

Petition – Reopen Carno Station

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 17 Hydref 2017
Petitions Committee | 17 October 2017

Research Briefing:

Petition number: P-05-780

Petition title: Reopen Carno Station

Petition text: We, the undersigned, welcome the development of a Business Case for the re-opening of Carno station, following Carno Station Action Group's petition to the Assembly 10 years ago. We note that the revised Business Case demonstrates a ratio of benefits to costs of 1.65 and that the stopping of most trains at Carno is compatible with the existing enhanced timetable. Carno is a relatively remote community on the longest stretch of railway without an intermediate station in the whole of Wales and a station here would open up dramatically improved, sustainable access to jobs and services. We therefore call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to reopen Carno station within a 5 year timescale.

Background

The former Carno railway station in Powys, on the Cambrian Line between Shrewsbury and Aberystwyth, closed in the 1960s. Carno Station Action Group was established in 2002 as a sub-committee of Carno Community Council to campaign for the station to be reopened. The history of the campaign is summarised on the [group's website](#).

Rail infrastructure investment is not devolved and the main statutory powers and duties rest with the Secretary of State for Transport. However, the Welsh Government has powers under the *Railways Act 2005* ('the 2005 Act') to invest in rail infrastructure, including stations.

The Cabinet Secretary's letter to the Chair regarding this petition highlights the fact that "the Welsh Government receives no funding from the UK Government for new rail infrastructure through its core block grant".

Welsh Government action

The Welsh Government's [National Transport Finance Plan](#) (NFTP) commits to "develop assessment criteria and, using those criteria, a prioritised list of new station proposals for

further consideration [in relation to securing funding from the rail industry]”. Carno station is listed in the NTFP as a station that will be assessed as part of this process (NTFP Reference RI10).

The Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure [wrote to all Assembly Members on 26 April 2017](#) (PDF 229KB) to provide an update on:

- the Welsh Government’s three-stage approach for prioritising proposals for new railway stations in Wales; and
- A prioritised list of stations which will be taken forward for further assessment under stages 2 and 3.

Following a question to the First Minister on the [process for assessing proposals for new railway stations](#) on 16 May 2017, the Cabinet Secretary wrote to all Assembly Members [with a further update](#) on the 6 June 2017 which stated:

The regional stations identified for further [stage 2] assessment were the ones that scored the highest across all the...criteria tested.

While Carno station was not included on the Cabinet Secretary’s prioritised list, Bow Street Station in Ceredigion was due to progress. However, in July 2017 the [Department for Transport \(DfT\) announced](#) nearly £4 million towards the development of Bow Street.

The Cabinet Secretary’s letter to the Chair on this petition says:

In Mid Wales, Bow Street was due to be progressed under this process. However, with the success of the bid for development funding (under the Department for Transport’s New Station Fund), it will no longer be taken forward under the assessment process..... This development has allowed me to include Carno in the current round of stage 2 assessment. This involves obtaining information from Network Rail on deliverability and operational considerations on the prioritised stations. In addition, a standard assessment model is being run to assess the anticipated demand at the proposed stations.

I have asked my officials to engage with the Carno Station Action Group as this stage 2 process progresses.

National Assembly for Wales action

As the petition suggests, a previous petition calling for Carno Station to be reopened was considered in 2007 by the Petitions Committee in the Third Assembly.

As part of that Committee’s consideration the petition was referred to the then Enterprise and Learning Committee, which undertook a short inquiry. While not expressly recommending that the station be reopened, the Committee asked that the Welsh Government “provide support to the Carno Station Action Group in developing and submitting a formal business case for such a station”. The response from the then Deputy First Minister and Minister for the Economy and Transport, Ieuan Wyn Jones, considered that the issue was best taken forward through TraCC, the then Mid-Wales Regional Transport Consortium.

In closing that petition, the then Chair of the Committee wrote to the petitioners in December 2007 to say:

The Committee agreed with the response from the Minister that the best way forward for the community would be:

- future working with TRaCC (Trafnidiaeth Canolbarth Cymru) to ensure that that the business case for the station would meet technical criteria; and
- inclusion as a priority in the forthcoming regional transport plan.

The proposal to reopen the station was raised periodically through the Fourth Assembly before the submission of this petition in the current Assembly.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.