

Inquiry into Integrated Public Transport

Evidence from Railfuture

4.2 Links between services: “The seamless journey”

4.2.1 Introduction

.1 In this section, we start from the premise that if car users in significant numbers are to be persuaded to use any form of public transport, where there is more than one component part of a journey the parts must dovetail as much as possible. Otherwise they will not be seen as a reasonable alternative to a door-to-door car journey.

.2 People in Wales - both locals and visitors - receive a very poor deal in this respect at present. For example, inter-availability of rail and bus tickets is much more developed in London and the Passenger Transport Authority (PTA) areas of England and Scotland. Moreover, other countries, such as the Netherlands, have far better systems of connections, not only between rail services, but between rail and bus.

.3 We believe that a great deal could be done here at little cost if the political will existed. For example, the introduction of suitable ticketing should be enforced, coupled with any necessary legislation (which might be within the Assembly’s powers) to require the compliance of bus companies. In addition, the rewriting of existing timetables to improve connections is vital. There are difficulties, given that almost all public transport companies are privately owned. However, incentives might be offered to secure co-operation and where local authority or Assembly subsidies are involved contractual obligations can be laid down. Again, as a last resort, legislation might be needed to ensure that the interests of the travelling public are given absolute priority.

4.2.2 Connectional policies

.1 This section focuses on rail / rail connections, but we would expect the same principles to be applied when connections between different modes of transport - particularly rail / road or road / rail - are involved.

.2 The following principles should be fundamental in timetable construction:-

- ‘clock-face’ timetables must be implemented on all routes to make connections as easy as possible to arrange;
- if the service into which the connection is being provided is half-hourly or better, passengers should not have a timetable wait of more than 10 minutes for their connection;
- if the service into which the connection is being provided is less frequent than half-hourly, the maximum timetable wait for a connection should be no more than 15 minutes;
- every effort must be made to arrange rail, bus and ferry timetables with the best possible connections between modes.

.3 The existing national railway policy on connections between services needs to be stated more precisely and be much more widely known than the current note hidden in the preface to the national timetable.

.4 The current policy states: “unless a connection is shown by times printed in light type, you should generally allow a minimum of five minutes between arrival and departure”.

.5 Instead of this we propose: “A recognised connection is one where the time between arrival at and departure from the interchange station is at least five minutes. At some interchanges, connections in less than five minutes are possible while at others the station layout is such that more than five minutes are needed: in both cases, minimum interchange times in minutes (e.g.: “3” in a block) are shown against the station name.”

.6 We think also that a revised policy on holding connections is needed to increase passengers’ confidence in the system.

.7 The existing policy says: “connections between trains cannot be guaranteed. To delay one train to await...a late-running train... may cause significant disruption to many other customers when they make connections at other stations along the route. Every endeavour is made to minimise the total disruption and special attention is given to services operating infrequently and the last services each day.”

.8 The current regulatory regime under which the TOCs operate imposes financial penalties on them when their trains run late. Although at first sight this may seem to work in passengers’ interests, in fact it provides an incentive not to hold connecting services, especially where the onward connection is provided by a different company from that whose service has been delayed. A solution to this must be found - for example that any penalty is paid wholly by the late-running company rather than by the company which holds a connecting service. We recognise that the needs of people already on trains or waiting along the route are very important, but the present system needs to give greater attention to the needs of passengers trying to connect into a service.

.9 Therefore we suggest a revised policy:-

- “all trains will wait up to five minutes for late-running connecting services. They will not normally be held for longer than this because of inconvenience to passengers already on board or waiting at stations further along the route.

