

ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Date: Wednesday 9 May 2001
Time: 2.00 to 5.00 pm
Venue: Committee Room 2, National Assembly Building

POLICY REVIEW: VISION AND QUALITY STANDARDS

Purpose

1. To invite the committee to agree recommendations aimed at driving up the quality of public transport in Wales.

Background

2. On 7 March the committee agreed priorities for the remainder of the review, namely:
- identifying quality standards for public transport enabling improvements to be measured;
 - assessing the potential of existing organisational structures to deliver such improvements;
 - analysing alternative regional organisational structures, before making any recommendations on changes needed to the existing structures.
3. Papers on each of the above will be discussed on 9 May, 23 May and 13 June respectively. The aim is that the committee considers a draft report and recommendations on 27 June, with a final draft issuing for public consultation over the summer recess.

Consideration

4. **Annex A** contains a **report from the Expert Adviser** setting out a vision for public transport in Wales, and suggesting means of achieving the vision through the development of quality standards. **Annex B** (prepared by officials but not representing the Assembly Government's views) sets out **existing developments** to achieve the vision set out in the recently published transport framework.

5. Both these reports indicate the challenges that are being faced in improving public transport and their complexities including:

- a regional dimension involving alleviating traffic congestion in some areas notably the South and North East;
- accessibility both in urban and rural areas with around 30% households not having cars;
- a perception of poor public transport services which means that people who have cars do not use a bus or train;
- a need for targeted investment to achieve improvements in a cost effective way.

6. Elements which could bring about improvements include:

- Land Use Planning policies are critical and new developments should build public transport in from the beginning;
- Building in accessibility in all developments as the norm. (Accessibility and safety in their widest sense including accessibility to rolling stock for people with disabilities, real time information and stations);
- Piloting "all mode" information centres across Wales;
- Developing a quality code or "kite mark" for bus services in Wales;
- Park and Ride initiatives and accessible routes to interchanges should be developed so that they contribute specifically to integrated transport;
- Promoting bus priority and guided bus measures, and enforcing parking regulations and other traffic management issues to ensure increasing traffic congestion does not prevent improved bus performance;
- Considering light rail options based on study in Cardiff Bay;
- Ensuring incremental improvement in rail services in the context of Wales and Borders Franchise;
- Ensuring that community transport is developed in light of recommendations of Transport Forum review, including considering the development of the role of taxis;
- Considering School Transport as an integral part of transport provision;
- Use of new technology, Smart cards, buses triggering traffic lights, real time information and through ticketing.

Recommendations

7. It is suggested that the following recommendations be included in the draft report that issues for public consultation:

- Local Authorities should prepare regional public transport strategies by April 2003 reflecting bus strategies (which are a statutory requirement) and include developments

on rail and community transport. These should be prepared on a regional basis to reflect travel patterns insofar as possible;

- Strategies should guide decisions on funding made by the National Assembly and such investment should be targeted alongside local authorities' own investment to achieve maximum effect. Additional expenditure on transport would be justified only on this basis and where results can be monitored and evaluated.

Conclusion

8. Members are invited to discuss the reports attached and agree to the recommendations at paragraph 7 above.

Committee Secretariat

May 2001

ANNEX A

THE VISION FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORT IN WALES

(REPORT FROM EXPERT ADVISER)

Purpose of this report

1. From the basis of evidence presented, visits undertaken, and Committee discussions to date, to set out the background to public transport provision in Wales, and, thereafter, to concentrate on three areas:-

- A public transport vision for Wales - what is it we want?
- Quality issues and the way forward - how do we achieve it?
- Monitoring and evaluation -how can we feel confident we get what we expect?

Introduction

2. Public transport (PT), in all its aspects and modes, covers a large area of activity, level and quality of service, disparity between modes and provision, and geographical differences. It was inevitable that Committee's Review needed to concentrate on key outcomes and the "big picture", and recognise Assembly's policy development and enabling role, rather than the fine detail of implementation. Becoming "bogged down" in "how", can divert attention from "what"!

3. Therefore, this Review concentrates upon the medium to long term vision, quality standards, esteem of PT, delivery mechanisms, and monitoring issues. Organisational structures will be the subject of a paper to the next Committee meeting.

4. This is deemed to be right, because although prudence demands proposals that are well researched and justified, no amount of analysis and evaluation actually delivers service to the public "on the ground"! The way forward lies in a comprehensive and coherent vision for Welsh public transport, with evaluated and measured phases to "get there" in a cost effective and socially inclusive way, via organisational arrangements that are fit for purpose.

What is Our Base?

5. Fewer than one in ten Welsh trips use PT – in 1999, 8% of all trips (14% in Cardiff). This is a very low base, compared to Europe and even some other parts of the UK. Considerable evidence has been amassed by Committee through written submissions, presentations, commissioned research and fact finding visits.

6. From all this information, some fundamental issues have emerged, consideration of which can form the basis of the Review's outcomes.

7. PT can be regarded as a broad spectrum, ranging from total reliance on the car at one side, to suburban "heavy rail" mass movement of commuters on the other. Most current provision in Wales is represented on parts of this spectrum, but provision is incomplete, patchy in places, and of variable consistency, reliability and quality.

8. From the evidence presented, there are clear and recognisable gaps in PT provision apparent. The issues that must be addressed are:-

- How to plug the gap between reliance on the car and conventional buses? This covers the whole generic area of community transport.
- How can we better integrate walking and cycling into PT?
- How can we tackle social exclusion, and the existence of "transport deserts"?
- How do we ensure Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compatibility in all we do?
- How do we address competition between local bus services and school transport for the same vehicles?
- How can intermodal interchange be improved and developed?

- How can PT quality be driven up? This is the "esteem" issue
- What happens when conventional buses run out of road capacity, as they will? This is the "second generation" road based PT issue.
- What role have alternatives to the bus (guided bus and Light Rapid Transit (LRT)) to play in Wales?
- How do we ensure users and potential users are better informed, advised and encouraged? This is the "confidence" factor.
- How do encourage agents to use the existing toolbox? This is a part implementation and part interaction with other traffic controls issue (particularly controls on cars and parking policy). Is there need for incentives?
- Are existing enforcement mechanisms adequate?

The PT Vision for Wales

9. This section covers problems established and/or represented, what the broad medium to long term policy objectives could be, and indicative targets that may be appropriate to support those objectives.

10. Evidence has been presented to Committee, and discussed by Committee, about gaps in current service provision, and what presenters felt ought to be done about them. Evidence was tabled about inhibitions and obstacles to new and innovative service provision.

11. To a large degree, these relate to decades of underfunding of PT, particularly when compared, as pointed out by several presenters, to Continental Europe; and, in the UK, serious lack of co-ordination between modes resulting from national legislation.

12. A recurrent theme, during evidence taking, was the social exclusion in many communities, and the lack of choice leading to enforced use of the car, often by poorer communities. It was made clear that social exclusion and disadvantage was not a rural versus urban issue, but many "PT-less" communities suffered, both in isolated rural, and urban fringe, circumstances. The increasing problem of urban congestion was cited as a disincentive to PT usage and development, leading to loss of confidence in PT reliability and convenience. Considerable intervention, it was argued, would be necessary to "advantage" multi-occupancy vehicles. Many argued rail expansion as a part solution.

