

## **Enterprise and Learning Committee**

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### **Rail Programme in Wales**

#### **Network Rail in Wales**

Network Rail welcomes the opportunity to update the Enterprise and Learning Committee on its operations in Wales.

Network Rail is responsible for 678 route miles of track in Wales and owns 220 stations (with Fishguard Harbour owned by Stena Line).

Over 1100 trains run in Wales every day. In South Wales rail freight is still significant with around 15% of the UK's freight tonnage being generated along the South Wales mainline.

Performance and reliability across Wales has seen a solid improvement in recent years, with significant reductions in the numbers of delays.

Performance is a complex function of the inter-relationship of infrastructure performance, rolling stock performance and operations. With respect to infrastructure, as a result of the temporary speed restriction reduction strategy and continuing volumes of track renewals, delays relating to track condition have fallen significantly.

In addition, the opening in 2009 of the Integrated Control Centre in Cardiff, designed around optimising communications flows between Network Rail and train operating companies (TOCs), has helped to improve incident management across the Welsh network for the benefit of passengers.

Arriva Trains Wales (ATW) Public Performance Measure (PPM) Moving Annual Average (MAA), as of the beginning of December, was 94.6% which was on target despite adverse weather conditions. This places ATW as one of the best performing TOCs in Britain.

#### **Investing in Future Growth**

With demand for services in Wales forecast to grow significantly, with a possible doubling over the next 30 years, Network Rail's challenge is to continue investing to maintain reliable links and to develop capacity on the key routes within Wales and those connecting England and Wales.

Improving the rail network is vital to the sustainable growth of the Welsh economy. Rail provides faster, more frequent, reliable and environmentally sustainable journeys. Better rail links create better connections between people and jobs and bigger customer bases for companies selling products and services.

Rail is also the most environmentally friendly mode of mass transport. For example, the average carbon dioxide emissions for a passenger rail journey is about half that of an equivalent car journey and about one-quarter of an equivalent journey by air. Rail freight produces a 74% reduction in carbon emissions over road freight

A number of schemes are planned, already underway or have been recently completed to relieve current capacity issues and deliver improved infrastructure reliability, performance, as well as improved connectivity, including:

- **South Wales Signalling Renewal** – a major scheme, costing circa £450m, to renew the signalling on the South Wales Main Line from Severn Tunnel to Swansea to improve the performance, safety and cost efficiency. The scheme is being phased over 10 years to minimise disruption to the passengers – Port Talbot East was completed in 2007, this will be followed with Newport, Cardiff and Port Talbot West.
  - **Cardiff Area Signalling Renewal & Enhancements** – scheduled completion 2015, benefits all service groups running through the Cardiff area.

The Government White Paper – Delivering a Sustainable Railway, forecasted that the number of journeys into the centre of Cardiff during the three hour morning peak period will increase to 9,400 by the end of the current regulatory control period (CP4) in 2014.

To accommodate the extra demand a Department for Transport (DfT) and Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) funded enhancement package is being aligned with Network Rail's re-signalling project to significantly increase operational capacity along the Valley Lines core route between Cardiff Queen Street and Cogan Junction. New platforms will be provided at Cardiff Queen Street, Cardiff Central as well as new turnback facilities at Caerphilly and Barry.

- **Newport Area Signalling Renewal** – scheduled completion Spring 2011, benefits all service groups running through the Newport area. As part of the re-signalling scheme work has already been completed on a new track layout in the Severn Tunnel Junction Station area to deliver operational benefits to through services. A derelict platform at the station has also been restored to use.
- **South Wales Integrated Control Centre (ICC)** – opened in 2009, the ICC is a £16.5m state of the art signalling and control centre housing Network Rail and ATW staff in an eco-friendly building. The new centre is designed to share real-time information and

further integrate decision-making procedures, so that the operation of the railway is more efficient and delays are minimised

- **European Rail Traffic Management System (ERTMS) Cambrian Line** – a major Network Rail scheme to improve the Cambrian Line with one of the world's most advanced signalling technologies. ERTMS is now commissioned on the section between Pwllheli and Harlech – the first use of this technology anywhere in Britain.

The full route is scheduled for completion in Spring 2011. The project is part of a wider vision to improve the Cambrian Line and is aligned with a WAG funded scheme to install new passing loops which will enable a more frequent service along the line.

- **Shrewsbury Station Platform 3 Signalling Re-Instatement** – completed in July 2010. The new infrastructure benefits services from the Cambrian Line and provides the facility for increased traffic through the station area which allows for any future growth in traffic.
- **Llanfihangel IBS** - implementation of an Intermediate Block Signal (IBS) between Abergavenny and Hereford delivering capacity improvements along the line.
- **Reading Station Area Redevelopment** – Christmas 2010 saw first phase of a six-year project to upgrade the railway in the Reading area. The scheme will address a capacity and performance pinch-point and will benefit services between Wales and London.

### **Electrification of the Great Western Main Line (GWML)**

The national Network RUS -Electrification recommended two main-line schemes as having a satisfactory business case, namely GWML and the Midland Main Line. In July 2009 the previous Government announced the intention to electrify the GWML from London Paddington to Swansea.

Network Rail was commissioned to develop the plan for electrification and we are currently funded to undertake the initial feasibility and cost estimate study. The decision on the funding of the project to completion is expected to be made by the UK Government shortly.

### **Station Schemes**

- **Newport Station** – the redeveloped station at Newport, jointly funded by Network Rail and WAG was opened to passengers in September 2010. Passengers at the station now have improved accessibility, with

step free access from both terminals onto all the platforms. The station also benefits from increased and improved parking facilities.

The new, larger station facilities will be better placed to meet the expected growth in passengers in the coming years.