Exceptions may be made where the connecting train is the last service of the day on a particular route. However, every effort will be made to avoid delaying the last train of the day by more than 20 minutes by providing alternative transport for passengers who need to connect into that service;

- at all times of the day, every effort will be made to enable passengers to complete their intended journeys to their final destinations. This does not mean to the final rail station, but to the final ticketed destination. Where necessary, an alternative mode of transport will be provided at the TOC’s expense to enable the complete ticketed journey to be completed as punctually as possible;
- if as a result of a connection not being made, a passenger misses his / her last train / bus of the day, the TOC which operates this last train guarantees to provide either alternative transport to enable the passenger to complete his / her full ticketed journey that day or, in the event of severe disruption to services (for example as a result of exceptional weather conditions), to arrange overnight accommodation;

- if the passenger's arrival at his / her final ticketed destination is delayed by 30 to 59 minutes, a refund of 50% of the cost of the complete single journey will be payable. For delays of 60 minutes or more, the refund will be 100%." (The principle of *force majeure* is accepted here, i.e. compensation will not be payable for delays wholly outside the rail industry's control, such as vandalism - including bridge strikes by road vehicles - terrorism, extreme weather conditions etc.)

.10 Nevertheless the aim must be to operate trains on time so that connections are made. This, with the improved service frequencies proposed in this document, requires a much more robust and reliable rail infrastructure than currently exists on the UK rail network. That this is achievable, given the will, is shown by reference to countries such as Japan and Switzerland, where high-density services operate to very high punctuality standards.

4.2.3 Through ticketing

.1 As we have made clear already, rail should be seen as one element in a complete journey. Where a journey involves use of more than one mode of public transport, the concept of the 'seamless journey' demands a system of through ticketing between the various modes.

.2 The Wales and Borders area currently has over 60 rail - bus through ticketing schemes, so in this respect Wales compares favourably with most other areas of the UK. 25 of these schemes are 'PlusBus' and these cover all the major conurbations along the south Wales main line corridor and the north Wales coast. This means that, in theory at least, more than half the households in Wales have seamless ticketing available from their local bus stop to any rail destination (or other PlusBus destination) in Britain.

.3 Unfortunately there are major disincentives to the widespread use of PlusBus:

- lack of public awareness;
- the need to purchase tickets in advance at a station (or by other means), with no possibility of purchase on the bus;
- pricing and conditions applied by PlusBus: in some cases separate purchase of the bus fare to the station is cheaper than the PlusBus through ticket (which is priced on the basis of a day's unlimited bus travel in the specified zone);
- the large number of schemes in Wales has given rise to overlapping and confusion. Cardiff, Ruabon, Caerphilly and Aberdare each have two (or even three) through ticketing options, which is bewildering to users as each scheme has a different price and terms of validity;
- major shortcomings in the benefits of through ticketing arise from the complexity of the bus industry, and especially changes of operator when local authority supported services are re-tendered (for example, the consequent withdrawal of through ticketing to Usk, Raglan and Monmouth);
- confusion caused by ambiguity or lack of clarity on areas of validity and acceptance on tendered services.

.4 We believe that this situation is unacceptable, yet when viewed along with the successful Wales FlexiPass range of tickets, Wales should be seen as a leader in the realm of through tickets. Clear information, a sensible approach and protection of schemes by local authorities are essential. In addition, the SRA should work towards improving the system when awarding and reviewing franchises.

.5 There are various ways in which the present situation can be improved, including:-

- the development of ‘smart card’ technology so that payment for travel is made in the most efficient way possible. This is particularly important on buses, where the vast majority of vehicles are driver-only operated and delays caused by fare collection can cause the bus to become later and later after every stop;
- greater use of multi-modal passes, such as the London Travel card and Cardiff Capital Card: these should be available in every area of the country, for both peak and off-peak travel;
- ticket agencies should be appointed in every town or large village, so that complicated tickets can be sold before the passenger boards a driver-only bus;
- in the case of air / rail fares, the air fare could have an optional add-on covering rail (or bus) travel within a reasonable catchment area of the airport concerned.