13. The debate now moves from assessment of problems, which are well chronicled, to the vision for the future, and how it can be achieved. In broad policy terms, a **PT vision for Wales** should:-

- Reduce dependency on the car
- Massively expand the generic sector of community transport
- Target those presently without choice

- Deliver accessibility for all, irrespective of location, by appropriate modes, or combination of modes
- Provide better links and interchange with all other modes, not forgetting walking and cycling
- Provide better information to potential and actual users by (prior to trip) IT, and (during trip) by "real time" passenger information
- Provide a new deal / new concept for school transport
- Achieve greater integration with cycling and walking and other public transport
- Increasingly provide "second generation" alternatives to conventional buses operating conventionally

14. Consideration turns to how the 1 in 10 who uses public transport now, can be converted, over time, to 2, 3, or 4 out of 10. A realistic 10 year target could be to achieve 4 out of 10, embracing higher proportions in inner urban areas, but recognising lower percentages in sparsely populated rural areas. Such a target is ambitious in a Wales or UK context, but, as we have found on the visits, it would be modest in terms of Continental Europe.

15. To achieve these broad aims, realistic targets should be set, against which to assess progress. The detail of targets will be a matter for the Executive to develop and refine, but we believe **realistic and indicative targets** could be:-

- Traffic Management, to assist buses, on every significant route in Wales by 2005. All routes to be reviewed and revised every 5 years (based upon evidence in Local Transport Plan (LTP) and Transport Grant (TG) programmes about the success of corridor improvements in attracting ridership)
- PT ridership to be doubled by 2006, and doubled again by 2011 (representing a 10 year target of 4 trips out of 10 on public transport)
- By 2006, a target of 5 guided busways in Wales to be built or committed. By 2011, 10 guideways to be in place and 1 LRT system (based upon evidence that urban congestion will seriously affect conventional buses in most Welsh urban areas in the 0-10 year time frame)
- The community transport sector capacity to be doubled by 2003, and doubled again by 2007 (based upon evidence of the capability of this sector and the clear evidence of suppressed demand based upon current legislative limitations)
- By 2005, every school pupil in Wales to be subject to a Safe Route to School (SRS) scheme, or carried on new form school transport (based upon evidence that, at times of the day, local bus services and school transport are competing for the same resources. Also, the clear need to drive up standards of school transport for its own sake)
- By 2006, a coherent and co-ordinated PT interchange regime to be in place in each City / major town in Wales, and in all towns by 2011. (Most large Welsh towns have physically separated bus and train stations, a major inhibition to coherent interchange)
- By 2003, an "all mode" information centre ("Mobility Centre"?) to be piloted. Provision of 5 mobility centres by 2006 and 10 by 2009 (co-ordinated PT information is in its infancy)

in Wales, and needs to be guided/nurtured by National Assembly (NAfW) policy)

- Regional "delivery platforms" for NAfW's forward PT policy aims and objectives to be in place by 2004, initially based upon existing, but strengthened, regional consortia, but investigating alternatives. (Evidence and visits demonstrated the possibilities for greater degrees of "joined-up" PT provision, which needs to be enabled by NAfW).

Quality Issues

16. Under this section, the current quality issues are covered, along with suggested improvements into the future which would help deliver NAfW's vision.

17. At present, "quality" is covered by existing legislation regarding vehicle and operator standards (Passenger Service Vehicle (PSV) licencing) via the Traffic Commissioner. Other quality considerations are covered by limited provisions within local authority "socially necessary" local bus service procurement, and any improvements that the competitive market can provide. However, in practice, this tends to be based upon minimum cost provision, with little "extra-over" specification for quality issues, and in terms of a co-ordinated approach, is rather "hit and miss", particularly when compared to UK major town and Continental practice.

18. It is the Transport Act 2000 that has provided legal basis to new quality measures, Quality Partnerships (QP's) and Quality Bus Contracts (QBC's), which will deliver quality in the future. The question becomes – what usage will each have? There is a developing view that QBC's could be used to introduce bus franchising type arrangements in Wales, as opposed to the present arrangement of "commercial" provision plus Local Authorities (LA's) picking up socially necessary services on a route basis, which is very inflexible. There is a possible conflict emerging, picked up on visits to England, where DETR are advising "extremely sparing" use of QBC's. If this is to be the case, then "bus franchising", which QBC's approximate, would be difficult to achieve. There is an uncomfortable parallel, here, with Traffic Authority / Commissioner TR "conditions", which were placed in legislation to avoid the worst excesses of deregulation, but which were rarely used. A similar fate must not befall QBC's!

19. There are a small number of existing and emerging QP's in Wales, but insufficient to draw longer term conclusions. There are no QBC's. However, the few QP's that exist, supported by TG allocation, have demonstrably improved PT in their areas, and are exemplars for the future. More must be done to encourage QP introduction, by further TG "pump-priming". It is up to the Executive to produce suitable codes and frameworks to enable this, given that, now, primary legislation exists. Until there is more experience with QP's and QBC's, further powers are not suggested.

20. An early QBC pilot in Wales is necessary, possibly based upon an individual LA area, or even on a LA Consortia area, to enable proper evaluation of the advantages of QBC's, in a Welsh context, to be made by the Executive, and scrutinised by this Committee. This will chart

the way forward on the franchising issue.

21. Previous papers to Committee have identified the following as being **areas where quality standards need to be developed**:-

- journey time
- service frequency
- service reliability
- modern rolling stock and/or vehicles
- service comfort / support services where appropriate
- customer service accessible and reliable public information
- convenience and attractiveness of station locations (both to settlements and to other public transport networks)
- ease and speed of connections with other transport modes (good interchanges, sensible timetabling and through ticketing arrangements)
- physical accessibility
- personal security and operational safety
- affordability
- effective staff skills with appropriate training
- ability and willingness to innovate

22. Considerable evidence has been amassed on what works in Wales, and further work commissioned on wider comparisons for this review. These are straightforward matters to be placed by NAFW into LTP advice for LA's, and perhaps later, for regional groupings, with benchmarks for the allocation of finance. More work needs to be done on drawing up these benchmarks.

23. For the immediate term, developing a quality **code of practice** for Wales, embracing the issues above, needs priority action. This Code should become the "bible" for public transport resource allocation in Wales, against which all future proposals are tested, monitored and evaluated. Initially, the Code should concentrate on community transport, conventional bus services and rail, along with their interaction / relationship to other modes and required operational levels of service. This will involve a step forward from where we currently are in terms of requiring co-operation and adherence to specified service levels, covering not only actual vehicle operation, but related matters of ticketing, information, and support services, and, for the first time, a "enforcable" requirement to consult / work with others / co-ordinate etc.

24. It is for the Executive to develop and refine the exact detail of the Code, but I believe the following to be **reasonable indicative targets and objectives** :-

- a plus/minus 10 minutes guaranteed difference from timetable without penalty
- punctuality standards to be recorded and published

- use of QBC's as a means of guaranteeing complete network provision, as opposed to route provision
- a specification requirement that, at contract commencement, average vehicle age should be, say, 5 years, with a presumption that 10 year old vehicles are retired from front line service
- an upward trend in specification with regard to comfort, mother / toddler provision, footroom, steps etc
- all operators required to participate and contribute towards a comprehensive passenger information system
- a requirement to pool and co-operate on timetabling and common data bases and ticketing, as a condition of the "right to trade"
- A requirement for all vehicles to be fully DDA compatible by, say, 2005 (i.e. not only new vehicles, covered by regulations, but a Welsh provision relating to all vehicles operated in our name)
- Requirements laid on operators for minimum levels of personal security. This may mean, in some circumstances, reintroduction of conductors, and / or roving uniformed security staff, or requiring operators to make appropriate, bespoke arrangements for the carriage of police officers.
- Operators, and public sector delivery platforms, for that matter, to satisfy minimum requirements of transport professional skills competencies
- A requirement to participate in innovatory and imaginative proposals to drive up the esteem of public transport (A parallel with the new Duty of Wellbeing in LA Modernisation legislation)

25. The proposal is that proof of adherence to the Code and its bench- marks would be a pre-requisite to NAFW financial support via TG, and would be a requirement for present LTP's, and potential Regional LTP's.

26. To deliver future quality improvements, the following need consideration. Commentary, and specific proposals, on each are contained in the Appendix.