- **Swansea Station** – a package of improvements at Swansea will see a larger concourse area with better and more accessible passenger facilities, as well as new waiting shelters, booking office and digital information boards. The station environment will also be significantly improved with refurbished canopies and modernised fittings that will blend in with existing architecture.

The scheme is utilising a number of funding streams, including National Stations Improvement Programme (NSIP), WAG and Network Rail renewals.

- **Access for All** – the Access for All Programme is a Department of Transport (DfT) funded project to address the issues faced by disabled passengers using railway stations in Great Britain. Within Wales, we are developing and delivering a number of schemes to provide step-free access at stations, including Bridgend, Abergavenny, Wrexham General, Neath, Prestatyn and Severn Tunnel Junction.
- **National Stations Improvement Programme (NSIP)** - the National Stations Improvement Programme is a DfT backed programme to deliver improvements to 150 medium sized stations in England and Wales. Work is planned for a number of stations across Wales, including Carmarthen, Pontypridd, Llandudno and Aberystwyth. Additionally WAG has accessed significant European funding with which it is delivering further station improvements across Wales.

### **Welsh Assembly Government Forward Rail Programme**

Network Rail enjoys a close working relationship with the WAG through the Transport Wales Rail Team and has successfully delivered a wide ranging portfolio of WAG funded enhancement schemes including the reopening of the Vale of Glamorgan Line to passenger trains, frequency enhancement between Pontypridd and Merthyr Tydfil and platform lengthening across the South Wales Valleys network.

The Wales Route Utilisation Strategy (RUS), published by Network Rail, sets out the strategic vision for the future of the rail network in Wales. The RUS was developed following a now well established process, including extensive stakeholder involvement, with the policy goals of WAG articulated in the document “One Wales: Connecting the Nation” forming a key input. Work started on the RUS in November 2006, with the final document published in November 2008

The individual plans for the key rail corridors set out in WAG's National Transport Plan take forward the recommendations of the Wales RUS, to timescales defined by WAG.

Network Rail continues to develop the individual rail schemes on the north-south corridor, and the east-west corridors in south, mid and north Wales identified within the WAG's NTP for the plan period to 2014.

Network Rail has developed an approach to managing investment schemes which is set out in the Guide to Railway Investment Projects (GRIP). GRIP recognises that in comparison with other industries there are significant additional complexities with working on an operating rail network.

The GRIP process covers the investment lifecycle from inception through to the post-implementation realisation of benefits and is designed to minimise and mitigate the risks associated with delivering projects on an operational railway.

WAG funded railway enhancement schemes currently in development by Network Rail include:

- Gowerton Redoubling - Currently in GRIP 4 (Single option selection)
- Taff / Rhondda Turnback - GRIP 5 (Detailed design)
- Maesteg Frequency Enhancement - GRIP 3 (Option selection)
- Energlyn Station - GRIP 4 (Single option selection)
- Tir Phil - GRIP 4 (Single option selection)
- Ebbw Vale Extension - GRIP 4 (Single option selection)
- Ebbw Vale Branch Re-Doubling - GRIP 3 (Option selection)
- North-South Wales Journey Improvements - GRIP 3 (Option selection)
- Aberdare - Hirwaun passenger line re-opening - GRIP 2 (Pre-feasibility)
- Llangefni - Gaerwen (Amlwch branch re-opening)- GRIP 1 (Output definition)

## **Planning Ahead**

Funding and planning for the railway is currently undertaken in five year periods, known as control periods, with all aspects of Network Rail's plans for that period reviewed by the Office of Rail Regulation.

We are currently in Control Period 4 (April 2009 to March 2014), and we are delivering a programme to improve performance and safety as well as increasing capacity on some of the most crowded parts of the network.

However beyond CP4, demand for rail, both passenger and freight, will continue to grow significantly and the existing network will not be able to accommodate the forecast levels of growth. While it is recognised that the recent economic dip has had some effect on demand in the short term, the underlying drivers behind the 40% growth in passenger demand and 60% growth in freight over the last decade will remain in the longer term. It is therefore vital that investment in the railway continues to accommodate the ongoing growth in passenger numbers and demand to move goods by rail.

Network Rail is currently planning for CP5 and beyond. We will be publishing an Initial Strategic Business Plan (ISBP) for 2014 -2019 (CP5) in September 2011. This will set out the industry's emerging plans for operating, maintaining, renewing and developing the rail network in future, with a focus on 2014 - 2019 but with high level projections over the longer term.

Alongside this, Network Rail is working together with the rest of the rail industry to develop proposals for the future of the rail network based on a collective vision for the future on its role, and the outputs needed from the industry as a result. The rail industry's Planning Ahead documents set out a vision for the future to meet the challenge of meeting growing demand while also further driving up safety and punctuality, improving customers' experience and satisfaction and continuing to reduce costs.

Network Rail has met with WAG to discuss options for Wales in the period 2014-19 and we will be developing plans further for inclusion in the ISBP.

Given the congestion apparent on many parts of the rail network, and the continuing growth in passenger and freight demand, investment in rail will clearly be key in supporting the Welsh economy in future. Building on the schemes that have been delivered or are in the planning stages (as set out above), well-targeted improvements in connectivity will make a substantial contribution to sustainable economic growth, and should be a priority alongside tackling congestion on existing networks.

Network Rail is also committed to working with the rest of the industry to develop the railway as cost-efficiently as possible and get the best possible return for every pound spent.

In this context, Network Rail is already committed to reducing costs by 22% between 2009 and 2014 nationally (on top of the 27% reduction already delivered between 2004 and 2009).

Notwithstanding these savings, we recognise the imperative to further improve value for money and affordability across the industry based on the agenda set out in Sir Roy McNulty's interim Value for Money study, for example, through improved partnership working to reduce whole- industry costs.