4.2.4 Interchanges

.1 If people are to be persuaded to use public transport to make journeys involving one or more changes between services, it is vital that those changes are made as straightforward and reliable as possible. No longer can it be thought good enough to leave a passenger on a cold, deserted, unstaffed station with no access to information as to whether his / her onward connection is on time, late or cancelled, and if the latter, what alternative arrangements are being made. These considerations apply equally whether the forward connection is by another train or by a bus, and the latter includes cases where a temporary change to / from a bus is needed because of engineering works on the railway.

.2 So far as physical resources are concerned, at every interchange station there must of course be all the facilities which we see as necessary for all stations as a basic minimum. However, in addition interchanges must have on duty (throughout the period of the day when connections are possible there) a ‘despatcher’ who will be responsible for:-

- seeing that connections (rail or bus) are held in accordance with national policy;
- making arrangements for onward travel when connections are missed (thus relieving pressure on central control offices and providing local knowledge of, for example, road routes to stations to be served by replacement buses or taxis);
- providing reassurance to passengers about alternative arrangements in the event of disruption;
- providing reassurance to passengers about their personal security;
- supervising or providing basic refreshment facilities;
- supervising toilet facilities.

.3 It is also essential that all public transport drivers are provided with radios or mobile phones and are required as part of their duties to inform interchange points on their routes of any delays which might require connections to be held or alternative arrangements to be made.

4.3 Station facilities

.1 The aim here is to enhance existing facilities and set national / regional standards in order to encourage the use of rail transport. An important aspect of this is to improve the actual and perceived safety and security of passengers.

.2 Every railway station must have (in no particular order):-

- bilingual signs / information posters;
- a notice board reserved for (at least) a weekly update on planned disruptions to services (eg. for engineering work) and alternative arrangements which may be relevant to passengers at

that station. 'Relevant' means on that station's line of route and also affecting connecting services from interchanges on that line. The engineering work notice boards must be reserved for that specific use, and when there is no engineering work to be announced they should carry messages to that effect;

- covered waiting accommodation;
- real time train running information;
- a means by which a waiting passenger can speak directly to a member of staff when problems arise;
- an accessible public telephone adjacent to the station platform, because it will be many years before all rail passengers have mobile phones. In any case, the station may be situated where mobile phone coverage is poor or non-existent.

Moreover it is not sufficient to have information about a train being late or cancelled: often the passenger will need then to contact someone at the other end of his / her journey to let them know what is happening;

- secure cycle accommodation;
- adequate lighting (including on the station approach road / path and positioned such that all notice boards can be read);
- at unstaffed stations, CCTV supervision of platforms (as is the case at many stations in urban areas already) to protect passengers and facilities;
- current timetable posters;
- effective cleaning of the station.

.3 Interchange stations (rail / rail and rail / other modes (see Para. 4.2.4) must have:-

- a 'despatcher' on duty for the whole period of the day when connections are possible at that station;
- toilet facilities, including provision for the disabled;
- at least basic refreshment facilities, even if this amounts to no more than snacks / drinks machines: these are commonly provided even at local stations in such countries as Switzerland;

These facilities must be available throughout the period in which the train service is operating.

.4 In addition, stations of appropriate importance must have:-

- a ticket and enquiry office;
- ticket machines (to relieve pressure on ticket windows);
- a secure car park;
- a higher standard of refreshment facilities;
- enhanced waiting accommodation (eg heated and with a higher standard of seating than at unstaffed stations).

5. Integration of services: "the seamless journey"

5.1.Introduction

.1 In this section, we start from the premise that if car users in significant numbers are to be persuaded to use any form of public transport, where there is more than one component part of a journey the parts must dovetail as much as possible.

Otherwise they will not be seen as a reasonable alternative to a door-to-door car journey.

.2 People in Wales - both locals and visitors - receive a very poor deal in this respect at present. For example, inter-availability of rail and bus tickets is much more developed in London and the Passenger Transport Executive areas of England and Scotland. Moreover, other countries, such as the Netherlands, have far better systems of connections, not only between rail services, but between rail and bus.