- **Community Transport (CT)** - Detailed arrangements will be informed by the Minister's recently commissioned CT Study. Some immediate policy changes are possible, others will require "rule changes"
- **Walking and Cycling** - To "make a difference" the possibility of affirmative action should be considered
- **School Transport and Local Bus Services** - Further work on the conflict between local bus services and school transport is needed. "Separate development" must be a future possibility.
- **Second generation** - Planning for increasing segregation between PT and other traffic needs to take place now, and to be implemented as opportunities arise.
- **Interchange** - This is an area where there is much "catching up" to do. With few notable exceptions, all major towns in Wales have bus and rail facilities that are physically

segregated.

- **Passenger Information** - This is a major issue. Some work has been done on the all Wales PTI, which is currently "bedding-in". It is a good start, but only a start.

Monitoring and Evaluation

27. Analysis of problems, setting a vision, and the way of getting there, are very important, but need to be supported by a robust monitoring and evaluation regime. How best to guarantee that scarce resources are most effectively spent?

28. Work is being done by officials and the Forum on cross-modal evaluation methods. This will be reported separately and needs to be taken into account in this Review. The purpose of this section is to highlight issues that need to be considered within current spending blocks.

29. What is now clear is that the gap between "where we are" and "where we need to be in 10 years" is so wide, that current practice and procedure evaluation will only get us so far, important as though that is. Many medium to long term answers will not be found in current UK practice. There is little domestic experience to draw on, although Continental practice will be useful.

30. Dealing first with the short to medium term, and "what we know", the present LTP mechanisms, and the independent consultants view on submissions, is an adequate process to determine competing demands for money, and to rank improvements in terms of value for money, adherence to NAFW policy and outputs, in terms of enhanced PT ridership and attractiveness. It is suggested that LTP processes be strengthened by the early adoption of the suggested Quality **Code of Practice**, outlined above, which will be the benchmark against which applications for resources are judged. If outcomes are unclear, or policy targets not addressed, then project priority will fall down the list.

31. Given that QP's and QBC's powers are covered by legislation (Transport Act 2000), and the Code will inform investment decisions, it is not suggested that further additional evaluation process is needed. In establishing the Code, care will have to be taken that sufficiently robust data is available, in a comparable and consistent form, to enable scheme comparisons to be sensibly made. The Forum Sub Group's work on evaluation methods cross-mode will need to be built into the process. It would be helpful to all agents if the database required to support the Code was clearly spelt out, so that information could be collected and assessed in a consistent form. Trying to compare data collected by different organisations, at present, is confusing at times. It does not appear that there is need for additional information, but that which exists should be standardised and shared between transport partners in a more meaningful way. It is suggested that the Executive require this to happen through future delivery platforms.

32. Measures of success should be assessed against policy targets and should be easy to identify. If a scheme, which promised a 10% increase in PT ridership within two years, is monitored to deliver only 5% say, it should be challenged and resources reallocated. Alternatively, if 10% was promised and 15% achieved, then there should be financial reward for enhanced performance built into the system. This becomes a straightforward performance management regime after the point of award of resources.

33. Prior to award, and in considering often widely differing PT schemes in nature and type, a more flexible approach is necessary, and must be driven by policy and the Minister. Demonstration projects and pilot schemes, to drive up the information base and experience in new areas of activity, are vital parts of the forward planning process. There are limited areas where it is recommended that there is need for such projects. They would be modest cost, and could be built into the unallocated elements in the forward five year programme. Investment thereafter would be informed by monitoring and evaluation of the demonstrations and pilots. Specifically, they are:-

1. Interchange Demonstration Project - 4 schemes in 5 year finance period, one per region of Wales
2. School Transport Demonstration Project - long term procurement for bespoke school buses
3. Guided Bus Pilot Scheme – demonstration length of heavily trafficked urban radial route

34. How these are selected, where they should be, and who should be involved, is a matter for the Executive, but should Committee wish, I can suggest candidate schemes in each category. Each would require a partnership of present agents, irrespective of any future organisational arrangements. The important point is that Welsh experience and good practice in these areas, where currently there is neither, should be built up on the basis of demonstration projects, and so inform future investment decisions in a more meaningful way.

APPENDIX

Community Transport (CT)

1. The considerable gap between total reliance on the private car, and conventional buses running on all traffic roads can be plugged by a variety of transport provision, not only community transport as we know it, but social car schemes, car clubs, car sharing, postal buses, taxi card schemes and other similar small vehicle provisions. Concentrated effort is needed to liberate and enable this sector, from supportive fiscal dispositions, to "enabling" legislation to sweep away unnecessary operational constraints. Detailed arrangements will be informed by the Minister's recently commissioned community transport study, but the following policy changes are needed :-

- Immediate support to CT through Fuel Duty Rebate (FDR) rules
- Legislative support, changing the "rules" particularly with respect to car sharing and passenger carrying for payment
- "pump priming" funding of a massive expansion of capacity within CT

2. This sector has much to offer the Welsh social inclusion agenda, both in rural, isolated community contexts, and also in plugging holes in more conventional provision elsewhere. A newly invigorated and enabled voluntary sector, working with revised and proactive public sector delivery platforms, can transform this PT sector in Wales. The outcome of the procured study on CT is awaited.

Walking and Cycling

3. These areas are largely covered by the commission given to Sustrans, the first report from which was made to March Transport Forum, and no comment is made on those proposals likely to emerge from that study.

4. The base, for mode of travel to work, in Wales, is 2% cycling, and 14% walking (1999).

5. In policy terms, these are areas where affirmative political actions are likely to be needed to "make a difference". Encouragement, education and limited on-street improvements can do much, but the usage starting point is so low that further measures should be considered. The fact that 4 out of 5 trips in inner urban areas are less than one mile, and usually made on foot, is of significance!

6. Hypothecation, for a limited period, of specific percentages of overall transport budgets, would effect a step change in these forms, that conventional approaches would not achieve. It would also underline the political and social importance of these matters to the Assembly.

7. Perhaps a four year dedication of 5% of the overall budget, split 3.5% to walking schemes, 1.5% to cycling schemes would be appropriate. 5% of a four year transport budget is very small in overall terms, but it would represent a larger spend on these modes, in a visible and more concentrated way, than has been applied before.

8. Cycling and walking, as subjects in their own right, tend to get submerged in conventional budgets and programmes both at Welsh National and at local government levels.

Home to School Transport and Local Bus Services

9. It has become clear that Home to School transport (HST), under present legislation, is big business in Wales. Circa £30 millions per year is spent by local authorities in its procurement. Evidence has been presented to show that an expanding local service bus market is "head to

head" with HST procurement. Buses are required, in some numbers, at the same time of the day, leading to competition for public money.

10. This does not seem to be sustainable and promotion of ways out of this dilemma are recommended. The problem is compounded by a reported dearth of quality vehicles working through the market place.

11. The time has come for consideration of separate development and procurement of local buses and school buses. Given that all buses have a front line service life of around 10 years, it would seem reasonable to plan for a separate development regime over, say, two Assembly terms, as a matter of jointly agreed forward policy.

12. Bespoke, and high specification, vehicles are available for the HST market, and if procured, maybe directly (then for others to operate) over a 10, 12 or even 15 year period, would remove competition with local services, allow appropriate vehicle for each use, and "free-up" the local bus service market to develop the sort of innovative and quality services that Assembly policy wishes to see, with low floor, DDA compatible, high specification local service buses.

Second Generation

13. The real life situation, whereby conventional buses running as general traffic on conventional roads, will run out of capacity at some time, needs to be formally acknowledged, and successor arrangements to mitigate this recognised. Congestion will result on multi-occupancy buses being delayed or grid-locked in amongst a sea of single occupancy vehicles. Clearly this is happening earlier in inner urban areas, but will eventually characterise most communities. We are perilously close to this position in some urban areas, at some times of day, already!

