performance

### **Newton Heath Fleet**

- Focussed Reliability Management
- People Management : "Kaisen" system;
- training, teamwork, motivation
- Reliability modifications to rolling stock
- Improvements in quality & supply of spares
- Projects to identify and remedy repeat faults
- Modifications to enable prompt door release/close for class 323 complete, underway for class 142, 150
- Improvements to staff competencies

## **ACTIONS: OPERATIONS**

- Recruitment & Training geared to fulfil all forecast future manpower needs
- Current Performance Manager appointed
- New front line Train Crew Performance, Customer Service and Station Managers appointed to focus improvement of standards in key areas
- Performance Champions to identify and resolve local performance issues
- Performance Management Group; senior cross-functional team focussed on performance
- Over 40 initiatives being driven forward
- Control Office review of procedures & competencies to enhance effectiveness

## **ACTIONS: RAILTRACK**

- F.N.W are heavily involved in Area Delivery Groups to tackle known issues with Railtrack and other Operators
- Sectional running times, station dwell times & junction allowances under review at key locations
- Regulating policies under review

## **CONCLUSIONS**

- Issues well understood by First North Western
- Accountability and Responsibility identified
- F.N.W has initiatives in hand / planned for issues within its control and these are bearing fruit
- Railtrack a major contributor to delays and performance is not forecast to improve

## **ANNEX 3**

### **PRESENTATION BY WALES AND BORDERS (CHRIS GIBB)**

#### **Performance**

- W&B run 580 trains daily, covering the whole of Wales, including Valley Lines and services to Manchester, Birmingham, Bristol, London Waterloo and the West Country. We have 1260 staff, 59,000 journeys daily
- Performance best in 15 months and fully recovered from Hatfield
- February ran 99.9% of Passenger Charter services, beating target of 99.5%
- February ran 88.8% of services to Passenger Charter targets, missing target of 92% within 5 ( short distance ), 10 ( long distance ).
- Cancelling 2-3 trains daily, half of these circumstances outside our control, a quarter due to train failures and a quarter due to other W&B problems
- Typically 60 trains are delayed daily more than target, 45 due to circumstances outside our control, 7 due to train failures and 8 due to other W&B problems.

#### **Issues**

- Trespass & Vandalism
- Vehicles striking bridges and misusing level crossings
- Flooding
- Level crossing speed restrictions
- Rolling stock reliability
- Traincrew recruitment
- Infrastructure reliability
- Congestion

- Overcrowding : Valley Lines up on last year by 10%

## **General Improvements**

- Creation of new Wales & Borders company
- Bringing together W&W, VL, CT in Wales,
- FGW stations to join 1<sup>st</sup> April, subject to contract
- North Wales next year, after franchise award
- Cambrian & Wrexham routes : dreadful performance largely solved
- Train cleaners
- Refurbishment of entire Valley Lines Pacer / Sprinter fleet to be complete by end of this year
- Extensive train mod programme to improve performance
- Extensive traincrew recruitment programme
- Timetable improvements in June and October, more trains to Wrexham, more capacity on Valley Lines
- Successful RPP bids – more services in West Wales, on Heart of Wales Line, Haverfordwest station improvements

## **ANNEX 4**

### **PRESENTATION BY VIRGIN TRAINS (CHRIS TURNER)**

#### **VIRGIN TRAINS**

On both franchises our performance continues to improve and it is currently better than it has been for a year. Our ageing fleet continues to let our customers, and us, down and we are replacing all of our existing train sets with new Voyager or Super Voyager trains.

The delivery of these trains is on schedule and we have already taken delivery of all of the 34 Voyager trains with the first of the 44 Super Voyager trains currently on test.

#### ***North Wales***

Virgin Trains currently operates 3 return trains a day between Holyhead and Euston as part of the West Coast franchise. These trains are a mix of HST's (High Speed Trains) and loco-hauled sets. We will be replacing these trains with Super Voyagers early 2003 and from the summer timetable change in May 2003 will be more than doubling the service frequency to a two hourly service.

#### ***South Wales***

Virgin Trains currently operates 1 return HST a day between Swansea and Newcastle as part of the CrossCountry franchise. We will be replacing these trains with Voyagers this year and have already replaced one service to Swansea on a Sunday. The winter timetable change in September 2002 sees a radical change to the service frequency to South Wales with a two hourly service from Cardiff throughout the day. One of these trains will be started from, and end at, Swansea. These trains are going direct to Edinburgh and for the first time will connect South Wales with Scotland – an international service!

**For more information please contact:**

Chris Turner, Regional Manager South West, Virgin Trains, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Victoria House, Temple Meads, Bristol, BS1 6PW or [chris.turner@virgintrains.co.uk](mailto:chris.turner@virgintrains.co.uk)