



Adroddiad

Report

gan/by **Stuart B Wild** MRTPI MCMI

Arolygydd penodwyd gan Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol Cymru

an Inspector appointed by the National
Assembly for Wales

Dyddiad/Date

TRANSPORT AND WORKS, WALES

TRANSPORT, WALES

The Pontypool and Blaenavon (Phase 1) Railway Order 2006

Cyf ffeil/File ref: A- -PAA-08-04-149

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Site : The Pontypool and Blaenavon Railway

- The application has been made to the National Assembly for Wales, in accordance with the Transport and Works (Applications and Objections Procedure) (England and Wales) Rules 2000 made under sections 6, 6A, 7 and 10 of the Transport and Works Act 1992, for an Order under sections 1 and 5 of the 1992 Act.
- The application for the Order is made by the Pontypool and Blaenavon Railway Company (1983) Limited.

Summary of Recommendation: I recommend that the Order be made.

Procedural Matters

1. I have been asked to provide an appraisal of this proposed Order. I note that the provisions of the Order have been closely scrutinised by numerous legal representatives of the parties involved and therefore I make no comment on the legal content of the Order and the references to various statutory documents. I shall limit my appraisal to the effects of the provisions of the Order. Since there are no physical works proposed by the Order I have not made a specific inspection of the site and its surroundings, although as a result of my work with the Planning Inspectorate I have been in the area relatively recently and am aware of the general location of the railway and other local features.

The Order

2. In effect the provisions of the Order would transfer the powers to run and maintain the length of existing railway to the Pontypool and Blaenavon Railway Company (1983) Ltd. It does not involve powers to carry out any physical works of any kind. If extensions of the railway are proposed in the future then further Orders would normally be necessary.

The Site and Surroundings

3. The railway as defined in the Order is the remaining section of a number of former railway lines which were included within the national railway network serving this area. For reasons of history the railway is described as two portions, one of 2,978 metres in length authorised by section 5 of the Brynmawr and Blaenavon Railway Act 1866, and one of 379 metres in length authorised by section 4 of the London & North Western Railway (Wales & c.) Act 1874. These two portions make an end on junction and extend from the southern terminus of the railway to the northern terminus at Whistle Road Bridge.
4. The railway lies in close proximity to the Big Pit National Coal Museum and the Blaenafon Industrial Landscape – World Heritage Site.

Appraisal

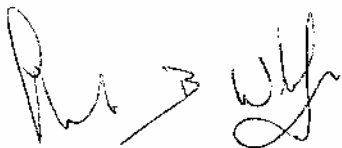
5. Normally railways are involved with the transport of passengers and freight and proposals for an Order might properly be considered under transport policies. However in this case it appears to me that the railway is of local significance and of a relatively short length. I understand that limited services have existed on part of the railway for a number of years. The Order would transfer the appropriate powers to the Railway Company and enable the appropriate planning of future services and facilities to be extended to the whole length of the existing railway. I doubt that in its present form it would have any significant role in transport policy. However it is physically closely linked to the Big Pit Museum. It appears to

me that the main role of the railway is as a tourist facility and should be considered in that context.

6. In Planning Policy Wales Chapter 11 on Tourism, Sport and Recreation section 11.1.2 sets out the objectives. These are to encourage sustainable tourism in Wales, maximising its economic and employment benefits, promoting tourism in all seasons, and encouraging its development in non-traditional destinations, while safeguarding the environment, and the interests of local communities; and to manage change in the tourism sector in ways which respect the integrity of the natural, built and cultural environment to provide for economic growth, employment and environmental conservation.
7. This is broadly compatible with the objectives set out in section 6.1 for Conserving the Historic Environment, particularly the first objective which includes recognising the contribution of the historic environment to economic vitality and culture, civic pride and the quality of life, and its importance as a resource for future generations.
8. Increased passenger use of the railway would provide an additional element to the visitor experience at Blaenavon and would be complimentary to the Big Pit Museum. Such an additional attraction would, in my view, be likely to increase the number of visitors to the area. This would have benefits to the appreciation of the historical significance of the area and to the local economy. As such the making of the Order would be in accord with the policy objectives of the appropriate sections of Planning Policy Wales, particularly promoting tourism in all seasons, and encouraging its development in non-traditional destinations, while safeguarding the environment, and the interests of local communities.
9. I understand that the Order has been advertised in the normal way and that no objections have been received. In which case I can see no reason why the Order should not be made.

Recommendation

10. I recommend that The Pontypool and Blaenavon (Phase 1) Railway Order 2006 be made.



Inspector