14. Equity demands recognition that multi-occupancy vehicles need preferential treatment over other vehicles. This will commence with sharing of road space, such as selective detection at signals, and bus lanes, but will develop into physical segregation in the form of guided bus tracks or (in limited cases) LRT tracks. It is ironic that we need to recreate the separate reserves, along urban radial routes, that once existed for tram operations!

15. Relevant Authorities need to be identifying and reserving land now, against this future requirement. Finance for such systems will inevitably fall to the Transport Grant regime, controlled by NAfW, unless the proposed relaxation of capital regulations permit some LA's to proceed without TG.

16. It would be useful if, for example, a guided bus pilot scheme could be promoted in Wales in the next few years, financed by TG, which would allow all to develop experience in this system,

and more properly evaluate its more widespread applicability throughout Wales.

Interchange

17. Nearly all Welsh towns have bus and rail stations on separate sites, and there has been little development of true integration embracing all modes, including walking and cycling, alongside developed passenger information systems, in an era of market place competition between modes.

18. There is a strong argument to promote, over a realistic time scale, through the planning and the forward financial process, reservation of land for true interchange development, and NAFW should allow land assembly for this purpose as eligible TG expenditure. Also NAFW pump priming of demonstration projects to promote exemplars of 21st Century public transport interchanges in Wales, should be established.

19. There has been much good work done, often financed by NAFW grant, and by Railtrack, in improving existing rail stations. Cardiff Central and Neath are recent examples. However, there is little evidence in Wales of the sort of fully comprehensive integration witnessed on our visits. That will require forward planning and resources, probably beyond the capacity of individual agents in the transport system to deliver, and an overall policy view is needed. Much remains to be done, in addition to short term remediation of what exists, in getting future interchange provision right, which inevitably means land acquisition and capital expenditure.

20. If interchanges are to be truly multi-mode and pursue NAFW public transport policy, then NAFW must take the lead in their promotion. It is not realistic, given the history of the last two decades, to expect individual mode management, or loose confederations of such management, to deliver major expressions of public requirements such as 21st century interchanges. Ease and speed of connections require good interchange facilities as well as logical timetabling and universal through ticketing arrangements, all of which must be considered as one entity.

Passenger Information

21. The good start on the all Wales PTI must be supplemented by widespread introduction of real time passenger information, already "on-street" in Cardiff and Neath Port Talbot, to be followed shortly by Swansea. This is a major confidence building factor in assuring the public that public transport is for them.

22. We have also been impressed by what we have seen on our visits. In this context, the "mobility centres" introduced by the Rhine-Main Authority (RMV), encompassing Frankfurt and its surrounding region, seem an admirable way forward. The centres, introduced by the public sector Authority, cover all forms of transport, ticketing, information, enabling, cross reference to

social service transport, special needs transport, and involving all forms of communication from personal visits, paper, telephone, internet, and individual requirements.

23. It seems, as indicated on the proposed targets in this report, that a Welsh pilot could be in place and evaluated and assessed by 2003 and that is what is recommended.

Denys Morgan

Expert Adviser

ANNEX B

EXISTING DEVELOPMENTS AND ACHIEVING THE VISION IN THE DRAFT TRANSPORT FRAMEWORK

DRAFT TRANSPORT FRAMEWORK

1. The Transport Framework published for consultation sets out a vision for developing integrated transport. The vision is for a transport system that delivers consistent adequate levels of accessibility, tackling social disadvantage and inequities, that provides strategic mobility to tackle regeneration and other economic aims, all within benchmarks for air quality, noise and other environmental parameters.

2. A key element in delivering this vision is that within 5 years Wales will have a much improved public transport system. It will have more frequent and better quality services on its rail and bus network. Services will be improved to provide better links and interchange with other means of transport. There will be much better information on all transport modes with active encouragement to use the public transport system. Cycling and walking will be made safer and easier with both making a much greater contribution to our journeys.

3. We also have within our key long term transport aims:

- To enable about a quarter of commuting to work to take place by means other than by car compared to about a fifth in the late 1990s;
- To reduce the pressure on the environment by improving public transport and offering alternatives to travel by car;
- To encourage a higher proportion of freight to be carried by rail.

4. The Transport Framework not only stresses the need for efficient and high quality public transport services as part of a broader integrated transport system. It also sets this within a spatial framework, to encourage service provision to be appropriate to the differing needs of communities in different locations – whether flexibly scheduled transport for more remote locations, high speed connections between key centres, or strong networks of complementary rail and bus provision supporting the journey to work in urban centres. In this way, the transport framework can map out the future network needs for Wales, identifying gaps, and allowing policy makers to overlay these transport corridors with land use planning, economic regeneration, and social inclusion initiatives.

5. The Committee's review has concentrated on bus, rail and community transport but recognise that other forms of transport including taxis, walking and cycling have an important contribution. Air services are also significant particularly in terms of economic development and inward investment. The Assembly Government through the Transport Forum are developing a walking and cycling strategy and are reviewing community transport which can take account of the contribution of taxis. Once the DETR's review of air services is completed there will be an opportunity to consider the opportunities for development. The Assembly Government also worked alongside the DETR on developing general policies in relation to Port development. Ports, like airports, can support economic regeneration, and need to be well connected to both passenger and freight transport networks.

Current bus and rail provision

6. Around 30% of households in Wales have no car and this rises to over 40% in Blaenau Gwent and Merthyr Tydfil. The most used form of public transport in Wales is the bus and in terms of passenger journeys this declined by 26% between 1988-89 and 1998-99. Conversely rail passenger numbers have been increasing and, for example, the Valley Lines had 21% more passengers by March 2001 compared with March 1998. A breakdown is at APPENDIX A.

Buses

7. The structure of the bus industry reflects developments since the introduction of the Transport Act 1985 when over 90% of local bus operation was within public ownership across Great Britain and it is now below 10%. Local authority subsidies declined in real terms from £183m in 1987 to £110m in 1997 (at 1997 prices) as indicated in the evidence given to the Committee by the Association of Transport Co-ordinating Officers (ATCO). Initially there was little motivation for operators other than to obtain a satisfactory return for shareholders and market decline set in. In the 1990s a period of consolidation took place and much of Wales' services are now provided by three national companies (Arriva, First Group and Stagecoach) creating some local monopolies. Major bus companies require a 15% rate of return according to ATCO and there are few areas in Wales where this can be achieved. This is not universal and for example in Cardiff the local authority owned bus company has a much lower rate of

return. In their evidence to the Committee (ATCO) pointed out that in the Upper Rhymney Valley new floor level buses had been transferred to the larger conurbations where there are more profitable routes to be replaced by older buses. They maintain that substantial revenue funding and incentives for new entrants would be required to achieve high quality services. In their evidence the Confederation of Passenger Transport (CPT), however, say that margins have been squeezed over the last 12-24 months due to high fuel prices combined with increasing employment costs and the implications of social legislation. They also maintain that some local authorities are failing to give proper annual price reviews that take full account of the cost increases incurred by operators.

8. The Welsh Consumer Council have reviewed the provision of local bus services from the user's perspective. The report states that the aim of the project was to identify the issues that needed to be targeted before consumers were likely to 'choose' the local bus service as a form of transportation. It concluded that the bus services currently in operation often fail to cater for the needs of the user and do not represent a real transportation choice for most people. One of the most important findings from the survey was that the 79% of bus users reported they would prefer to go by car and this rose to 89% in Cardiff and South East Wales where services are arguably better than elsewhere. A higher proportion of young people (38%) use the local bus on a regular basis than any other age group yet 90% said they would prefer to go by car. There were regional differences in responses reflecting inconsistency in services which the Council maintain is the consequence of fragmentation of responsibilities across operators and authorities. The report also highlighted a geographical distinction notably in Mid/West Wales compared to other more urban regions. On a more hopeful note 58% said that they would use buses if services improved.