.3 We believe that a great deal could be done here at little cost if the political will existed. For example, the introduction of suitable ticketing should be enforced, coupled with any necessary legislation (which might be within the Assembly's powers) to require the compliance of bus companies. In addition, the rewriting of existing timetables to improve connections is vital. There are difficulties, given that almost all public transport companies are privately owned. However, incentives might be offered to secure co-operation, and where local authority or Assembly subsidies are involved contractual obligations can be laid down. As a last resort, legislation might be needed to ensure that the interests of the travelling public are given absolute priority.

5.2. Connectional policies

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.8 The current regulatory regime under which the Train Operating Companies operate imposes financial penalties on them when their trains run late. Although at first sight this may seem to work in passengers’ interests, in fact it provides an incentive not to hold connecting services, especially where the onward connection is provided by a different company from that whose service has been delayed. A solution to this must be found - for example that any penalty is paid wholly by the late-running company rather than by the company which holds a connecting service. We recognise that the needs of people already on trains or waiting along the route are very important, but the present system needs to give greater attention to the needs of passengers trying to connect into a service.

.9 Therefore we propose a revised policy:-

“*Dispatchers must ensure that all passengers wishing to make a connection have been physically able to do so before they allow the connecting train or bus to leave

*All trains will wait up to five minutes for late-running connecting services. They will not normally be held for longer than this because of inconvenience to passengers already on board or waiting at stations further along the route.

Exceptions may be made where the connecting train is the last service of the day on a particular route. However, every effort will be made to avoid delaying the last train of the day by more than 20 minutes by providing alternative transport for passengers who need to connect into that service.

*At all times of the day, every effort will be made to enable passengers to complete their intended journeys to their final destinations. This does not mean to the final rail station, but to the final ticketed destination. Where necessary, an alternative mode of transport will be provided at the TOC’s expense to enable the complete ticketed journey to be completed as punctually as possible.

*If as a result of a connection not being made, a passenger misses his / her last train / bus of the day, the TOC which operates this last train guarantees to provide either alternative transport to enable the passenger to complete his / her full ticketed journey that day or, in the event of severe disruption to services (for example as a result of exceptional weather conditions), to arrange overnight accommodation.

*If the passenger's arrival at his / her final ticketed destination is delayed by 30 to 59 minutes, a refund of 50% of the cost of the complete single journey will be payable. For delays of 60 minutes or more, the refund will be 100%." (The principle of *force majeure* is accepted here, i.e. compensation will not be payable for delays wholly outside the rail industry's control, such as vandalism - including bridge strikes by road vehicles - terrorism, extreme weather conditions etc.)

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.3 Unfortunately there are major disincentives to the widespread use of PlusBus:

- lack of public awareness;
- the need to purchase tickets in advance at a station (or by other means), with no possibility of purchase on the bus;
- pricing and conditions applied by PlusBus: in some cases separate purchase of the bus fare to the station is cheaper than the PlusBus through ticket (which is priced on the basis of a day's unlimited bus travel in the specified zone);
- the large number of schemes in Wales has given rise to overlapping and confusion. Cardiff, Ruabon, Caerphilly and Aberdare each have two (or even three) through ticketing options, which is bewildering to users as each scheme has a different price and terms of validity;

- major shortcomings in the benefits of through ticketing arise from the complexity of the bus industry, and especially changes of operator when local authority supported services are re-tendered;
- confusion caused by ambiguity or lack of clarity on areas of validity and acceptance on tendered services.

.4 We believe that this situation is unacceptable, yet when viewed along with the successful Wales FlexiPass range of tickets, Wales should be seen as a leader in the realm of through tickets. Clear information, a sensible approach and protection of schemes by local authorities are essential. In addition, the Welsh Government and the Department for Transport should work towards improving the system when awarding and reviewing franchises.

.5 There are various ways in which the present situation can be improved, including:-

- *the development of 'smart card' technology throughout the UK so that payment for travel is made in the most efficient way possible. This is particularly important on buses, where the vast majority of vehicles are driver-only operated and delays caused by fare collection can cause the bus to become later and later after every stop;
- in the case of air / rail fares, the air fare could have an optional add-on covering rail (or bus) travel within a reasonable catchment area of the airport concerned.