9. Bus users, the report concluded, were likely to be non car owners or were prevented from driving either through disability or age; buses were seen as a last resort and tended to be used by people on low incomes with little choice. A study the Council undertook in the Rhondda in 1997 indicated that people on low incomes had opted to be in debt from buying a car instead of relying on local buses. Concerns about safety and access to information were also highlighted in the report. Users were more likely to enjoy and therefore choose bus travel if stops offered clean and comfortable shelters with accurate real time information with larger waiting areas providing refreshment facilities and luggage storage. Bus drivers contributed significantly to the experience of the journey. Ticketing methods and fare structures should be easily understood and affordable and a number of issues affected service quality including reliability, speed, safety and comfort.

10. Bus operators indicate that the decline has been largely halted but ensuring that public transport develops in a significant way remains a major challenge. The Disability Discrimination Act is one trigger which will ensure replacement and upgrading of vehicles and rolling stock, but operators report that the lead times for introducing this stock is limited. In the meantime, infrastructure improvements, ensuring bus priority on busy traffic corridors, and competitive operating costs, will be key to ensuring that operators can keep fares to a level

where they compare favourably with using a car, and are accessible to all. The Welsh Consumer Council's Survey encapsulates the concerns of passengers on buses and are equally applicable to other modes of travel in general terms.

Elements of a quality service include :-

- Journey time
- Service frequency
- Service reliability
- Affordability
- Modern rolling stock/vehicles
- Service comfort/Support services where appropriate
- Customer Services
- Accessible and reliable public information
- Convenience and attractiveness of bus/rail station locations (both to settlements and to other transport networks)
- Ease and speed of connections with other transport modes (good interchanges, sensible timetabling and through ticket arrangements)
- Physical accessibility (particularly for disabled passengers)
- Personal security and operational safety
- Effective staff skills with appropriate training underpins quality services
- Ability and willingness to innovate also underpins quality services.

Buses in the next ten years

11. The Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) considered, in their study, that the objectives for quality bus partnerships which have been put on a statutory basis in the Transport Act 2000 should be:-

- securing satisfactory levels of service, preferably by the same operator on each route;
- providing fare discounts for particular types of individuals or groups in the Community;
- providing and improving infrastructure including traffic priority measures and information systems.

12. The opportunity to develop quality contracts will also need to be examined and the Assembly Government is establishing a working group involving local authorities and bus operators to prepare guidance on the implementation of the provisions in the Transport Act 2000 for both quality partnerships and contracts.

13. There has been considerable debates about the merits of quality partnerships and contracts; the latter have the attraction of being all embracing and comprehensive but on the other hand are inflexible and would require detailed rules to manage them. The legislation requires partnerships to be considered first before contracts are pursued and unlike partnerships contracts require the specific approval of the Assembly. The IPPR report quotes a study prepared for the Scottish Executive which points to quality contracts delivering greater benefits in two areas:-

- where a local authority wanted to invest a large amount of new money in their bus system (such as the proceeds from congestion charging or a workplace parking levy.) In these circumstances it is very unlikely that the operator would be able to fund an equitable partnership;
- where local authority intervention (secured services, schools transport, concessionary fares) has a dominant influence on the market and better co-ordination and resource utilisation could be achieved from an integrated, planned network.

Making A Bus Quality Partnership Happen

14. The potential components of a quality partnership are:

Operators

- Minimum service delivery standards
- Vehicle quality standards

- Driver training, conduct and appearance
- Fares and ticketing
- Fixed service revision dates
- Provision of information, traditional and real time, on and off bus (in partnership)
- On-bus selective vehicle detection transponders

Local authorities

- Bus priorities, traffic calming and signage
- Fares and ticketing brokerage
- Passenger infrastructure, construction and maintenance
- Information systems (in partnership)
- Pedestrian access and signage
- Early notification of contract awards
- Project facilitator to co-ordinate, launch and monitor

Police

- Enforcement of priorities
- Passenger and public safety

National Assembly Transport Directorate (Trunk roads)

- Bus priorities as appropriate
- Traffic management generally

Delivery and Monitoring Value

15. The partnership will need to devise monitoring procedures to ensure that all partners achieve and maintain targets, at implementation and thereafter. The concept of a Welsh Quality Bus partnership "kite mark" could be developed, so that a minimum standard of bus service package is achieved and can be recognised by the general public. This mark should not be seen as stifling local initiative and branding, but rather emphasising that a minimum (but real) improvement and consistency has been achieved. Care must be taken to ensure that partners do not simply re-allocate resources from other areas into Quality Partnership schemes, leaving other areas started of investment. There must be an element of additionality.

Area-wide Partnerships – Greater Manchester

16. The most quoted example of an area-wide quality partnership is in Greater Manchester. The agreement is subject to consideration by the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) but nevertheless points to the potential of an area partnership. The key elements of the Manchester area-wide quality partnership agreement are:

Multi-modal ticketing (via 3rd party arrangements, eg Greater Manchester Travelcards Ltd which is jointly owned by all operators). Tickets offered cover a range of unlimited journey travel tickets including:

- Junior, adult and concession passengers
- Bus, bus and train, bus add-on to train or tram
- Daily, weekly, monthly, annual

Availability of service information for the travelling public including:

- Telephone enquiry with minimum response criteria
- Free timetables

- Web Site
- Information at interchanges
- Free map
- Free high frequency routes map
- Travel shops
- Real time information displays
- Radio and television (including text) reports

Fleet quality enhancement - A commitment that the area-wide fleet is of a minimum standard. The current criteria is:

- 50% of buses meet Euro 1 or 2 emissions standards
- 20% of buses fully accessible or to Diptac standard prevailing when built

Passenger infrastructure, provided through Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive (GMPTE)

- Bus stations, subject to performance criteria eg cleanliness, signage etc
- Provide and maintain quality bus shelters at important locations
- Provide bus boarders (platforms), raised kerbs and cater for mobility impaired

Operators agree to administer service changes on the following basis:

- To maintain the stability of services, service variations limited to twice per year
- Fixed service change dates throughout year
- Early notification of changes to PTE (9 weeks)
- Co-ordination of contract changes to fit fixed dates (where possible)

Notification of contract awards by GMPTE

- Early notification of contracts awards (13 weeks before commencement)

The role of Local Authorities and Highways Agency

- Development of priority schemes for buses including use of transponders
- Development of signage
- Associated traffic calming schemes
- Associated traffic calming schemes
- Development of guided busway schemes, bus gates and bus lanes

The role of the police

- Enforcement
- Creating a safe environment for passengers

Quality Corridor Agreements – These operate within the area wide agreement and cover:

- Specific bus priorities (note: members of the Partnership Agreement have priority over other operators where appropriate. This is subject to consideration by the OFT)
- Clear passenger charter including complaints procedure and arbitration procedure
- Specific policy on quality shelters, type, number, seats and facilities, anti-vandalism regime
- Provision of information
- Customer care training for drivers

-

- Enforcement of priorities
- Freedom for any operator to enter the scheme, providing minimum standards are

accepted

Improving and encouraging interchange

- Quality information and signage
- Quality and safe waiting facilities

Operators will equip vehicles with:

- Selective vehicle detection equipment (transponders)
- In-vehicle next stop announcement equipment
- Carry a partnership sign (quality assurance)

Operators will ensure that:

- Drivers are trained to an agreed standard
- Drivers carry an identification badge
- Minimum standards of service delivery are achieved

Application to Wales

17. There is limited experience of Quality Bus Partnerships in Wales (and details will be available for the Committee's final report.) Other examples of successful partnerships are at APPENDIX B.