5.4. Interchanges

[.1] If people are to be persuaded to use public transport to make journeys involving one or more changes between services, it is vital that those changes are made as straightforward and reliable as possible. No longer can it be thought good enough to leave a passenger on a cold, deserted, unstaffed station with no access to information as to whether his/her onward connection is on time, late or cancelled, and if the latter, what alternative arrangements are being made. These considerations apply equally whether the forward connection is by another train or by bus, and the latter includes cases where a temporary change to/from a bus is needed because of engineering works on the railway.

[.2] So far as physical resources are concerned, at every interchange station there must be, as far as possible, all the basic, minimum facilities which we see as necessary for all stations. However, in addition, interchanges must have on duty (throughout the period of the day when connections are possible there) a 'dispatcher' who will be responsible for:

- seeing that connections (rail or bus) are held in accordance with national policy;
- making arrangements for onward travel when connections are missed, thus

relieving pressure on central control offices and providing local knowledge of, for example, road routes to stations to be served by replacement buses or taxis;

- providing reassurance to passengers about alternative arrangements in the event of disruption;
- providing reassurance to passengers about their personal security;
- supervising or providing basic refreshment facilities;
- supervising toilet facilities.

[.3] It is also essential that all train conductors and bus drivers are provided with radios or mobile phones and are required as part of their duties to inform interchange points on their routes of any delays which might require connections to be held or alternative arrangements to be made.

6. Station facilities

6.1 Our aim here is to press for the enhancement of existing facilities and set national/regional standards in order to encourage the use of rail transport. An important aspect of this is to improve the actual and perceived safety and security of passengers.

6.2 Therefore, every railway station must have (not necessarily in order of importance):

- In Wales, bilingual signs and information posters.
- Two notice boards, one for short-term and one for longer-term warnings and details of planned disruption of services (e.g. for engineering work) and alternative arrangements which may be relevant to passengers at that station. `Relevant` means on that station`s line of route and also affecting connecting services from interchanges on that line. The engineering work notice boards must be reserved for that specific use, and when there is no engineering work to be announced, they should carry messages to that effect.
- An appropriate size of covered waiting accommodation.
- Real-time train running information.
- A means by which a waiting passenger can speak directly to a member of staff when problems arise.
- An accessible public telephone adjacent to the station platform, because some passengers will not have mobile phones (or may have problems with them). This is important if passengers wish to contact someone about their arrival time or changed travel plans.
- Secure cycle accommodation.
- Adequate lighting (including on the station approach road/path and

positioned such that all notice boards can be read).

- At least at unstaffed stations, CCTV supervision of platforms (as is the case at many stations in urban areas already) to protect passengers and facilities.
- Current timetable posters.
- Effective cleaning of the station.
- Appropriate access facilities for disabled people.

6.3 Interchange stations (rail/rail or rail & other modes) must have all of the above and:

- a `dispatcher` (see 5.4.[.2] above) on duty for the whole period of the day when connections are possible at that station;
- clear announcements of the necessity to change and for which main destinations, together with clear signs directing passengers to connecting bus services;
- toilet facilities, including provision for the disabled;
- at least basic refreshment facilities, even if only a snacks/drink machine (commonly provided even at local stations in such countries as Switzerland).

All of these facilities must be available throughout the period in which the train service is operating.

A list of rail/ rail interchange stations where these facilities should be provided is given in Appendix 1

6.4 In addition, stations of appropriate importance must have:

- a ticket and enquiry office;
- ticket machines (to relieve pressure on ticket windows), both for the immediate sale of tickets and the collection of tickets pre-ordered on line
- a secure car park;
- a higher standard of refreshment facilities than specified above for interchange stations;
- enhanced waiting accommodation, for example, a heated room and a higher standard of seating than at unstaffed stations.