18. Local Authorities will be producing bus strategies for inclusion in local transport plans by April 2003. These will need to be tailored to meet local needs but also take account of service requirements which do not stop at local authority boundaries. This will provide the opportunity to consider the relationships with other modes of transport (including cycling and walking) and also to consider the relevance of workplace or congestion charging. The impact of green travel plans could be considered and the opportunity taken to integrate school transport with other provision.

19. Bids for Transport Grant from local authorities support should reflect key proposals in the bus strategies in order to bring about a step change in provision. Some of the investment could be significant but much could be achieved with more effective targeting of a combination of

financial investment and traffic management including enforcement of parking regulations. The Assembly Government's guidance to local authorities on the preparation of bids for Transport Grant for 2002-03 and following years will reflect this point and focus on the need to achieve the critical mass of investment necessary to trigger change in travel patterns in certain areas.

20. Progress in improving bus services will be dependent on financial investment for both infrastructure and revenue support through the Assembly's local transport services grant, support for concessionary fares and local authorities own resources. Much will depend on tender prices where services are subsidised. In a review of the bus subsidy grant provided by the Assembly Government it is stated that local authorities funded services on a pragmatic basis, largely driven by the previous rules of operation of the various available grants. This could result in widely differing figures for subsidy per passenger. The Local Transport Services Grant, which enables Local Authorities to include funding for Community Transport, should assist Local Authorities in choosing the most cost effective solution to meet the travel demands of their population. However, there remains the issue that Local Authorities are still under considerable pressure from dominant commercial operators to secure and improve service provision. Free travel for elderly and disabled people from 1 April 2002 will have a significant impact on bus usage and will attract more people to use buses. The Commission for Integrated Transport (CfIT) are reviewing the operation of bus subsidies and this is an area requiring further work so that value for money consideration can be more rigorously applied. It is often the case that buses travel with few or any passengers in both urban and rural areas while there is a general acceptance that services are inadequate. The potential of community transport to meet requirements in a cost effective way will be examined in the Transport Forum's review.

21. In addition there are other significant issues to be taken into account. ATCO referred in their evidence to the Committee to a shortage of skilled professionals in three areas:-

- following local government re-organisation the staffing levels of local authority public transport teams were further reduced and with the shift away from road schemes re-training is needed to enable engineers to be directed toward the design and implementation of public transport projects;
- most of the large bus companies have stripped out the middle management which existed to keep an eye on quality and who could actually think more laterally about solutions to problems.
- it is becoming increasingly difficult to recruit bus drivers because of low wage rates, unsocial hours, ever tightening schedules and fear of assault;

Rail

22. The rail industry in Wales is currently in a state of flux. Following privatisation, services for Wales are covered by a total of seven different franchises, all with limited contract length and a reducing subsidy profile. This approach gave little incentive to operators to make the significant investments required to develop the existing rail infrastructure and rolling stock. Some investment (e.g. Cambrian line, new High Speed units for North Coast Line), but in general these have required partnership working with local government and significant public funding.

23. Similarly, the infrastructure was maintained by three divisions of Railtrack, from management headquarters all situated outside the area. With limited staff and resources, commercial routes, particularly high speed connections, and the South East commuter routes, took the lion's share of infrastructure investment. The announcement by the Strategic Rail Authority in 2000 that it would be taking forward a new franchise approach for Wales provides an opportunity to reverse the decline in infrastructure and service provision. It envisages a single 20 year franchise for services for Wales and the Borders (including management of all stations in Wales), which will be complemented by extending two existing intercity franchises (Virgin and First Great Western) which serve the links from North and South Wales to London. The franchise process is ongoing, and franchise bidders will be required to demonstrate how they will improve both quality and level of provision of service for this area. The longer franchise should encourage greater private investment, though it is clear that a railway with largely social, rather than commercial, potential will also require a supportive stream of funding from the Strategic Rail Authority.

24. The Assembly Government has been working closely with the Strategic Rail Authority through this process, taking account of the views of key stakeholders in Wales through a rail audit to identify their priorities, and setting out its aspirations clearly for increased quality of services.

25. The rail network is regarded by the Assembly Government not just as having a functional role to support people moving within and between communities. Attractive facilities, good services and high quality rolling stock can attract businesses and tourists to an area, support equality of access, can promote civic pride and raise expectations, as well as encouraging people from their cars. Poorly maintained and low quality facilities have the opposite effect, and can even encourage increased crime.

26. The Assembly Government is looking for a package of reliability, frequency and service from operators to build a quality rail network. Reliability is a prime concern of passengers, and improvements to infrastructure and rolling stock, as well as strong management by the operator, can improve existing reliability records. The Assembly has set out frequency aspirations for each route, and is looking to develop a coherent set of standards for services across Wales and the borders so that the frequencies on any route consistently reflect demand for route and populations served. Additional services should reflect peak commuter and school demands, market days and other local needs. Services should have clockface timetabling on all routes, with service coverage from between at least 06h00-23h00 Monday to Saturday, and

greater similarity of coverage for Sunday services, which for many now is a day for shopping, tourism and employment.

27. As important as service frequencies is the quality of passenger experience, whether on a train or waiting in a station. Rolling stock investments need to take account of new safety systems, disability provision, cycle storage and on-board information facilities. Stock for short commuter routes must be capacious, accessible and clean, longer distance stock will require appropriate catering, toilet and workspace facilities. Similarly, stations should be safe, attractive and comfortable places to wait, with well planned routes for access by pedestrians, cyclists and motorists, as well as modal interchange. In rural areas, a station can bring together other essential services such as retail, or post office, so that local facilities are maintained, and staffing at stations is more viable. Accessible real-time information, integrated ticketing, appropriate fare structures are also important. The Assembly Government has also requested that the successful operator provide that all stations in Wales are certified "Secure Stations" by the end of the franchise.

Community Transport

28. Community transport is not a clearly defined service and encompasses a range of provision. The Transport Forum sub group reviewing community transport has suggested that it is a form of transport, of any description, which is legal, safe, accessible, reliable and affordable. Furthermore it is transport which operates in the not for profit sector aiming to integrate and complement rather than compete with statutory and commercial transport provision. Community Transport is designed to meet the needs of a wide range of people, regardless of age, in any locality, who, for whatever reason (including geographical, physical and financial) are unable to access and use conventional commercial transport systems. Greater flexibility of provision is particularly cost effective for less dense populations. Traditionally the key focus of community transport work has been in rural areas, where feeder services can access main bus routes as well as key local facilities such as hospitals, markets and schools. However, the anecdotal evidence received from passengers and the CTA is that the demand for such services for marginal and socially excluded communities in urban areas (such as the Heads of the Valleys), is growing.

29. One of the key issues for Community Transport, perhaps as a result of its varying definition, is in how well it has been integrated into the broader transport network. The Community Transport Association is a voluntary organisation which acts to give information and support to community transport operators, but although it has worked closely with the Assembly Government in promoting the various grants which are available, it has no formal role in planning, or in assessing demand to be met. Local Authorities are required to include community transport within their Local Transport Plans. The previous rules of the Bus Subsidy Grant encouraged Local Authority transport planners to focus on conventional bus provision to serve more remote communities, leaving other services to be coordinated by their social

services, or education colleagues. It appears that one of the main reasons why there was such a noticeable shortfall in Community Transport provision in Wales, was the connection between the lack of awareness as to what could be achieved by providing community based transport and that of funding individual schemes. There are a number of first class examples where proactive Local Authorities and Voluntary Groups have developed partnerships, overcoming such obstacles enabling them to provide a range of adaptable community transport services in their areas. There seems to be a common link between success and well established partnerships between Local authorities and voluntary groups. Examples of good practice are at APPENDIX C.

30. Where there is a lack of basic understanding of the issues, then, not unexpectedly very little happens by way of community transport development. The current deficiency in Wales can perhaps be highlighted by the fact that as far as is known, none of the Local Authorities in Wales employ a full time Community Transport worker. In England for example, Hampshire County Council alone employs five full time Community Transport workers with the aim of inter-linking and developing the authority's education, social services, public transport and voluntary schemes. The Assembly Government has also now introduced the Local Transport Services Grant, which allows Local Authorities greater flexibility to fund any appropriate local transport services, so it is hoped that this will trigger greater integration between the conventional bus and community transport. This greater coherence between the bus and community transport sector however triggers additional issues to be resolved in the regulation and treatment of both – and there has been recent work by CfIT and DETR, which is now under consideration by the Welsh Transport Forum review of Community Transport, to look at the case for extending Bus Fuel Duty rebate, as well as concessionary fare arrangements to the CT sector. Enabling Community Transport schemes to become an established part of mainstream transport provision in Wales would make a difference.

European Experience

31. CfIT have examined car dependency in Germany where ownership is higher than the UK but use lower. It reported that Germany had high car ownership at 504 cars per 1000 inhabitants against an EU average of 454. The UK by contrast had ownership of 399 cars per 1000 inhabitants. However, for car use the picture is reversed. In the UK, car use is rather higher than the EU average and significantly higher than the German rate. While the report included a cautionary note about the use of this comparison it is nevertheless a useful indicator. The report also pointed out that the UK had the highest modal share for the car in the EU although the differences between countries are not huge. A number of German cities, for example, have long term strategies which recognised that the car was not suitable for every journey and had developed policies with considerable investment to improve transport choice. Public transport provision was also more attractive and usually run by a single organisation through the method of awarding contracts to operators varied between countries. The report pointed out that a single company can give greater coherence to services ensuring that connected effectively and worked as a network. Marketing and delivery of services focused on

competition with the car rather than the other operators. Generally subsidies are higher, typically they are 15-20% in the UK while major European cities provide subsidies of 35-70%.

Implementation of Integrated Transport in Wales

32. The Assembly (and previously the Welsh Office) assists local authorities in taking forward improvements in public transport. Since 1997 capital investment through Transport Grant has concentrated to a significant extent in improving public transport opportunities. The number of separate packages, and the different elements within each package cover the whole of Wales and include investment in bus, rail, cycling and walking and related interchange, traffic management and park and ride facilities.

33. Examples of work supported across Wales include:

- In the SWIFT area, rail based park and ride schemes at Aberdare, Barry Town, Taffs Well, Treforest and Caerphilly stations and the Caerphilly bus rail interchange have been completed. Another 9 park and ride and 5 interchange sites have been identified in the SWIFT area, and are receiving support for design work. Major bus investments have also been made in the SWIFT area, with funding for bus corridor improvements, bus station improvements, bus priorities and real time passenger information.
- In the SWITCH area, bus based park and ride is being supported in Swansea, together with a guided bus link from a park and ride to the bus and the separate rail station. In Bridgend bus based park and ride is being co located with the site of a future new rail station, and work is proceeding on the bus and rail stations. Two complete bus corridors across Swansea and Neath Port Talbot have been accepted for funding support, with bus priority, improvements to traffic management, bus stops, interchanges and passenger information. Pembrokeshire is leading a pilot project into demand management for unconventional public transport provision (vis Community transport) and is also receiving support for station access improvements, bus stop improvements and the creation of bus nodes in small towns.
- Tiger have received support for bus priority measure sin Newport and Pontypool and support for 4 complete bus corridor improvements across the whole Gwent economic region. Future plans under development are expected to include new stations and bus rail interchange improvements.
- Similar support has been given to North Wales authorities, including bus priority and traffic management and real time information in Llandudno town centre, bus stations and interchanges at Llandudno and Colwyn Bay stations. Corridor upgrades, rural bus

interchange nodes are being implemented in Ceredigion, and these, together with real time information are also being implemented in parts of Gwynedd. The Deeside Integrated Transport Strategy is an example of a focussed public transport strategy delivering corridor enhancements, bus prioritisation and traffic management, new services, station upgrades and cycling and walking links.

- Substantial further investment has been earmarked for improving rail infrastructure in the SWIFT area to enable the Vale of Glamorgan line to be re-opened for passengers and for development at Queen Street and elsewhere on the Valleys lines which will enable improved services to take place over the next few years. Assistance will also be given on the Cambrian line to Dovey Junction to enable additional services to be provided. Consideration is also being given to re-opening the line to Ebbw Vale for passenger use.

To complement the new infrastructure capacity being funded in the SWIFT area, it is anticipated that there will be significant increase to services running to Cardiff Bay from Cardiff Queen Street. As part of the redevelopment of Bute Square, Assembly officials have been working with Cardiff Council, WDA, Railtrack, Valley Lines and the shadow Strategic Rail Authority on how the development may impact on Herbert Street railway bridge and the track. One option is to replace the existing heavy rail link with a light rail system, capable of running at street level to the Bay, and mixing with heavy rail at Queen Street. The options assessment will be completed by August 2001. However, the costs of developing, and then expanding light rail links are high, and the Assembly Government will be looking to ensure that any investment in the rail network, secures the maximum benefits for passengers. And that any investment in light rail is compatible with committed investment in heavy rail.

Monitoring and Evaluation

34. It is essential that all investment is monitored effectively and that there is an evaluation of its impact in improving public transport services. This should be done in the context of monitoring progress against indicators and targets set in local transport plans. Measurements have to be meaningful and data collection which can be a costly exercise needs to be relevant. The National Census data contains relevant data and useful comparisons can be drawn over changing patterns of transport when the results of current Census are analysed. In South East Wales local authorities will be measuring passenger numbers to ascertain patronage on routes into Cardiff and Newport given the significant work, leisure and shopping travel into these centres.

35. The Assembly is reviewing its own data collection since current returns do not provide a detailed breakdown which would be useful for planning purposes in all cases. The Assembly Government and local authorities should agree a methodology for measuring modal shift and this would require establishing a robust baseline against which progress could be measured.

Setting an overall modal shift target for the whole of Wales would not be relevant since alternative forms of transport to the car are limited in many areas. However, there are opportunities in South Wales and North East Wales to bring about significant changes but targets should not be set before there is a realistic assessment of what can be achieved. In some places, it may be a key challenge to halt the decline of public transport usage and so ensure that future traffic growth is capped, as opposed to seeking dramatic percentage modal shift away from the car. In other areas land use developments will require to be planned with transport in mind.

36. The key issue for Local Authorities, and for the Assembly in setting targets is to ensure that they are both meaningful, and can be tracked back accurately to the transport interventions which have been funded. Transport benefits can be difficult to isolate, as they are often concomitant with changes in the economy, changes in land use outside the area of study, and the success or otherwise of key traffic generators such as major employers. In addition, although modal shift has been the prime focus of the UK Government 10 year transport plan, and is an important indicator for the Assembly Government, particularly in urban areas – for some regions within Wales it is not the prime objective. Journey times, and accessibility to services may be more important for travellers in rural areas. The Assembly Government is currently engaged in developing methodologies for measuring accessibility, and it is hoped in future that these can be fed into both the monitoring of existing programmes, and the targets set for funding such as the Local Transport Services Grant.

Conclusions

37. Consultation should take place with local authorities about the preparation of bus strategies which will have to be completed by April 2003. These strategies should be regionally based. The example of Greater Manchester points to this solution and SWIFT are preparing a bus strategy covering all authorities in their area. Bus strategies will be incorporated into Local Transport Plans. There is the opportunity to consider the impact of other policies including traffic management (both local authorities and trunk roads) and cycling and walking strategies. The relevance or otherwise of workplace and congestion charging in assisting the implementation of bus strategies could also be considered. School transport and the promotion of green travel plans should be regarded as an integral part of transport provision and promotion as well.

38. Bus strategies should also take account of rail and community transport developments and for the purposes of taking forward integrated transport could be designated public transport strategies (on a non statutory basis).

39. The Assembly's investment through Transport Grant (also where appropriate trunk roads) and subsidies together with local authority investment should be directed to ensure that targeted improvements are achieved. The review of the effectiveness of bus subsidies being

undertaken by CfIT will be useful in assessing cost effectiveness. In some urban areas a 'critical mass' improvement should take place so that the impact is large enough to bring about modal shift eg corridors with bus lanes, buses triggering traffic light changes, real time information, inter-ticketing and smart cards which would make buses an attractive alternative. Links should be developed with train and community transport. But different solutions will be required in different areas. The case for additional investment by the Assembly will be much stronger if bids are based on robust strategies and these should guide investment. In the particular case of buses investment should be linked to the establishment of quality bus partnerships. Additionally there will be the opportunity to consider the relevance of quality contracts.

40. In overall terms public transport strategies should generally include proposals to:

- reverse bus decline of 26% over last decade;
- increase rail travel incrementally;
- improve interchanges between all modes of public transport;
- promote potential of green travel plan;
- ensure accessibility and safety in their widest sense is taken into account.

APPENDIX A

HOW PUBLIC TRANSPORT IS CURRENTLY USED IN WALES

Journey to Work: is one of the key generators of traffic, as well as placing the peak demand on the public transport system. Encouraging modal shift from the car is essential for this journey. The chart shows current usage by mode for this journey. Total public transport usage here = 9%

Total journeys: The overall travel patterns across Wales including journey to work alongside other journey generators show an even lower share for public transport against the car, namely 5%. This shows the challenge which the Assembly must address in promoting accessibility for those without cars and offering a more attractive alternative to those with cars.

QUALITY BUS PARTNERSHIPS

Success Stories

- **Oxford** - service and quality enhancements and Park and Ride. Growth of around 5% a year.
- **Brighton** - "Metro" branding, high quality, frequent services, priority measures. Increased patronage of around 5% a year includes some mode shift.
- **Glasgow** - recent reversal of long term decline in core market and 4% growth with "Overground" initiative - new buses, easy to understand frequent services. Annual season ticket in exchange for scrapping car!
- **Manchester** - "Mega Rider" low price initiative in Manchester believed to be highest-ever growth of weekly tickets. Includes substantial shift from car users.
- **West Midlands** – new buses, pricing and ticketing initiatives (including family discounts), route branding, priority measures has checked significant decline and attracted new business.

- **Trent Buses Rainbow Routes** - quality, marketing, restructuring services. Patronage growth varied from 5% pa for 3 years to 100% increase over 5 years. On one route as many as 72% of patrons used to be car-only users.
- **Ipswich, Kesgrave corridor** - Quality Partnership, significant investment including priority measures, short guideway section, real time information (including personalised), vehicles. 42% patronage growth in early period alone.
- **Birmingham - Walsall 'Line 33'** Route upgrading. 20% increase on route 33, and a 5% increase on the route 33 corridor. 10% of new users had switched from using the car.
- **Leeds - "Superbus" Scott Hall Road.** Operators suggest patronage growth of 50% or more.
- **New Park and Ride initiatives in Canterbury, Reading, Swindon, Ipswich, Norwich, Leicester etc.** Removal of cars from city centres.
- **London.** (General overall patronage growth in recent years.) Large patronage growth following priority measures and other improvements on routes 43 (Archway - Bank) and 207/607 (Uxbridge Road).

SOURCE: DETR

APPENDIX C

COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

This appendix provides examples of a range of successful rural and urban Community Transport projects in Wales, highlighting good practice and best value. The thread that links all of these is identified as the support and co-operation provided by individual Local Authorities.

Rural Links

In Anglesey the **TARAN Community Transport** project has developed into one of the most successful schemes anywhere in the U.K. The hallmark of this particular group is its expertise in delivering specialist accessible transport throughout the Island. As a result of its professional approach, the group has been able to secure financial support from the National Assembly, Ynys Mon County Council, The National Lottery Charities Board and commercial transport operators including Arriva, to operate and manage a base for the National Passenger Transport Information Service. This organisation also provides specialist training for its 70 employees, which incidentally makes it the sixth largest employer in Anglesey.

The Estuary Car Community Transport Scheme operates out of Holywell in Flintshire. This

body provides a small but vital community car link between inhabitants of outlying villages and essential services in towns such as Holywell, Flint and Mold. The scheme is operated and managed by a group of dedicated volunteers who provide a range of transport services to meet individual and in some cases family needs. It is supported by Flintshire County Council and generates income from modest charges for its services and successful applications for funding from The National Assembly and The National Lottery Charities Board (Wales) plus local fundraising.

Powys County Council is acknowledged to be a leader in Community Transport development. The authority's links with the voluntary sector through The Powys Association of Voluntary Organisations (PAVO) is well established. In recent years, PAVO in conjunction with the authority has created Community Transport Development and Project Officer posts which has produced excellent dividends in terms of creating and expanding new and innovative schemes throughout the County. Financial support is provided by The National Assembly, Powys County Council, The National Lottery Charities Board (Wales), European Funding, fare revenue and local fundraising.

Some measure of its success can be drawn from the fact that the Powys Community Transport Forum has 45 members running 5 Dial-a-Ride, 7 Taxi Card, 6 Community Car and one WRVS Social Car schemes, with 15 (3 accessible) Local Authority owned minibuses available for hire at certain times by community and school groups.

Urban Links

The **Neath and Port Talbot Community Transport** Scheme operates eight accessible minibuses and one accessible car from its base in Neath. This is essentially an urban operation, but also provides for members in the more remote areas of the County. As with virtually all such projects of this size the scheme is managed and operated by a mix of paid and volunteer staff. Supported by Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council the scheme also draws income from members fares, applications to The National Assembly, National Lottery Charities Board (Wales), other funders and its own fundraising activities.

Community Active Travel Services (CATS) are based in Caerphilly and provide a well established service in the south of the county. The success of this group is undoubtedly due to its professional and in a way futuristic approach to transport provision. Its fully accessible fleet is painted in bright green with its lions (CATS Logo) for all to see. This is a world apart from those organisations which insist that community transport vehicles should be white and resemble ambulances. CATS have for some time provided services for people who require accessible transport for longer journeys in Wales and beyond, to airports, seaports, hotel destinations etc.

The scheme now provides a large specialist, fully accessible and equipped coach which

enables them to provide holiday tours for people with severely restricted mobility; it is comparable to anything available in the commercial sector for such passengers. Furthermore the very latest driver and passenger assistant training is provided for the staff operating all vehicles. This is certainly a first in Wales from a voluntary sector scheme and probably a first in the U.K. It is a first class example of need being identified and addressed with huge benefits for the users. Income to support the scheme, which is managed and operated by paid and volunteer staff, is provided by modest fare generation, Local Authority support, The National Assembly, The National Lottery charities Board (Wales) other funders and local fundraising.

SOURCE: Welsh Transport Forum Sub Group Review of Community Transport

References

National Assembly Transport Statistics

SWIFT Objective One – Sub Regional Action Plan

Any More Fares? Delivering Better Bus Services Institute for Public

Policy Research 2001

ATCO Evidence to the EPT Committee 2000

Welsh Consumer Council. Bus Travel in Wales A Consumer's Journey 2001

Community Transport Association. Evidence to the EPT Committee 2000

CPT Evidence to the EPT Committee 2000

D Begg. Why is car ownership higher in Germany than the UK but car use lower ? Commission for Integrated Transport 2000

National Assembly Bus Subsidy Grant Review 2000

National Assembly Guides to Franchise Bidders

Welsh Transport Forum sub group reviews of Community Transport – Interim Statement 2001